

ANNUAL REPORT OF ACTIVITIES 1988



INTERNATIONAL
 **HELSINKI** 
FEDERATION FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS

Czechoslovak police at a demonstration in Prague

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1988

**International Helsinki Federation
for Human Rights
Rummelhardtgasse 2/18
A-1090 Vienna
Austria**

The International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (IHF) is a non-governmental organization that seeks to promote compliance of the signatory states with the human rights provisions of the Helsinki Final Act. Its Honorary Chairman is Yuri Orlov; its Chairman is Karl Johannes von Schwarzenberg; its Deputy Chairman is Heinz Wittgenstein; its Vice-Chairman is Jeri Laber; the members of its Executive Committee are: Stein Ivar Aarsaether, Jeri Laber, Tanja Petovar, Antonio Stango; its Secretary General is Gerald Nagler; its Executive Director is Yadja Zeltman; its Program Director is Hester Minnema; its Office Manager is Anne Emblad; and its intern is Paula Lempiäinen.

The IHF represents national Helsinki Committees in:

- Austria (Anton Pelinka)
- Canada (Irwin Cotler, David Matas)
- Czechoslovakia (Jiri Hajek)
- Denmark (Erik Siesby)
- Federal Republic of Germany (Annemarie Renger)
- Italy (Antonio Stango)
- The Netherlands (Max van der Stoel)
- Norway (Stein Ivar Aarsaether)
- Poland (Stefan Starczewski)
- Sweden (Ake Sparring)
- Switzerland (Rudolf Friedrich)
- United Kingdom (Lord Erik Avebury)
- United States (Robert L. Bernstein)
- Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (Lev Timofeyev)
- Yugoslavia (Drago Demsar, Tanja Petovar, Vladimir Seks)

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INTRODUCTION

1988 was an important year for the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (IHF). The mission to the Soviet Union in January 1988 was surely a milestone. For the first time, thanks to our initiative, a high ranking delegation was invited to Moscow to discuss human rights problems. The visit gave us the opportunity to meet with members of the USSR government and other high officials and begin a dialogue on human rights issues, which is still ongoing.

The fact that in 1988, for the first time, an annual IHF membership meeting was held in a socialist country - Yugoslavia - was also an important event. At first, the Yugoslav authorities objected to the meeting but were eventually convinced that a dialogue with the IHF and our Yugoslav committee could be useful.

In November 1988 the IHF played an important role at the seminar in Prague - Czechoslovakia '88. The seminar was stopped by the police and our Czechoslovak hosts arrested. The police actions resulted in strong protests not only by the IHF but also by many Western governments and Western, neutral and non-aligned CSCE delegations.

The IHF believes that being awarded the Bruno Kreisky Foundation Prize for "Verdienste um die Menschenrechte" is proof of recognition of our human rights work and accomplishments.

In 1988 our Federation was strengthened enormously by two new members the Czechoslovak and Polish Helsinki Committees. Thereby enlarging our sphere of activities within the Eastern European countries.

We hope that the work we have been doing has proven to give results. In some countries the human rights situation has improved - which is encouraging and gives us more leverage when working on problem countries. In other countries the situation has deteriorated - which means that we have to work even harder.

The IHF thanks all persons and organizations who have helped, supported and encouraged us. We need and depend on it - morally, economically and in all other respects.

We at the IHF are all full of enthusiasm and ready for the tasks facing us in 1989.

Gerald Nagler
Secretary General

The year 1988 was a very mixed year in the area of human rights in signatory states of the Helsinki Final Act. Whereas in some countries the human rights situation improved dramatically, in other countries serious violations of the Final Act still occur.

The improved atmosphere in East-West relations also changed the nature of our work. Whereas before it was extremely difficult to reach government officials with our requests concerning particular cases of human rights violations, it has nowadays become possible to enter into a dialogue with authorities in an increased number of countries. This gives us more possibilities to exert leverage in human rights cases.

Paradoxically enough, the increased openness between East and West has increased the work for organizations like the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights. A greater number of reports and allegations of human rights abuses reach our offices, simply because many of the people who gather the information in countries which violate human rights can, contrary to the past, now operate out in the open with less fear of persecution.

At the same time we need to be even more vigilant to make sure that the recent positive developments are pursued and that the momentum of today is taken utmost advantage of. As Academician Andrei Sacharov said during our visit to Moscow in January 1988: "Although more is possible today, life for all of us became more difficult. Because the situation improved, it became much more complex."

Our year was singled out by the admission to the IHF of two very promising Helsinki Committees, in Czechoslovakia and Poland. Thanks to them our work on behalf of human rights in those countries has become more precise and intensified.

Mission to Moscow

The challenge for us began already on 25-31 of January, when after several months of negotiations with the Soviet authorities we were invited to Moscow to meet with Soviet Government officials to discuss human rights violations in that country. For the first time in history a non-governmental human rights organization has been accepted as an equal in a dialogue with Soviet officials. During the negotiations we made it clear that the IHF delegation intended to meet both with official and unofficial human rights activists, above all with Press Club Glasnost, a member of the IHF since October 1987.

A high-level delegation of 22 parliamentarians, scientists, legal scholars and human rights experts from ten different countries participated from the IHF side. The visit required thorough preparation. Extensive briefing packages were prepared for the delegates, and a preparatory meeting was held in Copenhagen. The delegation met with Soviet high ranking government representatives, such as the Minister of Justice and the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The trip was very successful. We trust we achieved its main goals: establishing a dialogue with Soviet officials; intensifying contacts with independent groups, such as our Soviet member committee, Press Club

Glasnost; fact finding; and, reporting to the CSCE Conference in Vienna, the press, and governments about the situation in the Soviet Union.

In addition, our trip was of special interest to the CSCE delegations in Vienna, who saw it as a test case of the Soviet Government's behaviour with respect to the human rights meetings in 1991 in Moscow. Extensive briefings were held with the chiefs of the CSCE Delegations upon our return from Moscow to Vienna. Many national committees briefed their own governments, i.e. the Swiss Helsinki Committee, upon the return of the delegates from their country.

A report on the visit On Speaking Terms was published and distributed to governments, CSCE delegations, the press and NGOs.

IHF General Assembly

In May, for the first time since the formation of the IHF in 1982, an annual meeting of Helsinki member committees was held in a socialist country, in Belgrade, Yugoslavia. Representatives from 13 member Committees attended the meetings. As at other annual meetings, the participants were absorbed in constructive and lively discussions about technical questions, such as financing and structure of the IHF as well as about substantive human rights issues, including the meaning of new developments in the Soviet Union, policies and priorities for future activities. A program of activities for 1989 was agreed upon.

As the IHF and its national committees grow and expand, the annual meetings will become more and more important. They serve as a source of inspiration and exchange of ideas between Helsinki monitoring groups from very different countries. They enable committees to learn from each other.

The meeting was combined with useful discussions with the Socialist Alliance of Yugoslavia and a dialogue between the Yugoslav Helsinki Committee and the Socialist Alliance is continuing.

Czechoslovakia '88

"I hereby declare this symposium opened". That was all that Vaclav Havel could say to those gathered in the hotel in Prague on 11th of November 1988, before he was arrested and brutally taken away by the Czechoslovak police.

With this statement, Vaclav Havel opened a seminar organized by Charta 77 and four other independent organizations in Czechoslovakia which was to commemorate the historical events in 1918, 1938, 1948 and 1968. Since such a seminar is in accordance with the letter and spirit of the Helsinki Final Act, the IHF decided to send an international delegation to participate in it. Upon arrival to Prague the delegation found its hosts arrested and itself under "police protection".

The delegation conducted a modest commemorative ceremony and laid flowers on the grave of Jan Patocka. The delegation strongly protested the arrests to the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party and requested clarification from the Police Headquarters on the reasons for arrests and

charges brought against the detainees. The families of those arrested were also visited, which was very much appreciated.

As a back-up to the Seminar, the IHF organized in Vienna a symposium Czechoslovakia '88 where papers prepared for the seminar in Prague were read and presentations by those who were not permitted to go to Prague were made.

The IHF published a description of the events in Prague and papers from the Symposium in Vienna: Czechoslovakia '88 - A Different Seminar.

The Dr. Bruno Kreisky Prize

In July the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights was awarded the Dr.-Bruno-Kreisky-Stiftung Prize for Merits in the Field of Human Rights as recognition for its contributions to the cause of human rights. The monetary award will facilitate our work towards a better understanding between nations and respect for human values.

We are honored to have received the award as an acknowledgement of our efforts on behalf of human rights. Some of the previous recipients of the award were:

Nelson Mandela

Professor Dr. Felix Ermacora

We are proud to be part of that family of human rights activists.

CSCE meeting in Vienna

The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, which had been meeting in Vienna since November 1986 concluded on January 19, 1989.

The IHF issued a statement on the occasion, in which it evaluated the results of the Vienna talks. It welcomed the fact that constructive efforts had been made by the delegations towards establishing more permanent mechanisms to safeguard the implementation of the CSCE documents. We welcome the provision whereby any individual country concerned with human rights violations in another country can engage that country in bilateral discussions, including specific cases. This promises to be an effective tool, especially because it provides that the response to and the results of such meetings can be brought to general attention at the three meetings on the human dimension, scheduled for 1989, 1990 and 1991, and at the general Follow-up Conference in Helsinki in 1992. The fact that the 1991 meetings are scheduled to be held in Moscow gives us added leverage in making sure that the Soviet Union adheres to its human rights promises.

The IHF has played a central role in dispensing information on human rights violations, pressuring the delegates, and assisting various human rights activists and non-governmental organizations. It informed its national committees on developments at the conference on a regular basis. The IHF members and members of its national committees had numerous meetings with delegations to the CSCE Conference to draw attention to human rights issues. In addition, the IHF's advice has been requested on the drafting of some paragraphs of the Final Document.

Although the Final Document of the Vienna Follow-up Conference is a good document, better than many of us imagined not so long ago, we have to remain vigilant. Since the conclusion of the conference numerous countries, including, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, the Soviet Union, Turkey, and Yugoslavia have shown serious disregard for the Final Document. Some continue to arrest and torture human rights activists. Some continue to arrest, and even kill demonstrators, who exercise their right to peaceful assembly and expression of their views. Minorities and religious groups continue to be persecuted. Free travel and emigration are still an issue in the USSR, and visas are being withheld by many Western countries. Although the situation has improved in some countries, such as Hungary and Poland, much remains to be done.

National Committees

One of the most important tasks of the IHF is the coordination of activities of national Helsinki committees and the establishment of new ones.

During 1988 the IHF has worked closely with the committees, distributing their publications and their press releases, and sometimes reissuing their material for international distribution, assisting them in their research, and missions, facilitating contact with sources in investigated countries.

Very positive development has been the formation of two new Helsinki Committees, both in Eastern Europe: Poland and Czechoslovakia. Both were unanimously adopted by the IHF and the national Helsinki committees on 30 November.

The Helsinki Committee in Poland has been in existence since 1982, but for political reasons worked anonymously. On 24 July at a press conference it made its activities public and revealed the names of its 12 members, primarily lawyers, journalists and professors. 22 regional representatives assist them in their work. Since July it has published several reports on the human rights situation in Poland, organized a conference on legal issues and began educational programs for students.

The Czechoslovak Helsinki Committee was founded on 5 November by 19 prominent Czechoslovak citizens. The founding of the committee was formally announced on 11 November, during the Prague symposium "Czechoslovakia '88", which was brutally interrupted by the Czechoslovak authorities. Since then the committee has grown to 32 members.

There is, of course, room for growth in our organization. More committees are needed in Western European countries, where greater pressure should be exercised on the governments to liberalize their visa and asylum policies, to take measures against racial and minorities discrimination and police abuse; to guarantee the right to conscientious objection to military service; and of course, to intensify criticism of human rights violations in countries other than their own.

Since the national committees are the flesh and blood of the IHF, their strength is of crucial importance to us. The broader the base of the Helsinki movement, bringing together citizens' groups from Western, neutral, and Eastern European countries, the more effective the IHF will be in achieving its goals.

Over the last several years the existing committees have received a great deal of attention from the Vienna office. Contact between the national committees and the IHF has increased substantially, providing the committees with information on the CSCE Conference, on IHF activities, and each other's activities. In addition, a documentation system in the Vienna office makes it possible to give our members updated information on human rights issues and to bring them in contact with relevant sources of information.

IHF representatives visited the national committees on various occasions, in order to discuss with them how to proceed with their activities and to suggest future plans and strategies to them.

Since the work of the IHF is intrinsically integrated with the work of our national committees the evaluation of our activities which follow also includes some actions taken by individual committees.

Bulgaria

Repression in Bulgaria remains severe. Members of independent movements, such as, the Society for the Protection of Human Rights in Bulgaria (SPHRB) were arrested. Some of them remain under house arrest. Hunger strikes were undertaken by some SPHRB members protesting the harassment and confiscation of the files of the organization. There still are at least 150 political prisoners in Bulgaria, many of them Turks who refuse to change their names to Slavic ones. A parliamentary commission began preparing drafts for changes in the Constitution, the law on passports and other important legislation. Requests by the IHF to send a fact finding mission to that country have been left unanswered by the Bulgarian authorities.

U.S. Helsinki Watch has begun a concerted effort to monitor human rights violations, and the persecution of the Turkish minority in that country. The Dutch Helsinki Committee made a study into the legal aspects of the repression of minorities in Bulgaria.

Czechoslovakia

The human rights situation deteriorated in Czechoslovakia through arbitrary arrests and harassment. Despite those actions the number of people openly protesting human rights abuses is growing. Many intellectuals, students and artists, who never before publicly spoke out against the authorities began, to do so.

The IHF and the national Committees were instrumental in helping organize the seminar "Czechoslovakia '88" and the parallel symposium in Vienna, described above.

The Yugoslav Helsinki Committee sent letters to the Czechoslovak Government protesting the arrests of the participants in the Seminar and against the verdict of Augustin Navratil. Protests on behalf of Augustin Navratil were submitted to the CSSR delegation in Vienna by the Swiss Helsinki Committee

The Norwegian Helsinki Committee has organized a working group to study the abuse of psychiatry in Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. Its main focus was the case of Augustin Navratil. The committee organized

protests in front of the Czechoslovak government and requested permission to send a Norwegian psychiatrist to examine him.

A vigil organized by the IHF together with the Austrian Helsinki Committee and Amnesty International in Vienna commemorated the anniversary of the invasion of Czechoslovakia by Soviet troops. The Italian Helsinki Committee sponsored a major demonstration on that occasion. Lists of political prisoners were presented to the CSSS Embassies in Amsterdam, Oslo, Rome, Vienna and Washington.

The IHF sent fact finding missions to Czechoslovakia in June and November. The U.S. Helsinki Watch sent a fact finding mission to investigate prison conditions and to update information about human rights conditions. In addition, the U.S. Helsinki Watch sponsored a medical commission of the Physicians for Human Rights which visited Czechoslovakia twice, the second time to perform a second autopsy on Pawel Wonka and to investigate the circumstances of his death.

GDR

In January the GDR expelled several leading peace and human rights activists after having accused them of treason. Some were permitted to return after concerted protests had been lodged by many countries.

The German Helsinki Human Rights Committee protested strongly arrests of peaceful demonstrators in the GDR and appealed for reunification of numerous families.

In June and in December the IHF sent fact finding missions to East Germany to investigate the human rights situation and to explore the possibility of organizing a Helsinki Committee.

Great Britain

The Norwegian Helsinki Committee published a report Unemployment and Human Rights on social, economic and professional rights in Great Britain.

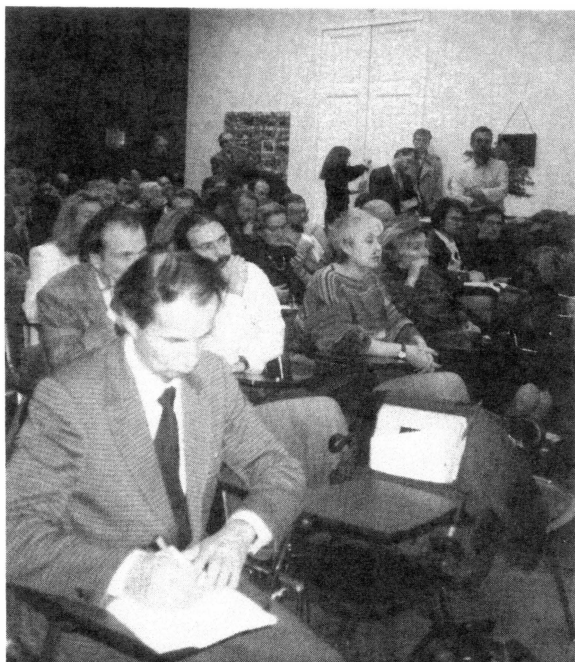
The Norwegian Helsinki Committee is also conducting a thorough study of human rights abuses in Northern Ireland.

Hungary

Hungary has seen a virtual explosion of independent groups and intensive political debates. Also the possibility of founding a Helsinki Committee has increased.

In May the IHF sent a mission to investigate the changes taking place in Hungary. Similar trips were sponsored by the Norwegian Helsinki Committee and the U.S. Helsinki Watch.

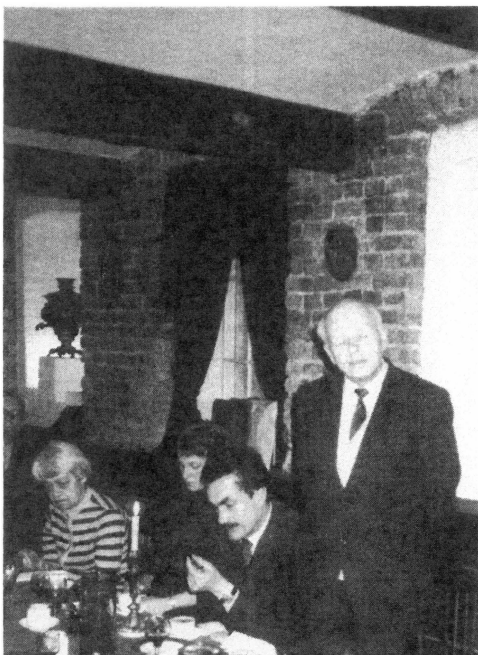
On 30 August the IHF sent a lawyer from Yugoslavia to observe the trial of Gyula Kristaly in Miskolc. Kristaly was charged with incitement for having distributed carbon copied leaflets criticizing the economic policies of the



Parallel seminar "Czechoslovakia 88", Vienna, November 12—14, 1988



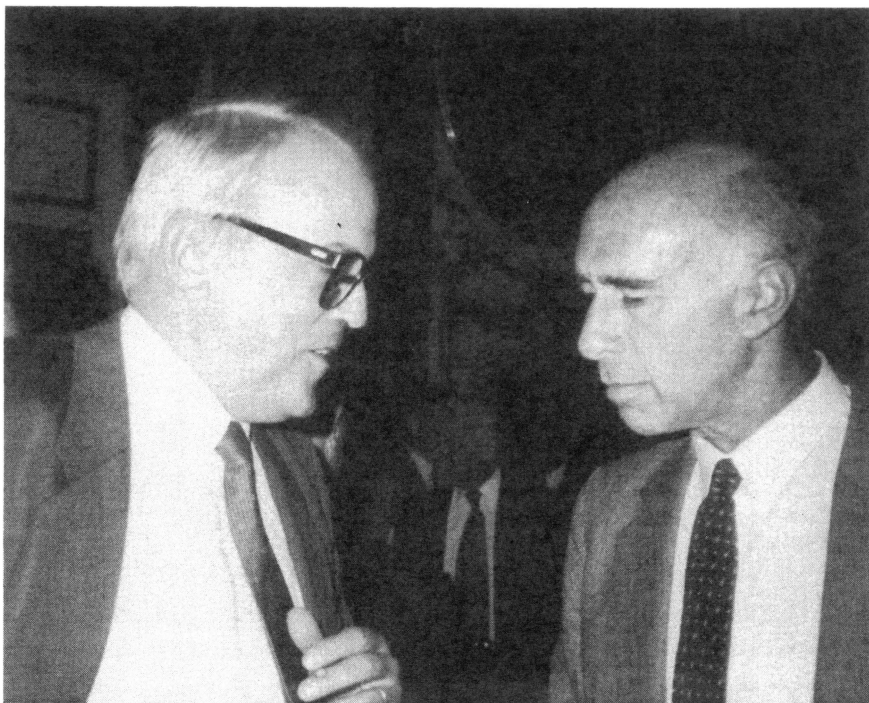
Press conference after seminar "Czechoslovakia '88", Vienna November 14, 1988



Larisa Bogoraz, translator, Karl von Schwarzenberg, Andrei Sakharov in Moscow.



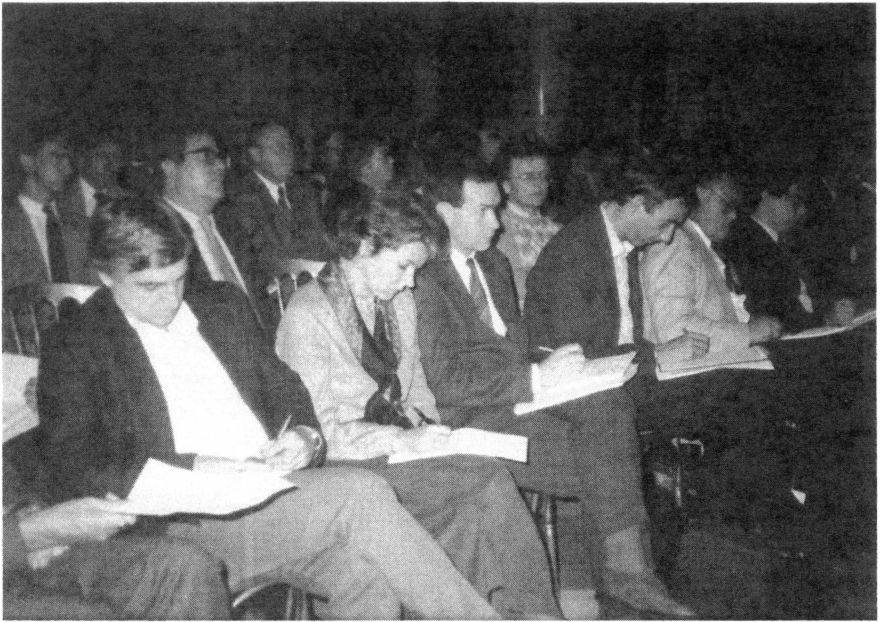
Meeting with Press Club Glasnost



Swiss CSCE Ambassador Blaise Schenk and Gerald Nagler during a briefing of CSCE Delegations in Vienna



Gerald Nagler, Yuri Orlov, Catherine A. Fitzpatrick at a press conference in Vienna



An IHF press conference in Vienna



Conference in Rome on Human Rights Violations in Romania, October 1988.
Speaking: Paul Goma

Hungarian government. He received a suspended sentence of 1 year and 4 months.

Norway

The Norwegian Helsinki Committee asked the Norwegian Parliament to abolish the agitation paragraph in Norwegian law and is working on a report on the use of isolation in Norwegian prisons.

Poland

1988 marked improvements in the human rights situation in Poland. However, that year people were still arrested for political reasons. Most harshly treated were individuals from remote parts of the country. Most of the arrests were replaced by very high monetary fines, thus finding a more sophisticated way of repression by forcing people to use their meager earnings for paying fines.

In August 2 in Cracow Solidarity's Intervention Committee and the Freedom and Peace Committee co-sponsored an independent human rights conference attended by IHF and other national committee members. It was at the time of the conference that the IHF met with the members of Polish Helsinki Committee.

The U.S. Helsinki Watch sent two missions to Poland, which resulted in the publication of two reports: Violations of the Helsinki Accords: Poland, An Update and Prison Conditions in Poland.

The Norwegian Helsinki Committee followed very closely the events in Poland. It organized a fact finding mission and issued several press releases and commentaries on the human rights situation there.

The Helsinki Committee in Poland is concentrating on pressuring the Polish Government to revise its laws to correspond with the international covenants and agreements. It published several reports on human rights, such as on the independence of trade unions. All reports were distributed in Poland and abroad.

Romania

Romania is generally considered to be the most repressive country among the CSCE participating states. Attempts by IHF and other Helsinki committees to send missions there have been unsuccessful. Also gathering information by other means has been extremely difficult because of the danger of arrests of those supplying information.

Nevertheless, on 17 June the IHF released at a press conference the S.O.S. Transylvania report, dealing with the Hungarian minority in Romania. The speakers at the press conference were an expert from Budapest and the author of the report from Norway. In June the U.S. Helsinki Watch sent a mission to Hungary to interview refugees from Romania.

Protests against blatant human rights violations in Romania throughout the year were made by all Helsinki Committees, and by signatory states, very often due to the pressure exercised by the various Helsinki committees.

The Italian Helsinki Committee organized together with the IHF, the Italian Parliamentary Group of Radical and Socialist Parties, and other groups a very successful conference on the subject. Proceedings from the conference will be published shortly in Italian and Romanian, with an English version to follow.

On 15 November the IHF participated in a demonstration in Vienna commemorating the Brasov uprisings, with the Chairman of the IHF as keynote speaker.

Turkey

The human rights situation in Turkey continues to be a serious problem. Continuous reports of torture during detention reach the IHF. Although Turkey has signed the U.N. and European Conventions against torture thousands of people are still in prisons, and repression of the Kurdish minority continues unabated.

Fact finding missions to Turkey have been organized by the Danish and U.S. Helsinki committees. The U.S. Helsinki Committee, in conjunction with the Association of American Publishers, investigated the state of free expression in Turkey, meeting with publishers, journalists, television, radio and other experts.

Members from the Danish Helsinki Committee were observers to the Kutlu and Sargin trials and met with members of the Human Rights Association in Istanbul. In September a delegation from that committee met with Turkish authorities and human rights activists to discuss the possible return of Turkish political refugees and the reform of the Turkish penal law. On Human Rights Day, 10 December eight Turkish refugees attempted to return to their home country. Five were refused access to Turkey and returned to the countries where they had obtained asylum. Three were arrested and held for a few days. They will be presumably prosecuted.

In March, the U.S. Helsinki Watch published Destroying Ethnic Identity: The Kurds of Turkey, demonstrating that the authorities are pursuing a policy of destruction of the ethnic identity of the Kurds, and at the same time documenting human rights violations by the Kurdish separatist guerrillas.

USSR

Present reforms in the USSR and their impact on the human rights situation are of great concern to us. Although the number of political prisoners sharply declined by the end of the year, there are still political prisoners in the Soviet Union, including some recent arrests. Many refusniks remain and travel passports are withheld as punishment of some human rights activists.

The IHF and the national Committees follow the events in the Soviet Union very closely. Fact finding missions and discussions on human rights conditions were organized by most committees.

The very successful IHF mission in January was described in detail earlier in the report. Professor Yuri Orlov, Honorary Chairman of the IHF, met with the Danish, German, Italian, Norwegian and Swedish Helsinki Committees to discuss glasnost and its implications for the human rights movement. In January the U.S. Helsinki Watch published Soviet Abuse of Psychiatry.

On 24-25 April the IHF and representatives of its Danish, German and U.S. Helsinki Committees met in Vienna with the Soviet Public Commission for International Cooperation on Humanitarian Issues and Human Rights, headed by Prof. Fedor Burlatski. The meeting was an important follow-up on the contacts established with officials in Moscow during the IHF visit. A press conference was held after the meeting.

On 4 May the German Helsinki Committee in cooperation with the IHF organised a forum discussion in the German Bundestag about the IHF's visit to Moscow, its results and follow-up.

In June the Italian Helsinki Committee sent a fact finding mission to Moscow which met with independent groups and refusniks.

The Danish Helsinki Committee did several investigations of psychiatric abuses in the Soviet Union. It is regretable that although Prof. Morozov has been replaced as Chairman of the Soviet Psychiatric Association, he is still the head of the Serbski Institute. Prof. Morozov is closely associated with psychiatric abuses in the USSR.

The Danish Helsinki Committee began a debate on legal reforms in the USSR with Soviet lawyers. The first debate took place in Copenhagen in March to be followed by one in Moscow in 1989.

In November the U.S. Helsinki Watch hosted Andrei Sakharov in New York. In December the U.S. Helsinki Watch participated in a visit to Perm Labor Camp organized by a journalist on The New York Times.

The question of the Jewish minority in the Soviet Union and the right to emigrate has also been a concern for the IHF. The Danish, Swedish and Swiss Helsinki Committees have been especially involved in the issue.

The Swedish Helsinki Committee is following closely the nationality issues in the Baltic Republics.

The Canadian Helsinki Group is pursuing the case of Raoul Wallenberg. It set up an international commission to investigate his fate.

The U.S. Helsinki Watch continues to follow the events in Afghanistan closely. After the withdrawal of Soviet troops from that country bloodshed might continue or even possibly intensify. Several fact finding missions to Pakistan resulted in a report By All Parties to the Conflict: Violations of the Laws of War in Afghanistan and a book A Nation is Dying: Afghanistan Under the Soviets, 1979-1987, by Jeri Laber and Barnett Rubin.

Yugoslavia

Much of the work of monitoring human rights has been carried out by the Yugoslav Helsinki Committee. The committee appealed to government officials to bring Yugoslav laws in line with international laws, such as the International Treaty on Civil and Political Rights. The committee was successful in petitioning the President of Croatia on behalf of those who were withheld passports for more than ten years because of their political activities. Soon after the protests, twenty individuals were given passports. The committee appealed for an amnesty for political prisoners. Such an amnesty was last granted in 1973. There have been serious and numerous allegations of police brutality and torture in Yugoslavia. On the initiative of the Yugoslav Helsinki Committee Vrac Milan Sandorov, a public prosecutor in Vojvodina Province, was arrested for alleged abuses. Protests have been lodged on behalf of Husein Cuk, who was sentenced unjustly to one year and nine months in prison for spreading "hostile propaganda".

After the annual meeting in Belgrade, members of the IHF went to Kosovo. A report on the situation in Yugoslavia was prepared by the Canadian Helsinki Committee and published by the IHF in the form of a newsletter. A report from Kosovo about the trial of Lema Betiti was prepared by the Norwegian Helsinki Committee.

On 13 May the IHF informed the Yugoslav authorities that it intended to send an observer to the appeal trial of Dobroslav Paraga, a 21-year old human rights activist and member of the Yugoslav Helsinki Committee. Paraga received a suspended sentence for having published an account of the way he was treated in prison where he spent four years. He was originally imprisoned for having initiated a petition to the government demanding the release of all political prisoners in Yugoslavia.

The U.S. Helsinki Watch sent a fact finding mission to Yugoslavia in December and is preparing a report on the findings. The situation in Yugoslavia is worsening every day. The IHF has called upon all Helsinki Committees to give the situation in Yugoslavia highest priority.

Asylum and Visa Policy

The problem of asylum and issuance of visas by Western countries is growing. The Swiss Helsinki Committee publish a report on the asylum situation in Switzerland.

The Dutch Helsinki Committee published a report on the visa policies of the Netherlands towards East European visitors.

Conscientious objectors

On 21 March the IHF organised a press conference at which an appeal by Eastern European dissidents from Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia was presented. The appeal called upon the CSCE signatory states to recognise citizens' right to conscientious objection and alternative service. One of the main initiators of the appeal, Miklos Havarszti and one signatory from Hungary were speakers at the conference.

Seminars and meeting

In February the IHF participated in a conference on the CSCE process organized by the City of Venice.

Also in February the IHF participated in a meeting of the "Wiener Kreis" on religious persecution.

In November Yuri Orlov, Honorary Chairman of the IHF, came to Vienna to meet with CSCE diplomats. During those meetings he was consulted on the draft of the Concluding Document of the conference, and updated for the delegated the human rights situation in the Soviet Union.

In December the IHF participated in a week long tribute to human rights monitors worldwide, organized in New York and Washington by the U.S. Helsinki Watch Committee and its umbrella organization Human Rights Watch.

Publications

In addition to the distribution of reports from national Committees the IHF published and distributed the following reports (the list includes 1988 publications and a selection from previous years):

- On Speaking Terms: An Unprecedented Human Rights Mission to the Soviet Union, Vienna 1988 also in German translation
- Democracy and Human Rights in Turkish Law, Vienna, May 1988 both in English and Turkish
- S.O.S. Transylvania, Vienna, June 1988
- Czechoslovakia '88: A Different Seminar, Prague, November 1988, Vienna, November 1988
- Turkey: Torture and Political Prisoners, Vienna, March 1987
- Violations of the Helsinki Accords in Bulgaria, Vienna, November 1986
- Violations of the Helsinki Accords in Czechoslovakia, Vienna, November 1986
- Violations of the Helsinki Accords in the German Democratic Republic, Vienna, November 1986
- Violations of the Helsinki Accords in Hungary, Vienna, November 1986
- Violations of the Helsinki Accords in Poland, Vienna, November 1986
- Violations of the Helsinki Accords in Romania, Vienna, November 1986
- Violations of the Helsinki Accords in the Soviet Union, Vienna, November 1986
- Violations of the Helsinki Accords in Turkey, Vienna, November 1986

- Violations of the Helsinki Accords in Yugoslavia, Vienna, November 1986
- The Moscow Helsinki Group, Ten Years, Vienna, May 1986
- The Unofficial Writers Symposium, Budapest 1985 (edited by Index on Censorship), Vienna, 1986

Moscow go-ahead for rights group

BY JUDY DEMPSEY IN VIENNA

THE SOVIET UNION will allow one of the most prominent Western human rights groups to visit Moscow and hold talks with Soviet officials on a range of human rights issues, a senior Soviet official said yesterday.

Mr Yuri Kashlev, head of the Soviet delegation to the Conference on Security Co-operation in Europe, which resumed in Vienna yesterday, said the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights would be able to visit Moscow. "We are expecting this delegation," he said of the group which was established in 1982 to monitor compliance of the Helsinki Final Act signed in 1975 by the 35 member states of the CSCE process.

The move is unprecedented and has surprised many diplomats in Vienna; few had been expecting such an open and

swift response by the Soviet authorities.

The CSCE monitors compliance of the Helsinki agreements of 1975 which formalised Europe's borders and sought to ensure the protection of human rights in the Eastern bloc.

"We are engaged in a dialogue on human rights in the Soviet Union not only with those who like us but those who criticise us as well," Mr Kashlev said at yesterday's meeting, referring to the federation, which has been a persistent critic of the human rights record in the Soviet Union and in other parts of Eastern Europe.

Western delegates in Vienna reacted cautiously to the news. Mr David Mellor, Minister of State at the Foreign Office, said it was a "welcome move." But he warned the West not to be fobbed off with a little bit of move-

ment. "We just can't have glasnost and perestroika on that part of the agenda which suits the Soviets."

The federation applied to visit Moscow in June. An official described the response as a very positive step. "We requested a meeting with the foreign, justice, and interior ministries as well as the visa office," he said. "As far as we know, those meetings are being arranged and we made it clear we would talk to dissidents as well."

The delegation will go to Moscow next month, though the Soviet authorities said it could travel next week if it wished. It will include Lord Avebury, chairman of the British parliamentary committee on human rights, Mr Ben Mottelsen, a Danish winner of the Nobel Prize for physics, and Mr Peter Jan-

kowitsch, the former Austrian Foreign Minister.

Mr Mellor said there were still many outstanding issues in the human rights field which had yet to be addressed by the Soviet Union. These included freedom to travel, the end to jamming the BBC's Polish service, unrestricted sale of Western newspapers and journals and the publication of complete economic statistics.

In spite of the optimism stimulated by the arms talks in Washington last week, Mr Mellor warned the Soviet and East European delegates that "human rights and human contacts are at the heart of the CSCE."

The West, he said, would not put pen to paper on a concluding document until a substantial agreement had been reached in this field.

Dissident Causes Dispute at Soviet Rights Forum

By Gary Lee

Washington Post Service

MOSCOW — An unprecedented meeting between official Soviet and Western human rights monitoring groups nearly broke down Wednesday when a former Soviet political prisoner, now a human rights activist, attempted to speak as a member of the Western delegation.

After a 30-minute dispute between members of the visiting International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, a Vienna-based group, and the Soviet Human Rights Commission, the activist,

Lev Timofeyev, was allowed to address the gathering.

Mr. Timofeyev, pardoned after serving two years in detention, called for the release of 200 political prisoners in the Soviet Union. An economist, Mr. Timofeyev was jailed in 1985 for anti-Soviet acts after he published articles abroad critical of the Soviet economy.

"We feel that priority should be given to gaining a common concept of certain well-known words — such as freedom, rights and love — which at present have widely differing interpretations," Mr. Timofeyev said.

Mr. Timofeyev is head of Press Club Glasnost, an unofficial human rights advocacy group composed of Soviet citizens.

The organization, founded several months ago as part of a Soviet human rights thaw, became part of the Helsinki federation this week.

Fyodor Burlatsky, who heads the official Soviet commission and was chairman of the session Wednesday, objected at first to Mr. Timofeyev's appearance, saying that the official Soviet delegates were not familiar with him or his organization.

"We do not consider this the appropriate time or place to get acquainted with Press Club Glasnost," he said.

The meeting illustrated how even in times of *glasnost*, or openness, sparks fly whenever Soviet officials face off against their Western counterparts on the issue of human rights.

In this case, the difference was over whether Soviet officials such as the members of the human rights commission recognized nonofficial Soviet human rights activists and their positions.

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