



MANIFESTO AS AN ACT OF RESISTANCE

ANATOMY OF PROTEST





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CHARTA 77

CHARTER 77 IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

In communist Czechoslovakia, **dissidents drafted a manifesto known as Charter 77**. This human rights movement aimed to **pressure the communist authorities into complying with existing laws**.

The signatories drew upon the **United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 1975 Helsinki Accords**, which the regime had signed. The regime could not ignore this collective text without revealing its contradictions.

TURNING THE REGIME'S PROMISES AGAINST IT

Charter 77 emerged from a group that had formed in opposition to the **legal proceedings against the Plastic People music group**: its members called on Gustáv Husák's regime **to honour the democratic commitments** of the Final Act of the Helsinki Process.

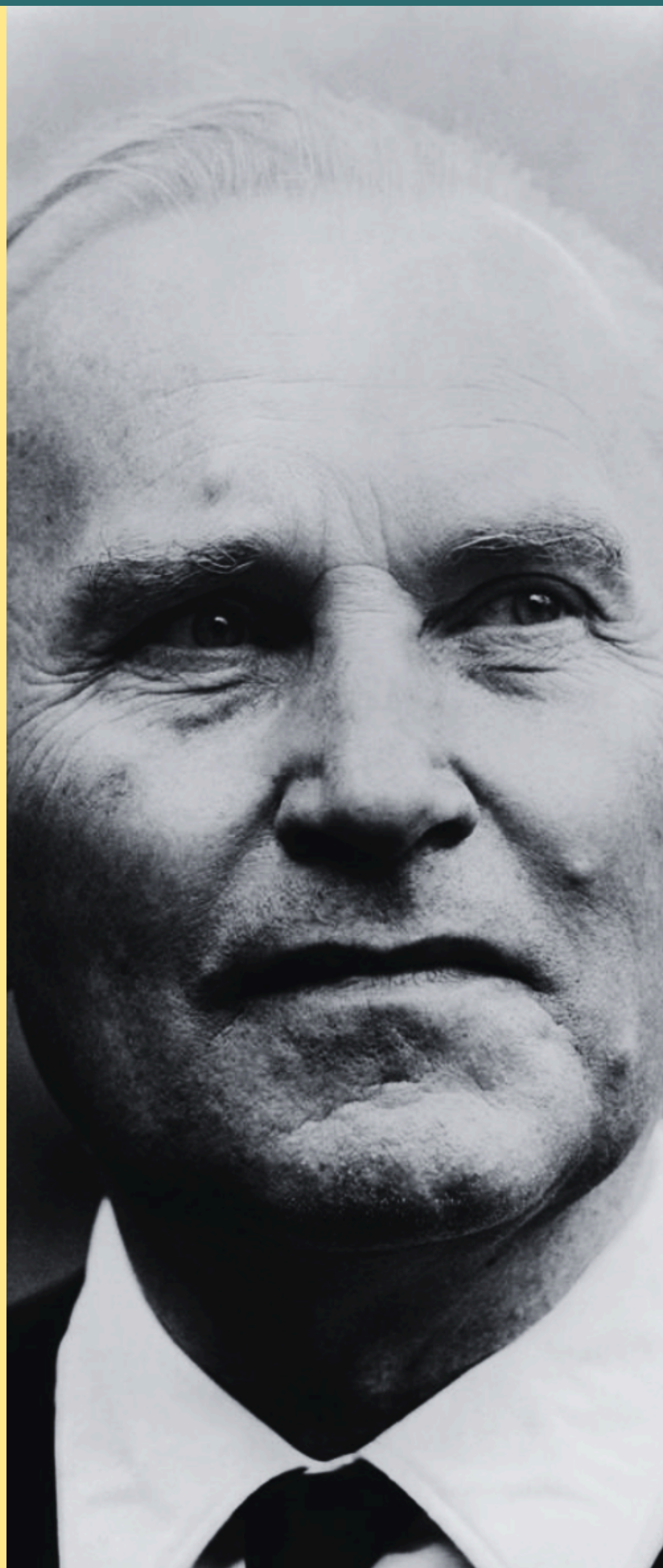
On 1 January 1977, **242 intellectuals and workers signed the charter**. The police immediately arrested the organisers and in October 1979, 10 signatories of the Charter, including writer Václav Havel, were accused of attempted subversion and sentenced to prison terms.



EXPOSING THE REGIME'S CONTRADICTIONS

The Charter, whose contents were revealed in the European press but not in Czechoslovakia, **signalled the emergence of a new form of opposition** that challenged the communist regime in the name of the legal standards it had itself accepted.

The repression that followed confirmed the accusations of the manifesto. Jan Patočka, philosopher and spokesperson for the Charter, died during interrogation. **Over the next twelve years, political legitimacy eroded.**



Prohlášení

Charty 77

Dne 13.10.1976 byly ve sbírce zákonů ČSSR/č.120/ zveřejněny "Mezinárodní pakt o občanských a politických právech" a "Mezinárodní pakt o hospodářských, sociálních a kulturních právech", které byly jménem naší republiky podepsány v roce 1968, stvrzeny v Helsinkách roku 1975 a vstoupily u nás v platnost dnem 23.3.1976. Od té doby mají naši občané právo a náš stát povinnost se jimi řídit.

Swobody a práva lidí, jež tyto pakty zaručují, jsou důležitými civilizizačními hodnotami, k nimž v dějinách směřovalo úsilí mnoha pokrokových sil, a jejich uzákonění může významně pomoci humánnímu vývoji naší společnosti.

Vítáme proto, že Československá socialistická republika k těmto

STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF CHARTER 77

STRENGTHS

- Creates a **permanent written record**, impossible to suppress.
- **Collectively brings together** actors from different worlds.
- **Forces public debate**, exposes the regime internationally.

LIMITATIONS

- **Immediate and severe repression** against all signatories.
- Remains **limited to urban and intellectual circles**.
- Alone, it **does not overthrow the regime without external support**.



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