



Communist Policy and Tactics 1968 – 2, 1. hluti

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COMMUNIST POLICY AND TACTICS

AUGUST 1968

SUMMARY

SOVIET INVASION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA

The Invasion and the Moscow Talks

The Russians were dissatisfied with the follow-up in Czechoslovakia to Cierna and Bratislava. Pressure for liberalisation remained strong. The Russians may have tried to engineer a 'conservative' coup in Prague with the object of getting a convincing invitation to intervene. But they had in the end to choose between negotiation with the existing leaders and imposing direct military rule. They chose the first. The outcome of the Moscow talks was that Dubcek and his colleagues remained in power but that they had to make substantial practical concessions because of the presence of Soviet troops. The success of this harsh compromise remains in question.

The role of the other invading countries

Their contribution was symbolic. The East German and Polish governments took the toughest line and the Hungarians were least happy with the intervention.

Yugoslav and Rumanian Reactions to the Invasion

Both strongly criticised the Soviet action. The Rumanians showed anxiety about a possible Soviet attack on themselves. Tension continued until the end of the month.

Other Communist Reactions

The Communist movement is badly divided. The West European parties generally opposed the invasion. Most Latin American and Middle Eastern parties backed the Soviet line. The Chinese strongly criticised both the Russians and Dubcek, but the North Koreans and North Vietnamese supported the Soviet Union.

CHINESE INTERNAL AFFAIRS

An important switch in policy has involved the substitution of working-class leadership for that of the students in the Cultural Revolution. This has been accompanied by the disbandment of some Red Guard units. This suggests a shift by the leadership to more conservative policies with more emphasis on order.

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SOVIET INVASION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA

The Invasion and the Moscow Talks

By mid-August it had become clear that the Russians were not satisfied with the way the Czechoslovak leadership was following up the meetings at Cierna and Bratislava. After these meetings, the pressure for liberalisation remained as strong as ever. Criticism of the Soviet Union in the Czechoslovak press continued, despite some efforts by the leaders to restrain it. The publication of the new party Statutes showed that Dubcek and his colleagues were determined to maintain the principles of internal "democratisation" in the party and thus to break with strict orthodoxy on points which the Soviet Party regarded as vital. The enthusiastic welcomes given to Presidents Tito and Ceausescu showed that in their external policy too the Czechoslovaks were unregenerate.

All these indications of the strength of Czechoslovak "liberalisation" must have seemed the more sinister in the light of the approach of the 14th Congress of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, at which, it had become clear, a clean sweep of the "conservatives" in the Central Committee was inevitable. At the same time, the Russians not only believed that they had obtained from the Czechoslovak leaders a number of specific assurances at Cierna which were being breached but also, as now seems probable, had decided to try to engineer, through the Czechoslovak "conservatives" led by Kolder, Bilak and Indra, a palace revolution against the liberals. They may have believed that if this came about they would secure acceptance of the entry of allied troops into Czechoslovak territory.

The exact timing of the Soviet decision is unclear. Their military forces were already in position around the Czechoslovak borders and could be moved in at any time. Contingency plans for the military operation had probably been worked out well in advance. But within Czechoslovakia, events did not move as the Russians seemed to have expected. Dubcek held his majority in the Praesidium together and refused any compromise with the principles of liberalisation or the date of the Party Congress. Thus the Russians seem to have found themselves committed to the occupation, but without the political scenario for which they had worked.

The immediate Soviet aims appear to have been to check what they regard as a rapid erosion of the orthodox Communist system in Czechoslovakia and specifically to prevent the impending rout of the conservatives in the Central Committee after which there would be no group among the leadership to carry out a palace revolution. They must have decided that it was necessary to reimpose a much more direct system of Communist Party control over every aspect of Czechoslovak life. An important element in this would be the muzzling of the Press. Their publicly declared aim of countering an outside threat against Czechoslovakia was mere window-dressing. In trying to achieve these aims, flexible tactics with regard to the future Government of Czechoslovakia were probably forced on them. Assuming the reconstruction of an intended coup against Dubcek is true, its failure would have faced the Russians with the choice between accepting a period of negotiation with the existing leaders or taking the risk of imposing direct rule by military force. In the event they chose the first.

The Russians presumably hoped that they would be able to compel the co-operation of a sufficient proportion of the leadership. At first they must have intended to achieve a Government without Dubcek. The forthright condemnation of him in "Pravda" of 22 August came at an early stage in the operation. This appears to have been a considerable blunder. The

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solidarity of the Czechoslovak leadership and the effect passive resistance of the population made it clear to the Russians that they had no alternative but to negotiate with Dubcek. Employing President Svoboda as a figurehead was not enough, and in any case Svoboda himself proved resistant to Soviet coercion and refused to play the part of a figurehead.

The open humiliation of the invading forces, the failure to produce a rapid and tidy solution involving the removal of Dubcek, the refusal of the Czechoslovak leadership to give any support to Soviet attempts to justify their invasion, and the solid popular support of the leadership must be counted as set-backs for the Russians. They have deeply upset world opinion, including communist and much non-aligned opinion, and they may well have created new tensions inside Eastern Europe which, though contained at present, may become more evident in the future. On the other hand they have achieved their basic aim of stopping the internal developments in Czechoslovakia which were causing them concern. The fundamental reasons for which the Russians agreed to allow the Czechoslovak leaders to return to their posts must have been their expectation that they could be obliged to follow a sufficiently orthodox line, and their desire to avoid having to take over Czechoslovakia and run it as a military province.

On the Czechoslovak side Dubcek and his colleagues have been able to return to their posts in a position to say that they will continue with the process of reform enshrined in the Action Programme. Although the Russians have not specifically endorsed the Action Programme, they have acquiesced in some of the important decisions of the Czechoslovak Communist Party since January. Most important perhaps for the Czechoslovaks, they have shown to themselves and the world their ability to resist passively the Soviet leviathan. A renaissance of Czech and Slovak nationalism and the end of Soviet popularity in Czechoslovakia may well be among the most important long term consequences of the recent crisis.

In substance, however, the Czechoslovak leaders have undoubtedly committed themselves to important practical concessions. Svoboda, Dubcek, Cernik and Smrkovsky all made clear in their speeches after the publication of the communiqué that new methods would have to be used to achieve their ideals. They have made it clear in their appeals for calm and discipline that the "planned immediate measures" to which the communiqué refers will include some which go against the climate which has prevailed since January. Such measures will no doubt include the tightening of control both in the Party and in the country as a whole, the reinforcement of the security services, strict control of the press (on which the communiqué is relatively specific) and, not least, the introduction of direct Russian intervention in the machinery of government including the placing of Soviet officials in a number of Ministries.

The presence of their troops in Czechoslovakia gives to the Russians the ultimate power of decision. This, as the Czech leaders have since pointed out, is the basic reality in the new situation. If the Russians could reach a decision to commit themselves to invasion, they may well be prepared to intervene once again in force if their requirements are not met. At the same time the Russians continue to be faced with the choice between accepting a government which the Czechoslovak people themselves will accept (and for the foreseeable future Dubcek and his colleagues are the only hope of this) and imposing military government, from which they have so far shrunk. If the Russians continue to prefer the former they must not destroy Dubcek's credibility as leader and this places limitations on the demands they can make of him.

The question remains whether Dubcek and his colleagues now have the physical stamina and political will to sell this harsh compromise to a deeply

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disappointed and suspicious Czechoslovak Party and people, and also, as they have declared is their intention, to make some progress with the post-January reforms in the face of the Russian guns.

It was no question that all were considered by the Russians to have a strictly subordinate role and that their inclusion was intended simply to give a false appearance of multilateral solidarity. It was possible that both Governments were not represented during the crucial talks with the Czechs in Moscow and that they were merely to have been sent home after hearing the results from the Soviet leaders.

Nevertheless the East Germans and Poles were certainly the most forward in supporting the intervention and probably helped to instigate it. At the same time the Polish press was more inclined than others to give a glimpse of the truth about the Czechoslovak resistance to the invasion. But it was in East Germany that the most vocal popular opposition to the invasion was heard, as the large scale protests took place against it.

The Hungarians were obviously least happy with the decision. The Hungarian press reported the general Soviet line on the reasons for the intervention but stressed that the Hungarian Party had all along hoped and tried to solve the problems by persuasion not force.

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The Role of the other invading countries

The forces contributed by Hungary, Bulgaria, East Germany and Poland to the intervention varied considerably in size but there was no question that all were considered by the Russians to have a strictly subordinate role and that their inclusion was intended simply to give a flimsy appearance of multilateral solidarity. It was notable that their Governments were not represented during the crucial talks with the Czechoslovaks in Moscow and that they seem merely to have been sent home after hearing the results from the Soviet leaders.

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Yugoslav and Rumanian Reactions to the Invasion

Rumanian public statements immediately after the Soviet attack were considerably sharper in tone than those of the Yugoslavs. However the latter soon stepped up their criticism of the Soviet action.

The Rumanian attitude was defiant and the fear was openly voiced that Rumania might be the next victim of a Soviet attack. Some military preparations were taken and President Ceausescu had a meeting with President Tito on the border between the two countries on 24 August.

If this Rumanian line was intended to discourage a Soviet attack by advance publicity they probably miscalculated its effect. Ceausescu, as well as Tito, was strongly criticised in the Soviet press and it is rumoured that the Soviet Ambassador in a call on Ceausescu threatened reprisals if the Rumanians did not modify their public tone.

The Rumanian response was varied. A speech by the Rumanian President on 26 August was noticeably more conciliatory in tone and stressed the need for measures to strengthen unity among 'socialist' countries. But some of Ceausescu's later pronouncements were tougher and the atmosphere between the Soviet Union and Rumania continued to be tense until the end of the month. The Rumanian Central Committee statement on the Moscow talks stopped short of condemning the agreement but pointedly stressed the need for Soviet troops to be withdrawn in order to ensure Czechoslovak sovereignty.

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Other Communist Reactions

The Communist movement is badly divided in its assessment of the Czechoslovak crisis. Most parties in Latin America and the Middle East have backed the Soviet line, but the West European parties have nearly all been against it and those of France, Italy and Great Britain in particular have condemned the intervention; they have continued to stress the need for a withdrawal of troops although some have given a guarded welcome to the Moscow agreement. Efforts to follow up an earlier French proposal for a conference of European parties to discuss the Czechoslovak situation appear to have been dropped since the Moscow talks. There is so far no firm indication of the effect which the intervention will have on the International Communist Conference, due to open in November although the Italian Party leader has said that the meeting would be inopportune.

West European Parties

The French party has strongly criticised the military intervention but the party leader, Waldeck Rochet, in an interview in *L'Humanité*, 27 August, made it clear that his party will not join in anti-Soviet attacks. There is evidence to show that the party may be divided. An attack on the Soviet action by Roger Garaudy, a leading party ideologist, in *Le Monde* of 28 August which accused the Soviet leaders of a "return to Stalinism", was soon censured by the Politburo.

The Italian Party Central Committee met on 27-28 August to discuss the situation. The General Secretary, Luigi Longo directed all communist parties to "draw all the necessary and indispensable lessons from what the French comrades have called the terrible error of military intervention in Czechoslovakia." A resolution issued by the Central Committee on 29 August urged a search for new forms of international relations between communist forces which would guarantee complete autonomy for all.

The Communist Party of Great Britain referred to the intervention as a "tragic mistake", which was completely unjustified. The most emotional response has come from Swiss communists and the most forthright from the Swedish party General Secretary C. H. Hermansson who said that the Soviet Government was a disgrace to socialism and should resign. In a later statement he noted that the Soviet-Czechoslovak agreement had been signed under pressure of a military occupation.

In contrast the Finnish Communist Party issued a statement which did not condemn the Soviet action but regretted that a political solution had not been found to the problem. The Communist party (SKP) which has strong ties with the CPSU and a number of conservatives on its Central Committee holds a different view from its parliamentary cover-party (SKDL) which deplored the Soviet action. The Greek party is in a similar position, opposing the view of its cover party (EDA) which condemned the intervention.

Latin America and Middle East

Most parties in Latin America and the Middle East have automatically endorsed the Soviet action, justifying it on the grounds that it was necessary to quell the upsurge of anti-socialist forces. The Cuban Prime Minister Fidel Castro considered the intervention was justified by Prague's inexorable march towards imperialism but added "it is useless to say that Czech sovereignty has not been violated. It has been, and flagrantly, and that can not be defended legally." Castro's attitude has been governed by his conviction that U.S. imperialism is his own most dangerous enemy, and he

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welcomes the prospect of worsening U.S.-Soviet relations; he may also have had some direct inducement from the Rumanians.

Asia

The crisis had also divided the Asian parties. The North Korean and North Vietnamese have supported the Soviet line. The Japanese party have condemned the invasion and supported the Czechs. The Chinese Prime Minister Chou En-lai, speaking on 23 August, denounced the occupation as "the most barefaced and most typical specimen of fascist power politics." The Soviet leadership was "trying to create puppets with the help of guns". It was, he said "exactly the same as Hitler of the past in his aggression against Czechoslovakia." He supported Czechoslovakia in her resistance but Chinese propaganda has branded the Czech leadership as revisionist. Chou En-lai expressed support too for Rumania which he alleged was "now facing the danger of foreign intervention and aggression." (China's ally in Eastern Europe, Albania, spoke similarly but called on the Czech people to stand up and fight against the invaders). The pro-Soviet Indian Communist Party (CPI) has taken an equivocal line, neither clearly condemning nor justifying the intervention. A statement issued by the pro-Soviet Communist party of Ceylon on 26 August also hedged, expressing alarm at the growth of "reactionary forces" in Czechoslovakia but also doubt about the wisdom of using force.

The Party Line-up

Communist parties which have criticised the Soviet action are Albania, Austria, Australia, Belgium, Canada, China, Denmark, France, Great Britain, Iceland, Northern Ireland, Israel (MAKI - pro-Jewish), Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Rumania, San Marino, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Yugoslavia. Communist Parties supporting the Soviet Union and her four allies are those of the Arab countries (joint support), Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Greece, Israel (RAKAH - pro-Arab), Lesotho, Luxemburg, Mongolia, North Korea, North Vietnam, South Africa, Syria, Uruguay, USA, Venezuela, West Germany and West Berlin.

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CHINESE INTERNAL AFFAIRS

In an important change of policy, the Chinese leaders downgraded the rôle of students and announced their reliance on working-class leadership for carrying out the outstanding tasks of the Cultural Revolution. The change followed a meeting on 28 July at which Mao apparently with some display of emotion rebuked the Peking student factions for their failure to stop their violent feuding. The new line was made known in a series of major press articles and in two new Mao instructions published during August.

A People's Daily editorial of 5 August - the second anniversary of Mao's poster in which he called for an attack on the "bourgeois headquarters" in the Communist Party - criticised the so-called theory of "many centres". This criticism was taken as the signal for attacks on sectarian and independent attitudes both among mass organisations and among local officials. The disbandment of broadly based Red Guard and Rebel organs, which were a potent source of factionalism, had already been reported from some provinces.

Also on 5 August Mao (by means of a "precious gift" of mangoes) made known his approval for the use of Worker-Peasant Propaganda Teams in maintaining control of the situation in universities. On 15 August, an instruction was published in which Mao urged that full play should be given to the workers' leading rôle in the Cultural Revolution. On the same day Mao, with Lin Piao and other leaders, held for the first time during the Cultural Revolution a meeting specifically for workers' representatives and propaganda team members. On 18 August - the second anniversary of the public launching of the Red Guards - a People's Daily editorial insisted that the young revolutionaries must take the workers as their teachers and that they could complete the Cultural Revolution only by "integrating themselves with the main force - the workers, peasants and soldiers".

In a further instruction, published together with a Red Flag article by Yao Wen-yuan on 26 August, Mao enlarged the rôle of the Workers' and Peasants' Propaganda Teams by entrusting workers' teams with responsibility, on a permanent basis, for exercising leadership over the schools, colleges and universities in urban areas, and peasants' teams with responsibility for managing rural schools. These teams are to carry out their duties in association with army personnel.

Yao Wen-yuan's article, quoting another comment by Mao, also reaffirmed the need for rectifying and gradually restoring the Communist Party organisation (specifically in factories, official departments, educational institutions and cultural bodies). The article pointed out that only a "very tiny handful" of members should be expelled from the Party, while an indeterminate number of activists who had emerged in the Cultural Revolution should be admitted to its ranks. The Party is clearly to remain a select organisation, comprising "the advanced elements of the proletariat".

The recent comments and instructions indicate a shift by the leadership to more conservative policies, with even greater emphasis on maintaining order and control and in particular on curbing the disorderly behaviour of students. The articles suggest that this will involve ending all manifestations of "extensive democracy", as practised by the young revolutionaries, and the beginning of a more earnest effort to conclude the campaign and restore effective Party control. It seems likely that Mao himself played the decisive part in putting forward the new line, although he probably felt some reluctance to initiate measures which would reduce the rôle of the young revolutionaries. The new line clearly suits the interests of the armed

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forces and their representatives in the leadership, as well as of the administrators represented by Chou En-lai. The publication of the Red Flag article under the name of Yao Wen-yuan may have been intended to convey that the Cultural Revolution Group also accepts the change of line.

The workers' propaganda teams will presumably relieve the strain on the People's Liberation Army in exercising control and giving political guidance in institutions. It seems inevitable, however, that the armed forces will continue to play the decisive part in exercising control for some time to come.

The process of establishing Revolutionary Committees at the provincial level was resumed after an interval of over two months. Three Committees were formed - in Yunnan, Fukien and Kwangsi; now only the two western regions, Tibet and Sinkiang remain without Revolutionary Committees.

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CHRONOLOGY

AUGUST

- 1 Communique of Soviet-Czechoslovak talks at Cierna issued - broadcast by President Svoboda.
- 1 Chinese Army Day
- 1 - 12 Japanese Communist Party Delegation visits Soviet Union
- 2 Broadcast by Czechoslovak Party First Secretary, Dubcek
- 3 Talks at Bratislava between Soviet, Czechoslovak, East German, Polish, Hungarian and Bulgarian representatives
- 3 Guinean Military Delegation received by Mao in Peking (left China 5 August)
- 3 - 10 Pakistan Foreign Minister visits China
- 4 Broadcast by Dubcek
- 4 Soviet-General Shtemenko appointed Chief of Staff of Warsaw Pact Forces
- 5 "Pravda" article on Bratislava talks
- 5 Czechoslovak Prime Minister Cernik addresses meeting in Prague on Cierna and Bratislava meetings
- 5 Chinese "Peoples' Daily" editorial: "Unite under the leadership of the Proletarian Headquarters headed by Chairman Mao"
- 5 Opening of restored Fenno-Soviet Saimaa Canal
- 6 "Pravda" article on continuing "threat from imperialism" after Bratislava
- 6 Endorsement by Politburo of CPSU of Cierna and Bratislava meetings
- 6 North Korea - Cuba agreement on establishment of Economic and Technical Joint Consultative Commission
- 8 Article in Czechoslovak "Literami Listy" criticises Soviet Union
- 9 "Pravda" article on the leading rôle of the Party
- 9 Rumanian "Scinteia" on poor relations with Poland
- 9 Ulbricht makes policy statement to Volkskammer on relations with the Federal Republic of Germany
- 9 - 11 President Tito visits Czechoslovakia
- 10 Soviet theses for Centenary of Lenin's birth published

/10 Draft Czechoslovak

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- 10 Draft Czechoslovak Communist Party statutes published
- 10 Announcement of end of Soviet exercises in Western Soviet Union (begun 23 July)
- 11 Soviet Union starts new communications exercises near Czechoslovakia
- 11 Mao Tse-tung and Lin Piao receive Cadres of Peoples' Liberation Army
- 12 - 13 Ulbricht visits Czechoslovakia
- 13 Soviet Minister of Defence visits Germany
- 13 Polish Chief-of-Staff meets Warsaw Pact Chief-of-Staff
- 13 North Vietnamese Politburo member Le Duc Tho returns to Paris talks
- 13 Yunnan Revolutionary Committee established
- 13 Mao receives delegation from Italian Communist Party (M-L) in Peking
- 13 - 14 Malian Foreign Minister visits Soviet Union
- 13 - 18 Soviet Minister of Foreign Trade visits Japan
- 14 Czechoslovak Communist Party Presidium statement on need for order in street demonstrations, &c.
- 15 Czechoslovak Military Council disavows views of General Prchlik
- 15 Burma C.P. Anniversary statement broadcast from Peking on need for armed struggle in Burma
- 15 Soviet and Hungarian troops start communications exercises in Hungary
- 15 Instruction by Mao on working class leadership
- 15 - 17 President Ceausescu of Rumania visits Czechoslovakia
- 16 "Pravda" article attacks Czechoslovak newspapers "Literarni Listy" and "Mlada Fronta"
- 16 Soviet Minister of Defence and Commander-in-Chief of Warsaw Pact Forces meet Polish Chief-of-Staff
- 17 President Nasser leaves Soviet Union after treatment
- 18 Chinese 'People's Daily' on worker's leading role
- 18 "Pravda" article on ability of Czechoslovak workers to overcome anti-Communist forces
- 19 Fukien Revolutionary Committee established

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/19-22 Rumanian

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- 19 - 22 Rumanian Minister of Foreign Affairs visits Algeria
- 19 & 20 Emergency meeting of Central Committee of CPSU
- 20 Meeting of Presidium of Czechoslovak Communist Party
- 20 At 23.00 hours Soviet troops invade Czechoslovakia with Hungarian, East German, Polish, Bulgarian units
- 21 Tass statement on invasion refuted by statements of Czechoslovak Communist Party Presidium and of Czechoslovak National Assembly. Dubcek and other leaders arrested. Whole country occupied. Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs announces protest to five aggressor Governments. U.N. Security Council agrees to place Czechoslovak question on agenda
- 21 President Ceausescu of Rumania condemns invasion
- 22 14th Extraordinary Congress of Czechoslovak Communist Party opens in secret; new Central Committee elected. One hour general strike in Prague
- 22 "Pravda" article attacks Dubcek by name
- 22 Yugoslav Government statement condemns invasion
- 22 - 24 Czechoslovak Deputy Prime Minister Sik visits Rumania
- 23 President Svoboda visits Moscow after abortive negotiations with occupying authorities in Czechoslovakia
- 23 Meeting of new Czechoslovak Communist Party Central Committee
- 23 U.N. Security Council Resolution condemning invasion (vetoed by Soviet Union)
- 23 Fidel Castro supports Soviet action in Czechoslovakia
- 24 Soviet/Czechoslovak negotiations in Moscow. Reports that Dubcek has joined them
- 24 Tito and Ceausescu meet at Vrsac
- 24 Soviet press attacks Tito and Ceausescu for support for Czechoslovakia
- 25 Postponement of Slovak Communist Party Congress announced
- 25 Reports of arrival of East German, Polish, Bulgarian and Hungarian leaders in Moscow
- 26 Ceausescu's speech expresses hopes for successful end to Moscow talks
- 26 Soviet-Czechoslovak talks in Moscow end

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/26 Kwangs

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- 26 Kwangsi Revolutionary Committee established
- 26 'Red Flag' article on workers' propaganda teams in Chinese schools
- 27 Czechoslovak leaders return to Prague. Communiqué of Moscow talks published. Other East European leaders leave Moscow after discussion with Soviet leaders. Broadcasts by Dubcek and Svoboda. Czechoslovak Foreign Minister Hajek leaves New York
- 28 Czechoslovak National Assembly condemns invasion but delays pronouncement on Moscow agreement
- 28 Foreign tourists and journalists barred from entering Czechoslovakia
- 29 Czechoslovak "Literani Listy" strongly condemns Moscow agreements
- 29 Polish "Trybuna Ludu" article strongly criticises Rumania
- 29 President of Czechoslovak National Assembly addresses Assembly on Moscow agreements
- 30 Chinese 'People's Daily' attacks Moscow agreements
- 30 Ceausescu's says no-one has monopoly of Marxism-Leninism
- 31 Czechoslovak C.P. Central Committee meets; new Presidium elected

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COMMUNIST POLICY AND TACTICS

MARCH 1968

SUMMARY

EASTERN EUROPE

Poland

The student demonstrations were caused by a feeling that Poland was behind other East European countries in reform. Gomulka's speech of 19 March offered no substantial concessions. He tried to distinguish between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism, and gave limited recognition that some of the students' requests were justified but it remains to be seen whether this will have a calming effect. It appears that Gierek, the Silesian Party First Secretary, has improved his chances of eventually succeeding Gomulka.

Rumania

The Rumanians contrived to underline their independent stance.

Czechoslovakia

The old guard appears defeated. Dubcek faces the difficult task of reconciling the new freedom with the maintenance of Communism. Extensive proposals have been made for Slovak autonomy. There is strong interest in achieving convertibility of the Czechoslovak crown and some evidence of a wish for limited independence in foreign affairs. In a speech on 1 April Dubcek, while referring to the need for a new political system, reaffirmed loyalty to socialism, took a fairly cautious line on Slovak autonomy and reiterated the need for friendship with the Soviet Union.

Soviet and other Eastern European attitudes

There is no prospect of a break up of the Warsaw Pact or of C.M.E.A. but the Soviet Union, Poland and East Germany must be concerned at the risk of infection of liberal ideas, although this danger is not great in the Soviet Union itself. The problem of deviations in Czechoslovak foreign policy is probably a long-term one. The Russians are very unlikely to intervene militarily but there are some possibilities of exercising economic pressure on Czechoslovakia.

The Dresden Meeting

The meeting expressed confidence in the progress of socialism in Czechoslovakia, though it is doubtful whether all participants were reassured about this. The early holding of a major economic conference of East European countries was announced. At this the Czechoslovaks may press for satisfaction over their hard currency problems. The need to consolidate the Warsaw Pact was stressed, though some countries, eg. Czechoslovakia, may be more interested in greater control over their own forces. There was also a denunciation of Federal German policy but the Czechoslovaks have not given much away in this.

/ European Security

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European Security

East European events will probably inhibit the Russians from early initiatives in this field. Although they may still see advantage in trying to co-ordinate their allies' policy, this is now more difficult. They may have tried to do so at the Warsaw Pact meeting at Sofia and failed through Rumanian opposition.

Germany and Berlin

The Russians are likely to keep up their propaganda against the Federal Republic and their pressure over Berlin.

SOVIET REACTION TO INTERNATIONAL MONETARY CRISIS

The official line has been to point to the deficiencies in the capitalist system and to the advantage to the Soviet Union of a rise in the price of gold. But some Soviet financial officials may regard an international crisis with genuine misgivings.

SOVIET ATTITUDE IN RHODESIA

The Russians have made heavy propaganda out of the hangings but probably intend to stick to words not deeds.

THIRD CONFERENCE OF NON-ALIGNED POWERS-YUGOSLAV INITIATIVE

The Yugoslav proposals for a third non-aligned conference are unclear. The idea seems to be Tito's own.

CUBA

In his decision to nationalise all remaining private business Castro has clearly admitted the existence of discontent.

CHINESE INTERNAL AFFAIRS

The number of Revolutionary Committees has increased and despite some confusion the authorities have probably had some success in restoring order. Criticism of officials, including the Acting Chief of Staff continues in Peking. Despite efforts to present a united leadership, there may be some tension among the leaders.

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EASTERN EUROPE

Poland

The underlying cause of the student disturbances in Warsaw and elsewhere in Poland is the feeling, stretching far beyond the student community, that Poland has dropped behind other Eastern European countries in the matter of reform and that the country is suffering from stagnation. There is some discontent with Gomulka himself whose outlook is regarded as out of date. Therefore although the effect of the demonstrations should not be exaggerated and although the authorities have succeeded in containing them, they may well have contributed to a lack of confidence in the present leadership and its policies.

Gomulka broke his silence over the disturbances at a Party rally in Warsaw on 19 March. Although he promised that the Party would examine the resolutions passed by the students and recognised that these resolutions contained "correct" as well as "incorrect" elements, he gave no sign of readiness to make substantial concessions to student demands. The main burden of his speech was that reactionary elements in the universities and elsewhere had exploited trivial or unreal grievances in order to encourage anti-socialist demonstrations. He condemned Zionism, to the supporters of which much of the blame for the disturbances has been attributed, but denied that it was a danger to Polish communism. He drew a distinction between Jews of varying opinions: those who put Zionism first could have their passports and go; those who did not know whether they were Poles or Jews could not be entrusted with posts of responsibility; but there were those who were devoted to Poland, and these found their place in society like any other good Pole. This classification provides plenty of scope for those who are disposed to exploit anti-semitism, parading as anti-Zionism, as a weapon against critics of the régime.

Gomulka's speech did not bring student demonstrations to a end. On 21 March two-day strikes were staged at Warsaw Polytechnic and Warsaw University. But the régime has shown its teeth in a number of dismissals including those of six professors at Warsaw University on 25 March. It remains to be seen whether Gomulka's limited recognition that there was some justification for the students' complaints will have any calming effect on student opinion. It seems likely that repressive control will continue to be the régime's chief weapon.

While it is too early to conclude that an active bid is being made either to displace Gomulka or to take over much of his power, opinion is gaining strength that Edward Gierek, is waiting in the wings. He delivered a tough and uncompromising speech against the students on 15 March in Katowice and he attended the Dresden meeting on 23 March as the third senior Polish delegate after Gomulka and Cyrankiewicz. Gierek enjoys strong support in Silesia where he is the Party Secretary for the area and is given credit for the efficiency with which it is run. He is regarded as a supporter of economic reform but he has given no evidence that he is in favour of a more liberal policy in general. There is certainly no reason to suppose that he is that "Polish Dubcek" for whom the students called in their demonstrations. His role if he came to the top would be more likely to be that of the leader seeking economic reform through greater efficiency but having little sympathy with those who call for greater liberalism in politics and in society.

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Rumania

Following their failure to reach agreement with the Russians at the meeting of the Warsaw Pact Political Consultative Committee at Sofia and with the Americans during the Deputy Foreign Minister's visit to Washington, the Rumanians revived their objections to the Soviet-American draft Non-Proliferation Treaty in new amendments tabled at Geneva on 11 March. Rumania's independent course was also confirmed by her non-attendance at the Dresden meeting. In a speech at the time of the meeting Ceausescu tried to give the impression that he felt no apprehension at the liberal trends in Czechoslovakia and that Rumania was opposed in principle to the scrutiny by other Parties of Czechoslovakia's internal policies.

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Czechoslovakia

Novotny's resignation from the Presidency, the retirement of five out of eleven of the Regional Party Secretaries and, at the turn of the month, the resignation from the Presidium of Hendrych, until recently the Party Secretary in charge of ideology, of Koucky, the Party Secretary in charge of foreign relations, of Lomsky, the Minister of Defence, of Kudrna, the Minister of the Interior and of Simunek, a Deputy Prime Minister and the Czechoslovak representative on the C.M.E.A. Council, seem to point conclusively to the defeat of the old guard. The election of General Svoboda, a nationally respected figure of 73 and a veteran of two world wars, to be President can be regarded as a decision to find a unifying figurehead. Cisar, who is popular with the students and intellectuals and a man of liberal views, has been reappointed as Party Secretary in charge of educational and cultural matters.

Having thus established themselves Dubcek and his colleagues must now face the task of applying a coherent policy and reconciling the personal and political freedom to which they are committed with the preservation of Communism, stable government, economic reform and the maintenance of good relations with the Soviet Union. This will not be an easy task. All sections of opinion are taking full advantage of the new climate of intellectual freedom and the right to publish views. Voices continue to be raised supporting the existence of political parties alongside the Communist Party. In the new mood in Czechoslovakia it seems likely that such parties, if permitted, would take genuinely independent lines. This could greatly complicate the government of the country and it is too soon to predict whether these demands will be granted.

The Slovak National Council has put forward far-reaching proposals which, if they were accepted, would give Slovakia full legislative and executive autonomy in all fields except foreign affairs, defence, the currency and changes in the constitution itself. The Slovak National Council would become a legislative body and executive powers would be vested in a Council of Ministers in Slovakia answerable solely to the Plenum of the Slovak National Council.

On the economic front Professor Sik has stated that the convertibility of the Czechoslovak crown is ultimately essential and that a first step should be prefaced by the introduction of the convertible gold rouble. It seems likely that the Czechoslovaks intend to pursue questions of convertibility with their colleagues in the C.M.E.A.

Although on a smaller scale than the comment on internal affairs, comment on foreign affairs has not been lacking. An example of independence in this field was the claim by Galuška, a senior member of the Czechoslovak Society for International Relations, that the resumption of relations with Israel is only a matter of time. This particular claim has not, however, been taken up by the Government.

A speech by Dubcek at the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party on 1 April provided interesting evidence of his approach to

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many of these problems. He said that the socialist revolution in Czechoslovakia was in a new phase in which, under conditions of non-antagonistic social relationships, it was necessary to create a new political system. Some political and social forms would be retained, others would be destroyed; but the democracy which was being sought was "socialist democracy" in which "the leading role of the Party must not be weakened". This, and Dubcek's statement that the Party will not promote a revival of anti-socialism under a cloak of democratisation and rehabilitation, may be an answer to the advocates of separate political parties.

Dubcek also said that the existing constitution should be amended to alter the status and powers of Slovak national bodies and that the possibilities of a federative system should be carefully examined. This suggests that he is not committing himself at this stage to going all the way with the proposals put forward by the Slovak National Council.

Dubcek affirmed that foreign policy would continue to be based on friendship with the Soviet Union but he added that it would be based on the principle of sovereign independence of the State and of non-interference in a country's internal affairs. He committed Czechoslovakia to the development of Central European policies which contribute to peace in Europe and to co-operation between countries having different social systems, but he balanced this with the statement that developments in the imperialist world, especially in Western Germany, forced Czechoslovakia to maintain her defensive forces at a high level.

The pace of events in Czechoslovakia has undoubtedly aroused concern in some of the members of the Warsaw Pact, and the meeting held in Dresden on 23 March is considered below. Concern is probably felt most acutely in East Germany but the Czechoslovak leadership have made it plain that they will not tolerate public criticism from that quarter. A critical speech by Hager of the East German Politburo led to a prompt, sharp and publicised reproof delivered to the East German Ambassador in Prague by the Czechoslovak Foreign Minister.

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Soviet and other Eastern European attitudes

While Czechoslovakia, Poland and Rumania present very different features, the situation in Eastern Europe is certainly more difficult for the Soviet Union than at any time since 1956. This is not to say that the formal and institutional links are likely to be severed. There is no prospect of a break-up of the Warsaw Pact or the end of C.M.E.A. although in both those bodies there may well be increased manoeuvring and the assertion of national interests. It is likely that for a long time to come calculations of self-interest will lead the East European countries and the Soviet Union to maintain uniquely close relations with each other. But this cohesion is due only to a diminishing extent to the power of the Russians to assert their authority unchallenged.

For the Russians and the Poles and possibly even more so for the East Germans it is the internal developments in Czechoslovakia which present the most immediate cause for concern. The liberal ideas to which such free expression is being given in Czechoslovakia and which also inform the policies of the Czechoslovak Government cannot fail to make their mark in other Eastern European countries. The Soviet leaders are probably not greatly worried about their ability to deal with any infection of the intellectuals and the younger generation in the Soviet Union itself although they have been keeping an even closer watch than before on the student communities in case they should be affected. In the Soviet Union, unlike Czechoslovakia, there is no sign that anyone in the top levels of the Party or Government is inclining towards serious liberal reform. The Party establishment at present shows remarkable stability and conservatism.

It is, however, important to the Soviet Union as well as to the régimes themselves that the infection should not spread to other Eastern European countries. East Germany and Poland appear to be the most nervous, probably because the potential for disaffection is greatest in those countries. From Hungary there has been some public advice to the Czechoslovaks not to make the mistakes which the Hungarians regard themselves as having made in 1956 but in Hungary, and at all levels, there is almost certainly a section of opinion which is sympathetic to developments in Czechoslovakia and wishes Dubcek well. Bulgaria has paid relatively little public attention. Rumania appears to find satisfaction in the assertion of national individuality in Czechoslovakia, but shows few signs of following the liberal example.

The Czechoslovak leadership is probably not contemplating any major deviations in foreign policy and is likely to avoid any serious friction with the Soviet Union in this field. If, however, freedom of expression continues, and as the economic reforms come to require increasing attention to economic relations with the West, there might be a move towards adopting a more independent stance in foreign relations generally even at the risk of following some policies different from those of the Russians. This, however, seems likely to be a somewhat longer term question and movement could well be so gradual that it would be difficult to identify any stage of its development as representing such a degree of defiance of Moscow as to give the Soviet Union grounds for making a major issue of it. The Czechoslovak leadership will probably be cautious in approaching the sensitive issue of diplomatic relations with Germany.

It seems extremely unlikely that the Soviet Union would resort to military intervention except in the case of the most extreme provocation or apprehension

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and even then they would probably need a situation in which an identifiable section of Czechoslovak opinion appealed for help. Dubcek and his colleagues no doubt have no intention of offering such provocation.

There are, however, possibilities of exercising economic pressure since two-thirds of Czechoslovakia's foreign trade is with other C.M.E.A. countries, the Soviet Union alone accounting for over one-third. The Soviet Union is the main source of the large Czechoslovak imports of food and raw materials. Czechoslovakia lacks the foreign exchange or the natural resources which would enable her to make a rapid reorientation of her trade (her dependence on crude oil and gas coming through the pipeline linking the Soviet Union and East Europe must therefore continue) and is bound to regard as a gradual one the task of building up her sales in Western markets in order to be able to buy more from the West.

The application of economic pressure is, however, an extremely uncertain weapon. Drastic measures, sufficient to ruin the Czechoslovak economy, might not only produce unpredictable results in Czechoslovakia but could also inflict great damage on relations between the Soviet Union and other Communist Governments and Parties. Limited pressure might be absorbed by Czechoslovakia without leading to submission to Soviet wishes.

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The Dresden Meeting

The one-day conference of East European leaders held in Dresden on 23 March was attended at the highest Party and political levels in the Soviet Union, Poland and East Germany (the three countries no doubt chiefly responsible for calling the meeting) and also Hungary and Bulgaria, and by Dubcek himself. The Rumanians were not represented. It is not clear whether they were invited; but they might well have judged (rightly as it turned out) that the main object of the conference was to assess developments in Czechoslovakia and this would have conflicted with their opposition to interference in the internal affairs of other States. The major points in the communiqué issued after the meeting are:

- (a) the statement expressing "confidence that the proletariat and the working people of Czechoslovakia, under the leadership of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, would ensure the further progress of socialist construction in the country".
- (b) agreement to the calling in the very near future of a high level conference to discuss "the new economic problems" of the participants and "co-operation in the sphere of further development of the economies of the socialist countries".
- (c) the reference to the carrying out of concrete measures in the immediate future to consolidate the Warsaw Pact and its armed forces.
- (d) the denunciation of increasing neo-Nazi activity in the Federal Republic of Germany and of recent "steps by the Kiesinger/Brandt Government directed against the interests of the G.D.R. and other socialist countries".

Though it may be doubted whether the confidence expressed in the first of the four points was entirely sincere on the part of all the participants, it was no doubt considered important to place on record the conviction that Czechoslovakia was not deviating from the "socialist" path; and one purpose of the remaining points was to emphasise the principle of Communist unity. Nevertheless, Prague radio stated on 25 March that the meeting "was in fact a confrontation" and that there was "no denying that within individual socialist countries opinions vary on how best to proceed with building socialism. The Czechoslovak way to-day is rather different from those in other socialist countries. Certain problems do exist". The second point and the presence among the delegations of a number of representatives of state planning committees suggest that economic questions played an important part in the discussions. On the one hand Czechoslovakia's fellow members of the C.M.E.A. (and in particular the Soviet Union) must be concerned at the consequences of a reorientation of Czechoslovak trade in the direction of the West. On the other hand, the Czechoslovaks, who urgently desire to acquire hard currency, will wish to press for some satisfaction in this connection in their bilateral dealings within the Bloc or through the machinery of the C.M.E.A. They are not alone among the smaller members of the C.M.E.A.

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in wanting an element of convertibility provided for in its operations. It is possible that in order to buy time and persuade the Czechoslovaks and perhaps others to continue to co-operate satisfactorily in the C.M.E.A., the Russians may be prepared to make some limited concessions. It is unlikely, however, that in return for such concessions Czechoslovakia would accept onerous restrictions on her freedom to pursue increased trade with the West.

The significance of the third point, referring to the Warsaw Pact, is not entirely clear. A general declaration of loyalty to the Warsaw Pact could have been expected. There has been some discontent among smaller members, not limited to Rumania, at the extremely subordinate role that is granted to them in the command structure. But it may be doubted whether Rumania and perhaps some others are really anxious to involve themselves more closely than at present in the general command and the co-ordination of military activities of the Warsaw Pact. It is possible that what may be of greater interest to them, and this could well apply to Czechoslovakia, is that they should have a greater measure of control over their own armed forces.

It would probably be wrong to attach particular significance to the last of the four points, and more accurate to regard it as being for Czechoslovakia a fairly easy gesture of unity which does not in fact give anything very substantial away.

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European Security

It is probably too early to assess the likely effect of the upheavals in Eastern Europe on Soviet policy towards the West, in particular on European security problems. In some ways there may be an inhibiting effect. The Russians will be preoccupied with the problems of Eastern Europe, as well as with the preparations for an international Communist conference, in the coming months. Their reaction to the danger of divisive tendencies in Eastern Europe may be to adopt an even more immobile policy. It is of course possible on the other hand that the Russians still see advantage in working for a new Communist initiative on European security, partly in order to re-establish some kind of common purpose among their allies. But this would be far from easy; although they may find the Poles keen to keep alive their own proposals for arms control in Central Europe, the East Germans have their own reasons for adopting a rigid attitude. The Czechoslovaks are likely to be suspicious of moves which are too obviously intended to keep them in line. The Russians may have hoped to raise the European Security issue during the meeting of the Warsaw Pact Political Consultative Committee in Sofia from 6-8 March. Such conferences would normally be expected to discuss European problems and to mention them in the communiqué. This time there was, however, no mention of Europe or Germany. It is possible that the Russians tried to get a declaration on the subject which was not acceptable to the Rumanians, who could be expected to object to tough language about Germany which might imply criticism of their own policy towards the Federal Republic.

Germany and Berlin

It is unlikely however that this points to any reduction in the propaganda campaign against NATO and against American influence in Europe. The Federal Republic of Germany will also continue to be a major target. Soviet propaganda is already making the most of the themes of "neo-Nazism" and "revanchism", no doubt partly as a means of rallying their allies. They are likely, however, eventually to find that this brings diminishing returns. They can, of course, still count on wholehearted support from East Germany and Poland in attacks on Bonn and there is no sign of the faithful Bulgarians falling out of line. But it is less certain that the Czechs and Hungarians, who in many ways find the Poles and East Germans uncomfortable partners, are convinced of the wisdom of any hysterical anti-German campaign.

The Russians are likely nevertheless to continue to keep up pressure over Germany, not only in the propaganda field but also by diplomatic and other means, particularly over Berlin. Although their retaliatory action during the working week of the Bundestag was minimal, they are unlikely to let the issue of Federal activities in West Berlin lie. They are happy to maintain tension over Berlin but there is still no evidence that they want to provoke a crisis.

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SOVIET REACTION TO INTERNATIONAL MONETARY CRISIS

The Soviet press has commented at length on the gold crisis. It has depicted the crisis as part of the "chronic sickness" of the capitalist system precipitated by the massive American military expenditure in Vietnam. The official line seems to be that a rise in the price of gold would be in the Soviet Union's interest because of their position as a major producer of gold and their relative independence from the mainstream of world trade.

However the Governor of Gosbank is reported to have said that he was far more interested in the maintenance of international financial stability than in the price of gold. (Trade between COMECON countries is apparently conducted at prices worked out in dollars which are then converted into roubles.) In short there is clearly some conflict of interest for the Russians in the monetary crisis. On the one hand they stand to benefit considerably from an increase in the price of gold; moreover they can make a good deal of propaganda over America's difficulties. On the other, senior Soviet financial officials who are directly concerned with foreign trade may regard a major international financial crisis with genuine misgivings.

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SOVIET ATTITUDE ON RHODESIA

The hangings in Rhodesia released a flood of propaganda from the Soviet Union. The Western powers were condemned for actively aiding the "racist régime" and for conniving at the "mass executions of Rhodesian patriots". Britain in particular was attacked for not using force to end the rebellion, and for 'hypocrisy' on the grounds that "London does not want Smith overthrown".

The Russians have stepped up their direct appeal to African Rhodesians by introducing two new Moscow Radio programmes in Shona and Ndebele, the main African languages of Rhodesia. A statement by the Soviet news agency, Tass, on 20 March, declared the Soviet Union's willingness to take part in action "in conformity with the United Nations Charter" against the Smith régime. However it is unlikely that this increased propaganda attention to Rhodesia will be accompanied by a change in the Soviet policy of avoiding direct intervention. Their intention seems to be to exploit the situation to the maximum but by words rather than by deeds which would be only too likely to lead to the embarrassment of Soviet national interest.

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THIRD CONFERENCE OF NON-ALIGNED POWERS -
YUGOSLAV INITIATIVE

The Yugoslav Government have sent a series of messages to "non-aligned and peace-loving countries" (including those in the Far and Middle East visited by Tito in January and February, East African countries visited by E. Kardelj in February and March, West African countries now being toured by S. Vukmanović, and others, e.g. Finland, France, Italy and the Holy See). Many of the messages are concerned with soundings about Tito's proposal for a third non-aligned conference. Yugoslav ideas about the agenda for the conference are as yet unclear. To suggestions that it may be primarily political and anti-American, they have replied that it would on the contrary be concerned primarily with economic affairs and the gap between the developed and under-developed countries. There is reason to suspect that the idea of a conference is very much Tito's own.

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CUBA

In a speech on 15 March Castro announced the Cuban Government's decision to nationalise all remaining forms of private business. This decision came as a logical sequel to an earlier speech on 13 March in which Castro revealed the results of a recent Party enquiry showing that most of the owners of private shops, bars, garages etc., were not only making fat profits but were also opposed to the revolution.

These two speeches constitute the most explicit admission by Castro so far of the existence of discontent. With the closure of all the bars, both State and private, grumbling will now be transferred to the shopping queues which will grow even longer with the disappearance of private retailers. The repressive machinery of the State may be expected to work overtime.

As with the recent trial of the anti-Party microfaction, to which Castro repeatedly alluded in these two speeches, the danger for Castro in publicising in this way the existence of criticism of his régime is that this might be taken as an admission of vulnerability at a time when things are going wrong for him.

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CHINESE INTERNAL AFFAIRS

The formation of the Kirin, Kiangsu and Chekiang Revolutionary Committees brought the number of provincial Committees inaugurated this year to nine. (The total is now eighteen: in fifteen provinces and the three major municipalities). This represents a higher rate of establishment than was achieved at anytime during 1967. There now remain eleven provinces and regions (less than half the total) without Revolutionary Committees and which are governed by Military Control Committees. In at least four of these eleven areas (i.e. In Hunan, Kwangsi, Ninghsia and Szechuan), Preparatory Groups for Revolutionary Committees are already in existence; these groups are led in each case by the leading officers of the local military command. The other seven provinces and regions, where progress towards establishing the new provisional "organs of power" appears to have been particularly slow, comprise: the western border regions, Sinkiang and Tibet; Yunnan province in the South-west, which borders Burma and Viet-Nam; Fukien on the east coast; Anhwei, Shensi and Liaoning. There have been persistent reports of serious factional strife from many of these areas.

Reports from many provinces have recently presented a confusing picture of continuing struggles against "class enemies", including "ultra-leftists" as well as "Rightists". In general, however, the available information suggests that the authorities have had some further success in restoring and maintaining order, particularly in the central and northern provinces where new Revolutionary Committees have been set up.

In Peking, there has been poster criticism of Liu Ning-yi, a member of the Party's Central Secretariat. (As Head of the Trade Union Federation, Liu had previously come under criticism in late 1966, but he remained active until January this year.) In the last few days posters have appeared attacking Yang Ch'eng-wu, the People's Liberation Army's Acting Chief of General Staff and two other leading military officers.

Mao and Lin Piao's reception of 10,000 military cadres, reported on 26 March, was presented as an event of great importance. Yang Ch'eng-wu and the other two officers under criticism were absent, and the placing given to Huang Yung-sheng, the Canton Regional Commander, in the list of those present suggested that he may have replaced Yang as Acting Chief of General Staff. If this should be so, it may reflect a serious new conflict of views in the leadership - probably centred on questions of the armed forces' role in the current stage of the Cultural Revolution.

The reception of military cadres reflected a desire to demonstrate that the leaders closest to Mao himself remain united. Nevertheless, the meeting had some unusual features, the official news agency report said that Lin Piao issued "important instructions", while other leaders including Chou En-lai, Ch'en Po-ta, K'ang Sheng and Chiang Ch'ing all gave "important speeches". The careful attention thus paid to the position of each leader in turn may reflect tension rather than harmony among some of the leaders concerned.

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CHRONOLOGY

MARCH

- 1 Chinese Government statement on Vietnam
- 3 Rumanian Party Central Committee statement on Budapest Consultative Meeting
- 3 Tass statement on Persian Gulf
- 4 Soviet note to U.S. Government protesting against alleged attacks on Soviet Embassy in Washington
- 4 Statement by Soviet Ambassador in East Berlin on Bundestag Working Week in West Berlin
- 4 Meeting of Presidium of Czechoslovak Communist Party - Spacek placed in charge of ideological matters in place of Hendrych.
- 5 China-North Korea protocol on 1968 goods exchange
- 5 Japan Party newspaper accuses China of undermining inter-party relations
- 6 Kirin Revolutionary Committee formed
- 6 North Korean 'Nodong Sinmum' article on 'mobilising anti-imperialist forces'
- 6-7 Meeting of Political Consultative Committee of Warsaw Pact in Sofia
- 8 Publication in Czechoslovak press of letter from Army Staff Officers criticising Novotny
- 8-9 First student demonstrations in Warsaw
- 9 Czechoslovak Supreme Court announce intention of reviewing violations of "socialist legality"
- 10 Wreaths laid on Jan Masaryk's grave
- 10 East German ordinance forbidding journeys through 'DDR' by NPD members
- 11 Further student riots in Warsaw - attack on Ministry of Culture
- 11 Czechoslovak Ministry of Interior officially regrets repressive action against student demonstrations in October 1967

/12 Three leading

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- 12 Three leading officials of the Central Council of Czechoslovak Trade Unions resign
- 12-17 Netherlands' Foreign Minister visits Yugoslavia
- 13 Further student demonstrations in Warsaw and Krakow
- 13 Chinese People's Daily attacks nuclear safeguards offers by Soviet Union, United States and United Kingdom
- 14 Czechoslovak Deputy Defence Minister Janko commits suicide
- 14 Chudik dismissed from Chairmanship of Slovak National Council
- 14 Cisar appointed to direct education and cultural policy of Czechoslovak Communist Party
- 14 First Secretary Gierek of Silesian Party speaks at Katowice on Polish student demonstrations
- 14 Moscow radio broadcasts for first time in two Rhodesian vernacular languages
- 14-15 East German Foreign Minister visits Soviet Union
- 15 Czechoslovak Minister of Interior and Public Prosecutor dismissed
- 16 Dubcek's speech at Brno
- 18 Czechoslovak Prime Minister's television statement
- 18 Nationalisation of remaining Cuban private business
- 18 Chinese 'People's Daily' article criticises Budapest Consultative Meeting
- 18 Dismissal of Zambrowski, Vice-President of Polish State Audit Commission
- 18-23 Austrian Foreign Minister visits Soviet Union
- 18-21 Head of Political Administration of Czechoslovak Army visits Soviet Union
- 18 South Vietnam Liberation Front delegation starts visit to China
- 19 Soviet Union signs International Covenants on Human Rights

/19 Gomulka's

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- 19 Gomulka's speech in Warsaw
- 19 Soviet/Mauritius agreement on establishment of diplomatic relations
- 19-20 Czechoslovak Deputy Prime Minister, Cernik, visits Soviet Union
- 20 Tass statement on Rhodesia
- 20-26 Bulgarian Prime Minister visits Turkey
- 20-3 Soviet Defence Minister, Grechko, visits April Iraq, Syria and U.A.R.
- 21 Czechoslovak writer Benes pardoned
- 21 Announcement of Sino-North Vietnamese railway transport protocol
- 21-23 Yugoslav Foreign Minister visits Rumania
- 22 Czechoslovak President, Novotny, resigns
- 22 Rumanian president Ceausescu's speech on "socialist democracy"
- 22 Pravda publishes Gomulka's speech of 19 March
- 22 Soviet Government statement on Israeli raids against Jordan
- 22-23 "Occupation strike" at Warsaw Polytechnic
- 23 Meeting at Dresden of East European leaders (Rumania absent)
- 23 Kiangsu Revolutionary Committee established
- 24 Chekiang Revolutionary Committee established
- 25 Six Professors at Warsaw University dismissed
- 25-29 Hungarian Prime Minister visits France
- 26 Kurt Hager, member of East German SED Politburo criticises Czechoslovak events
- 26 Komocsin, member of Politburo of Hungarian Party, in T.V. interview criticises some aspects of Czechoslovak events
- 26 Sino-Czechoslovak Barter and Payments agreement for 1968

/26 Poster

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- 26 Poster attacks in Peking on Chinese acting Chief of General Staff, Yang Cheng-Wu
- 27 Czechoslovak Foreign Minister protests to East German Ambassador about Hager's remarks
- 27 Yuri Gagarin killed in crash
- 28 Czechoslovak Communist Party Central Committee nominates Svoboda for President
- 28 Central Committee of Chinese C.P. greets 20th Anniversary of Burmese C.P.'s leadership of 'armed struggle'
- 28 Pravda denies that Soviet Union has tried to influence Czechoslovak Government
- 29 Brezhnev's speech to Moscow City Communist Party Organisation - warning to dissidents
- 30 Svoboda elected President of Czechoslovakia
- 30 Gagarin's funeral
- 30 People's Daily/Red Flag/Liberation Army Daily joint editorial: "Revolutionary Committees are fine."
- 30 34 Warsaw university students expelled
- 31 Disappearance of Deputy Chairman of Czechoslovak Supreme Court reported (subsequently found hanged)

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