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# Intelligence Memorandum

*Dissident Activity in East Europe: An Overview*

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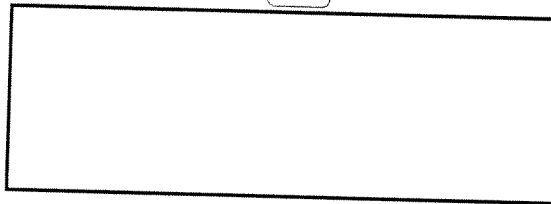
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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
Directorate of Intelligence  
1 April 1977

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

DISSIDENT ACTIVITY IN EAST EUROPE: AN OVERVIEW

*To those who think history unfolds in cyclical patterns, the recent events in Eastern Europe have an ineluctable logic. Twenty years ago or so it was the street upheavals in East Germany, the Poznan riots in Poland, and the Hungarian revolution. A decade later it was the "Prague Spring" and then the food riots in Polish coastal cities. And now, there is again very serious trouble in Poland and a recrudescence of unrest and dissident activity in Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Yugoslavia and, to a lesser extent, Hungary and Romania.*

*The underlying causes remain essentially unchanged:*

- All of the regimes in Eastern Europe are, to varying degrees, repressive and do not command the loyalty of their people.*
- The geopolitical ties to the USSR are at war with strong nationalist sentiment and the emotional and cultural pull of the West.*
- The economic performance of the regimes is deficient.*

*But there are new elements contributing to the current problems in Eastern Europe. Foremost among them is the USSR's detente policy. It has:*

- Promoted and therefore made legitimate the idea of increased interchanges with the West.*

*This paper was prepared by the Office of Regional and Political Analysis of the CIA.*

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- Resulted in a series of agreements, notably those involving increased contacts between the two Germanies and the Helsinki accord that reduced the isolation of the East European people (particularly its elites) and raised expectations of more to come.
- Fostered an atmosphere that has made it more difficult for the regimes to deal with their internal control problems in authoritarian ways abhorrent to Western sensibilities.
- Increased Moscow's stake in order, stability, and quietude in Eastern Europe even while it increased pressures from the West that tend to be destabilizing.

The flowering of Eurocommunism in Western Europe is another new and troublesome problem for the East European regimes and Moscow--not only because its leading proponents have given verbal aid and comfort to East European and Soviet dissidents but, more important, because it has appeal within the ruling parties in Eastern Europe.

The Soviets and East Europeans must also be concerned that President Carter's statements on human rights and particularly his exchange of letters with Soviet dissident spokesman Andrey Sakharov, give evidence of a new policy that is designed to cause trouble for the USSR in its own backyard. Even if the Soviets believe that is not Washington's intention, they will be worried that the effect will be the same. Moscow's misgivings in this regard will be in proportion to its concerns about the degree of unrest in Eastern Europe. Given the history of the postwar period, Moscow may well have a bias toward alarm. But in view of the prevailing situation in Poland, even an outside observer would conclude that Moscow has cause for concern.

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The Dissidence: Where Things Stand

--The situation in Poland is by far the most volatile in Eastern Europe. A major blow-up could come at any time. The popular mood has remained tense and sullen since the outbreak of workers' unrest last summer, although the regime has taken steps to dissipate the discontent. Dissatisfaction is rooted in economic problems that the regime cannot solve nor significantly ameliorate any time soon. Moreover, the dissatisfaction of the Polish people extends beyond the economic and into fundamental questions regarding the competence and legitimacy of the entire system and its leaders. Under these circumstances, Poland's professional intellectuals and dissidents have a good deal to work with. They established a Workers Defense League, raised funds for the families of workers jailed after the June rioting, and are now calling for an amnesty and an investigation of police abuses. Not surprisingly, while the Polish dissidents have given some verbal support to the Czechoslovak Chartists, they have been preoccupied with their own problems and opportunities in Poland.

The authorities who beat a hasty retreat before the workers' wrath last summer have, since last fall, handled the intellectuals with kid gloves. The leadership is acutely aware that they face a volatile situation and that a direct confrontation, with the potential creation of martyrs, must be avoided. The regime is trying to prevent the growth of cooperation between the workers and the dissident groups, and Gierek has released some workers and promised an amnesty for others, even while he has refused to undertake the investigation the Workers Defense League hopes will provide a focus for more fundamental criticism.

--The problem in East Germany is somewhat analogous to that in Poland in that it also involves popular unrest. It is different in that disquiet has not manifested itself in violence or overt acts of hostility to the regime. The temper in East Germany seems to be less churlish than in Poland and far less volatile. There is no evidence that any of the dissident groups are united.

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The Honecker regime is greatly concerned about the attraction of the West, particularly West Germany, for the East German population. Three out of every four East German homes receive, and presumably watch, West German television. Millions of travelers from the West enter East Germany every year. Against this kind of "subversion," Honecker's attempts to create an East German nationalism have faltered, and the regime's classical means of control seem almost irrelevant.

The Helsinki accords have made life ever more difficult for the East German regime. Acting under its provisions, large numbers--perhaps tens of thousands--of East Germans have applied for exit visas to emigrate to the West. The regime is taking steps to discourage such applications, and it is doubtful that it will allow many East Germans to emigrate no matter what the pressures from the West. No one knows the degree of skepticism or cynicism with which such applications are made, but disillusionment and resentment toward the regime could prove to be a problem.

We have seen some signs of increased restiveness among workers manifest in complaints about working conditions, wages, and hours. It is hard to tell how serious this is. So far, we see little evidence that the regime feels itself under great pressure from the workers. A worsening of the economic situation could lead to unification of the various groups dissatisfied with the regime's policies.

Last fall, the regime had some trouble with clergy in the Lutheran church and with a few outspoken dissident intellectuals. The latter have not been overtly sympathetic with the Czechoslovak Chartists, nor have they brought organized sustained pressure on Honecker. The regime's carrot-and-stick tactics have been relatively successful in keeping things quiet within the intellectual community.

--The Czechoslovaks have taken center stage among East European dissident intellectuals by their direct challenge to regime practices regarding civil rights, as outlined in "Charter 77," a manifesto which was prepared early last fall but not propounded until January. The Chartists--a mix of

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well-known oppositionists who were active in the political arena during the "Prague Spring" and a surprisingly large number (more than 600) of other intellectuals and technocrats--clearly have the authorities worried. One Czech diplomat abroad has reported that nervous colleagues have been watching what the Chartists say, particularly on ideological questions, since they went public. One reason the regime is concerned is that the Chartists represent, in a figurative sense, the plight of a vastly larger number of people (perhaps as many as half a million), who were purged after 1968 and whose political and other rights remain severely circumscribed. As apostles of the aborted effort to give socialism a "human face," many of the Chartists consider themselves forerunners of the Eurocommunism of the 1970s. The government has harrassed the Chartists and has arrested several, but has not initiated a thoroughgoing crackdown. One of the Chartists' leading spokesmen, Jan Patocka, died shortly after interrogation last month (he was not physically abused), but his funeral took place without incident, and as far as we know there was no popular reaction to his death.

--The small number of Romanian dissidents have been deeply divided by personal feuds and different goals, but some common ground has been found in Charter 77. The dissidents consist mainly of unknown artists and intellectuals who do not command national prestige. Novelist Paul Goma's "open letter" in support of the Chartists and a Romanian version of the Czech manifesto are the only recent evidence of vitality. The dissident's letter strongly criticized party leader Ceausescu's personal role and his authoritarianism. In Romania, they make clear, the problem is not the Soviets, but Ceausescu himself. This personal attack may account for Ceausescu's vitriolic speech blasting the dissidents, but the Romanian leader did not follow up with harsher measures. On the contrary, Goma was allowed to see the party number-one man on cultural affairs, and there were even suggestions that some of Goma's work might be published. Goma has not backed off and joined by a hundred-odd known sympathizers who signed his manifesto, he continues his struggle.

--Dissidence in Hungary has elicited no signs of serious concern from the regime. A small number of intellectuals have

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publicly supported the Chartists, but thus far they have not criticized conditions in Hungary. Ironically, while party leader Kadar's soft line has been successful at home, it has caused him some troubles with colleagues in Eastern Europe and perhaps the USSR as well. He is in a strong position as long as the Hungarian dissidents behave themselves and Hungary continues to be one of the quieter countries in Eastern Europe.

--There is little active dissent in Bulgaria, still Moscow's most dependable and ideologically conformist ally. Some passive resistance and unhappiness with living standards is evidenced by occasional work slowdowns and a widespread apathy, but this is nothing new. The aged top leadership will inevitably need to be replaced before long, and this might provide a new climate that would stimulate dissent.

--Opposition to the political establishment in Yugoslavia is unorganized, and factionalized, but is nevertheless worrisome to the Tito regime. Evidence of dissatisfaction, and the employment of harsh measures to suppress it, would bring into the open the regime's repressive character and make it more difficult for the leadership to argue that Yugoslavia is qualitatively "different" from other communist states. The regime's attitude toward dissent is colored by its abiding concern regarding the nationalities problem; all dissent is seen as potentially destabilizing.

Although such well-known personalities as Milovan Djilas and Mihajlo Mihajlov have long spoken out against government policies and communist practices, the intellectuals and students now criticizing passport policies and supporting the Chartists are not known to the general public.

The government has responded cautiously to dissident accusations that it is ignoring the human rights provisions of Helsinki. But it quickly expelled three West Germans who tried to publicize the issue in February, and is making strenuous behind-the-scenes efforts to keep dissent under wraps. The regime is also showing the stick to Yugoslav protesters. Two signers of the petition on passport policy have reportedly lost their jobs, and more punitive actions may be taken. The Constitutional Court rejected their appeal on 24 March. Belgrade's immediate concern is to limit adverse

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international publicity, as this would seriously embarrass the regime in view of Yugoslavia's role as host of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) review meetings.\* It has circulated the word that it may pardon some well known dissenters such as Mihajlov before the meeting as a gesture of Yugoslavia's good intentions on the human rights front.

### The Dissidents

There have always been individuals in Eastern Europe, even in quiet times, who have called themselves or have been called "dissidents," and have come forward to criticize the existing socio-political order. In recent months nascent dissident organizations in two countries of Eastern Europe, Poland and Czechoslovakia, have come into the open. The Workers Defense League in Poland, by the very act of adopting a name, has sent a signal that it aspires to, if it is not in fact, a corporate organization. The Charter 77 group in Czechoslovakia has not been quite so adventuresome; indeed, because organizing or joining political groups is illegal, the Chartists have denied that they constitute a political organization. How close the League and Charter 77 have the attributes of real organization--active membership, coherent structure, recognized leadership and thought-out programs, strategies, and tactics--we do not know. Elsewhere in Eastern Europe the dissidents tend to be small, loosely organized groups of dissatisfied persons, whose political philosophy in many cases comes close to social democracy, but who frequently have varying views, interests, and objectives.

By and large, the leading figures and spokesmen for the dissidents are individuals who have had a history of fighting for increased freedoms. No new charismatic figure has emerged. But a large number of new people who have not previously been identified as dissidents have signed letters and petitions in

\*It was agreed at Helsinki in August 1975 that the 35 participating nations would meet in two years to review implementation of the act's provisions. A preparatory meeting of experts is scheduled to be held on June 15 in Belgrade to decide on the dates and agenda for the main follow-up meeting, at, or below, the foreign minister level, which also is to be held in Belgrade this fall--possibly starting in early October and lasting up to three months.

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Czechoslovakia and Poland. The emergence of such people must be of concern to the regimes. One danger in instituting a harsh crackdown on the petition signers is that these new people who have come forward will be turned into hard-core activists.

There is evidence of some contacts among East European dissidents, but it is doubtful that there has been much consultation or coordination of tactics. Not surprisingly, the dissidents are not only preoccupied with their own problems, but also must be aware of their limited power to influence political developments elsewhere in Eastern Europe. More important are the practical difficulties that stand in the way of a coordinated effort.

Still, there is no question that, despite the problems of communication and the like imposed by operating in closed societies, a dissident movement now exists in Eastern Europe. It finds expression in the open support given to the Czechoslovak Chartists by dissident groups in several East European states. The East European dissidents have also learned from one another, and particularly from their Soviet counterparts. The Soviet dissidents have led the way in showing how the Western media, especially under the conditions of detente, can be used to embarrass the regime and to promote the activities, and even well-being, of the dissidents. More than that, Sakharov and others have shown that it is possible to speak out and be heard and still survive.

The Soviet dissidents, for their part, have gone on record that they share a common cause with like-minded individuals in Eastern Europe. Sakharov, for example, recently noted that his efforts "are part of a struggle throughout the world, a struggle that seems especially important at this moment when in Czechoslovakia, Poland, and other countries of Eastern Europe the movement is reaching a new level." A statement signed by 62 Soviet dissidents, released in early March, specifically expressed support for the Chartists, and the so-called Helsinki monitoring group in the USSR has also praised the efforts of the East European dissidents.

The impact of such statements is to buttress the concept of a common cause among the dissidents and to encourage them

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to believe that they are not alone in their efforts. Such expressions of mutual support may also persuade the Soviets, who are not known for their objectivity on such matters, that a "plot," involving a network of dissidents of several countries and possibly with outside support, is in existence.

### The Question of Popular Support

It seems safe to assume that there is a reservoir of popular sympathy, if not support, for the dissidents. After all, they stand in opposition to the regimes, and we have reason to believe that the people of Eastern Europe, in varying degrees, are disenchanted with both those who rule them and the system in which they live. We know that the dissidents, most of whom are members of the intelligentsia, have tried to reach out to the wider community. In Poland, the Workers Defense League was so named precisely for this reason. In Czechoslovakia, the Chartists have been trying to speak to the interests of the working class; a letter released in late March talked about the trouble that Czech workers had in making a living and other working class themes. (Ironically, at the same time the Czechoslovaks were deemphasizing human rights in favor of more prosaic concerns, the Poles were headed in the opposite direction. In late March, another organization--"Movement for the Defense of Human and Civil Rights"--was created in Poland. Was this an admission that the direct overtures to Polish workers by the League was a failure? Or perhaps too dangerous?)

Whatever our presumptions about the likelihood of shared attitudes between the dissidents and the people, the fact is that there is little evidence that the people have either tangibly supported the dissidents or are prepared to do so. The dissidents themselves make no great claims of having the allegiance, loyalty, or support of the worker or other groups. There has been no significant student agitation, one key barometer of unrest. The dissidents have not, for the most part, attempted to establish direct personal contacts with various segments of the population by such means as speeches in factories and the dissemination of circulars. Such actions, of course, would be considered incitement and thus subject to punishment.

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Many East Europeans, recalling the events in Hungary in 1956 and in Czechoslovakia in 1968, would doubtless believe it futile to show support for the dissidents, even assuming that an issue would come to the fore around which they could rally. Popular engagement is, of course, further limited by the lack of a free media and the efficiency of the organs of control.

But the absence of overt popular support for the dissidents does not necessarily mean that the East Europeans will permanently accept the status quo. Nationalist sentiments appear not to have diminished, and many East Europeans do not identify their interests with those of the Soviets, nor with their own rulers. This is understood in Moscow and in the East European capitals, and it is why the Communist leaders are always nervous about internal order.

#### Goals

It seems unlikely that any group of dissidents has developed a serious long-range, defined strategy aimed at achieving fundamental or revolutionary political changes. While the dissidents are, almost by definition, visionaries, they are also aware of their limited resources, the lack of active popular support, and, most important, the ever-present threat posed by the Soviet Union and its troops. They try to modify the strictures which prevail so as to gain elbow room to push for eventual change. This is not an inconsequential objective, for if the dissidents succeeded in expanding the limits of permissible political activity, they would be creating the preconditions for more fundamental change. This is one reason the regimes feel they cannot give ground by recognizing the kind of broad "rights" the dissidents assert, even if, in practice, they are willing or are compelled to tolerate their activities.

In no instance are the dissidents explicitly or overtly pressing for a change in the system of government or adopting anti-party or anti-regime positions. They have focused instead on the failure of the several regimes to observe specific human rights which all have formally acknowledged both in internal legislation and international treaty. The Chartists, for example, are championing a full range of human rights, including

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the right to have work commensurate with education and training, access to educational institutions, freedom of religion, the right to voice minority opinions, and freedom of movement.\* Most of the dissidents, including the East Germans and the Yugoslavs, have stressed the right to travel, partly, we suspect, because there is a significant constituency for this right among the technical and educated elites.

The Chartists and other groups evidently hope that the pressure they and the West are bringing to bear on human rights may prove irresistible. They are probably hoping that Moscow will allow the East Europeans to make concessions in the field of human rights rather than put at risk the USSR's relations with the West.

Only time and experience will define how far the dissidents can go, but for the moment they can claim at least one victory. The Polish regime recently sent new instructions to writers and publishers easing censorship and explicitly saying that criticism of party and government people was permissible--within limits. The dissident intellectuals have long thought that the Soviets would allow the regime more latitude than it realized and that it could be pressed into according more freedom to the intellectual community.

The US Impact

Except for the letter sent by the Czechoslovak dissident Kohout to President Carter, there is little hard information on what the East European dissidents make of Washington's recent pronouncements and actions regarding human rights. There is, of course, a danger that hopes and expectations will be raised to unrealistic, and even dangerous, levels. But we have no evidence that this is the case, nor is there any evidence that the dissidents have changed their tactics as a consequence of the new attention to human rights in Washington.

We suspect that the dissident opinion contains a certain cynicism regarding the US commitment to human rights if it

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\*Some of these "rights" are speaking to the plight of large numbers of party members purged after the 1968 Soviet invasion, who have had trouble finding good jobs and whose children frequently cannot get into universities.

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comes into conflict with US equities regarding the USSR. The dissident activity in East Europe had begun well before President Carter was elected, or took office. It has waxed and waned since the end of January, in part as a consequence of the amount of attention it has received from the Western media. The dissidents almost certainly regard the President's statements as a new plus; publicity in the West and the kind of pressure on the regimes that is implicit in Washington's statements, are vital to the dissidents' hopes of bringing about change.

There is no evidence, circumstantial or otherwise, that President Carter's remarks have had a significant impact on how the East European regimes are dealing with their dissidents. The regimes have been responding to developments, almost on a day-to-day basis, within the framework of a general approach dictated by the particularities of their own internal situation and the inclination of their leaders. In all the regimes, continuity rather than discontinuity has been characteristic. Hence, the Czechoslovaks and East Germans have tended to be tougher than the Poles or the Hungarians. And the policies of the Romanians and the Yugoslavs have been somewhere in the middle.

There is little reason to doubt that the US administration's position on human rights has been a cause for some concern in the East European capitals. The Yugoslav leadership, for example, must be concerned that their violations will undermine the kind of support they think they need to fend off the Soviets in the post-Tito period. Belgrade believes it must, for reasons of internal stability, be tough on dissidents, but at the same time it has given signals that it may free some well-known dissidents, clearly to strengthen its standing in the West as a "different" Communist state. Ceausescu had some very harsh things to say in public about the human rights statements of "certain politicians," but the Romanians, too, need the US, and the fact is, for all of Ceausescu's fulminations, the handful of Romanian dissidents have been treated with a light hand. The problem is different for Gierek and Kadar, both of whom favor a more tolerant approach to the dissidents. If President Carter's statements, and the internal situation in the USSR, causes Moscow to impose a tougher line

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on dissidents across the board in Eastern Europe, then Kadar and Gierek will have trouble--particularly Gierek, who is up against a highly volatile and unpredictable situation in Poland.

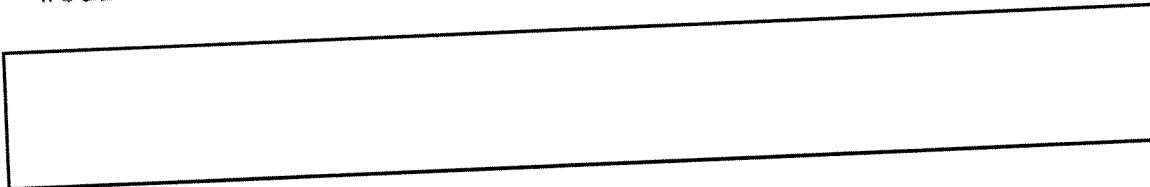
### Eurocommunism

There is an important relationship between Eurocommunism and the current unrest in Eastern Europe. Support from the West European Communist parties, which espouse those ideas that have come to be called "Eurocommunism," has helped the dissidents by enabling them to argue that there is no necessary contradiction between Marxism and Western-type political freedoms. Some of the dissidents may well believe that Communism with a "human face" is possible, although others are probably using Eurocommunism opportunistically, perhaps as a cover for the more profound changes they want.

The East European regimes could handle this, but what gives them--and Moscow--real concern is that Eurocommunist ideas, particularly as they relate to autonomy from the USSR, have attraction for people inside the apparatus. In a sense, Eurocommunism threatens to bridge the conceptual gap between the dissidents and the establishment.

The European Communist party conference in Berlin last June, during which Eurocommunism proponents forcefully put forward their views, evidently caused considerable ferment within some of the Warsaw Pact countries. At the December Warsaw Pact ideological conference it was, reportedly, noted that the Berlin document has led to confusion, sympathy for Eurocommunist ideas, and the need to combat the "spread of a deviant concept of proletarian internationalism."\*

Eurocommunism was high on the agenda at last month's Warsaw Pact ideological meeting in Sofia. We do not know what, if anything, was decided. But there is one report that at an earlier meeting the Soviets raised the idea of supporting splinter groups within the offending parties. That Moscow would even talk about such a major step suggests the depth



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of its concern. We do know that the Soviets tried to prevent the Madrid meeting of the three leading Western European Communist parties last month, evidently because they feared that it would produce more outspoken criticism of the repression of Soviet and other dissidents. The communique of the Madrid meeting was soft on the human rights issue, perhaps as a consequence of Soviet pressures.

### United Leaderships?

Except for Poland, the dissident problem has led to little or no observed political fallout within the East European leaderships. A number of personnel changes were made in Warsaw last December, and it looks as though Premier Jaroszewicz will lose his job sometime this year. Even the Polish problem is not strictly one of "dissidence," but rather concerns fundamentals of economic and political mismanagement.

With the possible exception of Romania, where Ceausescu runs something close to a one-man show, there are divisions or differing tendencies along a "liberal-conservative" continuum. One would expect to see some exacerbation of these differences as a consequence of the dissident activity. But the evidence to support that expectation is not very strong. We know that there have been longstanding and deep divisions in Yugoslavia over internal security policies, including the way to handle dissidents, but it is not clear how, or if, the divisions have come into play during the recent flare-up.

In Czechoslovakia, the leadership is divided between hard liners and more pragmatic conservatives led by party leader Husak, but these differences do not appear to have affected in any major way the regime's handling of the Chartists. Both factions, whatever their inclinations at the outset, must have realized the implications of Charter 77, and neither would be inclined to pursue a soft policy like that of Gierak in Poland. Although Husak successfully resisted hard-line pressure for trials of people responsible for the "Prague Spring," he has also shown an ability to pursue a conservative tack when necessary. The hard liners probably prefer a decisive crack-down on the Chartists, but if so they have not yet had their way.

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Moscow has a good deal to say about tactics on such problems in Czechoslovakia, and the chances are good that it has supported the tough, but not harsh, stand taken by Husak.

In East Germany, the regime is not completely united on how to deal with dissidents; for example, in the Biermann case\* there is evidence that the "hawks" won out. The extent of differences within the leadership is hard to measure, however, and probably varies from case to case depending on the circumstances.

Within the Polish leadership there has been some pushing and shoving on how to react to the dissidents; those favoring a moderate response have thus far been on top. A high-ranking Polish official claims that Poland's fastest rising political star, the new Central Committee economic secretary and former foreign minister Stefan Olszowski, has argued for continued tolerance for a degree of dissident activity. Proponents of a harsher course have been noted in the upper managerial levels of the media. The Politburo as a whole recently indicated its support for the moderate course by criticizing the past performance of the media.

The East European leaders have differed among themselves on the appropriate way to deal with the dissidents. According to one account, strong differences with regard to approaches to the dissident problem were expressed at the Warsaw Pact summit last November. Kadar reportedly was extolling his own conciliatory approach, implicitly as an example for others ("after all, there is no great dissident problem in Hungary, comrade"), but it seems more likely that he was on the defensive, holding out against Honecker and others who want a tough line across the board in Eastern Europe and believe that anything less is dangerous.

#### The Soviets

Moscow is obviously concerned about the unrest in Eastern Europe. A blowup anywhere in Eastern Europe has

\*Wolfgang Biermann, a popular dissident singer and poet, who was in trouble with the regime for many years, was not permitted to return to the GDR following a tour to West Germany last fall.

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important implications for the stability of the regime affected, for its ties to the USSR, and even for the internal tranquility of the USSR. Moscow's first concern must be Poland, where, as we have indicated, the situation is both volatile and unpredictable. Worse, there is no quick or easy fix for what ails Poland, and there is little that Moscow can do to help, except, perhaps, by sending in large amounts of economic assistance. This the Soviets have been unwilling to do, possibly because of their own economic needs or because they are not certain that such aid would help that much, or because they are not persuaded that the situation in Poland has reached critical proportions. Whatever the case, the Soviets have, at least until now, been willing to go along with Gierek's moderate approach to Polish dissidents and also to Poland's economic problems.

In East Germany, Moscow has supported Honecker's efforts to get on top of the problems caused by the Helsinki accords and the increased Western influence on the East German population. But the problem for Honecker, and Moscow, is that the steps he has taken to promote an East German identity, for example, by eroding the special status of the GDR's capital, East Berlin, are not likely to significantly ameliorate the yearning of many East Germans, particularly those in the technical and professional classes, to travel or emigrate to the West. Detente in central Europe has created internal pressure on Honecker that will not go away unless detente goes away. Honecker can impose measures that will significantly curtail the GDR's contacts with the West and will dampen the expectations of the East German people for a Western "life style," but such measures would quickly add up to a significantly changed atmosphere between the two Germanies and in Europe as a whole. Neither Honecker nor the Soviets want this to happen, and therefore they have adopted palliatives rather than remedies in dealing with the unrest in East Germany. This could change if the East German situation gets worse, and that is why the Soviets must be watching events there closely and must be concerned that dissident activity and unrest elsewhere in Eastern Europe will adversely affect East Germany.

The variety of approaches in Eastern Europe to the dissident problem is prima facie evidence that Moscow has

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foregone imposing any set line on its allies. The Soviets feel uncomfortable with the more permissive approaches of the Hungarians and Poles, but they have permitted both Kadar and Gierek to fashion their tactics to fit their own circumstances. Moscow's forbearance is dependent on:

- a) Confidence that, whatever their deviations from the Soviet model, Kadar and Gierek are essentially good Communists who will not be metamorphosized into social-democrats and who will not forget the special relationship with the USSR.
- b) A measure of stability and order in Hungary and Poland. Kadar's most powerful argument for his policies is also the simplest: that it works, i.e., that Hungary does not have a dissident problem, and is still a Marxist state faithful in its own way to the USSR. Gierek clearly argues from a weaker base and is compelled to make the case, not without merit, that if things are bad in Poland now, they would be a good deal worse if he tried to crack down on dissidence. If they get worse anyway, Gierek will be in deep trouble with Moscow.

There is evidence that Moscow's attitude toward the problem of dissidence in Eastern Europe may be changing. For one thing, the Soviets have become tougher with their own dissidents since the first of the year. This makes it easier for Moscow to call upon their allies to take a harder line. As a result, permissive approaches are pushed further from the norm and hence less acceptable.

There are reports the Soviets leaned on both the Poles and the Hungarians at an ideological conference in Sofia early last month. So far, we see little evidence of a toughening line on the dissidents in either country, or for that matter, in Czechoslovakia or East Germany.

One report claims that the Soviets have told the Poles that they must adopt more orthodox economic policies. The Soviets clearly have grounds for complaint. They have never been comfortable with Poland's crazy quilt of socialism and

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private enterprise. In December, Gierek announced a series of socio-economic reforms whose purpose is to strengthen the private sector of the economy. This surely has not gone unnoticed in some circles in Moscow. But it would be very difficult for Gierek to renege on his public promises, and Moscow could buy itself a real problem if it forces him to do so.

Short-Term Prospects

The odds favor continuity over the next few months. Poland will continue to be highly volatile and there could be a blowup similar to last summer's or even worse. But Gierek and company, knowing the stakes, made policy adjustments and will probably muddle through. Honecker will continue to feel the pressures from the West and to be aware of the basic restiveness of the East German people, but he is not likely to do anything drastic (e.g., significantly cut back the interchange between the two Germanies) that would seriously threaten public order in East Germany. The dissidents in Czechoslovakia, Romania, Hungary, and Yugoslavia will step up their activities with an eye to the Belgrade review conference, but the respective regimes ought to be able to cope with them with little trouble. The dissidents in those countries are not likely to get more popular support over the next three to six months than they enjoyed in the past three months.

This assessment could turn out wrong if:

--Mischance, misfortune, or miscalculation intrude. While Gierek appears to have learned from the bad mistakes he made last year, this does not mean he will not make another. The sudden death of dissident spokesman Jan Patocka in Czechoslovakia illustrates the sort of unexpected event that could narrow the gap between the dissidents and the population, although this has not occurred thus far in Czechoslovakia.\* Moreover, the

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\*Anniversaries also sometimes prove difficult for the various regimes. For example, oppositionists in Yugoslavia can be expected to counter or denigrate the regime-sponsored extravaganza planned to celebrate Tito's 85th birthday on May 25. Among other such anniversaries which could serve as a focal point are June 17 (the 1953 East Berlin uprising), August 13, (Berlin wall erected in 1961), and August 20 (the Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968).

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Soviets and some of the East European leaders are more nervous and sensitive than normal about the situation in Eastern Europe. They could overreact to trouble.

- The dissidents press their case beyond the permissible. So far, the dissidents have acted with considerable restraint, and even finesse. They have not forced the regimes into taking harsh actions, but they could change their tactics and engage in activities (overt or covert agitation, propagandizing among workers, acts of violence, civil disobedience, etc.) that would compel the regimes to make tough decisions on how to respond. Under such circumstances, the chance of miscalculation and overreaction increases.
- Economic conditions grow significantly worse. A bad harvest this summer leading to food shortages might draw a quick and strong reaction from consumers. In some countries, economic expectations have been high: clear-cut evidence that those expectations will not be realized any time soon could cause trouble. This may be especially true in East Germany; the average worker there is better off than his counterparts anywhere else in Eastern Europe, but his expectations are consequently higher and his standard of comparison is the West, not the East.
- The Soviets force the East Europeans to get much tougher on the dissidents and on economic policies. There is some, but not yet persuasive, evidence that this may already be happening in Poland and Hungary. If it does occur, the odds of serious trouble in Poland and elsewhere in the next several months would go up appreciably.
- There is a widespread perception of change in Washington's attitude toward dissent in Eastern Europe. If US-Soviet relations seem to be deteriorating and the US is seen to be pushing Moscow on human rights issues, the Soviets might respond by ordering a crackdown on dissenters in Eastern Europe and their ties to Western newspapers, etc. At the same time, the dissenters might be encouraged by the seeming resolution of the US to press their case

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harder and more forthrightly. This could be a dangerous mixture. If there is a perception that the US has backed down or significantly modified its stand on human rights, some dissenters might be disillusioned and become more subdued, but others might be inclined to force the issue on both superpowers before Belgrade.

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CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS

1976

June 24 Price increase proposals announced in Poland.

June 25 Widespread riots and other disturbances in Poland over price increases.

early September 14 Polish intellectuals form Workers Defense League.

November Warsaw Pact summit discusses problem of dissidence.

1977

January Petition of 60 Yugoslav intellectuals surfaces in Western media. (In late summer of 1976, these persons had petitioned the Constitutional Court to end the practice of arbitrarily denying passports for political reasons.)

January 6 Charter 77, the manifesto of Czechoslovak human rights activists, published in West Europe.

January 13-14 Four Czechoslovak dissidents--three of them Chartists--arrested for "maintaining contacts with hostile forces."

January 20 Small number of Hungarian dissidents express support for Charter 77.

January 26 US State Department comments negatively on Prague's harrassment of the Chartists.

January 30 Two Charter 77 spokesmen officially informed that Charter and its representations were "contrary to Czechoslovakia's law."

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February 3	Polish leader Gierek proposes pardon for those workers still in jail as a result of June 1976 riots.
February 9	"Open letter" of Romanian novelist Paul Goma published in Paris. (Letter calls attention to the regime's intolerance of dissent and declares solidarity with the Czech Chartists.)
February 12	USSR publishes defense of its campaign against Soviet dissidents in <u>Pravda</u> editorial.
February 13	Goma and seven other dissidents send public appeal to the participants of the Helsinki agreements (CSCE), condemning the lack of respect for human rights in Romania.
February 17	Romanian leader Ceausescu attacks Goma and other dissidents as "traitors."
February 17	Yugoslav authorities expel three West German human rights protesters who were engaged in a hunger strike in support of jailed writer Mihajlo Mihajlov.
March 1	Czechoslovak dissident Jan Patocka discusses dissident activities with Dutch foreign minister.
March 2-3	Meeting of Warsaw Pact central committee secretaries responsible for ideology in Sofia. Discussion centers on dissident activities in East Europe.
March 3	Czechoslovak dissident Pavel Kohout writes letter to President Carter and delivers it to the US embassy.
March 10	US embassy in Belgrade learns of a second protest letter in Yugoslavia; 90 persons support Charter 77.

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March 16	One thousand persons reportedly attend funeral of Patocka, who died on March 13. Secret police much in evidence during ceremony.
mid-March	Czechoslovak dissidents release two documents intended to regain momentum for their cause; one missive tries to establish common cause with the workers, the other is an appeal to the Eurocommunist parties for greater support.
March 24	Yugoslav dissident appeal rejected by Constitutional Court.
March 27	A new organization of dissidents--Movement for the Defense of Human and Civil Rights--is proclaimed. Its goals are broader than those of the WDL and are aimed at publicizing infringements on civil rights; regime responds with immediate and strong criticism.

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