CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND POLAND: SOCIO-ECONOMIC TRANSITION PROCESS AND STATISTICS

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As soon as early 1990, The French National Statistical Institute (INSEE) began to work out appropriate specific ways of answering to consultancy requests coming from Center-East European countries. We already had some knowledge of the subject, gained from a long practice of counseling and technical assistance in Africa and in South America. We had already developed and experimented the whole set of the usual means of working together with other institutions: long stays of experts, visits, formation sessions, seminars... But for Eastern Europe we thought that, because of the cultural proximity and the span and thoroughness of the restrucuration process, we needed something else to enable us to go further in the understanding of what was at stake.

Here again we were not without previous experience. Since quite a long time there has been research conducted at Insec to explicit how in different countries, the past, the institutions, the social and administrative structures play a role on the ways the statistical systems are organised and on the aims which are assigned to public statistics. We have tried to determine how much these systems depend upon institutionnals and cultural features which are themselves specific to each country and subject to transformations.

And precisely, the work of Cécile Lefèvre deals with two of our main concerns in the field of cooperation with other countries: to be able to work out appropriate tools, to be able to apprehend accurately the institutionnals mechanisms of the transition process. It is an attempt to guess how, in two Center-East European countries namely Czechoslovakia and Poland, statistics will be able to fulfill the needs of both the government and the society, needs which are sometimes contradictory and nevertheless expressed very strongly. It is also a guess at what status will statistics have and which role will they play in the socio-economic apparatus which is rapidly emerging in these countries.

This work has been done essentially by synthetizing interviews conducted in the two countries. It has been made possible because of the openmindedness and good will of the Presidents and their colleagues of respectively the Federal Statistical Office of Czechoslovakia (the FSU) and the Statistical Office of Poland (GUS). May all of them find here, the expression of the French National Statistical Institute’s gratitude.
This document is a first try and was thus not intended to encompass all the issues at stake. But as such, Cécile Lefèvre's work appeared to me to be interesting enough to be shared with all of those, statisticians, economists and politicians which are concerned by economic transition problems. We hope for and will welcome any remarks and comments, because they will enable us to go further.

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INTRODUCTION

Current trends in statistics can be considered as providing an index of the transition now underway in the countries of Eastern and Central Europe, both from an economic and a social and political point of view. In the past statistics were essentially an instrument for checking the Plan. With the collapse of the system of central economic planning and the introduction of democratic principles, statistics have found a new role. They are no longer called on to verify the Plan, but rather to give an accurate picture of the social and economic situation in a country, in order to assist in introducing reforms leading to a market economy. They are also called upon to predict the consequences of such reforms so as to be equipped with the necessary monitoring instruments. Finally, they should take part in the democratization process by increasing the dissemination of socio-economic information, indispensable for any democratic debate.

Is this ideal evolution of the statistical system actually taking place in reality and how? This is is the question we will try to answer through a comparative study of the statistical system and the changes to it in Poland and Czechoslovakia. All the countries of Eastern and Central Europe now find themselves on the road from a centrally planned economy to a market economy, even if the rhythms of the change differ from country to country. The process has been sudden and violent in Poland since the end of 1989, but more gradual in Czechoslovakia.

We will examine whether and how such differences have been reflected in the rhythms and priorities chosen for the evolution of statistical systems and we will consider their significance: are statistics adapting to the reforms, or accompanying them, or predicting their socio-economic effects, which must then be measured?

At the same time, the statistical transition also demands practices and a code of ethics conforming to democratic principles, specifically that of the independence of the statistical system, conceived as a public service and as something beneficial. How credible are statistics in these two countries?

This study deals with the most recent past, 1990 and the start of 1991, but it gives great weight to historical factors. A study of the history, the role, the functioning and the links between the statistical services of these two countries and the central authorities and planning between 1945 and 1989 will allow us to arrive at some initial conclusions on the (supposed) correspondence between the structures and objectives of that epoch, of society on the one hand and the statistical systems that reflected it on the other. It will also allow us to understand to some extent the past and future rhythm of change of the statistical system, that is to say to observe to what extent there exist correspondences, time lags or interactions between the economic, social and political evolution in these two countries and the evolution of statistics.
This is the aim of the first part, devoted to the history and heritage of a statistical system formed on the Soviet model.

Let us recall the main characteristics of such statistics, typical of a centrally planned economy. The main aim was to compare the Plan and its implementation. For this reason, such statistics dealt almost exclusively with monitoring of material production by branch. Social phenomena were left out of account, and the system was based on the principle of exhaustiveness, through the use of the "system of reports."

The study of the heritage of such a statistical system will bring out the similarities and differences between Poland and Czechoslovakia in this field. It seems that this heritage is at present more important in Czechoslovakia than in Poland, where the 1980s saw a certain emancipation from the Soviet model. We will study these different historical trajectories in detail.

This will lead us on to examine the changes and their rhythms now underway in the different fields covered by statistics. We will ask: Should one talk of "adaptive" statistics, that is, statistics following (perhaps necessarily and perhaps desirably) the economic and social changes, or of "prophetic" statistics, which foresee and bring into being all the instruments needed to measure a market economy which is often still in its infancy? And in what fields (social statistics, industrial statistics, nomenclatures) can we see one or other of these two sorts of statistic at work? And how far can this schema be applied to Poland and Czechoslovakia?

We will study this problem in our second part, using some specific examples of the introduction of new survey methods (notably by sampling), new indicators (inflation rates, unemployment rates, statistics on the private sector, statistics on the environment etc) or the development towards international norms for the usual indicators (from material product to gross national product, statistics on foreign trade, statistics on households, short-term analyses etc).

The very notion of transitional statistics seems ambiguous. These two countries are aware of the need to have indicators that respond promptly, allowing them to keep up with the period of transformation into a market economy, but at the same time, in the longer term, they are pursuing the aim of producing statistics conforming to international standards. And on this second point there is a further alternative: both these countries have expressed their desire to enter or at least to associate with the European Economic Community as fast as possible. This objective however can be approached by various routes. Should each country approach Western Europe on its own, trying to get there first (this is a strong temptation)? Or should an attempt first be made to create new forms of solidarity between the Central European countries? This leads, as far as statistics are concerned, to a choice between a total break with the preceding model and the most rapid possible adoption of Western-type statistics on the one hand, or, on the other, to a slower adaptation more attentive to the countries’ specificities. This raises the problem of the transposition of the Western model. This is itself a product of history. Can it be used for societies in transition?
And, above all, how much room for manoeuvre do statisticians in the East have? The answer to this question also depends on the degree of legitimacy that statistics are seeking to regain, both in the eyes of the political and administrative bodies and with public opinion. The third part of this study will deal with these questions and with the sometimes differing answers given in Czechoslovakia and Poland.

This study does not pretend to give an objective or complete diagnosis of the state of statistics in these two countries. Rather, through a sociological survey of the field, the aim is to understand how the social actors the producers and users of statistics envisage the transition process on the statistical plane. The main source used in this study is a series of interviews of about two hours each done in Poland between 25 November and 7 December, 1990 and in Czechoslovakia between 18 and 31 March, 1991. In the course of these two journeys, I met many departmental or divisional heads at the Statistical Office of Poland (the GUS), the Statistical Federal Office of Czechoslovakia (the FSU); the Czech Office (the CSU) and the Slovak Office (the SSU) as well as ministerial representatives and academic economists and sociologists. They freely and subjectively put forward their views on their work, on the current changes and more generally on the economic and social situation in their countries. It seemed especially interesting to contrast and compare these different points of view in order to present a picture of the different points of view concerning the tensions and issues facing statistics in these two countries.

The main hypotheses of this study can thus be summed up as:

- There can be no successful economic reform without the introduction of appropriate statistic tools;

- There can be no democracy without reliable and credible statistics.

The transformation of the organization of statistics can thus be seen to be a crucial issue both in Poland and Czechoslovakia, and more generally in all these countries where for a long time figures have been at once inflated and devalued.
THE HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF THE POLISH AND CZECHOSLOVAK STATISTICAL SYSTEMS; SIMILARITIES AND SPECIFICITIES
It will be useful first of all to sketch the history of statistics, first for Poland then for Czechoslovakia, bearing in mind the following methodological precaution: most of the information comes from spoken statements, which those I spoke with have often not re-read and since have not been able to supplement, and which cannot therefore pretend to be either exhaustive or impartial. On the other hand, this information throws an interesting retrospective light on the way in which the past was lived and perceived, showing how this past is now viewed, and what traces it has left.

Then, we will go on to draw out the main features of the present state of statistics from the legal and administrative points of view, asking: how are statistics organized today? (We will, in particular, present the organizational diagrams of the different statistical offices). And what is their place in the administrative and political network? And what are their links with the academic world?

This will allow us to highlight what, in the past but also in the future, unites, and what (notably the federal question in Czechoslovakia) distinguishes, statistics in these two countries in transition.
It is impossible to understand the present state of the Polish statistical system without studying its history. Unfortunately, there are few existing sources on this subject, for, according even to such figures as Mr. Peuker, a specialist in labour statistics who joined the Central Statistical Office (the GUS) in 1945, and Mr. Jopkiewicz, the director of the GUS' library, whom I met at the start of December 1990, "there is no real history or historian of the GUS." This statement reflects the general impression that, for a long time, the GUS was nothing more than an office for collecting and producing figures, strictly subordinate to the regime and particularly to the Planning Commission, rather than an institution with its own life.

Nonetheless, we will attempt to identify some phases in the GUS' history, asking to what extent the calender of the political, economic and social events that have shaken Poland since 1945 has coincided with changes in the statistical system. Have reform processes and the development of statistics interacted? Apparently and even though it is possible to identify a number of distinct periods even before the move from a socialized economy to a market economy which really got under way in autumn 1989 Polish historical events have been a secondary influence on statistics. The latter were tied very closely to the system of centralized economic planning organized by the Communist political regime. Only the abandonment of this system (10 September, 1989, first non-Communist government in Poland; January 1990, economic programme aimed at establishing a market economy) was able to bring about a radical challenge to statistics, implying new activities and methods of work, guided by the desire for democratization (or, as some of those I spoke to ironically put it, the wish for the "socialization of statistics").

In order to distinguish several phases in the history of statistics, before the 1989-90 turning point, we have used the article by Claude Simon entitled: "Poland, the credibility and the reform of statistical information in relation to economic policy" of 1981\(^1\), the special issue of the statistical review put out by the GUS in 1988 on its 70th anniversary\(^2\) and finally the information on the history of the GUS collected in the course of different interviews with representatives of the GUS, of ministries or of the University from 25 November to 7 December, 1990.

\(^1\) Claude Simon, "Pologne. La crédibilité et la réforme de l'information statistique et leurs liens avec la politique économique", Collections de l'INSEE, Direction des synthèses économiques RF8 783 INSEE 070483.

\(^2\) Wiadomosci Statystyczne no.7 (326), 1988.
From 1918 to 1945

The first central body of official statistics, the GUS, was created on 13 July, 1918, under the direction of the president of the Council of Ministers. This office came out of the Polish Association of Statistics, created in 1912 which brought together, across the borders of divided Poland, all Polish statisticians and contributed in 1915 to the publication of the first statistical yearbook. The GUS itself published its first yearbook in 1920 and organized censuses in 1921 and 1931. These two prewar decades saw the development of research into statistical methodology and sustained international cooperation (particularly through the International Institute of Statistics). At the end of 1939, the GUS moved, under German control, to Cracow, which allowed it to save its archives and the contents of its library (also set up in 1918) from the destruction of Warsaw in 1944.

From 1945 to the present day

The "Stalinist" period

1945-46: two years of intensive re-activation

On 12 March, 1945, a law of the Council of Ministers reaffirmed the existence and role of the GUS and named Stefan Szulc to head it. At the beginning things were difficult, since many statisticians had died in the war and the the GUS suffered from a severe shortage of qualified staff. When it resumed its work, according to Mr. Peuker, who was taken on at that time, there were only around 30 or 40 people. The GUS then took on a lot of non-statisticians and many women; at that time its staff was 90% women.

Despite these difficulties, the GUS rapidly undertook a wide range of activities related to the reconstruction of the country. On 15 May, 1945 a population and housing census was organized in Warsaw; in July 1945, a census of industrial enterprises, whether working or not; in August, a survey was conducted of the budget and cost of maintaining a family in Warsaw; at the end of 1945 preparations began for the national population census that took place in 1946. Furthermore, the GUS launched a big survey of agricultural production and drew up a general inventory of durable goods and means of production. As for publications, in August 1945, the review Wiadomosci Statystyczne ("Statistics' News") reappeared (the previous issue being dated 18 August, 1939) with an article on the sharing out of redistributed land. The first yearbook reappeared in 1947 after an eight-year gap.

From 1945 to 1947 the GUS thus rediscovered its prewar role, and also undertook many projects allowing a better understanding of the economic and social reality of the Poland of that time, after five years of war.
But these two years also saw the introduction of a system of links between the GUS and other bodies of the regime, as established by the decree of 31 July, 1946. This was the start of the transformation of the GUS into an appendix of the National Planning Commission. Statistical body was put at the service of economic planning. Thus, from April 1945, the GUS proposed to the economic bureau of the Council of Ministers the introduction of a "system of reports" for the enterprises, a proposal adopted on June 25, 1945.

This reduction in the GUS’ independence and the restriction of its activities in the service of government objectives, was confirmed in the period that followed.

1947-1955: the freeze on statistical activity

The statistical yearbook did not appear from 1947 to 1955, and almost no statistical information was published in that period. At the most only a dozen people and institutions were in receipt of such information.

At this time the GUS was totally dependent on the Planning Commission, which assigned it the task of making the figures coincide with the Plan; Priority was given almost exclusively to statistics concerning material production, to the detriment in particular of social statistics, and more generally of statistics of a qualitative or local type.

It was in this period that the publications’ control office or censorship office was set up, which told the GUS which figures it could publish. This office continued to exist until the start of 1990.

The data that were censored mainly concerned the following subjects:
- the number of military and militia personnel, and their wages;
- figures about prisons;
- figures on the nationalities ("there are no national minorities in Poland");
- figures on religion;
- figures on industrial accidents ("we do not have them here")
And the word "strike" was systematically replaced by the term "time not worked."

But, according to Mr. Peuker, most censorship was self-censorship; the GUS did not undertake studies which would probably fail to be passed for publication.

The last significant indications of the "freeze" on statistics and their subordination to political and economic imperatives: The Polish Statistical Association was wound up and merged into the Polish Economics’ Association; while in 1955 a decree from the presidium of the government was needed to permit the re-issuing of the statistical yearbook.
With the coming to power of Gomulka after the "Polish October", the economic regime was relaxed somewhat by various reforms and statistics saw new development. Various prohibitions were progressively lifted.

The 1960s: the opening up

This period was marked by, on the one hand an increase in the GUS' publications and activity, and on the other by a reorganization law, setting up regional bodies the WUS under the GUS.

Increased activity

This was a boom period for publications. Their number and contents increased; thus "the yearbook rose to more than 500 pages by the start of the 1960s, reaching its maximum size of 730 pages in 1971...; it was the most important of all the yearbooks produced by CMEA countries from the point of view of the amount of information contained" says Claude Simon in the previously mentioned article. He wrote this, guided by the idea that an increase in the quantity of published information is an important aspect of the level of democratization. On the basis of this idea, he examined the fluctuations in the number of pages in the yearbook in connection with the phases of political relaxation and recentralization.

This idea is reasonable enough, but needs refining. The fact that the volume of publications grew is also partly to be explained by the fact that information gathering in the different branches of the economy had improved qualitatively, producing more information (thus monthly and quarterly data began to be collected and published); but this continued to be done in line with the demands of the planning system to which the GUS remained strictly subordinate throughout these years. Indeed the GUS' structure was determined by the division of the economy envisaged by planning; thus domestic and foreign trade were studied by two separate departments; inversely, investment and construction were dealt with by the same department, since from the "material" angle they were viewed in the same manner.

It was thus natural that the volume and nature of the information changed in line with the evolving demands of the Plan itself from 1960 to 1970. "Certainly" continues Claude Simon, "the Plan's objectives became less minutely quantitative, and were replaced by indicators of value associated with profit and productivity norms, but this also enlarged the scope for eventual manipulation."

Thus the growing volume of published information is not in itself synonymous with an improvement in the reliability of statistics and their democratization. But it is true that, in general, 1960-75 were years of opening up and development for the GUS' activities. For example, according to Mr. Kordos, director of the Department of Demography and Social Studies, in 1960-61 discussions on the methodology of
social statistics got underway in Poland, as in Hungary and then Czechoslovakia, and Soviet methodology in this field began to be sharply criticized. These discussions led to the adoption of the technique of rotating samples used in social surveys between 1967 and 1970.

It was also at the end of the 1960s that the Department of Analyses and Syntheses was created, showing the GUS’ desire at this time to develop a type of study which is more ambitious than the simple production of figures.

Finally, there was another factor that certainly contributed to increasing the amount of published data; this was the creation of the regional statistical offices (the WUS) by the 1962 law, which led to the development of regional publications.

Juridical and administrative re-organization

The tasks of the GUS had grown compared to 1946, a new law was necessary. This was voted through on 15 February, 1962. This text set out:
- the principles for an increase in the centralization of statistics (in particular, it envisaged a strengthening of the GUS’ role in supervising statistical reports demanded from enterprises and administrations);
- the creation of regional state statistical offices (the WUS) under the direct guidance of the GUS.

These two main points bear witness to a certain increase in the GUS’ powers, both horizontally, within the economic and administrative network, and vertically, through increased control over the transmission locally collected information.

Municipal statistical offices already existed before the war in the main cities. These offices were under the control of the town halls. The GUS’ influence on them was thus sometimes partial. The GUS dealt with collecting information in the voivodships outside the big cities. From 1962 a far more centralized structure was brought into being; a WUS, independent of the town hall, and under the GUS, was created in each of the 16 voivodships (in 1975 their number was increased to 49).

The 1970s: a new deterioration

1972 saw the beginning of a slowing down in the production of publications, essentially owing to a shortage of printing paper, according to Mr. Rog, in his previously quoted article on the history of the GUS from Wiadomosci Statystyczne. As a matter of fact, the situation for statistics also deteriorated due to the political and economic context. Statistical publication was cut back so as not to reveal the failures of the economic policies introduced under Communist Party First Secretary Mr. Gierek (including steep price rises, growing indebtedness and wrong choices of economic priorities). Not only were these bad results not to be made public, but very often they
were not even communicated to the various levels of the party, whether from fear of reprisals or because, in any case, nobody took any notice of them. And, more than ever, the GUS was under the control of the Plan and the government. Under Gierek, says Mr. Olenski (present head of the Centre for Statistical Research and Development), "the GUS could not publish monthly data without the written agreement of the Planning Commission. This practise of selecting and doctoring figures by the Plan came to an end in 1980."

The fields most affected by these camouflage efforts were statistics concerning incomes, consumption (which might exacerbate the strong social tensions), health (particularly industrial accidents) and education. Nothing, furthermore, was published on the foreign debt and the foreign trade deficit, which seemed to be a sudden discovery for many Poles in 1980.

Finally, the quality of price and production statistics got steadily worse, not only due to the GUS' own problems, but because constant corrections of statistical figures slanted the results at each stage of collection and processing, as a product of the ongoing game of mutual distrust between the enterprises, the planners and the GUS.

1980-1989: a contradictory period

The years 1980-1981, crucial for the social and political history of Poland, were also a major turning point for statistics. The GUS gained an increasingly large remit and more independence. According to the department heads I spoke to, the declaration of the "state of war" did not, as might have been expected, lead to new restrictions and stricter control of statistical information; indeed, the growth in the GUS' powers was not affected, continuing until 1989, the second key date in this period.

It was then that the reform of the Plan totally transformed the relations between the GUS and that administration. Furthermore, the conditions in which the WUS worked were thrown into turmoil.

However, this phase of opening up between 1980-1989 did not change either the methods for collecting data, which remained based on the system of reports and the principle of exhaustiveness, or the basic concepts. It was only with the adoption, in September 1989, of the first emergency plan, followed in January 1990 by the "Balcerowicz Plan" (named after the Minister of Economics and Finance), that Polish statistics were subject to a more basic re-examination, since they were shown to be ill-adapted to the market economy introduced by these programmes.

The criticism of official data and of censorship, the worsening of the economic and social situation and the political conflicts, inevitably affected the field of statistical information, an important element in any democratic debate.

The attention given to this subject becomes clear from point 6 of the 21 demands in the Gdansk accords (between the strikers in the Baltic port and the central Polish government), signed on 31 August, 1980. This point demands "the publication in full of information on the economic and social situation."

Some consequences flowed from this: a big study of family budgets and living conditions was set in motion by the GUS on 15 September, 1980; the Council of Ministers signed a decree on the calculation of cost-of-living indicators, the procedures for which were to be discussed with the trade unions; the monthly table of average salaries, suppressed in 1977, was re-introduced; finally, Mr. Sadowski, who replaced Mr. Kuzinski at the head of the GUS, declared his desire to "raise the status" of social statistics, develop direct observation of prices the term "inflation" now makes its appearance diffuse information more widely and re-activate the Scientific Statistical Council.

In 1981, the Polish Statistical Association was re-born, headed by Mr. Kordos. And, it was the common view of both the producers and users of statistics who I met that the GUS saw its role grow and change.

According to Mr. Olenski, Mr. Jopkiewicz and Mr. Peuker, from the beginning of the 1980s onwards, "the GUS has gradually been able to publish more data and do this more freely." One sign of the new importance granted to official statistical publications was that in 1980-1981, according to its present director Mr. Sawsinski, the Department of Analyses and Syntheses, originally entrusted with dealing with current information concerning reports on the carrying out of the Plan was given the job of preparing the statistical yearbooks. These had previously been prepared directly at the printers by an editorial committee. "The assignment of this new task to our department shows that a rehabilitation of the statistical yearbook was being sought."

For social statistics this opening up expressed itself in an improvement in sampling methods; but the change was above all important for industrial statistics.

"The first big reform of statistics was the change in the system of reports" stated Mr. Dzewałtowski, director of the department of Production and Scientific and Technical Progress. Before 1980, an enterprise would send its statistical form into the combine to which it belonged, which would in turn transmit it to the branch ministry. "This was the royal road of the report." The transmission of this report to the GUS was a secondary route. Since 1980 the economic reforms have transformed these circuits. The intermediary level between the enterprises and the ministries has been
suppressed, whilst the branch ministries have been progressively reorganized, losing some of their powers (the Plan being less and less detailed and imperative) and no longer exercising direct control over industrial statistics. The GUS has thus little by little become the sole recipient of the forms, while the Industry Ministry, which has gradually absorbed all the former branch ministries, now basically plays a role of coordination between enterprises.

Under Jaruzelski

The introduction of martial law on 13 December, 1981 did not, paradoxically, stem this evolution of the GUS. However the paradox is only apparent. The Communist regime no longer could or wanted to hide statistical information. It even had an interest in highlighting economic and social difficulties, wanting to appear open by cloaking itself in the legitimacy of figures and scientific assurance. On 13 February, 1981, four days after his nomination as prime minister, Mr. Jaruzelski announced he would take a direct interest in the Statistical Office, to show the importance he was going to give to "the creation of a broad and objective system of information, which would be in a sense above the ministries." (Trybuna Ludu, 14 February, 1981).

Several factors explain this increased role for the GUS and statistical information in general.

The economic reforms implied changes in the relations between planning, the enterprises and the GUS, giving the latter an increased role. Furthermore, the GUS was relatively freely able to make its findings public, particularly as regards the recession, since the regime could no longer hide this or give a falsified picture of the reality. Everyone knew what was going on, being increasingly well informed both by the foreign press and radio and by unofficial "grey" publications. The censor's office still existed but the Planning Commission ceased to issue vetos.

The GUS' staff thus felt increasingly free to pursue their work, despite the "state of war." According to Mr. Peuker: "At the GUS, as throughout the administration, military posts were set up in the different premises after 13 December. The padded doors that you see in some of the offices here date from that period. The representative of the military regime here at the GUS was a colonel from the Academy of Military Policy, a specialist in the war economy. The rest of the team were also from the army rather than the security services. This lasted between a year and 18 months. The colonel was here a lot at the beginning, but then less and less so. The control was more formal than real."

Another element in the explanation is that the regime's doctrine on the role of information had evolved. Thus, the impression of the GUS' staff that they had more room for manoeuvre had a legal basis. The new law on statistics of 1982 reaffirmed the GUS' powers and insisted on the obligation to reply to the GUS, which increasingly gained a monopoly on statistics.
This was part of a more general trend towards using economic and social information and opinion polls in new ways. For the first time, a member of the Communist regime, Colonel Kwiatkowski, a soldier with a background in journalism and an advisor to General Jaruzelski, took charge of studying opinion, thanks to the creation in September 1982 of the Centre for Research into Social Opinion (the CBOS). The polls he organized were no longer, as in the past, solely concerned with detecting potential or nascent social tensions; they were designed to "put the legitimacy of a science at the service of government objectives" and contribute to the process of normalization.

S. Kwiatkowski decided to talk true, even if that meant stating openly that only a quarter of the population supported Jaruzelski, with the same number of opponents. "I personally am in favour of giving wide publicity to the results of surveys... I do not accept the argument that this weakens us in the face of our enemies." The concern here was to appear objective, pragmatic and scientific: "citizens must be made aware that the society is not monolithic, and that there are groups with contradictory interests"; and to gradually convince Poles that everything was working in favour of normalization. The majority of the population would show itself ever more inclined to support social peace (and the economic improvement that this would bring) guaranteed, to borrow a phrase from Georges Mink, "by a para-military state that justified itself as fulfilling the time-honoured function of arbitrating over a divided, pluralist and conflict-ridden society."

Thus, it is no surprise that this new will on the part of the Communist regime not to falsify reality but to justify itself by its realism and its legitimate and scientific use of figures, and so to appear as the last and only resort, was translated into growing freedom for statisticians, and particularly into increased freedom to publish.

**The last turning point: 1989**

The reform of the Plan in 1989 meant new changes for statistics. This reform involved the transformation of the Planning Commission (whose role had become less and less that of direct command in recent years) into a Central Planning Office (CUP) similar to the French Planning Commissariat. This reform increased the GUS' role to the extent that "the Plan had become a user rather than a giver of orders" as Mr. Olenski explained it.

This change in the relations between the GUS and the Plan was of decisive importance above all for the regional statistical offices, for, while the GUS had seen its functions change from 1980-1981 onwards. According to Mr. Binda, director of the WUS in Cracow on 4 December, 1990, "1980-1981 changed nothing in our local work. The big changes came with the disappearance of the Planning Commission."

It was only then that the WUS abandoned all "working over" of the figures, in

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conformity with the demands of the Plan, since it was now no longer working for the planning authorities. "We got rid of the job of 'harmonizing' the figures." It was thus in 1989 that the WUS' director stopped being called in regularly to the local office of the Communist Party as had been the case in the past.

This change in the relations between different branches of the administration required the updating of the 1982 law, and this took place in May 1989. The new law defined the rules for the protection of information and its circulation between the GUS and other branches of the administration in the following way. According to Mr. Olenski, the GUS is obliged to transmit all the information it has on state enterprises to the ministries, but in aggregated form. A ministry can still ask for further information, but the GUS can decide if it will meet the request. Furthermore, from a legal point of view, the president of the GUS is on the same level as the head of the Planning Office; both are under the Prime Minister. There remains, however, one nuance; while the head of the Planning Office is a member of the Council of Ministers, the president of the GUS is a "permanent guest."

The 1989 law will soon have to undergo further up-dating, above all to deal with items such as the rules for collecting information, the obligations of private bodies and enterprises (on the basis of equal treatment for the public and private sectors) and the confidentiality of information.

This necessary revision is part of a deep-going re-consideration of the Polish statistical system; this complete overhaul of statistics required by the economic transition has been underway since the winter of 1989-1990. However a premonition of it is present in the conclusion of Mr. Rog to an article in Wiadomosci Statystyczne in July 1988: "In its 70-year history, the GUS has fully carried out its duty to the full satisfaction of the governments and the society. Currently, the GUS is entering a period of upheavals in planning and in the way in which the national economy is managed. Assuredly, hard work awaits it."
2. ELEMENTS FOR A HISTORY OF STATISTICS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Information on the 1945-1971 period was obtained on 20 March, 1991, from Mr. Stanislav Dubsky, who has worked in the FSU’s Department of Analyses and Publications since 1951 and who took part in the editing of the collection that appeared in 1989 on the 70th anniversary of Czechoslovak statistics. This collection enabled to complete the history for the 1970s and 1980s.

Before the Second World War: a long tradition of statistics

In 1989, 70 years of Czechoslovak state statistics were celebrated in, since the first statistical office was created in 1919, the date of the first law on statistics. However the first statistical service on the territory of what is now Czechoslovakia was set up in 1829, and in 1897 the statistical office of the Czech kingdom was established. In line with law No. 49 of 1919, it was decided that the state statistical service of the newly created Czechoslovak Republic would be organized and directed by, on the one hand, the State Statistical Council, with both an advisory and a decision-making role, and on the other by the State Statistical Office, in the role of executive agent.

From 1945 to 1948: rebirth of a statistical office for the whole of Czechoslovakia under the Second Republic

During the Second World War there were two independent statistical bodies; the Czech office and the Slovak office, operating under two different political regimes. The Czech Lands had become the German Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, while in Slovakia a pseudo-independent state with pro-fascist tendencies was established. Because Slovakia was the first to be liberated, its statistical office ceased functioning in September 1944.

On 5 May, 1945 a statistical office for the whole of Czechoslovakia was revived. The Council of State appointed Frantisek Fajfr as its first president, and he stayed in charge until 1961. Frantisek Fajfr had a solid background in statistics. Before 1918 he was working on statistics for the Austro-Hungarian Empire; then he worked on financial statistics at the Czechoslovak office; above all he was an excellent demographer.

In 1945 an asymmetrical structure was thus created. The all-Czecho-slovak statistical office was set up in Prague, while in Slovakia a Slovak statistical office was created, which immediately became an integral part of the body charged with planning (which at the time had limited powers).

The Czecho-slovak office collected data on the basis of the five regions that had existed under the First Republic from 1918 to 1938. This division was restored in 1945 by the Czecho-slovak government which did not accept the wartime structure which had split the country into three: Bohemia-Moravia, Slovakia and the Sudeten region, where the Reich had set up a statistical office.

In 1945, Czecho-slovakia was thus once more divided into five regions, a situation that lasted until 1949. The Czecho-slovak statistical office's first activity was the population census, organized in 1946 in Slovakia and in 1947 in the rest of the country.

The first real contact between the planners and the statisticians dates from 1947. At that time a Two-Year Plan was worked out in the context of a market economy which would remain dominant until 1948. The main task of this Plan was to restore the prewar level of industrial production. This objective was achieved in 1948. In this Plan, statistics had the role of working out an indicator for industrial production.

In this period, the 1919 law on the independence of statistics remained in force. The relations between the Plan and statistics followed the principle of independence. 1948 saw a sudden and violent change in these relations, after the seizure of power by the Communists in the "Prague coup."

1948-1961: statistics are subjected to the centrally planned system

Statistics under the first Five-Year Plan

The 1948-1952 period is that of the first Five-Year Plan. These were the years of the rapid change from a market to a planned economy. In March 1948, the land reform limited the size of landholdings to 50 hectares, before their re-organization on the basis of state farms and cooperatives. The law of 28 April, 1948, left only 2 % of industrial enterprises in private hands. It can be said that by 1953 the Soviet model had been totally adopted.

From 1950 legislation on statistics was passed that imposed the Soviet practice. The subordination of statistics to planning was established and showed itself in the presentation of economic results, which were always presented in two columns: The first containing the Plan's targets, the second the results, calculated by the statisticians. The subordination even expressed itself in the content of the work. Statistics
were to measure social and economic development according to categories desired by the planners, and they were almost exclusively to serve the latter.

Sometimes Soviet practice of reports was applied in such a mechanical fashion that truly comical situations arose: in the form for the census of livestock (valid for all the Republics of the USSR, including the Caucasus and Central Asia) there was a line for entering the number of camels and dromedaries, not common in Czechoslovakia!

In theory, the organization of statistics was independent. But the president of the Statistical Office was a member of the Council of the Planning Commission, and the post of president of that commission was higher up the state hierarchy than that of the president of the statistical office.

The aim at the time was the complete control and integration of all sources of socio-economic information. The integration process began with the voting through of law No. 108 of 1951 on the organization of economic registration, which marked the start of the process of merging statistics, accounting and all "economico-technical" operations.

The statistical offices thus served simply as providers of data, which they collected and processed. It was the Planning Commission, however, that presented them to the government, took charge of their publication and analyzed them according to its own philosophy. According to Mr. Dubsky, the Planning Commission took the work of the statistical offices and presented it to the political bodies as its own. "In those days statistical work was devalued, and never referred to."

The favoured method of the Planning Commission, which it imposed on the Statistical Office, was to publish the growth rates for different branches of the economy without mentioning the real values either for the reference period or for the current period. No indication of the macro-economic proportions was given. At the time it was advantageous to present economic growth in terms of rates, since the country possessed big reserves both of labour and industrial capacity. This was for three reasons: under the First Republic, Czechoslovakia had been an important industrial power in Europe, and the basic structures had not been destroyed in the Second World War; furthermore, during this war, the Germans had set up several factories in the country, which remained after they left; finally there was a lot of available labour.

Thus the growth of the economy expressed in rates was strong during the first Five-Year Plan, which prioritized accelerated development of the industrial sector.
From 1954 to 1961: the dependent status of statistics reinforced

In 1953, the reserves that had allowed these impressive growth rates began to dry up. In 1954 and 1955 the economy was managed according to annual plans, to allow a re-adjustment of economic policy to be worked out. In 1956 the second Five-Year Plan was put into operation, to cover the years 1956-1960. In this period, the FSU did not carry out any analyses, restricting itself solely to the collection of data. This information was essentially provided by the enterprises, who filed very detailed reports on forms received from the Planning Commission. This work of collection gave rise to the publication of raw figures for the central bodies, and, twice a year, the FSU published a report destined for public consumption after checking by and agreement from, the Communist Party. As in the previous period, the statistics made public only indicated the trends in the economy expressed in percentages.

This situation lasted until 1957 when the statistical yearbook made its reappearance. In 1948 the first yearbook since the war was published, but then there were no more. The 1957 yearbook had 330 pages; in 1960 it reached 500-600. However, the reappearance of the yearbook did not change the policy of secrecy concerning absolute figures on the country’s economic development. Sometimes the veil of secrecy was lifted, but only for some branches and in a way that ruled out comparisons. In general, everything was presented in percentages.

1961-1967: a period of change for statistics

At the heart of a power struggle

In 1961, the Minister of Agriculture under Mr. Novotny (the first secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party at the time) came up with the idea that it was necessary to link statistics with "State Inspection." This was a novel idea for a country with a centrally planned economy, since it involved a partial reversal of the role of statistics, from being an obedient provider of data to exercising powers of inspection and investigation, in liaison with the Ministry of State Inspection. The tasks of this ministry were precisely defined by the Communist Party, which chose a number of priority areas to be subject to inspection, for example the duration of working time and the regulation of wages. The employees of this ministry had special powers giving them free access to all of an enterprises’ buildings and documents. After these employees had carried out the inspection, a report would be signed and serious consequences might follow, including fines and dismissals.

Law No. 56 of 1961 involved the staff of the statistical offices in this work. Statistics thus passed from one form of subordination to another: the Ministry of Inspection indicated the places to be investigated and the employees of the statistical offices carried out the work on the ground.
Mr. Dubsky recounts the following story: one day the Ministry of Control asked him to go to check on certain activities of the Planning Commission itself. In his view, therefore, from 1961-1967, the Ministry of Inspection had more power than the Planning Commission. In fact a multitude of rivalries and power struggles existed between the Ministry and the Commission, with each trying to enlist the statistical services on their side.

A relaxation of the system of centralized economic planning

Owing to this friction between two political bodies, the Czechoslovak statistical office was no longer subject to a single undivided master, which probably led to certain developments in its relations with the government bodies. But the internal changes in the statistical office at this time were above all due to a change in economic policy. 1962 and 1963 were years of economic slow-down.

It turned out that the third Five-Year Plan (1961-1965) could not be implemented, particularly as far as the predicted investments were concerned. Starting in 1963, a debate began on economic reforms, initiated by the Czech economist Ota Sik. In 1965 measures encouraging a degree of decentralization were introduced. The guiding philosophy of these measures was that of a partial return to a market economy or at least some simulated form of it. The reform envisaged the use of financial instruments, and of the ideas of "profit" and "enterprise management."

While the assimilation of statistical projects to the work of the Ministry of Inspection harmed the image of statistics in the eyes of the population statistics being an object of fear since they could be used as an instrument of repression the introduction of these new economic ideas on the other hand, represented a welcome opportunity for statistics to change themselves and increase their scope. The economic reform introduced by Ota Sik in fact laid down the conditions that made it possible for the statistical office to develop its own analyses from 1967-1968 on, when the climate of political liberalization was also conducive to this.

Another factor, of a more technical kind, contributed to the modification of the content of the work of the statistical office and the increase in its scope: the coming of computerization. Naively, according to Mr. Dubsky, the Planning Commission believed that computerization would free it from its most onerous tasks, without any other consequences. In fact, it revealed the limits of the power of the Planning Commission, since it gave statistics scientific authority thanks to the adoption of new methods of model building and econometrics.

The Czechoslovak statistical office bought many American and French computers and networks of computer centres were created. From this time on, the office had its own computer centre at its disposal, but above all it availed itself of the services of the Research Institute VUSEIAR, based in Bratislava, set up with the methodological and financial aid of the UN in 1968-69.
In the years 1967-1968, the climate was thus propitious for more development towards autonomy for statistics and for research, but, according to Mr. Dubsky, this potential was not fully exploited.

1968-1971: no big changes for statistics

The 1967-68 period might have allowed a transformation of statistics. But this would be to leave out of account the weight of habit and inertia proper to statistical work. The development of the technical and computer-based aspects of the work was preferred to thinking about on methodology, since the statistical office, freed now from the direct supervision of the Ministry of Inspection, was, on the other hand, still considered to be essentially a servant of planning. In the Council of Ministers the president of the statistical office only had the status of a guest, while the head of the Planning Commission, to which the former was subordinated, was a full member.

From this point of view, nothing really changed during the Prague Spring. With normalization, on the other hand, Mr. Dubsky recognized, the importance of a good knowledge of economic and social reality, to be obtained thanks to statistics, became an idea to be considered (Here, indeed, there are similarities between the Czechoslovak "normalization" and what took place in Poland after 13 December, 1981.) Statistics, now considered as of more importance, gained better working conditions and equipment and support for their studies.

A new law on statistics (law No. 21 of 1971) reaffirming the existence of a unified system of socio-economic information (that is to say the coming together of statistics and accounting) was passed. And it was at this time that the Federal Statistical Council was created, involving representatives of the ministries, the university and the enterprises in the work of advising and approving statistical programmes.

While 1968 did not represent a sharp break for statistics the main lasting change was the creation of three offices, one federal and two for the republics, in line with the transformation of Czechoslovakia into a federation normalization also had little effect. Certainly, a number of people were dismissed, and publications were once again subject to increased control, but these were minor consequences compared to the political and social events shaking Czechoslovakia.

Mr. Dubsky’s account ends at this date. The following paragraphs which round off his account are based on the collection published by the FSU to celebrate 70 years of Czechoslovak statistics mentioned above. For the 1967-71 period this official history and Mr. Dubsky’s account blend well, but the former lays emphasis on legal texts and, particularly interesting, on the origin of the problem of the division of labour between the offices.
The 1970s and 1980s

From 1967 to 1971

It was in 1967-1968 that "statistics regained their legitimate place in the central organisms of state administration" (p. 79). In fact, following decisions by the Bureau of the National Assembly, inspection and statistics were separated and the Federal Statistical Council, with an advisory role covering the programmes for statistical research, the use of computers and methodology, was created.

The dominant idea of the time, embodied in government decisions, was to encourage a restructuring and upgrading of the role of statistics. At the time a lot of stress was put on the need to develop computerization and enlarge the research structures: the VUSEIAR, the centre for computer and statistical research, was officially opened in Bratislava in 1969.

Two publications were also launched at this time: an internal bulletin, Informator, designed to facilitate collaboration between the statisticians in the central office and those in the regions, and Demosta, a demographic and statistical bulletin for distribution abroad.

The proclamation of the re-organization of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic as a federation on 28 October, 1968, led to the foundation of the Federal Statistical Office (Federalni Statisticky Urad the FSU) on 1 January, 1969, of the Slovak Statistical Office (the SSU) on the same date and of the Czech Statistical Office (the CSU) on 8 January.

The law saw them as having new roles, but did not clearly explain what these were. For more than two years, the old regulations on the activities of the statistical services continued to be applied; however, the fundamental division of spheres of competence between the federation and the republics, as defined by the constitutional law on the federation (No. 143/1968) began to be taken into consideration.

This law stipulated that the field of socio-economic information (an expression that now progressively replaced the term "of the recording of economic data") was the common concern of the federation and the republics. But, according to paragraph 23 of this law, the following questions remained the exclusive concern of the federation:

- the working out of a single methodology for monitoring the development of the federation;

- the organization of the collection and circulation of information;

- the definition of the significance of the necessary information;
- the fixing of the means and the dates for obtaining information as well as the means for verifying its authenticity;

- making socio-economic information available to international bodies.

Most often, the concrete definition of the activities of the three statistical bodies was dealt with by specific agreements. Finally, the offices in the republics were given the task of carrying out statistical projects in the proper sense, that is with direct collaboration with the "sources", and the collection and processing of information needed by all the levels of the executive in the republics and by the FSU.

A new publication was created, which for the first time systematically disseminated basic data about the federation, the republics and the regions. And, on the occasion of the 1971 population census, computerization was stepped up.

This short period was also marked by the preparation of the 1971 law on statistics, which was still in force in March 1991, in expectation of a new law.

From 1971 to the 1980s

1971 was an important milestone in the history of Czechoslovak statistics: law No. 21/1971 on the "unified system of socio-economic information" proposed in theory a new conception of the role of the FUS which would henceforth be considered as "one of the central bodies of the Czechoslovak administration."

It is worth noting that the law removed the methodology for the accounting and calculation of the state budget from the competence of the FSU. This was henceforth to come within the scope of the federal Ministry of Finance (acting in agreement with the FSU). On the other hand, the FSU was put in charge of perfecting and computerizing information systems and of the integration and linking of the different systems socio-economic information, information for planning and the calculation of the state budgets as well as scientific and technical information with the objective of being in a position to respond to requests from the ministries and the central bodies.

On all these points, the aims of statistics were determined by the Congresses of the Czechoslovak Communist Party (1971, 1976, 1981, 1986). It was considered necessary to develop a system of socio-economic information that could "feed" the party bodies. This requirement also lay behind the creation and development in the course of the 1970s of the Institute for Research into Public Opinion, in connection with the FSU on the one hand and the SSU on the other.
The last changes before 1990

The start of the 1980s saw the continuation of the process of computerization both in the national bodies and in the regions, and the recruitment of a considerable number of computer scientists. Efforts went into the creation of a single system of economic indicators for statistics and planning (since, until then the statisticians had, for each yearbook, to themselves unify the different indicators from the branches of industry). And, in 1987 there appeared the first collection using these basic unified indicators.

The most important publication of this period was the first number of the Historical Statistical Yearbook which came out in 1985 and which gave long sequences of figures from the start of the Czechoslovak state up to 1983. This yearbook was still being quoted in March 1991, both by statisticians and academics, as a work of reference.

Finally, the 1970-1990 period was marked by three main features:

- the impact of the creation of the Federation on the organization of statistical work;
- the increased recognition of the importance of statistics as a counterpart for its subordination to the demands for information from the central bodies;
- the permanent emphasis on the technical process of computerization and the idea of the creation of an integrated system of socio-economic information. This objective remains on the agenda; such a system is envisaged as being constructed by the joint efforts of the FSU, the Presidential Council, Parliament and the ministries.

As a sequel to this history as presented from Prague, it seemed to me that it would be interesting to give the comments of Mr. Husar, the vice-president of the SSU on the history of statistics as seen from Slovakia, as a way of confirming and balancing the above account.

A brief history of Slovak statistics

After the war, the statistical office in Slovakia was tightly integrated with the Planning Commission. It was installed on the latter’s premises, was totally subordinate to it, and was obliged to verify the Plan using the indicators set down by the planners. Social statistics were very little developed and the only statistics produced not directly aimed at verifying the Plan were demographic statistics.

At that time, then, there was a statistical office in Prague dealing with the whole country this ancestor of the FSU was called the State Statistical Bureau of
Czechoslovakia and a Slovak office in Bratislava. In the 1960s, the Slovak office moved out of the Planning Commission’s premises, and by 1965 the two bodies were truly distinct from one another.

It was in 1968 that Slovak statistics were truly born, with the creation of the Czechoslovak Federation, even if the SSU remained in reality subordinate to the Planning Commission and the Central Committee of the Communist Party. All the same, 1968 saw a perceptible change; previously, Slovak statistics had always been aggregated at the higher level into all-Czechoslovak figures; after 1968 they appeared in publications in their own right.

Mr. Husar considered that the statisticians had, fundamentally, always carried out their work correctly. Afterwards, however, their results would be used only in part or would be changed to conform to the Plan. Furthermore, the CCP approached the SSU several times a year to place orders with the Institute of Research into Public Opinion which was attached to it. The results of these surveys were always kept secret. These files were felt to be real dynamite. When one reads them today, said Mr. Husar, they seem rather innocent and comical.

Like Mr. Dubsky, Mr. Husar saw the 1968-1989 period as years of development of computerization and all the technical and mathematical aspects of statistics. Furthermore, in the course of this period, the SSU was more and more considered as a mere regional body, only concerned with gathering information, contrary to the grandiose perspectives envisaged in 1968.
3. THE PRESENT PLACE OF STATISTICS IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND MINISTERIAL NETWORK

The organization and structure of the statistical offices: internal developments

In Poland (in November 1990)
The statistical apparatus

Here is the organizational diagram of Mr. Olenski, director of the GUS' Centre for Statistical Research and Development, explaining that office's administrative reorganization.

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President

Social statistics
Economic statistics
Cabinet
Institute of Studies
Regional Offices (WUS)

"Technical" statistics
Administration
Training
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The GUS' organizational diagram (see page 37) should be looked at in the light of the divisions proposed in the above schema. The central branch can conveniently be put to one side, since it is somewhat peculiar, artificially grouping together the President's cabinet right at the centre of decision making the Institute of Statistical and Economic Studies, which is well away from it, and the 49 statistical offices in the voivodships (regional offices or WUS). Having done this, we find the GUS to be organized according to a division into four main fields: social, economic, technical and administrative.
The few changes recently made to this organizational diagram are the following:

- The Department of Social and Demographic Studies arose out of the former Department of Economic and Social Studies, which underlines the desire to distinguish the economic and social fields, and give greater importance to the latter.

- The Department for the Programming of Statistical Studies and that of National Income and Wealth are descendants of, respectively, the Department of Programming and Control of the Information System, and of National Property and Income. For the moment this is more a matter of a change in terminology than a real upheaval, although words can have a real importance in this period.

- Finally, everything concerning computer technology has developed a lot and is currently being re-organized. It is planned to reduce the number of computer centres, which currently employ 600 people, from ten to two or three. The most important change affecting the organization of statistical work in Poland is its territorial restructuring. Until 1975, Poland was divided into 16 voivodships. In 1975, the number of voivodships was increased to 49 at the instigation of Gierek. He wanted on the one hand to break up the fiefdoms formed under Gomulka and on the other to exercise firmer control over society, since, in Gierek’s view, one of Gomulka’s big mistakes was not to know what the population was thinking.

The Polish leadership now considers that this is too many. The voivodships are too small to form real entities and they do not correspond to Polish historical tradition. For this reason a proposal for a new territorial division is being studied. There will be 11 or 12 voivodships this point is certain but their boundaries have not yet been defined. This territorial reorganization will take place in 1992 or 1993.

The statistical apparatus will have to be transformed in consequence, and preparations have already to be made for this, since the number of WUS will also fall from 49 to 11 or 12. This raises the problem of the redeployment of staff. Furthermore, if the new boundaries do not correspond to the old, the continuity of statistical series will be made problematic. The work of data collection will stay the same, since it is carried out at the lower administrative level, the "poviat", which is not to be reorganized.

The statistical personnel

Information on this subject was gathered from Ms. Witkowska who works at the Management Training Centre.

In the GUS itself, that is to say in the central structure, there are 645 employees, 75% of them women. The number has fallen over the past five years, the highest figure (of 700 to 800 employees) being reached in the 1970s. Some 60% of the people working at the GUS have university-level qualifications, 40% have qualifi-
cations at secondary level or have been to a professional training college. 60 to 70 % are over 40 years old, but at the moment the GUS is trying to recruit young people.

The WUS (regional offices) have a slightly different staffing structure. Each of the 49 WUS employees between 100 and 200 people, 60-70 % of them women. The average level of education is lower than at the GUS, and wages are also not as high. At the same time, the average age of the personnel at the WUS is lower, above all since the advent of computerization.

This question of the average age raises the double problem of the training of students in statistics and the power of attraction of the GUS.

The Central School of Commerce (the SGH formerly the Central School of Planning and Statistics (SGPiS), a name which provides yet further evidence, if it is needed, of the close over-lapping of the two fields, which was abandoned in July 1990) is the main centre for university-level training in statistics, offering a four-year course. The university-educated GUS personnel are products either of this school or of other universities (in economics, management, demography etc). In this latter case, and for the rest of the personnel in general, the training takes place on the job, something which is made possible by the very low level of internal mobility.

The GUS today recognizes that it is not in itself an attractive employer. And at the WUS in Cracow, people say that they have constant difficulty in finding enough applicants for the number of theoretically available posts. The GUS thus remains not very attractive; young people with economics’ degrees prefer the private sector, which is a lot better paid. In November 1990 salaries at the GUS were around 1.2 million zlotys for a secretary, 1.5 to 2 million zlotys for a specialist with university level qualifications and three million for a head of department (at the time a million zlotys were worth about a hundred dollars). Since then, owing to the indexation of salaries in line with inflation the nominal sum has risen considerably.

But today this situation is beginning to change. The GUS says that it no longer has big problems with recruitment, which is done through interviews. In fact, the threat of unemployment leads staff to hesitate before leaving their job, and leads young people to be less reluctant to go and work there, even if they continue to consider, as Ms. Witkowska puts it, that the GUS' work is "technical and conservative." The GUS will only slowly change its image in the eyes of the population.
To understand the functioning of the statistical system in Czechoslovakia, it is essential to bear in mind its federal organization, which has already been highlighted in the historical section of this essay (chapter 2).

Under the federal system, there exist three statistical offices in Czechoslovakia, one federal and two for the republics, the organizational diagrams for which are reproduced in the following pages. According to the law of 1971, the two republican offices are essentially in charge of the collection of information and the first phase of its processing, with the federal office dealing with syntheses and above all with ensuring methodological conformity.

Three factors are pushing towards the adoption of a new law on statistics: the 1971 law has been twisted so often that no one any longer attempts to apply it or make it respected; furthermore, it no longer corresponds to the role of statistics, which are now strictly distinguished from accounting in an economy that is introducing market structures; finally, it is being challenged by the republican offices. This challenge is seen more in the Slovak than in the Czech office: the latter, it is true, being located in the same premises in Prague as the federal office. There, those I spoke to believed that "the three offices are equal in terms of the working out of programmes and new concepts." The yoke that they denounce most vocally was not that of the FSU, but that imposed by the political bodies, who, until the end of 1989, alone decided what society demanded.

A rather different viewpoint was put forward at the Slovak office. The SSU wants to be able to itself organize statistical work in a more independent way better adapted to the needs of the Slovak Republic. This is expressed particularly by the working out of a new organizational diagram and, they say at the SSU, by a greater development of social statistics than in the Czech Lands. But it remains understood that the methodology must remain unified; "on the condition", says Mr. Husar, vice-president of the Slovak office, "that the SSU can say its piece on the subject." He adds that the idea is to establish "a methodology by mutual consent."

Thus, the sharing out of spheres of competence between the offices is the subject of much discussion. Although the big decisions still require the agreement of the three presidents, and although the leadership of the federal office always respects the principle of equal treatment for the two republics if the president is Czech, the vice-president is Slovak and vice versa, the Slovak office is thus demanding more autonomy.
ORGANIZATION OF THE SLOVAK STATISTICAL OFFICE - SSO. SLOVAK REPUBLIC

Advisory Organs of President of the SSO

President of the SSO

Vice-President

First Vice-President

Enterprise of Computer Technique

Publisher of Statistical
and Evidence
Printed Matters

Town Service of the SSO
Region Services of the SSO

Secretariat of President of the SSO

Independent Personnel Branch
Library

Complete
Methods and Analytics Division

Complete
Methods Branch

Complete
Analysis Branch

Region Branch

National-Economy
Balances and Financial
Statistics Division

Complete
Balances branches

Financial Statistics
Branch

Structural
Balances Sector

Price and Foreign
Trade Statistics Sector

Complete
Methodics Branch

Scientific
and Technological
Development
Statistics Division

Complete
Analysis Branch

Population
and Living
Standards
Statistics Division

Scientific
and Technological
Development
Statistics Branch

Construction
Statistics Branch

Trade and Non-Production
Sectors Statistics Branch

Demography
Statistics Branch

Labor and Wages
Statistics Branch

Census
of Population, Houses
and Flats Branch

Complete
Methodics
Division

Production
Branch Statistics
Division

Industries
and Transport
Statistics Branch

Agriculture, Forestry
and Water Management,
Environment Statistics
Branch

Relations between
suppliers and customers

Trade and Non-Production
Sectors Statistics Branch

Demography
Statistics Branch

Labor and Wages
Statistics Branch

Census
of Population, Houses
and Flats Branch

Complete Industries
Balances and Transport
branches Statistics Branch

Public Opinion
Research Institute

Research Branch

Methodological
Branch

Automation Statistical
Information System
Division

Project and Control
Data Processing Branch

Data-banks Branch

Data Services and
Microcomputers Branch

Computer Technique
Division

Technical Development
Branch

Computer Services
Branch

Reproduction Technique
Branch

Economical and
Services Division

Economies Tools Branch

Resource Management

Publisher of Statistical
and Evidence
Printed Matters
For example, one point of contention, mentioned by Mr. Kamenicek from the Department of Methodology at the FSU and a member of the commission for drawing up the new law on statistics, appeared over the composition of the Federal Statistical Council, a body which discusses and adopts the annual programme of statistical surveys and examines new concepts. The members of this council are named by the federal government. The Slovak office has asked that a third of the posts be reserved for Slovaks. This demand has not been accepted because this council must in principle be considered as a federal body bringing together personalities on the basis of their professional abilities and not according to their nationality. Mr. Kamenicek finds all these little disputes regrettable for "statistics is a system, it forms a whole and its activity must be defined in a single and unequivocal manner."

The new law on statistics will thus be guided by a double concern for economy (it is necessary to avoid duplicating jobs in the different offices) and respect for the spheres of competence of each. The new constitution which, in March 1991, was set to be adopted in June 1991, (now the date talked about is Spring 1992) will define in a general way the spheres of competence of the republics and the federation. In the course of this discussion, the law on statistics may well be considerably changed. To some extent, therefore, the future of all three offices remains partly open.

The statistical personnel

The federal office employs 435 people, 56 % of them women. A reduction in staff numbers of 10 % (in line with reductions throughout government agencies) was decided in December 1990; according to the FSU this can be done by natural wastage by not renewing the posts of those who retire. The average age of the FSU personnel is 46 years old. 263 of the 435 have university-level qualifications (of which 41 % in economics, 20 % in statistics, and 12 % in mathematics or computing). Almost all the others, according to the FSU’s Training Department, have completed their secondary schooling. There is no official competitive examination for entry into the statistical offices, which recruit on the bases of applications and interviews, advertising the available positions principally at the School of Higher Economic Studies, but also in other universities.

The major recent development in personnel management at the statistical offices, the FSU, the SSU and the CSU, was the introduction of a competitive examination in March-April 1990 for all the leading posts. The examination involves both oral and written tests, with the jury being made up of experts from government bodies and academia. Thus, the president and vice-president have changed. From now on, says Mr. Friendlaender, director of the FSU’s Department of Training and Education, they will be specialists in statistics and not politicians as in the past. Mr. Sujan, for example, today president of the FSU, formerly worked at the Institute of Statistical Research, the VUSELAR, and the vice-president is a professor from the School of Higher Economic Studies, who in the past had been forbidden to teach.
This managerial renewal has also affected the departmental, and sometimes the divisional, heads. There have been far fewer changes at the lower levels.

"Before", says Mr. Friendlaender, "all heads of departments had to be members of the Communist Party. Today all that has changed."

**Conclusion**

If we study the organizational diagram and the staffing of the statistical offices of these two countries, we can see some possible points of comparison.

In the two cases, the leading personnel have recently been changed, but in Czechoslovakia this has taken on a much more official, systematic and scientific form, since these posts have been subject to a competitive examination. The rest of the staff have not faced such a big upheaval, although they are often tempted, as in Poland, to leave for better paid jobs, despite the relative job security offered by the statistical office. Both the GUS and the FSU have little power of attraction and young graduates are not rushing there. In both countries, recruitment takes place in a similar way; the statistical offices advertise the available posts in the universities and specialist establishments and then recruit people with a wide-range of training and outlook on the basis of interviews.

There is not, therefore, as in France, with the Ecole Nationale de la Statistique et de l'Administration Economique, a specific training system for government statisticians. Some of those I spoke to sometimes expressed the wish to go down that road, by closer relations between the GUS and the Central School of Commerce in Poland and between the FSU and the School of Higher Economic Studies in Czechoslovakia. Mr. Friendlaender, director of the FSU's Department of Training and Education, even states the FSU’s desire for the creation of a faculty of statistics and computing on which the FSU could have a strong influence. But no office is considering the creation of a basic training school of its own; on the other hand, on the job training is being strongly developed. This development is demanded by the introduction of new methods of data collection and new subjects for research to which we will return in the second part.

The statisticians in the central offices, however, recognize that the major problem for the adoption of new statistical concepts is located outside, upstream and downstream, from the offices. Once the staff have been trained, it requires yet more time before all the government bodies and enterprises understand the importance of adopting the same and new norms. It is thus desirable that all those involved with statistics should have a uniform training. This exists to some extent in Czechoslovakia, where the FSU’s training courses were open, in the past, to both the office’s staff and people from outside, such as statisticians and accountants from enterprises and ministries. Today these latter are still allowed on the courses, but they have to pay. Since money is short everywhere, few government bodies or firms are willing to offer their staff these courses.
The desire to change the methods and content of statistics may thus be held back by the weight of the habits of other bodies and of enterprises in relation to statistical data. But, inversely, the statistical offices are often accused by the latter of sluggish-ness and inertia. Now, in these two countries, the bulk of statistical work is in the remit of the offices. Certainly, in Poland, the Ministries of Health and Education and the energy section of the Industry Ministry, and in Czechoslovakia the two republican Ministries of Health and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (for unemployment statistics) have important prerogatives where statistics are concerned; but apart from these specific cases, the administrative centralization of statistical work by the offices can be considered strong. The situation in the two countries is thus in this respect quite similar.

On the other hand they differ widely when it comes to the criterion of territorial centralization.

The Polish organization has a lot in common with the French model; a central body, the GUS, located in Warsaw, coordinates the work of the regional offices, the WUS, presently 49 in number. The relation is one of subordination and those I spoke to considered the GUS' supervision as heavy: "everything comes from the GUS. Everything is decided by the GUS." "Only responsibility for the number of local publications, their subject matter, and contacts with the radio, press and television" are decentralized. Decisions are taken by the GUS, while the WUS carry out the work of collection and take some part in the dissemination of the results.

As our historical outline has already underlined, in Czechoslovakia the federal structure profoundly marks the organization of statistics, and this is a big difference with Poland. The three offices are theoretically on a plane of equality but "the FSU is more equal than the others" joked one of the federal statisticians.

In the course of time, if republican demands lessen which seems unlikely statistics could evolve, according to those I spoke to, in the following way: the republican offices will become genuinely responsible for some important fields such as statistics on domestic trade, prices, construction and perhaps electoral statistics. Thus the FSU would delegate its powers on certain subjects which in any case are already processed at the local level.

It should be pointed out that there are many local instances; while in France there are two levels (the general and regional managements), and in Poland there are two or sometimes three (the GUS, the WUS and some local posts where the voivodship is big), in Czechoslovakia there are four: a federal office, two republican offices, twelve regional offices and 110 district offices. This inevitably complicates the system for circulating information and presents endless problems over who is in charge of what, leading to sluggishness and disputes. According to Mr. Husar, the vice-president of the SSU, the suppression of the regional level has been mooted, but it would be difficult to carry out since the regional offices presently perform an
important part of the work of checking and processing the raw figures, and do regional analyses.

Thus, the republican offices would get more responsibilities, and would without doubt get additional staff, while the FSU would remain the "methodologist-in-chief", the coordinator of syntheses at the federal level, and the body with which the federal government, foreign institutions and international organizations would deal.

However, this evolution presupposes that a consensus is reached on a new constitution, an issue as yet undecided.

Finally, this analysis has brought to light similarities regarding the personnel and its recruitment, and the degree of administrative centralization of statistical work between the Polish and Czechoslovak statistical offices. On the other hand, the territorial organization and the process of circulation of information are a lot more complex in Czechoslovakia, and this is a marked difference.

The place of statistics as an institution: outside judgements.

A growing role in both countries...

Statistics have had a growing role and increasing recognition in both countries since the 1980s. However this phenomenon has taken different forms; on the political level, the two historical accounts have shown the growing awareness of the regimes in these countries that real information on economic development and the views of the population, provided by statistics, is an essential tool of government.

In Poland, this growing interest finally expressed itself in an increase in the relative independence granted to statistics. At the same time, the population, through Solidarnosc, manifested its desire to know socio-economic facts, a major element in the debates.

In Czechoslovakia, on the other hand, dependence on the demands of the CCP remained strong until 1989, as I was told, by, among others, researchers at the Institute of Public Opinion. Today it does not seem that there has been a rejection of the statistical institutions by the new political bodies or other government bodies. On the contrary, as in Poland, it seems that these bodies are so aware of the importance of economic and social knowledge in this transitional period, that statistics have gained a privileged position. Thus the budget for statistics has, like everything else, been affected by budgetary tightening, but not more than elsewhere. And, above all, the heads of the three statistical offices participate in many consultations on the country’s economic future (for example, on the indexation of wages, the adoption of the Accounting Plan or the establishment of a new customs system).
The growth in the role of statistics is also a result of economic and administrative changes. Tasks that were previously undertaken by ministries and other government bodies have now devolved onto it. The progressive breaking-up of the branch ministries has in fact been crucial for the statistical offices, as the historical survey has revealed.

In the past, explains Mr. Burda, head of the FSU's Department of Statistical Methodology, statistical work was closely tied into the division of the economy according to branches. The indicators used were very different or did not have the same content for each branch, for they were designed only to meet the needs of the branch ministry. The federal branch ministries (metallurgy, construction, fuels etc) were first gradually merged and then abolished in 1989 and 1990. Now there is only one Ministry of Industry in each republic and a Ministry of the Economy at the federal level. The FSU thus takes in hand the processing of all industrial data, an often heavy task, according to Mr. Burda, who would prefer the industry ministries to take on part of this work.

The FSU has also recently been made responsible for price statistics, previously the work of the Ministry of Trade (a point to which we will return) as well as, in collaboration with the Central Customs Administration, for foreign trade statistics, previously the work of the ministry of the same name.

...but perceived differently

The process of growth of the role and powers of the statistical offices is thus evident in the two countries, but it has not been experienced in the same way.

In Poland, the workings of statistics seem more accessible to the understanding of the potential public desirous of taking an interest; at the GUS, and apparently in many of the WUS, there is a library open to all. The two main statistical publications Wiadomosci Statystyczne, composed of articles, and a monthly statistical bulletin as well as the yearbook, are on sale.

In Czechoslovakia, the publications have very small print runs and are generally circulated, for political and historical, but also currently for financial reasons, only to the central government bodies and some research circles. The "ordinary" public has to go directly to the different departments of the offices to get the desired information. On this subject a statistician at the Slovak office remarked humourously "this is a simpler, more direct procedure than the bureaucratic route!" But this also supposes that everyone has at least a vague grasp of the organizational diagrams of these offices.

Distribution thus only takes to a rather closed circle of users and producers of statistics. But this circle (statistical offices, ministries, the central bank, the presidential council and the universities) gets on well, according to the people I met.
Representatives of the different bodies meet each other often; for example, the Ministry of Strategic Planning and the FSU together work out the bulletin on the social and economic situation for the prime minister, and the research institutes aid the FSU over the classifications. Relations are described as good.

The climate is a lot less serene in Poland, where the Central Planning Office, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, and the sociologists I met, made known to me their criticisms of the GUS, in particular over its lack of zeal in following developments in the private sector, the calculation of the unemployment rate (looked at in the second part of this essay) and the use of out-of-date socio-professional classifications based on ideological criteria.

It is hard here to distinguish between objective statements on the one hand, and a not disinterested and sometimes passionate discourse on the other. But the atmosphere of the relations between the political class, statistics and research appears to be genuinely different in the two countries.
THE CONCRETE CHANGES IN STATISTICAL SYSTEMS LINKED TO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL TRANSITION
At the start of 1990, people in the Central and Eastern European countries were arguing on the following lines: "As we were able to go over to democracy, the passage to a market economy will be a mere formality."

Prague, March 1991, in the Czech statistical office: "after having lived through a political revolution, we are now living through an economic revolution... and this is a lot more complex."

This change of views is without doubt due to the fact that, despite the appearance of permanent verification and supervision of economic results, the real functioning of the national economy had been poorly analyzed for a long time.

"We did not" declared V. Dlouhy, Czechoslovakia's finance minister "have a detailed understanding of our own economy."¹

And in Poland, explains W. Brus, a Polish economist who, with O. Lange initiated the economic reform of 1956, the problems go back to the 1950s. "Prewar Polish statistics were good, and even during the Nazi occupation, the underground managed to produce figures of remarkable quality. But the publication of the statistical yearbooks was interrupted in 1949. Naively, I had imagined that the figures were still being collected but only circulated in the highest levels of the party, in order to protect the economy from sabotage or Western propaganda. But in 1954 I was appointed to a party commission dealing with statistics. It was only then that I discovered that no collection of statistical series or research had been undertaken since 1948. There were production figures provided by factory directors, but no one had tried to find out the real costs of production. The planning system had indeed industrialized Poland. But at what price? That we didn't know. When this iron curtain of ignorance was finally lifted, we were horrified.²

To carry through the economic reforms, Poland, like Czechoslovakia, thus needs to improve, or even transform the statistical apparatus in order to allow an analysis of the real situation in the past, to get an understanding of current economic and political developments, and to evaluate some of its consequences. This results from new political as well as economic needs. "Statistics should no longer be used to justify, but to take decisions," in the formulation of the GUS' Mr. Olenski.

Let us turn our attention to some points that highlight the need for the statistical system to change. We will deal in succession with statistics for the private sector, for prices, for unemployment and social statistics.

(1) Interview in Figaro-économie, January 16, 1991.
4. HOW STATISTICS ARE MONITORING THE PRIVATIZATION PROCESS AND THE EMERGENCE OF NEW ENTREPRENEURS

This is certainly one of the areas which most strongly requires the statistical system to change its methods of work. Statistics can no longer be content with drawing up reports to suit the Plan, with the information coming in from the enterprise through numerous intermediaries: organizations, centres or associations. Now it must obtain more reliable and more direct information, while winning the confidence of the nascent private sector. It also has to equip itself with the flexibility and the appropriate instruments for recording and getting to know about these new enterprises, particularly in that the leaders and officials responsible for economic policy are demanding such information, as is shown by these views of Jeffrey Sachs, an American economist who advises the Polish government on economic reform: "The 25% fall in production recorded in 1990 refers only to the state industrial sector; it does not take into account the unmeasured boom in the private sector of industry and services, which has accompanied the decline in the public sector."1

And, according to L. Balcerowicz, the Minister of the Economy and Finance: "The problem is that we lack the statistics to measure the real importance of the private sector. All the figures that I can give you are for the public sector and for the first half of 1990. It is clear that these are falling. But look, for example, at the shop windows that are flourishing in the streets of Polish cities! I am confident that the private entrepreneurs are capable of taking the baton."2

Reading such statements it would seem that statistics for the private sector do not exist. In fact, they are one of the major concerns of the statistical offices, but in Poland, they are finding it difficult to follow the rapid development of the small private sector, while in Czechoslovakia, such projects often remain on the drawing board, since they cannot of course jump ahead of the slower than expected development of the "small" and "big" privatization.

Let us however look more closely at how statistics takes account of the nascent private sector.

Recording the birth of the private sector

Both countries have registers in which every newly created enterprise must be entered.

In Poland

The GUS considers an improvement in this register, the REGON, to be of great importance. In November 1990, REGON recorded 220,000 units, but, according to predictions, it should have recorded nearly two million. Bringing this register up to date involves three main lines of approach:

- It must be centralized by the GUS, since until now, the WUS have each had their own register, because it is there that the enterprises have to go to register. This can lead to multiple entries if an enterprise is active in several voivodships;

- The enterprise’s branch and activity need to be defined using the newly adopted Western classifications;

- It must distinguish the different legal statuses of the enterprises in line with the new law on property rights.

In theory, each new enterprise goes to the WUS in the region, fills in a questionnaire and receives a registration number.

In reality, this register is far from containing all the small workshops and trading enterprises. In fact, although a "REGON number" is obligatory for opening a bank account, a lot of small outfits are formed without their own bank account, or open them by other means, via private banks, which are also coming into being.

One last problem presents itself: this register does not accurately record cessations of activity. However, the life of these small private enterprises, mainly in services and trade, is often short or episodic. This difficulty is well-known in the analogous French register, SIRENE.

An important instrument for finding out about the small private sector is the tax register. In Poland, as in Czechoslovakia, the statistical offices often turn to this register to complete their information; the small private enterprises are obliged at least once a year to provide a statement of turnover and information on the number of employees.

In Poland, this takes the following form: the workers at the WUS go to the tax offices and recopy their registers by hand. This is obviously a provisional situation; on the one hand, these fiscal registers should soon be put on computer, on the other, because the statistical services hope to improve their own registers.
In Czechoslovakia

The recording procedure is much the same, but it does not, as in Poland, seem to be one of the urgent priorities for modernization. Furthermore, once again, the problem of the spheres of competence of each office raises its head.

Every enterprise must go to the statistical office in its region to get the "ICO number" needed to open a bank account or conduct any transaction. The enterprises only declare themselves once but there exist three registers, one at the FSU, which attempts to centralize all the data, and one in each republican office. The existence of three registers poses evident problems of coordination.

Since April 1990, private enterprises have been registered in this way, but their activities have continued to be categorized according to the old classification, although a changeover to the CEAEC (The Classification of Economic Activities in the European Community) classification has been decided on. It was believed that it would be easy to carry through this changeover, but in fact it demands considerable human resources, which are cruelly lacking in the offices for the fields of registers and classifications, as Mr. Burda, head of the FSU’s Department of Statistical Methodology and Ms. Sehla from the Czech statistical office, complained. The latter adds that, on top of the conjunctural problem of the over-slow rhythm of registration (it is estimated that at the end of 1990, there were 488,000 private enterprises in Czechoslovakia, according to a manual count at the regional level, while the register only counted 200 to 300,000), there is also a structural problem. In Czechoslovakia, she says, "there has been no thought given to the status of small economic units, since production was dominated by very big state monopolies."

Thus, nearly a third of these private enterprises operate in the service sectors, the distinctions within which are at present very poorly established, since previously they were excluded from the field of the only type of production that was really recognized, that is "material production."

Another, even if better understood, difficulty has made itself strongly felt in Czechoslovakia; the number of private enterprises is not necessarily very significant. In fact, it is estimated that at the end of May 1991 "nearly a million Czechoslovaks had registered as private entrepreneurs, but less than 10 % of these really are."

In fact, most of the declared private entrepreneurs keep their main jobs in the state sector and only pursue their personal business part-time or are still waiting to start. Finally, as in Poland, cessations of activity are very badly recorded, since the bankruptcy law has not yet been adopted.

In brief, as Mr. Sulc, a specialist in statistics at the federal Ministry of Strategic Planning, put it: "the systematic instruments for the recording of new private enterprises are not yet completely up to the mark but then the private sector itself has only existed in the past year!"

The regular investigation of the life of the enterprises

Both countries have seen the same evolution: on the one hand the "system of reports" still exists, but the forms that the enterprises have to fill in have been changed (in particular, financial indicators have taken on more importance) simplified (since the questions must not demand additional calculations by the enterprise), and are less frequent.

Furthermore, the principle of equal treatment for the private and public sectors has been adopted, with enterprises henceforth being categorized by size, expressed in the number of employees.

In fact, this principle remains very theoretical, for it is evident that state and private enterprises are precisely of very different sizes and have very specific fields of activity; schematically, the gigantic state engineering complex is opposed to the small private repair workshop!

Finally, the improvement in getting to know about the small private sector units also involves the abandonment of the principle of exhaustiveness at any price, which is untenable in this instance. Thus, attempts at sampling based surveys are beginning to be made in the enterprises, far more rapidly in Poland than in Czechoslovakia.

In Poland

The basic statistical instruments

Henceforth, the GUS is the only body responsible for drawing up questionnaires and their sole recipient, but pressures from the state for the GUS to provide individual information on enterprises seems to still exist, no doubt out of habit.

The GUS' aim today is to create a unified system of surveys which gives equal treatment to the public and private sectors. For enterprises with more than 50 employees, the monthly report system has been lightened. For those employing between 6 and 50 people, it is now bi-annual. Finally, those with one to five people, (and this is the category where private enterprises are concentrated, the average number of employees being 2.4) will not all be receiving them. These enterprises are being surveyed through sampling, and if one refuses to reply, another is chosen. The sample is chosen partly from information provided by the tax authorities on the basis of
statements of turnover, which is often probably less than the true amount. This procedure is still very rudimentary, in the estimation of the Department of Production and Scientific and Technical Progress, and must be improved.

In the field of trade, the principle is the same as for industrial production, but the threshold for the number of employees is 20 rather than 50 and surveys by sample are conducted in 5 to 10 % of units with fewer than 6 employees.

Private trade presents additional difficulties. Surveys here concern all commercial activity (apart from agriculture) but they do not distinguish whether one is dealing with the an enterprise’s primary or secondary activity, at a time when the big industrial enterprises, including state enterprises, often engage in retail trade through opening sales outlets.

Furthermore, itinerant trade and street market trade are not studied at all.

Inadequacies in the monitoring of the private sector and projects for improvement

In spite of the very recent adoption of new instruments, in spite of the recourse to tax files and in spite of the real will to better get to know about these private entrepreneurs, it has to be said that statistics continues to have a poor grasp of this process. This is above all true for industry and trade statistics, but also statistics on incomes. At the end of 1990, no survey allowing an investigation of incomes in the private sector existed. Social statistics also need to be improved from this point of view, since surveys into family budgets had, at that date, only studied households in the "socialized sector." The budgets of households whose head worked in the private sector were thus not known, although it is likely that they are different from those in the preceding case.

Generally speaking, explains Mr. Sawinski, head of the Department of Analysis and Syntheses, the GUS too often continues to reason using the socialized sector/non-socialized sector division. To abandon it would need something verging on a mental revolution.

The GUS justifies its relative slowness in monitoring the private sector by the material difficulties this presents (the setting up of new surveys, notably by samples, demands new resources, training courses and time) and the refusal of some private enterprises to allow statistical research to take place, a problem to which we will return.

But the GUS’s main argument is the following: the private sector at present still plays only a marginal role in the economy. In November 1990, private enterprises only accounted for 10 % of industrial production (although the proportion rises to 30 % in building and trade). As for private medicine, it had only just begun to
develop, above all in dentistry and the purchase of pharmaceutical dispensaries. Some of the GUS’ statisticians thus believe that the bias introduced by lack of knowledge of the private sector is thus not enormous.

The opposite view is heard at the Central Planning Office. According to this body, the small firms are overturning habits and the traditional mechanisms of supply and demand. Their role in the transition period will thus be crucial. This office has also decided to undertake its own complementary surveys of small private enterprises, who can volunteer to reply.

In fact, the Central Planning Office is insisting on qualitative assessments of this phenomenon (using opinion polls, reading the press and so on) which, in its view, are neglected by the GUS to the profit of purely "quantitative and administrative" data.

But it recognizes that this appreciation of the GUS depends on the implicit division of labour chosen: should the GUS restrict itself to describing statistical developments while the Planning Office carries out the work of analysis and prediction? Apparently such a clear-cut division of labour will not be adopted since there exists a definite competition in setting up surveys of the social and economic situation between the Planning Office, the Institute for Research into Economic Development and the GUS, associated on this occasion with the Academy of Sciences of Poznan. And the GUS seems determined to develop its work in the field of conjunctural investigation of private enterprises, using a more rapid and qualitative method of monitoring than the traditional questionnaires. This can only be done with units that volunteer to reply to these surveys.

The voluntary principle leads us to address a final problem, that of the sending in of the information. Introducing the necessary statistical instruments is one thing, obtaining reliable results (or simply any kind of reply) from private enterprises that often want to remain hidden, is quite another, particularly as statistics remain associated with the idea of political and economic control.

Does the private sector have confidence in statistics?

Theoretically, the 1982 law on statistics, as amended in 1989, prohibits the giving of statistical data to state bodies wishing to use it for enforcing taxation. But confidence in this law is not great. The same law also stipulates that enterprises are obliged to reply to statistical questionnaires. But no penalties are laid down for non-response, for the question did not arise when the economy was centrally planned. Today when "administrative commandments" have disappeared, enterprises sometimes no longer bother to reply. Then the GUS tries to elicit them by telephone.

According to many of those I spoke with, the law needs to be amended in order for it to be better respected. But, at the same time, before introducing penalties, firms have to be given the time to understand that a reliable understanding of the national
economy can be very beneficial to them, helping them to better evaluate the situation and thus work out a strategy. Time has to be allowed for the establishment of a climate of confidence. This precondition is beginning to be realized: the GUS’ different departments are more and more often contacted by private enterprises seeking to get started and interested in data on the social and economic situation, the environment and on the price index on which depend the permitted increases in wages (for, above a certain limit, wage rises are heavily taxed this is the famous "popiwek"). This shows that firms recognize the GUS’ role in providing information, as well as its growing independence, particularly, it is pointed out at the GUS, since statistics on the army, the police and the judiciary were made public.

But the problem of non-responses from the private sector will continue to arise: on the one hand because in any case it exists in all countries (although it can be minimized by an improvement in the quality of sampling techniques), on the other because suspicion of statistics will not disappear in a day and its disappearance demands an educational effort with significant mass media support.

In Czechoslovakia

One fact needs to be mentioned: the progress of "small privatization", that is to say the privatization of small trade, services and construction, has been a lot less rapid than those responsible for economic policy had hoped. Thus all that statistics can do is to establish some formal principles, introducing the private sector in a way that sometimes remains theoretical into its field of study. Perhaps this argument is being used to justify immobility, but it remains credible since it has to be recognized that the slow rhythm of this development is dependent on economic changes.

We will begin by briefly describing the privatization movement in Czechoslovakia and the way in which it has been encouraged, before examining the implications of this for statistics.

The slowness of the small privatization and measures to encourage it

It is anticipated that privatization in Czechoslovakia will take place in several stages. The first wave of the "small privatization" began at the start of 1991. Often, state enterprises are firstly transformed into limited companies, in which the state retains a majority share, appointed in a sense as manager, before being really sold to private buyers. In the first round of auctions, the buyers must be Czechoslavaks. Subsequently, foreign buyers can come forward. In a second stage the "big privatization" of industrial enterprises will begin.

But this process is very slow, as all those I spoke to agreed. There are as yet only very few private enterprises, for several reasons. Firstly, there is a lack of capital and the population’s savings are insufficient in relation to the estimated value of the national wealth. Furthermore, a degree of legal uncertainty reigns over the process of restoring property to its former owners and their descendants, and over the laws.
on property statutes. Finally, sociological factors play a big role: the great majority of Czechoslovaks are not interested in privatization. For the time being, attitudes and thinking have changed little on this point.

According to Mr. Matejovski, a sociologist at the Academy of Sciences, one of the deep tendencies characterizing Czechoslovak society is the existence of a very strong social consensus on the attachment to egalitarianism. This attachment goes back to before the Communist regime, which of course, used and glorified it. Mr. Matejovski believes that this is a characteristic that strongly differentiates Czechoslovakia from Poland. In Czechoslovakia egalitarianism is a tradition going back to the Middle Ages, and to the movement led by Jan Hus, which valued equality more than liberty. Furthermore, he states, historical change in Czechoslovakia has always been motivated more by culture and politics than by economics.

The socialization of the economy was thus more or less total, but it also had a perverse effect, "the privatization of the way of life." Czechoslovaks, Mr. Matejovski continues, have invested their personal aspirations in their private life. On the other hand, the privatization of the economy, the idea of creating one's own enterprise, hardly attracts them. This description of Czechoslovak society has to be qualified, but it does reflect a certain cast of mind which distinguishes Czechoslovakia from Poland.

The slowness of the privatization process has led the federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to initiate a programme to encourage small businesses, the outlines of which were explained to me by Ms. Stribna, a ministry expert in this field. Small businesses, she says, have not existed in Czechoslovakia for forty years. "But these are the people who have provided economic dynamism in the Western countries. They should thus be encouraged as they were in Czechoslovakia under the First Republic." This means in particular, workshops, tradespeople, private farmers and small cooperatives.

But three main problems arise:

- a lack of capital;
- a lack of experience in managing businesses;
- gaps in the system of socio-economic information.

Ms. Stribna considers the first as the most urgent problem. It requires the rapid setting up of a guarantee fund allowing loans to be granted to new small and medium industries and enterprises. This fund is on the verge of being established by the Czech Trade Bank, the French bank Société Générale, the EBRD and other international organizations. It was to start activity in July 1991.

The second problem, that of lack of experience and the weight of past ways of thinking, has led to the organization, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education,
of a three-level training programme. The first level consists of courses in economics and management in secondary level education and above all in the vocational schools. The second is a short, practical programme designed for people who are seriously intending to start up a business. The final level consists in longer courses and seminars, dealing with law and finance and open to all at a fee (some unemployed people can attend for free).

To remedy the last problem, the ministry plans to create advisory councils for businesses and develop and unify this network. They would give advice on legal, fiscal and accounting matters, a little like Chambers of Commerce.

Statistics also have a role to play in this mission to inform, since they cannot restrict themselves simply to giving an accurate record of the birth of the private sector; they should also have to become a public service providing socio-economic information for businesses.

Statistics awaiting economic change

As in Poland, the Czechoslovak statistical offices have adopted the principle of equal treatment for the private and public sectors, differentiating between firms according to the number of employees. Thus, in commerce, statistical forms are monthly for units of more than 100 people, quarterly for those employing between 25 and 100 people and annual for firms employing less than 25. But, as we have already underlined, this size criterion amounts in fact to a criterion based on legal status since almost all the big units are state firms or cooperatives, which in 1990, were responsible for 90 % of total trade. The annual form thus essentially concerns the private sector and only includes questions already required by the tax returns, as a way of encouraging the firm to reply.

"This is enough for the moment" is the view at the FSU's Department of Trade and Prices (the expression was repeated to me in several departments) "but it will very shortly be necessary to develop sampling surveys."

The basic idea of including the private sector in the field of statistical investigation has thus been adopted. But, given the weakness of the private sector few further studies have been started.

Thus, at the Slovak office, the Department of Balances in the National Economy and in Financial Statistics explains that at present the finances of the private sector are not subject to statistical study. In fact, although the law on private property, which decrees the authorization of private property for enterprises dealing in production and distribution and their non-subordination to the Plan, came into force in May 1990, it only became effective in autumn 1990, too late for statistics to take it into account in 1991. The department intends to use tax returns and other administrative sources so as "not to remain totally ignorant" but is above all awaiting 1992, when financial data on the private sector will be collected thanks to a simplified form,
currently being worked out, corresponding to the private enterprises’ accounting procedures.

At the Slovak office’s Department of Statistics on Population and Living Standards, the classifications for households and professions do not yet take the emergence of the private sector into account, although this is planned. "For the moment", says Mr. Vikukel, a specialist on the survey of family budgets, "we are obliged to await economic and social changes before adapting statistics to them. This depends on the rate of progress of the economic reform. If the private sector develops quickly, in 1992" he states, "it will appear in all categories."

Finally, as far as private agriculture is concerned, this too only began to develop in 1990; according to the Czech office’s Department of Agricultural, Forestry and Environmental Statistics, 400 holdings of more than 5 hectares were created (on top of the more than 600,000 private plots of less than 5 hectares which already existed and which produce around 10 % of total agricultural production). But these figures have not been established by the statistical offices which do not yet take account of private agriculture, since the package of laws on the land has not yet been adopted. They have been obtained by cartographic surveys on the one hand, and by district agricultural commissions on the other.

Statistics for the private sector, therefore, are revealed by these different conversations to be waiting to be in abeyance and this is a situation that is partly understandable. It remains to be seen if the basic instruments which have been introduced or planned will be effective, that is to say, if statistics will be able to react more rapidly and flexibly when the need is felt.

It is not clear that this will be the case, since statistics for services already show some deficiencies. Ms. Haskovcova, head of the FSU’s Division of Social and Service Statistics, explains that until now the problematic faced by statistics for services had been different from that in the West, for it involved statistics for the local economy: a survey was made of the services offered to the population by the communes.

Today it is necessary to go over to a statistical system that takes into account the private sector. This development is urgent, since it is estimated that a third or even 40 % of newly created private businesses are involved in service provision. But it is difficult to carry out because the classifications for service activities are not clearly defined and statistics cannot know precisely what these firms are doing. Furthermore, since they are often small, they are known only thanks to their last annual tax return. However, the wait for the tax law has delayed the examination of these returns. Data on the private service sector, one of the areas of the private sector which is developing most vigorously, are thus poor.

It has to be recognized that this impression of relative immobility is closely tied to the time needed to establish a whole new legal system corresponding to a market economy. Thus we are often dealing with a transitory phenomenon. Once the laws
have been passed, I was told, "everything will move very fast." This should be studied in the near future.

For the moment, the problem of the private sector not replying, often referred to in Poland, is not posed with the same sharpness. The new law on statistics adopted by the government on 28 March, 1991, to be submitted to parliament at the end of June, spells out the private sector's obligation to reply. But it is at present difficult to predict the size of the problem of non-response. Mr. Sulc, from the federal Ministry of Strategic Planning, fears that it will be a big problem. This fear seems less sharp in the statistical offices, which hope that the simplification of questionnaires and the reduction in the number of items of information asked for will encourage enterprises to reply. But this question is also in abeyance.
Why establish new price statistics?

The price index is a basic statistic for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The introduction of a market economy did in fact start in Poland and in Czechoslovakia with price liberalization measures and a cut in subsidies.

In Poland, price liberalization took place in January 1990: at the end of that month, only 10% of prices were fixed by the state or subject to price control (for example the prices of medicines, electricity and transport), compared to 50% at the end of 1989. In Czechoslovakia, price liberalization was more gradual during 1990 and the real price liberalization took place on 1 January 1991, that is one year later than in Poland.

This liberalization took place after years of fixed and stable prices (or theoretically stable, because the existence of inflation was denied; the statistics did not give the real price of products nor the under-the-table payments). It revolutionized economic mechanisms and the habits of the population; and, for statistics in particular, a new job emerged, not simply recording prices quarterly or annually in the sales centres, but monthly and directly in the shops. This was a real upheaval. At the same time as in all countries the rise in the general level of prices had to be recorded as did the big fluctuations in relative prices, which are a direct result of the economic transition.

Furthermore, as the price index is particularly sensitive and political, the role of statistics appears here as an important element of the democratic debate more openly than in other fields, particularly in discussions on indexing of wages and pensions to inflation.

The consumer price index is thus one of the aspects of statistical work which best reflects the degree of recognition and independence which it has acquired.
How price statistics are worked out

Price statistics as a reflection of the passage from one economic system to the other

The administrative organization of price statistics reflects particularly well the economic transition and its effects on statistics. In fact, for a long time, in neither of the two countries was there a department specifically dealing with the question of prices, because it was sufficient to ask the commercial centres in order to check on the centrally-planned prices. This was therefore a minor activity. In addition, these statistics, or rather the monitoring of prices, was often linked, logically, to statistics on trade.

In Czechoslovakia, the combination of these activities still exists: the Trade and Price Department has three divisions: the first deals with foreign trade, the second with domestic trade and the third with prices. The head of this department explains the maintenance of this structure today by the fact that it was necessary to have a minimal workload justifying the existence of a department, which only the combination of these different jobs could obtain. In the future, the number of people working on these questions will have to grow alongside the development of market mechanisms, and so the two divisions responsible for trade will merge and separate from that dealing with prices.

Moreover, the development of statistical work on the price question would undoubtedly become more the preoccupation of the republican offices than of the federal office, which would delegate certain of its powers if the sharing of responsibilities took this direction. This process of delegation has already begun. This year again the FSU is solely responsible for processing information on prices. But from 1992, this should take place at republic level, the FSU only being concerned with collating them at federal level.

In Poland, the situation is a little different but it also bears witness to a change in the economic logic. Price statistics were already separated from the others in mid-1989. The creation of a Price Department in the GUS corresponds to the new organization of the ministries, and to the collection of prices at the points of production and of consumption. The study of prices was in fact previously spread through several departments according to branch: each department dealt with the prices concerning its sector of activity.

The introduction of price statements

In both countries, collecting of prices directly in the shops has been introduced. This monitoring of retail prices, including the private sector, is a big innovation. It really began at the end of 1989 in Poland, and on 1 January 1991 in Czechoslovakia, at the same time as general price liberalization.
In Poland the price collection is carried out in 307 places throughout the country, by investigators who are permanent employees of the regional offices. Many new investigators have been employed or people who were already working in the offices have become investigators. These investigators have been trained in micro-computers because, since January 1990, all the WUS and the GUS have been computerized for price statistics. These elements show the importance given to price statistics and this of course should be seen in relation to one of Poland's major preoccupations: inflation.

During the first three quarters of 1990, there continued to be a distinction between the public and private sector for establishing the price index. This distinction has today been abandoned and this change can be explained as follows: at the beginning of 1990, prices really were different between these two sectors. Now the difference has become much less and the private shop sector has grown. The differences in prices are today more obvious in relation to different regions than in relation to different shops in the same town, for the same product.

In Czechoslovakia, consumer prices have thus been recorded monthly since 1 January 1991, while they were only recorded quarterly before this date. In addition, in the past they were not collected in all districts, because prices were the same throughout the country. Today, the price statements deal with more than 1000 products and are given for three purchasing points in each geographical centre chosen for the survey, and this is in all districts. These three purchasing points are a state shop, a cooperative and a private shop. These latter, at least in January 1991, often had prices lower that those of the state sector, which at that period was no longer subsidized and thus had high administrative costs.

Prices are recorded by few employees who were already working each statistical sub-office of the district but have transferred to this work at full time. The immediate work on this information takes place in the district sub-offices, which have been equipped since spring 1990 with the appropriate micro-computers. The information then rises through the usual steps: region, republic, federation.

From the statements to the announcement of the monthly price index

In Czechoslovakia and in Poland, the central offices put together the price index and are responsible for publishing it monthly. In reality, this is not really a novelty because the FSU, for example, has always published this index. But today, it has taken on a new economic, social and even political meaning, which we will come back to.

The FSU in fact produces several price indices: some have different reference dates, others are by category of population following their different structures of consumption. There is therefore one price index for the workers' households, one for the agriculture cooperatives, and so on. Ms Kolenic of the SSU, pointed out that it was
a "Slovak specificity we produce price indices that make it possible follow the standard of living of different groups of the population and the social effects of reforms."

All these indices give rise to announcements in the press and publications destined for the offices of statistics at a lower level, for research institutes and above all for the governmental bodies and ministers, because they are used to decide the scope of increases and the indexing of wages and prices to inflation, a particularly sensitive question in these two countries.

**Price indices and public opinion**

As everywhere, the public finds that the rise in prices indicated by the price index is underestimated by statistics, while political bodies wish it was lower.

But the situation should be nuanced according to the country. Inflation was of a quite different scope in Poland than in Czechoslovakia during 1990. The interest in calculating it and monitoring its development took on an urgent character in Poland, while in Czechoslovakia it has only been a preoccupation since the beginning of 1991. In fact, here it is only since January 1991, while in Poland it was at the beginning of 1990, that an agreement between the federal government, the trade unions and the enterprises has planned a partial indexing of wages to prices. Wage rises from the enterprises that are greater than the rise in prices are subject to heavy taxation, as in Poland. On this question, Czechoslovakia has therefore adopted the practices already in operation in Poland, but in a different general context.

In fact, the establishment of the price index represented for the GUS both a scientific and technical challenge and the opportunity for recognition and legitimatization from other governmental bodies and by society as a whole.

This is equally true for the FSU but in a more limited form. It would seem that the recognition by the ministries and governmental bodies already exists but that the credibility and the image of the public service in the eyes of the population is not a question that the FSU really considers.

"In Poland," states Ms Kowalska, head of the Prices Department of the GUS, "public interest is very great." Before the GUS announces the rate of inflation (the 14 of each month) the telephone never stops ringing, most calls coming from enterprises' accountants. "But the rate is not given before the scheduled time," she adds. According to Ms Kowalska, this telephone pressure shows that this price indexing is considered reliable (in fact it is also because it is used to determine wage rises). "It is the only index which currently has this force and it obviously provokes much tension."
She adds that this is why there must be a big effort to thoroughly explain and inform people of how it is calculated, and this will take some time.

In Czechoslovakia there is a different approach. The relationship between statistics and public is much less direct.

In the SSU it is said that they do not receive any calls concerning the price index. According to Ms Kolenic, "Habits are quite different. Statistics were for a long time considered a state secret and the population accepted the information given by the newspapers and the television."

In the FSU, Ms Kocianova explains that previously prices were never a subject of interest giving rise to any discussion. Today they have suddenly taken on great importance and the enterprises have begun to show an interest. But the public, she considers, still does not understand very well how the price index is calculated, and this is not the major concern. "Above all, the population currently has particular difficulty in accepting the difference in prices between different shops," and must learn to use the mechanisms of competition. "But the change in mentalities will occur rapidly," says Ms Kocianova.

There is therefore certainly a simple phenomenon of a time lag between Poland and Czechoslovakia on this question. But deeper differences also exist. Historically, price rises have always been topics of mobilization and interest for the Polish population, while in Czechoslovakia this problem has only just appeared and the distance between the population and statistics seems greater.
By definition, unemployment did not exist in the people’s democracies. Everybody had the right to a job and had to have one. "As everybody was supposed to work, there were no statistics on employment and still less on the different categories," explained Mr Franchet, director of Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Community. "In fact, the number of the economically active was the same as that of jobs, precisely the same figure."\(^1\)

In the first period of the transition there were no really reliable figures, more from technical than ideological obstacles. "As there is no legal age for starting work, nor for retirement, there is a lack of base points from which to start. Because of supply difficulties, the enterprises practised the equivalent of lay offs with the employees, who worked an imposed and changing part-time schedule. The alarming figures which are published today do not say anything about the 'stock' of unemployed, real or implicit. At most they make it possible to enumerate the elimination of jobs caused by the closing of enterprises. They give the extent of a recent 'flood' which coincides with the gradual entry of the economy into the world of competition. Cynically, the experts expect a lot from social aid programmes. They will make easier the job of making a census of this population on the basis of its needs for benefits."\(^2\)

These statements by Westerners make it possible to understand how much employment and unemployment statistics demand revolutions both in the ways of collecting information but above all in outlook. We will present the approach of certain Polish experts who also show signs of certain conceptual difficulties, before describing how the statistical offices try, despite everything, to gradually introduce the instruments and methods that will make it possible to improve their knowledge of work and employment.

The labour market, and its corollary, unemployment: two new concepts

The idea of a "labour market" in the Western sense of the term the place where the supply of labour meets the demand began to appear in Poland and, with a certain delay, in Czechoslovakia, in 1990-91. It appeared both in mentalities which for many years had been accustomed to the security of employment guaranteed by the centrally planned socialist system as well as in economic statistics and scientific research.

\(^1\) Quoted by M.B. Baudet and A. Lebaube, Le Monde, 24 October 1990, "Les Pays de l'Est malades de leurs statistiques".

\(^2\) M.B. Baudet and A. Lebaube, article cited above.
According to Jan Rutkovski, from the Statistical and Economic Studies Centre attached to the GUS, there exists "no valid theory, no basis for creating labour market statistics." This currently leads, given the appearance of an unemployment problem, to conducting surveys which are not based on solid conceptual foundations. Therefore, in his opinion, Poland needs urgent Western help in the methodology of employment statistics because, even in the GUS where the staff are used to dealing with different statistical and economic concepts, there are very few people who can really imagine what the idea of employment means in a market economy.

The weight of the habitual ways of thinking will be one of the major obstacles to the development of employment statistics in Poland. This opinion is shared by Ms Wasilewska of the Central Planning Office. "Unemployment", she explains, "has only recently acquired the status of an 'economic fact' in the thinking of statisticians. Even if it has been possible to use this term for the last ten years in Poland, it tended to designate a 'social fact'."

It is now a question of developing and making clear what we call economic activity, labour force, and to develop indicators for participation in economic life. But Ms Wasilewska deplores the fact that there is little experience in this field. In fact, up to now, reasoning always rested on the correspondence between participation in economic life, activity and employment, a correspondence which has now become false.

The appearance of an official rate of unemployment in Poland and the way it is calculated

Recording the unemployed

The employment bureaus were created by the employment law of 29 December 1989, following the economic emergency plan of September 1989 and in preparation for the effects of the Balcerowicz plan (named after the Polish Minister of Finances) of January 1990.

The first official rate of unemployment dates therefore from January 1990. During that month 55,000 unemployed were registered. But before this date 600,000 jobs were declared vacant. How could such a turnaround take place?

This phenomenon is explained by several reasons. First of all there is a legal reason. Until 1989, directors of enterprises had to report all the posts vacant in relation to the workforce given in the Plan, which followed the logic of jobs for all and not of efficiency. This explains the large number of jobs declared vacant. This procedure no longer exists.
The second reason is a social and ideological one: to make the right to work and job security a reality, many people were more or less obliged to take jobs that did not correspond to their qualifications.

The last reason, which could have been foreseen and is quite logical, is more linked to the current situation: the parallel establishment of a register of the unemployed and of unemployment benefits led to a big spate of people registering as unemployed in the first few months. This spate, and the corresponding rate of unemployment, then varied according to the modalities of unemployment benefit (conditions required, duration, etc.). It is only since November 1990, in the estimation of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, that this wave has become less erratic and it has become more interesting to study the rate of unemployment in a regular manner.

But how exactly is the rate of unemployment calculated?

"At the end of 1990, the technique of calculating the rate of unemployment was still very makeshift," consider the specialists of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The number of unemployed, and their sex, is collected by telephone twice a month from the employment bureaus in the voïvodies (regions) which are in the process of being computerized. Then (but this will change as we will explain later), this information is passed from the employment bureaus to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, which then transmits it to the GUS.

The GUS then relates the number of unemployed to the total active population, from which are excluded individual farmers and members of the army and clergy. This rate is thus open to discussion and is not totally comparable to Western rates. This way of calculating in fact creates a bias: the rate of unemployment is seems higher because it is based on a more limited population than the total active population. Thus in November 1990, the rate of unemployment calculated in this way was estimated at 7.5 %, but according to European norms it would have been 5.5 %. In fact, two rates are calculated and the rate calculated according to European norms is that given to international organizations. In the future, it seems likely that the GUS, under the pressure of the Central Planning Office and the Ministry of Labour, will calculate the rate of unemployment solely on the basis given by the International Labour Organization (ILO), that is to say including the private farmers, the army and the clergy in the active population. For the moment, this rate can only be calculated for Poland as a whole, because the GUS does not yet issue the number of private farmers, nor the size of the army or the number of clergy by voïvodship.

Other inadequacies

The rate of unemployment by sex and by voïvodship is today well known, but not very precisely by profession. The coding of professions by the employment bureaus is not always very accurate, and the classifications in any case needs reworking. Nor
is there always information on the age of the unemployed, nor on the exact rate of unemployment for territorial regions smaller than the voïvodship.

And above all, this rate of unemployment can only be obtained through the procedure of registering in the employment bureaus. But this is not obligatory and only seems useful when it gives right to a benefit. As the conditions and duration of this benefit vary, the rate of registering is not stable. Soon there will be in Poland people who have been unemployed for a year, but they will no doubt no longer declare their existence.

This leads us to note the relative failure of the employment bureaus in their second mission. In fact, they are not simply supposed to register the unemployed. According to the law they should also organize training schemes, give grants for the creation of new posts or new enterprises, and organize municipal public works. But in most cases they lack the technical staff and the computer equipment. "Information and a job vacancy market do not exist, and these bureaus limit themselves to being recording offices." And we have seen that this recording is often a little summary.

Therefore this method of calculation should be completed by household surveys. According to the Department of Labour and Incomes in the GUS, such employment surveys could be introduced during 1991. This survey would be quarterly, carried out during one reference week, would cover 24,000 households and would give information on unemployment and the state of the labour force in general.

**Evolutions foreseen in the future**

Other than the introduction of this labour survey and an improvement in the precision of the figures given by the employment bureaus, the major change in 1991, was the GUS taking almost-complete responsibility for these statistics, for which the Ministry of Labour had been largely responsible up to then.

Because of the more developed computerization of the WUS (regional statistical offices) than of the Ministry of Labour, the information will in the future pass directly from the employment bureaus to the WUS then to the GUS, without previously passing through the Ministry. This latter has stated, "We are a little worried about the growing role of the GUS in relation to the calculation and distribution of the rate of unemployment, this is why we are maintaining contact with the voïvodship offices."

But this contact will no longer be considered as the official channel of information. This change therefore profoundly affects the relations between the GUS and the Ministry of Labour because the information will now circulate in the opposite direction.

(1) *Revue Française des Affaires Sociales*, No 4, Oct-Dec 1990, François Bafail and Dorota Ostrowska, "La Pologne en souffrance".

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This change can be represented by the following schemas:

Up to 1991:

![Diagram showing employment bureaus, Ministry, and GUS connected by telephone and computer]

From 1991:

![Diagram showing employment bureaus, WUS (official channel) and computer, and parallel channel connected to Ministry of Labour and GUS]

The Ministry and the Planning Office thus make the above-mentioned criticisms, of the GUS concerning the rate of unemployment, but also think that these relations will speed up the transformation of the GUS. These important users in fact hope to impose and encourage the evolution and adaptation of the statistical system.

The calculation of the rate of unemployment in Czechoslovakia

Gathering of the data

Unemployment statistics in Czechoslovakia have a particularity: like in Poland up to 1991, they are not part of the immediate competence of the statistical offices. All the elements concerning unemployment come from the federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and its republican equivalents. The district employment bureaus (there are 110 districts in Czechoslovakia) created in 1990 and which, as in Poland, are supposed to serve as registration offices and also job placement agencies, do the work of collecting information at the base: that is to say that they record the name, the sex, the profession, and the last salary figure of the person who registers as unemployed. They send this information to the two republican ministries which transmit them to the federal ministry, which in its turn gives them to the statistics
offices. This is the only way of collecting the information and of knowing the number of unemployed because household surveys on employment still did not exist in March 1991 in Czechoslovakia. They should start in 1993.

**Gaps and insufficiencies**

This investigation of the labour force as well as the improvement in registering the unemployed will make it possible to have a better knowledge of the structure of unemployment, the weak point of Czechoslovak statistics. The FSU Department of Social Statistics explains that the rate of unemployment by profession is therefore not very exact, except for manual workers, who were the subject of particular interest during the first months of calculating the rate of unemployment.

Up to now, unemployment statistics therefore consisted of collecting information and the calculation of a total rate, by the employment bureaus and the Ministry of Labour. And it is thought that this collection, unlike what happens in Poland, has up to now given quite a fair picture of the rate of unemployment. The Czechoslovaks come to register in a regular fashion. It is only in Slovakia that the statisticians have some reservations concerning the rate of unemployment in the regions where the Tzigane minorities live.

More thorough research is however beginning to turn out to be necessary and is planned for the second half of 1991. This would concern the rate of unemployment by age, economic branch and social group. It is in this field that the statistical offices could play a specific role in relating this rate to the other statistics it has available. But more than the FSU, it is the federal Ministry of Labour which needs this work, in order to have a better knowledge of the categories of the population most vulnerable to difficult social situations and to prepare the social measures which would result, particularly in Slovakia.

The FSU was in fact led to become more interested in the rate of unemployment above all when it was called on to discuss how it was calculated.

**The discussion between the ministries and offices concerning the calculation of the rate of unemployment**

This calculation has raised two problems: that of the definition of unemployed (what to use as the numerator) and the definition of the reference labour force (what to use as the denominator), because Czechoslovakia at first wanted to think about a specific method for calculating the rate of unemployment.

The first problem has been resolved as follows: an unemployed person is considered to be someone who comes to the employment bureau to register as such. "But,"
explains Mr Berka, "we know that there is an existing group of people about 5000 per month who have already given up coming to register and of course others who have never come. For the moment these two groups modify the rate of unemployment by only 0.1%, but unemployment is going to rise, and then there will be a greater effect on the accuracy of the rate of unemployment."

Second problem: After having used different methods of calculation during the first months, the three statistical offices and the three Labour Ministries agreed on the adoption of the definition of the active population given by the International Labour Organization. Before this agreement, each ministry and republican office had tried by trial and error to find a method of calculation which best reflected the actual situation. According to the case, the figure for the active population used as the denominator could include pensioners and students with a job, and exclude women on maternity or parental leave. The rate of unemployment would then seem higher than if it had been calculated according to ILO guide-lines.

"This method was not bad," explained Ms Stolarova, unemployment specialist in the Slovak office, "it reflected reality better, it was easier to explain to the population. It was an attempt by Czechoslovakia to find its own methodology." But today a single method of calculation, unified for the whole Federation, and established according to internationally recognized guide-lines, has been adopted after a meeting of a council of trade unions, employers, ministries and statistics offices.

From now on, the federal Ministry of Labour still has the role of collating all the information from the republican ministries and discussing the methodology used. The FSU also participates in the methodological work and is responsible for announcing and publishing the rate of unemployment. This situation and this division of labour, it was emphasized to me, are those which existed under the First Republic. The FSU, I was told by the federal Ministry, often tries to take as a model and to seek its references in the statistical office of the First Republic.

Conclusion

This comparison of how employment statistics were introduced in Poland and in Czechoslovakia makes it possible to see some common features: in both countries they require a transformation of outlook and concepts (which the Poles seem to find more difficult than the Czechoslovaks). Moreover, in both cases the rise in unemployment has, with a small time lag, made the creation of employment bureaus necessary. These supply almost the only information available today (in the absence of other employment surveys) on the number of unemployed. We have shown how the two countries, each in their own way, had started by calculating the rate of unemployment with their own methods and have finally adopted that of the ILO;
and finally we have shown the improvements that need to be made in recording the unemployed, particularly as regards their profession.

But this comparison has also shown, in a precise example, that the climate in relations between the ministries and statistics offices was noticeably different in Poland and in Czechoslovakia. The GUS is now master of unemployment statistics but it is sometimes criticized. In Czechoslovakia the ministries remain responsible for these statistics, the FSU does not demand this role, and cooperation seems to rule.
Social statistics, which are not directly used to evaluate material production, were for a long time the poor relations in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. More exactly, the only social surveys which existed were on the one hand surveys of the family budget (which was in a way the "basic" survey), and on the other hand surveys of public opinion, either made by the statistical office or by an affiliated institute as in Czechoslovakia. These surveys were most often made for the exclusive and secret use of the Communist Party.  

The other social statistics consisted in fact of a simple collection of data obtained from the bodies and organisms responsible for the leisure activities, health and education of the population, which was therefore not directly questioned on these topics.

Therefore, at the moment - and this is a declared wish of the statistical offices - the necessity is to develop social statistics, that is to say improve those which exist and introduce new surveys using sampling techniques. This would be a lot of work and require abandoning the old conception of social statistics. This conception was that official statistics should serve to confirm the Marxist theory of a socialist society, and secret statistics to inform the regime.

However, particularly in the case of the family budget survey, there has not always been a total break with the past but rather an evolution, unlike the other statistical fields previously studied. However, this judgement should be nuanced. According to Mr Kordos, head of the Demography and Social Studies Department of the GUS, the break with the Soviet model in Poland had already started in the 1970s. On the other hand, in Czechoslovakia the Soviet model remained much "purer."

We will start by describing the survey of family budgets, the main element of social statistics, then we will study other surveys and the evolutions underway.

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(1) On the question of opinion surveys, see Le Courrier des Pays de l'Est, No 329, May 1988; G. Mink "La réhabilitation des sondages d'opinion en URSS, Pologne, Hongrie."
The family budget survey

In Poland

The family budget survey is, in the words of Mr Kordos "the lynchpin of social surveys in Poland" aside from the census. It was introduced in 1957. Discussions and criticisms of the Soviet methodology for this survey started from 1961. The Polish statistics office in fact wanted to further develop sampling techniques and the rotation of the sample of the population questioned in this survey. This improvement was made by stages, from 1973 to 1981. It led Poland to differentiate itself from the USSR on this subject, and on this subject only at the time, recalls Mr Kordos, because the sampling methods could only be applied to household surveys. The rule of exhaustiveness remained obligatory for statistics relating to enterprises.

For the survey on family budgets, 30,000 households (in relation to a population of 38 million inhabitants) are questioned each year, or rather, a quarter, that is 7500, each quarter. The GUS uses an accounts book technique for this survey in which the household itself records its income and expenses. At the end of the quarter, an investigator comes to fetch the book and ask some supplementary questions. In the past, statements by employers could be used to check and double-check the information given by the household. Is this practice still current? I was not able to find out.

Other than computerization, which should also develop in this field, the changes concern above all the scope of this survey.

Before 1990, only households in the socialized sector were questioned. It is true that they represented 90 % of the population. Today the GUS is trying, but with difficulties, to question households working in the private sector. These often refuse to reply or only give incomplete answers regarding their income.

Moreover, from 1991 police and military households will be incorporated into the sample. The Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of the Army have in fact given their agreement. The survey of family budgets should therefore move towards greater representativeness.

In Czechoslovakia

The survey of family budgets covers 6500 households (for a population of 15 million) of which 4000 are in the Czech lands and 2500 in Slovakia. The survey is therefore smaller than in Poland. Half the households are changed every six months. As in Poland, the technique used is that of an accounts book kept by the household. This book is collected monthly. The choice of households rests on a certain number of criteria (number of children, wages received by the family and profession of the head of household, always up to now in the socialized sector) and on a contractual basis.
In fact, the households which agree to keep this accounts book receive a payment which was, in March 1991, of 250 to 300 koruny every six months, for a typical workers family with one child, (the average salary at this date was about 3000 koruny, the equivalent of 100 dollars).

This payment is quite modest, but the statistical offices think that eliminating it would introduce difficulties in finding volunteer households. They are seeking however to abolish this practice because it is not really in line with the principles that these offices are trying to introduce, particularly that of the obligation to reply without payment to surveys by the statistical offices (which according to the code of ethics set out in the law, guarantee the protection of individual statistics). This is why this payment could be replaced by participation in a special lottery.

As in Poland, the statistical offices are now trying to include households other than in the socialized sector. With the change in the structure of professions, they are supposed to change the socio-professional categories used for this survey. From now on, the households of the military can be questioned. But the present sample still does not include households from the private sector, although these are certainly rare. It seems that they refuse to participate in this survey.

**Survey on family budgets and study of new social inequalities**

In Poland as in Czechoslovakia, the survey of family budgets is considered as quite a good source of data on households. But its difficulty and slowness are often criticized. As it still rests on a stratification of society inherited from the past, it does not make it possible to really grasp the new social differentiations and the changes in patterns of consumption which result from the economic transition.

In the Slovak statistics office however, there is a stated desire to use this survey to measure new social inequalities. According to Mr Vikukel, of the Social Statistics Department of the SSU, the survey has stayed almost the same, but the analyses which are made from it are quite different. "At the moment, the studies are above all on the situation of pensioners. As some continue to work, we are trying to separate out the different situations of these people." This corresponds to the desire to be useful and help the government to introduce appropriate social measures.

In the Czech office there is the same thinking: "from now on we must aim to produce statistics on the real situation of families." But the emphasis put on social statistics is apparently more important in Slovakia than in the Czech lands. We will come back to this later.

The indispensable and precious survey of family budgets is not however always adapted to the analysis of the rapid social changes brought about by the transition. Thus, in Czechoslovakia, the last complete statistics available often date from before
the "Velvet Revolution." This is why the Institute for Research into Public Opinion affiliated to the FSU for example, has decided to regularly two or three times per month make rapid surveys by sampling on the effects of price changes on consumer habits. The FSU and the government now use these results as "rapid information."

In Poland, the inadequacies of the survey are the same. They result quite naturally from the scope of the sample questioned and thus also from the long process of sorting the answers. This is why the Central Planning Office, on the basis of the GUS figures, carries out its own survey, focusing on the types of household particularly affected by the economic reform, that is to say young households with children, single people without jobs, etc. Every two months, it compares the spending patterns of these categories particularly the share of the budget devoted to food with the national average.

For the figures on social benefits, with the same goal, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, is also trying to develop its own sampling surveys, faced with the urgency of having available figures that make it possible to introduce new allowances.

In both countries, we thus see a recognition of the usefulness and interest of social statistics. Not only do they make it possible for societies to know themselves better, indeed to discover themselves, but they are also called on directly to help the leaders take their decisions on social questions. This is why they often demand more rapid and relevant information than in the past. Because of this, their demand is one of the elements that is pushing towards the improvement of socio-economic information within the statistical offices, but also sometimes and thus creating a sort of competition outside them.

**Other social surveys**

**In Poland**

The "integrated system of social statistics" was introduced in the GUS in 1980, explains Mr Kordos, director of the Department of Demography and Social Studies. This is divided into three sorts of studies: continuous studies (essentially the survey of family budgets), cyclical studies and occasional studies, carried out to order and for payment.

The "cyclical studies" are in fact composed of a major survey on living conditions in the broad sense (health, housing, leisure activities) which then make it possible to carry out periodical surveys on specific questions using a more limited sample.

As for the surveys to order, they have only existed for six years. Outside users approach the GUS which chooses the surveys which it agrees to carry out and fixes the tariff. The GUS then becomes responsible for the methodology used in the survey.
and co-signs the first results. Those who ordered the survey can then use the results freely. The GUS, not being able to respond to all the requests, must make a choice between clients (government, researchers, etc.). Recently for example, in November 1990, the Economic Institute of the Academy of Sciences and the GUS carried out a joint survey of workers’ opinions on privatization. In addition, the government ordered a survey on the households receiving benefits.

In this way, the GUS allows outside users to benefit from its existence throughout the country and its network of investigators, in exchange for payment.

Polish social statistics therefore seem to have already evolved a lot: there are many sampling surveys, similar to Western surveys; in addition, in certain fields, the move from "secret" statistics, ordered by the CP to "market" statistics seems to have taken place.

The last Polish specificity: the role played by the Church in social statistics. Before the Round Table negotiations of spring 1989, statistics on religion were either secret or non-existent. In any case, the GUS was not responsible for them. Since the second half of 1990, one of the advisers of the president of the GUS has specialized in statistics on religion. Particularly important, there has been an agreement made between the GUS and the Polish episcopate. The episcopate has designated a representative to be responsible for relations with the GUS. His role is to discuss the collection and publication of statistics on religion. But he can also give his opinion on all other social statistics.

This unprecedented agreement is an indication of the place of representatives of the Polish church within the state administration. But I was not able to find out or to measure what real influence this representative had within the GUS.

In Czechoslovakia

Before 1990, social statistics were not treated with a great deal of respect. According to Mr Matejovski, sociologist in the Academy of Sciences, they were not of bad quality but there were many gaps in them. Only demographic statistics, considered as belonging to "natural sciences", and the exhaustive data given by the government bodies on infrastructure (social housing and medical buildings) and education, were well developed.

The July 1990 name change of the department concerned in the FSU is particularly significant of this situation. This department was called Department of Statistics of the Non-productive Branches, Internal Trade, Tourism and Services. Its new name: Department of Social, Consumer and Services Statistics; demonstrates the interest now given to social statistics as such.
The change has thus started, but the FSU's newly created division, responsible for specifically studying "social development in Czechoslovakia" admits it is still in a phase of conception and precision of its fields of research.

Nevertheless, we can list the main advances:

- First point: social statistics are recognized as such.

- Second point: their field of study has broadened because the statistics offices can now obtain from the Ministry of the Interior figures on suicides, delinquency, drugs, and on everything which concerns social pathology.

- Last point: publications are developing.

In spring 1991, the FSU published for the first time a bulletin of social statistics, which is being gradually modelled on the Données Sociales published by the INSEE. The features of this bulletin are: it is centred solely on social aspects, it should be more detailed than the statistical yearbook already published on this topic, and it will little by little include all the new fields covered by social statistics (criminality, urban pollution, police and military family budgets).

The Slovak office is also working on the development of a social statistics bulletin bringing together figures not published in the past, starting from 1980. In the past, explains Mr Petrik who worked for several years in the statistical secretariat of the CMEA, the CMEA itself imposed rules concerning the statistical publications of the member countries. The current effort given to the publication of social statistics illustrates a certain desire for change and openness. But it should also be noted that the print run of these publications remains limited. The FSU publication for example will of course be sent to government bodies; in addition it will be sold, on order only; to research institutes, embassies, administrative authorities. But it will hardly be accessible to a broader public.

The new orientation of social statistics is therefore now defined. But there are still few surveys by sampling, aside from the survey of family budgets. The former system is still very present. A few examples make it possible to show this.

Health statistics come almost exclusively from the Czech and Slovak Ministries of Public Health and are supplied by the government bodies on the sectorization principle. The offices are beginning to find this information inadequate for giving a good knowledge of the state of the population's health.

As far as leisure activities are concerned, the statistical offices previously only took note of activities organized by factory committees. There is therefore no recent survey, because the enterprises very readily sent in this information. We have to go
back to 1961 to find the results of a direct survey of the population concerning leisure activities. The FSU would like to return to this practice but says it lacks the necessary funds.

As for statistics on culture, the work of the statistics offices was previously relatively simple. It was sufficient to collect reports from the television, radio, newspaper and publishing monopolies. These are being completely dismantled, and a new way of collecting this information must be found. This is perhaps the field in which there has been the most rapid change, because the Czech and Slovak Ministries of Culture have both established developed statistical services.

Finally, we should note as a characteristic feature of Czechoslovakia the impact of the question of the spheres of competence of the Republics and Slovak demands on social statistics. In the three offices, the people I spoke to emphasized the importance that should be given to social statistics. But this aspect was particularly emphasized in the Slovak office, as if it gave it the opportunity to underline its difference.

The social statistics division in the SSU says in fact that it wants to "transform statistics in line with social demand" and considers that it pays more attention to this demand than the other two statistics offices. Those I spoke to explained that this was a difference of attitude and priority between the CSU and the FSU on one hand and the SSU on the other. According to them and at that time (March 1991), this corresponded to the political economic and social line desired by Slovakia which considers that "the reform, decided in Prague by Vladimir Dlouhy, Minister of Economics, and above all by Vaclav Klaus, Minister of Finance, gives too little attention to the social consequences."

In reality, in Prague as well and particularly in the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, a lot of thought is given to the social effects of the economic reform. But the argument that this is not the case is sometimes used, in the statistics office as elsewhere, with the goal of achieving recognition of the specificity of Slovakia. This attitude is not always linked to demands for autonomy.

Conclusion

Thus social statistics are a field which brings out two points particularly well. First point, the view of society has been transformed and there is a growing interest in studying its statistics. This is found in the comments gathered in both countries. Second point: the specificities linked to the history, the culture, and the current weight of the main social actors in each of these two countries appears more clearly in the case of social statistics than in other statistical fields, which are more strongly shaped by the Soviet model.
These differences are shown for example in the questionnaires for the most wide-spread type of statistical survey in the world: the population census.

Thus in Poland, the 1988 census introduced some new questions, on the following topics among others: women’s fertility (according to those people I spoke to this provoked a lot of reactions) and the living conditions of the rural population. On the other hand, questions on the exact income of the population, how they acquired their consumer goods and on religious and political opinions were avoided.

In Czechoslovakia, where the census took place between the 3 and 15 March 1991, new questions introduced since the 1980 census covered religion, nationality, and the real economic activity of citizens.

This simple comparison is thus an illustration of the rather different orientations of social statistics, linked to the national preoccupations of the two countries. In the very particular case of census questionnaires, Poland was marked by the discussions on abortion and contraception and the weight of the rural population. In Czechoslovakia, the problems linked to the choice of a federal constitution, national minorities and economic reconversion predominated.

On the other hand there is a common feature, which was highlighted at the beginning of this chapter: social statistics are now of major interest and usefulness for political decisions on social measures. Thus the people I spoke to in both Poland and Czechoslovakia wanted to insist that meetings were held to present the census results to the newly-elected local representatives and be used explicitly in parliamentary discussion to support the drawing up of new social legislation.
THE PROBLEMS AND STAkES OF STATISTICAL TRANSITION
Central and Eastern European countries today have to evaluate the introduction of structural reforms and study their social effects. In this context, statistics can and should be a help to developing economic policy. In fact, while statisticians seek justification and recognition from the political powers, the quality and pertinence of statistical information can contribute to governmental credibility.

But this dual process of legitimation requires that the statistical system, the main supplier of socio-economic information, enjoys a certain credibility in the population. But such credibility is often lacking. Then the temptation is simply reject statisticians' work, which are seen as a form of interrogation. Nevertheless we do see a change of people's thinking on this. At the same time the statistical offices are trying in different ways to give themselves a new image. We will come back to this in Chapter Eight.

The most obvious way to create a new image is undoubtedly to emphasize the aspect of a break with the past rather than a transition, and to seek to establish a statistical system similar to that of Western countries as quickly as possible.

But this other temptation overlooks the fact that statistics reflect and depend on the real situation of the economy and society. Principles cannot be decreed from above if practice does not follow or if the pace of change is too different. A question then arises: are there and should there be specific "transitional statistics" ? Should there be long-term thinking and the introduction of all the statistical indicators corresponding to a market economy of the Western type or should there be specific "transitional" statistics for a transitional economy ?

This question leads to another: between a brutal break and a slow transition, should the transformation of statistics take the form of a pure and simple adoption of the West European system of statistics or of an adaptation to the specificities and past of each of these countries ? This is a choice which is always influenced by the desire to join the European Community as soon as possible. In the last chapter we will look at how this desire is present and expressed in Poland and Czechoslovakia. Will there be a "common statistical home" ?
In the past, statistics in Central and Eastern European countries were relegated to the rank of simple instruments for recording and checking. At the same time they were all-powerful because they concentrated several powers (the power to describe, to inform, to manage, to control, etc.) and this accumulation of powers prevented statistics from giving a picture which reflected reality. This first conception is often that of the statistical offices themselves and the central authorities, while the second is the point of view of the population.

Mr Fayolle, specialist of Central and East European countries in Eurostat (the Statistical Office of the European Community) explains that today "East European statisticians are faced with the challenge of proving their social usefulness in societies which, given their past experience, will not be easily convinced of the indispensable nature of a strong independent and recognized statistical system. An 'inevitable product' of the previous managed economy, the system of statistical information was one of the obstacles of this economy. Its silence, its bias, its redundancy, were necessary to the functioning of the administrative apparatus of political and economic management. The radical challenge to this apparatus will also inevitably be a challenge to the statistical system. The temptation of a pure and simple rejection of statistical activity exists in the population."

We will study the scope of this temptation, whether the statistical offices are aware of it and how they react, on the basis of statements made in Poland and Czechoslovakia.

Distrust of statistics

On this point a distinction should be made between Poland and Czechoslovakia. It was in Poland that this problem was explained to me the most often, although at first I thought it was bigger in Czechoslovakia. In fact, it appears that the GUS was more rapidly faced with the problem of lack of credibility; therefore it is more conscious of it. In Czechoslovakia this problem has only recently been raised, except in the Census Department and the Institute for Research into Public Opinion. The very recent census (which took place from 3 to 15 March 1991), did in fact reveal the population’s distrust of statistics.

Therefore we will have to wait a while before deciding if there is a really different situation in the two countries or simply a time lag. In addition, the problem arises...
rather differently depending on whether households or enterprises are being addressed, and whether it is from the point of view of the central office or the local offices. The local offices are more aware of the lack of legitimacy.

**In Poland**

"Without comment, figures are not read; With comment they are not believed."

This is the dilemma of the relationship of statistics with the public as explained by Ms Wasilewska of the Central Planning Office.

Obviously this distrust of statistics is rooted in the past. Mr Olenski of the GUS explains that "in the past, there was a permanent lack of confidence. Statistics were seen as part of the system of control, of repression, of taxation. In fact, this link has not existed for 20 to 25 years, but the memory remains. Thus the small private sector, particularly in commerce, is frightened of the GUS."

Thus the image of statistics is rather tarnished. On the one hand, surveys often appear to be a relic of the inquisition; on the other, the GUS was for too long seen as a simple producer of figures, reasoning in terms of quantity ("we have to have figures, as many as possible, and their relevance is not really important") and whose task was to confirm the regime's success.

According to the WUS in Cracow, these ideas are particularly widespread in the 40-50 age range. "[These people] don't realise the usefulness of statistics. They don't believe in them."

"The GUS lies." Mr Kordos of the Demography and Social Studies Department says, "I often hear this phrase. This opinion stems from a vulgar and unscrupulous use of figures which still occurs today, for example in the recent presidential election campaign. But the GUS itself in fact does not lie. It is true that there has been pressure and that censorship existed in the past: the GUS was not independent."

Maria Jarosz, a sociologist in the Academy of Sciences, who worked in the GUS for several years, confirmed these ideas. She explained that the population's rejection of statistics was very understandable because "What was published officially was uninteresting. However, the GUS had good basic sources." And the discovery of "black holes" in official publications (for example the statistics on industrial accidents or those on the foreign debt) has not contributed to improving Poles' retrospective judgement on statistics. They therefore find it dif-
ficult to understand that statistics can become a public service and no longer simply in the service of the government of the day.

The legacy of the past thus undeniably plays a role and the weight of old attitudes and practice partly justifies the suspicious attitude of the population. It is thus a question of time and change of habits. But another explanation is often put forward: the tense social and political situation in the present period does not contribute to improving the image of statistics.

Mr Sawinski of the Department of Analyses and Syntheses explains that "The problems of credibility stem in large part from the current situation, marked by high inflation and the recession, rather than statistics themselves." Thus, when inflation is high, the price index is always more violently criticized than when it is low. The population, in periods of economic upheaval, finds it difficult to accept the figures published by the GUS, and is then tempted to disbelieve them.

Or more exactly, according to Mr Kordos, "Credibility is closely linked to the quality of the data. But this is very difficult to ensure in a period of transition." From this point of view, it would therefore be almost normal, and a passing phase, for statistics to be criticized as long as the major transformations of the Polish economy have not been completed.

In this context, figures on the economy are either the subject of lively discussions, or they begin to provoke a certain boredom in the population. For example, there is concern in the GUS library about the falling number of visitors. This is interpreted as a sign of the population’s weariness with the endless discussion of economic difficulties.

A third explanation can be added to these two which has already been mentioned. In Poland, as in all countries, statisticians face a refusal to answer their questions from the private sector enterprises, the emerging liberal professions and from households concerning their incomes. The WUS staff in Cracow outlined this problem of the refusal of the private sector to answer questions: "Investigators are often taken for tax officials and are sometimes ejected by the enterprises. According to these investigators, only 10% of enterprises tell the truth about their sales and their wages. The big ones tell fewer lies, except as concerns the secondary commercial activities that they are developing. In Cracow in November 1990, the last questionnaire for enterprises of less than 5 employees was sent to 1200 units; we received 500 replies."

In fact, this phenomenon of non-replies or distorted statements from the private sector is standard. But, for Polish statisticians this is a discovery which has obliged them to think of a new form for their relations with enterprises and households. Several of the people I spoke to hope that this will encourage them to "take initiatives" to demonstrate their independence and usefulness.
In Czechoslovakia

"In Czechoslovak cinema as in literature - see Hasek’s *The Good Soldier Svejk* - the tragi-comic figure is always the pen-pusher. There is a great aversion to the administration, the bureaucracy and this to statisticians in this country." This is how Mr Sulc, specialist of statistical data in the Strategic Planning Ministry, describes the situation. For this reason he expects that the rate of non-response to statistical surveys, which is still very low, will increase a lot in the next period, now that the Plan no longer makes it obligatory.

This is also the opinion of Mr Vesely, head of the Department of International Cooperation in the FSU: "Statistics have a bad image, because they are seen as the incarnation *par excellence* of bureaucratic work and useless form-filling. They seem an extra burden."

Thus Czechoslovak statisticians realise that their work is relatively badly seen by the population as a whole. But in general, those I spoke to think that statistics, as such, are not totally discredited. For example, when I asked Ms Kocianova what she thought was the public’s opinion of the FSU’s independence in the calculation of the price index, she thought that there was not a problem: "The population currently has particular difficulty in accepting the difference in prices between different shops." As for the investigators responsible for collecting prices, they are sometimes badly received by private shops, who fear not only investigation but particularly extra work. There is therefore no serious problem of rejection of statistics.

The Census and Population Statistics Department has the opposite opinion. It is true that the census has just finished when I met the staff of this department. What it had shown on the ground was the public’s distrust of statistics. Carrying out the 1991 census was made difficult by people’s attitude because they now refuse to be questioned, investigated or registered. They show a certain fear that data on religion, nationality, housing will be used against them.

The press has waged a campaign of agitation, claiming that the right to anonymity has not been respected. Above all, it played on the still-existing fear of a network of secret police informers. It was particularly the sensational - and very popular - press which created this climate of suspicion. The *Spigl* for example compared statisticians to "tracker dogs" and called statistics a "remnant of socialism." The denials from the Federal Statistical Office were rarely published because the newspapers were worried about their already-declining sales and used everything which could attract the attention of their readers.

The department hopes that this distrustful attitude is simply a temporary phase. It is explained by the fact that "a mistaken idea of democracy is developing: for some people it means freedom at every level, the end to all discipline." This attitude is a
lot more developed in the towns than in the countryside, where there were very few refusals to answer.

Paradoxically, after having suggested that the rejection of statistics by the population was undoubtedly deeper, more rooted in attitudes, and more linked to the past than had been thought, the statisticians of this department finish with an explanation that it is not a radical challenge to statistics because it is based on other factors of the present situation. But it should be noted that they have really become aware of the problems of lack of credibility that confront Czechoslovak statistics today.

The statisticians of the Slovak office are also beginning to meet this difficulty. Although ten years ago the population replied willingly to statistical questions because everything was in the public domain, today there is beginning to be a reticence, particularly on questions of income and material goods. Mr. Petrik, specialist of social statistics, told me "We don’t explain this by the development of a free-enterprise mentality but by the current, very particular, social climate."

Today the population is frightened of the growing thefts, criminality and delinquency. It has fears for the protection of data, not in the statistical office itself but when data pass through the hands of the investigating agents. Some Czechoslovaks refuse to open their doors to investigators for these two reasons.

Through these different explanations, we can see that Czechoslovak statisticians are becoming aware of certain mood of rejection of statistics. But the most often, and perhaps in the end correctly, they mainly explain these as a result of other social factors, and not as a radical challenge to statistics themselves. These factors are, as we have seen, of different types: fear of rising crime, influence of the scandal-mongering press, assertion of freedom at all levels, or the weariness of the population.

The following words illustrate this last argument: Czechoslovaks, it is noted at the Institute of Research into Public Opinion, no longer always reply to statistical enquiries but "when they do so it is reliable. The main problem today is the refusal to reply because of lack of time and desire to do so. This is a new phenomenon, a sort of weariness of the population which is sceptical and disabused by such surveys." Mr Petrik ends by saying "We are living today in a very specific social climate. It is undermining the necessary confidence in statistics."

How can this confidence be regained? How can there be a new image, how can more credibility be won? It seems already that this low credibility is increasing. This can be seen by several indicators, which we will note, before studying how the statistics offices can develop and support this movement.
The growing credibility of statistics in the eyes of the public was particularly described to me in Poland, because of the few months lead in the transformation of Polish statistics compared to Czechoslovak statistics. In fact, in Poland, the change in attitude began at the end of 1990-beginning 1991 to be really perceptible, in any case more so than in Czechoslovakia.

The GUS and the WUS are increasingly directly contacted by the public wanting to know the average wage and particularly the price index. In the Price Department of the GUS, they refer to themselves as being under "telephone pressure." The public chooses to go directly to "the source" for socio-economic information. Similarly, the WUS in Cracow, received many calls concerning consumer prices, but there are also often more general questions on the current economic reforms. This can be considered as a sign that the public accords statistical offices a certain competence in explaining economic mechanisms.

This reflects two things. Firstly, there is a recognition of the usefulness of statistics, particularly by the enterprises which appreciate the first business surveys which allow them to see where they stand and evaluate their branch of activity. Secondly it reflects the broadening of distribution and improvement of the information. There is "glasnost" also for statistics, and this is starting a process of re-legitimization. Ms Powalka, of the Department of Production and Scientific and Technical Progress in the GUS, notes that the confidence in statistics has recently grown significantly since statistics on the army, the legal system and the security system were made public.

In Czechoslovakia, these different indicators of growing credibility were also mentioned by some of the statisticians I met, particularly for the price index and in questions concerning the environment. This last question for example was recently for the first time the subject of a public detailed and official publication. But direct contact with the public remains severely limited. It is true that I did not meet statisticians from regional and district offices who, being closer to the local problems, would perhaps have nuanced this judgement.

Lastly, we should mention the important event which took place simultaneously in the two countries and which contributed to giving statistics a new role. This is the task that was given to the statistics offices at the time of the first free elections: establishing electoral statistics. In Poland this work only concerned the communal elections of May 1990. In Czechoslovakia, it was carried out on the basis of the legislative elections of June 1990, and the communal elections of November 1990. It was on this occasion that many district offices received computers.

The statistical offices were thus responsible for processing and publishing election results. This gave statisticians an opportunity to prove their usefulness and their independence from the government. According to those I spoke to, this opportunity
was taken. They say that on this occasion they could demonstrate that statistics were an instrument of democracy.

But elections are too much a single event and too often provoke tense discussions to be the solid foundation of a new statistical legitimacy. Other activities (particularly publications and pedagogy) and other means (particularly revision of the legal texts concerning the organization of statistical work) must be introduced.

The law, support of legitimacy

A new law would not be enough to give statistics a new image. However, the transformation of the legal framework fixing the basic principles for statistical work will be an essential component of such a change.

The modification of the legal framework should insist on the following principles:

- The statistical office’s independence from the government must be reasserted:
- The notion of confidentiality of all data and secrecy of statistics should be redefined;
- Answers to statistical surveys defined in the annual programme of work should in return be made obligatory;
- New rules for the coordination of statistical work between the central office and the other government bodies and ministries should be introduced;
- The forms for regular coordination between the users and producers of statistical data should be defined.

Throughout Central and Eastern Europe there is currently rethinking of the legal framework of statistical work and the responsibility of each element in the system of socio-economic information, but it takes different forms in different countries.

For example, in the USSR, there was no law up to now on the organization of the statistical system, whose rules of functioning were only fixed by decree. Today, faced with the rapid increase in the refusals to answer from enterprises, and given the growth in powers of the Republics, and thus of the republican statistical offices in relation to the federal office, - the Goskomstat of the USSR - the collection of statistical information is becoming problematic. This is why there is an increasingly urgent feeling that a law on statistics is necessary. This law would provide a legal basis for collecting information. The federal law would provide a general framework, as a reference for the Republics who would have the right to adapt it when adopting
their own law (this vote has already taken place in Estonia, Lithuania, and in Moldavia while the federal law is still at the draft stage).

This description of the situation of Soviet statistics from a legal point of view makes it possible to bring out certain points which we will also see in the cases of Czechoslovakia and Poland. The first is the division of spheres of competence between the federation and the Republics: this question only arises for Czechoslovak statistics and of course in a different way than in the Soviet Union. The second point, which concerns both countries, is the affirmation and respect for the major principles outlined above, which are indispensable for inspiring the confidence necessary to obtain information.

The evolution of the legal framework is thus different in Czechoslovakia and in Poland: in the first case a totally new law (in fact three) will be adopted; in the second, for the moment, there are only talking about updating the existing law.

In Czechoslovakia

The law in force up to now has been No 21 of 1971 on the "unified system of socio-economic information." The idea of a "unified system" expressed the desire to integrate all the accounting and statistical operations into a single whole that was as valid for the FSU as for managing the state budget, for calculating the Plan and for the accounts of enterprises. This law was only marginally changed in 1989. Mr Vesely, head of the Department of International Relations in the FSU, explained "This is why a new law was needed, which would be adapted to the conditions of a market economy. The 1971 law has been too often evaded, we can no longer try to apply it."

The decision to introduce a new law was taken during the spring 1990 discussions between the government and the FSU on statistical regulations, a discussions which demonstrates the interest and importance that the Czech leaders give to this subject. During this meeting, a guideline document for transitional statistics was drawn up and adopted by the government. This text was entitled: "The statistical activity of the Czechoslovak state in the new economic and social conditions." The FSU is responsible for writing a draft law on the basis of this text. This was also a sign of the FSU's recognition as a fully-fledged actor in the field.

Drawing up this draft required the formation of a commission of statisticians from the three offices specializing in law or methodology (three from the FSU, two from the CSU and two from the SSU). All the successive versions were discussed in these offices, and there were several round-table discussions with the users of statistics: the central administration, governmental bodies, associations and trade unions. The final draft was adopted by the government of 28 March 1991, but has not been adopted by parliament. In fact, this law and the republican laws which are based on
it will have to be compatible with the new constitution defining the different spheres of competence of the federation and the republics. This constitution is not yet definitive.

The underlying philosophy of a new law on statistics is the following: to affirm that statistics and accounting are very different from each other, while in the past they were considered as two aspects of the same work of controlling the Plan. As explained by Mr Kamenicek of the department of Statistical Methodology of the FSU and member of the above-mentioned commission "The law should:

- correspond to a pluralist democratic system;

- be adapted to a market economy;

- aim for the future integration and participation of Czechoslovakia in the EEC."

As far as this third point is concerned, Mr Vesely recalls that Eurostat, the Statistics Office of the European Community, has in fact asked that this law be submitted to it. The FSU accepted this request straightaway because "it is in its interests that this law, in the perspective of joining the EEC, corresponds to European legislation on statistics." We will deal with this goal at more length in the next chapter.

The new law, unlike that of 1971, specifies that there is an obligation for the private sector to reply, insists on the protection of individual data, and explicitly allows for fines if confidentiality is not respected. The independence of the statistics office is the subject of a specific paragraph which stipulates that the FSU is independent in the collection and processing of data.

The legal framework of Czechoslovak statistics has thus been really changed, and this has provoked much methodological and political thinking. This should contribute to giving it a new credibility and, in the opinion of Mr Kamenicek, "to better defining its role in the present political and economic context."

In Poland

There is not a new draft law in Poland. However, it should be remembered that the GUS actively participated in developing the "European Statistical Convention" of which it was the initiator. Moreover, some parts of the 1982 law, which was brought up to date in 1989, will have to be reworked or made more detailed. According to Mr Olenski, director of the Centre for Research and Development of Statistics in the GUS, the law should be revised on the following points: relations between the ministries and the GUS, rules for collection, the obligations of private enterprises and bodies, and the notion of confidentiality.
In the past, and sometimes still today, data on individuals are communicated outside the statistical offices. Those I spoke to regretted the fact that the present law is in fact not at all precise enough on this question. It is true that the notion of secrecy is often linked to bad memories of the past, but in this specific case it is necessary for the respect of democratic rights. "We are going to have to limit excessive 'transparency' and define strictly the best level of collation of data," says Mr Olenski.

This problem arises in the case of financial data for example, explains the GUS Department of National Revenue and Wealth. "The confidentiality of individual data concerning physical persons is covered in the 1982 law. But for artificial persons, as they had all belonged to the state up to now, the notion of confidentiality had very little meaning. But now this problem will be sharply posed with the privatizations. In the future, we will have to be more strict and not give individual financial data to other institutions." For example, adds Mr Olenski, "before 1989 the GUS had to give non-collated statistics on the enterprises to banks. Now the GUS has decided not to give statistics to commercial banks if this could influence the giving of credit."

But all these decisions remain subject to hazard. And even if a new law is not currently being prepared, it is obvious that the current one will have to be updated in any case. Mr Olenski hopes that this will happen in 1991. This would make it possible to create the conditions necessary for the establishment of a climate of confidence between statisticians and the enterprises. But of course, this will not be sufficient. As Mr Kordos reminds us, "The law will not resolve all the problems of credibility." He considers that there will have to be a lot of explanatory and educational work.

The necessary efforts in education and dissemination of the data

Relations with the media

These questions were more often taken up by the people I spoke to in Poland than in Czechoslovakia: they seemed more concerned by them. However, they were not completely absent from the concerns of Czechoslovak statisticians, as is illustrated by the following statements.

In the Department of Trade and Price of the FSU, it is noted that there is a sudden display of interest by the general public in the price index. "But the population does not understand very well how it is calculated. We have to find the ways to explain it. For the moment, the overall index is published monthly in the press, with some short comments." In the same way, once a month the newspapers give the number of unemployed. But no one showed me any more detailed newspaper articles or radio or television coverage.
It is true that moving to market mechanisms has led to a new phenomenon: everything has to be paid for, including the media activity of the statistical system. This problem was explained to me in the Department of Census and Population Statistics. Before the 1991 census, the FSU organized a publicity campaign through the radio, television and press. "Previously, this campaign would have been the responsibility of the state. Today it is the FSU which has to pay for it and it has a limited budget. This is a new problem." This does not help the public gain a better knowledge of statistical work.

In Poland there is apparently a special effort in relation to the media, and at least the statisticians often talk about it. In fact, several of those I spoke to emphasized that "statistics should be popularized" or "socialized" as some of them said ironically. "We want to adapt statistics to the needs of the general public. This affects the topics studied, the way they are presented and how they are distributed." And again: "Now, we have to work for society as a whole." This is why, explains Mr Sawinski of the GUS, the public now believes more in statistics but more time is needed. And he gives a precise example of the new attention given to the requests of the population: "statistics always gives averages, whereas people see their individual situation. This is why we have greatly increased the number of different wage categories, so that everybody can identify with one of them. And in each press statement, we explain how the average wage is calculated."

Once a month the GUS has a page in government journal (Rzeczpospolita) for publishing its results and explaining its work and the methods it uses. In addition, the press does of course publish the monthly price index and the number of registered unemployed. I was also told by the WUS in Cracow that there is a television programme on Sunday lunchtime on the evolution of prices and other statisticians have from time to time appeared on radio and television talking about different economic subjects.

But this is still not enough, thinks Mr Kordos, director of the Department of Social and Demographic Studies. "The problem is the lack of a clear programme of the GUS for increasing its credibility. There is a big need for information and the present contacts between the GUS and the media are not enough. Economic mechanisms are very badly understood, as the success of Stanislaw Tyminski during the presidential elections demonstrated. The media should support the GUS in this educational work."

In the Central Planning Office, Ms Wasilewska also insisted on the need for collaboration with the media and proposed a strategy for gradually winning the confidence of the public: "For the moment we should be satisfied with quite technical and simple neutral comments, and not hesitate to explain why we lack information on certain subjects and why it would be useful. For the moment we should also have the analyses presented by the research centres and not by bodies formerly linked to the regime like the GUS or Planning Office."
Dissemination policy

This is in part a continuation of the educational work, but it should also make it possible for the independence and scientific nature of statistics to be seen and recognized.

"Publishing policy has emerged as an important element in establishing the credibility of statistical offices. All the Central and Eastern European countries will, like the OECD countries, have to publish regularly, preferably every month, statistics on their current economic situation. These statistics should be distributed at regular and pre-set intervals even if publishing them at that date runs the risk of provoking political difficulties. This is the most effective way for statistical offices to demonstrate their political independence1.

It seems that this principle has been adopted in both Czechoslovakia and Poland. But the situation is a little different as far as the circle for the distribution of statistical publications is concerned.

In Czechoslovakia as we already said, distribution remains limited. Publications are produced in a restricted number of copies, often today for financial reasons. Ands they are sent to government bodies, administrative authorities and research institutes. There is not a library where the general public can consult these publications, but it is possible to directly contact the different departments of the statistical offices to obtain information. But this is not very widely practised.

However, there has been a great novelty this year. Statisticians are expressing their desire "to develop publishing activity in order to be more open to the public and win their confidence." To develop this project successfully, while seeking a solution to the need for funding, a bookshop was opened in the FSU offices in April 1991. It will sell publications of the FSU, which can be paid for in koruny or hard currency. "It is new for us to sell information, and so we have to develop a sales network," says Mr Dubsky of the Department of Analyses and Publications.

In Poland, statistical publications seem potentially more accessible to the public. As well as the yearbook, there are two monthly reviews on sale to the public: one is a collection of date in figures, the other is a collection of articles and is called Wiadomości Statystyczne. These publications are available in the GUS library which is open to all, and in the library of each WUS. And they are also sent to the economic libraries in Poland and some abroad. But the number of readers in these libraries is falling, because of the weariness of the public which has other more pressing concerns.

"Poles often reproach the government with not sufficiently explaining the direction and goals of its reform programme. But it is very difficult to convince a whole people to undo forty-five years of habit, to change from top to bottom. The Polish press,

(1) Problèmes Économiques, No 2.229, 12 June 1991. OCDE, "Stratégie pour une adaptation des systèmes statistiques des pays en transition vers l'économie de marché".
which is so often criticized, gives a mass of information on all the aspects of the changes. Who, in the current situation, has an hour a day to give to reading the press?¹

This is why all the elements which we have studied in this chapter - demonstrations of the usefulness of statistics and the independence of statisticians in some specific fields (prices, electoral statistics, etc.), updating of the legal framework, publications policy and relations with the media - are indispensable to re-legitimizing statistics in these two countries. But they are not enough or at least will require a lot of time.

The statistical offices are therefore obliged to demonstrate more clearly that there has been a radical break with the past. But how can this break take place? Must statisticians in these two countries brutally reject their whole heritage or should they find some elements of continuity? We will see that there are differing opinions on this point between statisticians themselves and between Poland and Czechoslovakia. But they all agree on one idea: the most rapid integration possible in the European Community.

¹ Courrier International, No 18, 7-13 March 1991, article taken from Neue Zürcher Zeitung.
9. STATISTICS OF A BREAK WITH THE PAST, STATISTICS OF A TRANSITION

Statistics and the passage to the market economy: reliability and time lags

Reliability of statistics in a transitional period

It is naturally more difficult to ensure the quality of statistical information during the current economic and social upheavals in Poland and Czechoslovakia than in a period of stability. This is a further difficulty which these two statistical systems have to confront: to regain credibility they must be particularly reliable but it is precisely this reliability which is difficult to obtain today. The demands on them are much greater because they cannot be based on practices, categories and statistical series that have been established over time, as they can in Western countries. "There is no choice," a GUS statistician told me, "we cannot wait for a natural evolution as you did."

Mr Kordos explained "Finally, data are undoubtedly less reliable today, because quality is particularly difficult to ensure in a transitional period." For example, the previous good collation of statistical and administrative information is going to be disturbed for a certain period, because not all the government bodies are going to change their classifications at the same time. This is why this is a critical period for statistics. This will undoubtedly be a period of major changes and desynchronization with the other government bodies, both for the speed of the reform itself and in relation to the pace of change in attitudes.

This problem was explained to me at most length in Czechoslovakia. According to Mr Sulp, former statistician of the FSU who now works in the Ministry of Strategic Planning, Czechoslovak statistics were formerly reliable. "This was the big difference with Poland or the USSR where it was normal for figures to be falsified 'at the summit'. In Czechoslovakia there were simply practical errors, 'at the base'. But obviously there was close control over the final publication. The solution of non-publication was preferred to falsification." And Mr Sulp explained this by the existence of a high professional consciousness in Czechoslovakia and a tradition of good quality administrative work. "Thus, in Czechoslovakia, we revised the Plan rather than the statistical figures. In other socialist countries it was the reverse which was done."

Paradoxically, Mr Sulp expressed some reserves on the quality of the 1990 figures, because that year there was a total internal transformation of statistics with resulting difficulties in correctly organizing all the work. For example, many enormous industrial combines were broken up, which disturbed the system of reports. The sudden changes in prices made value indicators less significant than in previous years. And
as far as the financial statistics of enterprises are concerned, 1990 was also a bad year because their processing was suspended during the adoption of the tax law.

Therefore, as Mr Burda, head of the Department of Statistical Methodology in FSU, explains, "The two years 1990 and 1991 constitute a critical and transitional period. This will end when the new professional training has its first effects and this will go more quickly with Western help."

**Statistics behind or in front of the reforms?**

In the meantime, in order for statistics to be as reliable and as useful as possible, the gap between real social and economic transformations and their expression in statistics, a gap which is undoubtedly inherent in a transitional phase, must be reduced as far as possible. The situation in Poland is fairly simple. The "Balcerowicz plan" led to relatively sudden, rapid and major changes. The statisticians therefore made an effort to record their expression from the beginning of 1990 and to measure their effects. In a certain fashion we can say that they are following the advance of reforms with a certain delay but continuously.

In Czechoslovakia the problem is rather different because the reform programme, at least for 1990, was more gradual. Privatization and the creation of new private enterprises are taking place more slowly than envisaged, although the rise in unemployment is worrying, it is on a lesser scale than in Poland, and inflation does not have the same history in the two countries. Thus the statistical system has not been pushed to such major changes. This is not necessarily negative: it leaves time to think and could make it possible for statisticians to prepare for changes. Is this what is in fact happening?

On this point there are different opinions. In fact, in the statistical offices, it is generally considered that the statisticians are not "behindhand." On the contrary, they are ready to record the changes. According to Mr Kudlak, head of the Department of Trade and Prices in the FSU, "Czechoslovakia is about a year behind Poland in the privatization process. Statisticians therefore have a little time to develop a methodology that is appropriate to the emergence of the private sector." Mr Petrik of the SSU adds that "for the time being we are obliged to wait for economic and social changes before adapting statistics. This depends on the progress of the economic reform. If the private sector develops quickly, in 1992 it will appear in all categorizations.

On the other hand, the Strategic Planning Ministry, it is thought that the statistical system is not adapting itself quickly enough. To take the opinion of Mr Sulc: "The basis of all economic reforms is the Report on the development of the national economy adopted in January 1991. This was distributed to all ministries and government bodies. But they are carrying out the changes envisaged in this report at
different speeds. Statistics in particular are changing relatively slowly in relation to the pace of the economic reform. Statisticians were used to studying a centralized economy by quantitatively monitoring its material flow. The study of variations in value was under-developed. The economic reform wants to reverse this hierarchy. But statistics have still not evolved a lot on this point. In the last issue of the statistical bulletin for example, we find precise information of the number of dwellings in Czechoslovakia according to different criteria (their size, construction date, etc.) but not yet their value."

"This statistical behindhandedness will last still for several months because statistics are not an 'elastic' enough field to react immediately to economic transformations. An adaptation period is necessary, and even partly desirable, if we want to maintain a certain comparability and continuity of data. But this should be limited. Everyone is conscious of this problem. The difference in pace will be the most important and most visible in the 1990-1992 period."

According to Mr Sulc, the duration of the major transformations of statistical work will be two years. And they will take place as a result of a triple pressure:

- from the FSU which seeks to transform itself;

- from the requests of Ministries and the State Bank;

- from foreign experts.

"All cooperation (international and between the different government bodies) will contribute to this."

An evolution which will take time

Finally, in these two countries, the difficult period for statisticians is the present, and we can base ourselves on the supposition that the critical period will last two years, and it will end more quickly with Western aid. This concerns the hard core of the changes, because carrying out all the changes started will take longer. Yves Franchet, director of Eurostat, who is both "enthusiastic and optimist but also discouraged and worried", considers that "at least ten years will be necessary to really see the reality, while Western leaders who are in a hurry, and the Eastern European leaders who are conscious of their delay, are only giving themselves two years to know everything."

(1) Le Monde, 24 october 1990, M.B. Baudet and A. Lebaube, "Les pays de l'Est malades de leurs statistiques".
Certain Polish and Czechoslovak statisticians already recognized this, when they considered the question of the adoption of new classifications (more specifically the Classification of Economic Activities in the European Community and the System of National Accounts used by the EEC countries and the job classifications developed by the International Labour Organization). They at first thought of introducing all these new classifications very rapidly but today they realize that it will take a lot more time than expected. In fact, there will have to be a big effort to develop markers for the passage from the old to the new classifications, and then these classifications will have to be explained and adopted outside the statistical offices, in the enterprises and government bodies. Finally, the major problem creating the desynchronization mentioned above is the slowness of adopting the economic notions linked to the market economy.

As Mr Olenski of the GUS explains "this is the real problem of the transition: not only adopting new standards, but integrating them into daily life. The transition is difficult for statisticians, but still more for the enterprises. The changes remain very abstract. They are more difficult than foreseen because terminological changes are not enough. Even if we create the same categories as for the EEC they don't mean the same thing." Mr Olenski talks about "false friends", as there are between languages. "We almost have to create a dictionary to explain the qualitative differences between apparently identical words. This is very long problem of attitudes. Words like 'enterprise' and 'establishment' and so on are still used in the connotation of a centrally planned economy. This is the real transition: to think differently with the same words."

Thus, as the changes will last longer than foreseen, how can we characterize statistics in this period? Are they market economy statistics making their appearance in a particular period or are they transition specific statistics? What do they aim for? Adaptation to or complete adoption of the Western statistical model?

Can we talk about transitional statistics?

Long term and short term

During the conference organized by the Centre for Cooperation with the European Economies in Transition by the OECD in Paris from the 10-12 September 1990: "Several speakers pointed out that the necessary data were likely to be rather different during the period of the transition from what they would be when the countries of Central and Eastern Europe had found their place in the market economy. There is therefore likely to be a conflict between short-term and long-term goals. A consensus has nevertheless emerged saying that statistical offices should give the bulk of their resources to achieving the long-term goals - that is to say the introduction of the
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statistical system which will be the most useful once they have definitively adopted the principles of the market economy.

"At the same time, it was emphasized that statistical bodies in these countries have got an important role to play in facilitating and encouraging the transition itself. For this second role, rulers will particularly need up-to-date information on the short-term evolution of the enterprises sectors as well as on the economic and social situation of households."

If the statisticians want to fulfil this role of describing the current economic and social situation and helping the reforms, they cannot neglect the "short term." Moreover, they must learn to take their heritage into account without completely denying it. This is why we can talk about transitional statistics, in the following precise sense. On the one hand they are based on several basic indicators that make it possible to follow major trends and national developments. On the other, they try to maintain a minimum of continuity between the past and the future.

The first aspect consists of the development of types of "control panels", that is to say the creation of instruments and indicators for measuring the development of the private sector and monitoring the evolution of prices, the emergence of unemployment or the creation of new social inequality. These are the indicators that we have studied during the second part of this work.

The second aspect highlights the danger in completely destabilizing the statistical system which has already been deeply disturbed by the transformation of channels of communication and the mobility of new leaders and persons in charge. Thus Mr Fayolle, specialist in Eastern Europe at Eurostat, considers that "this situation is worrying: the risk exists of precipitating the loss of existing statistical gains without re-examination; it increases the unclarity of the social and economic situation at the point where the decision-makers and foreign partners particularly need to see things clearly. There is in fact an important legacy, not everything has to be abandoned."

But of course this warning does not intend to put a brake on the development of statistics towards its long term goals: the passage to the market economy and a corresponding statistical system. At the conference organized by the OECD in September 1990 mentioned above, all the countries finally recognized that for several years they would have to use a mixed system. They will keep a substantial part of their present statistical programme while gradually introducing a new statistical system oriented to the market.

"So, a break or a transition? The answer is clear: break and transition. A break in the nature of the choice of the system, transition in the time to move from one system to another. Neither reform nor revolution: a planned evolution.\(^1\)

This planned evolution that Mr Stoleru wants implies a strategy and a choice: to what extent should the Eastern European countries imitate the West, and to what extent seek their own path? This very general question is particularly posed for statistics.

**Adoption or adaptation to the European model?**

Opinions differ on this point, and before explaining them we can classify the arguments put forward into the following types. For statisticians themselves, there are those who do not ask questions, those who would like a rapid transformation of statistics through the complete adoption of the Western model but who do not mention the problems that could raise, and those who immediately raise the difficulties in transposing this model but hope that they can manage it. These latter are more or less ready to adapt this model either by choice or by necessity (this latter distinction often corresponds to the difference between the positions of Czechoslovak and Polish statisticians). This leads us to a second type: depending on who one speaks to, drawing inspiration from the Western model and not simply imitating it corresponds to two different ideas. Sometimes they talk about the specific statistics of their countries, sometimes about the specific statistics of the period of transition, these two can obviously be related and enter into the framework of the previous alternative choice/necessity.

**The case of classifications**

"Statisticians must use some imagination," says Mr Sawinski of the GUS, "in order to see how to link the old statistical system to the new one, while knowing there has been a break. They have to deal with the two aspects." The statistical system in Poland and in Czechoslovakia is therefore trying to be in harmony with that of the EEC. This would make it possible to satisfy the demand for comparability of statistical information; and at the same time it should reflect the reality of the country, which is not always easy. The adoption of new systems of classification shows this very well.

The harmonized Western systems of classification have to be adopted because they will be a factor of integration, and also serve as a criterion in negotiations with the IMF. And it is hardly possible to adopt a system of classification partially because it is a system of coding whose internal logic cannot be easily broken. However classifications must also be related to reality and not divide it in a totally abstract fashion. The new classification of economic activities (the NACE classification) illustrates this problem. in the GUS, Ms Skowron of the Centre for Statistical Research and Development takes the example of the computer professions. The Euro-

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\(1\) Le Monde, 16 February 1990, L. Stolers, "Un plan Monnet pour l'Est".
pean classification is very detailed in this field because it carefully distinguishes between advice and expertise and both of these from programming. The Polish classification has only had one single category up to now. In certain fields the "NACE" would therefore be too ambitious.

Mr Berka, a FSU specialist of labour statistics, explains the same sort of difficulties in relation to job classification. The new classification adopted, that of the ILO, for example distinguishes between cashier, sales agent and supervisor, etc. In Czechoslovakia there is no distinction between these professions. A "salesperson" does all these jobs. "Should we then" asks Mr Berka "introduce categories which today don't correspond to anything, but which will mean something in the future?"

Once again it should be remembered that the procedures of harmonization are simpler in the field of classification and concepts that in the field of practice and data collection. There is then a second risk; what would be the value of a rapid and superficial harmonization "from above" which would present figures in line with the European norms without improving their quality? Harmonization should therefore be seen rather as an encouragement to improving data in the perspective of integration in Europe rather than a precondition that is valid in itself.

The particular interest in this question in Czechoslovakia

In Poland, the idea of the balance to be made between adaptation and adoption of the Western statistical model was not often developed by those I spoke to. Ms Skowron of the GUS even thought it was a false problem. Rather than counterposing Poland to the EEC, it would be better to consider the diversity of each European country. "Each country," she says, "whether a former socialist country or a member of the EEC, will keep its classifications and change them gradually. In the end, Poland is not so very different. This is a period of transition for everyone, towards a coming together coordinated by Eurostat." Ms Skowron's position is not incorrect, particularly when she mentions the specificities of the EEC members themselves, but she under-estimates the difference which exists between the Polish statistical system and that of Western countries.

In Czechoslovakia on the contrary, this question was often mentioned during the conversations I had. The two most widely-held ideas are the following: while following international recommendations they should on the one hand ensure the continuity of data and on the other hand preserve a certain Czechoslovak specificity. This position is illustrated by the following statement, "The transition as far as statistics is concerned must not be too sharp. Czechoslovakia wants to be able to maintain statistical monitoring," explains Mr Vesely of the FSU. Similarly, on the question of passing to a system of national accounts the SSU says: "there does not just have to be a change but a translation of past data with the aim of maintaining comparability and continuity."
The second idea - the maintenance of certain specificities - was also evoked several times and in different fields. Mr Kamenicek, member of the commission responsible for drawing up the new law on statistics, thus explained to me that the commission had studied the laws in other countries, "not to copy them but to note the principles and to adapt them to our conditions." In the same spirit, according to Mr Burda, head of the Department of Statistical Methodology in the FSU, of course we have to adopt the European system of classification for economic activity but a system which is more detailed and more adapted to the Czechoslovakian situation could also be developed.

The concluding remarks can be left to Mr Husar, vice-president of the SSU, because he particularly wanted to explain his conception of the statistical transition in Czechoslovakia by introducing, as well as the notion of national specificity, that of the specificity of the republics. "There are three main categories, the statistics of the past (the centrally planned economy), the statistics if the market economy, and the statistics of the transition that Czechoslovakia must develop, with the help of Western experts, but in line with its own needs. The West cannot supply us with a ready-made model."

"At the higher level, Czechoslovakia will fall into line with European directives. But in the details, it has to develop its own statistical system. And at the level of the republics there will also be some specificities." For example Mr Husar plans that statistics on tourism, on national minorities, on religion and on raw materials should be further developed in Slovakia.

Thus the statisticians of Central and Eastern Europe are seeking to maintain a certain identity (even if the situation varies from country to country), but the changes are being placed within the broader project of integration into the EEC because, as those I spoke to in the SSU repeated, "the goal of all these changes is in time to draw nearer to the EEC."

The march to Europe

The Polish and Czechoslovakian statistical systems are opening up at the same time as they are changing. The policy on cooperation of the statistical offices demonstrates this clearly. But it is hesitant on one point. Is it preferable for a country to undertake a "solitary march" towards Europe, hoping to arrive first, or a "solidarity march" which will perhaps be slower, implying renewed relations with its neighbours, the former socialist countries? This question of course goes further than the simple statistical field, but it has repercussions for it. We will now look at these repercussions.
It seems that after a period of rejecting the relations inherited from the CMEA and distrust of the idea of "Central and Eastern European countries" by Poland and Czechoslovakia who want to be simply "Europeans", the idea of cooperation between them in the statistical field could be a good strategy for European integration.

**Policy on cooperation**

In the central statistical offices of these two countries, this policy has changed a lot. In the past, the department responsible for this task were above all in contact with the statistical commission of the CMEA. They worked on international comparisons, were the unit for translation of yearbooks and publications, particularly into Russian, and answered the annual questionnaires from international bodies.

Now they are stepping up their cooperation with Western countries, often to the detriment of their former relations with their neighbours. Contacts with the West already existed before 1989. For example, in the 1970s, the GUS and the INSEE made a joint comparative study on consumer prices in France and Poland, and then in Paris and Warsaw. But this type of activity remained quite rare, and in any case there was no comparison with the present situation.

Today we should distinguish between bilateral and multilateral cooperation with Western countries. The GUS and the FSU have developed relations with different EEC countries, and also with the Bureau of Labour Statistics in the USA, and, in the case of Czechoslovakia, with Austria. These contacts are related to specific projects. Multilateral cooperation concerns relations with the IMF, with the World Bank, and particularly with Eurostat, the Statistical office of the European Community, which coordinates the cooperation between members of the EEC and the countries in transition. This cooperation currently consists of technical and conceptual aid (in the form of missions, training courses, seminars, etc.) contributed by the statistical offices of the Western countries to the countries in transition to the market economy.

This cooperation with Western countries is useful for a number of purposes. Their first goal is to help the transformation of statistics in these countries. But there is also a political goal. In the same way as the perspective of joining the EEC can be used to reach a social and political consensus on reform, within the statistical offices cooperation with Western countries contributes to concentrating the efforts to change. And above all, recognition from abroad constitutes for statistical offices an important element in their regaining credibility.

We therefore understand why cooperation with the former "sister countries" has been slowed down. It does not contribute either the technical aid nor the scientific and political guarantees that they seek. This is why there is a temptation to neglect it.
The temptation to a "solitary march": winning the race to the West

"Realism today means thinking that the sun rises in the West."¹ In this case, why get mixed up with the neighbours, given that the main question is winning the race to the West?

In fact, the phenomenon of a relative rejection of relations with the former countries of the CMEA is explained by two reasons, which are not at all of the same weight. The first explanation is that today, urgent choices have to be made. When greater importance is given to cooperation with Western countries, this is a question of priority and not a definitive renunciation of relations with neighbouring countries.

The second explanation is more fundamental. "Since the forced federation with the Soviet Union everyone wants to live in their own home and in the West. Each for themselves, Europe for all."² This attitude also implies a certain distrust of the notion of Central Europe. Each of these countries wants recognition that it is different from its neighbours, and at the same time belongs to Europe "without adjectives."

A question of priority

The people I spoke to often advanced this argument. Their position is that priority has to be given to cooperation with the West because this will help to develop a new economic and statistical system but that "if we have the time we can consult our neighbours on their own progress." Some examples of this attitude are: the FSU commission responsible for drawing up the new Czechoslovak law on statistics, according to one of its members, has "called on the experience of Austria, West Germany, Japan, the United States, but not of Poland or Hungary: there was not enough time."

Time was even more lacking as the immediate usefulness of contacts with neighbouring countries seems very slight. For example, in the Department of Labour and Population Income, it is noted that "cooperation with other Eastern European countries on the question of unemployment is non-existent because it is in the West that they have the experience of unemployment, not in the East!" Mr Havlena, Czechoslovak Minister of Strategic Planning and a supporter of Central-European cooperation, says "Czechoslovakia started its economic transition later than Poland or Hungary, it tried to profit from the experiences of these countries. But in fact, the same mistakes were made again."

Cooperation with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe has thus been limited for the last year, but, according to Mr Vesely, head of the Department of International Cooperation in the FSU, this is because of lack of time. Money also played its role: "previously, many visits to CMEA countries were organized because there was a big budget for this, in transferable rubles. That time has passed."

(2) op. cit. page 32.
"Today, the urgency of certain problems, linked to the transition has forced us to
turn towards Western countries, before consulting our own neighbours." This is why
this year, the contacts between the statistical offices of the countries in transition are
often established through Eurostat.

The question of priority thus plays a certain important role. But more fundamental
factors also have their effect.

Breaking with the shared past

Many testimonies of Poles, Czechs, Slovaks and Hungarians collected in the alrea-
dy-mentioned issue of the review Autrement, entitled "Central Europe, an imaginary
continent" illustrates the fear these countries have of being imprisoned in a concept
of Central Europe and their desire to "come back into Europe." Mr Smolar, a re-
searcher at the CNRS (the French National Center for Scientific Research) and
adviser to the Polish government, says: "For me, Central Europe is a useful political
tool, and a concept to be used carefully. In Kundera's idealization, there are Russian
elements which I do not like. This community of states between Russia and Germany
exists, but in a negative fashion. They have gone through 45 years of co-existence,
not in a common house but in a Moscow apartment." (Smolar is here referring to the
article by the Czech writer Milan Kundera which appeared in Le Debat November
1983, entitled "A West Kidnapped, or the Tragedy of Central Europe." - was also
published in english -)

"The unity between the current leaders Havel, Michnik, Kis, Konrad, linked by
friendship and a similar cultural background, is a passing phenomenon, which should
be quickly built on. But the factors of division are much more important. The
essential question is how to win the race to the West... We are now talking of coming
back into Europe. That means becoming normal, that is Western. We don't make a
difference between Europe and the West. To come back into Europe also means to
close the Communist parenthesis, rebuild democracy, the market economy and the
state based on law."1

The idea of a specific and common road for Central European countries therefore
provokes a certain wariness. In fact, "The Europeans of the Centre-East are reluctant
to try for third way because they have suffered the defeats of all the reformist variants
of state socialism since the 1970s."2 Moreover, they do not want to continue to be
identified with each other.

(1) op. cit. page 23.
    page 237.
For example there is the position put forward by Mr Straka, specialist in statistics in the Ministry of Foreign Trade in Czechoslovakia. "There are big differences between Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia in the structures of the economy and of foreign trade." On 15 February 1991, Lech Walesa, Vaclav Havel and Jozsef Antall, met in Visegrad to discuss their future relations after the dissolution of the CMEA. But the idea of a free-trade zone was not really adopted. "Each country" says Mr Straka, "has an interest in joining the EEC, but each from its point of view. We follow the same road but in parallel, not together. The solitary road to the EEC is simpler than a common adherence."

However, among the people I spoke to, Mr Straka is one of the few to have such a fixed position. In fact, it seems that this position was more widely shared at the very beginning of 1990. Today, tripartite cooperation (Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary) seems to be taking shape, at least for statistics, partly because the EEC is in favour of this, partly at the initiative of the three countries concerned.

Thus, in May 1990, Mr Stoleru wrote: "Perhaps today we should clear away dreams. Perhaps we should convince Poland, Rumania, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Bulgaria, that not only are they not economically ready to enter the EEC, where they would be economically eaten up, but that the EEC itself is not ready to receive them. Should they then group together and go through an organized regional transition? This scenario is not at all popular in these five countries. Each country has only one idea; reject everything which comes from the past, no longer look to the East and turn everything to the West."¹

In 1991, nine months later, the leaders of three of these countries organized a summit meeting and laid the basis, certainly still slight, of Centre-European cooperation. And the discourse has changed. The notion of Central Europe is still, and will continue to be, the subject of discussion, but the idea that there is a Europe "of communist origin" encountering similar problems and which could usefully cooperate is gradually emerging. But for the moment this is a three-way and not a five-way union, for many reasons linked to the history and current pace of socio-political changes.

Towards a "solidarity march"

The words of Janos Kis, Hungarian philosopher and leader of the Alliance of Free Democrats, are a good illustration of this change of orientation. "I think that we have common interests. If we want to join the European Community, we have to apply together. It is only together that we represent an important political factor whose initiative cannot be ignored. Beyond that there are certain regional questions which could require a joint effort, like the ecological crisis, nationalism or the situation

¹ Le Monde, 26 May 1990, L. Stoleru, "Réformer le COMECON".
RUPTURE OR TRANSITION?

created by the collapse of the CMEA. The cultural nucleus of cooperation is these three countries because, historically, this is where the post-communist transition first started. In addition, their level of development is comparable, and the fact that they are neighbours makes it possible to envisage closer cooperation.\(^1\)

This general statement is also valid for the evolution of statistics in particular. Today the Polish and Czechoslovak statistical offices say that they want to develop, or rather redevelop, relation on a new basis.

"In the past" explains Mr Havlena of the Ministry of Strategic Planning in Czechoslovakia, "when we did not want to deal with the Soviets, we spoke to the Hungarians and Poles (but not with the Rumanians or Bulgarians). We had a lot of contact with the ex-GDR. Dialogue has existed for a long time. However it should be established on a new basis today."

Ms Wisniewska, head of the International Cooperation Division of the GUS described this new basis more precisely. "Before 1989, cooperation with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe was very formal. It is now intensifying and becoming more scientific. For example, Poland is passing on its experiences of cooperation with Eurostat to Czechoslovakia, particularly on questions of methodology and classification."

"A significant indicator of this change in relations: from this year these exchanges with Czechoslovakia and Hungary are taking place in English and no longer in Russian!"

There are therefore new forms of cooperation between these countries; and they have recently become more official. In fact, following the example of the three heads of state of Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia who met on 15 February 1991, the presidents of the statistical offices of these three countries met at Zakopane in Poland on 10 May 1991, in order to establish cooperation on the basis of principles different from those of the CMEA.

According to the statement of intent signed on May 11th, "cooperation will take many forms and will include the creation of a network of centres for proficiency courses in statistics, the organization of seminars, joint consultation, exchange of information and experience, publication of a joint bulletin of economic indicators and any other form which will be considered useful for the three statistics offices... The provisional name of this form of cooperation in CE-STAT (Central European Cooperation in Statistics).

\(^{(1)}\) Autrement, "Europe Centrale, un continent imaginaire", page 75.
Of course this document is still only a statement of intent, and its proposals are not in the least intended to replace the development of relations with Western countries and particularly with the EEC countries. It is rather, as Janos Kis explained above, a question of applying together in order to represent a significant factor "whose initiative cannot be ignored", and to combine their efforts.
CONCLUSION

This study aimed to describe the comparative transition in statistics in Poland and Czechoslovakia, placing it in the total context of the economic, political and social transition which these countries are experiencing, over a fairly short period (1990-beginning 1991). A number of questions, laid out in the introduction, have been the constant thread throughout this study.

The first of these questions is the role of the past; what is the weight of history and of the legacy of the Soviet model on the current situation of statistics in these two countries? And what degree of correspondence can be established between the historical evolution of these two countries since 1945 and that of their statistical systems?

In Poland as in Czechoslovakia, the role and the tasks of statistics was closely linked to the centrally-planned organization of the economy. Statistics were an instrument for monitoring the plan. Moreover, they were a propaganda instrument, because the Communist regime used figures as a scientific guarantee of its "successes" and legitimacy. This conception of statistics has disappeared today in a definite but gradual fashion. The statistics of the past, based on the "system of reports" completed by all the enterprises in an exhaustive fashion, and giving the priority to everything which concerned material production, are gradually giving way to statistics which use more and more sampling methods and give a greater place to social statistics.

However, there has definitely been a break, in which the political events of 1989 played a big role. But although these events were undeniably necessary for this evolution, it was more precisely the abandoning of planning which was the major direct cause of the transformation of statistics. Thus, in Czechoslovakia, there had been more recognition since 1968 of the interest of statistics, but no radical transformation took place before the "velvet revolution" which sounded the passing bell not only for the Communist regime in power but also for the centrally-planned economy. In Poland, 1981 represented an important turning point because since then socio-economic information has been a continual subject of discussion; however, there again it was the abolition of the Plan which marked a real break for statistics.

The second question was a description and analysis of the current changes: how are the changes in the statistical system seen in practice, and what is their rhythm in relation to that of the reforms? Two points make it possible to characterize the transformation of the statistical system in Poland and in Czechoslovakia: the change in personnel and the change in questions studied and methods used.

As far as the first point is concerned, there has been a change in the top personnel in statistical offices in both Poland and Czechoslovakia. But in Czechoslovakia, this occurred through the use of competitive examinations, while in Poland the new
nominations, on the basis of less clearly defined criteria, were more spread out over time. They had already started more than a year ago, and continued after the election of Lech Walesa as president in December 1990, because a new president of the GUS was appointed in January 1991.

As for the changes in questions studied and in methods of work, the differences described between Poland and Czechoslovakia in four fields illustrating the effects of the transition on statistics (statistics of the private economy, those on prices, on unemployment and social statistics) seem to be less deep differences in nature than the result of the economic reforms in the two countries having started at different times, a time lag of more or less a year. Added to this is the fact that Polish statistical system undoubtedly had to adapt more quickly to a rapid evolution of the economic system, while in Czechoslovakia the pressure for change (in the period studied, that is to say up to March 1991) was apparently less strong.

Finally, the third series of questions dealt with the way in which the strategy for transforming the statistical system in the period of transition is combined with the introduction of a statistical system which already corresponds to a market economy. Given greater independence, enjoying moderate but growing confidence from the public, the statistical offices in these two countries are trying to highlight the break made with the past in order to win a new legitimacy, but at the same time to guarantee a certain scientific continuity in their work and data. And at the same time they are pursuing the final objective; to make their statistical systems as close as possible to those of Western countries and in particular to those of the members of the European Economic Community which Poland and Czechoslovakia would like to join. In pursuing this common goal, it seems that, as far as statistics are concerned, a common approach by Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary has been chosen, in the form of exchanges of experiences and a joint training school. This project is not confined to the strategy of transformation of the statistical apparatuses. Internal changes and other forms of cooperation complete the plans.

This leads us to look at the possible continuations of this study.

First of all, it should be remembered that most of this work is based on oral interviews. The personalities of the people I spoke to and the period in which these conversations took place should therefore be taken into account. These interviews made it possible for us to understand how the actors and the users of statistics perceived and recounted the deepgoing transformations that they are currently experiencing. But completing this with more written documents would be useful.

Furthermore, it would also be interesting to continue this study in two ways.

In space, through extending the comparison of the statistical systems of Poland and Czechoslovakia to include Hungary, because there seems to be the formation of a sort of "nucleus" of these three Central European countries. It should then be asked whether there is one single path for the transformation of the statistical systems in
the countries in transition or two (Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia on the one hand, Bulgaria and Rumania on the other). Even more pertinent is the question if, for statistics, the specificities of these different countries predominate over the shared common legacy of the Soviet model and the existence of similar difficulties to be dealt with.

In time, a similar study made some months later in Poland and in Czechoslovakia would make it possible to better measure the evolution, to see which of the plans have become reality, to bring out which of the differences between the two countries have faded away and which have grown, and to examine how new problems and new decisive questions have emerged in a later period of the transition.
Owing to the recent and specific nature of the subject, this bibliography is, apart from a few works, essentially made up of articles dealing at greater or lesser length and with more or less directness with the theme of statistics during the transition in Poland and Czechoslovakia.

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