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**CONFERENCE AT HELSINKI
AND ITS AFTERMATH**

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CONFERENCE AT HELSINKI AND ITS AFTERMATH *

Much has been said and written about the Helsinki Conference before it, during it and after it. We therefore should be able to give an answer to the questions as to what this conference actually was about, what was its purpose and what were its results. Unfortunately, our answers to these questions remain more than vague.

The U.S.S.R. had for a long time desired a meeting like the conference which was convened in Helsinki in August 1975. It was called a conference on security and co-operation. We should therefore ask of which European states the security has been endangered and who endangers it or of which states the security should be secured. The idea of this conference was originated by the U.S.S.R. Should we therefore think that the existence of the U.S.S.R. is endangered by other European states or that the U.S.S.R. is concerned about the independence of smaller and small European states? We must discount both possibilities. When the U.S.S.R. in 1956 »protected« with the aid of her troops Hungary's and in 1968 Czechoslovakia's independence, security and the right to freely decide their internal order, we were told, it is true, that the U.S.S.R. did not hasten to secure the independence and security of those two states, rather the contrary.

We ask: has anything like that happened before that the European states have endangered the security of the U.S.S.R. or that they have needed the assistance of the U.S.S.R.? A direct answer to this question is given by Professor Ernst Kohlman, a member of long standing in the Communist Party, who recently left the U.S.S.R. He has stated that the whole history of the U.S.S.R. is an uninterrupted chain of forcible annexations of foreign countries by the U.S.S.R., the oppression and discrimination of foreign peoples.

What did the U.S.S.R. then aim for by this conference? May it be noted that the end result of this conference is not and was never intended to be an international agreement which would have been binding on the participating states guaranteed by sanctions. There has been a political declaration only, the fulfillment of which cannot be legally controlled. Its contents are interpreted by the participating states at their own discretion and in accordance with own opinions. The conclusions of any of the states drawn from this declaration are not legally binding nor obligatory to other states. Even the wording of this declara-

* Lecture given at a festive meeting of the Estonian Information Centre on the occasion of its 30th anniversary on December 14, 1976, in Stockholm.

tion to a great extent is so vague that it is difficult to establish whether, and to what extent, one or another state observes or violates it.

Western powers and in particular the Nato powers assumed for a long time a reserved attitude regarding this proposal of the U.S.S.R. Anyway, now this conference has taken place. At the conclusion of the activities of the conference, representatives of many states found that something extraordinary had taken place in the post-war history of Europe. And that is true; although, one must say that in the opposite direction than those politicians enthusiastic about the conference think.

As is well known, the U.S.S.R. opposed the idea that states outside Europe participate in this conference. The guarantor of the security and independence of European states as well as of peace in Europe was to be the U.S.S.R. What such a guarantee would have meant to European states was, fortunately, understood by many states. In such a situation the idea of this conference was not, unfortunately, altogether abandoned, but efforts were made that the U.S. and Canada be included among the participating states and that the agenda of the conference include also questions pertaining to human rights what the U.S.S.R. was loathe to consider.

The additional wishes of the Western powers were finally accepted by the U.S.S.R., but whether their contents as well is a separate question. When statesmen both from East and West discuss the same problems and use the same terms it does not yet mean that the same things are meant. The Western powers should have enough experience to be capable of estimating the value of the promises of the U.S.S.R., as far as any promises are given by it at all.

That the hopes of the Western powers, as far as this conference was concerned, constituted a self-deception was emphasized by many politicians and scientists before the convening of this conference. It should have been known to the Western powers that the U.S.S.R. keeps her promises and obligations so long as it is useful to her or as long as she is forced to do it. Small Estonia experienced it directly. Molotov was not ashamed of stating that we recognized the independence of the Estonian republic and concluded a peace with that state in a situation where we were weak and were interested in concluding peace. Now we are strong, we have a possibility and we are using that strength. That, one must conclude, is the view of the U.S.S.R. also as far as the European security and the results of the Helsinki conference are concerned. The U.S.S.R. seems to be convinced that the USA will sooner or later withdraw from Europe or, at least, reduce its contribution in Europe. When that has happened the Foreign Minister of the U.S.S.R. can once more

declare: now that we are strong, we have an opportunity to dictate our wishes and demands.

Many members of the European Council have called attention to the fact that the U.S.S.R. is continually engaged in activities aimed at the reduction of the importance of Nato in order to disintegrate it in the course of time. The U.S.S.R. is in a favorable position regarding this as the world, including the European states, forgets soon what the U.S.S.R. has done or is doing. By her active propaganda the U.S.S.R. is trying to lull its political opponents and those doubting her seeming good will. She is trying to convince the European states that it is of no purpose to carry high armament costs because nobody is endangering those states and those sums are anyway and better needed elsewhere: in order to rise the living standard of their own people.

In his interview given to the French TV Mr. L. Brezhnev noted that some circles in the Western states are spreading fabrications about a danger from the side of the U.S.S.R.; he then emphasized that the U.S.S.R. has strong armed forces but we have never endangered nor are now endangering anybody.

We see that this propaganda of the U.S.S.R. has brought and is bringing results. Some European states find that armament costs can be reduced and must be reduced on those same grounds propagated by the U.S.S.R. This all is happening at a time when Brezhnev, in spite of the Conference at Helsinki, states in public that the U.S.S.R. cannot reduce its armament — in spite of the fact that evidence has repeatedly been produced that the U.S.S.R. is constantly increasing its armaments. Mr. L. Brezhnev also emphasized in the same interview that we are forced to complete our defense.

Nato was once created as an organization to guarantee, collectively, the security of its member states and to give them military protection in the case of any of these states were attacked by the U.S.S.R. or its satellites. That collectively promised assistance has so far been effective. When the U.S.S.R. later proposed the idea that the Nato and Warsaw Pact states should conclude an agreement of mutual cooperation and mutual security of some kind it sounded like grim humour, but not from the point of view of the U.S.S.R. whose aim is the elimination of that collective security that Nato is offering to its members.

Now something like that has happened. The security, collectively guaranteed by the Nato to its member states, has been in many respects weakened by the Helsinki Conference. The U.S.S.R. has always been aggressive in its efforts. When one target has been achieved, a new action is started in the same spirit. As we all know, the U.S.S.R. is

propagating now the summoning of a security conference of the whole world.

In spite of the fact that the U.S.S.R. emphasizes the validity of the so-called Brezhnev doctrine, there is, at the same time, spreading among the member states of the Nato a conviction of some kind that the U.S.S.R. is a supporter of the world peace. We all were, for example, greatly astonished when we heard that President Ford, in his election campaign, emphasized that the Polish state was independent and decided freely both its internal and foreign policy, without the interference of the U.S.S.R.

Professor Hofer, a member of the European Council, seriously warns the states of free Europe of the propaganda lulling them to peace by the one actually threatening them. He gives examples of where such a lulling of oneself can lead to and has led. A mutual pact guaranteeing security is conceivable only when in the organization or agreement guaranteeing this security states of equal strength are participating. That was the case in Europe when there existed simultaneously great powers such as Britain, France, Germany, Austria and Russia. In Europe of today there is no mutual balance of great powers. The U.S.S.R. dominates the Europe of today. It is balanced from outside by the USA whose possibilities to do this are in many respects restricted, however. Nor is there any unanimity with regard to the questions concerning the defense of Europe, not to speak about other contradictions within the Nato.

On the other hand, there is no more a sufficient guarantee of peace and security today for many reasons, even though several great powers participate in the organization guaranteeing peace and security. If a small state endangers peace and security it is possible to force it to return to order and keep peace, at will. When a great power steps out of line there are no positive means for counteraction. If a great power resorts to violence and another great power tries to prevent it by force, a new great war or even an atomic war begins and the peace and security of the states will be endangered or ended.

What should be done in such a situation? Have the European peoples as such independent democratic states, outlived their time and will these states sooner or later be forced to adopt the Communist regime and ideology, probably under Moscow's direction, or then resign themselves to be destroyed in an atomic war?

Unfortunately, the perspectives ahead us are not very agreeable but, fortunately, we do not as yet face such a choice. There still are possibilities and hopes for the defense of European states and nations. One

such possibility is, so far, the existence of the Nato, as before. We have reason to think that, in addition to military forces, the European nations have for their defense even other resources which can be as effectively as the power of arms. Those other forces are the ones that even in the Eastern states, have come to the fore over and over again: of the recognition and application of human rights. The spread of these demands will force even dictator states sooner or later to find means in order to pacify and satisfy the people. It should be beyond dispute that those means cannot be solely violence against their own people.

We see that those in power in the U.S.S.R. do not deny human rights. They emphasize that they respect in full those rights and that criticism directed against the U.S.S.R. is groundless and evilminded. Fortunately, these explanations do not satisfy the majority of the politicians of democratic states. As a result, there has been also the wish to discuss, to some extent, these questions at a public forum. Such a forum was the Conference at Helsinki.

But what were the results of this conference? The final document makes many inter-state promises, such as: the respecting of each other's sovereignty, non-interference in the internal affairs of another state and inviolability of once existing frontiers; it is agreed each state has the right to decide itself its political, economic, social and cultural development; that each state decides without interference from the outside its internal and external status. Those promises sound attractive particularly if that content we desire is given them. But those promises can also have a sharply negative effect. The ban on intervention in the internal affairs of a state can mean that each state can behave with great freedom of discretion as far as the estimating and deciding the rights and liberties of its citizens are concerned. Nobody has the right to come and say that the human rights and liberties of its citizens are being violated. On the other hand, these promises and declarations are, probably intentionally, formulated in a very vague way.

We ask whether these promises include anything new to us. It is interesting that only a promise is made to start to do this or that not obligated to this or that. When one now promises, e.g., to refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of another state one is saying by that that so far this has not been the case. But has there so far been anything that prevented refraining from violating the sovereignty of another state? On the contrary, the refraining agreement is in force regarding all member states of the U.N. If the U.S.S.R. now wishes to change its attitude regarding other states and nations and end its so far violent behavior all doors have been open to it without any conference. In spite of that, the

U.S.S.R. desires a declaration from some kind of a conference. Why?

Taking into consideration the experiences thus far one must come to the conclusion that all those political promises given at Helsinki will remain, as long as the old regime of the Eastern states remains in power, without positive results. Those states behave today and will in the future as though there had been no conference at Helsinki. Those promises cannot bring about alleviation of tension between the East and the West. By those promises neither the security of the European states nor the freedom of the European nations will be secured. Nothing will be changed in the relationship between the U.S.S.R. and its satellites nor in the fate of the nations annexed by the U.S.S.R.

That such is the case was confirmed only a couple days ago by the fact that neither the U.S.S.R. nor its satellites were ready to give an entry visa to the members of the U.S. Congressional group when they desired to see, on the spot, the results of the Conference at Helsinki had given.

If we have serious reasons for doubting that the above-mentioned promises will be fulfilled by the Eastern states, we have still less reason for believing that the Eastern states, above all the U.S.S.R., have now taken upon themselves obligations to estimate and apply human rights and liberties in a different way than what they have done so far. Even for that they would have no obstacles, if they only would have wished it.

The belief that human rights will from now on be respected in the Eastern states is unfounded. In addition, the promises given by those states which participated in the conference are, regarding these rights, more vague than the above-mentioned political promises. Not even once it is said that a man in those states which participated in the conference has rights of this kind or that kind as we read, e.g., in the General Declaration of Human Rights.

The states which participated in the conference declared that they will begin to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, but not that they are obliged to do that nor that rights or freedoms of this or that kind are guaranteed to their citizens. In order to promote family contacts they promised to take under positive consideration applications to travel in those countries, in order to visit relatives abroad and then return to the home country. Promises are made to begin considering, in a positive and human spirit, applications as far as the reunion of families is concerned, and promises also to arrange fees of visas within the framework of reasonableness.

That is all what is discussed or promised in the final document of the

Conference at Helsinki, as far as human contacts are concerned. It does not include anything new, as compared with the General Declaration of Human Rights. And how about the promise of beginning today, i.e. more than one year after the Conference at Helsinki? As far as the freedom of religion and conscience in Estonia is concerned, Archbishop Konrad Veem has drawn up a detailed survey. As far as the U.S.S.R. and other Eastern states are concerned several similar surveys have appeared during the past year. As to the concrete side of the situation we can, without going into details, as a proof of lack of humaneness of those in power in the U.S.S.R. mention the case of family Agapov. As far as the possibility of visiting relatives in Estonia is concerned it is, among other things, still limited mainly to Tallinn. If an individual Estonian from the home country is permitted to visit relatives in a Western country, it is such an extraordinary piece of news that it is written up in newspapers and it will be made known, through the medium of »Kodumaa», even to us here.

And that is not all: we know how the situation is in Estonia, e.g., as far as the freedom to move about is concerned in their home country for all Estonians. A great part of the country is under permanent military control. Red Army men carry automatic weapons even on their off duty time. A proof of the kind of this is the bloody deed of Kunda where about ten people were murdered by a drunken soldier of the Red Army. Such a deed does not disturb those in power in Moscow, but to write about it in newspapers or speak about it in public is a serious crime against the security of the U.S.S.R.!

At the same time as the Eastern states continue the direct violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms one cannot, however, think that these states are indifferent regarding that criticism that is directed against them in connection with the violation of human rights and freedoms. That they are, in this respect, even very sensitive is confirmed, in addition to other things by the writing and the spreading by Moscow of numerous works by which they try to justify their policy. It is also, to some extent, confirmed by the fact that the critics of the regime are no more liquidated as earlier. Some of them, although very few only, are instead released from there to freedom in the West.

Unfortunately, that material which proves beyond doubt the grave and continued violation of human rights in the Eastern states is used to a very limited extent by well-known Western statesmen, even though this violation of human rights often assumes the shape of the most brutal violence. One must especially emphasize the fate of the persons who are considered politically undesirable there. They will be either dis-

missed or subjected to »cures«, owing to their political convictions, in mental hospitals.

One of the sacred truths of the U.S.S.R. is that there is no unemployment in the U.S.S.R. Every person fit for work must therefore have an employment. Nobody — nor his or her family — can get social allowances because of the lack of work. If somebody is dismissed he or she must procure a new employment. Because a person dismissed on political grounds is considered unreliable it is actually impossible for him to get new employment near his old place of residence. If he has been without employment for four months he can, on the basis of the penal law, be prosecuted as being a parasite of the society.

And then begins his Calvary road if he has no influential defenders abroad. When one member of a married couple has been dismissed there follows the dismissal of the other one. In the Western states a mental hospital is an institution for cure. In the U.S.S.R. it fulfills also the tasks of a penal institution or, what is still more gruesome, it is an institution for making the detained one mentally ill. He is being »cured« by many drugs in order to break his power of resistance and in order to force him to acknowledge any kind of accusations. When this has been achieved and the detained one according to the local standpoint is thus cured, there does not follow his release but his punishment for the crime he has acknowledged.

Equally depressing may be the fate of a person accused for a crime concerning which he has no idea and concerning which nothing is said even in the penal law of the U.S.S.R. Many norms of punishment are applied in the U.S.S.R. which are not made public. Those norms are made known only to the appropriate offices or authorities who apply these norms. They can be either in direct contradiction with the published laws, but they are applied, and the accused one has no possibility of defending himself. Such direct violence of the authorities has remained in force for the whole time. It is one of the rudest violations of the human rights of Soviet citizens when it is carried out by authorities who are supposed to be the defenders of the legal order. According to the § 82 of the constitution of the Estonian Socialist Soviet Republic the administration of law takes place in Estonian. But it does not in any way prevent that the proceedings of law are practiced by Russians who know only Russian.

Although the U.S.S.R. is sensitive to criticism as far as human rights are concerned and although it is possible to alleviate the fate of many citizens of the U.S.S.R. the reaction of the West is, regarding this, very modest only or nonexistent. When, e.g., the Swedish Archbishop visited

Latvia and Estonia he did not consider it appropriate to touch upon the question of human rights. When Pravda interviewed European statesmen on the occasion of the anniversary of the Conference at Helsinki the then French Prime Minister Jaques Chirac found that the effect of the Helsinki decisions had not been as great as expected. He had not a single word to say about the continued violation of human rights by the Eastern states. The German Federal Chancellor Helmut Schmidt emphasized, it is true, the importance discussing the problems of human rights at the Conference at Helsinki; but even he was silent over the fact that, in spite of everything, violations against them continue in the Eastern states.

As a representative of the power of the U.S.S.R. Mr. L. Brezhnev has in repeated statements noted that the U.S.S.R. has repeatedly been accused of not fulfilling the agreements achieved at the Conference at Helsinki or has applied them to only the extent they are useful to the U.S.S.R. But those accusations, contends Brezhnev, are groundless because isolated cases only are being criticized while the result of the conference as a whole has been forgotten. If an Agapov or somebody else finds that the only way of avoiding the violence as practiced by the government of the U.S.S.R. is to commit suicide it does not prevent Mr. L. Brezhnev from claiming that the U.S.S.R. is fulfilling the promises given at the conference at Helsinki as it has always applied those principles.

We can, regarding this, note that according to the opinion of Mr. L. Brezhnev it is a proof of the weakness of the Western powers when they have taken a negative attitude regarding the possibility of the Communists entering the Italian government. We must draw the conclusion that the regime of the U.S.S.R. and its satellites is, according to the standpoint of the same Brezhnev, directly endangered if one begins, in those states, to make room for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The reason for the armed interventions by the U.S.S.R. in 1956 in Hungary and in 1968 in Czechoslovakia was the awareness over the weakness of its own internal order, i.e., awareness that the regime of the U.S.S.R. and its satellites can collapse even without use of arms: if only room is made for the spreading of human rights and freedoms in those states.

We, therefore, must draw the conclusion that those in power in the U.S.S.R. do not intend to change voluntarily their behavior regarding their attitude to individual citizens nor to the nations the U.S.S.R. has subjugated by means of arms or otherwise nor to the general policy of the U.S.S.R.

But we can ascertain that the U.S.S.R. feels itself uncomfortable

owing to those accusations which are directed against it from the outside. It has difficulties in justifying the violent regime applied by it and in defending it against the accusations coming from the west, as far as the inhuman behavior, practised by this regime, is concerned. The U.S.S.R. would feel satisfied if one would begin to treat it as an equal to the democratic states of today. But that is possible only then when the vigilance of the Western powers would be relaxed, i.e., when one would forget the acts of violence of the U.S.S.R. both in regard to its own citizens and to those of other nations and when one would forget the permanent danger from the side of the U.S.S.R. to the Western powers. When that has been achieved the time has arrived when the U.S.S.R. can, without endangering its internal order, to extend its rule to those nations which so far have remained free. That is that peace and security what the U.S.S.R. wants to guarantee to the European powers by means of the Conference at Helsinki and declarations of that kind.

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"BREZHNEV DOCTRINE"

Mr. Brezhnev on the Soviet Invasion of Czechoslovakia

Mr. Brezhnev, First Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party, described the invasion of Czechoslovakia as an «extraordinary step dictated by necessity» in a speech in Warsaw on Nov, 12 to the fifth congress of the Polish Communist Party. Mentioning Czechoslovakia only once by name in his speech, when he referred to the recent activation of forces hostile to Socialism in Czechoslovakia, Mr. Brezhnev insisted that Communist countries stood for «strict respect» for sovereignty. «But,» he declared, «when internal and external forces that are hostile to Socialism try to turn the development of some Socialist country towards the restoration of a capitalist regime, when Socialism in that country and the Socialist community as a whole is threatened, it becomes not only a problem of the people of the country concerned, but a common problem and concern of all Socialist countries. Naturally an action such as military assistance to a fraternal country designed to avert the threat to the social system is an extraordinary step, dictated by necessity. Such a step.» he added, «may be taken only in case of direct actions of the enemies of Socialism within a country and outside it, actions threatening the common interests of the Socialist camp.» — (Le Monde — Neue Zürcher Zeitung — Times — Guardian — Daily Telegraph — New York Times — Soviet Embassy Press Department, London).

(Keesing's Contemporary Archives, November 16-23, 1968, p. 23027)

A long editorial on the centenary published on April 22 in the three leading Chinese papers, The People's Daily, Red Flag and The Liberation Army Daily, violently attacked the so-called «Brezhnev doctrine», which had been used to justify the invasion of Czechoslovakia (see page 23027). It declared that Mr. Khrushchev's «secret report» of 1956 was «a counter-revolutionary coup d'état which turned the dictatorship of the proletariat into the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, and which overthrew socialism and restored capitalism», and quoted Mao Tse-tung as having said in May 1964 that «the Soviet Union today is under the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, a dictatorship of the Hitler type». It defined the «assortment of fascist theories called the Brezhnev doctrine» as follows:

«(1) The theory of «limited sovereignty». Brezhnev and co.... declare that Soviet revisionism has the right to determine the destiny of another country, «including the destiny of its sovereignty».... In other words, you have the right to order other countries about, whereas they have no right to oppose you....

(2) The theory of «international dictatorship». Brezhnev and co.... assert that they have the right to render military aid to a fraternal country to do away with the threat to the socialist system».... The «international dictatorship» you refer to simply means the subjection of other countries to the rule of the new tsars....

(3) The theory of «socialist community». Brezhnev and co.... shout that «the community of Socialist states is an inseparable whole» and that the «united action» of «the socialist community» must be strengthened.... By «united action» you mean

unifying under your control of politics, economies and military affairs of other countries. By »inseparable« you mean forbidding other countries to free themselves from your control....

(4) The theory of »international division of labour«. Brezhnev and co.... have not only applied »international division of labour« to a number of East European countries and the Mongolian People's Republic, but have extended it to other countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America.... The Soviet revisionist clique has taken over this colonial policy from imperialism. Its theory of »international division of labour« boils down to »industrial Soviet Union, agricultural Asia, Africa and Latin America« or »industrial Soviet Union, subsidiary processing workshop Asia, Africa and Latin America«....

(5) The theory that »our interests are involved«. Brezhnev and co.... clamour that »the Soviet Union, which as a major world Power has extensive international contacts, cannot passively regard events that, though they might be territorially remote, nevertheless have a bearing on our security and the security of our friends«.... This theory that »our interests are involved« is a typical argument used by the imperialists for their global policy of aggression.... How strikingly similar are the utterances of the Soviet revisionists to those of the old tsars and the U.S. imperialists!»

(Keesing's Contemporary Archives, June 13-20, 1970, p. 24031)

LENIN'S OLD COMRADE HANDS IN HIS PARTY CARD

Academician Arnosht Kolman, an old-guard communist who belonged to Lenin's entourage during the October Revolution, has returned his party card to Mr. Brezhnev after being a member of the Soviet Communist Party for 58 years, and has asked for political asylum in Sweden.

The following is an abridged version of his open letter to the Soviet party leader:

»L. I. Brezhnev,
General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party,
Kremlin, Moscow.

I wish to inform you that I am leaving the Soviet Communist Party. I am 84 and have been a party member for 58 years. I joined its ranks in order to fight for social justice, for a happy future of mankind. Now, after long and painful reflection, I have come to this difficult decision.

I was born in Prague and came to Russia as a prisoner of war during the First World War. During Kerensky's rule I was held in solitary confinement for six months for anti-war propaganda, and I was freed by the October Revolution. As a Red Army soldier, I fought on four fronts for the establishment of Soviet power.

In the 1920s I worked illegally in Germany, was a member of the Central Committee of the German Communist Party. I was sentenced to five year's hard labour, but after half a year's solitary I was freed in an exchange (with the Soviet Union).

Afterwards I held responsible ideological posts in the Comintern, in the Central Committee, in the Moscow party committee and in the Soviet Academy of Sciences. I knew Lenin personally, worked with Krupskaya (Lenin's wife), Khrushchev and many others.

After Khrushchev's revelations about the bloody crimes of Stalin, euphemistically described as »the personality cult«, I began to understand how deeply distorted the Soviet Communist Party and Soviet power had become, and that I, as a party member, must bear my share of responsibility for this.

However, 1968 was the real turning point for me, when I had occasion to observe the »Prague Spring« and see with my own eyes with what enthusiasm the united people of Czechoslovakia backed the strivings of the party to rekindle the socialist ideals and the fight for socialism with a human face.

When your tanks and armies occupied Czechoslovakia subjecting it to your political Diktat and merciless economic exploitation – in short turning it to your colony – I lost any illusions I may have had about the nature of your regime.

The Soviet Union lacks the most elementary democratic rights: instead of free elections there is voting for candidates imposed from above; there is no public political life; strikes are forbidden and the trade unions are subservient to state interests; political discussions are forbidden and everything is covered by universal censorship; information is subject to the interests of lying propaganda.

Basic human rights are crudely trampled on in the Soviet Union: dissidents are harshly persecuted, tens of thousands of them are languishing in jails, concentration camps and psychiatric jail hospitals, many being punished for their religious beliefs only. In the sixtieth year of Soviet power there are no elementary intellectual freedoms and there is no freedom for the creative artists. ...

As far as the nationalities policy is concerned, the history of the Soviet Union is nothing but an uninterrupted chain of territorial annexations, forced »unification« of foreign lands, subjection of and discrimination against many nationalities in the country, among them the Crimean Tatars, the Volga Germans, Jews, the Baltic nations, the people of the Caucasus and Central Asia, etc. This makes the Soviet Union no less »a prison of the nations« than Tsarist Russia was.

While preaching about »international détente« and »peaceful coexistence«, the Soviet Union is, in fact, amassing at an increasingly fast rate nuclear weapons and rockets, is preparing new generations of mass destruction weapons and is preparing for aggressive wars.

The political and social structures of the country are in a state of acute stagnation. The Soviet Union has one of the most conservative regimes in the world, with an aging leadership.

And is it not a tragedy that 60 years after the Revolution the agriculture of Europe's former granary is unable to produce enough bread, meat, fish and even potatoes to satisfy the needs of its own population?

Isn't it inhuman to take away children from parents, block the reunion of families, deny exit visas to visit relations abroad and to deny the families of political prisoners the right to see their loved ones for years and even to write each other? Can one live amid such conditions? And how long can one live like this? I can no longer go on living like this».

(The Times, October 6, 1976)

