

EDVARD KARDELJ

THE NEW ORGANIZATION  
OF MUNICIPALITIES  
AND DISTRICTS

PUBLISHED BY THE UNION OF JURISTS' ASSOCIATIONS  
OF YUGOSLAVIA  
BEOGRAD  
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## THE NEW ORGANIZATION OF MUNICIPALITIES AND DISTRICTS\*

With the new organization of municipalities and districts we are making, a further important stride in the developing of the political forms of socialist democracy and socialist relationships in our country generally. On principle these changes do not introduce anything new into our social development. In their essence they stand but for a further building and perfecting of the political system whose foundations we had laid through the introduction of workers' self-government. Our aim had been to build the commune — besides the Workers' Councils in enterprises and a socialistically oriented co-operative in the village — into the base of our social system as the fundamental social-economical cell of society and, according to Marx, as "that finally discovered political form within which can be implemented the emancipation of labour". Our aim had also been that our society be an organic "national community" of communes, which is to say not a federation of but an integrated organism within which the individual cells will live a full life and draw their strength from society as a whole and from their own initiative. It means that we have endeavoured to have the whole mechanism of such a society as close to the working masses as possible so that they could participate in it as directly and as broadly as possible.

However, in the first phase of our work in that direction we had to put emphasis on the district, while municipalities remained fairly undeveloped. True, with the introduction of the so-called municipalities with special rights we had proceeded a step further from the district toward the municipality but the number of municipalities with special rights — which could go being realized but in the more developed towns — is very low. It is thus that with us, whenever we spoke of the commune, heretofore, we actually meant the district.

Such orientation has corresponded to the objective conditions in which our system of social self-government was developing, and it was not the consequence of some determinate assumptions. On the contrary, we often had emphasized that the building of the self-governing district was but the initial step toward the building of the self-governing municipality. And indeed, today our society already is able to make a second step also in the development of the mechanism of socialist democracy, that is, to fortify the role of the municipality and fix the perspective of its development as a socialist commune.

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\* Expose made in the Federal People's Assembly on June 16th 1955

This step, however — even though in its essence it does not introduce anything new in principle into the orientation of our socialist system — still is a very significant act in the progress of our society along the socialist path. With this step we are effecting an extraordinary broadening of the mass base of social self-government, and by that very fact of our entire system. Millions of our working citizens will now be able to take an even more direct and more active part in the deciding of the essential questions of social life, which will provide them with fresh possibilities and a new incentive to develop their initiative in all fields of the construction of the socialist society, and especially in the further promotion of the productive forces and the general material and cultural social standard. This fact will create conditions that will change the role of the district and the republican organs also in many respects, and in a certain sense, and gradually, even that of the federal organs proper. Consequently we shall not be exaggerating a bit if we say that the action to the realization of which we now are proceeding represents one of the most signal phases in the development of socialism in our country.

The Revolutions has carried out the nationalization of the means of production and established a powerful state system as the instrument of the revolutionary authority of the working people. It is natural that in the first phases this centralized state system had to play a decisive role in the reorientation of society to the new path of socialist development. Only through a centralized and influential state machinery was it possible not solely to suppress the resistance of the overthrown classes, but also to orient millions of people, who had formed their habits, abilities and concepts under the conditions of private capitalist ownership, to organize themselves in a new way, on the basis of the social ownership of the means of production, and to begin to acquire new habits, new concepts, a new social consciousness befitting the new social relationships. And not only that. The sector of the socialized means of production was too weak to become a decisive economic force in our society, that is, a force which in itself would be capable to secure the survival and further development of socialist relationships. So it was necessary to take the course of an accelerated pace of industrialization. And this was a task which, in its first phase, in the objective and subjective conditions in which it was being realized, could be effected only by a powerful centralized state machinery. And indeed, the state of the working people, with its organizing forms of revolutionary “etatism” in the field of the economy, has performed an important role in the establishing and strengthening of the material base of socialist development, in the organization of the socialist sector and the establishment of the system of planned economy generally. The material strength of our society at large, and particularly of the socialist factors therein, experienced an enormous growth thereby, which enable us to proceed further also in the matter of promoting more progressive social relationships.

As the active builders of socialism, of course, we could not confine ourselves only to the construction of factories, power plants, roads and other pro-

jects. We would be forgetting that we are conscious builders of socialism if we oriented ourselves exclusively to an economic strengthening of society as such, and if we did not give incessant thought also to the fact that in harmony with the development of the material forces of socialism, *the relationships between people* also must progressively be developed in a socialist sense, for such indeed is the meaning of socialist construction. Much as the "etatistic" forms of the first phases of the post-war development had been indispensable, useful and successful—and thus potentially socialist also—and much as they had had the broad support of the working masses, which rightly saw their own instrument, employed in harmony with their aspirations and moods, in those "etatistic" forms, the fact nevertheless remains that therein were formed relationships between people which by their tendency of development certainly may be termed socialist, although their concrete "etatistic" forms still carried in them strong characteristics of the state-capitalist relationships. Such forms could and did play a progressive part only as a first step toward socialism, but they would become a fetter on socialist development the moment they became an end in themselves. The conservation of such "etatistic" forms would conduce not only to an affirmation of bureaucracy but would also undermine the political stability of our social system, and/or of the leading socialist forces within that system. In such relationships the worker-producer would begin to lose the feeling that he had become the collective owner of the social means of production, and, in a certain sense, he would in fact cease to be that. Of course, this would put the brake on both the development of the economic and social initiative of the worker and working man at large and the development of the new socialist consciousness of the masses, without which there is no stable system of socialist democracy, either.

In developing our social and state system, we always had those facts before our eyes. Accordingly, no matter how indispensable and irreplaceable the forms of revolutionary "etatism" had been in the first phases of our social development for the creating of the material and political base of socialist construction, it had been equally clear that this was but the first step of a young society toward socialism, that the further progress of socialism did not depend upon the economic strengthening of society alone but upon a ceaseless changing of the relationships between people in the direction of an ever more consistent development of their socialist and freedom-loving character. One of the essential factors of that process is certainly the gradual overcoming of "etatistic" forms in the individual domains of social life, too, on the one hand, through the gradual converting of the individual state functions into functions of the social self-government, organized along both the horizontal and the vertical line, that is, in both the territorial communities and within the framework of the individual branches of social activity, and, on the other hand, through a gradual internal transformation — through the corresponding democratic political forms — of the individual state organs into the factual organs of social self-government.

This task, of course, cannot be matter of some mechanical legal act of the state but can be realized solely within the result of a long organic development of society on the basis of social ownership over the means of production. This process depends upon both the material conditions and the pace of development of the new social consciousness in the minds of people. Here we have adhered, and must adhere, to the old Marxist principle that neither the degree of self-government nor the degree of state authority are any absolute categories which in themselves are either absolutely good or absolutely bad, but that their role and importance always depend upon the needs of the development of the productive forces, and in conformance therewith, upon the needs of developing socialist relationships also to which a fitting political form should be given.

It is conceivable that this ratio does not lend itself to mathematical determination. On this point one is easily apt to go forward precipitately, and even more easily to lag behind the needs and possibilities. However, here we did not venture into some problematic constructions. We had established the tempo of development mainly empirically, confronting constantly the existing political and economic mechanism of society with the needs and movements of the growing — conscious and elemental — socialist economic, political and spiritual initiative of our working people in the day-to-day practice. This initiative grew increasingly, in the same proportion as the social sector of the means of production of the country was gaining in strength materially and at the same rate at which our working people, with their habits and concepts, were beginning to find their bearings in the economic relationships which had developed on the basis of social ownership of the means of production. We had constantly endeavoured to free this initiative and such a movement from all kinds of obstacles in the political and economic system. It is precisely by this process of adapting political forms to the development of socialist initiative from below, that the tempo of the development of social self-government and of the gradual socializing of the individual functions of the state administrative apparatus was determined empirically. Thanks exactly to the fact that in the main we did neither lag behind nor run ahead of the possibilities, we have achieved important successes, indeed, along that path.

The successes achieved are fully corroborative that the orientation also which lies at the base of the construction of our socialist democracy is a correct one. And on principle this orientation had been provided by Marx and Lenin already; by Marx particularly with his analysis of the Paris Commune, and by Lenin particularly in the first years after the October Revolution. Much as Lenin had insisted at the time upon the revolutionary "etatism" of the dictatorship of the proletariat — whereby, under the conditions of the material and cultural backwardness, inherited from tsarist Russia, it was only possible to organize the country for socialist development — he had always insisted as much also upon the necessity of an ever greater broadening of the mass basis of Soviet authority so as to suppress the growing power of bureaucracy and to

factually socialize the functions which were in the hands of a bureaucratic apparatus.

"To fight bureaucracy to the end, until complete victory over it, this is possible only then when the entire population will be participating in government," spoke Lenin at the Eighth Congress of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks), and then he added: "The low cultural level determines that the soviets — although by their programme they should be the organ of government *through the working people* — are in fact the organ of government *for the working people*, through the most progressive section of the proletariat, but not through the working masses. Here we are facing a task which we cannot solve in a way other than through long education."

At another point, to all this Lenin also adds that even this section of the most progressive proletariat, which factually is participating in government, is "incredibly thin," which still further confirms his appraisal of the character of the Soviets.

In other words, Lenin had considered that the fight against bureaucracy was possible only through an ever greater and ever broader attraction of the working masses to participate directly in social governing, along the course that "*governing for the working people* be turned into *direct governing by the working masses proper*". In order to be able to attain this, Lenin had considered it as necessary, first, that the workers and working peasants be organized in a proper way, so that they could exercise their decisive influence upon the apparatus of government, and, second, that a long educational work be organized which would make it possible for the working masses truly to become capable of performing such a socialist task.

Our practice corresponds in a full measure to the perspective which Lenin had given, and it confirms it. Of course, with the developing of the system of social self-government the working people of our country are not renouncing the state as the instrument of their authority, nor can they do so. If we indulged in such utopias, we would be rendering a poor service to socialism. We live in a world of developed international antagonisms, in a world in which the interference of other countries in the internal affairs of the individual countries is one of the most important means of struggle. And even within the country we have not yet overcome the class antagonisms in such a measure that they no longer represent a more serious danger to socialism. Both the one and the other demands that the state organization of our young socialist society be capable of defending its survival and its further unhindered development. But, although matters stand thus in the province of the struggle for the survival and free development of socialism and for the defence of the independence of our peoples, we deem that all this should not act as an obstacle to the process wherein *in the domain of the developing of socialist relationships* the state functions will gradually pass to the organs of social self-government, and/or wherein the individual state organs will themselves by virtue of their content turn into such organs of social self-



government. It is due to this precisely that we are attaching such great importance to the development of "Workers' Councils and similar forms of self-government of the working people in production and in other fields of social life, as well as to their self-government in municipalities and districts. It is evident that it is precisely in such political forms that a society on the socialist path can and must gradually supersede the remnants of the past social systems, in both content and forms.

## II

In the earlier development of that process we have carried out four big tasks :

1. We have established and consolidated the Workers' Councils ;
2. With the last Law on People's Committees we have provided the general orientation on the building of communes, throwing the weight in the first phase on the developing of self-governing districts ;
3. We have carried out essential changes in the economic system in the sense of its adapting to the orientation toward the Workers' Councils and communes and for freeing the economic life which is developing on the basis of social ownership of the means of production from different harmful and unnecessary administrative forms and methods, which fetter initiative from below, end condition bureaucracy; and

4. With the decisions of the Sixth Congress of the League of Communists and the Fourth Congress of the Socialist Alliance of the Working People, communists and all conscious fighters for socialism have adapted their role and their working methods to such a general orientation in our social development.

In all those directions we achieved important successes in the last years which, integrally, confirmed the correctness of our basic orientation.

The Workers' Councils have been growing stronger rapidly and mightily. They have produced both their economic and political effect. Rather than an obstacle to, they have provided the incentive for a quicker development of the productive forces and the raising of labour productivity. And for another thing, which is particularly important from the viewpoint of the struggle for socialist relationships, they have contributed enormously to the developing of a socialist consciousness among our working masses and the mass schooling of our working people for the tasks of social government. Our factories today are a first-class school for mass social education. In these schools fresh cadres are daily growing at a pace which could not even be conceived before. These, in effect, are the cadres which can take upon themselves the responsibility for the work of the communes also. Without such previous schooling the self-governing commune would not be realizable at all.

The district People's Committees, too, with their entire democratic organizing mechanism, have developed into a powerful independent social factor. During the last years ever more difficult tasks of social government were being

transferred to them, in both the province of the economy and in other spheres of social life. Around them, and frequently around the municipal People's Committees also, was being created a network of councils and other social organs and organizations upon which the People's Committees rely in their work and through which they are linking themselves to the working masses. These democratic organizing forms are demonstrating to the working people the real significance and perspectives of socialist self-government. Participating in the various organs of the People's Committees, numerous citizens have acquired valuable experiences in the tasks of social government and the methods of utilizing the mechanism of socialist democracy for solving the current social questions. Through their close association with the masses, and particularly through their direct responsibility before the meetings of electors, the People's Committees have become not only stable political bodies, but have in the majority of cases developed into powerful organs of social self-government thereby performing an enormous educative role among the masses also and building a large number of capable social workers possessed of initiative.

In the development of the new economic system as well we have weathered the initial difficulties to achieve important results, which also confirms the correctness of our general political orientation. Economic life was gradually freed from the administrative methods of management and the various bureaucratic sediments, and the door was thrown open ever wider to the independent socialist initiative of the producers, that is, working collectives, co-operatives and the individual working peasants, associated with the socialist sector of the economy. By this very fact a huge mass of working people was attracted to the direct economic management, and the need for a massive central economic-administrative apparatus disappeared, therefore. The associating of economic organizations into chambers and similar central self-governing organizations along the vertical line — even though the development of those organizations is only in its beginning — has also shown positive results, so that today already we may claim that the economic practice has confirmed also our orientation toward the transference of determinate central social functions from the state apparatus to the self-governing socialist economic organizations. Ipso facto, our economic organizations are ceasing to be the passive administrative executors of some minutely elaborated state plans and are becoming independent socialist creators within the framework of a unified economic plan, that is, within the framework of common social interests. The new economic system has provided them with the material base for such independence. With the further development of productive forces this material base will grow ever stronger, whereby the framework for a varied independent social initiative and activity of the working people within the communes will also be broadened in the interests both of the social community as an integer and in their individual interests.

And lastly, important results have been achieved in the field of political relationships as well. Communists and all conscious fighters for socialism already

have acquired great experience in the new methods of work. They are not setting themselves the task that they themselves — through the apparatus of the state — govern society *for the working people*; their task consists primarily in educating and training the working masses so that the latter themselves should be able to govern society socialistically through the corresponding mechanism of socialist democracy.

In doing so, they are in fact realizing the task which comrade Tito had formulated at the Sixth Congress of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia:

“When we are decided that the role of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia today is not command, to interfere in anything and everything like some supreme arbiter and judge, who brings his judgment on the various problems of social life — scientific, economic and otherlike something irrevocable and infallible; then it is clear that the role of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia consists in its most important task — in the ideal-educative leadership, in its vigilance that with us the socialist society will go on developing normally and correctly; that is, the role of communists consists in re-educating and educating the citizens of our country in the socialist spirit“.

Today already we may claim that the struggle for the realization of this task, in which is so clearly expressed the role of a conscious and organized socialist action in our conditions, has produced signal results. This method of work has made possible a closer and more direct linking of the most conscious and most active fighters for socialism with the broad working masses, it has made easier their educative role among them and it has made possible a more direct influence of communists and all the socialist forces upon their daily practice.

When such a line of political development was proclaimed by ourselves at the Sixth Congress of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, the anti-socialist circles with us, and abroad, had hoped that with this the socialist forces in our country are going to cut their own roots. However, those hopes were frustrated. We have always considered that the lasting source of the power of the active fighters for socialism is not in the state apparatus but in the working masses. And the Sixth Congress of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia and the Fourth Congress of the Socialist Alliance of the Working People of Yugoslavia have oriented the socialist fighters precisely toward a more intensive linking with the masses and toward their socialist initiative through those masses, and not through the administrative apparatus of the state alone. As a result, the socialist forces have gained in strength, and our entire system has become more stable politically. Those successes, too, are a factor which is enabling us today to march forward with a quicker step along the path of developing the mechanism of socialist democracy.

Of course, in our work on the realization of the above mentioned tasks we have been meeting, and still are, with many negative tendencies [and with many weaknesses and drawbacks. We could speak on the subject at great length.

However, today, and in connection with the question we are treating here, this is not necessary to do. We have never had illusions that great tasks can be performed without a struggle, without clashing with negative tendencies, which stem not only from the remnants of the old class system but also from a certain conservatism which is to be found in the socialist ranks also. However, what is of essence for us here is the basic tendency of development, for us it is of essence whether practice has confirmed basically the correctness of our orientation or not. And that practice has provided an affirmative answer here, of that there can be no doubt whatever. The successes we have achieved are so significant that it does not strike us as difficult to fight the drawbacks and negative manifestations we are encountering. The most convincing confirmation of this occurs in the fact that the political stability of our system is growing increasingly stronger from year to year, which indicates, first, that the system had been developing in keeping with the aspirations of the working people, and, second, that we indeed are on the path which corresponds to the needs of legitimate social development on the basis of the social means of production. And simultaneously the growing moral-political power of socialism is itself becoming a factor which makes further advance possible.

### III

The results achieved have not only enabled us to, but even demand categorically that we proceed further in the realization of the policy which lies at the base of our socialist practice. This relates particularly to the question of the further building of communes.

The importance of the commune in our social system consists in that, on the one hand, it represents such a social-economic community which can effect the basic co-ordination of the individual interests of the working people with the collective interests of the social community — by which, of course, I do not mean to claim that this is a task that falls to it alone — and, on the other hand, because, due to this its very character it also is the most suitable political form through which the widest circle of working people may be attracted to directly participate in social government. Through such forms then, the broadest masses of the working people are spurred to a conscious social life and rendered capable to look upon the solving of the individual social problems not through the spectacles of their momentary personal interests exclusively, but to become qualified masters of their destiny, with a clear insight both into the needs and the objective possibilities. As a community of producers, the commune simultaneously is a community of consumers as well. This fact directs every citizen to approach the concrete questions not from the viewpoint of this or that party demagoguery, such as is often customary in other systems, but to make decisions independently and with full responsibility on the basis of the factual material possibilities and with the aim of having those possibilities utilized as correctly as possible. Tasks of this kind at the same time are the elementary school of the

citizen so that he may look in the same way upon the solving of the remaining social questions also which are subject to decision by the higher social organs. For this reason with us in particular the rule that *the selfgoverning commune is the most important school of socialist democratism* is valid.

There is no doubt that such a commune will become the basis of our entire political system, that is, that its structure will influence the structure of all the other leading social organs, down to the Federation. Evidently, the perspective of the further development of our political system is that, in the self-governing organizations generally, and in the communes particularly, the citizens will be acquiring a social standing and abilities for the functions of social government and that these organizations precisely will also propose them as candidates for the representative bodies of the higher organs of social government.

It is clear, however, that the commune is not and must not be a closed organization which would go weakening or hindering in any way the unity of society as a whole or the independence of the social self-governing organs. However, the social community disposes of a sufficiency of instruments to prevent the possibility of such manifestations.

1. An integrated economic plan will provide the general framework for the economic activity of communes and other self-governing organizations and the unified principles for the distribution of surplus labour. This at the same time will serve to secure the unimpeded and simultaneously directed development of the social economy as a whole, as well as the free initiative of the communes, self-governing organizations and the individual working men, so that they be able to attain maximum results within the framework of their possibilities.

True at the first steps of development in that direction, we have experienced certain difficulties with manifestations of particularism. However, such manifestations were not the result of our general orientation but were primarily the consequences of the uncompleted building up of the system. This year already such harmful tendencies have been reduced considerably, and with the further perfecting and consolidating of the entire system practically every self-governing organ will be placed within determinate material possibilities within the framework of which, to be sure, he will be able to move freely and to utilize them to the maximum, without the danger of causing losses to society thereby, but beyond which it will not be able to go. It stands to reason that in determinate fields it will still be necessary to apply a corresponding system of administrative measures and control, which will serve to secure that the basic movement of the economy unfold in harmony with the ratios which will be provided under the integrated social economic plan. The correct combination of economic measures and general administrative instruments will make possible a satisfactory co-ordinating of the general interests of the community with the need of developing the all-embracing initiative of the self-governing organizations and communes, which will render unnecessary major interference of the state administrative organs in their work and operations save for keeping vigil over the lawfulness of that work.

2. In their general social activity, both the communes and all the other self-governing organizations are bound to the Constitution and laws which secure the unity of the social system as well as the unity of the rights and obligations of the citizens and self-governing organizations. This fact, on the one hand, makes possible the independent social activity of the commune in all directions, without "guidance" and/or interference on the part of the higher administrative organs, but, on the other hand, it also prevents the possibility of the appearance of social wilfulness toward society as a whole or the tendency that the mechanism of the commune be exploited for some political or moral violence over the citizen or over the self-governing social organizations. The citizen and the different self-governing organizations are not linked to society as an entirety through the commune exclusively but through other social organs, organizations and associations, both local, republican and federal ones, and their rights and obligations toward the commune are fixed by laws so that the commune can modify them neither to the detriment of the citizen, nor that of the social community.

Such legal mechanism, as well as the various self-governing associations along the vertical line, will make certain not only that the commune will not be able to turn into some willful local authority, but will also make it impossible that some narrow-minded or conservative concepts eventually gain a foothold in the commune which would pull society backward. All our self-governing organizations must be sufficiently open so that the progressive social currents could always fill them with fresh air.

I have brought forward all this especially because with us sometimes there appear exaggerated illusions regarding the character of the communes and the system of self-government generally. It would be highly mistaken to believe that this system solves everything in itself already or that it is immune from different negative tendencies. On the contrary, if the development of the communes were to be determined by blind forces exclusively, then in determinate conditions the self-governing commune might turn into a narrow-minded and willful, and even reactionary political or spiritual authority over the citizen or his organizations. The consequences of such a system would be graver and more negative than the consequences of any state centralism whatever — and then for both the citizen and society as an entirety. For this very reason the commune should be regarded not as some closed universal social organization, but as a cell of a complex but integrated social organism from which it must draw its strength and vitality the same as the organism as an entirety must draw this from its own cells. Because of this precisely we are rejecting both the interpretation that our society should become some kind of a federation of communes and the concept whereby the developing of self-government should denote the loosening of those social functions which must be centralized in the interests both of society as a whole and of its individual parts.

3. In the future legislation we shall have to devote particular attention to an accurate determination of the status and role of economic enterprises and

their self-governing organs. Here and there the concepts are still heard that through decentralization we had "surrendered" the enterprises to districts and/or municipalities. This is a highly mistaken notion. Society has not "surrendered" those enterprises to any special organs outside those enterprises but has entrusted management to the working collectives themselves in that, within the framework of the Economic Plan and laws it had simultaneously fixed the rights and obligations also of those self-governing organs of the producers toward society. Subject to the character of their determinate obligations or rights, the enterprises, and/or their associations, also have their relationships toward the various state and social organs from the commune to the Federation. Accordingly, today we no longer have either federal, republican or local enterprises, but we have self-governing social enterprises which all are simultaneously both federal, republican and local and at the same time they are social enterprises.

Of course, the association of the enterprises with the commune is an exceptionally important factor in the developing of the productive forces and socialist relationships. This association precisely makes possible the co-ordinating of the individual and collective interests on their elementary level, which is a precondition so that the independence of enterprises should not turn into the self-will of the working collective or even into an anti-socialist factor. But, such a social importance of the association of the enterprises and the commune on principle notwithstanding, the fact nevertheless remains that the commune can have but those rights toward the enterprises which society as an entirety is granting to it by the Constitution and laws.

An independence of enterprises so clearly fixed is indispensably necessary also because in our society — as in every modern society — a significant part must be played by the vertical associations of enterprises according to different branches. If we desire to transfer the individual central social functions from the state administrative apparatus to such self-governing associations, then the responsibility of such associations toward society should also be fixed, and/or toward its central organs. In this way, in the struggle for the further developing of productive forces and socialist relationships, society will act not only through the commune but also through such self-governing economic associations, and in some fields in an even greater measure through these latter.

4. The same applies to the various non-economic self-governing organizations and activities also, for example, education, health and so on. Marx, for instance, had said in his time that the state should first of all cease to interfere in the questions of education. He had demanded that education be separated from the church and the state. Of course, education cannot be left to blind forces, especially not in the conditions of a society which is driving ahead toward socialism through difficulties and strong resistance from the elements of the past. However, we have possibilities to go developing broad organizations of self-government in that domain which will secure a leading role to the socialist forces, yet which at the same time will de-bureaucratize and democratize education, that is, which will make it into a field of creative work and initiative by a very wide circle of organizations and citizens directly engaged in that field of

action, and first of all of those directly concerned in such activity, that is, of our working people. If we are striving so that education should not be the concern of narrow-minded officials, this does not mean that it should be delivered into the hands of conservative Philistines or confused petit-bourgeois muddlers, who often make the demand in the name of a false specialized leadership and false freedom of science, but into the hands of society, into the hands of the working people, through fitting forms of social government. In the organization of education we already have struck out successfully along that road and already are acquiring the first experiences. Evidently we should pursue this road further also. In this field the state should perform its role first of all through laws and less so through some big interferences of the administrative apparatus. And the same applies to the commune. With this I do not mean to say that the commune should disinterest itself in such questions. On the contrary, it will have to secure financially the primary education and a mass educational work. Consequently it may not be disinterested for the content of the work in that field. However, at the same time it should rely on self-governing organizations in that field, with the organs of the democratic social government at their head, whose general rights and obligations will be fixed by the laws and statutes of the communes. The commune, then, before all else, should make it secure — besides the material aspect — that education and the educational institutions will not be everybody's business but that they will belong to society, to the working masses and their organs of social government and social control. If the conscious socialist fighters be active in all those self-governing organs, one should not fear that socialism would stand to lose by such development. On the contrary, only benefits will accrue.

Here I have mentioned but the sector of education so as to more clearly emphasize the essence of the problem of social self-government as against the "etatistic" methods. Of course, we shall have to advance along this self-same road in the other fields of social activity also. All this is nothing new, for we already have achieved important results in that direction, too. However, I have mentioned the question in order to indicate that in this field as well the commune cannot be free of restrictions in its rights.

5. And lastly, I should like to call attention to still another question along the same line. It is necessary that in all its activity the commune be a public and open organization, answerable to both the meetings of electors and society as an entirety, ever subject both to the public criticism of citizens and their organizations and to the inspection of the higher state organs along the line of securing lawfulness. In order to make certain that the commune will in no direction turn into some closed organization of narrow-minded localism, or even become the domain of certain local groups of people, all the relationships of the commune toward citizens, toward the self-governing organizations, as well as toward the higher social organs should be fixed by statute wherein every citizen would be able to find both his rights and his obligations and all his possibilities for influencing the governing of the commune, and through it of society generally.



In addition, the status of the specialized and administrative apparatus of the commune should also be laid down precisely. It is true that on principle the specialized apparatus should only prepare the proposals for the representative organs and execute their decisions, without itself conducting policies or deciding on essential social questions. But it also is true that this apparatus is not, nor should it be, a company of some blindly obedient officials of the old type, but it has to be composed of conscious socialist citizens who will participate creatively in the progress of our society. Consequently this apparatus must not be conceived as a mechanical instrument of the People's Committee, but should also have its fixed rights and obligations toward both the People's Committee and the higher social organs and toward citizens. The apparatus is bound to act lawfully and to call the attention of the People's Committee to the possible occurrence of unlawfulness in its decisions; officials may be appointed or relieved but according to a determinate public procedure excluding the various subjective influences, and the specialized level and lawfulness of the work should be secured through determinate jurisdictions of the higher organs toward the People's Committee. Only with such a status of the specialized apparatus shall we be able to achieve a fitting level of its quality and preclude its becoming the tool of any policy of local willfulness or particularism.

Earlier practice has also confirmed the justifiability and the exceptional importance of the role of such organs as the councils in the People's Committees, the meetings of electors and different other forms of the citizens' co-operation with the People's Committee. Through the proposed Law and the statutes of the People's Committees these forms now are being consolidated and developed still further. That makes one more factor which undoubtedly is going to operate in the sense of preventing the self-governing commune's developing in a negative direction.

There are two reasons why I have dwelt in some detail on the question of the competencies of and the limits of the rights of the communes. To begin with, with us there are people who expect the self-governing commune, by the very dint of its being self-governing, to be the defender of various backward or reactionary tendencies, and even a protection of its own kind from the progressive influence of the socialist society. However, what I have set forth should suffice to indicate that such hopes are not warranted. On the other hand, with us there also are people — very devoted to the cause of socialism, yet also slightly conservative when new trails have to be blazed — who fear lest the self-governing commune should become a barricade of harmful particularism and who therefore would prefer to adhere to the old administrative methods of leadership. If we bear in mind all the factors of which I have spoken here, it will be clear that such fears are unnecessary and unjustified, and / or that the social community possesses every possibility to assure the unity of the system and the basic interests of the community, even while opening broad lanes to the socialist initiative of the working people and their self-governing organizations.