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manifesto



"The life of our nation was first threatened by the war. Then followed another bad time with events which threatened the nation's spiritual health and character. The majority of the nation hopefully accepted the programme of socialism. Its direction fell into the hands of the wrong people, however. It would not have mattered so much that they did not have sufficient statesman-like experience, matter-of-fact knowledge, or philosophical education, if at least they had possessed more common wisdom and decency, if they had been able to listen to the opinion of others, and if they had allowed themselves gradually to be replaced by more capable persons.

"The Communist Party, which after the war possessed the great trust of the people, gradually exchanged this trust for offices, until it had all offices and nothing else. We must put it in this way, and those communists among us, whose disappointment over the results is as great as the disappointment of the others, know it to be so. The incorrect line of the leadership changed into a power organization which became very attractive to egoists avid for rule, calculating cowards, and people with bad consciences. Their influx into the party affected the nature and the conduct of the party. Its internal arrangement was not such that honest people could gain influence in it without shameful incidents or could change it and bring it continuously into line with the modern world. Many communists fought this decline but they did not succeed in preventing what happened.

"The Situation in the communist party was the pattern and cause of a similar situation in the State. The party's linking with the State led to the party losing the advantage of distance from the executive power. There was no criticism of the activities of the State and economic organizations. Parliament forgot how to proceed, the government forgot how to rule, and the directors how to direct. Elections had no significance and the laws lost their weight. We could not confide in our representatives in any committee, and if we could trust them we could not ask them to do anything because they could effect nothing. It was still worse that we could no longer trust one another. Personal and collective honour declined. Honesty led nowhere and it was useless to speak of any appreciation for ability. Therefore most people lost interest in public affairs; they were concerned only with themselves and with money. These bad conditions also brought the result that now one cannot even rely on money. Relations among people were spoiled, joy in work was lost; to sum up, a time came upon the nation which threatened its spiritual health and character.

"We All Are Responsible for the present state of affairs. The greater responsibility rests with the communists among us; the main responsibility, however, rests with those who were component parts or instruments of uncontrolled power. It was the power of an opinionated group placed in authority with the help of the party apparatus everywhere, from Prague to each district and community. The apparatus decided what one might or might not do, and the apparatus directed the co-operatives for the co-operative members, the factories for the workers, and the national committees for the citizens. No organization actually belonged

Should we never meet again, we wish you all to love each other, protect each other, and hope for truth. . . . Hold fast until liberty can be guaranteed by those to whom you have given your trust. . . .

Literarni Listy August 21, 1968
last issue

manifesto (cont.) . . .

to its members, not even the communist-organization.

"The main guilt and the greatest deception of these rulers was that they presented their arbitrariness as the will of the workers. If we wanted to believe this deception we would now have to blame the workers for the decline of our economy, for the crimes against innocent people, for the introduction of censorship which made it impossible for all this to be written. The workers were to blame for the mistaken investments, for the losses in trade, for the shortage of apartments. Naturally, no sensible person believes in such guilt on the part of the workers. We all know and, in particular, each worker knows that in practice the workers did not decide anything. It was someone else who made the worker officials vote. While many workers thought that they ruled, the rule was executed in their name by a specially educated group of officials of the party and State apparatus. In effect, they took the place of the overthrown class and themselves became the new authority.

"For The Sake of Justice we will say that some of them long ago realised this bad game of history. We know them now by the fact that they redress wrongs, correct mistakes, return the taking of decisions to the membership and the citizens, and limit the authority and the numbers of the apparatus of officials. They are with us against obsolete views in the party membership. But a great many of the body of officials still oppose change and they still have weight! They still hold instruments of power, particularly in the districts and in the communities, where they may use these instruments secretly and unimpeachably.

"From the beginning of the current year we have been in the revival process of democratisation. It began in the communist party. We must say this, and the people among us outside the party also know it who, until recently, expected no good to come from us. We must add, however, that this process could not begin elsewhere. After a full twenty years only the communists could live something like a political life, only communist criticism was in a position to assess things from their basis, only the opposition within the communist party had the privilege of being in contact with the enemy. The initiative and efforts of the democratic communists therefore is only an instalment in the repayment of the debt which the entire party incurred with the people outside the party, whom it kept in a position in which they did not have equal rights. Therefore, no gratitude is due to the communist party although it should probably be acknowledge that it is honestly striving to use the last opportunity to save its own and the nation's honour.

"The Revival Process is not bringing any very new things. It brings ideas and suggestions many of which are older than the errors of our socialism and others which have emerged under the surface of visible happenings. They should have been expressed long ago but they were suppressed. However, let us not cherish the illusion that these ideas are now victorious through the force of truth. Their victory has been decided rather by the weakness of the old leadership which, obviously, first had to be weakened by a rule of twenty years in which no one hampered it. Obviously all the wrong elements hidden in the foundations and the ideology of this system had to mature until they gained their full form.

"Therefore let us not overestimate the significance of the criticism from the ranks of writers and students. The source of social change is the economy. The right word has significance only if it is spoken under conditions which have already been duly prepared. Duly prepared conditions — in our country, unfortunately, we must understand this term to mean our general poverty and the complete disintegration of the old system of rule in which politicians of a certain type calmly and peacefully compromised themselves at our expense. Thus truth is not victorious; truth simply

remains when everything else goes to waste! There is no cause for a national celebration of victory, there is merely cause for new hope.

"We Turn To You in this moment of hope, which is still threatened. However, it took several months for many of us to believe that they could speak out and many still do not yet believe it. Nevertheless, we spoken up, and so many things have been revealed that somehow we must complete our purpose of humanising this regime. Otherwise the revenge of the old forces would be cruel. We turn mainly to those who so far have only waited. The time which is coming will be decisive for many years.

"The time which is coming is summer, with its vacations and holidays, when, according to old habit, we shall want to leave everything. We can be certain, however, that our dear adversaries will not indulge in summer recreation, that they will mobilise the people under obligation to them, and that even now they are trying to arrange for calm Christmas holidays! Let us be careful, therefore, of what will happen; let us try to understand it and respond to it. Let us renounce the impossible demand that someone higher up must always give us the only possible interpretation of things and one simple conclusion. Each of us will have to draw his own conclusions at his own responsibility. Commonly agreed-upon conclusions can be found only by discussion, and this needs the freedom of expression which actually is our only democratic achievement of the current year.

"In the forthcoming days we will have to show initiative of our own and determination of our own.

"Primarily we shall oppose views, should they arise, that it is possible to conduct some sort of democratic revival without the communists or possibly against them. This would be both unjust and unreasonable. The communists possess developed organizations and in these we should support the progressive wing. They have experienced officials and, last but not least, they also have in their hands the decisive levers and buttons. The action programme has been submitted to the public; it is a programme for the initial adjustment of the greatest inequality and no one else has any similarly specific programme. We must demand that local action programmes be submitted in each district and each community. Here, suddenly, we will have very ordinary, long expected and correct steps. The Czechoslovak Communist party is preparing for the congress which will elect a new central committee. Let us demand that it be better than the current one. If the Communist party now says that in the future it wants to base its leading position on the citizens confidence and not on force, let us believe this as long as we can believe in the people whom it is now sending as delegates to the district and regional conferences.

"People Have Recently Had Fears that the progress of democratisation has stopped. This feeling is partly a manifestation of tiredness due to the agitated events, and it is partly due to the fact that the season of surprising revelations, resignations from high places, and inebriating speeches of unprecedented verbal boldness is past. However, the struggles of forces has merely become less evident to a certain extent. The fight is now being waged for the substance and working of laws, for the extent of practical steps. In addition, we must give the new people, the ministers, prosecutors, chairmen, and secretaries, time to work. They have the right to this time so that they can either make good or prove incapable. Apart from this, one cannot presently expect more of the central political organs.

"The practical equality of the democracy of the future depends on what becomes of the enterprises and what will happen in them. In all our discussions it is the economists who have us in hand. One must seek out good managers and see to it that they get good positions. It is true that, compared to the mature countries, we are badly paid, and some are even worse off. We can demand more money — it can be printed, but at the same

time its value diminishes. Let us rather demand that directors and chairmen explain to us what and at what an expenditure they want to produce, to whom they want to sell their products and at what price, the profit from this, what part of it is invested in the modernization of production, and what can be distributed.

"Under apparently boring headlines a very hard struggle is going on in the Press relating to democracy and personal advantages. As producers the workers can intervene in this struggle by the choice of the persons whom they elect to the enterprise management and enterprise councils. As employees they will do best for themselves when they elect as their representatives in the trade union organs their natural leaders, capable and honest people, regardless of the latter's party allegiance.

"If at this time we cannot expect more from the present central political organs we must achieve more in the districts and communities. Let us demand the resignation of people who have misused their power, who have harmed public property, or who have acted dishonestly or brutally. We must find ways and means to induce them to resign, for instance, through public criticism, resolutions, demonstrations, demonstrative work brigades, collection drives for gifts to them when they withdraw, strikes, and boycotts of their doors. However, we must reject methods which are illegitimate, indecent, or gross since they might use them to influence Alexander Dubcek.

"We must so generally decry the writing of insulting letters that any letter of this kind which they may yet receive could be considered a letter they had sent to themselves. Let us revive the activity of the National Front. Let us demand public meetings of the National Committees on questions about which no one wants to know anything. Let us set up special citizens' committees and commissions. It is simple: a few people convene, they elect a chairman, keep regular minutes, publish their findings, demand a solution, and do not let themselves be intimidated. Let us change the district and local press, which has degenerated to a mouthpiece of official views into a platform of all the positive political forces, let us demand the establishment of editorial councils composed of representatives of the National Front, or let us found new papers. Let us establish committees for the defence of the freedom of expression. Let us organize a special service to keep order at our meetings. If we hear strange news let us check on it. Let us send delegations to the people concerned and let us publish their replies even by nailing them to trees. Let us support the security organs when they prosecute genuine criminal activity.

"We do not mean to cause anarchy and a state of general insecurity. Let us avoid disputes among neighbours, let us renounce spitefulness in political affairs. Let us reveal informers.

"The heavy vacation traffic throughout the Republic will arouse interest in the constitutional arrangement between the Czechs and Slovaks. We consider the Federation a method of solving the nationality question; aside from this, it is one of the important measures aimed at democratising conditions. This measure alone may not by itself ensure better living conditions for the Slovaks, either. The problem of the regime — in the Czech regions and in Slovakia individually — is not solved by this. The rule of the party-state bureaucracy may still survive — in Slovakia even better, because it has "secured us greater freedom."

"The Recent Great Apprehension results from the possibility that foreign forces may interfere with our internal development. Being faced with all these superior forces the only thing we can do is decently to hold our own and not to be provoked. We can assure the government that we shall back it, if necessary, even with weapons, as long as the government does what we gave it the mandate to do, and we can assure our allies that we will observe our alliance, friendship, and trade agreements. Excited reproaches and unfounded sus-

pitions must necessarily make the position of our government more difficult, without being of any help. At any rate, we can insure equal relations only by improving our internal conditions and by carrying the process of revival so far that one day at elections we will elect statesmen who will have sufficient courage, honour and political wisdom to establish and maintain such relations. This, by the way, is the problem of absolutely all governments of all small countries of the world.

"This Spring, like after the war, a great chance has been given us again. Again we have the possibility of taking into our hands our common cause, which for all practical purposes we call socialism, and giving it a shape which will better correspond with our once good reputation and with the relatively good opinion which we once had of ourselves. This spring has just ended and will never come back again. In winter we shall know everything.

"With this we conclude our statement to the workers, farmers, officials, artists, scientists, technicians, and everybody. It was written at the suggestion of the scientists."

"The following signatures are not a complete record of all of the people who agree with us, but merely a selection from the various groups of citizens whom we reached at home:

*) National Artist (N.A.) B. Blachut, Member of the National Theatre in Prague; Dr. of Medicine and Science J. Bro, Prof. and Director of the Prague Institute for Diseases of the Blood; M. Buzkova, sow breeder; Academician Bohumil Bydzovsky, mathematician; Prof. Dr. J. Cvekl, philosopher; V. Caslavská, Olympic winner; Z. Cechrak, CKD worker; Z. Fiala, CKD technician; M. Hanus, CKD worker; Ing. J. Hanzelka; writer; Dr. of medicine M. Holub of the Microbiological Institute of the Cz. Academy of Science; Z. Holec, CKD worker; R. Hrusinsky, actor; D. Hruza, CKD worker; J. Chocena, farmer; J. Ires, film producer; Dr. of medicine and science V. urkovic, Chief of the Internal Polyclinic of the Charles University in Hradec Kralove; Dr. of Science V. Kadlecova, Chief of the Ophthalmic Clinic of the Charles University in Prague; Pro. Dr. A. Knop of the Pedagogical Institute in Ostrava; K. Kosik, Philosopher; Academician Aromir Koutek, geologist; O. Krejca, stage manager; Dr. of Medicine and Science J. Kral, Chief of the Prague Institute for Sports Medicine; Ing., Candidate of Science M. Kral of the Higher Political School of the CZ. Communist Party Central Committee; K. Krautgartner, Conductor of the Cz. Radio Dance Orchestra; Dr. of Medicine and Science V. Kruta, Chief of the Physiological Institute of the J. E. Purkyne University, Brno; Academician V. Laufberger, Chief of the Laboratory for Graphic research methods, Prague; Dr. of Medicine, P. Lukl, Chief of the Internal Clinic of Palacky University, Olomouc, Vice-President of the European Cardiological Society; Z. Marysova, farm worker; J. Menzel, Stage manager; V. Mostecky, CKD technician; J. Nevrsil, CKD worker; J. Nemeč, CKD worker; Dr. of Law, Božena Patkova; Ing. Emil Petyrek, Correspondent member of the Cz. Academy of Science and Director of the Mining Institute of the Academy; Prof. Dr. of Medicine and Science O. Poupá, Chief of the 3rd department of the Physiological Institute of the Cz. Academy of Science; Dr. of Medicine and Science J. Procházka, Chief of the Chirurgical Clinic of the University in Hradec Kralove; Y. Prenosilova, singer; N. A. Alfred Radok, stage manager; E. Radok, film producer; J. Raska, Olympic winner; N. A. Jaroslav Seifert; Dr. of Medicine, B. Sekla, Chief of the Virological Institute of the Charles University, Prague; Academician, Dr. of Medicine and Science, Z. Servit, Director of the Physiological Institute of the Cz. Academy of Science; Ing. J. Slama, Economic Research Institute of Industry and Building; Dr. of Medicine and Science O. Stary, Correspondent Member of the Cz. Academy of Science, Rector of the Charles University in Prague; J. Snizek, CKD technician; J. Suchy, poet; Dr. of Medicine V. Sevcik; J. Slitr,

composer; K. Silha, CKD worker; J. Svankmajer, film producer; M. Tomasova, actress; Ph. Dr. L. Tondl; J. Topol, writer; N. A. Jiri Trnka; J. Triska, actor; Ludvik Vaculik, writer and journalist, (the author of the text of this document); K. Vojir, CKD worker; Dr. of Medicine and Science J. Vaynsek, Professor and Vice-Rector of Purkyne University in Brno; Prof. Dr. of Medicine J. Veleminsky, Ostrava; Dr. of Medicine and Science V. Vejdovsky, Chief of the Ophthalmic Clinic of Palacky University, Olomouc; V. Voros, CKD worker; Academician O. Wichterle, Director of the Institute for Micromolecular Chemistry of the Cz. Academy of Science; N. A. Jaroslav Vojta, member of the National Theatre; N. A. Jan Werich; Col. Emil Zatopek, Olympic winner; Dana Zatopkova, Olympic winner; Ing. Jindrich Zogata, agronomist.

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FOOTNOTE — Nine months after the Czechoslovak Writers' Manifesto sent to the West by a large group of intellectuals was published throughout the world (See Sunday Times, 3.9.1967, etc.) and shook the Novotny Stalinist regime, a group of responsible citizens from all walks of life charged a leading Communist writer, Ludvik Vaculik, with preparing the text of an appeal to the Czechoslovak people. This document was to sum up the progress of the present movement for liberalization inside the country and to formulate ideological foundations for the stand of the democrats against the rearguard actions of the Communist conservative elements opposing Mr. Dubček's policies.

This document, which was published in CS(S)R in "Literarni Listy", the organ of the Writers' Union; in "Prace", the Trade Union daily; in "Zemedelske Noviny", the daily organ of the Ministry of Agriculture, and in "Mlada Fronta", the Youth daily, was widely discussed by the entire Czechoslovak press and by the press abroad, although its full English text has not been generally available until now. In Czechoslovakia itself, as intended, the Manifesto provoked intensive discussion. It was first rejected by the Government, the Communist Party and the National front, but this attitude is now changing. Some 40,000 signatures have since been added to the original seventy supporters. Even the daily organ of the Communist party, Rude Pravo, now admits that the appeal has nationwide support and the paper objectively prints correspondence on this matter and reports the progress of the continuing signature campaign. The "Two Thousand Words" form a document and an indictment of great political importance.

F.C.I.

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A Poem

by Anna K.

Let black-pool silence fall
Cool and dark

Let mantle silence
the thin, black film
that stays the drop

fall
Stilling



Compulsory Discussion?

Anyone much concerned with what students say knows that teaching by discussion is in favour and straight lecturing is 'out'. Teaching by discussion is nothing new. Socrates practised it in the fifth century B.C., and one of its end-products, the 'disputation', was the standard method of testing for degrees in the Middle Ages. Some English universities have been using tutorial systems for generations, either of the 'one-to-one' variety in use at Oxford and Cambridge, a single student reading his essay to a tutor as a prelude to discussion, or of the small-seminar type in which several students take turns at reading essays at the weekly meeting. The value of the tutorial as a mental exercise is obvious, but the universities that have a tutorial system also use the lecture method. For every hour one of their students spends in a tutorial, he will spend seven or eight in a lecture theatre, perhaps with several hundred other people. Moreover, such universities tend to be highly selective in their entry, so that they can afford to be generous in their faculty-student ratios. If they admitted students as readily as do North American universities, they would have to modify seriously or even scrap their tutorial systems.

The variety of methods in use even at these universities is evidence enough that there is no one method of transmitting all forms of knowledge. Sometimes factual information is required, which the professor has, and the students do not have, and which is not always available in a book. Again, required reasoning may be of a "convergent" nature, i.e. one works by a series of steps towards a single correct solution, and the professor has to demonstrate the process. In such cases, to attempt to proceed by discussion may be to waste everyone's time in working against the grain of the subject matter.

Nor is any one method suitable for use by every faculty member. All of us must have encountered at least one shy scholar whose reading from a manuscript proved immensely informative and stimulating. Though the 'divergent' mode of thinking, by which one works outward from a central insight or set of facts, usually lends itself to progress through discussion, there are lectures whose explorations prove more stirring than any discussion.

Nevertheless, students are surely entitled to ask whether a course does what it claims to do,

whether the conscientious student will acquire the requisite information and skills, so that he will become able to think, question or perceive in the ways natural to the subject. But how is he to tell? rades in tests, examinations and course-work supply some guidance, but should there not also be a subjective sense of gain, an inner awareness of a new mental vigour, of curiosity, excitement and fresh insight? Good teaching, by whatever method, triggers off a chain reaction in the student equipped to profit by it.

This inner awareness of progress often brings enjoyment and self-confidence, but the university's primary function cannot be the increase of happiness and well-being in its members. Though the university will obviously provide medical help for sick students, it differs from a hospital because its end is to promote not health but learning; likewise it differs from a youth club because its ends are not recreation, self-discovery, or even happiness, but the gathering and transmission of knowledge, the training of reasoning powers and of sensibilities. Any student does well to look critically at the teaching in his university, so long as he asks whether it achieves the objectives capable of being realized in a university and nowhere else.

The student who pleads for more flexible and varied methods of teaching is doing his academic community a service. But to demand that all teaching be done by discussion would be to require not more flexibility but less. No distinguished teaching was ever done by means of a slavish adherence to a single method enjoined by someone other than the professor or teacher. Teaching is an art practised by an individual using the methods he finds most appropriate for the subject-matter and for his personality and attitudes. Although group discussion is a most valuable way of approaching a wide variety of subjects, an attempt to enforce it universally would amount to educational totalitarianism, and, if successful, would lead to general boredom and to a dissatisfaction far more widespread than any that now obtains.

The above article was written by an English professor who wishes to remain anonymous.

Five-Minute Poem

by Anon.

Changeling child
caring not for what
comes
but what is
to you the
spine of love —
must I tell
you the existence
of all this you see coming
now
the nightly labour
of some silent birth-moon
cradled in the forest's
reaching



The Canine Matrix An Apology - by Myshkin

the earth breeds neurotic children
born without navels; and
the fruit has never known the tree.
we've lost the way to rot; therefore
let us turn our intellectual noses
from quasi-stellar objects to fire-hydrants,
there's always the smell of dogs;
for I believe the universe
isn't clinical, but rather
urinal.

Lux Fiat . . .

The first issue of the Martlet Magazine is, necessarily, piecemeal. Whether or not it improves depends in large part on the response of the university to such an irrelevant, quasi-creative media. We are seeking this year to establish the magazine as a printed dialogue about anything and everything; it exists to be used and commented upon by the students and faculty. Whatever your creative, philosophical or political bent, please feel free to turn on weekly in these pages, or to respond in letter to what we print.

And don't mind me. I only work here.

Copy may be left in the Martlet Magazine slot in Hut J; in the Martlet office in the SUB; or in the 'T' slot in the SUB mailbox, just outside the main office. We also need artists, people who are willing to type the odd letter, offer suggestions, give a different point of view, or simply get involved in the running of a small but time-consuming magazine. If you want to get in touch, you could call Local 477 or leave a message in J Hut.

B. TROTTIER, Editor.

Martlet Magazine

published every Friday

editor Barbara Trottier
associate Jerry Jelynk
Frances Foster
art Maurice Brivadier

Unsolicited material can be left in the
MAG box in The Martlet office in the SUB.