EDITORIAL

LET THE SUNSHINE IN

"March 16 is the birthday of James Madison, our fourth President. We choose this day to celebrate our freedom of access to information about government because Madison... never ceased to mention the freedoms that help us learn everything we need to know about matters relating to our liberties and all public concerns."

In one of the choice ironies of the Reagan Administration, these stirring words came from the pen (so to speak) of the President himself in 1987, proclaiming March 16 as Freedom of Information Day. The irony is that information about government has never been less free.

Citizen groups armed with indignation, the pen, the lawsuit, legislative advocacy and the vote have vowed to halt the Administration's constriction of citizens' right to know in this last year of Reagan. Groups such as the American Civil Liberties Union, the American Library Association, the Government Accountability Project, the National Security Archive, OMB Watch, People for the American Way, Public Citizen, FOIA Inc., the Advocacy Institute and others have formed the Right to Know Committee of Correspondence to draw common strength for the battles they are waging against information deprivation.

John Shattuck and Muriel Morissey Spence, both of Harvard University's Office of Government, Community and Public Affairs, have co-written a comprehensive analysis of the Administration's assault on freedom of information. They call on the next President to issue the orders and messages necessary to improve the public's presumptive right to know, and on Congress to pass appropriate legislation.

How fitting it would be if the next President were to take such action on March 16, 1989? Madison would have found that a birthday well worth celebrating.

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town black neighborhood, with Farrakhan near the front. The state's elected black leaders, however, were absent.

In the weeks ahead, the mainstream press is likely to focus on whether the Brawley family's account of what happened to Tawana is accurate. But more important is the exposure of racist violence, and the institutionalized racism of police and prison guards in Hudson Valley and around the country. The real question is how to force the criminal justice system to prosecute those responsible.

**U.S. Funds**

*(Continued From Front Cover)*

human rights community, some Russian émigrés (including former political prisoners) and even members of the N.E.D.'s own advisory committee on Soviet and Eastern European Affairs. They fear that the center's ties to the N.E.D. will exacerbate the Soviet Union's longstanding paranoia and propaganda about dissidents' ties to U.S. intelligence agencies.

Richard Pipes, former National Security Council adviser on Soviet affairs and an adviser to the N.E.D. on its Soviet-area programs in 1986, told InterNation that "the moment you start running such an exchange with Soviet scholars and other people you could leave yourself open to charges of doing intelligence work and you could hurt some people." Pipes added that the center "may have had the best of intentions, but the moment you start using United States funds, the K.G.B. can accuse you of working for the government."

Despite such qualms, the center was the largest recipient of N.E.D. funds in the Soviet area in fiscal 1986, receiving $200,000. During fiscal 1987, it received an additional $125,000. And in fiscal 1988, the center received $40,000. Moreover, it was an N.E.D. grant of $50,000 for a feasibility study that led to the creation of the center in the first place, in 1985.

The Center for Democracy's success with the National Endowment for Democracy is largely due to its founding member Vladimir Bukovsky, who came to the West in 1976 after spending eleven years in Soviet prison camps and psychiatric hospitals for his human rights activity. Today, Bukovsky is a leading member of the contra lobbying enterprise Prodemca. He was also one of the founders of Resistance International, an anti-Communist group that supports the Afghan mujahedeen. Prodemca receives N.E.D. funding.

Bukovsky found a strong supporter in N.E.D. president Carl Gershman, a former assistant to Jeane Kirkpatrick at the United Nations and, like Bukovsky, a member of the neoconservative Committee for the Free World. According to one well-placed source, the center "was Carl Gershman's program. He pushed it and got the N.E.D. board to fund it." Under Gershman the N.E.D., which was established by

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Congress in 1983 as a nonpartisan agency to promote American-style democracy in Soviet bloc and "authoritarian" countries, has been used to advance the Reagan Administration's foreign policy objectives. In 1985, for instance, it was revealed that the N.E.D. had helped finance far-right student and labor groups in France, which had bitterly opposed the elected government of Francois Mitterand.

According to a source who follows the politics of the émigré community, the center's activist programs and Bukovsky's political charisma "were tailor-made for Gershman's record of militant anti-Sovietism and anti-Communism." Bukovsky strongly contends that Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms have increased the Soviet threat to the West. Last March he warned that "under Gorbachev the Soviet Union becomes much more dangerous. Because they become much more successful. Yes, they might disarm the West, both morally and physically." According to Bukovsky, the West "should increase the pressure. I think it's a time for pressing them rather than for relaxing."

Most of the center's board members would share Bukovsky's view of the Soviet threat. They include defense hawks Michael Ledeen, Edward Luttwak and Albert Wohlstetter, as well as Hoover Institute Sovietologists like Robert Conquest, Milorad Drachkovich and John Dunlop. Other center advisers include Polish émigré philosopher Leszek Kolakowski, Soviet émigré writer Vassily Aksyonov and two Republican presidential candidates, Jack Kemp and Robert Dole.

The center's executive director is Yuri Yarim-Agaev, a Soviet émigré and physicist. In March 1984, when he and Bukovsky were both at Stanford University, Yarim-Agaev wrote a proposal for a new "Soviet studies research center," which later became the Center for Democracy. At the heart of the proposal, a copy of which Internation obtained through F.O.I.A. requests, was a bold idea: to use the Soviet human rights network to gather political and military information on the U.S.S.R. The Soviet human rights movement, Yarim-Agaev wrote, "has established an extensive internal informational network and the channels of delivering the information abroad." However, "because of the specifics of the human rights movement, this network has not been concentrating on gathering military, technological and strategic information, nor can it do so."

Yarim-Agaev proposed to rectify this. He went on, "If supported properly this information network can provide data" on subjects like "the black market, government and its administration: laws, instructions, regulations, secrecy, police and K.G.B." Other topics for scrutiny would include "the military and society: social and political aspects of the war in Afghanistan, the social and political situation of Soviet troops stationed abroad, militarization of civil life, evidence of specific privileges, resource allocation of the military in the economy, politics and society," as well as data on corruption, tension between different nationality groups and the relationship of the Communist Party to the K.G.B.

Yarim-Agaev argued that the key to the research center's success would be the establishment of a "network for collecting of current information on the U.S.S.R." by "travelers from the West," who would "bring the information out safely" using "necessary technical means."

In the summer of 1984, two months after Gershman became the N.E.D.'s president, Yarim-Agaev received $50,000 for a feasibility study. The study's language was more discreet, but the principles laid out in the earlier proposal were intact. It listed as its top three priorities:

1. To establish the number of sources inside the U.S.S.R. and the list of addresses in different cities from dissidents and recent Soviet emigres.
2. To find the information about all tourist trips to the U.S.S.R. from Western Europe and Third World countries.
3. To identify persons in Europe who will find, brief and debrief the tourists.

The N.E.D.'s enthusiasm, reflected in its $200,000 grant to the center in 1986, was understandable, since, according to Yarim-Agaev, information gathered by the network "could be used by governmental and public organizations."

In fact, only the dissidents themselves would be kept in the dark. In his March 1984 document Yarim-Agaev wrote,
"We should emphasize that our friends in the Soviet Union are not motivated by political interests but by their personal convictions. . . . One cannot expect them to serve knowingly as pure intelligence sources. Within a broad flow of information provided by them, however, one can always find facts of interest to experts."

In fiscal year 1986, the center’s contact project, then called the Independent Exchange Program (I.E.P.), organized and financed more than twenty trips to the Soviet Union using “experienced” travelers who met with an estimated 100 disidents, including independent peace activists and refuseniks. The center also began approaching Western tourists. From January to March of 1987, at least ten visitors were briefed.

Budgeted at $53,000, the I.E.P. was the center’s most expensive program. A related fund to provide financial aid to select disidents was allocated another $37,000. The rest of the grant was spent developing a computerized “bank of information” in which both legitimate human rights information and questionable center “research” from the U.S.S.R. could be stored.

In fiscal year 1987, with the center’s receipt of the $125,000, director Yarim-Agaev decided to drop the I.E.P., however, since the opening up of the Soviet Union as a result of glasnost made its activities unnecessary. “I still think it’s a very good program,” he explained, “but because of limited funds I had to choose priorities. I decided we can sacrifice since there are many trips without our support.” Yarim-Agaev also stressed that “it was my decision” to drop the I.E.P. “There was never any criticism of our work or suggestion to do other things. I never bent any of my programs, or changed anything because of reactions from N.E.D.”

However, the financial aid program and the computer bank are still going strong. The Center for Democracy’s quarterly report for January through March 1987 notes that it “continued to maintain files on various subjects pertaining to the Soviet Union (i.e., Soviet economy, policy, military, etc.), Eastern Europe and some Third World countries (e.g., Afghanistan, Angola, Nicaragua) where the Soviet Union is involved.”

The N.E.D. has seemed willing to finance even the most offbeat center projects. In 1986 the endowment tucked on another $25,000 to the center’s grant to fund a Bukovsky scheme to smuggle American films, most with anti-Soviet themes (for example, White Nights, Red Dawn and The Assassination of Trotsky) into the Soviet Union through a Polish group called Fighting Solidarity. The aim was to give citizens there “access to the cultural and social pluralism of our democratic system.” According to N.E.D. reports, the center plans to make political documentaries and videos of Soviet émigrés in the West and smuggle them into the Soviet Union using the same courier system. In fiscal 1988 the center received another $20,000 for its video project.

In December 1986, Carl Gershman and John Richardson, then the N.E.D. chair, convened a meeting of “Soviet experts” to review the programs [N.E.D.] is funding to encourage democratic trends in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.” Herbert Ellison, former director of the Kennan Institute, was concerned about the center. He told us, “I think it was a very widespread notion that they really oughtn’t to try to undertake any kind of active intelligence that would involve any kind of parallel to intelligence activities properly undertaken by government agencies with that assignment.”

Ellison’s concern is shared by a number of former disidents now living in the United States. Ludmilla Alexeyeva, author of the widely respected book Soviet Dissent and a leading human rights activist, remembers that “Agaev showed me his original proposal in 1984 and I refused to work with him because I thought it was dangerous for people in the Soviet Union.” Pavel Litvinov, one of the leading members of the Moscow human rights movement in the 1960s, says that Yarim-Agaev and Bukovsky tried to win his support for the center’s work when they first applied to the N.E.D. for funds. They asked Litvinov for the names of his friends in Moscow and of people he knew who traveled to the Soviet Union regularly. They planned to enter these names in a centralized computer data base to be set up with N.E.D. funds. Litvinov refused. “My principle,” he says, “is always to be extremely cautious. I would never put information in any semiofficial or official computer.” Litvinov says that Bukovsky and Yarim-Agaev’s center resembles “a new, modern N.T.S.” (a C.I.A.-funded White Russian émigré group that advocates the overthrow of the Soviet system). “It hurts the cause of human rights,” he says. "My
strong belief is that you do what you say you're doing. If your purpose is political struggle to overturn Soviet Union, then don't make human rights front. . . . Don't get people involved in false struggle."

Catherine Fitzpatrick, director of research at Helsinki Watch, the human rights monitoring group, thinks that N.E.D. funding compromises and endangers human rights work. She argues, "It's not wrong to help human rights activists [in the Soviet Union], but it's wrong to use government money for that purpose. It's potentially very harmful to people there." Fitzpatrick also questions how the center's information was used. "It's one thing when we gather information because it stays in our office, but it's dangerous to the whole cause when you mingle human rights monitoring and intelligence-gathering. Is the center revealing the names of its contacts in Moscow to N.E.D.? Does it share the information in its computer bank with N.E.D.? Does the center give N.E.D. the names of its 'couriers'?"

The N.E.D. declined to respond to questions about how the center's information was used. Instead, N.E.D. spokeswoman Diane Bettge, quoting from a June 1987 evaluation, described the center as "an organization which [had] established itself as a force for assisting human rights activists and political dissidents in the Soviet Union." As for criticism of the center's activities by the N.E.D.'s own Soviet experts, Bettge admits that "caution was urged with respect to certain programs of the center, such as the I.E.P. This was because these programs were more activist in nature than other programs considered and could therefore be difficult to conduct within a totalitarian system."

The Soviet government has traditionally associated most kinds of dissident activity with so-called enemies of the Soviet Union abroad. The standard charge has been that dissident groups are either working for, inspired by or helping Western intelligence agencies. Such accusations continue to be heard today: Last February, Pravda accused Glasnost's editor, Sergei Grigoryants, of serving Western interests. There is substantial evidence, however, that under Gorbachev the Soviet government is beginning to shake free of its neo-Stalinist attitude toward dissent. There is a broadening of the parameters of discussion and a tenuous tolerance of unofficial groups. And Gorbachev's talk of socialist pluralism bodes well for independent groups.

But these hopeful signs are fragile; Gorbachev and his supporters, who face powerful and entrenched opposition, are not fully confident of the outcome of reform. In this struggle for growing tolerance and openness, any Western effort, whether inadvertent or intentional, to use Soviet citizens for ulterior purposes can only end badly all around—for those who have had ties to dissident and independent political activity in the Soviet Union, for Gorbachev's reform program and for those in the West who care about human rights. The Center for Democracy's reckless and provocative schemes, and the National Endowment for Democracy's support of them, give ammunition to Soviet conservatives who oppose the current liberalization process and the rapprochement with the West. It would be tragic if Glasnost was silenced as a result.
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