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# Dissidence in Eastern Europe

A Research Paper

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## Dissidence in Eastern Europe

*Central Intelligence Agency  
National Foreign Assessment Center*

*September 1978*

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### *Key Points*

- The new wave of dissidence in Eastern Europe last year, although now considerably diminished, shows no signs of vanishing. It has been most intense in Poland and Czechoslovakia, somewhat less so in Romania and East Germany.
- The dissidents, few in number, are generally outspoken, nonconformist intellectuals. They have developed and sustained their causes and have attracted some popular support, particularly in Poland, where those who protest are relatively well organized and well led.
- The East European regimes, however, have kept the domestic impact of dissident activity within bounds. They have made it clear that a price must be paid for active dissidence—loss of job, harassment, physical abuse, police detention, or a jail sentence. There is no evidence that the dissidents' causes have been taken up by influential party or government officials.
- The formulation of regime policy toward dissent could, however, become a serious source of discord within local leaderships, particularly as a new generation of leaders displaces the old. The toleration of any measure of dissent will remain a risky course, both for the national leaders and for their relations with the USSR.

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## Dissidence in Eastern Europe

### The Roots of Dissidence

The authoritarian systems in Eastern Europe invite dissent by continuing to place a wide range of human endeavor within a political straitjacket, by refusing to tolerate criticism, and by insisting that whatever change takes place be initiated by an inherently conservative, bureaucratic structure. Above all, the formal repudiation of the most onerous Stalinist controls has made possible the systematic expression of dissent. (u)

The roots of dissident activity reach back into the mid-1950s and the search for new political, social, and economic blueprints initiated by Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalinism. Many of today's dissidents either participated in, or are spiritual heirs of, those efforts to revise ideology and the Stalinist system that was built in its name. The present-day dissidents, unlike the earlier "revisionists," do not consider ideological reform as the key to systemic reform, but they do seek, as did their predecessors, to expand the range of individual freedoms allowed by the authorities. (u)

In the early days of de-Stalinization, dissent against various aspects of the Stalinist system was generally tolerated and even officially encouraged. Candid discussion and innovative proposals were permitted both for their cathartic value and as proof that Stalinism had been rejected. Over time, some of this activity became officially unacceptable. "Dissidence" that went beyond the bounds set by local Stalinist leaders still clinging to power or that led to "radical" demands for freedoms was banned. (u)

In some instances, the advocates of reform became involved, willingly or accidentally, in scheming against local Stalinist leaders by political moderates, which was made possible by the concurrent political struggles in the Soviet

Union. In Poland, for example, revisionist Marxists like Leszek Kolakowski publicly battled against dogmatism and helped bring to power in 1956 a "reformist" party leader, Wladyslaw Gomulka. Similarly, the fight by Hungarian writers to end censorship in late 1955 was closely linked with the efforts by backers of reformer Imre Nagy to bring down Stalinist party leader Matyas Rakosi. (u)

The spontaneous ferment of de-Stalinization was also at work in East Germany and Czechoslovakia in the mid-1950s, albeit more subdued. In East Germany, a young Marxist philosopher, Wolfgang Harich, led a small group of party members in advocating economic and political reforms, "true independence" (that is, an escape from Soviet hegemony) for East Germany, and eventual reunification of the two German states. Unlike developments in Poland and Hungary, however, the actions of the East German dissidents were of little consequence. Harich made his move too late (after the suppression of the Hungarian uprising when there was a general turn to orthodoxy) and did not make common cause with party chief Ulbricht's opponents in the Politburo. (u)

Efforts after 1956 to suppress revisionism, and to tighten the allowable bounds of de-Stalinization, gave rise to the first readily identifiable dissidents, since many of the "revisionists" refused to abide by the new restrictions. In Poland, where revisionism had run the deepest and where many revisionists were for a time allowed to air their views in official publications, Gomulka—initially considered a reformer—gradually followed a more conservative course. By 1963 Gomulka's retrenchment in the cultural and ideological spheres prompted writers and other intellectuals to react with what have become classic dissident tools. (u)

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In early 1964 well-known Polish intellectuals published the "Letter of 34," in which they protested censorship and other controls on book publication. Jacek Kuron and Karol Modzelewski, two young Marxist scholars who had studied under Kolakowski, subsequently circulated a 90-page open letter criticizing Gomulka personally and calling for the creation of a "true socialist state." In May 1965 the Warsaw branch of the Writers' Association demanded that censorship be abolished. In October 1966 Kolakowski commemorated the 10th anniversary of Gomulka's rise to power with a public condemnation of "repressions and lack of democracy in Poland." In reprisal he was expelled from the party. Other writers who protested Kolakowski's expulsion were, in turn, also expelled. Gomulka's increasing problems with the dissident intellectuals came to a head in early 1968, when a ban on staging a classic Polish drama with anti-Russian overtones led to a writers' "revolt" and to student riots. Amidst an ensuing party factional crisis, Kolakowski and others were forced to emigrate, and many student leaders, including Kuron and a newcomer to dissident activity, Adam Michnik, were jailed. (u)

While Gomulka was tightening up in Poland, Czechoslovakia's Stalinist leader Novotny, under the pressure of Khrushchev's second round of de-Stalinization and the weight of a stagnating Czechoslovak economy, belatedly undertook the de-Stalinization that he had avoided in the mid-1950s. As in that earlier period, the general feeling that dogmatism was being rejected, albeit in a hesitant way, encouraged spontaneous talk of revisionist policy alternatives to prevailing neo-Stalinism. Much of the pressure on Novotny to go further than he wanted came from Slovak intellectuals and journalists, whose public criticisms and calls for reform came to be viewed as "dissidence." More important, these dissident acts were probably encouraged by Slovak party leaders who wanted to force Novotny to redeem a Slovak nationalism that had been labeled bourgeois during the Stalinist purges. (u)

Novotny, beginning in 1963, presided over a relatively widespread de-Stalinization that coun-

tenanced substantial revisionist discussion, startling freedoms in the arts, and permitted, at least for a time, considerable frankness in the media. It was during this period that such revisionist theoreticians as Zdenek Mlynar developed theories of how to build a "democratized" Communism, ideas that were to be put in practice in 1968. The period also had its outright dissidents who fell victim to Novotny's periodic efforts to retrench or at least to set limits to de-Stalinization. (u)

In 1966 Novotny began to take a tougher stance toward nonconformist intellectuals, especially the writers. In so doing, he was following the lead of the Soviets, who in February of that year had tried and convicted the nonconformist writers Sinyavskiy and Daniel. These trials sent shock waves through the Soviet and East European intellectual community and marked the beginning of sustained dissidence in the Soviet Union. (u)

The East German regime also responded to the pressure of Khrushchev's second de-Stalinization with moderation of its cultural policies, but with greater hesitation, abrupt policy shifts and considerably less domestic effect than in Czechoslovakia. For example, the nonconformist East German songster Wolf Biermann, who was criticized and stripped of party membership in early 1963, was allowed to publish his poems and perform his songs in 1964 and, in late 1965, was abruptly banned from performing and was labeled an anti-Communist. Another victim of this regime ambivalence was Robert Havemann, an eminent scientist who was prohibited from teaching in 1964 and then retired in 1965 because of his outspoken views. (u)

Many revisionist ideas were put into effect in Czechoslovakia during the "Prague Spring" of 1968. Perhaps surprisingly, this institutionalization of reform ideas did not lead to greater dissident pressures for similar changes elsewhere in Eastern Europe. The Soviet-led Warsaw Pact quashing of the Czechoslovak "experiment" in August was protested by dissidents in other East European countries, but it also stifled hope that popular agitation for a "humane" type of Com-

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munism would bear fruit. That hope has been rekindled by the convergence of circumstances during the past two years. (u)

#### New Stimuli to Dissident Activity

The 1975 Helsinki accord and efforts of the East European regimes to show a measure of compliance with its human rights provisions raised some popular expectation that authoritarian controls might be loosened, and stimulated dissident efforts to that end. There was a widespread anticipation among East Germans in the summer of 1976, for instance, that because the accord signified "international recognition" of East Germany, the regime could not, or would no longer, block foreign travel on the grounds that travel was predicated on such "recognition." (u)

Even more important, the decision to review implementation of the Helsinki agreement in Belgrade in 1977 prompted some dissidents to conclude that a Communist desire to show a good record in Belgrade might make regimes susceptible to pressures for internal reforms. Other dissidents were well aware that Moscow intended Helsinki to signify only Western recognition of Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe. As a result, they apparently emphasized the human rights commitments of the accord as a way of inducing the West to reconsider its support for the agreement or at least to force the Soviets and their allies to observe human rights as a price of Western recognition of Soviet hegemony over the area. (u)

The calculation that pressure might lead to some changes for the better was fortified by what many dissidents saw as important Soviet concessions regarding national independence made to the "Eurocommunists" at the Berlin conference of European Communist parties in June 1976. For example, the East German dissident philosopher Robert Havemann, who considers himself a Eurocommunist of the Spanish variety, seized upon the conference as a vindication of his long-time advocacy of a Communist system that included domestic pluralism and a "true" sovereignty in foreign affairs. Some Polish dissidents also concluded that the time was ripe for the East

Europeans to strive for greater autonomy from Moscow. Indeed, public, that is to say, dissident pressure was seen as an effective way to lead the regime toward seeking "true sovereignty." (u)

The vigorous US human rights policy enunciated in early 1977 gave some impetus to dissident activity and emboldened persons to speak out who otherwise might have remained silent. Many dissidents probably welcomed the US position because they believed it would help expose the vulnerabilities of the East European regimes with regard to human rights. Those who were already actively pressing a cause and considered international attention important for both its success and their own protection no doubt calculated that the US human rights policy would serve these ends.<sup>1</sup> (u)

East European dissidents were also encouraged by publicity and support from West European media, politicians and government leaders, public organizations, influential intellectuals, and maverick Communist parties.<sup>2</sup> This support has generally been a consequence of the US initiative, of a naturally keen interest in developments close to home, and of domestic and regional political pressures. Some, particularly East European, emigres may have seen in the US-led, Western human rights campaign evidence of a new, more confrontational policy toward Eastern Europe, which they welcomed. (u)

Against this international backdrop, region-wide trends and developments in individual countries gave a direct stimulus to dissidence. By mid-1976 many dissidents were undoubtedly aware that all of the Warsaw Pact countries

<sup>1</sup> This was not the unanimous view, however. Other dissidents apparently were wary of the American policy and, recalling what they consider past US inconsistency toward Eastern Europe, were skeptical that Washington would press its objective with consistency or determination. Those who consider themselves Communist reformers rejected the helping hand of a "capitalist" state for ideological reasons; others felt vulnerable to charges of being "agents of imperialism."

<sup>2</sup> For some dissidents, support by Eurocommunists has not been consistent enough. Thus, a prominent Czechoslovak dissident publicly acknowledged Eurocommunist support, but said that it "could be more effective and courageous." He called on the West European Communist parties to publish political material by exiled East Europeans and to establish direct contacts with dissidents in the East.

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faced difficult economic problems, and probably calculated that the regimes were thus more vulnerable to pressures for concessions. (u)

The economic factor was most important in Poland, where the workers' riots in June 1976 dramatized popular dissatisfaction and revealed the regime's political weaknesses. Polish dissidents had already become more active by late-1975, when they were successful in modifying government-proposed changes in the constitution. In September 1976 they seized upon the issue of the release of imprisoned rioters to show the need for political reform. This attracted popular support and, in turn, helped stimulate other dissident activity in Poland and, perhaps, elsewhere in Eastern Europe. (u)

In Czechoslovakia, the well-publicized Charter 77 manifesto was triggered by the publication in the Czechoslovak press in the fall of 1976 of the UN human rights covenants. Czechoslovak dissent, in general, has been fed by the despair of those reformers who had been purged and ostracized since 1968. Many of these persons may have gained new hope that the stagnating economy would impel the leadership to rehabilitate, among others, purged economic and managerial functionaries. In East Germany, Rudolf Bahro's wide-ranging critique in August 1977 of the "system's" deficiencies examined at length the country's economic shortcomings. (u)

#### Who Are the Dissidents?

The dissident activists in Eastern Europe have traditionally come from the educated, articulate stratum of society, a broadly defined intelligentsia. They are politically dedicated, idealistic men and women of all ages whose zeal and commitment make them willing to pay the substantial personal price that the regimes exact for openly nonconformist behavior. (u)

The broad spectrum is evident in the Polish dissident ranks, which includes academicians, lawyers, writers, journalists, retired non-Com-

Polish leader Gierek's talk, in the immediate wake of the riots, about the need for "democratization" probably helped some dissidents to believe that chances for reform were good. As time passed, however, the regime talked less about the need for political changes.

munist politicians and soldiers, Catholic priests, and university students. In East Germany, the voices of dissent have been scientists-turned-political philosophers, popular entertainers, writers, and frustrated emigrants. Czechoslovak dissidents, largely those persons who helped generate or implement the reform ideas of 1968, include philosophers, writers, dramatists, entertainers, and politicians. In Romania, aside from a few writers and scholars and a group of Baptist clergy, the majority of dissidents have been would-be emigrants or, more recently, members of discontented national minorities. (u)

While the dissidents have had some success in expanding their numbers, they have generally failed to enlarge their circle of political activists beyond a small portion of the intelligentsia and have been unsuccessful in politicizing other segments of the population. [redacted]

The most success at attracting a broader following has been evident in Poland. One dissident group initially championed a cause—help for and the release of jailed workers—that garnered considerable popular support. This and another dissident organization have enlisted students into dissident work and may have won popular goodwill through efforts to counsel people about their everyday problems. The second group also claims to have financial backing and considerable moral support from private farmers (an important class in Poland where three-quarters of the farms are in private hands) and retired, probably World War II, military veterans. Some of the changes that Polish dissidents advocate are looked on favorably, if passively, by liberal members of the Communist Party establishment. Despite considerable effort, however, the Polish dissidents have not enlisted much worker support. The influential Catholic Church, moreover, has not backed them, even though some Catholic priests, seeking to win greater religious freedom, are also dissidents. [redacted]

Despite the rapid increase in the number of Czechoslovak dissidents, they continue to be mostly drawn from the intelligentsia. In Romania, Goma's "following," swelled from seven to 300 in less than six months. This was largely

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illusory, however, because most persons subscribed purely as a device to get out of the country. (u)

There are a number of reasons why dissidents fail to attract meaningful support. The vast majority of East Europeans obviously considers the personal cost of participation far too high and believes there is only a slim chance that dissident activity can produce change. Political apathy and anti-intellectualism among workers and a frequent aloofness among intellectuals are the major factors that have kept these two key segments of society apart. The regimes naturally exploit and encourage these attitudes. Liberals within the establishment intelligentsia may sympathize with certain dissident objectives but, more than likely, they consider many of the goals and methods unrealistic, if not dangerous. Those dissidents who have long been open critics are sometimes viewed, justifiably or not, as gadflies, whose failure to produce change is proof of their futility. (u)

Frequent personal and philosophical differences among dissidents have weakened their overall cause. This diversity and disunity helps in part to explain why some in the regimes are relatively tolerant of dissidents; a fragmented movement cannot draw wide support. (u)

#### What Do They Want?

The dissidents seek a variety of changes in the existing systems of rule in Eastern Europe. Some advocate sweeping reforms that would in fact constitute revolutionary changes in the way the Communist systems function. While none of the dissidents challenge outright the leading role of the party, as this would make them vulnerable to charges of treason, some of the dissidents, notably those associated with one of the leading Polish groups, incline strongly toward West European Christian democratic views. Those pressing for the broadest changes include most Polish dissidents, some East Germans, and many Czechoslovak Chartists. Their political platforms typically embrace the following demands: (u)

- A "real" multiparty system or some formal mechanism for greater interest group repre-

sentation within a one-party system (usually, but not always explicitly, within a so-called Communist framework).

- The abolition or significant relaxation of censorship.
- The reduction of centralized, bureaucratic controls, especially in the economic and government administrative spheres.
- Greater independence from the USSR. Nonetheless, most dissidents recognize, however reluctantly, the imposed necessity of some type of close relationship with the Soviet Union.
- Respect for human and civil rights already delineated in domestic laws and international accords signed by East European governments. (u)

Aside from the "programmatic" dissidents, there are those who seek more modest changes. Thus, the Romanian Goma speaks out for a de-Stalinization patterned after what he calls the "livable life" in Hungary and Poland. Many of the Czechoslovak dissidents want rehabilitation—not necessarily of their political views, but of themselves and their families—and the opportunity to live a more normal life. Then there are the more narrowly focused "one issue" dissidents such as the East German writers, who want more freedom to write what they wish, and the Romanian Baptists, who want more freedom to preach. Finally, there have been some, such as many signatories of Romanian writer Goma's manifesto, who have taken to dissent as a device to facilitate emigration. (u)

Several prominent dissidents—the East Germans Havemann and Biermann, the Hungarian Agnes Heller, and the Czechoslovak Zdenek Mlynar—consider themselves ideological brethren of the Eurocommunists. Others—such as the Poles Kolakowski and Michnik—are skeptical that Eurocommunism will turn out to be different from the Communism practiced in the Warsaw Pact states. Nonetheless, all have welcomed the Eurocommunists' support in the struggle for more independence from the Soviets. (u)

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The dissidents frequently differ on ways to bring about change. The East German Bahro, for example, appeals to "men of conscience" within the establishment to work for change. Some Polish dissidents believe popular pressure on the leadership can induce it to initiate reforms. Other Poles do not believe the system can reform itself and have tried to establish a de facto pluralism by founding, without regime approval, publications, groups, and societies that speak to and on behalf of specific interest groups. The Polish dissidents so far claim to be satisfied with these small steps which they feel will slowly erode regime control. They have shunned violence, realizing that this would give the regime cause for repression and would dissipate the limited public support they now enjoy. (u)

cooperation occurred in August 1978, when Polish and Czechoslovak dissidents met in southern Poland to discuss possible joint actions and then issued a communique. [redacted]

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Nonetheless, many dissidents see disadvantages in such personal contact. It is difficult to arrange, and may expose dissidents to serious legal charges, such as conspiracy. Any attempt at coordinated actions across national boundaries would arouse deep suspicion in Moscow and induce Soviet pressure on the East Europeans to crack down. Existing evidence that dissidents respond to or imitate the activities of dissidents elsewhere in the region most often indicates only that they are well informed of each others' activities by Western media broadcasts. (u)

**Impact of Dissent**

Some dissidents have formed secret organizations to avoid regime reprisals. A secret Polish group [redacted]

The dissidents have not altered in any fundamental way the East European regimes' style of rule, nor have they induced the governments to adopt more conciliatory domestic policies. If anything, there has been a shift—slight in Poland, pronounced in Czechoslovakia—toward tougher internal controls. Indeed, the dissidents seem to have brought upon themselves varying degrees of harassment and repression. Nor has dissidence helped generate serious political discord within the party leadership that could provide the vehicle for political change. [redacted]

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In East Germany, the anonymous manifestos that appeared early this year claimed to represent the views of amorphous groups but, more than likely, were the work of a very few individuals [redacted]

Nonetheless, the mere existence of dissidence has been an embarrassment to regimes that insist on making a show of unanimous popular support and try to conceal the repressive features of their system. At least initially, dissent confronted the regimes with a challenge that had to be assessed and kept within bounds. It has probably caused some differences within leaderships over tactics to be used in muzzling dissent, although these differences have not been obvious or persistent. The more organized dissidents—those in Poland and Czechoslovakia—probably created some strains, albeit limited, between the regime and segments of the populace by strengthening en-

Such secret groups can presumably exist for a long time because their members pay little or no personal cost for belonging. They could also play an important role during a period of political transition, when uncertainty and change are in the air. Generally, however, anonymous dissent has little impact, if only because there is a tendency among the population to view it as a possible police provocation. (u)

There has thus far been little active cooperation and almost no advance coordination among dissidents in different East European countries. The few known instances of such contacts across national boundaries have usually been instigated by Polish dissidents. [redacted] group has periodic contacts with dissidents in the USSR. The most brazen and ambitious effort at

\*The Poles apparently consider this as the first in a series of cooperative efforts. They have also been trying to encourage Hungarian dissident intellectuals to become outspoken and to use *samizdat* publications to express their views.

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25X1 demic popular antipathy toward such institutions as the police, bureaucracy, and the censor. The dissidents frequent use of legalistic tactics in challenging regime practices has made the authorities, in turn, more attentive to legal procedures in dealing with the dissidents. [redacted]

The dissidents' protests against repressive and restrictive regime policies—including tough police countermeasures that substantiated the initial allegations—provided an issue that, within the context of the Helsinki review process and the US emphasis on human rights issues, placed the East European regimes on the defensive in foreign affairs. How best to throttle dissent reportedly caused some differences for a time between the Soviets and East Europeans. The Soviets have clearly been inclined toward a more heavy-handed approach than most of their East European allies. [redacted]

25X1 Some of the East European regimes clearly saw dissent as a potentially troublesome obstacle to their desire to maintain or expand economic and, in some cases, political relations with the United States. Consequently, the regimes' handling of dissident activity appears in some limited ways to have taken the US human rights interest into account. The Polish decision in February 1977 to grant amnesty to workers jailed the previous summer in connection with disturbances over proposed price increases was announced less than a week after the United States expressed concern for Soviet and Czechoslovak dissidents. The move was an unexpected capitulation to dissident demands, and was probably intended to enhance Warsaw's image in Washington and reduce the possibility that the dissident question might intrude on bilateral relations. To be sure, Poland has consistently handled its dissidents more subtly than most other East European states, but the regime's moves probably reflected more its concern with domestic political factors than a wish to please the United States. [redacted]

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25X1- Similarly, the Hungarian regime's decision not to punish 30 would-be dissidents who in February 1977 supported the Czechoslovak Chartists may have been taken in the hope that this would

deter the creation of a dissident movement that could have an adverse impact on relations with Washington. Budapest clearly hoped that the new US administration would be more inclined than its predecessors to return Hungarian national treasures and grant Hungary most-favored-nation trading status. The Hungarian decision to invite American religious leader Billy Graham to Hungary in late 1976 was unquestionably intended to draw attention to Budapest's relatively moderate domestic policies at a time of sharply increased dissident activity elsewhere in Eastern Europe. [redacted]

The Romanian regime was acutely concerned that US attention to human rights could impede renewal of its most-favored-nation status. More importantly, Bucharest was worried that this might set back its "special relationship" with Washington that has been of major political use in fending off the Soviets. As a consequence, the Romanians—except for a brief crackdown in the spring of 1977, when they apparently feared that there would be a dramatic increase in dissidence—have encouraged dissidents to emigrate. The Ceausescu regime has not shown, however, an inclination to adopt more enlightened domestic policies, and remains perhaps the most repressive in Eastern Europe. The regime has privately played down agitation for increased cultural and linguistic rights by the Hungarian minority, calling it a Moscow-inspired, Budapest-engineered tactic to tar Romania's image. [redacted]

The Czechoslovak Government, despite its interest in settling several longstanding bilateral issues with the United States, has not moderated in any way its "hard-line" inclinations and has almost completely ignored US sensitivities when dealing with its dissidents. [redacted]

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25X1- Western publicity and support for dissidents has been largely responsible for whatever successes and impact the dissenters have made. Media coverage of their activities, when relayed back into Eastern Europe, has provided important, if indirect lines of communication between dissidents within a country and across national boundaries. This coverage has bolstered morale and has often been the only way for the dissi-

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dents' cause to be publicized within their own country. As a consequence, most dissidents have made a special effort to funnel news to the West. Most frequently, their "connections" have been friends and colleagues who have emigrated: Poles in London and Paris, Romanians in Paris, East Germans in West Germany, and Czechoslovaks in Rome and Vienna. [redacted]

**Outlook** [redacted]

Although dissident activity in many East European countries has declined considerably since early 1977, it is likely to persist throughout the region. Many of the factors that propelled the recent surge of dissent will still be at work. Economic problems may worsen and provide dissidents with renewed hope that some of their proposals for political reform will be heeded by regimes weakened by or preoccupied with dissatisfied consumers. While such hopes may be misplaced, the combination of dissident pressures and a sluggish economy could create acute domestic instability [redacted]

The situation is especially acute in Poland, where intense popular dissatisfaction over consumer supplies is likely to continue over the next several years, and where dissidents see their job of pressing for political change as a long-term endeavor. In Czechoslovakia, recent dissident activity has been tied to the 10th anniversary in August of the Soviet-led invasion, but it will continue to exist at least as long as the regime fails to come to terms with the large number of people who were purged after 1968. The dilemma for the Prague regime—how to rehabilitate people without rehabilitating their ideas—is complex, and may be unsolvable without changes in the leadership. In Romania, the direct link between dissidence and emigration that was established last year should help perpetuate dissent in a country where a spartan and harshly totalitarian life makes emigration particularly attractive. [redacted]

Other factors that could perpetuate and intensify East European dissidence include:

- A difficult leadership succession problem in the USSR that engenders either hope for moderate policies or fear of orthodoxy.

- Continued political sparring between the Soviets and the Eurocommunists.
- The second Helsinki accords review conference to be held in Madrid in 1980. This will remain a factor even though the dissidents' expectations may have been reduced by the limited accomplishments of the Belgrade review conference.
- The continued unsettling effect of Western contacts with, and presence in, the region. The area's economic needs argue against any cutback in Western ties.
- Uncertainties surrounding the succession to Tito in Yugoslavia. [redacted]

On the personal level, the camaraderie of the struggle, the excitement of matching wits with the authorities, and the hope that is renewed by even a small success will also propel dissident actions. [redacted]

The authorities may calculate, perhaps with reason, that time is on their side in the contest. The psychological and personal financial price that dissidents have to pay is difficult for most to bear for a sustained period. Their failure to get results not only adds to their personal discouragement, but makes it difficult to maintain popular interest. [redacted]

At least in Poland, however, the dissidents can already claim to have accomplished much, and are working to secure more. If they continue to be allowed relative freedom, their activity could give rise to the claim that a new norm of what is allowable has been wrested from the regime. This, in turn, could encourage other dissidents in Eastern Europe to emulate the Poles, a prospect that could be destabilizing for the area as a whole. A prolonged period of active Polish dissent would increase the risk that chance and miscalculation could lead to violence and possibly to a Soviet intervention. [redacted]

At present, East European dissidents can be seen most properly as a small hard core of political "radicals" who do not have the popular support or political leverage to force a change in any of the East European states or to effect a national uprising. Unlike many of the "revision-

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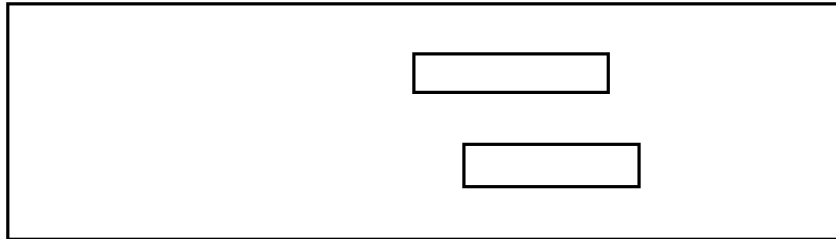
ists" and dissidents of the past, they do not have access to the official media, and are not operating in an environment of acute political discord. The motive force for abrupt political change has most frequently been political factionalism within the establishment (Nagy versus Rakosi; Gomulka versus Ochab; the Slovaks versus Novotny). Dissidence, when it preceded such

change, was an indicator of existing political disarray and, frequently, a tool of factional maneuvering. If history is any guide, dissidence will come to play an important role in forcing political change only when it combines with economic problems that acutely affect the consumer and at a time of political upheaval within the ruling elite.



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## APPENDIX

### COUNTRY STUDIES

The following studies of four East European countries—Poland, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, and Romania—examine in detail dissident activity that gathered momentum in the fall of 1976, accelerated in early 1977, tapered off by midyear, and was rejuvenated in the fall of 1977. Since the beginning of 1978, fewer manifestations of dissent have been evident, even in pace-setting Poland. (u)

Hungary and Bulgaria are omitted, since neither has exhibited significant dissent. Hungary remains virtually untouched by dissidence, despite the existence of a small core of intellectuals who have intermittently clashed with the authorities, who publicly expressed support for the Czechoslovak dissidents, and who issued in early 1978 a volume of nonconformist articles and essays. In Bulgaria, overt signs of dissidence came to light only in March 1978 with the appearance of a "Declaration 1978," which claimed to speak for a dissident group, ABD. Whether such a group exists or what ABD means is not known. The document called for an end to various restrictions, including those on travel and religion.

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## POLAND

**Summary**

Dissident activity mushroomed throughout 1977. A number of well-organized dissident groups took advantage of a political authority preoccupied with popular discontent over inadequate food supplies to agitate for such causes as amnesty for jailed workers and the protection of human rights. Their activity reflected a typical Polish ebullience, as well as a more outspoken attitude that has been evident among dissidents since late 1975, when the regime proposed changes in the state constitution that rankled national pride. (u)

The several dissident groups now active comprise at least several hundred activists, a wider, uncountable circle of incidentally involved sympathizers, and an even more unfathomable number of passive supporters. Most are drawn from the intelligentsia and from student circles. None of the dissidents advocates revolution per se, and most recognize a need for self-restraint in order to avoid physical conflict with the authorities. Nonetheless, the gradual reforms that many of them are demanding would radically change the way Poland is ruled, and the way it relates to the USSR. [redacted]

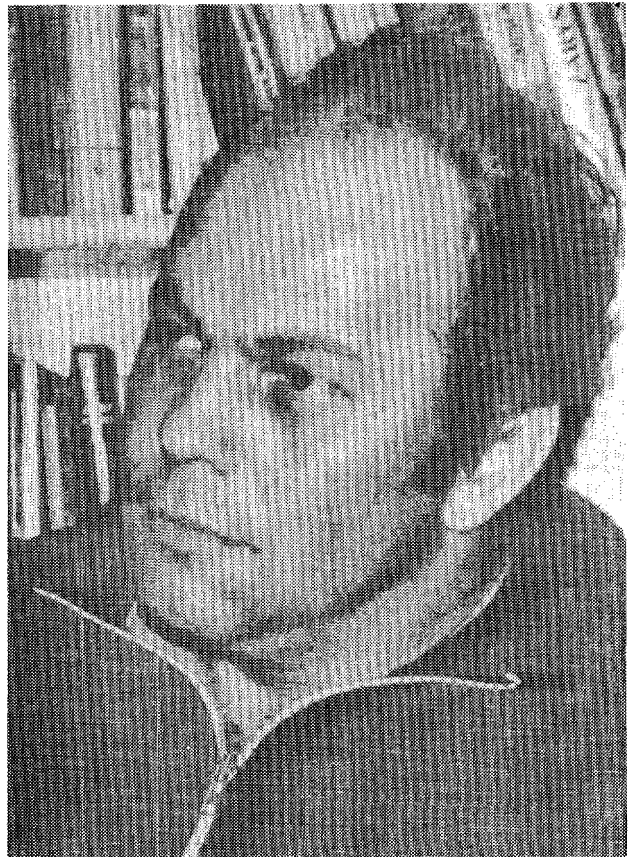
The Gierek regime has used selective harassment, along with some police "dirty tricks," to keep the dissidents off balance and to limit their growth. The overall response, however, has been fairly weak and cautious, largely because of Warsaw's desire to avoid a confrontation with the intelligentsia at a time when there is a likelihood of trouble with the citizenry over economic problems. The restraint probably also reflects a calculation (or wishful thinking) that the intellectuals will continue to be ineffective in attracting workers and that the dissident groups will eventually lose steam. [redacted]

In the meantime, however, the regime risks a crisis growing out of miscalculation or chance. It also allows the establishment of more permissive

standards of citizen conduct that not only could help along the evolution of a new kind of Polish Communism, but also could provide an unsettling example for the rest of Eastern Europe. (u)

**A Workers' Cause**

The first major event in the present surge of dissident activity in Poland occurred in September 1976, when 13 intellectuals formed a committee to "defend" about 50 workers imprisoned the previous June after riots over proposed price increases. The new "Workers Defense League" (KOR), led by Jacek Kuron, publicly called for an amnesty, collected and disbursed financial



Jacek Kuron, main spokesman for KOR

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and medical aid for workers' families, and arranged legal counsel for the workers. In a period of four months, KOR reportedly disbursed some 2 million zlotys (an average worker's annual salary is about 60,000 zlotys), sent representatives to observe the trials, called for an investigation of police conduct during the riots, released its own report of the June events, and issued news bulletins recounting its efforts on behalf of the workers and reporting on dissident clashes with the police. (U)

KOR attracted considerable sympathy from a populace always ready to think the worst of the police and disenchanted with the Gierek regime's inability to deliver on economic promises. KOR helped create an atmosphere in which dissidents and others became willing to speak out on behalf of the imprisoned workers:

- In early November 1976, almost 900 workers at the Ursus tractor factory appealed to Gierek to reinstate workers who had been fired.
- In mid-November, Catholic bishops sponsored a collection effort on behalf of the workers' families.
- On 22 December, 28 university professors petitioned parliament to set up a commission to investigate the June disturbances. Within weeks this was followed by a similar petition from 162 other intellectuals. (U)

The initial response of the regime to the formation of KOR was to harass its adherents by periodic detentions and interrogation and to threaten more severe measures. The police also attempted to discredit the dissidents by circulating falsely attributed documents (several "KOR communiques" and a KOR letter calling for sexual freedom). In at least one instance, they also sent false KOR spokesmen to visit the family of an imprisoned worker. The police tried to choke off contributions to the KOR defense fund by floating rumors that the funds were being misused and, when that failed, fined dissidents for "illegal fund collection." In mid-January 1977 the authorities prohibited KOR from receiving contributions sent openly by emigres in

the West. These tactics failed to stem dissident activities. [redacted]

The regime's efforts to explain away the so-called June events were also unsuccessful. The authorities had attempted to ease popular suspicions of police brutality during the riots by releasing a special investigative report in late October. This tactic failed, however, because the report, predictably, exonerated the police. At the same time, the authorities decided to show their resolve by pressing ahead in December with a retrial of six workers, whose cases had been returned to the lower courts by the Supreme Court. (U)

In an effort to undercut KOR, Gierek announced in early February that amnesty would be granted to all the jailed workers except five "recidivists." The regime recognized the extensive popular sympathy for the jailed workers and was worried by indications in January that the circle of KOR sympathizers was growing. The security services were undoubtedly aware that other dissident groups were being formed and may have been concerned that the newly formed Czechoslovak dissident movement might add a further impetus. Warsaw probably also calculated that an amnesty would be looked on favorably by a new human rights-oriented administration in the United States, which in late January had criticized Czechoslovak and Soviet handling of dissidents. Warsaw probably knew that Moscow was about to crack down on its dissidents and may have calculated that it would be easier to make concessions at that time rather than later, when the action would be more likely to burden Soviet-Polish relations. [redacted]

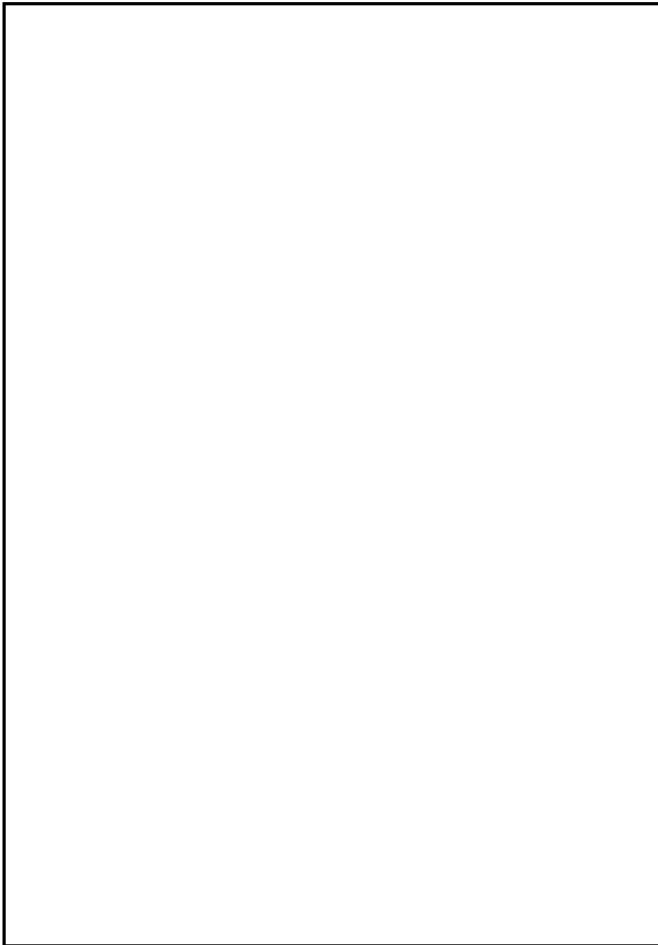
#### More Dissidents

The February 1977 amnesty—though only partial—slowed KOR's momentum, but other dissidents had already gone into action:

- A secret "Polish Youth Committee for Implementation of the Helsinki Agreement," which had declared its existence the previous June, showed its first sign of life in February, when it released the inaugural issue of its journal, *U progu* (*On the Threshold*).

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worked in KOR, and was headed by a comparative newcomer to the dissident ranks, Leszek Moczulski. RUCH's publicly stated purpose was to monitor the observance of human and civil rights in Poland, to publicize infringements, and to lobby for appropriate changes in the law. It quickly established itself as a competitor to KOR for the loyalties of those prepared to participate in dissident activities. In mid-April the first two of many RUCH "counseling" centers to hear citizen grievances were set up in Warsaw and Lodz. By month's end, the first edition of its monthly journal, *Opinia (Opinion)*, was circulating in 2,500 copies. (u)

The founding of RUCH was probably triggered by Poland's ratification, in early March, of the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Other contributing factors were:

- The international focus on human rights issues because of the approaching Belgrade review conference and because of the policy declarations of the new administration in Washington.
- The examples provided by the Czechoslovak Charter 77 dissidents and the "manifesto" issued by the Romanian dissident writer Paul Goma.
- Differences within KOR over how to proceed in the wake of the February amnesty, which undercut KOR's mission.
- A reluctance by some dissidents—for both philosophical and personal reasons—to associate themselves with KOR and its dominant personality, Jacek Kuron. [redacted]

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- Another secret dissident organization, the "Polish League for Independence" (PPN), which had done little since the declaration of its formation in May 1976, publicly stated its intention to issue documents that would educate Poles in political matters. The first in the series was not issued, however, until early summer.
- A member of KOR, Stanislaw Baranczak, founded the dissident journal *Zapis (The Record)*. Its first edition, which appeared in January 1977, contained literary and scholarly articles by 16 authors, writings that had been rejected by the Polish censors. (u)

But the most important development in early 1977 was the founding in March of the "Movement for the Defense of Human and Civil Rights" (RUCH). The movement was started by 18 dissident intellectuals, three of whom had

While the establishment of RUCH can probably be attributed largely to the international attention given to human rights in early 1977, its roots were visible in late 1976. Some of the founding core of RUCH, perhaps prompted by the successes of KOR but wanting to stay apart from that group, were preparing to press for Polish implementation of the provisions of the Helsinki agreement on cooperation and security in Europe. In November 1976 several of these dissident intellectuals, under the leadership of lawyer Karol Glogowski, were documenting abuses of human and civil rights in Poland. [redacted]

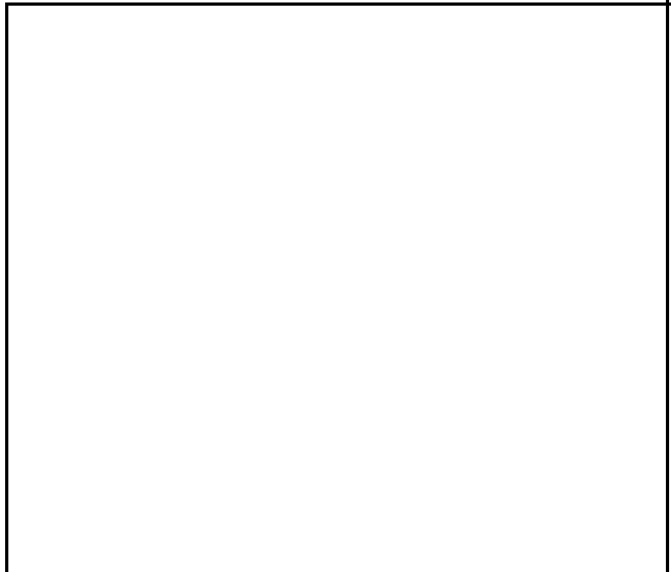
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Philosophical differences between the two groups are also substantial. RUCH's philosophical orientation is close to that of the West European political center or right-center. It is a loose grouping of Polish Christian Democrats, populists, "free democrats," and adherents of the national socialism of the Polish military hero Marshal Pilsudski. The group seeks a multiparty system, and many of its leaders are former non-Communist politicians and military men. ( U )

KOR's political orientation may be termed "leftist" or revisionist Marxist. Two of its most prominent young leaders, Jacek Kuron and Adam Michnik, are Marxist reformers. Kuron advocates "Finlandization" of Poland, which he defines as the establishment of a "parliamentary democracy, limited in its foreign and domestic policy only as it affects the interests of the USSR

stated explicitly." Michnik has called Marxism-Leninism an "empty shell" in contemporary Poland, and advocates "an unceasing struggle for reforms, in favor of evolution which will extend civil liberties and guarantee a respect for human rights." ( U )

**The Regime's Reaction**

In the wake of the February amnesty, Gierek reportedly encountered pressure from within the party for a tougher policy toward the dissidents. Apparently he largely ignored this pressure until after RUCH was formed in March, and even then the regime did not adopt a consistently firm stand. Gierek presumably believed that a crack-down would be dangerous and counterproductive.

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In late February Gierek reportedly received a letter from 600 party members criticizing his moderate policy. They may have been reacting specifically to the amnesty, an act that, while it

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Adam Michnik, one of the leaders of KOR, 30 years old and a dissident activist since the early 1960s

may have reduced KOR's *raison d'être*, may also have been seen as an unseemly surrender to demands that would only embolden the dissidents. Moreover, in early March at the Warsaw Pact ideological conference in Sofia, the Soviets reportedly pressed their allies for tougher handling of dissent, although no specific demands were made [redacted]

Aside from the roughing up and arrest of a few dissidents in early March, Gierek still took no drastic measures. The founding of RUCH in late March, followed by a petition signed by 1,700 students calling for the observance of human rights, substantially increased the pressure on Gierek. At the mid-April party Central Committee plenum, there were reports of differences over what should be done and signs that some had attacked the moderate policy by criticizing the showing of a controversial film, *Marble Man*. In late April Gierek intensified the harassment of dissidents, but avoided the harsh acts that some

no doubt would have preferred. The best indication that the leadership had moved toward a tougher policy came on 27 April, when two leading KOR members were informed that they were suspected of maintaining "illegal contacts" with foreign organizations, namely Radio Free Europe and the Paris-based emigre journal *Kultura*. The previous December the authorities had been content to detain them for questioning as possible witnesses to the supplying of "false information" to hostile circles abroad. The investigation, however, was overtaken by events [redacted]

#### Pyjas: A Near Crisis

The death under suspicious circumstances on 7 May of Jan Pyjas, a Krakow student active in KOR, led to a confrontation between the government and the students and provided a new impetus to dissident activity. (u)

On 10 May Kuron publicly revealed Pyjas' death and implied that it may have been caused by a police beating. He proclaimed that two KOR units—an Intervention Bureau and a Social Self-Defense Fund—had been formed to investigate the death and to prepare his organization to deal with any such incidents in the future. Four days later, as they were leaving for Krakow to attend Pyjas' funeral, Kuron and six other KOR leaders were arrested. On 15 May, after the funeral services, about 5,000 Krakow students marched in silence through the streets, with the police watching from a distance. On 18 May a small group of Krakow students formed a Student Solidarity Committee, declared their union with KOR, and vowed to assist any students who got into trouble as a result of demonstrations over Pyjas' death. On 20 May a requiem mass for Pyjas was held in Warsaw without incident. (u)

The imbroglio not only drew more students into dissident activism, but also, when the authorities refused to release the KOR leaders, provided a new cause. Other KOR activists took over for their imprisoned leaders and launched a crusade for the release both of the dissidents and of five workers who had not been freed by the February amnesty. At the end of May, a number

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of KOR supporters, two Catholic intellectuals, and relatives of those in prison staged a week-long hunger strike in St. Martins Church in Warsaw. Popular support for the release of the dissidents increased throughout June, and even the Catholic Church, which had withheld official support from the dissidents despite the involvement of some priests, gave the campaign open moral support. In mid-July Polish primate Cardinal Wyszyński called on the regime to "respect the dignity of man" and release the dissidents. (u)

Once again, the authorities bowed to popular pressure and, on 22 July—the national holiday—released the dissident leaders and the workers. It is less surprising that the authorities did so than that they waited so long. Gierek may have waited until the July holiday, traditionally an occasion for granting amnesty, to gain a convenient way out. (u)

Dissident activity slowed considerably as a result of the amnesty, but did not stagnate. KOR took credit for the amnesty and promptly indicated that it intended to soldier on. In late August a KOR spokesman made several public overtures to the authorities, calling for full compensation and job reinstatement for the previously imprisoned workers. RUCH, which had opened three more "centers" in July to handle citizens' grievances, jumped on the bandwagon with an "open letter" calling for reinstatement of the workers, an end to harassment of dissidents, and administrative safeguards to ensure "rule of law." The PPN also chose this time to issue its first essays on political education. (One gave a pessimistic appraisal of the chances for a "dialogue" between the rulers and the ruled, and another was a primer on how to deal with the police.) (u)

#### A Name Change

Polish dissident activity gained impetus in the autumn. In early September KOR spokesman Kuron, in an interview with a Swedish newspaper, revealed plans to expand KOR's activities. He said that KOR would:

- Begin publishing a range of *samizdat* journals.

- Form a publishing company.
- Expand the number of Student Solidarity Committees.
- Create numerous investigative groups.

The purpose of these initiatives, according to Kuron, was to put the group on a more permanent footing and to "create institutions," thereby moving Poland toward a de facto political pluralism. (u)

At the end of September, KOR took a new name—the "Committee for Social Self-Defense"—while retaining the familiar KOR acronym in parentheses.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, three prominent activists prepared and released the first issue of *Robotnik (Worker)*, a four-page bulletin targeted at workers. In mid-October KOR also inaugurated a political-literary quarterly, *Głos (Voice)*, the first issue of which

<sup>4</sup> Its full acronym became KSS-KOR, but, for simplicity, KOR.



Leszek Kolakowski, a professor of philosophy who left Poland in 1968—the only emigre member of KOR

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POLISH DISSIDENT PUBLICATIONS

**Bratniak (Fraternity).** A monthly founded in October 1977. Published by the Movement for the Defense of Human and Civil Rights (RUCH). Caters to young people.

**Bulletin of the Committee for the Defense of Family and Life.** Published irregularly since committee was founded 28 May 1977. Advocates Christian way of life and argues against abortion.

**Bulletin of the Social Self-Defense Committee (KOR).** Published monthly in about 1,000 copies, September 1976. Contains news of dissident activities and police harassment.

**Bulletin of the Student Solidarity Committee in Warsaw.** Apparently published quarterly. Contains information about the Warsaw student community.

**Collective Works of the Zespól Problemowy (Study Group).** Social essays. Produced by the secret Polish League for Independence (PPN).

**Communique of the Social Self-Defense Committee (KOR).** Often published concurrently with the KOR Bulletins. Contains lists of repressive regime actions against the dissidents.

**Glos (The Voice).** Published monthly since 22 October 1977. Socio-political essays. "Official" organ of KOR.

**Gospodarz (The Farmer).** Published monthly since October 1977. Carries news and information for farmers. RUCH.

**Opinia (Opinion).** Published monthly, in an average of 2,000 copies, since 30 April 1977. Contains news and longer political essays and articles. RUCH.

**Organ (Organ).** Probably an irregular publication; founded in the spring of 1978. Contains satire. RUCH.

**Poradnik Społeczny (Social Manual).** Published irregularly; first issued July 1977. Primers on basic political themes. PPN.

**Postęp (Progress).** Two issues published in July and October 1977. Deals with worker affairs.

**Puls (PULSE).** Appears irregularly; inaugurated in autumn 1977. Literary journal.

**Robotnik (Worker).** Apparently a monthly. First issue appeared on 30 September 1977. Targeted at workers, written in plain and simple Polish. KOR.

**Spotkania (Encounters).** Issues published in October 1977 and January 1978. Initiated by unnamed young Catholics, apparently associated with the officially sanctioned (therefore heavily censored) Catholic monthly, *Wież (Tower)*.

**U Progu (On the Threshold).** Appears irregularly in about 2,000 copies; inaugurated in February 1977. Vehicle of the secret Polish Youth Committee for Implementation of the Helsinki Agreement, apparently with some input from the Student Solidarity Committee. Also reportedly has links with the young Catholics' publication, *Spotkania*.

**Zapis (The Record).** Published quarterly; first appeared in January 1977. Publication of record for any literary and scholarly articles banned by the Polish censor. Stanislaw Baranczak, member of KOR, appears to play prominent role in putting together *Zapis*.

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contained a general statement of KOR's philosophy, "The Declaration of the Democratic Movement," which was signed by 110 members and active supporters. The declaration demanded the restoration of "sovereignty and democracy" and the "establishment of independent, self-governing institutions, seeking to fulfill specific tasks in the defense of human and civil rights." It called for the right to strike, free trade unions, abolition of censorship, and reform of the electoral system. At the end of October KOR announced that its membership had increased from 23 to 31 persons,<sup>5</sup> including KOR's first emigre member, an Oxford professor, Leszek Kolakowski. Kolakowski, a close friend and former professor of both Kuron and Michnik, had left Poland in 1969 but continued to have frequent contacts with his former pupils.<sup>6</sup> (U)

In November 1977 the dissidents further expanded their activities:

- KOR claimed that a dissident workers' "cell" had been formed in Radom under the leadership of a worker who had been sprung from jail by KOR agitation.
- More KOR-affiliated student groups sprouted.
- Michnik organized privately-held lectures on politically sensitive subjects, initially for students in Krakow. The course was named the "flying university," after a similar institution that had existed in 19th century Poland. (U)

KOR's main competitor, RUCH, was also energized. At a two-day "national conference" in Warsaw in mid-September, it issued two documents that reiterated the organization's objective of strengthening human rights in Poland, and called for close scrutiny of human rights issues at the Helsinki review conference. The signatories asserted that detente could become permanent only if "internal differentiation" and political pluralism were recognized everywhere. They also argued that only an end to the "spheres of

influence doctrine in Europe would allow implementation of the CSCE principles of self-determination, equality, and sovereignty." In early October some RUCH members who also belonged to Amnesty International aggressively began to solicit signatures on campuses in Warsaw and elsewhere, and apparently at factories, for an AI petition against imprisonment for political reasons. (U)

Moczulski, RUCH's principal spokesman, in early October tried his hand for the first time at the type of publicist work practiced successfully by his KOR counterpart, Kuron, and told Western correspondents of a miners' strike in Silesia. Also in October and November, RUCH founded two publications—*Gospodarz (Farmer)* and *Bratniak (Fraternity)* and inaugurated more "counseling centers" and "discussion groups" in various cities. (U)

The dissident spirit also infected others:

- A group of young Catholics—probably associated with the officially approved and heavily censored Catholic monthly *Wież (Tower)*--started their own *samizdat* journal, *Spotkanie (Encounter)*, in October. Some of these people had participated in the now largely moribund "Polish Youth Committee for Implementation of the Helsinki Accord," which was responsible for the appearance of the *samizdat* publication *U progu (On the Threshold)* in February 1977.
- Unnamed dissidents in Lodz, probably members of RUCH, started a literary journal, *Puls (Pulse)*.
- In October and November the secret organization PPN published in the emigre press several documents analyzing the Polish situation and instructing Poles in the techniques of outwitting the system. (This primer revealed ways to gain information legally about events not reported in the official press.) (U)

The flurry of activity was propelled partly by the return of students to the campuses and by the competition between KOR and RUCH. Some activity was keyed to the Belgrade review con-





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ference, which opened in mid-October, and—perhaps less openly—to the visit to Poland of President Carter, which was initially slated for late November. At least some dissidents calculated that the regime would not be inclined to respond harshly to new boldness on their part because it would not wish to create problems during the US President's visit.

The police did, however, react selectively to the dissident ventures. In early October they confiscated the petitions collected for the Amnesty International cause; in mid-November they broke up several of the initial sessions of the "flying university"; and in early December they seized some mimeograph machines. (u)

The Polish dissidents were quiet during President Carter's visit in late December. The editor of RUCH's publication, *Opinia*, did remind both hosts and visitors of Polish dissent by requesting, futilely, admission to President Carter's landmark news conference in Warsaw. A KOR activist, Kazimierz Switon—a worker who turned to dissident activity after being freed from prison as a consequence of KOR agitation—staged a hunger strike in a Warsaw church to dramatize the arrest of his two sons on charges of theft, a charge that some dissidents felt was trumped up. The dissidents' relative passiveness may have been intended to show support for a visit that they hoped would expand Poland's ties with the United States and reduce its dependence on the USSR.

Dissident activists continued in early 1978 to try to keep their causes in the public eye. RUCH activists handed out leaflets during local elections in February, reminding citizens of their voting rights. Three RUCH activists in Katowice launched a drive in late February to organize "national free trade unions." Meanwhile, KOR took steps to upgrade and expand its "flying university" seminars by getting support and participation from respected academicians and writers. In late January, 58 intellectuals signed a document that set up a new organization, "The Society for Scientific Coursework." The society

<sup>7</sup> The main organizer is Kazimierz Switon. His colleagues reportedly are a coal miner and a lawyer turned welder.

created a syllabus of 13 courses, each to meet three times during the winter semester. (u)

The regime's reaction to these new challenges was two-pronged. On the one hand, it chose to ignore the public challenge to the single-candidate electoral system. (Similar challenges brought lengthy jail sentences to Czechoslovak dissidents in 1971.) On the other hand, it reacted to the expansion of the "flying universities" and the free trade union initiative with aggressive harassment and frequent detentions of the key people involved.<sup>8</sup> (u)

One of the dissident causes—an easing of censorship—garnered important public support from other elements of Polish society early this spring. The 162nd Conference of Polish Bishops issued a communique labeling censorship "regrettable and harmful" and expressing support for "initiatives" that allow unfettered cultural, intellectual, and academic expression. Many dissidents interpreted this statement, rightly or wrongly, as indirect support for the "flying universities" and its efforts to circumvent censorship. In early April, at the National Writers' Union Congress, several people (including normally conformist writers) made calls for an easing of censorship that were reminiscent of the mid-1960s, when Polish writers were battling a cultural crackdown. (u)

Buoyed by these shows of support, dissidents continued to press their causes vigorously. In early April KOR released two long documents on censorship and police brutality, the latter containing 10 documented case histories. Switon's Free Trade Union Committee reiterated its appeal for free trade unions in mid-April on the occasion of a meeting in Prague of the Communist-controlled World Federation of Trade Unions. In late April three people from Gdansk, following Switon's lead, formed a free trade union of the Baltic coast. The appeals of these somewhat amorphous trade union committees,

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accompanied by police detention and harassment of their founders, prompted a number of West European trade unions to urge international labor organizations to issue formal complaints against Poland. (U)

The dissidents also expanded their network of extralegal lectures and classes. In mid-May RUCH founded its own version of the "flying university," naming it the "Independent Academic Group for Cooperation." The group plans to publish academic works that have been rejected by state publishers; to provide a forum for an exchange of ideas and experiences among those banished from the official educational system; and to lend assistance, presumably financial, to dissidents suffering hardships as a result of their activities. KOR activists began seeking to secure large halls for classes to be held this fall. The police began taking more action against the "flying universities" (fines, short detentions, and the firing of dissident instructors from university faculties), but the regime refrained from closing them down and the "flying universities" activism has continued. (U)

A Polish sociologist, who is knowledgeable about, but not involved with, dissident activity, believes the "flying university" classes are attractive to students because they recall the romantic stories they have heard about the Polish underground during World War II and because official university classes are so dull. Although the "flying universities" involve a small number of people, some of them are very well organized. One in Lodz, for instance, has 20 instructors, led by an ex-graduate student from the local university, and 50 students, including textile workers and other nonstudents. The students, who are studying sociopolitical thought in the interwar period and relating it to contemporary Poland, are required to do homework and take exams.

**The Future**

Dissident activity in Poland in mid-1978 is led by aggressive, determined men and women who are politically astute and philosophically well

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grounded. They have put pressure on the regime to accept reforms and have increased the number of their followers. The democracy they advocate and their anti-Soviet, nationalist views are probably appealing to a substantial portion of the population, and even to many in the establishment.

Yet the influence of the dissidents is clearly limited. Polish dissent is fragmented, beset by personal, racial, religious, and philosophical antipathies, and all these divisions are exploited by the police. It has not captured a significant number of followers outside the ranks of the intelligentsia. The man-in-the-street has ignored the dissidents' appeals, presumably because of his primary concern for bread-and-butter issues, his deep-rooted anti-intellectualism, and his political apathy. Individual clergymen have on occasion supported the dissidents, but the Catholic Church has stayed aloof because of its distrust of some dissident leaders, its lack of sympathy for some of their views, and its belief that the Church cannot allow itself to be directly tied to a cause so clearly political. And even many intellectuals, who might agree on the need for more moderate regime policies, believe the dissidents are unrealistic and their goals unreachable. They are skeptical that lasting changes can be forced and fear that pressure may be counterproductive, blocking changes that might otherwise evolve from within the system.

The mild and cautious response of the regime to the dissidents' activities has been a tactic born of necessity. Keenly aware that public unhappiness over shortages of food and consumer goods could, as in the past, lead to serious civil unrest, the leadership does not want a confrontation with dissidents at this time. Its concern is probably directed more at the possibility of an attack on two fronts than at the possibility of being faced by an intellectual-worker coalition. After all, the workers did not rally to the student cause in 1968, and the intellectuals did not instigate the worker "revolts" of 1970 or 1976.

The authorities may calculate that limited pressure—intelligently applied—will succeed in restricting dissident activity to a small segment of the intelligentsia. They may also believe that

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25X1 allowing a certain amount of dissent provides an efficacious way for people to let off steam. The regime undoubtedly thinks that time is on its side. Some of the dissidents will break ranks because of personal and psychological strains; in the absence of measureable progress, others will become disillusioned and will be seen as quixotic by the populace. [REDACTED]

There is, of course, a serious political danger for the regime in pursuing such a long-term cure. The more conservative elements, both in Poland

itself and in other East European countries, will find it hard to sit still while the cure takes effect, and undoubtedly will wonder whether the patient (a Communist Poland) will still be around when the cure is complete. There is also always the chance of miscalculation. The dissidents, who now almost unanimously recognize the need for restraint, might forget their self-imposed constraints in the heat of the moment. And the authorities might at some point also lose their composure and set in motion an irreversible series of events. [REDACTED]

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### CZECHOSLOVAKIA

The only organized dissident group, Charter 77, revealed itself in the first week of January 1977, with the publication in the Western press of a general manifesto. The document criticized the government's failure to observe human and civil rights provisions of domestic laws and the international accords to which Czechoslovakia is a party. The declaration—timed to coincide with the start of Amnesty International's "prisoner of conscience year"—described Charter 77 as an "informal association" of citizens dedicated to lobbying for human and civil rights in Czechoslovakia and elsewhere and asked for a dialogue with the authorities. (u)

The group (it refuses to call itself a "group" to avoid grounds for legal prosecution) was initially represented by three spokesmen and encom-

passed 241 people, who signed the manifesto.<sup>1</sup> The signers were a mixture of Marxists, non-Marxists, Catholics, and Eurocommunist sympathizers, and almost all were members of the Czech intelligentsia. Most important, virtually all had been deeply involved in the effort to wed Communism and democracy in 1968 under the leadership of Alexander Dubcek, and, when it was suppressed, suffered the political, economic, and social consequences. (u)

Their motives for banding together in the largest show of Czechoslovak dissent since 1968 were as varied as their ideological beliefs. Some

<sup>1</sup> They were: Jan Patočka, a non-Communist philosopher long banned from teaching except for a short time in 1968; Vaclav Havel, a playwright heavily engaged in the political reform spirit of 1968; and Jiri Hajek, a lawyer and the foreign minister in 1968 under Dubcek.

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simply wanted personal rehabilitation, to be allowed normalcy in their private lives.<sup>2</sup> Others wanted to embarrass the Husak regime and its Soviet masters before the opening in Belgrade of the conference to review compliance with the Helsinki accords. For some, like Zdenek Mlynar, who looked on the accords as signifying Western recognition of Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe, dissent was a way to keep Western attention focused on the accords and on East European conditions. A few may have calculated that the country's deepening economic problems made a powerful argument for again employing their expertise. Several signed the manifesto because they wanted to emigrate and believed their participation would lead the regime to grant them permission to leave. The enterprise also seems to have grown as much out of despair as out of hope for success. Chartist spokesman Jan Patocka once said that only "those who already had nothing more to lose" were asked to sign the manifesto. (U)

Those who had such a hope may have been misled by a rare example of government leniency in December 1976, when some political reformers-turned-dissidents (like the Chartists, people discredited after the collapse of the "Prague spring") were granted early release from jail terms they had been serving since 1972.



Pavel Kohout, a playwright—helped draft the Charter 77 manifesto



Vaclav Havel, a playwright and one of three original Charter 77 spokesman—tried in October 1977 and received a suspended prison sentence

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Those who initiated Charter 77—playwrights Vaclav Havel and Pavel Kohout—say they were moved to do so by the trial in July and September 1976 of members of a nonconformist musical group and by the publication in Czechoslovakia in October of UN human rights covenants. They may have also been encouraged by dissident stirrings at that time in East Germany and Poland. Patocka, for one, showed some similarity of purpose with Polish dissidents when he claimed that Charter 77 sought to teach people to defend themselves and to know and argue for their rights. (u)

The impact of the manifesto was immediate. Within a month, the number of signatories almost doubled, and Charter spokesmen released to Western correspondents a series of followup documents. The regime arrested three prominent signatories “for maintaining contact with hostile forces,” and two younger followers, reportedly for disseminating the manifesto in the industrial center of Ostrava. The media launched a torrent of invective, describing the manifesto as “a slanderous pamphlet” instigated by “anti-Communist and Zionist centers,” and calling its leaders “agents of imperialism.” The regime’s harsh reaction triggered criticism from such diverse Western quarters as the Italian Communist Party, Austrian Chancellor Kreisky, and the US State Department. Other East European dissidents promptly expressed solidarity with the Chartists. (u)

This three-way interaction between the dissidents, the regime, and Western observers continued, albeit at a less feverish pace, for the next several months. The regime moved aggressively to intimidate dissidents through job dismissals, interrogations, threats, and other harassment.<sup>3</sup> The dissidents responded with more publicity and new criticisms. The regime offered to let the Chartists emigrate, but they refused. The authorities hinted that Charter 77 was “illegal,” but did not press the point in court. Finally, the police tried to sever dissident contacts with Western correspondents, a move that prompted even

<sup>3</sup> The dissidents claimed in a letter to parliament in late May 1977 that 80 people had lost their jobs because of their adherence to Charter 77.

more criticism in the West, and that earned Prague a black mark for violating the Helsinki agreement’s provision regarding better working conditions for journalists.<sup>4</sup> (u)

Prague’s harsh reaction to Charter 77 activities reflected the regime’s conservatism, its awareness that it had little popular support, and its fear that the dissident manifesto might, if not clearly labeled unacceptable, become the focal point for general discontent, particularly among many of the 400,000 persons who had been purged after 1968. Party leader Husak probably also saw a political need to show resolve. Husak had been advocating selective rehabilitation of those purged after 1968, and the flurry of dissent seemed to vindicate hard-line proponents of an uncompromising line. [REDACTED] 25X1

By mid-May, the movement had lost much of its momentum. Two of the three spokesmen were no longer active, and Mlynar became the first prominent Chartist to accept the regime’s emigration offer.<sup>5</sup> Dissident activity stagnated during the summer under the impact of continued police pressure and amidst false rumors that those arrested in January would finally be brought to trial. (u)

The dissidents showed signs of regrouping in late September when two new Charter spokesmen were named.<sup>6</sup> This resurgence was probably prompted by the scheduled opening in October of the Belgrade conference to review the Helsinki accords, and perhaps by the new signs of vigor among Polish dissidents. The regime reacted quickly by putting on trial and giving three-and-a-half-year prison sentences to the two Chartists who had been arrested in January, and by trying

<sup>4</sup> In February 1977 the regime detained Western journalists on at least six occasions. In April it declared that journalists would be issued an entry visa only if they agreed not to contact dissidents. Prague subsequently backed away from this requirement, but it remains selective about issuing visas to foreign correspondents.

<sup>5</sup> Jan Patocka died in early March following, and perhaps partly because of, a lengthy police interrogation; Vaclav Havel negotiated his way out of jail in mid-May by agreeing to step aside as a Charter spokesman. Mlynar, fired from his low-level job at the National Museum shortly after Charter 77 appeared, reportedly had tired of regime harassment.

<sup>6</sup> They were Ladislav Hejdanek, a philosopher and apparent student of deceased Charter spokesman Jan Patocka, and Marta Kubisova, a singer banned from performing since 1968.

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in mid-October four other prominent dissidents. Although the four received relatively light sentences, the trial coincided with the opening of the Belgrade conference and provoked considerable Western criticism at Belgrade and elsewhere.) U)

The Husak regime's motives for holding the trials while the Belgrade conferees were beginning work probably included apprehension over the rise of dissident activity in Poland, uneasiness over new signs of life on the part of the Chartists, and a desire to discourage a new round of activism. Prague may have also intended to demonstrate that it would not let such external factors as the Belgrade conference provide protective cover for Czechoslovak dissident activity. It is also possible that the trials were inspired by Moscow as a trial balloon to gauge Western reactions to long-expected dissident trials in Moscow. [redacted]

The trials apparently generated differences over tactics among the Chartists. Old splits reopened, and a new Trotskyite faction was formed. There apparently was substantial disagreement over whether to issue a Charter 78.<sup>8</sup> A substantial number of the dissidents, including spokeswoman Marta Kubisova, reportedly advocated more aggressive, dramatic actions than Charter 77 had employed. At the other end of the spectrum, original Charter spokesman Hajek argued for the need to stay well within the letter of the law to avoid giving the police a pretext for a crackdown. [redacted]

The increasing influence of the "radicals" may have been responsible for such actions as hunger strikes by two dissidents in November and January and an attempt to crash a workers' social event in January 1978. The latter led to a fracas with the police and landed three Chartists in jail for more than six weeks. Hajek resigned as spokesman in early April. He attributed his

<sup>8</sup> Ota Ernest, the principal defendant and not a signatory of Charter 77, was given a three-year prison sentence (subsequently reduced to two and a half years for good behavior) for alleged subversive activity, that is, maintaining "conspiratorial links" with emigres considered "foreign agents." Jiri Lederer, journalist and Chartist, was given a three-and-a-half-year jail term on the same charge. Vaclav Havel and Frantisek Pavlicek, both playwrights and Charter adherents, were given suspended sentences.

<sup>9</sup> It has not been issued.



Jiri Hajek, a former Czechoslovak Foreign Minister—the main voice of Charter 77 dissidents for more than a year

decision primarily to nervous strain and a wish to spend more time with his family, but it may also be an indication that those who advocate a more confrontational policy have taken control of the Chartist movement. [redacted]

Charter 77 reportedly attracted over the course of a year almost a thousand signers. While this is numerically insignificant in a population of 15 million, it nonetheless is symbolically important among a people that had intimately experienced the dangers of political involvement after 1968. The Husak regime, which no doubt was surprised that 241 persons initially signed the document, must have been astounded and concerned that almost three times as many would add their signatures in the face of the intense media criticism and police harassment [redacted]

The group's sheer survival for 18 months is a major accomplishment. It has skillfully pressed and embarrassed the authorities by its detailed accounts of instances of official abuse and repression and its firm rebuttals of media attacks.

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This success at embarrassing the regime in its foreign relations, most apparent in the early months of 1977, was again evident last April when the Chartists embarrassed Husak during his landmark visit to West Germany by releasing an open letter detailing new regime repressions. [redacted]

Nevertheless, the Chartists have failed to attract nonintellectual segments of the society or to inspire others to speak out on other issues.<sup>9</sup> The regime's decisive attack on Charter 77—while it gave the dissidents more domestic publicity than they probably expected and reportedly stimulated popular interest and sympathy—showed that dissenters had to pay a heavy price for speaking out. [redacted]

The cause has also failed to gain a following among the Slovaks, the junior partner in the Czechoslovak federation. Fewer Slovaks than Czechs had been caught up in the reformist atmosphere of 1968, and, consequently, there were few Slovaks suffering political exile in 1977 who could be attracted to the dissident cause. Slovaks appreciated the political equality and economic growth that their compatriot, party and state leader Gustav Husak, had brought to

<sup>9</sup> This may be only partially true. There have been other reported instances of dissidence, including a letter to Husak in early October 1977 from 55 "Christians" criticizing religious discrimination.

Slovakia since 1968, and some saw Charter 77 as a Czech effort to unseat Husak and jeopardize Slovak gains. [redacted]

Charter 77 may be on the verge of significant change.<sup>10</sup> The loss of Hajek, a driving force within the movement, could cause it to drift without purpose and eventually to crumble into a number of smaller organizations. One dissident has publicly suggested that "perhaps" Charter 77 is no longer necessary.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, those advocating more aggressive actions may indeed have taken over the group, and may lead it into more direct confrontation with the authorities. [redacted]

For the longer term, dissidents will continue to be active at least until the regime makes a serious effort to come to terms with the people purged after 1968 and to implement more moderate domestic policies. Hard-liners within the leadership and lower party ranks will probably continue to be able to block any moderation in policies for as long as Moscow, which holds the key to domestic Czechoslovak developments, is unwilling or unable to throw all its political weight behind such a course. [redacted]

<sup>10</sup> It has not yet changed its name, however, and no new materialized.

<sup>11</sup> He also claimed new groups "are springing up," but this cannot be confirmed.

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## EAST GERMANY

The East German regime, unlike Poland and Czechoslovakia, was not confronted by a flurry of organized dissident activity last year, presumably because it had dispersed the most likely nucleus for such discontent in November 1976. The limited dissent that did occur was composed entirely of individual acts and statements. Early in 1977 it included complaints about censorship and other cultural restrictions by outspoken writers and performing artists. In August, dissent took a more programmatic, philosophical, and, from the regime's viewpoint, subversive turn with the airing in the West of Rudolf Bahro's stinging critique of deficiencies in the "existing socialism." Bahro's action triggered several anonymous critiques, published in West Germany early this year, and reportedly stimulated critical thinking with regard to regime policies in white collar circles. The authorities handily stifled their critics through imprisonment, emigration, or by rewarding them when they displayed conformist behavior, but it remains to be seen whether it can eliminate the "corrosion" of Bahro's reformist ideas.<sup>1</sup> (U)

A potential dissident group revealed itself in November 1976, and the regime was able to disperse it before it became established. Whether by luck or by calculation, the authorities uncovered this dissidence when it deprived Wolf Biermann, a dissident songwriter and performer, of his citizenship in November and denied him reentry after he completed a tour of West Germany.<sup>2</sup> The action provoked an unprecedented protest from the East German intellectual establishment. A public letter asking the leadership to

<sup>1</sup> Bahro was sentenced to eight years in prison in late June 1978, for alleged intelligence activity.

<sup>2</sup> Biermann, 42, had not been allowed to perform his pointedly critical ballads since 1965. His work, however, was available to the East Germans through the West German media. He frequently taped interviews and performances in his East Berlin apartment that were subsequently smuggled into West Germany. The East German authorities largely ignored this activity, apparently believing that Biermann's broadcasts had little impact in East Germany.

reconsider was initiated by 13 persons and eventually was signed by an additional 66 people, many of them young writers from the Jena area. Biermann's friend and former teacher, Robert Havemann, penned an open letter to party leader Honecker seeking a reversal. Havemann, himself a longtime critic of bureaucratic and repressive excesses, had been Honecker's cellmate in the Nazi period. (U)

The authorities responded to this challenge in a measured way. Havemann was placed under virtual house arrest, a condition that has persisted with varied intensity since September 1976. Most of Biermann's sympathizers from Jena were jailed, although some were allowed to emigrate. The most prominent signers were pressed to retract and were subjected to "administrative action" (three were expelled from the party, and two received party reprimands) [redacted] 25X1 [redacted] 25X1

At the same time, the regime sought to win over some of its critics. It attempted to buy off some by providing publishing and travel opportunities for the more prominent intellectuals, partly because they were well known in the West and harassment would create unfavorable publicity and partly because their work was important to advance East German international prestige. To avoid driving the more "reasonable" writers into opposition, the authorities showed a willingness to forgive in early December 1976, when they released innovative writings by Christa Wolf and Guenter Kunert, both of whom had signed the pro-Biermann petition. [redacted] 25X1

This token reassurance probably had a significant calming effect. Many apparently had rallied around Biermann because they feared his exile signaled a more restrictive cultural policy. Honecker had allowed writers and artists progressively more leeway since 1971, and despite the inevitable backing and filling by the regime, some apparently thought censorship would be

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further eased. This optimism, however, was shaken immediately before the Biermann expulsion. In October 1976 the Writers' Union expelled the nonconformist poet Reiner Kunze, who was very popular with younger writers (especially in Jena) and whose book *The Wonderful Years*, a frank account of the problems faced by East German youth, was then in third place on the West German best seller list. On the same day, in a high-level shakeup, Horst Sindermann was fired as head of government, most likely because the government was not coming to grips with the country's economic problems. Some intellectuals credited Sindermann, probably wrongly for the progressive cultural liberalization. [redacted]

Why the regime suddenly expatriated Biermann after it had ignored him for more than 10 years is impossible to answer. Some cynical observers in East Germany believe the regime acted in a calculated way to flush out other dissidents. There is evidence, however, suggesting that the authorities were surprised by the show of support for Biermann. The police, who have a long history of overresponding, may have believed that Biermann and Havemann, longtime collaborators in interviews carried by the West German media, were about to found a dissident group. There is evidence that Biermann was cataloguing individual grievances, and Havemann had become more outspoken after the Soviet "concessions" at the East Berlin meeting of European Communist parties that June about the need for domestic political reform and greater East German independence from Moscow.<sup>3</sup> The police probably were also alerted to the possible formation of a dissident group by the incidence of such activity elsewhere, notably the founding by Polish intellectuals of the "Workers Defense League" in September. The most probable immediate reason for Biermann's ouster, however, was his criticism of the regime during a large performance in West Germany that many

<sup>3</sup> Havemann, 68, a scientist banned from teaching and expelled from the Academy of Sciences in the mid-1960s, advocates a "true Communism" that allows freedom of speech, information, job selection, and travel. He has called for East Germany to make its own contribution to the development of Communism and has talked of eventual German reunification.

East Germans were able to see on their television sets. [redacted]

Whatever the regime's rationale at the time, it seems clear that the decision to expatriate Biermann was taken with several concurrent developments in mind:

- A greater outspokenness about restrictions on religion by the previously quiescent Evangelical church. This attitude was largely the result of the self-immolation of a pastor in August and the regime's subsequent clumsy handling of the incident.
- Signs of possible collusion between some pastors and dissident intellectuals. Kunze, for instance, had attempted unsuccessfully to speak at a church youth rally before his ouster from the Writers' Union.
- Increased agitation among the populace over travel and emigration restrictions. Thousands were applying for permission to travel, and some, when rebuffed, persisted with petitions to the government.<sup>4</sup>
- Economic problems, a concern that by itself may have argued for a tightening up, even though the East Germans were not in nearly as serious difficulty as the Poles. [redacted]

Biermann's expulsion was [redacted] of the measures taken by the regime in reaction to these unsettling developments. Another action that had even wider repercussions, and one that helped discourage dissent, was the adoption of a tougher posture toward West Germany and, specifically, Berlin. It is possible that the regime hoped the minicrisis over Berlin that it started in late 1976 and continued until May 1977 would signal its unhappiness over what it considered West German encouragement of dissent in East Germany and would lower its own population's expectations about easier travel (blaming the West Germans, of course, for the restrictions). The Berlin controversy of early 1977 may indeed have inhibited would-be dissidents. Writers who

<sup>4</sup> Karl-Heinz Nitschke, who applied 18 times for permission to live with his sister in West Germany, prepared a petition in July 1976 on freedom of travel that was signed by 33 citizens from Riesa.

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had protested the Biermann exile told a US official in January that while they were aware of Polish and Czechoslovak dissident activity, they did not intend to follow suit. [redacted]

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The infectious atmosphere of East European dissident activity of early 1977 did not, however, entirely bypass East Germany:

- Rudolf Bahro, whose book criticizing Communism as practiced in East Germany was to be publicized in West Germany later in the year, was sufficiently inspired to submit the manuscript he had been working on since 1971 to an East German publisher.
- Several would-be emigrants (for example, Wilfred Meissner and Hellmuth Nitsche) wrote to President Carter criticizing the inadequate observance of human rights in East Germany. Both were imprisoned after reports on their letters were published in the West. Nitsche, known for his longtime criticism of the system, was subsequently al-

lowed to leave the country, but Meissner apparently is serving a four-year jail sentence.

- In early April several persons who signed the Biermann petition tried to organize another petition protesting the continued imprisonment of young writers jailed after the Biermann incident. The attempt foundered when several prominent writers refused to participate. [redacted]

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Such isolated and halting steps characterized East German dissidents during the first half of last year. In early July, rumors that the young Jena writers would go on trial moved some of the older writers to weigh in with criticism—published in the West German press—of repression in East Germany. Their statements were presumably intended to focus Western attention on East Germany and head off trials or a widespread crackdown. The fact that the writers spoke out individually, but within a very short time, suggests a decision not to provoke the authorities with a joint statement. [redacted]

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Hellmuth Nitsche, imprisoned in 1977 after writing a letter to President Carter, was subsequently allowed to emigrate

In the midst of this effort to exile critical elements, East Berlin experienced a new incident of dissidence. On 22 August, excerpts of Rudolf Bahro's critique of the East German political and economic system were published in *Der Spiegel*. Bahro was arrested the next day on charges of "intelligence activities," and in September, at least four others were arrested, presumably for suspected complicity. (u)

Bahro's book, which was published in West Germany last September, is both a stinging indictment of the "traditional Stalinist system" in East Germany and a utopian prescription for correcting "social and political repression, cor-

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ruption, bureaucratic squandering, and deceit." Bahro characterizes himself as a Marxist who seeks to stimulate men of conscience in the establishment to think critically of how the system works. His criticisms are telling, especially on economic matters, because he has worked for years on the staff of an industrial enterprise. But his depiction of *The Alternative*, as his book is titled, is utopian—abolish the "division of labor"—and vague—the Communist Party, rather than seeking to control and direct events, should become an open organization acting as the "living conscience" of the people. His advice on how to effect change is nothing more than a call for unspecified coordinated actions by reform-minded persons throughout Eastern Europe and the USSR and for the eventual formation of a new Communist Party (a "League of Communists") (u)

Despite its drawbacks, the book has prompted others to compose lengthy indictments of the way Communism is practiced in East Germany. The first, published in September, 1977, by *Der Spiegel* and purportedly the work of a "high-level SED official," enthusiastically endorses Bahro. A second manifesto, mailed to West Germany the same month by an anonymous "League of German Communists" and subsequently published in the West German *Koelner Stadt-Anzeiger* in January 1978, also leveled severe criticisms at the regime. (u)

The most publicized manifesto, reportedly written in October and December and published in *Der Spiegel* last January, is a strongly worded criticism of the "deceit, corruption, repression, arbitrariness, favoritism, and incompetence" of the "semischizophrenic socialism" that exists in East Germany. It claims to represent the views of a small group of lower level party members. The document includes personal attacks on the East German leaders, acid criticism of Soviet "red fascism," a blunt rejection of Leninism as "useless," and an appeal for a neutral, leftist, and reunited Germany. The anonymous writers advocate a "totally reformed Communism" that includes party and institutional pluralism; freedoms of the press, organization, association, travel, and emigration; price reform and the

elimination of economic irrationalities; and a reduction in the bureaucracy. (u)

The manifesto's publication in West Germany caused a chill in East - West German relations and prompted East German media specialists to dismiss it as a West German provocation. While many of the thoughts in the manifesto reflect views held by many East Germans, the document has in fact had very little impact. Its exaggerated language and anonymous authorship have apparently prompted many to dismiss it as a fabrication. [redacted]

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Dissent in East Germany is likely to continue to be expressed by isolated individual statements and acts and in many cases, especially if done jointly, will be anonymous. Its political effect has been limited. Havemann's hope that the statement of dissent in 1976 by Biermann's friends and colleagues indicated a new willingness by regime critics to stand together was ill-founded. For those not willing to be bought off, the regime has made the cost of dissent too high. People are kept in jail without trial, often for lengthy periods, and then sometimes, if lucky, quietly ransomed to West Germany. [redacted]

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Bahro's idealistic criticisms pricked the consciences of closet dissidents within the establishment, perhaps mostly because his appeal as a fellow establishmentarian has a freshness and sense of commitment that they have lost. This could be troublesome, however, because ideology—or more accurately what the regime says East Germany stands for—is crucial in a country where appeals for support must be based on essentially ideological rather than national grounds. [redacted]

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There will probably be other statements from East German dissidents, old and new, to fortify Bahro's message. Havemann plans to publish his own Bahro-like critique. And Biermann, in exile in West Germany, still passionately declares his loyalty to a Communist East Germany and his intention to crusade for its perfection. Even though they may have little significant following within East Germany, their actions keep alive discussion about the need for change. [redacted]

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## ROMANIA

Dissident activity in Romania both last year and so far this year has been at a relatively low level. It did not have the dynamic personalities, the organization, or the ideological underpinnings comparable to that of the Polish dissident movement. Nonetheless, the activity that did occur was a rare instance in Romania's Communist history, when a small, but relatively broad cross section of the public was bold enough to express public unhappiness with pervasive political controls. The dissidents raised human rights issues when the new, human rights-oriented administration was inaugurated in Washington. This timing no doubt caused anxiety in the Romanian hierarchy that its throttling of dissent might jeopardize its efforts to continue its "spe-

cial relationship" with the United States. Additionally, ever-suspicious President Ceausescu probably wonders to what degree dissident complaints about his personality cult reflect broader opinion.

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The central figure in this brief flurry of activity that began in February last year and peaked by April, was Paul Goma, a 42-year-old writer.<sup>1</sup> Goma, perhaps distressed by the forced emigration in January 1977 of a friend, says he was moved by the Czechoslovak Chartists to write two "open letters" in February criticizing the regime's violation of rights guaranteed by law. The first letter expressed solidarity with dissidents elsewhere in Eastern Europe, particularly in Czechoslovakia, and blasted the "sword of repression" throughout the region ("for you, the Russian sword, for us, the Romanian sword"). He accused Ceausescu and his politically prominent wife ("the two Cs") of instituting a reign of bludgeon-gag-corruption (in Romanian, three Cs) and of pushing Romania back 1,000 years. (u)

His second letter, signed by six other Romanians and subsequently dubbed the Goma Manifesto, accused Bucharest of making a mockery of rights guaranteed in the Constitution and the principles of freer movement set down in the Helsinki accord. The manifesto asked the delegates to the conference reviewing implementation of the accord to pay close attention to human rights issues. To the apparent astonishment of the authorities—and perhaps to Goma as well—the manifesto, which was publicized in the West, attracted an increasing number of signatures and established Goma as the center of a "dissident movement." By Goma's count, the document was eventually signed by more than 300 people. (u)

<sup>1</sup> Goma had been publicly criticizing the Ceausescu regime since 1973 when, after a year's stay in Paris, he returned to Romania to research a novel on Romanian prisons in the late 1940s.

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Signers of the manifesto included an assortment of frustrated would-be emigrants (by far the largest element), religious dissenters (mainly Baptists), and a handful of persons from the intelligentsia. Goma claims 60 percent of his "following" were "workers," but it is likely that most of the signers were, in fact, white-collar workers. (u)

Whatever their social origins or occupations, the vast majority who signed the letter did so because signature was seen as a way to get the regime's attention and subsequent permission to leave Romania. This belief was well-founded: the six who initially signed, all frustrated emigrants, were immediately offered and accepted passports.<sup>2</sup> Partly as a consequence of the regime's initial willingness to grant passports in these cases, Goma's following at any one time was very small and at no time was it organized. Goma does not appear to have been especially aggressive in seeking out signers. He considered registering his "group" with the authorities as the "Committee on the Implementation of Romanian Laws," but never took that step. His one piece of followup work to the manifesto was an effort to document instances of the political use of mental institutions, evidence that has not been published.<sup>3</sup> [redacted]

It is not clear what goals, if any, Goma had in mind when he wrote his letters. After his departure from Romania last November, he said that he seeks the de-Stalinization of his country and that he made common cause with the Chartists because he saw their demands as reformist and consequently having some chance of success. Goma implied that he wants to see Romania adopt what he considers the "livable life" of Hungary and Poland. (u)

The appearance of Goma's "dissident movement"—against the human rights backdrop cre-

<sup>2</sup> The authorities soon realized that their actions were encouraging others to sign Goma's document and began delaying—but did not end—issuing permits to emigrate.

<sup>3</sup> Goma's interest in documenting the political use of psychiatry in Romania may reflect the influence of Ion Vianu, a psychiatrist who had written about the misuse of psychiatry in an October 1976 issue of a Romanian literary monthly. Vianu was one of the few members of the intelligentsia to sign Goma's manifesto.

ated by the then-upcoming conference to review the Helsinki accord and the new US administration—helped embolden others.

- In February 1977 a small group of religious dissenters issued a 17-page statement protesting religious oppression. (u)
- In March a well-established historian, frustrated by the rejection of his latest book and his inability to travel, drafted a broad-gauge manifesto announcing the formation of a CSCE monitoring group. His manifesto was never publicized; the police arrested him and simultaneously rounded up a number of dissidents, including Goma. [redacted]
- In June, Karoly Kiraly, an emigrant Hungarian and former member of the Romanian leadership, wrote the first of several letters to the authorities calling for a more enlightened policy toward Romania's large Hungarian minority. These letters subsequently appeared in the Western [redacted] (u)
- Five young h [redacted] had signed the Goma Manifesto and all of whom were eager to emigrate—issued an open letter in June calling for Western scrutiny of Romania's poor human rights record. Joined later by 17 friends and sympathizers, they agitated throughout the summer, despite having been sentenced in July to remote work projects.<sup>4</sup> Amnesty International made representations on their behalf in the fall, and Bucharest started letting them leave Romania in November. [redacted]

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Romanian religious dissenters, who organized and determined, needed little impetus from Goma's initiative to air their complaints about religious discrimination. A nucleus of dissident Baptist clergy under the leadership of Oxford-educated Iosif Ton had actively agitated since early 1973 for religious freedom.<sup>5</sup> And in early

<sup>4</sup> They had free weekends.

<sup>5</sup> The dissident Baptists had been waging a two-front war against the political authorities and older pastors more inclined to cooperate with the authorities and opposed to the dissenters' doctrinal views. Nonetheless, the dissenters acquired some following among seminary students in Bucharest and in several of the Baptist communities outside Bucharest. In January 1977 Ton was elected head of the Oradea Baptist community—the largest in Romania, with some 1,300 members.

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February 1977, they lost a more than year-long battle of wits with the regime for control of the official Baptist organization in Romania. As a consequence of this defeat and Ton's belief that the period before the Belgrade conference provided an opportune time, the dissidents issued a document explaining the forms of religious discrimination in Romania and arguing that the safeguarding of human rights was no longer of internal, but international concern.<sup>6</sup> Ton followed this up with another document in March, urging the government to heed its Helsinki obligations or admit to religious persecution.

The authorities' tactics for curbing dissident activity included persuasion and threat, harassment, periodic detentions, internal exile, forced labor sentences, job dismissals, and most frequently, offers of emigration papers.

Reflecting a sensitivity to Western publicity and opinion, Bucharest generally avoided using such harsh measures as imprisonment against individuals who were well known in the West. Thus, Goma was initially subjected to surveillance, and there was some disruption of his phone service and anonymous threats of personal harm. Party Secretary for Cultural Affairs Burtica held two publicized meetings with Goma in an effort to buy him off and to display Bucharest's willingness to engage in a "dialogue." One consequence of these meetings was the publication in a Romanian journal of a benign literary essay by Goma, the first time in seven years that he had gotten something by the censor.

A crackdown came at the end of March, when the police learned of plans for a new dissident organization and responded by arresting or detaining about 20 people, including Goma and a prominent historian, Vlad Georgescu. Nine people were immediately sentenced to one year of forced labor. Dissident Baptist leaders were called in for daily interrogations. The abrupt police actions were accompanied by an anti-US media campaign of a type not seen in Romania for years.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Ton said in January 1976 that he might start a Romanian civil rights newsletter patterned after the Soviet dissident *Chronicle*.  
<sup>7</sup> Bucharest apparently believed for a time that US officials were directly involved in stirring up dissidence in Romania.

The campaign did not last long, however, because the regime apparently was soon reassured enough to relax. Goma—who was expelled from the Writers' Union while in jail, an action that officially barred him from publishing in Romania—was released in early May, shaken enough to cease any further dissident activism. Georgescu, whose activity had prompted the crackdown and who had been charged with espionage, was released several weeks later.

In June, Bucharest allowed several more signs of the manifesto to leave, apparently to commemorate the opening in Belgrade of the preparatory conference to review the Helsinki accord. Over the summer the regime sparred with a separate group of young hotel clerks and their sympathizers until it decided, apparently in late September, to grant them the permission to emigrate they had sought all along. In November, Bucharest tried to put on a good face for the Belgrade conferees by letting Goma, the hotel clerks, and other dissidents leave the country. The brief flurry of dissident activity in February and March had thus been almost totally neutralized.

The Ceausescu regime's concern about maintaining its special relationship with the United States appears to account for some of its restraint in handling dissidents. Bucharest was very concerned that dissident revelations of repression or bad publicity over the arrest of dissenters might endanger renewal of its most-favored-nation trading status or, more basically, might prompt the Carter administration to reconsider US policy toward Romania.

The chances for dissidence may have been enhanced by last year's developments. Goma has left the country, but those few of his "followers" who remain could again draw Western media attention to restrictive domestic policies. The dissident Baptists, although few in number, are determined, well organized, and have connections in the West. In May 1978, they again issued documents criticizing restrictions on religion in Romania.

Goma's "movement" may have been indicative of and helped promote a new outspoken attitude

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among broader segments of the populace. Although too early to call it a trend, a new boldness is apparent in the Jiu valley miners' strike last August, in the Hungarian minority's demonstrative airing of its grievances early this year, and in the renewed demands to emigrate in the wake of Ceausescu's trip to the United States this spring. At least in the latter case, this new attitude stems from a calculation by a surprisingly large number of Romanians that the Ceausescu regime's interest in good relations with the United States

makes it ~~vulnerable to pressure~~ on human rights issues.

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This boldness, even though it may stop short of harnessing the average Romanian to a political cause, may make it more difficult for Bucharest to continue to enforce Stalinist economic and political policies. It may also prompt human rights issues to crop up more frequently in US-Romanian relations.

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