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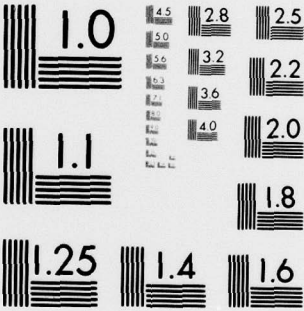
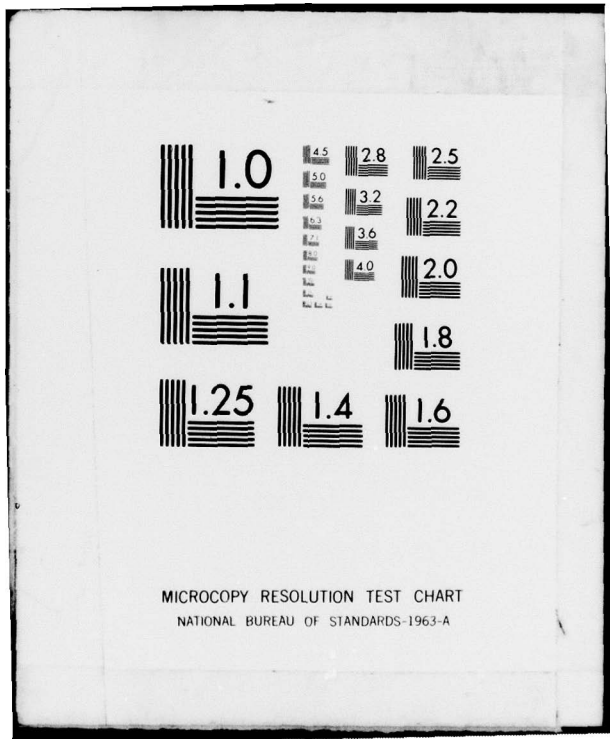
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Paper prepared for the Conference on "Eastern Europe:
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It is hardly possible, for obvious reasons, to discuss the question of ideological stability or instability in Eastern Europe on the basis of empirical sociological research, as such research, in crucial matters, cannot be carried out. Yet, even if it could be done, even if political and police obstacles for such research were removed, its predictive value would be doubtful. Every society with a long history has, as were, its subterranean cultural regions, invisible structures that are part of the people's social psychology and which are inherited from tradition. This underground of culture, where the distribution of forces is entirely incalculable, is revealed in moments of crisis or of violent breakdowns. They result always from unpredictable coincidences of events and their ultimate outcome is never certain. Consequently, in discussing such problems, we are necessarily thrown on the resources of our historical knowledge, of our general acquaintance with a given country, of our impressions. All predictions are bound to be unreliable.

Documents, research studies, and books published in Western countries on the so called dissident movement in the Communist world are fairly numerous and well known. The best known facts come from the USSR, sometimes from Czechoslovakia, probably because the response they elicit from the outside world is mostly determined by the size of repressions used against opponents of the system. (There is very little known about China, since even the fact that we know much more about the Soviet Union results from a certain relaxation in political relations, while the control of information is extremely strong in China, and the extent of detailed knowledge of that country in the West is very limited in the first place.)

1. What does it mean to be a "dissident" in a Communist country?

If we were to apply the the term "dissident" to all those who in one form or another question or reject the official state ideology, almost everybody would turn out to be a "dissident", since that ideology is nearly dead. Such a concept would be therefore of little operative value. Normally we think of people who articulate their protest and who do that outside of all struggles between cliques and factions in the ruling apparatus. This, however, is not precise enough. Which behavior in general is an act of protest depends on the scope of activities that the state considers subject to ideological rules, or on the consistency of the totalitarian system (I use this word in the current sense, meaning a system with a built-in tendency that views all activities of individuals, in economical, political, intellectual or artistic spheres, as having goals identical with the goals of the state, thus in effect proscribing any activity outside those explicitly ordered or approved by the state; no absolutely perfect totalitarian system has ever existed, yet Stalinism in its last stage, and possibly China, were pretty close to the ideal). Further, since the only legitimacy of the existing power system is its ideology (no elections and no inheritance of the monarchic charisma), in an ideal totalitarian society all forms of acitivity are ideologically relevant, no domain of life is "neutral" or ideologically indifferent, and state rules operate everywhere. In the last years of Stalin's rule in the USSR one became a dissident by wearing brightly colored socks or narrow trousers, by accepting the findings of modern genetics or by practising abstract painting (the last example is still valid, at a certain degree, in the Soviet Union, though not in Poland

or in Hungary). Certain limitations of the universalist pretensions of the state (resulting, in part at least, from the fatal results that the absolute monopoly of ideology produced in economy and in technology, including the military one) limited automatically the scope of the concept of "dissident". The basic content however, remains. They are people who locate themselves outside of the factional game in the party apparatus, who articulate their refusal to take part in this game in the language of ideology and politics and who reject the monopoly of the party in establishing what is or is not "correct" (meaning "true") in ideology and whose profession it is to express ideological, philosophical, political, moral, scientific, and religious attitudes.

2. The importance of the dissident movement in Communist countries.

One can not help notice that some Western intellectuals feel a sort of envy when observing the importance intellectuals in Communist countries enjoy, at least in the eyes of their governments ("they have no freedom, but their voice counts"). It is true that the significance of intellectuals results from peculiar features of the Communist regimes and from the special functions of the official ideology. In Communist countries, the system of power has only legitimacy in its ideology, in the principle that the ruling party embodies and represents the proper interests and aspirations of the whole society, in particular those of the working class; the ruling party is the only organism which "expresses" the society or the nation as a whole, and the party by definition is supposed to be an ideological body, held together by ideological bonds. As no political system may afford to do without the legitimating principle, the ideology is absolutely indispensable in the Communist system of power, and - this is the point that should

be stressed - it remains such even if virtually nobody takes it seriously any more. The monopoly of power in this system cannot exist without a monopoly of truth which the same ruling party enjoys.

Now, the monopoly, by definition, cannot be abolished in part, since once one of its parts is abolished it is no longer a monopoly. Hence the seemingly paradoxical phenomenon that ^apower system equipped with all instruments of repression and intimidation, and having centralized control not only of police and army but - which is more important - of all means of communication and information, is in perpetual fear of even the faintest voices of a handful of intellectuals; the latter have nothing at their disposal except a typewriter to make a few copies of an article or a statement and to distribute them among friends. Their material means are absurdly small; yet the system is very vulnerable because it is unable to operate without the ideological monopoly and this monopoly becomes more and more artificial, more and more unreal.

3. The changes that have occurred in the post-Stalinist period with regard to the official ideology may be summed up in three points:

First, limitation of the universalist claims of Marxism-Leninism (the latter being defined less by its content and more by the fact that its content was determined for any given moment by an authority; basically, Marxist-Leninism is what party authorities say it is). This limitation is the most striking in sciences, but it has occurred in other areas of culture as well, though in varying degrees in the countries under consideration.

In the Soviet Union in the last phase of Stalinism the ideological pressure in sciences varied roughly according to Comte's hierarchy of sciences: it was absent in mathematics, somewhat stronger in physics and chemistry,

powerful in biology and absolutely overwhelming in the social sciences and humanities, leading to the virtual destruction of some of them. In other countries these forms of pressure, though strong, have never been able to compete with the USSR; they were stronger in East Germany and Czechoslovakia, milder in Poland. This has changed significantly during the last two decades. In Practical terms, the ideological pressure on the content of sciences does not exist any more (it does exist, of course, in the directions of research, in particular where huge financial means are involved). Even in the Soviet Union changes may be noticed in some humanities, (linguistics being notable example). In areas which are still considered ideologically relevant - philosophy, sociology (as far as it exists at all), historical research -- ideological constraints are still prevalent. Here, too, differences can be seen between various countries. In Poland, for example, it is not possible to attack Marxism openly, yet it is possible to publish, in modest editions, philosophical books that have nothing to do with Marxism, that do not pretend to be Marxist and are written as if Marxism has never existed. This is the case still more in other human and social sciences. There is an amount of serious sociological research carried out in a scientific spirit, even if some important spheres of social life are inaccessible to unprejudiced inquiry.

Second, the virtual disappearance of ideological faith. Here, too, there are differences between countries, yet the general tendency is clear. Official state ideology is more and more reduced to sheer ritual and it is less and less an object of faith. The Stalinist system was not based simply on terror; it relied heavily (perhaps even more in people's

democracies than in Soviet Union itself) on a number of people, among them intellectuals, who were ideologically faithful to the system and felt responsible for it (how much bad faith was involved is another matter). This has almost come to end. Marxism is being taught in all universities as an obligatory subject, it is the subject of many books and articles, and yet there is a real cultural life where it is entirely absent. It is no exaggeration to say that the party has lost "the struggle for the government of souls", at least to the extent that the party still pretends to embody a traditional Marxist creed. In fact, even in the official ideological propaganda only vestiges of Marxism can be found. The authorities, if they try to keep a minimum contact with the society, appeal less and less to traditional doctrine, and more and more to raison d'etat and national interest.

Third, even this wheezy ideology has no well defined content any more, and this because there is no single authority to decide what is or is not true. In Stalinist times ideological decisions were clearly concentrated in one hand and the ideology was well codified; this did not mean it was precise; it was vague and obscure and it had to be so, since one of its functions was to keep the appearance of stability and to justify any political decisions and all changes in practical policy; still, one could always appeal to the highest tribunal and the ideology looked intact in spite of everything. This, too, has ended. Again, in some countries these processes went further than in others yet the general trend is the same everywhere.

As result, all European socialist countries live in a state of incurable ideological paralysis. The inherited ideology is indispensable both as a general principle of legitimacy and in particular as the justification of the Soviet domination of other countries ("proletarian internationalism", immortal friendship of socialist peoples," etc), but virtually none believes in it and to the authorities themselves it is often a source of restraints, rather than help. Certainly, the ruling apparatus needs some contact with the population and this is why it has a sort of unarticulated ideology, contradicting the official one and instilled with all manner of hints; it is of nationalist character and, though as indispensable as the official one (albeit for other reasons), it makes the fraternal relations within the "bloc " more and more difficult: in the Soviet Union it is the imperial glory of the state, in the people's democracies - the ideology of terror in the face of Soviet tanks.

4. The differences between the Soviet Union and the people's democracies on the one hand and among the people's democracies on the other are in part determined by this combination of circumstances. These countries differ in many respects and their history, both remote and recent, is responsible for their actual ideological state and for the character and the scope of their respective "dissident movements". There are countries where the Communist movement was, if not very strong, at least much stronger than in others before the Second World War (say in Czechoslovakia as compared to Poland. In some countries there was during the war a strong armed resistance against ^{the} Nazis (e.g., Poland and Yugoslavia) with the Communist playing a central part in the latter and an insignificant one in the former)

and it hardly existed in others. The situation looks different in countries which have had a millennial tradition of religious ties with the West and in countries predominantly of Eastern Christianity (Bulgaria, Rumania, Serbia). In some countries (in particular Bulgaria) there was a traditional sympathy for Russia, while historically conditioned hostility was powerful elsewhere (especially in Poland). All these differences have to be taken into account in explaining the present state of affairs.

The dissident movement in the Soviet Union was until recently (this might be not true any more) more organized than elsewhere. It seems to be more differentiated than in the people's democracies, which certainly can be explained by the fact that the dominant issue in other countries is their national independence, while the Soviet Union is a sovereign state. We may guess that this is the reason why we hear less about the dissident movement in Rumania, where the party itself assumed to a certain extent the role of the bearer of the idea of independence.

In Poland there hardly was any "samizdat" in a form similar to the USSR; no doubt various texts are circulated in relatively restricted circles; however, during the last few years I have not heard about an attempt to publish a clandestine journal (apparently there were two in Czechoslovakia last year; I have not seen any of them and I do not know if they are still in existence). In part this may be explained by two facts; first, that in Poland one can still publish legally much more than in other countries; second, that there is a very good publishing house and a monthly journal in Paris (Kultura); many people in Poland collaborate with it, pseudonymously or even openly, and it is easier to smuggle things from

abroad than to try to publish them at home.

Properly speaking, the concepts of "legality" and "illegality" can hardly be applied to the dissident movement; legal norms in these matters are vague and imprecise, thus giving party or police authorities ample room for repression within the law; the actual size and forms of repression differ and change depending on circumstances, but they may be strengthened in any moment while the codes are left untouched. In principle it is possible to arrest and to sentence people for the very possession of a forbidden book, for telling political jokes, for "wrong" opinions expressed in a private conversation or in a letter. This is more or less similar in all these countries but the laws are not actually enforced everywhere. To my knowledge both in the Soviet Union and in Rumania all typewriters have to be registered and the samples of print kept by the police. Still, precisely because of the vagueness of the law, some editors of underground journals in the Soviet Union make claims to perfect legality (apparently this is not the case elsewhere).

5. The main stages in the history of people's democracies from the point of view of their ideological changes and opposition movements may be distinguished as follows:

In the years 1945-49 non-Communist movements constituted everywhere a continuation of pre-war political formations and parties, mostly social-democratic, agrarian and nationalist. The organized forms of these movements were utterly destroyed in this period (in some countries there remain a few sham parties, without any significance whatsoever).

In 1955-56 a new tide of criticism appeared and it reached the peak in autumn 1956 (Hungarian uprising, Polish events). It was characteristic of this stage that the Communists were extremely active in the opposition; in fact, they appealed to the same principles which the ruling party recognized as its own. By then it was largely obvious to most people (unlike in the first period after the war) that the Western democracies and the U.S. are not particularly interested in Eastern Europe and accepted the Soviet rule in this part of the world. This was the period of so called "revisionism". To be sure, this word has always been vague and imprecise and was used freely by party authorities as a label against the different people and groups which in one point or another questioned the politics or the official ideology of the party. It is true, however, that in those years an ideological movement emerged which showed a common tendency and was operating within the party or on its peripheries. "Revisionists" rejected the theory that Stalinism could be considered merely an "error" or a series of errors; they saw in it rather a relatively coherent system working as a rule without great "errors", but in conformity with its social functions and ideological principles; and so, they tried to trace the roots of the system, instead of correcting the details. On the other hand they still believed, for a while, that Stalinism could be attacked and overcome from the standpoint of Marxist and even Leninist traditions; hence the attempts to discover "another Marx" or even "another Lenin". These attempts had a certain political significance, sterile though they were in intellectual terms (inasmuch as the whole of Stalinism was virtually present in the Leninist

legacy). What was significant about this movement was that it contributed to the disintegration of the party apparatus, precisely because "revisionists" appealed to the same ideological principles and spoke basically the same language as the apparatus ^{chiki}; consequently, their criticism could find an echo among people who were immune to attacks or to propaganda coming from other sources (this, of course, is the reason of the enormous impact of Khrushchev's speech; the speech, in fact, contained no revelation except for particular anecdotes, the monstrosities of Stalinism having been well documented earlier; the same things revealed by the highest authority were bound to provoke a shock within the party which more or less insensitive to Western sources). As ^a result, the Hungarian CP fell completely apart within a very short period, and in Poland the party came close to sharing the same fate.

The year 1968 may be considered the end of that ideological form or at least the obvious beginning of the end. The invasion in Czechoslovakia and the cultural pogrom in Poland have not left much room for the further existence of Communist "revisionism". Student riots in Poland started with a small movement initiated by a group of activists who shared some (by no means all) Trotskyite ideas. Many of these activists were offspring of Communist families, some were children of dignitaries; they still thought in terms of a superior brand of socialism and, at a certain extent, of a better or "corrected" Marxism. This ideological direction has been practically abandoned by now. People do not look for an improved Marxist society. Communism stopped being an intellectual problem, it is

simply an expression of power. Those who still think in terms of general social issues, do so in national, liberal or social democratic terms. Much as it is reflected in practical life, Communism is not an issue to reflect upon. Among young people we can notice a turn toward national, catholic and conservative traditions, even among those who were not brought up in the religious spirit; this, surely, is a new phenomenon.

Not that the process went that far everywhere. In Yugoslavia there is still, in spite of recent pressure and repressions, a sort of intellectual opposition based on Marxist and Communist assumptions. The same can be said about the Soviet Union and Hungary. It can be predicted, however, that this tendency will be decrease in importance and other ideological trends - e.g., national, liberal and religious ideas - will become more prominent. Still, we cannot predict the role such Marxist oriented or critical-Communist ideas could play in a moment of crisis; their importance, as noted earlier,^{is} in that they appeal to the mental patterns and ideological schemas of the ruling apparatus. The stability of the system, of course, depends at a great extent on the stability of the apparatus; as long as it is stable, it may largely disregard the discontent of the population, yet its disintegration means the collapse of the whole. Therefore we cannot entirely exclude the possibility that people who criticize the Soviet system from a Communist standpoint (as Medvedev) and do not even question the one party rule, trying instead to convince the party to reform itself, may play in certain circumstances a greater role than much more "advanced" critics.

6. Principal features of the dissident movement. Each of the countries that make up Soviet bloc has now some specific political and ideological features of its own, uniformity having proved impossible to achieve, all the efforts of Soviet leaders notwithstanding. It is understandable that in the Soviet Union people have more difficulties in getting rid mentally of Leninist-Stalinist schemas; cultural continuity was almost broken, the old intelligentsia exterminated, indoctrination has lasted for many decades, bloody repressions were of monstrous magnitude. In Poland and in other people's democracies Stalinism in the strict sense of the word lasted only for a few years, the continuity of culture has never been utterly disrupted, the indoctrination effort was never that consistent, repressions never achieved the size remotely comparable to what happened in ^{the} Soviet Union; and so, even to people brought up in this system it was relatively easy to free themselves from ideological pressure.

The articulated dissident movement in Soviet Union is usually divided into a number of categories. First, there are people starting with Marxist and Communist principles, believing that Leninism was an excellent plan of the socialist society, that this plan was ruined by Stalin and that the purity of communism could be restored, making the society more efficient economically, less oppressive politically and culturally, without giving up the one-party system. Second, we have democratic and liberal tendencies, of which Sakharov is the best known spokesman; their adherents tend to believe that socialism as a political system went bankrupt and that one should struggle for the restoration (or rather establishment) of a

democratic system according to West European patterns. Third, there is a chauvinist-Russian ideology, something that may be called Bolshevism without Marxism; it implies that there is nothing wrong with the autocratic and despotic system of rule; but that Russian national aspirations are checked and suppressed by the official ideology; it seems to imagine a well disciplined society with ^a more or less ^{military} regime, severe control of cultural life, spartan education and Great-Russian nationalist ideology cementing the social body (possibly with the return to the Eastern Orthodoxy and traditional ceasaropapism, unity of the Church and the state, unity of ideology, Russian imperialism). Fourth, there are national movements of ^{re} expressed non-Russian nationalities (in particular ^{the} Ukraine, Lithuania, Georgia). They are naturally dominated by the question of national independence and the resistance against russification. Fifth, there are religious movements, demanding freedom of faith and religious practice, protesting against repressions and discrimination of believers. There is no way of calculating the actual and potential power of these tendencies. One thing, however, is commonly admitted among those who study Soviet life: that national movements of oppressed peoples are potentially the strongest factor of disintegration of the Soviet system. If the system ^{were} ~~was~~ to show symptoms of weakness, these forces would forcefully emerge. It is apparently against them that the repression is the strongest and the most consistent.

If these various movements can be classified in the USSR on the basis of "samizdat" literature or of recent emigrés activity, such a classification is less easy in other countries. In Poland clandestine groups are sometimes operating and discovered by the police, yet they do not seem to have great

importance. The only organized group now is, so it seems, the underground Maoist Communist party, made up mostly of former and inveterate Stalinists; its seat is in Tirana and its influence insignificant. Marxism is a barren ritual. In intellectual circles there is a small minority of people actively engaged in party activity but they, too, are not believers, rather arrivists. There is another minority, actively engaged in opposition (unorganized) - these are people who try to protest, when necessary, in public against the glaring abuses of power and to struggle for civil liberties. And between them there is a number of intermediate attitudes. Still, the general situation in cultural life is clear enough: Polish literature, art, social sciences and humanities exist practically outside Communist ideology (of course, within limits imposed by the censorship). Normally, if we look at a journal in the field of humanities, it is hard to tell that it is published in a country professing officially a Marxist and Communist ideology. To be sure, journals under strict control stress their political loyalty, yet they appeal less to Communist ideology than to national motivations and raison d'etat. The strength of pressure exerted on different domains of culture varies with time; and so, in the last few years, it is historical science which is under particularly rigorous control in Poland - mostly as result of interventions from the USSR; it is practically impossible to publish anything unflattering about Russian tsars, and the history of ^{the} Poles' struggle against tsarist oppression in ^{the} 19th and 20th centuries has become almost entirely taboo (which was not the case, oddly enough, in the Stalinist period), since it is difficult to discuss these matters without provoking obvious associations with the present situation. Direct Soviet

pressure in cultural matters is very strong, yet its results are only of a negative, police character. Moreover, Poland is the country with the strongest Catholic Church in Eastern Europe; there are Catholic journals which play an important part in cultural life, supervised as they are by the party. Paradoxically, a good part - in fact the most active and the most creative part - of ^{the} Polish intelligentsia before the world war was anti-Catholic or indifferent, and Catholic culture was on a low level. Now Catholics have created a strong intellectual milieu and among the contributors to these journals there are many authors, among them former party members, who never had anything to do with Catholicism. There are, to be sure, groups espousing nationalist or liberal-democratic ideas; however, since everybody is agreed that fundamental issues of the country may be summed up in the two words, "independence" and "democracy", internal controversies within the non-Communist intelligentsia have limited currency and are, by and large, ^{of} little significance.

In Czechoslovakia there seem to be more remnants of communism in the oppositional or underground intellectual movement, which can be explained by the recent history of the country: the attempt to regenerate Communist society did not fail as a result of internal developments, but was simply crushed by armed invasion; consequently, it is still possible for some people to hope that communism is reformable and that Dubcek's road would have succeeded if the experiment had not been broken by foreign armies. Repression in Czechoslovakia seems to be more consistent than it ever was in Poland, ^{leaving} ~~having~~ almost no room whatever for "neutral" attitudes, and forcing the expression of any ideological--not to speak of

anti-Communist-- views into clandestine channels.

In Yugoslavia, where freedom of speech and publication was and still greatest of all Communist-ruled countries, dissidence often expresses itself in separatists tendencies (e.g., Croatia) on the one hand, and in Marxist intellectual groups advocating industrial democracy and workers self-management on the other. At the same time, the latter wage a struggle against the results of the advanced market economy, thus opening themselves to charges of ideological inconsistencies. I have not heard any recent manifestations of clandestine activity in other countries. It seems that in Hungary the situation is similar to Poland, though perhaps one finds there more often people still speaking in Marxist terms. As a whole the situation is nevertheless clear: Marxism and communism gradually cease to be a system of reference in ideological discussions. What counts are aspirations to independence, liberal-democratic solutions, nationalist tendencies, religious ideas. People know that they can count only on internal forces within ^{the} Soviet bloc, since they have long ago concluded that their lot is indifferent to the governments in Western democracies and the U.S., and that the U.S. is interested in the stability of Soviet Union, rather than in helping internal dissent (this is why the Helsinki festival went apparently unnoticed in these countries, as everybody had known before that Eastern Europe was already recognized as part of the Soviet area).

Nothing can be predicted about the further evolution of these systems on the basis of historical analogies, as there is none. We do not know how long a system with a built-in ideology will be capable of surviving with its ideology virtually dead. We know that the internal stability of these

systems can be shaken, by a coincidence of international and domestic circumstances. And since such coincidences cannot be predicted or planned, it makes little sense to speak of what can--or should--be done in this part of the world.