

CZECHOSLOVAK NEWSLETTER

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COUNCIL APPEAL TO MADRID CONFERENCE

The Council of Free Czechoslovakia has issued an appeal signed by Czech and Slovak cultural, social and political organizations abroad (in the United States, Canada, Western Europe, Australia, and New Zealand) to all the participants in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) review opening in Madrid in November. The following is the complete text:

"We, the Czechoslovak cultural, social and political organizations outside Czechoslovakia, signatories of this appeal, have been following with concern and uneasiness the developments in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic (ČSSR). We must conclude, with regret and sadness, that the ČSSR government and its agencies have been persistently and systematically violating and even suppressing the human rights and fundamental freedoms of its citizens, guaranteed in the Final Act of Helsinki, as well as in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, all signed and ratified by the government of the ČSSR.

"The Charter 77, issued in January 1977 and since then signed by more than one thousand Czechoslovak citizens, men and women, students, workers and professionals, of all political persuasions, religious beliefs and backgrounds, which asked from their own government solely that it adhere to all its obligations embodied in the Constitution and in international treaties — including the Final Act of Helsinki — which it signed and ratified, was met with harassment and persecution, the extent and scope of which have no parallel in recent European his-

tory. Many signatories and supporters, as well as their families, of the Charter 77 were imprisoned, dismissed from their jobs, subjected to gross discrimination and even forced into involuntary exile.

"A similar fate was meted out to members of VONS (the Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Prosecuted), founded in April 1978 to 'monitor cases of people who have been imprisoned for expressing their opinions, as well as cases of arbitrary action by the police or judiciary'; to make such cases 'known to the general public and the authorities,' and to assist the victims within the limited capabilities of VONS. It was generally known that these efforts, unquestionably within the framework of the provisions of the Final Act, were met by the Czechoslovak authorities with harassment and arrests, culminating in the infamous Prague trials and sentencing of VONS leaders to terms of imprisonment.

"At this very moment, numerous signatories and supporters of the Charter 77 and of VONS are in prison in Czechoslovakia, solely because they asked their government to grant and guarantee to all Czechoslovak citizens those rights and freedoms embodied in the Constitution of the ČSSR and in the Helsinki Final Act, signed and ratified by the Czechoslovak government.

"Therefore, we appeal to all governments participating in the CSCE and meeting at the second review conference in Madrid that they:

- 1) Devote adequate time and attention to the violations of the provisions of the Final Act by the government and authorities of the ČSSR;
- 2) Unequivocally condemn widespread and blatant violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Czechoslovakia;
- 3) Demand forcefully that the government of the ČSSR fulfill its duties and obligations under the provisions of the Final Act of Helsinki and of other international covenants and treaties ratified by it; and
- 4) Give full support to all freedom-loving Czechs and Slovaks in their devotion to human rights and fundamental freedoms and in their efforts at their full implementation in the present difficult conditions in their homeland.

"We issue this appeal as representatives of the democratic traditions of Czechoslovakia, and in the name of all Czechs and Slovaks living abroad, as well as on behalf of our brothers and sisters in the ČSSR deprived of the freedom of expression. We fully support the provisions of the Final Act of Helsinki and ask only that all participating governments fulfill obligations that they freely undertook by signing it. We, in the free world, and our fellow citizens in the ČSSR, maintain that the fulfillment

of the provisions of the Final Act is of vital importance for the well-being of humanity and that the full implementation of internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms will have fateful consequences for the future of Europe and of our civilization."

The Council of Free Czechoslovakia is preparing a memorandum for all the signatories of the Helsinki Final Act for the forthcoming Madrid conference. The memorandum will deal with the Marxist-Leninist background of the Czechoslovak regime as a source of its violations of the Helsinki Final Act, and will present the Council's views and suggestions on all three baskets of the Final Act with special regard to the persecution of the members of Charter 77 and VONS, suppression of religion, and violations of the economic and social rights of the Czechoslovak population.

THE POLISH EVENTS AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA

The communist regime in Czechoslovakia has watched the Polish workers' fight for their rights with great concern, the more so because Czechoslovakia itself went through a similar crisis twelve years ago, a crisis interrupted by the Warsaw Pact invasion of the country. There is no evidence, however, that the Polish events could be repeated in Czechoslovakia under present circumstances. (Jiří Lederer, a Czech journalist, Charter 77 member, and political prisoner for a total of almost four years [Czechoslovak Newsletter, Vol. III, No. 2 (March 1978), p. 5], who emigrated to West Germany on September 1, said in an interview with Agence France-Press on September 3 that he had learned from workers in Czechoslovakia that groups had formed in factories to discuss the Polish situation, but "it would be false to deduce from this fact that something similar could develop in Czechoslovakia.") The regime nevertheless instructed party units at every level to make sure that supplies of consumer goods in industrial centers and factory canteens were adequate. The Central Trade Union Council, according to Prague Radio on September 10, criticized the leaders of the Building Workers' Trade Union for not making enough effort to find solutions to problems with the workers' active participation.

The tenor of press, radio and television commentaries has been hostile to the Polish workers' action, especially after Moscow decided to denounce "antisocialist forces" for plotting to prize Poland loose from the "socialist camp." Prague Radio on September 4 quoted Trybuna Ludu (The People's Tribune), the official daily of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' (communist) Party, that "forces hostile to socialist development in Poland . . . are exploiting the present crisis as fertile ground for attacking socialism and the leading role of the party, including the trade unions." Prague Radio's commentator went on: "The real intentions of the many so-called friends of Poland are proved by the activities of some representatives of the reactionary Western press, which is spreading information that is eagerly used for subversive activities against the socialist system in the People's Republic of Poland. At a time when the Polish United Workers' Party is doing all it can to help the Polish workers to overcome social and economic difficulties, . . .

the West is being fed fairy tales that conditions in Poland are ripe for the so-called process of liberalization. Such an interpretation has the obvious purpose . . . of implanting bourgeois ideas of freedom and rights. Interference in the domestic affairs of another country is now being defended even by Social Democratic trade unions in the West, which are sending funds to those in Poland who are in effect trying to undermine the socialist foundations of the country."

The Czechoslovak media have laid all the blame on the West for instigating the strikes against former Polish First Secretary Edward Gierek's regime. Rudé právo (Red Right), the main daily of the Czechoslovak party's Central Committee, asserted on September 5: "The flood of words and slogans from those who masquerade as the friends of the Polish people, but who are really its worst and most implacable enemies, is an ill-concealed attempt to mislead the Polish nation. The Times of London wrote that there is 'a spark of hope that Poland is on its way to a new and more hopeful period.' What kind of more hopeful period would serve the interests of the grand bourgeoisie for whom The Times speaks? The bourgeois media reflect the thoughts and wishes of the Western ruling class for whom socialist Poland is a thorn in the flesh. These forces would like to harm the unity of the socialist countries and the process of detente that has achieved such remarkable results in the 1970s. . . . Western centers of anticommunist ideological diversion are stepping up their activities; their treacherous work is being escalated in accordance with the long-range strategic plans of the imperialist ruling circles. . . . They are seeking to exploit the complex situation in Poland to start a new round of psychological warfare." Thus, Rudé právo concluded, "the Western ruling circles and their media express their solidarity with those elements in Poland that they regard as their potential tools in their struggle against popular power."

Prague Radio commented on September 4: "A touching concern for the rights of the Polish trade unions is being shown in the West precisely by those who have nothing but nightsticks and tear gas for strikers in their own countries. [President Jimmy] Carter, the man who ordered striking steel and railroad workers, miners and longshoremen back to work, hypocritically appeals to God to protect the Polish workers."

"Facts prove," said Prague Radio on September 11, "that the leader of the [Polish] strikers, [Lech] Walesa, worked illegally for two years to establish an organization of so-called free trade unions on the Baltic coast."

Rudé právo wondered on September 27 whether the new Polish trade unions were not going to be influenced by "the enemies of People's Poland." It went on: "Many people are today asking whether the so-called new trade unions are not going to be a platform for Jacek Kuroń and similar people from KOR, the illegal antisocialist organization." It called Kuroń and Maryla Polońska the "godfathers of the new unions," and said they wanted "to liquidate socialism and the party of the working class from Poland at any cost."

Vasil Bil'ak on Poland

The dark warnings emanating from Moscow and reechoed in the Czechoslovak media are reminiscent of the articles that appeared in the Soviet press prior to the

Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. A voice from those days, Vasil Bil'ak, a Czechoslovak party hard-liner of Ruthenian stock, a member of the party Central Committee and party secretary responsible for interparty relations, was the featured speaker at an event in Prague commemorating the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of Rudé právo. His address attacking "Western imperialists and Chinese hegemonists" was published in Rudé právo on September 13. Of the Polish events he had this to say: "The sympathies of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, of our people, are with the Polish communists and with all those who are striving for Poland to develop as a sovereign socialist state and a solid member of the socialist community. We are convinced that there are enough honest patriots and internationalists in Poland to solve their country's problems, to beat back the onslaught of antisocialist elements, and to do all that is necessary so that revolutionary achievements shall not be impaired. In this not easy struggle they are not alone; they have loyal allies. They need no advice from those who are hostile to People's Poland and who hate socialism."

Charter 77 Letter and the Regime's Reaction

The Charter 77 rights movement on August 28 issued a message of solidarity with the Polish strikers signed by spokespersons Marie Hromádková and Miloš Rejchrt:

"We are following your struggle for a free life in dignity with interest and emotion. The demands that you have articulated, especially the release of political prisoners, observation of the freedom of expression, and the right to found independent trade union organizations, are identical with our own endeavors. We believe that your persistence, prudence and sense of civic responsibility will bear positive results for you and the entire Polish nation, as well as enhance the authority of human rights throughout the world."

The following day, as a warning, the police detained for questioning at least 17 persons, among them Hromádková and Rejchrt, as well as Jiří Hájek, foreign minister under former First Secretary Alexander Dubček and one of the first to sign Charter 77. The Czechoslovak police have acted in the past to prevent contacts between Charter 77 and Poland's KOR (Workers' Defense Committee).

THE COST OF INDEPENDENCE OF MIND

Acta Creationis: Independent Historiography in Czechoslovakia, 1969-1980, a collection of essays by blacklisted Czech and Slovak historians, was distributed to participants in the 15th International Congress of Historians, held in Bucharest August 10-17. All the contributors, nine of whom still live in Czechoslovakia, are banned from working as historians or publishing in their homeland. Edited by Vilém Prečan, Acta Creationis lists more than 180 books and articles published either in samizdat or in the West. Under Soviet pressure, the Rumanian congress organizers

stopped a press conference that twelve of the attending historians, led by Thorolf Rafto of Norway, had planned to hold in a Bucharest hotel on August 14 to publicize the book.

Acta Creationis contains an eight-page report by Prečan on the fate of historiography under the "normalization" imposed on Czechoslovakia after 1968. Entitled "A Slovak Historian Resists Coercion," the report describes the case of the Slovak historian Jozef Jablonický. The following is an abridged version of it.

The story of the Slovak National Rising of 1944, one of the largest military operations undertaken by the European anti-Nazi resistance, belongs to the great themes of modern Slovak history. For the first fifteen years after the communist takeover in 1948 the rising was being interpreted less by historians than by state prosecutors. Only with the advent of a liberal-reformist current of thought in the early 1960s did the inquiry into the rising attain the character of a genuine historiographic exercise. After the reinstatement of totalitarian controls in the wake of the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia, all social sciences reverted to the jurisdiction of the authorities in power. Such was the fate of the Slovak rising as well.

What were deemed undesirable writings were banned, while opportunistic outpourings received a green light under the supervision of the secret police. The case of Jozef Jablonický illustrates present conditions in Czechoslovakia. Born in 1933, he completed his studies at the faculty of philosophy in Bratislava in 1957 and published his first major book as a member of the History Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in 1965. Jablonický views his own beginnings with self-criticism: "Totalitarian deformations influenced my first steps as a historian. I am well aware today how little I knew two decades ago about the democratic resistance in Slovakia; parrot-fashion I recited theses typical of the prosecutors' interpretation of history. . . . The blinkers fell from my eyes only gradually, as I studied primary sources and interviewed scores of people."

In 1969 he published a 500-page monograph in Slovak, From Illegality to the Uprising: Chapters from the History of Democratic Resistance — something still possible in the immediate aftermath of the "Prague spring." It was the first systematic treatment of the role played in the resistance by noncommunist groups and individuals. Despite his own membership of the communist party, Jablonický tackled the subject without ideological constraints. A fellow historian, himself to be victimized not much later, recognized the risk Jablonický was taking and warned him. But such warnings did not seem real in 1969. In fact, Jablonický survived the first round of purges, which were anyway somewhat more benign in Slovakia than in the Czech lands. He remained in charge of the institute's Department of Recent History, and his book even received a Socialist Academy prize in 1970. Looking back at those years, Jablonický later remarked that permanent suppression of so many erudite historians seemed an unlikely development to him at that time. He believed that "this absurd state of affairs cannot go on for long; common sense and society's genuine interest will prevail." He expected his victimized colleagues to return to their history institutions soon. He continued his research and gradually extended it to cover the communist underground during the war. In 1973 he finished writing a mon-

ograph on this subject.

In the mean time, as the criteria of ideational purity became more severe and the thirtieth anniversary of the rising nearer, l'affaire Jablonický was taking shape behind the scenes. His 1969 book was vulnerable, not least because of the polemical tone in which he treated Gustáv Husák's memoirs.

In September 1973 Jablonický's book was removed from public libraries and bookstores. An indictment in the form of a party-sanctioned condemnation was shown to him. It castigated him above all for allegedly disparaging the importance of communist underground organizations and for simultaneously overrating the noncommunists. Had he heeded advice and made a break with his past as a true historian, he might have been spared further harassment.

What in fact followed is a logical corollary of the order of things as they came to be in the Czechoslovakia of "real socialism" in the 1970s. Jablonický's fate epitomizes the predicament of all intellectuals who have refused to bow to those bent on humiliating them and stripping them of the purpose of their strivings.

His enforced removal from the History Institute to the Slovak Institute for Preservation of Monuments and Conservation of Nature in 1974 and the impossibility of publishing his new work on the communist resistance were both but a beginning. The State Security was to enter the picture. Jablonický's contacts were investigated, his correspondents and interlocutors identified.

In November 1976 the police took into custody a former deputy of the Slovak Diet, Pavol Čarnogurský, then 68 years old. He was accused of subversion of the state, but in real fact his case may have been engineered to frame Jablonický. Four searches were made of Jablonický's home and place of work between November 8 and 10, 1976, ostensibly to unearth evidence of his complicity in Čarnogurský's "crime." Sackfuls of books, periodicals, personal correspondence, a part of his research archives, manuscripts and other materials were confiscated. There followed interrogations by the police, "interviews" at work, demotion to a lesser job, and finally expulsion from the Slovak Communist Party. In the summer of 1977 the State Procurator's office refused to return the confiscated materials under the pretext that Čarnogurský's case had not yet been closed. In February 1978 Jablonický's permit for research in historical archives was withdrawn. The official minutes of his interrogations are replete with his proud declarations and insistence on the rights of a man to refuse to be browbeaten by police chicanery.

In 1979 Jablonický wrote two polemical articles against official historians; both remained unpublished. In them he denied official historiography the right to represent itself as the only true purveyor of the nation's past. His study "The Failure of Malár's Army in the Carpathians" circulated in typescript as Volume 175 of the samizdat "Padlock Editions." The police seized the first version of it in November 1976, and a second, incomplete version in June 1978. The third, final version was written in unbelievably difficult circumstances: the author had to write while simultaneously hiding away the remnants of his own archival collection and each newly completed page of the manuscript.

Later that year the secret police gave up the pretext of harassing Jablonický as simply a material witness in the case against Pavol Čarnogurský. Now he himself became an alleged "perpetrator of antisocial activities" by his obstinate insistence on his right to pursue his historical research. His work was described as "writings harmful to the interests of the state," supposedly because in them he deprecated the contribution of the fifth clandestine committee of the Slovak Communist Party to the Slovak National Rising and because they "are in conflict with official historical findings." The secret police deliberately devalued the results of Jablonický's research by calling them "writings" to which Czechoslovak copyright law affords no protection. According to this reasoning, communicated to Jablonický in response to one of his complaints, Law 35/1965 protects only literary, scholarly and artistic works created in consonance with the development and requirements of socialist society. Contrary to this, Jablonický was accused of having "manufactured and kept in his possession" writings directly contravening such development and such interests.

Police deceit and harassment came to a head toward the end of 1979. On November 30 Jablonický traveled to Prague on a package tour organized by his employer, but once there he was apprehended by two uniformed and two plain-clothes police officers and taken to a station house for interrogation. The police claimed that an illegal meeting connected with Charter 77 was to have taken place the following day with Jablonický's participation. His bags were searched to check "whether he was carrying a gun." He was then escorted to Prague Central station, where the police bought him a ticket with money purloined from his own wallet and forced him to leave on the first available train back to Slovakia. All this, they asserted, was to prevent "a serious breach of public order."

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This much we have learned so far about the struggle of a historian in Czechoslovakia against overwhelming odds. Jablonický did not of his own volition enter this contest, which no individual can win except in moral terms. At first he did not wish for a confrontation at all, but when it came to the point, he did not bow to superior force. Shedding light on his case and publishing those of his studies that are available in the West will bring Jablonický into the company of his fellow scholars, even though he himself may not travel even from Bratislava to Prague.

CZECH SCIENTIST HONORED BY THE NEW YORK ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

The Committee on Human Rights of Scientists of the New York Academy of Sciences has nominated to honorary membership 45 "refusenik" scientists and five dissident scientists presently in prison. Among them was Václav Benda, a Czechoslovak computer scientist and member of Charter 77. Benda was sentenced last October to three years' imprisonment for "subversion of the republic" (Czechoslovak Newsletter, Vol. IV, No. 9/10 [September/October 1979]).

CHARTER 77 PROPOSALS FOR THE MADRID CONFERENCE

Charter 77 has sent Gustáv Husák, president of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and secretary general of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, a letter with proposals for the second review of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) to open in Madrid on November 11. The following is an abridged translation of the 1,250-word Czech text.

We are among those who take the principles of the Final Act of the Helsinki CSCE seriously, and we therefore welcome the assurance of responsible Czechoslovak authorities that careful preparations have been made for the Madrid meeting which should contribute toward improving relations among states and nations, strengthening the security and rights of citizens, averting the risk of conflicts, and forestalling a return to the atmosphere of the cold war. We concur with those parts of the May declaration of the Warsaw Pact states, of which you are a cosigner, that emphasize strict adherence to all the provisions of the Final Act. Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is explicitly stated to be a basic condition and principle of genuine peaceful coexistence and cooperation, no less important than the political, economic and military conditions and considerations of international law.

We are equally concerned that progress should be made in military affairs, in reducing the burden of armament and the danger of conflicts, but measures in this regard can be effective only if they are free of one-sided advantages.

We would welcome it if the state of which we are citizens were to contribute in a positive fashion to the problems of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and to the so-called Third Basket in general. This deals with relations among states and their citizens. Some of the norms of these relationships have been incorporated in binding international agreements, so that international discussion of them cannot be regarded as interference in internal matters. We would welcome it if such discussions could be constructive and free of cold-war contention, and not pretexts for authorities to act against citizens of our country in violation of international covenants on human rights, the binding nature of which was reaffirmed by the Final Act, which has become a part of our legal system.

As members of a civic-initiative group based on the Final Act and Article 17 of our Constitution, we have since the beginning of 1977 repeatedly called the attention of the organs of our state to situations and cases that violate the Final Act and international covenants. The usual response has been yet another, more blatant violation, including police harassment and trials that have elicited widespread international reaction, especially by European public opinion committed to peaceful coexistence.

This is why we deem it our duty to draw your attention to the likelihood that the actions of some of our state authorities may generate polemics that will not conduce to a constructive debate of Point VII of the Final Act. To prevent such polemics, we submit the following proposals for your consideration:

1) You as President of the Republic should pardon Jaroslav Šabata, Otta Bednářová [who has since been released from jail, but not pardoned. Ed.] Václav Benda, Jiří Dienstbier, Václav Havel, Petr Uhl, A. Černý, J. Šavřda, P. Cibulka and others like them who have been wrongfully convicted, and annul their sentences.

2) Criminal proceedings should be stopped against Rudolf Battěk, Karel Soukup and others whose cases we can fully document for you.

3) A thorough review of parts of our legal system should be undertaken, especially of the Criminal Code and the SNB [state security police] statutes which do not accord with the international covenants on human rights and the obligations under Point VII of the Helsinki Final Act. We believe the proposals in Charter 77 Document 15 would contribute to a constructive atmosphere in Madrid. The spokespersons and legal experts of Charter 77 and their friends would gladly offer their help if such an initiative were taken in the Helsinki spirit. We are also ready to submit further material on the discrepancies between our law and practice on the one hand and the principles and obligations of the Final Act on the other.

4) A constructive atmosphere would be promoted if discussion of Point VII and the Third Basket were directed toward reaching an agreement that would require participant states to harmonize their law and legal practice, and police procedures in particular, with the international agreements cited in Point VII and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. A special body like the United Nations Human Rights Commission should be set up, or the United Nations commission asked for its assistance. If the Czechoslovak delegation in Madrid were to take such an initiative, our country's international standing would be much enhanced.

5) The behavior of organs of state toward citizen initiatives is a criterion for evaluating implementation of the Final Act. A constructive atmosphere in Madrid would be fostered by recognizing and giving full support to such initiatives by participant governments, and by setting up lines of communication between the organs of the conference dealing with the Third Basket and citizen-initiative groups, similar to the relationship between the councils of the United Nations and nongovernmental organizations.

We would be happy, Mr. President, for you to accept our proposals in the spirit in which they have been offered. Their realization would contribute to the implementation of the Final Act, improve mutual trust among states and our citizens' confidence in our government, and spur peace in Europe.

Unfortunately, we have to add that we and some of our friends have been interrogated in recent weeks in connection with the drafting of this letter, and some of us were detained for 48 hours without valid reason and contrary to the law. We have been suspected of acts and intentions quite alien to this letter, as an impartial

reading of it will show.

Prague, September 17, 1980

Maria Hromádková, Charter 77 spokesperson
Miloš Rejchrt, Charter 77 spokesperson

NEWS FROM NORMALIZED CZECHOSLOVAKIA

VONS List of the Persecuted

Communiqué No. 195, issued by the Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Prosecuted (VONS) on August 3, contains a four-part list of "VONS cases." The first, headed "Persons Prosecuted or in Psychiatric Wards," lists 119 names with their addresses and the articles of the Criminal Code under which they were tried or indicted. The second list is headed "Repression," by which is meant short-term detentions, beatings, house searches, shadowings, dismissal from employment and other forms of harassment. It includes the names of more than 250 persons, some "with relatives or friends." The third list, "International Solidarity," names 14 persons prosecuted in East Germany, Poland or the Soviet Union. The last list, "Incomplete Information," cites some 50 persons in trouble but about whom only a few data were available at the time the communiqué was prepared.

Rudolf Battěk

Charter 77 spokesperson Rudolf Battěk has been ordered to undergo psychiatric examination to determine whether he is fit to stand trial or in need of mental therapy. He was arrested on June 14 and charged with assault of a police official when he tried to fend off a policeman grabbing for him (Czechoslovak Newsletter, Vol. V, No. 7/8 [July/August 1980]).

The Case of Otta Bednářová

Otta Bednářová, a former journalist, has been released from prison, according to reports received in Vienna on September 27. She was one of six members of Charter 77 and the Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Prosecuted (VONS) who were arrested last October on charges of "subversion of the republic" (Czechoslovak Newsletter, Vol. IV No. 9/10 [September/October 1979]). Gravely ill, she was forced to work at Opava prison as though in perfect health. Her case prompted many protests by human-rights groups in Czechoslovakia and elsewhere in the world. On July 20 this year her sons, Jan and Jiří Bednář, issued an appeal on her behalf "to the public at large" and to United Nations Secretary General Kurt Waldheim, the International Red Cross, and the International Organization of Jurists. Describing their mother's condition as critical in their plea, they ended it with the words: "We appeal to you to save our mother." She was finally released from detention as a joint result of the pressure of world public opinion and the Prague government's desire to appear humane on the eve of the Madrid conference.

Prague Radio on the Madrid Conference

Prague Radio broadcast the following commentary on September 6 on preparations for the review Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe opening in Madrid in November.

"The position of all the signatory states is not yet clear. In the extremely complex international situation that has developed over the last weeks and months, every word can be taken either as support or as rejection of the meeting's main purpose: detente and the improvement of security and cooperation in Europe. The Soviet position is unambiguous: its policy is unchanging . . . and seeks the reduction of military tension and gradual disarmament. The socialist countries in Madrid will defend the idea of a secure Europe free of terrifying weaponry, a Europe cooperating in the most diverse areas. In contrast, the United States' policy is in a bind. It would like to turn the Madrid meeting into a forum to attack the USSR, and it does not hide the fact that this should be done in the guise of defending human rights and assailing the Soviet Union as a threat to Western Europe. Even its most loyal allies do not believe this. The gap between Western European and American interests is growing wider. America's allies cannot discard their class allegiance, of course, but for many reasons their policy is becoming more realistic. It will not be easy for the United States to turn the Madrid meeting into a provocation that would increase rather than reduce tension. Nobody follows the American Pied Piper any more."

Rights Draft Confiscated

During the roundup of human-rights activists in Prague on August 29 (see p. 5) the authorities seized a draft document prepared by several Charter 77 members for presentation to the Madrid conference. They warned that any attempt to disseminate the document would be construed as a criminal act against the state.

Who Occupied Czechoslovakia?

A group of 150 citizens of Sušice in April petitioned the local party committee and the district committee in Klatovy, West Bohemia, for permission to commemorate the thirty-fifth anniversary of the liberation of Sušice by the Fourth Armored Division of the United States Army in 1945. The petition triggered a police investigation in the course of which a number of persons were threatened with loss of their jobs and expulsion from the communist party (eleven of the petitioners were party members). M. Černega, who attested the other petitioners' signatures, was summoned before the local committee on April 23 and informed by Chairman Štengl that no commemoration would take place nor would permission be given to restore a commemorative plaque removed after the communist takeover in Czechoslovakia in 1948, because "the Americans did not liberate Sušice. They occupied it."

Culture under "Real Socialism"

Cultural activities have to be judged by class and party standards, according

to a report to the Fifteenth Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia by its Presidium, quoted in the June 12 issue of Nové slovo (New Word), the weekly organ of the Slovak party's Central Committee. "A great struggle is going on," it said, "for detente, lasting peace . . . and the triumph of socialism in the world. In ideology the struggle between socialism and imperialism is growing more intense. . . . In evaluating works of art, films and books, in organizing such cultural activities as exhibitions, concerts, scientific seminars, etc. party and class criteria have to be applied. Hostile propaganda works selectively to influence different strata of our population [with] special programs aimed at the intelligentsia of the socialist countries, at young people, and at the working class — and their influence is not always without result. . . . We have always emphasized that the main creative inspiration for socialist art is socialist realism."

The Union of Czech Writers in Prague recently published a brochure with the title "Nová české próza" (New Czech Prose). It lists the names of 95 authors, gives short biographies of them, and cites 166 novels they have written. Only twelve of those listed were known before the "normalization" imposed after the Warsaw Pact invasion of 1968. The qualification for membership of the union is no longer talent but strict adherence to the party line. Even Rudé právo (Red Right), the Czechoslovak party Central Committee daily, felt constrained on September 11 to publish a Czech editor's comments on the quality of recent writing: "When reading manuscripts, especially those by young writers, I am ever more frequently aware of a disturbing phenomenon — sloppiness and an arrogant disregard for literary mastery. Beginners, even those of proven talent, are abasing themselves to the level of graphomaniacs, typing manuscripts . . . full of flagrant violations of grammar, style and composition. . . . They are producing abortive works. This is the road to nonart, stagnation, and the destruction of talent."

Class Justice

Pravda (Truth), the Slovak party Central Committee daily, celebrated on June 13 the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the Supreme Court of the Slovak Socialist Republic, one of the fruits of the federalization of Czechoslovak government. It editorialized: "The anti-Marxist trends of the 1960s in the theory of law and government . . . also affected the practice [of law]. . . . Some judges used to dispute the leading role of the party, claimed absolute independence, and tried to dispense with Leninist principles. . . . Thanks to the fraternal assistance of the socialist parties [that is, the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968] and the hard core of Marxist-Leninist forces . . . errors of justice have been redressed. . . . The Supreme Court has issued important directives about correct Marxist-Leninist practice. . . . They emphasize the consistent recognition of the leading role of the party in the administration of justice."