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who?

The Continuous Escalation of Anti-Socialist and Counter-Revolutionary Developments in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic

A DOCUMENTATION

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On August 20, people true to the cause of socialism in the party and the state of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic (CSSR) issued an urgent appeal to the Soviet Union and the other allied states to accord the Czechoslovak people help, including support by their armed forces. This appeal, as is known, became necessary because in the CSSR the socialist gains of the working people had been threatened by internal and external forces. The fraternal countries have answered this appeal and thus fulfilled the duty of socialist internationalism.

The extent of the danger to socialism in neighbouring Czechoslovakia and to peace in Europe, and the urgent necessity of the measures taken by the allied socialist countries become clear when one reviews the continuous escalation of anti-socialist and counter-revolutionary developments in the CSSR from the beginning of the year.

JANUARY

The plenary meeting of the central committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia decided to separate the functions of the First Secretary of the central committee and that of the President of the Republic, ostensibly because of too great a concentration of personal power. The resolution of the plenary session spoke of a correction of "mistakes of the past" and of an improvement in the work of leadership by the party and the government.

Immediately following this plenary session a marked increase in criticism of the former first secretary of the central committee, A. Novotny, was noted in the Czech press, particularly in the organ of the writers' association "Literarni Listy", the organ of the youth organisation "Mlada Fronta", in the trade union paper "Prace", in "Svobodne Slovo" and in "Reporter". This criticism developed into an all-round condemnation of the resolutions adopted at the plenary session in January and this grew into a general criticism of the socialist gains in Czechoslovakia during the last twenty years.

The fraternal parties showed understanding for the resolutions of the January plenary meeting although it was already clear from the press campaign that danger was emerging for the party and the socialist system.

In bilateral talks with the CPSU and other fraternal parties the leading comrades of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia gave assurances that the increasing activity of the anti-socialist forces would be stopped.

FEBRUARY

The notorious "rehabilitation campaign" began under the decisive influence of central committee member and Minister for Water and Forestry, Smrkovsky.

This campaign was worked up into an endless public discussion of past mistakes, with the aim of obscuring the revolutionary socialist gains in the minds of the masses of the people and discrediting the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.

To begin with demands were concentrated on the resignation of Novotny from the post of president. This was used as the starting point for those crass changes in the membership of the presidium and secretariat of the central committee, in the district and regional committees of the Communist Party, among leading personnel in the organs of state power, in particular in the Ministries of the Interior, Defence and Foreign Affairs as well as in the leading bodies of the mass organisations, which in fact led to the elimination of the backbone of a socialist state, the party groups.

It became clear that a change in the whole general political line and a revision of the resolutions of the 13th Party Congress was being aimed at via the removal of the old cadres on the excuse of the struggle against "dogmatism" and "conservatism" and for the development of a "true democratic socialism".

One of the leading representatives of revisionism in the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia proclaimed "the separation of the party from the leadership of the state, the economy and cultural life" as a basically new theoretical definition of the role of the party in "democratic socialism". This thesis means the liquidation of the leading role of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in socialist society, in fact, of the liquidation of the party.

Under the chairmanship of right-opportunist member of the presidium of the central committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, Kriegel, the

bourgeois thesis of the "Partnership of the Parties of the National Front" was proclaimed in the presidium of the National Front. Thus the bourgeois principle of "pluralism" began to take effect.

In the spheres of economy and science, the central committee member and deputy prime minister, O. Sik, proclaimed and put into practice the theory of the "socialist market economy", which, based on unscrupulous defamation of socialist economy, aimed at abolishing the socialist planned economy, completely decentralising the economy, sacrificing the factories to the laws and crises of the capitalist world market as well as the introduction of capitalist methods of management.

The formation en masse of anti-socialist and openly counter-revolutionary associations, organisations and clubs such as, for example, the "Clubs of the 231", the "Clubs of the Committed Non-Party People", etc. The management of these clubs was taken over by counter-revolutionary elements and agents of imperialist intelligence services.

MARCH

In West German and western papers and periodicals, on the radio and on television, writers, scholars and journalists such as Goldstücker, Kohout, Snejdarek and Cerny slandered the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and the socialist gains in the CSSR, and launched direct infamous attacks on the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, and other fraternal parties.

The development in the CSSR was extolled as the model of a developed European socialism.

The reply of Comrade K. Hager (Socialist Unity Party of the GDR-Ed.) to the attacks on the GDR made by Smrkovsky in a West German television programme was misused by the mass media in the CSSR—which falsified Hager's statements—for a tirade against the GDR and the Socialist Unity Party. The imperialist agencies dropped their mask and went over to open intervention and direct guidance of counter-revolutionary activities in the CSSR.

– The resignation of Novotny from the post of state president was celebrated in the capitalist press as the first “big victory” of the “Prague Reformers”.

– On March 31 “Tagesspiegel” wrote: “We are following this experiment with sympathy and circumspection.” The circumspection in the first place was that the extremist forces should not show their hand too soon and expose themselves before the people. The enemy, too, has learnt from the events in Hungary in 1956. This time he intended to go to work silently. He let no doubt arise as to the fact that his aim was the liquidation of the socialist system in the CSSR.

Speaking on West German television on March 30, 1968, Professor Klaus Mehnert, for more than 30 years—in the Weimar Republic, under Hitler and today under Kiesinger and Strauss—a leading expert in anti-communism, said about the events in Czechoslovakia:

“This means development in a direction that would have provoked Lenin in the extreme—a development towards social democracy, towards a democratic socialism in Czechoslovakia . . . It is therefore a logical possibility that one day a social democracy, so to speak, will take over the reins there.”

A few weeks later, at the festive function commemorating the 150th anniversary of the birth of Karl Marx, “ideologist” Ciesar announced the revocation of Leninism, negated its international significance and denied the universally valid theoretical principles of the construction of socialism.

On March 23, a meeting of leading representatives of the parties and governments of the socialist countries was held in Dresden. At this Dresden meeting the Czechoslovak comrades confirmed that negative processes were taking place in their country, that the press, radio and television were no longer under the control of the party and that the forces of the right were consolidating themselves. At the same time, however, the Czechoslovak comrades said that the party would master the situation so that there was no ground for grave anxiety.

In a comradely exchange of views the representatives of the fraternal parties pointed out in all frankness the genuine danger of a counter-revolutionary seizure of power in the CSSR. They also expressed their support for the leadership of the Communist Party and their readiness to guarantee the Czechoslovak comrades every assistance in their struggle to strengthen the position of socialism in the CSSR as opposed to the anti-socialist elements.

In a joint communique the Czechoslovak representatives pledged themselves to carry out the general line adopted at the 13th Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, to safeguard the socialist gains in the CSSR.

APRIL

A plenary meeting of the central committee was held in an atmosphere of increasing pressure on the part of the revisionist and counter-revolutionary forces. This meeting concluded with significant changes in the leadership of the party and the state and the adoption of a “programme of action”. Sixteen comrades were removed from the presidium and secretariat of the central committee of the party, and the formation of a new government was agreed on. The campaign for the elimination of the so-called conservatives from the leadership of the party and the state was stepped up.

– The “programme of action” was permeated with revisionist concepts and views.

MAY

On May 1, the revisionist and counter-revolutionary forces appeared in the open in an organised manner. In Prague and other cities and the “Club of the 231” and the “Club of Committed Non-Party People” and the newly-formed bourgeois youth and student organisations (Boy Scouts, Sokol and Junak), demonstrated as organised groups with slogans such as “For complete freedom” and “New leaders with clean hands”. A US flag was carried alongside the slogan “Long live freedom”.

At a demonstration organised by Prague Radio counter-revolutionary speeches were held on the Old Town Square in which the Soviet Union was attacked; demands were uttered for the acceptance of an “opposition party”, the removal of all functionaries over forty years of age from the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, the disbandment of the security forces and the liquidation of the leading role of the party in the army.

On May 19, the “philosopher” Svitak, the leader of the “Club of Committed Non-Party People”, outlined the strategy and tactics of the counter-revolution in the trade union paper “Prace”. In a programmatic article Svitak showed

the way for the step-by-step removal of communists from power and how the anti-socialist forces could seize power by demanding early parliamentary elections. Svitak demanded that the intelligentsia should be recognised as the leaders of society, that opposition parties should be permitted, that the workers' militia should be disbanded and "pluralism" of the political system introduced. He called on the workers to strike, reviled the whole of the past history of the CSSR and abused the so-called conservatives.

JUNE

*Prague EC
Simply omitted!*

A political opposition was virtually formed in the CSSR. The leaders of the "Peoples Party" and the "Socialist Party" made a basic change in their political line and directed their main efforts to undermining the leading role of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.

Throughout the whole country the members of the former social democratic party got together and organised themselves. On June 12 a document entitled "The Attitude of the Municipal Preparatory Committee of the Czechoslovak Social Democratic Party to the Present Political Situation" was circulated in Prague. In this document it was stated that the social democratic party was returning to political life after a break of twenty years. The unification with the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in June 1948 was declared to be "invalid".

At the same time contacts with the social democratic parties and emigre organisations in Switzerland, Austria and West Germany were consolidated.

On June 13 the counter-revolutionary writer Liehm wrote in "Literarni Listy":

"The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia bears the responsibility for all the mistakes made in the last twenty years, for all the sickness and crimes in the social order . . . The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia exercises its leading role although it has neither the moral nor political right to do so."

The acts of intervention by West German and American imperialism assumed increasingly dangerous proportions.

– On June 14, the adviser of the US Government on anti-communist activities and psychological warfare on the socialist states, Brzezinski, was allowed to

make attacks in Prague on the Soviet Union, Poland the Warsaw Treaty, etc., and openly proclaimed US claims to world domination.

– On June 17 "Literarni Listy", the journal of the Czechoslovakia writers' association, went unchallenged when it extolled Imre Nagy, condemned in Hungary as a counter-revolutionary and traitor, as a pioneer of the "Alliance of Socialism with Democracy and Freedom".

The same article called for the withdrawal of Czechoslovakia from the Warsaw Treaty and the "neutralisation of Czechoslovakia". The leadership of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia remained silent.

– June 27 saw the most open and massive attack of the counter-revolution till that date. Without resistance or counter-measures from the party or the government, a declaration of "2,000 Words" was published simultaneously in four national papers, on the radio and on television. This took place at a time when the district delegate conferences of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia were being held in preparation for the 14th Extraordinary Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.

The "2,000 Words" openly called for the rallying and organisation of the various anti-socialist groups. To this end the organisation of so-called "citizens' committees" in all towns and villages, of "editorial councils", "committees for the defence of freedom of opinion", "services for the maintenance of order" and also the foundation of a newspaper was proposed. A campaign of slander was launched for the dissolution of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and the state power.

The presidium of the central committee, which at first only hesitatingly distanced itself from this call, was split by Smrkovsky and Kriegel who supported the authors of the "2,000 Words", and was forced to tolerate the public campaign in favour of this document.

A massive boycott campaign was organised in the mass media against the secretary of the central committee, Comrade Indra—who in a circular letter issued by the party secretariat called upon the party groups to struggle against the "2,000 Words"; against the member of the presidium, Comrade Kolder—who openly challenged the anti-socialist elements with an article in "Rude Pravo"; and against the member of the presidium, Comrade Svestka—who removed several right-wing elements from the editorial staff of the central paper of the party.

JULY

The West German government started sending large numbers of emissaries into Czechoslovakia for the purpose of making contact with certain Czechoslovak authorities and institutions.

The "Stuttgarter Zeitung" of July 18, 1968, disclosed in an article entitled "Amateur Diplomats in the No Mans Land of Official Policy" something of the so-called private character of the journeys of such Bonn politicians as the president of the West German Federal Bank and war criminal Blessing, the FDP chairman Scheel, the SPD deputy Eppler and others to Czechoslovakia.

How little "private" the journeys of these gentlemen were, is shown among other things by the fact that Scheel, for example, made a report to Kiesinger and Brandt at the conclusion of his mission.

At the same time the central organ of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia published on July 10, 11 and 12, a scientific analysis of the "New Czechoslovak Model of Socialism". This analysis outlined a clearly revisionist platform for the concept of the future development of Czechoslovakia. It followed completely the new line of the right-wing forces in the party's leadership and aligned itself in its political expression with the platform of the declaration of the "2,000 Words".

Counter-revolutionary subversive and undermining activities reached a dangerous climax in connection with the extreme nationalist, anti-Marxist-Leninist position of the party, state and military leadership of Czechoslovakia as well as the mass media on the question of the staff exercises of the joint command of the Warsaw Treaty forces.

On July 15 it came to an open attack on the Warsaw Treaty when General Prchlik, at that time leader of the Security Section of the central committee, called for a revision of the Warsaw Treaty at a press conference and openly slandered the joint command.

In face of the sharply increased activity of the anti-socialist forces in Czechoslovakia and the growth of political interference by the imperialist powers, the situation became intolerable for the alliance of the states of the Warsaw Treaty. The CPSU, the Polish United Workers' Party, the SED, the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party and the Communist Party of Bulgaria addressed themselves in letters to the central committee of the Communist Party of Czecho-

slovakia with the proposal that initially on July 10 and subsequently on July 14 a joint meeting should be held in Warsaw.

The presidium of the central committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia did not accede to this proposal of the five parties.

On July 15 the representatives of these five parties met in Warsaw and sent the joint letter to the central committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.

The letter of the five parties to the central committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia was a necessary act of socialist internationalism and fully in conformity with the Marxist-Leninist norms in relations between the communist and workers' parties. In the joint letter a clear estimation was given of the situation in connection with developments in Czechoslovakia, the working class and all other working people in Czechoslovakia were assured of support and solidarity of the fraternal countries, the international communist movement was truthfully informed and the imperialist forces seriously warned.

On July 19, the plenary meeting of the central committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia decided to reject the letter of the Warsaw Conference which had already been publicised on the previous day by the presidium without discussion in the central committee.

In this connection the nationalistic mass hysteria in Czechoslovakia was heightened. With the help of television, press and radio, and with the active collaboration of the imperialist mass media, the horrible spectre of "interference" by the Soviet Union and the other states of the Warsaw Treaty was raised.

The five communist and workers' parties used every possible political means to help the leadership of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and the communists and other workers of Czechoslovakia to avert the danger of counter-revolution. The meeting of the political bureau of the CPSU with the presidium of the central committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia from July 29 to August 1 in Cierna nad Tisou, and the conference of representatives of the fraternal parties and governments of the socialist countries in Bratislava on August 3 helped to further this aim.

AUGUST

As a result of the important conference of communist and workers' parties from socialist countries in Bratislava, the perspective was opened for calling a halt to the forces in Czechoslovakia hostile to socialism and for their final defeat. At the conferences in Cierna nad Tisou and Bratislava the Czechoslovak party delegation came to firm agreements with the fraternal parties to guarantee, in conformity with socialist internationalism and in the spirit of a joint declaration, the preservation of the socialist gains of the Czech and Slovak people. The Czechoslovak party delegation undertook to ensure immediately the political guidance of press, radio and television in the spirit of socialism; to pass without delay a law restricting the activities of the anti-socialist parties, clubs and organisations; they also gave the necessary guarantees that they would pursue a consistent course serving the interests of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic in the party and state leadership.

The right-wing group in the presidium of the central committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia nevertheless not only failed to carry through the agreements reached, but in fact moved even further to the right after Bratislava. In this way the anti-socialist elements were encouraged. The right-wing group concealed the agreements arrived at from the members of the Czechoslovak Communist Party and the Czechoslovak people. They paid lip service in public to the Bratislava agreements, but at the same time allowed the anti-socialist forces to launch a secret campaign against the decisions in the Bratislava Declaration.

The ink on the Bratislava Declaration was not yet dry when Smrkovsky announced: "Everything is all right, the way for the further process of democratisation is open." With this he fired the opening shot in the campaign for non-fulfilment of the joint agreement.

"Mlada Fronta" discounted the value of the Declaration, writing on August 5, 1968, that it contained the "same old words which accorded with the old methods of thought and estimation of world events."

"Lidova demokracie" followed up on August 6 with: "The terminology of the Declaration is somehow out of date and does not satisfy us."

And finally "Svobodne Slovo" supplemented this on the same day: "The document is reminiscent in tone and expression of documents from the fifties."

but was!

Immediately after the conclusion of the conference, "Prace" on August 4 imputed imperialist methods to the five participating fraternal parties and wrote that: "The Soviet Union is not the USA and Czechoslovakia is not Guatemala."

The obligation undertaken by the leadership of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia to exercise its influence on the mass media without delay was not only not fulfilled, but the two-faced attitude to the document merely permitted the counter-revolutionary forces in Czechoslovakia to consolidate their positions even further after the Bratislava conference.

The communique from the meeting of the presidium of the central committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia on August 6, 1968 stated:

"The presidium of the central committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia declares its agreement with the actions and work of the delegation of the presidium of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia at the meeting in Bratislava. It declares that the actions and work of the delegation contributed to the successful results of this meeting."

But what is a declaration by the presidium worth when some of its members—for example Smrkovsky, on August 7, 1968, who stated in an interview at Usti nad Labem "one will first have to translate the Bratislava Declaration into Czech". Smrkovsky added: "We have got what we wanted. Now however it is necessary to recover the ground we lost in Bratislava."

This was the opening shot for a barrage of unbridled propaganda against the five participating socialist states and also against those forces in Czechoslovakia which, from a position of Marxism-Leninism, had clearly expressed themselves in support of the Bratislava Declaration.

On August 8, "Literarni Listy" reviled the leadership of the Soviet party, which had displayed a considerable measure of patience and tried to find a political solution:

"Soviet policy is clearly not aware that in the summer of 1968 a new tradition in Czechoslovak-Soviet relations has been founded, the tradition of pressure; this was not necessary. From the beginning all that was needed was more understanding, more trust and a somewhat more exact estimation of the real situation in Czechoslovakia."

The district leadership of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in

Olomouc was suspended because they published a declaration supporting the decisions of Bratislava.

A new signature campaign was launched against the armed organisation of the working class, the Czechoslovak Workers' Militia, which was a thorn in the side of the counter-revolutionary forces.

Parallel with this, anti-socialist groups and organisations openly organised collections of signatures on the streets and squares of Prague and other towns for the dissolution of the Workers' Militia.

"Rude Pravo" of August 19 reported the discovery in Brno of a cache of leaflets demanding "administrative and physical liquidation of the Workers' Militia."

In alliance with representatives of the "Club of the 231", the "Club of Committed Non-Party People" and others, West German "tourists" openly gave suggestions and practical "advice" as to the most effective methods for conducting the "struggle against state power".

These actions culminated in the boycott propaganda against the 99 class-conscious workers of the "Praha" automobile works in Prague, who, inspired by a sense of responsibility for the safeguarding of socialism in Czechoslovakia, had addressed a letter to "Pravda". Smrkovsky and Cisak initiated and personally conducted the persecution of the 99 class-conscious workers.

Smrkovsky stated that "some of our people have more faith in another state than in their own government".

The presidium of the central committee distanced itself from the forms of the boycott campaign against the 99 workers, but they considered their action incorrect in principle. With this the presidium virtually sanctioned the anti-Soviet propaganda as well as the slander campaign against the communists and class-conscious workers. By means of distorted inquiries, hatred was incited against the positive forces of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. The Prague evening paper "Vecerni Praha" put to carefully chosen anti-socialist individuals the question of which people they would not elect at the party congress. The chairman of the Prague Union of Journalists, J. Ruml, named the following: Kapek, Svestka, Indra, Kolder and from Slovakia Barbirek and Bilak.

On the occasion of the reception for President Tito, press, radio and television gave publicity to the slogan "Tito yes—Ulbricht no".

few students singing a 'yolly song'

Counter-revolution grew ever bolder. Vandalistic rowdies besieged the building of the central committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia on August 8, hurling stones at it.

On August 17 "Rude Pravo" could not avoid publishing a report on this:

"Around 9 p.m. on August 8, some 300 people, mostly young people, who had come from the Old Town Square, gathered in front of the offices of the central committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. They shouted slogans such as 'We are being led up the garden path', etc. A deputation of six entered the central committee offices and compelled a speaker to go to the Old Town Square, and one member of this group declared: 'It only needs a few words to that crowd out there and they would beat all of you up'. The crowd outside remained and around 10 o'clock started shouting 'Come on out', 'You are afraid', 'Come on out, you swine'. The crowd pushed and battered on the door and throws stones. With similar shouts the crowd afterwards went to the Old Town Square."

On August 12 discussions took place in Karlovy Vary between the delegations of the SED and the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, both led by their first secretaries. A further effort was made to induce the party leadership of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia to a consistent implementation of the Bratislava Declaration, in particular to conduct a struggle against bourgeois ideology and the anti-socialist forces. The result of the discussions showed that the right-wing group in the presidium of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia was not prepared to fulfil the Bratislava decisions, but on the contrary intensified their dangerous right-wing course.

The party leadership of the CPSU and the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party also made strenuous efforts to achieve the carrying out of the Bratislava Declaration and the agreements reached. The right-wing group, however, concealed the full content of the agreements from the other members of the presidium as well as from the central committee; they resorted to lies and deception against their own party leadership and the leading comrades of the fraternal parties.

In all the discussions held with representatives of the right-wing group, it became increasingly clear that this group was treacherously suppressing the joint decisions. Instead of a political offensive against the anti-socialist elements, as had been agreed in Bratislava, the offensive of the counter-revolu-

tionary forces was directly furthered by the attitude of the right-wing group. In this manner the right-wing group established by means of pressure and deception an arbitrary regime within the party and the state. And thus the danger of complete demoralisation of the party and surrender of its character as a militant Marxist-Leninist party grew. This increased the undermining of the constitutional socialist state system; this led to an ever quicker slide onto the course of the effective elimination of Czechoslovakia from political, economic and military cooperation with the states of the socialist community and as a result to new dangerous steps on the road to a neo-capitalist development.

The intensified right-wing course of the leading group and the prevalence of counter-revolutionary activities led to a political crisis. In this situation a group of party and state personalities, true to the principles of socialism and internationalism, decided to seek help from the allied socialist states.

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