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THE QUESTIONING OF COMMUNISM
(A STUDY OF CONFLICT IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA IN 1968)

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to study the conflict in Czechoslovakia in 1968 which developed through different stages of the questioning of Communism since the Communist takeover in 1948.

The term "Questioning of Communism" refers to the examination of the basic principles and practices of Communism on which the Communist Party operates. The principles of Communism include such principles as "democratic centralism", the leading role of the Communist Party, the monopoly of power, the "nationality question", centralized planning, political bureaucracy in the society, etc.

This study deals with the two areas of conflict: outside the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, and inside the party.

Outside the party, conflict erupted between the social groups (such as the economists, the Slovaks, the students, the intellectuals and the non-Communist political parties) and the party.

Conflict within the party erupted between the conservatives and the liberals and resulted in the change in the leadership in the party in 1968.

This thesis concentrates mostly on the causes of conflict and its roots prior to 1968, and on the accommodation of conflict by the Communist Party in 1968. Prior to 1968, conflict was not accommodated by the party. Rather, the participants in conflict were suppressed by the Communist Party.

An analysis of conflict in Czechoslovakia in 1968 confirms that Czechoslovakia does not conform to the pattern of violent conflict in Communist states illustrated by the experience of East Germany, Poland and Hungary. A new pattern of accommodation of conflict by the Communist Party introduced in Czechoslovakia in 1968 was due to the liberal democratic policies of the Communist Party leadership under Alexander Dubcek.

However, despite the successful domestic policies of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, Czechoslovakia did not succeed in her democratic experiment because she neglected her foreign policy with the Soviet Union.

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This thesis is dedicated to those 160,000
Czechoslovak citizens who love their country
but, in protest to the Soviet occupation of
Czechoslovakia, left it, as this writer did.

In the past the masses were not satisfied with the Party's policies.... Obviously, the Party cannot replace the masses; so it must change the policies.

Alexander Dubcek

(From a speech to the Czecho-
slovak people, July 18, 1968)

INTRODUCTION

In general, a conflict in a Communist society can be studied on the basis of the assumption that the leading Communist Party always tries to suppress those who are in conflict with it. Opponents are regarded as anti-Communists, opposing the Communist ideology and party's policies. They are considered to be the "enemies of the Communist establishment." The party is always anxious to eliminate such "unfriendly elements" from the political process. The party never tries to meet the demands of those in opposition or to make some concessions to them. Otherwise, the party would neglect its leading role prescribed to it by Marxism - Leninism with all its dogmas and principles on which the party operates in a Communist state. Not that the Communist Party is unable to accommodate an internal conflict. It only willingly prefers suppression of the participants in conflict and, by doing so, makes its Communist policies sound rather rigid.

The case of Czechoslovakia in 1968, however, is an exception to this rule. The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia was seemingly willing to understand the social problems of Czechoslovakia and did attempt that complicated task by permitting widespread differences to be argued out within the party. Those in opposition to the party were not to be suppressed; rather, conflict between them and the party was to be regulated by satisfying their demands. Such a regulation by the party may be regarded as unprecedented in the history of Communist movements. The Communist Party of Czecho-

slovakia was, in 1968, operating on democratic principles. Czechoslovakia remained a one-party state but, within that one party, dissent, questioning and debate flourished.

The introduction of democratic principles was possible only because of the new leadership and its intention to democratize the policies of the party.

During the first eight months of 1968, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia accomplished a great deal towards the democratization of Czechoslovakia. A completely new approach to the solution of social problems was needed in the policies of the Communist Party. This required a basic change in the structure of the party to fit its role in democratized Czechoslovakia.

The party faced many conflicts both outside and inside its structure. It had to solve existing conflicts first, and, consequently, to eliminate causes of any further conflicts. The main point will be, therefore, to see what were the causes of the existing conflicts and how they were accommodated by the party.

This thesis is divided into six chapters. The first chapter will deal with some specific aspects of conflict in a Communist state which differ from the conflict in Western democracies.

Conflict in a Communist state is known to have always taken a violent form once it developed into a widespread political mobilization. Such a violent conflict erupted in Poland, East Germany and Hungary. It will be, therefore, necessary to make an analysis of how Czechoslovakia fits this pattern.

In essence, Czechoslovakia is unique in its development as a Communist state and in the formation of its party system. Although the Czechoslovak party system is similar to those in Bulgaria, East Germany and Poland in terms of having in existence some other non-Communist parties, it is not similar to them in terms of creating new political parties. In contrast with Czechoslovakia, other Communist states did not allow non-Communist political parties to be created after the Communist takeover. In this sense, Czechoslovakia is unique. This peculiarity will be analyzed in Chapter II. It will help us better understand dissent among the population and the causes of conflict in Czechoslovakia.

This study will deal with the two areas of conflict: first, outside the Communist Party, and, second, within the Communist Party itself.

Chapter III will cover the study of conflict outside the Communist Party, namely, conflict between the social groups and the party. The social groups will include the economists, the nationality groups (the Slovaks), the intellectuals, the students and youth, the groups within the non-Communist political parties as well as other political groups (e.g. the Club of Committed non-Party Members, the Club 231, the Organization of Human Rights, etc.)

The social groups, while in conflict with the party, questioned some of the basic principles of Communism elaborated by Marx and Lenin. The economists, for instance, questioned centralized planning as well as the party monopoly in the economy. They demanded not only

a free enterprise system and market economy, but also political debureaucratization. The Slovaks questioned Lenin's position on the "nationality question" by demanding federalization. The intellectuals demanded the right of free speech, and, at the same time, questioned the Communist monopoly over the ideology of the country. The students demanded basic human rights, and, at the same time, refused to serve the party as a "transmission belt" of its ideology. Political parties and other political groups questioned the monopoly power of the party and made their requests to be independent and equal partners to the Communist Party.

Conflict within the Communist Party itself had arisen between the liberals and the conservatives. It resulted in questioning of such basic principles of Communism as democratic centralism, the monopoly of power, the unity of party and state and the political bureaucracy in the society, which will be analyzed in Chapter IV.

After having analyzed the conflict and its causes both outside and inside the party, the peculiarity of conflict in Czechoslovakia in 1968 will be explained in Chapter V. The conflict took a non-violent form, which does not fit the pattern of existence of a conflict in a Communist state known to be accompanied by violence. How the Communist Party undertook the regulation of conflict and responded to pressure from the population to deal with the needs and demands of the society will be emphasized.

Even though the process of democratization in Czechoslovakia proved to be successful under the leadership of Alexander Dubcek,

Czechoslovakia failed in her questioning of Communism. Some of the reasons why Czechoslovakia did not succeed in her questioning of Communism, will be presented in Chapter VI.

The essential point of the thesis, however, will be the confirmation of the fact that even a Communist state is capable of satisfying the needs of its citizens, while having a new, democratic, "human face."

I. CONFLICT IN A COMMUNIST STATE AND ITS SPECIFIC ASPECTS

It would be misleading to assume that the conflict of 1968 in Czechoslovakia erupted overnight. On the contrary, it had its roots in the Communist Party's political rule since its takeover in February, 1948. For this reason, it is necessary to point out some specific aspects of conflict which lie in the Communist establishment itself.

In terms of Marxism - Leninism, one should not speak of conflict in a Communist state since Communism is supposed to be free of conflict. Marxist ideologues argue that the real cause of conflict disappeared along with the capitalist mode of production.

In a Communist state, the means of production are owned by the state, and, therefore, no exploitation by the owner of the means of production should take place. As a result, there should be no oppressors and no oppressed. On this basis, it is asserted that there are no conditions for conflict to arise.

Naturally, Marxists have in mind "friendly" classes without any form of hostility between them. Orthodox Communist ideologists refuse to accept the view of different social groups in a Communist society which make demands upon the party and, from time to time, find themselves in conflict with the party. As Ralph Dahrendorf, a theoretician on conflict and classes, correctly points out, "all life is conflict, because it is change. Everything is change."¹

Thus the basis for conflict is to be found in social relations among people rather than among the classes, even if one deals with a Communist state.

The misinterpretation of the nature of conflict by Communist regimes stimulates conflict rather than solves it. Conflict then usually takes a more violent form and its participants are suppressed as "bourgeois elements", "enemies of the people", "traitors", "imperialist agents", etc. There has been absolutely no effort on the part of a Communist Party that represents and executes Marxist - Leninist ideas in the life of the society to have conflict regulated and accommodated. That is why most of the Communist countries have experienced more open and violent conflicts than Western democratic societies. Because they repress dissent, opposition cannot take place within normal channels, or be relieved by negotiation and compromise. As a result, conflict builds up and festers, resulting, eventually, in a violent explosion.

As conflict in a Communist society gradually grows, and its participants are suppressed, it also becomes a chronic movement that erupts into a widespread political mobilization of the masses against their political leadership (e.g. East Germany, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia).

In a democratic society, "there is a chance for the subjected class to take over government or to penetrate into the governing elite to make its claims heard."² This is what Dahrendorf

calls the "ideal pattern of democracy."³ Here conflict does not have to be violent at all.

In a Communist state, the basis for the accommodation of conflict is far from being democratic, since the dominant Communist Party does not allow public opposition or the questioning of its ideology. If this is the case, then conflict takes a violent form. This was the case of East Germany, Poland and Hungary.

Why did conflict have to take a violent form? It is because the Communist Party does not try to have conflict accommodated by satisfying the demands of its citizens. On the contrary, the party chooses their suppression. Consequently, when the suppressed groups come into conflict with the political bureaucracy, they prefer a violent form of conflict.

The Communist Party does not put any effort into its policies to have conflict diminished and its causes removed. Instead the party prefers the more authoritarian approach of liquidating participants in conflict by the moral or physical punishment of the groups making demands on the party.

In fact, conflict in a Communist state can never be suppressed⁴ since the causes of conflict are "memorized" by the suppressed groups. Conflict, so to say, "passes through", and when a new opportunity arises, it takes a new form. But its basis and roots lie in those unsatisfied demands of the previous conflict. This can be illustrated, for instance, by the conflict between the Czechs and the Slovaks or between the economists and the party leaders. In both in-

stances, as it will be analyzed in the Chapter III, conflict was never resolved. In the case of the Slovak nationality question, for instance, conflict dates back to 1919. However, it tragically climaxed in Communist Czechoslovakia in 1954, when some of the Slovak so-called "bourgeois nationalists" were sentenced to death.⁵ Despite the tragedy, the conflict climaxed again in 1967 - 68. It was the same nationality conflict passing through the different stages of its development. Conflict never ceased to exist until the Slovaks were separated in January, 1969 to form the Slovak Socialist Republic in a federalized Czechoslovakia. However, solving the nationality conflict can be attributed to the liberal Dubcek political system and not to the pre-1968 rigid and orthodox Communist Party ideologists.

Since the Communist Party is not willing to satisfy the demands of different social groups or to diminish the sources of conflict, we come to the conclusion that conflict always exists in a Communist state. It is a "protracted conflict" within a Communist state, as Strausz - Hupe calls it.⁶ Its roots are to be found in Communism that itself has been a soil for conflict among the social groups and the authoritarian party which has been too rigid to be able to adopt itself to any conflict.

Conflict in a Communist society must be seen differently from that in Western democracies. Conflict in a Communist state has certain aspects which Western democracies lack. It is the basic deprivation of the democratic rights of the people. A society

which has been reluctant to allow people to exercise their basic human rights can expect dissent among people and extreme conflict to arise with more probability than can a democratic society.

However, if the people of a Communist state have experienced a long democratic tradition, as in Czechoslovakia from 1919 to 1948, then they are unlikely to passively accept the removal of democratic rights. They are more likely both to try to modify the harshness of the regime and to openly rebel against its restrictions. Hence the very widespread mobilization of the Czechoslovak population in support of democratic reforms in 1968.

No social group in a fully democratic society lacks any of the basic human rights. Conflict that may arise from its demands, consequently, cannot be of the same degree of importance, or even danger, to the establishment as it can be within a Communist society. Where dissent is tolerated, opposition does not threaten the basic character of the regime and therefore need not be stamped out. Almost by definition, however, opposition in an authoritarian regime leads to a fundamental questioning of the whole regime. The regime, in turn, reacts to this threat by repression. The conflict escalates into a political struggle against the political bureaucracy and the Communist establishment.

When in conflict with the party, social groups within a Communist society always combine their specific demands with the questioning of the party which has deprived them of their basic democratic rights (e.g. civil rights, free enterprise, etc.).

In conclusion, we can say that conflict in a Communist society can never be resolved unless the Communist Party is willing to share the power with the population. It always reflects the basic relationship between the mass of the population and the dominant party in power. As long as the dominant Communist Party will not let the masses of the population share power, the Communist Party can expect to be in conflict. It is rigidity of the system itself that "suppresses the incidence of conflict and exerts pressure towards the emergence of radical cleavages."⁷ It is the Communist Party that willingly neglects the functioning of the social forces in the society. It is a weakness of the one-party system which does not permit any political opposition in democratic terms, and, therefore, conflict not only always exists, but is likely to be strengthened and to take a violent form.

After the analysis of conflict, in Chapter V, we will evaluate the conflict in Czechoslovakia in particular, and we will see how Czechoslovakia fits this pattern of existence of violent conflict in a Communist state.

Although Czechoslovakia is not a pure example of a one-party system, such as the Soviet Union where only the Communist Party exists, it has some similarities as well as differences with Communist countries. It will be necessary, therefore, to analyze the development of Communist Czechoslovakia and its peculiar party system before we proceed to the analysis of conflict itself and to the causes of the conflict which have their roots in the development of the Communist state.

II. PECULIARITIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNIST

CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND ITS PARTY SYSTEM

The development of Communist Czechoslovakia and her party system is very unusual. It differs from the Soviet Union in the sense that there are four other non-Communist parties in Czechoslovakia. In the Soviet Union, the only political party is the Communist Party. Czechoslovakia differs from other Communist countries as well. This difference is not that non-Communist parties remain, since this is also true in Bulgaria (one non-Communist party remained), East Germany (2), and Poland (3). (Albania, Rumania and Yugoslavia have none). The difference, instead, lies in the creation of the regime. Czechoslovakia is the only East European Communist regime where the non-Communist parties were created by the Communist Party after the Communist takeover.

In order to understand this uniqueness, one has to take a look at the political development of the country.

Czechoslovakia had a strong democratic tradition prior to the Communist takeover in February 1948. People enjoyed all the basic democratic rights such as free speech, free elections, free press, etc. There was no restriction imposed on the right of free enterprise or on the activities of the non-Communist political parties. There had been in existence the Republican (Agrarian) Party, the Social Democratic (Labour) Party, the Czechoslovak National (Socialist) Party, the Czechoslovak Populist (Catholic) Party, the National Union Party, the Christian Socialist and Nationalist Parties, the

factions of the German Parties, three major factions of the Polish Parties, the Hlinka's Party and the People's Party in Slovakia and three Ukrainian parties in Eastern Slovakia.⁸

The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia was one of the best organized political parties. Its post-war popularity was due to its condemnation of the leaders of the previous Czechoslovak government and of their responsibility for Czechoslovakia's fall to Hitler. The majority of the Czechoslovak population shared this attitude with the Communist Party and supported it in its political struggle with the other political parties. That is why the Communist Party polled 38 percent of the popular vote in the free elections held in 1946.⁹ The Party leader, Klement Gottwald, accepted the premiership, and, having in mind the strong democratic tradition in Czechoslovakia and fearing the loss of the support it already had, announced Czechoslovakia's "special road to Socialism." The Communist Party was careful enough to encourage the masses as when Gottwald publicly declared on behalf of the party that "the dictatorship of the proletariat and of the Soviets is not the only road to Socialism."¹⁰

The "special road to Socialism" was to be based on democratic principles. In the political life of the country, this meant that the other political parties were to remain in existence. After the Communist takeover on February 28, 1948, Czechoslovak citizens expected some of the most popular political parties to be allowed to continue in existence. The Czechoslovak National Socialist Party was considered as the one that could survive, since it grouped the strongest

nationalistic elements. However, the Communist Party feared the nationalistic elements in the party, revised the party and formed a new Czechoslovak Socialist Party which was a completely new political party.¹¹

The only political party which was partially retained was the Czechoslovak Populist Party. However, its national character was restricted to the Czech lands only since in Slovakia the Populist Party was considered to be a strong collaborator with Hlinka's Party. The latter was the Slovak ruling party at the time of the independent Slovak state during the World War II, and was considered to be strong, a clerical pro-Hitler party.¹²

Since both of the existing political parties in Slovakia did not fit well into the Communist organization of Czechoslovakia, the Communist Party established two completely new political parties, the Slovak Freedom Party and the Slovak Revival Party. This was done by the Communist Party mainly in order to create the impression of "people's democracy."¹³ Despite the fact that all the other political parties -- the main anti-Communist forces in Czechoslovakia -- were abolished, the Communist Party was still in a struggle for power as strong anti-Communist sentiments increased.¹⁴

For this reason the newly created political parties were managed by the Communists. The population opposed the Communist policy of manipulating and directing the political parties which, it was thought, would stay in competition and opposition to the Communist Party. It soon became clear that the intended "people's democracy"

was nothing else but deception by the Communist Party. The party made a serious effort to abandon promised democratic principles on which to build post-war Czechoslovakia. This intention of the Communist Party has been clearly revealed in the official publication of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, the History of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.¹⁵

However, the party did not hesitate to call the new political parties the National Front. This move was intended to give an impression that the National Front was established by the will of the people, and, consequently, it was also expected to support the governing Communist Party.

In order to give it more a national character, the National Front united some other mass organizations, such as trade unions, women's leagues, youth organizations, etc.

I have to underline the fact that the creation of the new political parties by the Communist Party does not mean that the party lacked political opposition or that it created these parties out of a desire for political conflict. In creating political parties, the Communist Party sought only its allies.

It sounds paradoxical and illogical for any party to do so, but the experience of the Czechoslovak "people's democracy" supports this analysis.

In the manual, History of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, the party ideologists explain this course of action by the party in terms of establishing strong foundation for the party, which would

require "creating allies rather than political opponents."¹⁶

The political parties have been formal, with no political program different from that of the Communist Party. The "special road to Socialism", therefore, was characterized only by the existence of the parties. The newly-created parties were simply window-dressing designed to give an illusion of a multi-party system in order for the regime to forestall opposition. In fact, the Communist party had total control. The Czechoslovak "special road to Socialism" "was not at least distinctive from a common Leninist path taken by the Soviet Union after the October Revolution."¹⁷

The other parties did not properly represent the masses. The population could not make its demands on the ruling Communist Party through their representation in the political parties. It follows first, that the political parties did not constitute a political opposition to the Communist Party. Second, they could not compete with the Communist Party either in national elections or internally. This practice in the Czechoslovak party system, therefore, does not make the party system democratic.

"What makes any party undemocratic", Leon Epstein argues, "is what keeps it from having internal competition open to the electorate or from otherwise operating as a democratic party."¹⁸ This applies to any party whether one is talking about a "people's democracy" or a Western democracy. This, in essence, makes the difference between a democratic and undemocratic party in both Western democracies and in a Communist state.

Political democracy requires competition "to give the voters a choice."¹⁹ As a result, the Communist party system in Czechoslovakia cannot be considered to be democratic for none of the candidates of a non-Communist party can get nominated unless they are approved by the Communist Party. Although the right to nominate has been permitted by the Czechoslovak Constitution, in practice, it has not been exercised. An illustration of how the Constitution is disregarded is the 1972 case when a group of Czechoslovak citizens were sentenced to prison for up to six years for distributing a pamphlet in which they reminded the voters of their Constitutional rights before the national elections.²⁰

Among all the political parties in the Czechoslovak party system, the Communist Party has a dominant position secured by elections in which all the candidates are nominated by the Communist Party. Only a very small percentage of the candidates from other political parties have been allowed by the Communist Party to run for some unimportant positions, where the party tries to give impression of making democratic politics.

As a result, non-Communist parties do not share power with the Communist Party and they do not function as a political opposition. The political dominance of the Communist Party is clear and in no doubt. It has its own armed political militia, and it controls all important positions at all levels of the economy, governmental bureaucracy, police, courts, culture, education, etc.

As seen from our analysis, the development of the Czechoslovak party system is unusual and completely different from both the Soviet

Union and the other Communist countries where no new non-Communist parties were created after the Communist takeover.

There has been no effort made among the Czechoslovak Communist Party ideologists to have the non-Communist parties abolished or to permit their broader functioning. On the contrary, some efforts had been made to rename the one-party system a "hegemonic party system" as proposed by Jerzy J. Wiatr in neighbouring Poland.²¹ Such a party system would give the impression that the non-Communist parties play an independent role in political opposition,²² since "they are not Marxist parties but they are independent parties of socialist democracy."²³

In conclusion we can say that in forming the Communist government in Czechoslovakia after the coup d'état in February 1948, the Communist Party created political parties for two reasons: first, it was forced by the social conditions in Czechoslovakia to establish a political structure of "people's democracy" because of the strong democratic tradition in the country. Second, by doing so, the party tried to get wider mass support for its policies.

In creating new political parties by the Communist Party, Czechoslovakia is unique from all other Communist countries where none of the non-Communist parties were newly created after the Communist takeover.

However, in the Czechoslovak "people's democracy", the party system has not been democratic, since the Communist Party does not permit electoral competition. At this point, the Czechoslovak party

system is similar to all the "one-party systems" in the rest of the "people's democracies."

The Communist Party did not intend to face political opposition by creating political parties. The party managed the other political parties to the extent that they became "transmission belts" of the party's policies rather than true representatives of the population which had been deprived of its basic rights.

The population seeking its representation in the non-Communist parties lost its confidence in these parties. By early 1968, the poor relationship between the membership and the leaders of the parties led to a direct confrontation between them which was growing into a serious political conflict. As a result, this confrontation was transmitted into the political conflict between the parties and the Communist Party. This conflict will be analyzed in the following chapter which also deals with the political parties.

III. ROOTS OF CONFLICT IN 1968

THE QUESTIONING OF COMMUNISM BOTH OUTSIDE AND INSIDE THE PARTY

Social conflict in Czechoslovakia in 1968 must be studied in two different areas: first, outside the Communist Party, and, second, inside the party.

Conflict outside the party was always related to the party, its policies, ideology and tactics.

Conflict itself did not mean just the existence of a poor relationship between some of the social groups concerned and the party. It also signified a questioning of the basic principles of Communist ideology. Many of the demands were incompatible with the Communist policies and the ideology of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia during the twenty years of its political rule since 1948. Many of the demands meant the encroachment on and the questioning of the basic principles of Leninism (such as the nationality question that is not supposed to exist). Also the party monopoly and its absolute power was being questioned during 1968. For instance, the questioning of the centralized economic policies of the party was to result in greater economic freedom leading to a market economy.

Some other social groups called for the right of association (e.g. Sokol, the Boy Scouts, the Club of Committed non-Party Members, Club 231, the Organization of Human Rights, and many others).

Other groups demanded an end to restrictions on their activity. These groups include, for instance, students, the youth organizations

(CSM), women's organizations, professional groups, social scientists, and economists.

The intellectuals, who were among the strongest of all of the social groups, demanded the abolition of censorship.

Calling for basic democratic rights, the social groups questioned Communist Party domination as well as some of the basic principles of Leninism. In general, the social groups outside the party expressed their unanimous distrust for orthodox Communist Party policies, its ideology, and its role in the society.

On the other hand, as will be seen from our analysis, the Communist Party itself questioned its own ideology, its structure and the monopoly of power in Czechoslovakia.

The conditions of social life and the level of the social development in Czechoslovakia, required new leaders in the party. Completely different ideologists were needed to understand those social demands and to meet them.

Not only were the demands being met under Dubcek in 1968, but the leadership itself had tried to take a new, and unprecedented course of action in the party. Not only did the new, liberal party leaders find themselves in conflict with the conservative leaders, but they, too, started questioning basic principles of Communism, such as democratic centralism, the political bureaucratization of the society, the unity of party and state, the National Front and the possibility of the political opposition, the nationality question, and socialist internationalism.

We will now proceed to an analysis of the questioning of some of the basic principles of Communism and the causes of conflict between the social groups and the party. (The Questioning of Communism and the conflict within the party will be analyzed in the chapter following the social groups).

THE QUESTIONING OF COMMUNISM OUTSIDE THE PARTY

The Basis For Conflict

There are two main sources of conflict characteristic of all of the social groups which will be analyzed in this chapter.

The first source of conflict is the deprivation of the population of its democratic rights after the Communist takeover in February 1948.

The second source of conflict is the social conditions created by the nationalization of property without any reimbursement.

The first source of conflict was the basis on which the demands of the social groups were built. For instance, the students, in addition to their demands for freedom of academic grounds, also claimed their basic human rights of speech and association.

A restriction by the party to exercise the basic human rights stimulated the strength of conflict of all of the groups. Thus, the main root of social conflict in 1968 lies in the basis of the Communist establishment itself and its use of coercion against its citizens, and in the deprivation of citizens of their fundamental rights.²⁴

If people, for instance, are not permitted to associate, they cannot make any demonstration to draw public attention or to exert pressure on the party.²⁵

This makes the social groups in Czechoslovakia different from the social groups in a Western democracy. This helps us to explain why the social groups in the Communist states more often come into conflict with the party than their Western counterparts.

In a Communist state, there is no longer a presumption in favor of right and against coercion. Rather there is a discretionary authorization of the agencies of the state to act as they see fit.²⁶ As Professor Neumann correctly observes, "there is no activization of political freedom and no encouragement of mass participation in politics as it is in a democratic society."²⁷ Once ideas and opinions are decided upon by the party, they are no longer a subject for discussion.²⁸

With all the consequences expected, the main aim of the social groups outside the party was to get involved in political participation in the country. And in order to achieve this aim, they openly claimed their basic human rights first.

Second, the nationalization of property without any reimbursement of not only the "bourgeois elements", but also of the small businessmen, of the middle class people as well as the farmers in the country, was another source of conflict in 1968. They called for more free enterprise in Czechoslovakia.

With nationalization, all the rights of the free enterprise and

market economy were abolished. This caused the stagnation of the Czechoslovak economy. Forced and unprofitable international socialist "cooperation" was another main target of all the social groups and not only of the economists.

The social conditions of life were heavily affected by the economy of the country. In order to improve social conditions, the economic conditions first had to be improved.

Both the basic human rights and the economic changes were very strongly reflected in the social groups' demands on the party. How strong they were and how they were accommodated by the party will be seen from the following analysis of the social groups in their relationship to the party.

The groups will include the economists, the nationalist groups (the Slovaks), the intellectuals, the students and the youth, the political parties and other political groups, such as the Club of Committed non-Party Members, Club 231, the Organization of Human Rights, the Organization of the Social Democrats, etc.

The Economists

The economists did not become one of the most influential social groups overnight.

After the Communist takeover, the Czechoslovak economy was nationalized and it became one hundred percent state owned. No mixed economy, like that in East Germany, Poland or Hungary, was allowed. The Communist Party adopted the Marxist - Leninist principle of centralized planning

with all its defects which became remarkable during the next decade. The Western embargo on trade with Communist Czechoslovakia, the Korean War and the tension in Berlin combined to stop almost entirely foreign trade with the West.

Instead, Czechoslovakia was to industrialize Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union and China. Thus was born the "iron and steel concept" of the Czechoslovak economy, the basis of the first and second Five Year Plans. The building up and further development of heavy industry was stressed. It became the basic tenet of the Stalinist model of constructing Socialism.

The weakness of centralized planning and of the Five Year Plans began to be apparent toward the end of the 1950s. Overemphasis on industrialization liquidated crafts and private services and crippled trade. Shortages of consumer goods weakened workers' incentives. Wages were to a large extent equalized. Technological progress was in decline.

The Communist vision of Czechoslovakia as the industrial tutor to the East collapsed in 1961, when China, seemingly a "bottomless market" that would forever import Czechoslovak machinery, cancelled all orders. This situation resulted from the Czechoslovak friendship with the Soviet Union, a friendship regarded by China as incompatible with her negative views of the Soviet domination in the Communist bloc. Machinery had to be sold to the Soviet Union at a great loss. Billions of crowns' worth, in fact, had to be written off. For the first time since 1948 the Czechoslovak economy suffered remarkably

for the sake of the Communist ideology of the party.

Difficulties became especially apparent in 1963 when Czechoslovakia was the only socialist country to experience a decrease in national income. The Third Five Year Plan was never carried out. Technological obsolescence made it very difficult for Czechoslovak products to compete in world markets. Stocks of unsalable goods began to grow. Total industrial production in 1963 was 0.4% lower than in 1962, while fixed capital investment declined by 11.4%.²⁹

The main problems lay in the rigidity of centralized planning and overemphasis on the priority of heavy industry at the expense of consumer goods. It was felt that the range of production was too wide and many plants too small and outdated to compete successfully in modern conditions. Yet, Czechoslovakia was forced in the COMECON to expand her production of heavy industry at the expense of the standards of Czechoslovak technology.³⁰

The national and international economic difficulties caused a wide wave of criticism of the Communist Party by both the professional economists and general public. The economy became a subject for daily discussions. The Communist understanding of the economy of Socialism with the concepts which Marx applied to capitalist economy was strongly criticized. It was "rule of opinion over reality."³¹

The Stalinist dogma of the planned economy was questioned for the first time in a series of critical articles by Eugen Loeb, published in Kulturny zivot. The centralized planning was said to be not the only possible form of direction. In general, there were two

different views in the criticism of Socialism: First, there was the view that laws objectively determined things, i.e. that laws were not a direct reflection of phenomena but rather determined all phenomena.

Second, there was the view that Socialism offered human beings the possibility of changing things. In this case, the task was to achieve optimal production.

Adherents of the first view believed that since laws determined economic facts, socialist society must be a planned society. Stalin made planning itself a "law" of Socialism.

Loebl maintained that even Marx himself had asserted that his laws of capitalist society (e.g. the law of accumulation) were subject to modification by varied circumstances, and, thus, in Czechoslovakia, a dialectic understanding of Marx rather than Stalinist dogmas should be adopted. The dogmatic and outdated concept considered labor as the major factor in productivity, whereas the role of the machines and scientific knowledge was not recognized. This led to billions of crowns worth of expenditure without any significant results in industrial production. What Czechoslovakia needed most was the high level of technology and good organization of enterprises.

The progressive weekly, Hospodarske noviny, and the Czechoslovak Society for the Propagation of Political and Scientific Knowledge sponsored a conference in Prague on economic problems.³² At the Conference a leading economist, Selucky, attributed some of the economic difficulties directly to the gaps in Marxism. For instance, he said that

the Marxist theory of value does not provide a basis for a policy of foreign currency and foreign exchange relations. For reasons connected with this, no price system with a justified economic relationship had been set up in Czechoslovakia...Law of supply and demand must be decisive for the structure of the consumer industries and that, in the long run, it should be decisive for the structure of the whole economy.³³

Selucky in fact introduced the principle which was to provide the basis for the reform of the Czechoslovak economy.

The Czechoslovak economists came into an open conflict with the party which was to be responsible for all the centralization of power over the economy. Economic failure was directly attributed to the party which, in turn, was inevitably publicly pressed to improve both the management and efficiency of the Czechoslovak economy.

On September 14, 1964, the party presidium and the government approved basic principles drawn up by the "working group of experts" led by economist Ota Sik, of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences. Consequently, the Communist daily Rude pravo published the recommended principles for economic reform and the introduction of a new system of management and planning. The "Principles" explained that

most experts agreed that a permanent solution to such objective problems in the economy as unsatisfactory industrial structure, insufficient resources for increasing labor productivity, inability to satisfy the purchasing capacity of the population, difficulties with foreign trade...was handicapped by serious defects in planning management and incentives to production. What is needed, therefore, is a revaluation of the socialist system of the planned economy and an effort towards the improvement of planned management principles.³⁴

The proposed new economic model was to be based on economic cost accounting in relation between enterprises. Material incentives,

wages, and salaries should become more directly related to the economic success of the enterprises, the efficiency of their operation, and the quality and usefulness of their products. The goal was to use economic instruments to adjust output more closely to the expanding demand.

The party explained that the economic reforms were to introduce a second (intensive) stage in the economic development of Czechoslovakia. The prior stage had been one of extensive development aimed at rapidly expanding the industrial potential of the country. The existing system of management, however, had become outdated.

Economist Ota Sik argued that the economic problems were the result of applying the old methods of the extensive stage of development to the intensive one.³⁵ Korda, for instance, argued that

Czechoslovakia was already an intensively industrialized country prior to World War II and that the centrally controlled economic management system imposed by the Communist Party had in fact been unnecessary and harmful, and it had caused chronic dislocation in the Czechoslovak economy.³⁶

The new system, therefore, should be based on a rational calculation of the profitability of investment projects and on measures to stimulate workers' interests in production. Prices should be determined by supply and demand. This was intended to tie the enterprise to the market. Thus the ultimate criterion should be profitability based on such parameters as prices, wages, and interest rates. This would demand more free competition, which could be accomplished only by having experts in the major economic positions. As a result,

such an enterprise would eliminate the party's direct control of the economy. This was the main reason why the new economic model was not fully accepted by Novotny's party.

Party's conservatism was fully employed in the operating of the new model which was put into force on January 1, 1967. The party was forced to accept the model because of a sharp decrease of the economy and the standard of living of the Czechoslovak people. However, it was a half-hearted compromise with the party. The party continued to view the economic reform with great suspicion. Antonin Novotny, the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, speaking to the Party Central Committee Plenum in March, 1967, put it this way: "As long as economic measures are not in harmony with our political aims (total control of the economy) and our political program (orientation on the COMECON cooperation), these measures cannot be accepted by us, no matter how effective they may be."³⁷ Thus, no matter how great the difficulties, the party's political gain was to be achieved at the expense of the Czechoslovak economy and the standard of living of the Czechoslovak people.

The party's conservative policies which put great obstacles in the Czechoslovak economy were strongly criticized. Economist Ota Sik was one of the most outspoken critics exerting pressure on the party not to stand in the way of implementing a new model of the Czechoslovak economy.

Novotny's position to the economic reforms was one of the main causes of the fall of the old conservative party leadership in 1968.

In contrast, the Dubcek leadership was committed to serious pursuit of the reform question.

The economists came into conflict with the new leadership as they did with Novotny's regime. However, the conflict did not last for a long time since the influential liberal officials already within the party and those who were newly recruited did not intend to put further barriers before the new economic model. In addition to the principles embodied in the model in 1964, the new party leadership was willing to advance them by abolishing the political bureaucracy in the economy. This would mean that all the important economic positions would be filled by experts and not by party bureaucrats, as was the case prior to 1968.

Decentralization followed and there were the steps toward the introduction of a market economy rather than maintaining the old and ineffective centralized planning. In the Action Program of April 5, 1968, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia went completely over to the new more radical economic model. In June, 1968, Dubcek came out in favour of workers' councils as the best way to give the workers direct participation in the management of the enterprises.³⁹ It meant a complete decentralization of the system. Almost overnight, the first workers' councils started functioning in the Ostrava-Karvina Mines and their number grew rapidly all over the country.⁴⁰

We can conclude that an open conflict between the economists and the party caused the fall of the conservative Communist Party leadership led by Novotny prior to 1968. The new model was fully

accepted, implemented and further developed under Dubcek's leadership. It meant smoothing out the conflict since the party was willing to meet the demands of the economists after the takeover the leadership by Alexander Dubcek. The questioning of outdated and conservative centralized planning and of bureaucratic party rule was very successful. The economists proved they had been a strong group, and a successful one in their struggle against the political bureaucracy and in questioning one of the basic principles of Communism - centralized planning.

The Slovaks

The Slovaks were another cause of the fall of Novotny's regime.

There are three factors to be considered in the so-called "Slovak question": the political, the economic, and the social.

In the political area of conflict, the Slovaks exerted pressure on the party to have their national rights recognized. In their struggle with Prague, the Slovaks had sought complete independence from Prague.

The efforts of the Slovaks to create an independent Communist Slovakia have their roots in World War II.

The Slovak Communist Party which was struggling for the independence of Slovakia was created as an illegal organization in the Slovak state during 1939-45. The Slovak state was an ally of Hitler, and the aim of the Slovak Communist Party was a Slovak Soviet Socialist Republic. This was to be achieved through the Slovak National

Uprising in August 1944. Since the problem of future Czechoslovakia had already been worked out with the Benes government in exile, Moscow became suspicious of the local nationalistic movement and did not support the Uprising.⁴¹

In 1943, the Slovak National Council (SNC) was created. Its purpose was to organize the Slovak uprising against the Germans. When the SNC came out from its underground existence in 1944, it exercised the entire legislative, governmental and executive power in Slovakia. Both Moscow and the Benes government were forced to recognize the fact that Slovakia had a governing body which insisted on acting as its spokesman in any future Czechoslovak government.⁴²

The official government program (The Kosice Program), proclaimed upon the Benes government's return to Czechoslovakia in April 1945, pledged full equality as the basis of Czech - Slovak relations and recognized the SNC as the sole source of governmental power in Slovakia.

After the May 1946 elections, however, the Czech Communists argued that the problem of Slovak nationalism was a socio-economic one; given socialist development (i.e. an improvement in the economic position of Slovakia and social organization), the nationalistic demands for political independence, and with them the entire problem, would disappear.

The new Slovak Board of Commissioners was created and was made responsible to the central government Cabinet in Prague in addition to the SNC presidium. The relative positions of the governmental organs were settled by the Constitution of May 1948.⁴³ This was a strongly centralist document which left the Slovak organs with little but formal powers.

Under the Constitution, a three-fifths majority of the Assembly was required for any amendment to the Constitution especially affecting the status of Slovakia. As more than three-fifths of the members were Czechs, Slovak opposition alone would not be sufficient to prevent the Czechs from amending the Slovak status in any way they wished.⁴⁴ As a result of such formal provisions, the SNC meetings became less frequent and legislation was replaced by administrative decrees from Prague.

After the absorption of the Communist Party of Slovakia into the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in July, 1948, the Communist Party of Slovakia was no longer independent.⁴⁵ Shortly thereafter the purges of the so-called Slovak "bourgeois nationalists" began. It affected those Slovak leaders who "might represent a threat to this renewed subordination."⁴⁶

In 1960 a new Socialist Constitution significantly reduced Slovak powers. Socialism was said to be victorious in Czechoslovakia, and no significant powers were required from the Slovak national organs. With the 1960 Constitution the Slovak Board of Commissioners was abolished. The Constitution further stipulated that the SNC may legislate only when authorized to do so by the Czechoslovak National Assembly. The Assembly, nonetheless, retained its veto right. As Jozef Lenart, then a Slovak Communist Party secretary admitted, "many people saw in the 1960 changes a liquidation of the Slovak national organs" along with the rights of the Slovak people.⁴⁷

In the political conflict between the Slovaks and the centralized power in Prague, the Slovaks presented three major demands: firstly,

they demanded rehabilitation of the so-called "bourgeois nationalists"; secondly, they demanded the complete revaluation of Slovak modern history, particularly the Slovak National Uprising; thirdly, they demanded the transformation of the state into a federation on the basis of Slovak political independence from the Czechs.

The first two demands can hardly be dealt with separately. The Slovak "bourgeois nationalists" were sentenced (the leader, Slansky, was hanged) for being accused of subversion in the Slovak National Uprising, which was not adequately appreciated either by the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in Prague or by Moscow. The Uprising was said to be leading to the separation of Slovakia, and, as such, it was to be treated as a betrayal of Communist Party ideology. It was not until August, 1963, that the Supreme Court of Czechoslovakia acquitted of all charges those who had been accused of "bourgeois nationalism."

At the end of August 1963, an editorial by Gustav Husak in the progressive Slovak literary weekly, Kulturny zivot, praised the Uprising as the effort of a whole people for liberation and the restoration of the Czechoslovak Republic. Another writer even compared the Uprising to the founding of the Czechoslovak Republic in 1919.⁴⁸

Rehabilitation of the "bourgeois nationalists" was mainly the result of the Slovak intellectuals. They started campaigning for completion of rehabilitation as soon as possible. The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia was strongly criticized for delaying de-Stalinization in Czechoslovakia.

Another factor that sped up the rehabilitation was the forthcoming

twentieth anniversary of the Slovak National Uprising. In both instances, the party was aware of being slow in correcting political deformations from the early fifties. The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia was "ready" for rehabilitation especially after the Slovaks invited Nikita Khrushchev to visit Slovakia as a special guest at the twentieth anniversary of the Slovak National Uprising.

The major principle gained by this campaign was recognition of the fact that the Uprising had been a Slovak undertaking planned and executed by Slovaks, not by Moscow or by Czech (or even Slovak) emigres in Moscow.⁴⁹ The Slovaks achieved recognition of the fact that the Uprising had been the work not merely of the Slovak Communists but of non-Communist Slovaks as well. This justified their policy of coalition with the Slovak democrats.⁵⁰ Thus, the Communist Party of Slovakia could with pride admit to nationalism without the "bourgeois" label.

Thirdly, the Slovaks' demands for federalization were justified, especially with the regard to the neglected development of the Slovak economy. The growth of production was slow. Wages and salaries of Slovak workers were far below the level of their Czech counterparts. The Slovak organs had no power and political judgements in Prague rather than economic necessity underlay major economic decisions. As a result, thousands of the Slovak workers migrated to the Czech lands, which, in turn, only created further economic backwardness and social difficulties.

Federation was regarded as the only acceptable solution for the

equalization of the rights of Slovaks. After June, 1963, the Slovaks made their claims for the independence of Slovakia on many occasions. Nevertheless, it must be emphasized that the Slovaks wanted reform rather than secession. News about "Slovak nationalism" reached even Moscow. In June, 1966, Brezhnev visited Bratislava, capital of Slovakia, to give his personal warnings of danger of the Slovak "nationalism." Because Moscow relied on Novotny's reports, it understood little of Slovakia's position.

Slovak opposition to Prague was directed against Novotny who personally strongly opposed the Slovaks. He refused to proceed with the rehabilitation of the Slovak "bourgeois nationalists" mainly because he himself was involved in arranging the political trial. He also saw federalization as "neo-bourgeois nationalism."

An important event in the emergence of the idea of federalization occurred in 1965, when a national federalization and political freedom was openly demanded. At the time, the Slovaks were forbidden by the party to commemorate the Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary of the birth of Ludovit Stur, the representative of the Slovak nation in the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the great reformer in the struggle for the rights of Slovak people.

Stur was regarded as anti-Marxist since his movement opposed the 1848 Hungarian revolution. This opposition had, in fact, been based upon the strong anti-Magyar sentiment of the Slovaks, who looked upon the Magyars as the great obstacle to their freedom as a nation.

Stur had been condemned by Marx himself for this movement. Any

remembrance of Stur, therefore, was not permitted by the party. As a result, a wide national discussion about national freedom had been started by the progressive journals such as Kulturny zivot⁵¹ and Praca⁵²

Marx's condemnation of Stur was an obstacle to any return to Stur's national concept of the foundation of socialist life. The condemnation was dismissed by Gustav Husak who argued that "Marx had not been sympathetic to the smaller nationalities of the Habsburg empire. Marx was willing to see the Slavs and the Slovaks assimilated into a multinational empire. He wanted them to surrender their 'national freedom' for 'political freedom'."⁵³

A nationwide discussion followed. Some openly demanded "national federation" and some wanted political freedom.⁵⁴ The idea of federation was attracting a good deal of attention at the November 10-12, 1965, session of the Czechoslovak National Assembly, and, it must be stressed, was condemned by its president as a manifestation of "narrow nationalism."⁵⁵

The Slovak Communist Party Institute of History in March 1967 organized a discussion on Czech-Slovak relations to debate this issue. It was argued that "political decentralism is sound and good idea, that the 'centralist mania' in politics means underestimation of the creative potential and the advantages for the whole state."⁵⁶

Similar ideas were pressed by historian Gosiorovsky, who praised the pre-Republic Pittsburg Agreement, and especially its proposition for a "Czech-Slovak federation with two parliaments."⁵⁷

The political conflict between the Slovaks and the centrist party

dogmatism had been felt in its social consequences: Prague failed to refer to the nations as equal. There was always a tendency to use adjective Czech without heeding the Slovaks. For example, one would hear or read of "Czech" film, the "Czech-German Games", "Czech money." World famous Slovak artists were called "Czech" artists in propaganda for abroad. In all the national institutions only the Czechs were employed. According to the reliable sources in the Czechoslovak government, the Czechoslovak foreign service, for instance, had employed as many as 96 percent Czechs prior to 1968.

The CPC daily Rude pravo received thousands of complaints that Slovak culture was neglected, that Slovak subjects were not given enough attention in the country.⁵⁸ In response to such complaints, the party demanded a campaign to overcome "little things."⁵⁹

The culmination of the conflict between the Slovaks and the party leaders occurred on the occasion of the Hundredth anniversary of the founding of Matica slovenska, an organization designated to educate and enlighten the Slovak people, their language and tradition. The President and the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia directly affronted the Slovak nation by refusing to accept an album of Slovak manuscripts personally dedicated to him. The album was returned with a postal rejection slip, signed in President's own hand, "Sent back, addressee does not wish to receive."⁶⁰

Slovak opposition to Novotny became critical in September, 1967, at the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia Plenum, when Novotny again rejected Slovak economic and social demands, and

labelled Dubcek (the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Slovakia at the time) the prime exponent of "neo-bourgeois nationalism." This course of action was a very familiar tool of Novotny's maneuvering in reaction to Slovak national rights.

Shortly thereafter, the Slovak Communist Party in Trencin forwarded an official petition to Dubcek in his capacity of First Secretary of the Slovak Communist Party, demanding Novotny's dismissal because of his open and direct discrimination against the Slovaks.

Thus, the Slovaks were one of the causes of the fall of Novotny. With his resignation from the post of the President of Czechoslovakia on March 22, 1968, the new liberal attitudes of Dubcek to the Slovaks problems were different from those of his predecessor in the party. Under Josef Smrkovsky, the new Chairman of the National Assembly, the Czechoslovak Parliament set up a study Committee on the question of federalization. On June 24-28, the Plenum of the National Assembly passed the constitutional law to make preparations for federalization.

On October 27, 1968, the law establishing federalization was passed in the Assembly. Finally, on December 18-21, laws were passed establishing new relations between the Czechs and the Slovaks. Federalization came into existence on January 1, 1969. Czechoslovakia was divided into two republics, the Slovak Socialist Republic and the Czech Socialist Republic, under the auspices of the common federal government. New ministries were formed, and the Slovak National Council was granted a full constitutional and legislative powers.

To conclude, the Slovaks' struggle for their political, economic

and social independence resulted in federation between the two nations. The Slovaks posed a serious problem to Leninism and the party in their conflict with the centralized party bureaucracy. They questioned the "nationality question", which Leninism links only to the existence of bourgeoisie,⁶¹ and which Stalinism regarded as a gradually diminishing phenomenon.⁶²

The Slovaks were not only able to achieve the rehabilitation of the "bourgeois nationalists" and to restore the pride of their Slovak National Uprising against Hitler, but they also achieved their long historical aim - federalization and an independent republic. This was possible only because of the new attitudes to the nationality question held by the liberal Communist Party under Dubcek in 1968, when conflict culminated and demands of the Slovaks were met.

The Intellectuals

This group includes all professional artists, authors and writers in the communications media. This group was very critical of the party ideology and the conflict between the two was continuous. However, it would be misleading to argue that the intellectuals became the strong anti-party spokesmen of the Czechoslovak people right after the coup d'état. On the contrary, they were the ones who had been recruited to the staff of the new party government during the first decade of Communist rule.

Their disillusionment with the party ideology, its economic and political policies came to the party's attention especially after

Stalin's death, during the Second Congress of the Czechoslovak Writers' Union in 1956.

The political trials of innocent people was the main reason for the intellectuals' disillusionment with the party. The intellectuals not only accused the party of conducting such trials but they also attacked the party's policies of not allowing them to write about the purges. The party's strong censorship of the press caused the conflict between the intellectuals and the Communist Party.

The intellectuals' main grievances lay in their limited rights of expression and their lack of freedom of speech. Consequently, they were prevented from making open demands on the party. The intellectuals were dissatisfied with such party practices as the slow de-Stalinization, unsatisfactory revaluation of the Slovak National Uprising, and, especially, with the rehabilitation of political prisoners in general and of the Slovak "bourgeois nationalists" in particular. None of this criticism of the party malpractices could appear in the press. Therefore, the intellectuals used their Writers' Union as a platform for their attack on the party. Especially after the revelation of the Stalin's "cult of personality" in 1956, the intellectuals no longer considered themselves to be the servants of the party.

A serious attack on the party took place at the Third Congress of the Writers' Union in 1963. This attack resulted in a wide range of reprisals against the intellectuals. At the December Central Committee

of the party Plenum, the party worked out a policy statement on the press and published it in the party organs in April, 1964.⁶³ It was a criticism rather than appraisal. Such outspoken progressive journals as Kulturny zivot, Kulturni tvorba, and Literarni noviny were affected by the imposition of stronger censorship. They were read by the most of the people and had the greatest influence of all the Czechoslovak publications.

The journals questioned the party's ideology, especially in their weekly editorials. Literarni noviny, for instance, published an interview with a Hungarian Marxist philosopher Georgy Lukacs who is considered to be a revisionist and whose views were rejected by the Hungarian Communists.⁶⁴

The journals responded sharply on the party's measures. Kulturny zivot, for instance, answered straightforwardly:

Nothing would have been more convenient but also more irresponsible and immoral than to accept the critique with penitence and especially accept it formally as it used to be done in similar cases in the past (when) sectarian methods prevailed in the management of the cultural front.⁶⁵

Invoking Khrushchev, the editors concluded that they had become accustomed to "criticizing and criticizing sharply, and we have no intention of burning two candles...we prefer to burn our fingers by dealing with serious ideological problems."

It was clear that the target of the intellectuals was not a party leader but the Communist Party as such. Eugen Loeb, for instance, put it in the Kulturny zivot: "There should not be the tendency of placing the blame on the individual, be it the Pope or Stalin."⁶⁶

As expected, the party prevented the publication of the Kulturny zivot, the Literarni noviny, Tvar, and the Knizni kultura. From 1965 on, the journals were closed many times and their publication was resumed again because of popular protests and criticism on the part of the party. Such party journals as Zivot strany, the Rude pravo and the Pravda sharply attacked the liberal articles in many of the journals.⁶⁷

Conflict between the intellectuals and the party intensified when, at the Thirteenth Party Congress in June 1966, Novotny announced that there would be a law on censorship.⁶⁸ The law was approved by the National Assembly in October, at the time of the Central Committee Plenum.

Novotny's well known hard-line speech to the Plenum flourished with criticism of the "bias in the entire cultural sphere and particularly in the cultural periodicals and in cultural journals in general." He charged them with the inconsistency, "narrow-mindedness", "underestimation of the ideological struggle", and disregard of "frank critical warnings."⁶⁹

The law on censorship became effective on January 1, 1967.⁷⁰ It placed the press under the control of the Ministry of Education and Culture (instead of the Ministry of Interior) and established a Central Administration for Publications, whose functions was, in effect, censorship. Furthermore, the directives given to the officials of the new administration went beyond even the provisions of the Press Law itself.⁷¹ This restricted even more the degree of freedom enjoyed

and utilized by the writers since 1963, and provoked a revolt at the Fourth Writers' Congress in June 1967.

At the Congress, the writers protested the censorship. The letter of Alexander Solzhenitsyn protesting censorship and persecution of progressive writers was read. This was considered outrageous by the party bureaucrats present; they left the meeting hall in protest! The walkout inspired further discussions by such prominent writers as Ivan Klima, Milan Kundera, and Ludvik Vaculik. (The latter, in 1968, was the author of the famous "Two Thousand Words to the Czechoslovak People" published on June 27, 1968, in which he called for an armed struggle against Communism.⁷²)

The Congress morally rejected the regime, especially after an incident with the party about the Arab-Israeli war. After the establishment of the Israeli state, Czechoslovakia supported it. However, after the Arab threat against Israel, the Czechoslovak government took a pro-Arab stand. This political dualism was strongly rejected by the intellectuals and they attacked the party for it. Many intellectuals drew analogies between the small state of Israel and the small state of Czechoslovakia. Both, in different times in history, were fighting for their very survival. For this reason, contrary to the party, the intellectuals took a pro-Israeli stand.

Despite the warnings of the party's chief ideologist, the Congress passed a resolution against censorship, interference by the party and its malicious policies both domestic and foreign.⁷³ The resolution was published in the Literarni noviny on July 8, 1967.

The party leadership reacted to the Writers' Congress with a furious counterattack. In September, 1967, the Central Committee of the Communist Party met. Novotny accused the Writers' Congress of having prearranged its position in Paris and Bonn. As a result, Klima, Liehm and Ludvik Vaculik were expelled from the party. In addition, the party changed the entire editorial board of the Literarni noviny, and named Novotny's nominees to the board.

As a result of Novotny's policies, the journal was boycotted by almost all its readers and its circulation dropped by the three-fourths.

Conflict between the party and the intellectuals had gradually intensified, especially after Dubcek succeeded Novotny as the First Secretary of the CPC on January 6, 1968. Although censorship had not been abolished until June 24, 1968, it did not function properly. The great stream of opposition was impossible to stop. The party was criticized more and more from all sides. The mass media became a good platform for a mass relief.

The Literarni noviny (The Literary News) was reestablished as Literarni listy (The Literary Pages). Circulation of dailies and weeklies rose astronomically, checked only by the lack of newsprint and the capacity of the printing presses. The communication media ended their discussions with the "one statesman (Novotny) policy" and started writing about the whole body of the party and government. The media were the main vehicle of the democratization. Moving further than merely criticizing the party, they published the "Two Thousand Words to the Czechoslovak People", calling for an open armed struggle against Communism, its

evils and ills. The intellectuals called for a democratic society with no authoritarian rule, and for a return to the Czechoslovak democratic tradition.⁷⁴

The call for an open armed struggle of the population caused the Czechoslovak government and the Central Committee of the CPC to protest. Although both of them denounced the idea as being dangerous, no prosecution followed. Many journals defended their views.⁷⁵

The old "intellectuals vs. party" conflict was gradually diminishing. Dubcek's desire to take a democratic course in society, to re-establish democratic rights and to build "Socialism with a human face", responded to many of the arguments made by the intellectuals.

However, the intellectuals' old rival Novotny was still President of Czechoslovakia. They could not forgive him for his repression of the media. Many of the journals, therefore, published an open letter, in which they asked him in the name of the Czechoslovak people, to resign. He did so on March 22, 1968.⁷⁶

In sum, the intellectuals posed a serious problem to the party. They questioned its very foundation, its ideology and its policies. They mobilized the Czechoslovak population by exerting pressure on the party to reestablish the basic democratic rights, to improve better management of the economy and to again become the society which would be appreciated not only by Europe, but also by the world, as it had been twenty years earlier.

The intellectuals had been successful in their conflict with the party. Censorship was abolished and their demands had been met.

The Students and Youth

Students and youth in general were another very strong social group that exerted its pressure on Novotny's regime from outside the party. It may be said that the students in particular shared the success of other groups in helping to undermine the conservative pre-1968 political bureaucracy.

There are two main points to be made from the analysis of this group in its relation to the party. First, the students demanded an end to the discrimination which they considered a limitation of basic human rights. Second, there was a demand for the reorganization of the Czechoslovak Youth League (CSM), which was considered to be a "transmission belt" of the party ideology rather than a platform for the express of ideas.

The students' and the youth's conflict with the party is an old one. The impulse for its existence came from the party. After the coup d'etat, it adopted the principle that only the sons and daughters of the working class would be allowed to study.

Thousand of young people had been affected by this senseless rule. Those who had already started their study were expelled. Only the lucky ones who made an appeal to the President of Czechoslovakia were granted permission to study. This was the case of this writer.

On the other hand, the party forced all the young people to join the Czechoslovak Youth League (CSM), which became a "transmission belt" of the party official ideology.⁷⁷

The CSM was forced to adopt principles of the party line and was

to be committed to the party.⁷⁸ As early as 1964, the students accused the CSM of formalism, because of the tacit rule making admission to an institute of higher education dependent on joining the League and obtaining the backing of the local CSM organization. The Communist daily, Rude pravo, published some of the criticisms of such malpractice and rejected the idea that "anyone who does not share the Marxist world view is unsuitable for studying."⁷⁹

Student unrest grew. Students, and those who had been denied entry to higher education, were becoming a political segment of society a fact that created difficulties in their relationship with the party.⁸⁰ The relationship was becoming conflictful rather than the cooperative one it supposed to be. This was apparent after the Conference of the university students in Prague in December, 1965. Jiri Mueller, a student at the Prague Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, demanded the complete reorganization of the CSM along representative and federative lines. "The reorganized youth organ", he said, "should function as a politically active pressure group in society at large."⁸¹

The party reacted to Mueller's criticism by expelling him from the university and drafting him into the army. Mueller's radical views were supported by the majority of the young people and were widely discussed in the Student, Literarni noviny and Smena. The discussion preceeded the June, 1967, CSM Congress in Prague. At the Slovak CSM Congress, even Dubcek himself accepted the idea that "greater attention should be given to various groups within the society."⁸²

However, at the 5-9 June, 1967, CSM Congress in Prague, none of the radical students were permitted to give speeches. The delegates to the Congress were hand-picked, and discussion about the Mueller issue had been prevented. Nevertheless, criticism of the CSM and the party "hard-handed rule" continued.

Conflict between the students and the party was strengthened by the events of October 30, 1967, when more than two thousand student residents of the Prague technical College Strahov went to the streets in protest against the poor conditions in their hostel. They were beaten and tear-gassed by the police.

On November 8, the traditional activist students of the Charles University Faculty of Philosophy held a five-hour meeting to protest the police brutality. This meeting passed a resolution which was sent to the Minister of Education and the Minister of Interior. In addition, the resolution was sent to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and the Central Committee of the CSM. The students demanded: immunity of the academic grounds, identification and the punishment of the policemen responsible for the beatings, number tags for the policemen to make them easily identifiable, prohibition of the use of chemical gas against citizens, a National Assembly hearings on the Strahov events, publication of the investigation results, accurate and extensive press reporting of the events.⁸³

The students' resolution demanded completion of the investigation by 30 November. Another students' meeting was to take place on November 17, on the occasion of the International Student Day.⁸⁴ The mass demon-

stration scheduled on the Student Day was banned by the party. The students were angered by such an action of the party, and drew a parallel between Hitler who closed all Czech universities, and the Communist Party which forbade the commemoration of such a historical event. The angered students asked the government, the party and all the university officials to attend their further meeting on November 20. The meeting took place, and, since the party did not seem to respond to the students demands, the students set a deadline for the completion of the Strahov incident investigation no later than by December 15.

Fearing further student action, the party published the results of the investigation in its daily Rude pravo on December 15, 1967. Most of the students' demands were not granted. However, the Government's report did find the police guilty of "unduly harsh measures." The minister of Interior was instructed to look into the shortcomings uncovered by the investigation. Persons responsible for the conditions in the hostel were punished, although there were to be no criminal proceedings in connection with the demonstration.⁸⁵

The damage to the party caused by the students affairs was almost immediate. Three weeks later Novotny was struggling for his secretaryship in the party.

Dubcek's election was seen by the students as a commitment by the party leaders to greater freedom in the universities. The students enthusiastically went into the reform movement. Their support of Cestmir Cisar as a new presidential candidate is a well known example of their involvement.

Universities established independent student councils. At the CC of the CSM, the structure of the League was undergoing a reform. On March 21, the chairman of the CSM, Miroslav Zavadil, resigned. New political activism found its most coherent expression in the Student, published by Prague students and edited by Ivan Svitak. Its pages contained some of the most searching discussions concerning democratization and by far the most radical demands. Also Mlada fronta and Smena, the dailies of the CSM, became outspoken propagators of a democratic society.

The youth support of Dubcek was the most remarkable during the time, in 1968, when the country had its hour of trial. They faced Russian tanks unarmed. Although their efforts to save democracy not only for themselves but also for the country already bore the marks of futility (e.g., the self-immolation of Jan Palach), their activism was heroic and unprecedented.

In conclusion, youth, and students in particular, very seriously questioned the basic principle of Marxism in the party. They questioned the structure of the political organization (CSM) and its role as a "transmission belt" of the party ideology. Their aim, however, was a different interpretation of Marxism rather than the destruction of Socialism.

The youth movement achieved its aim (admission to advanced education for the restricted strata of population) in the conflict with the party. Furthermore, the Youth League ceased to be a "transmission belt" of the party ideology, and, especially during 1968, both the structure and the policies of the League underwent drastic changes. The League

began to be a platform for exercising the rights of the youth and students. In 1968, the League was an ally of the party, spreading its liberal ideas among the young people all over the country.

However, it would never again voluntarily become a platform for ideas which would be in basic contradiction to the healthy consciousness of the Czechoslovak youth.

The Political Parties and Other Groups of Political Opposition

Political parties came into an open conflict with the Communist Party as early as 1963. The non-Communist parties were considered to be mere puppets and the servant of the Communist Party. Since 1963, however, there was a sign of the struggle within the parties for greater independence from the Communist Party. The main target of the parties and other political groups, therefore, was opposition to the leading role of the Communist Party and demands for freedom of expression and greater representation of dissenting opinions in the Czechoslovak government. It was felt that the National Front, which consisted of the four other political parties, did not provide such a platform. Its function was considered to be too formal and too vague. Many theoreticians felt that the National Front existed only for the sake of the "people's democracy" label.⁸⁶ In fact, the National Front was no platform at all for expressing people's opinions.

Julius Strinka was among the first and the most important theoreticians to make such criticism publicly. In his article "Two Concepts

of the Dialectics of Socialism", published in the journal Otazky Marxistickéj Filozofie (The Questions of the Marxist Philosophy), Strinka publicly called for an "institutionalized criticism of the party or its opposition."⁸⁷

Dissatisfaction with the non-Communist parties which did not perform their function the way they were supposed to provoked further criticism on the part of the Communist Party. For instance, in his provocative article "Some Problems of Socialist Democracy From the Viewpoint of the Citizen's Position in Our Society", Michal Lakatos argued that criticism, in his words the "clash of opinions", provided the motor force in society, the "dynamics of progress."⁸⁸ He argued that "there is always a clash between the rulers and the ruled since the former, in their effort to find harmony, in fact resort to manipulation, greater control and strong discipline."⁸⁹

Political parties also expressed their views publicly. An official spokesman for the non-Communist parties, Svobodne slovo (The Free Word) openly demanded free elections. The paper put it this way: "The representative political bodies must be truly representative, based upon free elections, so that all the different and varying strata of groups in society might be truly represented."⁹⁰

It was felt that the leaders of the non-Communist parties were corrupted by the Communist Party, and, therefore, were not interested in representing the opinions of their members. The leaders were suspected of being Communist themselves since they willingly obeyed the orders of the Communist Party.

Elections to the non-Communist parties had been a puzzle. There had been no campaign made for joining the parties. Agendas of their Plenums were never publicly discussed and the news about them never appeared on the front page. The membership basis had been kept secret and it is said to have had a ceiling.

It was argued that the political parties should also be "the real carrier of politics and not merely a formal representative."⁹¹ "Political institutions should be developed in such a way as to give a free scope to the initiative of the masses."⁹²

Conflict between the non-Communist parties and the Communist Party was strengthened by 1967. Even the Ministry of Defence weekly Obrana lidu published a strong criticism of the Communist Party. "As long as the (Communist) Party refuses to admit any possible discrepancy between its interests and those of various strata of society," the article argued, "it should expect some dissatisfaction among the population. Public opinion should be heard, accepted and respected."⁹³ (Emphasis added).

Most of the criticism argued that the question of the political opposition should not be only the business of political parties. Since the issue was related to a whole society, sociologists assumed leadership in the discussions. The sociologist, Miroslav Jodl, went as far as to say that

among all the nations of the Soviet bloc, we are probably the most democratic, a nation with the strongest tradition of local autonomy, a nation, which has known and appreciates fully the freedom of the press, the freedom of expression and asso-

ciation...whose concept of democracy has always been connected with the social and socialist concept.⁹⁴

Conflict reached its climax during the Fourth Czechoslovak Writers' Congress in June, 1967, when Ludvik Vaculik, in his speech to the Congress, clearly and directly attacked the leading role of the party as written into the Czechoslovak Constitution of 1960, calling this totalitarianism.⁹⁵ He criticized the party for its incapability, for its unwillingness to listen to the people, and for the post-war failure. "Not one human question has been solved in the course of last twenty years", Vaculik argued, and proposed that the Constitution be changed to make the power of the Communist Party and the rights of citizens equal.⁹⁶

Nothing had changed prior to 1968, except for the fact that Vaculik was expelled from the party. Revitalization of the non-Communist parties followed the "Prague Spring." The Czechoslovak People's Party, the Czechoslovak Socialist Party, and the Slovak Freedom Party forced their leaders to resign. New leadership was elected mostly because of the collaboration of the former leaders with the Communist Party. The membership basis was strengthened, and the ceiling for the number of members of each party was considered to be invalid. The membership rapidly increased, for instance, in the Czechoslovak People's Party from 21,000 in March, 1968 to 82,000 in June, 1968.⁹⁷

Journals such as Obroda, Zitrek, and Ahoj which were operating before the Communist takeover in 1948 resumed their publication. The press became more active and placed the parties in direct opposition

to many views of the Communist Party. The former Social Democrats within the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia made an attempt to reconstitute a Social Democratic political organization separate and distinct from the Communist Party. The Social Democratic organizations sprang up over the country almost overnight. It was alarming when Frantisek Kriegel, a chairman of the National Assembly at the time, argued that "the Communist Party had the power but the Social Democrats had the popularity."⁹⁸ However, conflict with the Social Democrats was accommodated within the Communist Party by offering the most outspoken members the highest posts in the state and the Communist party bureaucracy.

There is no precise statistical evidence publicly known that might reveal the membership of the non-Communist political parties as compared to that of the Communist Party (1,800,000 members at the time of the invasion). However, their popularity was rapidly growing among the population. The same may be said about the Communist Party. (As many as 300,000 new members joined the Communist Party during the first eight months of 1968.) Thus, popularity of the Communist Party increased due to its effort to introduce democracy in Czechoslovakia. The non-Communist political parties' strength had also been supported by other social groups, which were strongly determined to join a political opposition.

Among the most committed groups which were bearing all the marks of embryo political parties was the Club of Committed non-Party Members (Klub angazovanych nestranniku - KAN). It was a grouping of non-par-

ty people for the express purpose of engaging in political activity. For instance, they intended to nominate their candidates in the next elections and to secure representation at all levels of government. The KAN was formed in April, 1968, and officially applied to the Prague Municipal Committee for registration so that it could legally perform its political activities. The aim of the group's candidates was to present a real challenge to the Communist Party by obtaining positions of equality with the Communist Party members in their professional and political careers.

Another group, and, it must be stressed, the strongest among all of them, was that of K-231 (Club 231). It was formed at the end of March, 1968, with the objective of accomplishing the rehabilitation of all those who stood trial under the notorious Law 231 and were sentenced during the purges in the early 1950s.

The K-231 consisted of those imprisoned for having participated in the resistance movement in 1939-45 or for having served in the Czech or Slovak army under the leadership of the Western allies. Others were sentenced for being "Titoists." Within two months of its founding, the Club had 30,000 members. Its membership was expected to soar to an estimated 132,000.⁹⁹

The K-231 may be said to have achieved a real success. On June 26, 1968, the National Assembly passed the law on the rehabilitation of political prisoners. However, it can be argued that a share of this success may also be attributed to the wide public.

The third political group to demand legal recognition was the

League for Human Rights. There are no statistics available as to the strength of the group. However, its activities indicated that its function was to demand basic human rights. Thus, it was expected, the League would be joined by thousands of people.

The League very openly exerted pressure on the party to pass the law guaranteeing freedom of association. The party promised to comply.

By the middle of June, 1968, there had been as many as seventy different social groups requesting registration with the Ministry of Interior. All of them intended to join political opposition against the Communist Party. For this reason only the League for Human Rights was granted such a permission. The party considered the situation very carefully since it feared that growing dissent among the population would endanger not only its leading role in the society, but its very existence as well. However, granting an immediate permission to the League for Human Rights indicated the party's very sincere intention to keep its promise to take a new political course based on the principles of real democracy.

To conclude, we can argue, that there had been strong pressure from the political parties and other political groups against the Communist Party. They demanded real representation of the non-Communist population in the Czechoslovak government. Their membership basis was rapidly growing and was supported by the wide mass of the population. Dissent among the population was growing during 1968. There had been as many as seventy different political groups which may be said to be embryo

political parties. The Communist Party carefully observed their programs and structure, and slowly considered their legacy.

The party feared their strength might endanger its leading role in society and its very existence. Although it had decided to pursue a more liberal and democratic course it still intended the Communist Party to have a leading role.

There is no doubt that the strong political opposition of the parties and other political groups sped up the fall of the conservative party and its dogmatic ideology. They helped the liberals take power in the party. For this reason the party did not restrict their activities in 1968 and allowed the creation (in fact, if not by law) of other political groups. What might have happened after a year or a couple of years had there been no invasion, one can only speculate.

The political opposition of all the groups outside the Communist Party, no doubt, was the main cause of the fall of the conservative Novotny's regime in 1968. It was these social groups which exerted the strongest pressure on the party to have its policies changed. The economists, the Slovaks, the students and the youth, the intellectuals, the political parties and those seventy different groups engaged in the political opposition, had been the main stream of force against Novotny's regime. It was pressure that the party could not resist. In essence, it was the economic, social and cultural conditions of Czechoslovakia that required improvement without delay.

The conditions created conflict between those who had been the only spokesmen of behalf of the national economy, education, and cul-

ture, and the party. It was not a conflict that could have been overcome overnight. It required basic changes in the society. The essence of the party structure would have to be changed. It was a conflict which questioned the capability and ideology of the party at large. The economists, for instance, questioned the senseless and centralized unprofitable planning and proposed free competition, a market economy, and adaptability of prices. This would essentially improve conditions for the growth of the Czechoslovak economy, and, consequently, a growth in the standard of living.

The Slovaks posed a serious problem for the party. On one hand, they questioned its theoretical socialist "equality" in propaganda purposes, and, on the other hand, they opposed subordination to the party and its strong centralized rule.

The intellectuals in their conflict with the party questioned a very basic principle of Communism, namely freedom for society as a whole, and demanded instead freedom for individuals and removal of the restrictions imposed on the basic human rights.

The students and the youth questioned the party's interference with "free" education and the privilege of the working class in the sphere of higher learning. Youth in particular protested being a "transmission belt" of the party ideology and demanded reorganization of its League (CSM) as the platform for the expression of its ideas and activities.

Finally, the non-Communist parties questioned a very basic prin-

ciple of the Communist Constitution - the existence of the National Front and their forced subordination to the Communist Party in that Front. They demanded a real representation of the Czechoslovak non-Communist population in the government, and even free elections. They questioned a very basic principle of Marxism-Leninism - the leading role of the Communist Party in Czechoslovakia.

New political organizations were created in 1968 which gave the people an opportunity to mobilize their support for Dubcek, to express their views and their ideas about the state they lived in.

It must be stressed that all the social groups had been very successful in exerting their pressure on the Communist Party. The New Economic Model was accepted and even further elaborated. The law giving legality and acceptance of the federalization of Czechoslovakia was passed by the National Assembly. Censorship was abolished and freedom of expression reintroduced. Thousands of innocent political prisoners were rehabilitated. The youth organizations were reorganized and no restrictions were imposed on education or the students. The activities of the political parties and the newly established political groups (e.g. KAN, K-231, etc.) with an anti-Communist program were allowed, although still carefully observed.

Social groups outside the Communist Party were the main stream for the anti-conservative party movement. No other groups outside the party had any significant influence on the events in Czechoslovakia during the period of 1967-68. It was mainly the social groups analyzed above which caused the fall, in 1968, of the old outlived, conservative

and dogmatic Novotny's regime.

However, the social groups outside the party had been only one important force to have caused drastic changes in the Czechoslovak political system.

The other important force that hurried the reintroduction of democracy was the party itself, especially the liberals within the party and the outcome of their struggle with the conservatives.

IV. CONFLICT WITHIN THE COMMUNIST PARTY

Conflict within the party itself was not new. Its roots lay in the history of the party after the Communist takeover of Czechoslovakia in 1948. Conflict, in fact, had always existed and was gradually growing until it caused a wide public mobilization of the Czechoslovak population in 1967.

Conflict within the party is very peculiar in the sense that it never caused a questioning of Communism during the past twenty years of the existence of the Communist state as openly as it did in 1968. Such basic principles of Marxism-Leninism as democratic centralism, the unity of party and state, the leading role of the party, were questioned by the high party officials themselves. They came to such a questioning after a long disillusionment, many malpractices, and the overwhelming concentration of power by the party which resulted in the greatest popular dissent Czechoslovakia has ever experienced.

There are three factors in the conflict within the party which must be analyzed to understand the questioning of the basic principles of Communism and Novotny's fall.

The first factor involves the political trials in the early 1950s. The second factor is the "Socialist " Constitution of 1960. The third factor is growing dissent among Novotny's most loyal associates.

The first factor gives us a political background for understanding the inner conflict.

The first political trials were arranged as early as 1949 and continued until the end of 1954. The purpose of the trials was to strengthen the Communist Party, and, more importantly, to evoke fear among the population and to give the party an unchallenged position in society.

The most notorious political trials took place in November, 1951, when Rudolf Slansky, the Secretary General of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia was arrested. Subsequently, on December 6, 1951, he was removed from the presidium of the party.

On the same day, Novotny replaced Slansky in the presidium. He put himself at the disposal of Stalin's and Beria's experts who came to Prague to supervise the purges. Slansky's trial took place in November, 1952. The trial's target was labeled the "anti-state conspiratorial centre", and consisted of many influential members of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. These stood trial with Slansky. All of them were Communists. They were described as the "Trotskyist-Titoist, bourgeois-nationalist traitors and enemies of the Republic and Socialism."¹ (Among them was also Vlado Clementis, the Foreign Trade Minister until March, 1950.)

Eleven of the alleged leaders of the conspiracy were sentenced to death. They were all Jewish, which was the cause for a political wave of antisemitism and hatred.

Another notorious political trial took place on April 21-24, 1954, with the Slovak "bourgeois nationalists", among whom had been the leaders of the illegal Communist Party of Slovakia during the World War II, Gus-

tav Husak, Laco Novomesky and other Slovak Communists. The charges of the trial were the same; they included contacts with Clementis and Slansky. Husak received a life sentence, the other incurred terms of imprisonment.

It must be stressed that no crime was committed by the accused. This was later confirmed by the Czechoslovak Supreme Court in the "Rehabilitation Statement" made on May 24, 1963, in the Eugen Loebel case. Loebel was the Deputy Foreign Trade Minister at the time, one of the accused with Slansky.²

Novotny's role in the trials is very evident from the statement of Karel Bacilek, the Minister of the State Security which was established by the Stalin's security "experts" for the purpose of arranging the political trials in May, 1950. Bacilek wrote about the trials in the Communist Party daily Rude pravo on December 18, 1952:

Without the great assistance of Comrades (Klement) Gottwald (the President of Czechoslovakia during the period of 1948-53), Zapotocky (President of Czechoslovakia during the period of 1953-57), Dolansky, Kopecky (both of them high party officials), and most of all, Comrade (Antonin) Novotny (emphasis added) (later party First Secretary and President of Czechoslovakia)... we would not have succeeded in clarifying in such a short time many well camouflaged problems or in securing a successful outcome of the investigation.³

Further, even more valid evidence of Novotny's involvement in the trials can be found in the official History of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (Dejiny Komunistické strany Československa), published in Bratislava in 1961. On p. 534 the report wrote concerning Novotny:

His rich revolutionary experience meant a considerable contribution to the party leadership. The Prague district

organization - the biggest one in the Republic - was among those, which combated the anti-party activities of Slansky most successfully.

Novotny was known to have refused many proposals for political rehabilitation of the political victims in the trials, not only of those who were already dead, but also of those who were still alive.

Evidence of Novotny's arrogant behaviour in connection with the political trials and his refusal to proceed with the rehabilitation is found in the Husak's personal account of the latter's eleven years imprisonment. His long series of articles was published by the Predvoj in the first months of 1968. "Many times," Husak argued, "Novotny visited the prison in person and talked to me. Upon my insistence on freeing me for I committed no crime, Novotny just laughed, said nothing, and left, still laughing."⁴

After his release from prison in 1963, Husak fought for the rehabilitation of all the innocent political prisoners. With others, he raised the question of political trials. Discussions were nationwide and become the topic of the day.

It was important for the Czechoslovak people to talk about the political trials because there were still many officials in the Central Committee of the Communist party of Czechoslovakia who had arranged the political trials of the 1950s.

The Slovak Communist party ousted those implicated in staging the trials well before the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. By 1963 there were no high party officials from the fifties left in the Commu-

nist Party of Slovakia, whereas in the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, there were still as many as seven in 1967. (See Appendix.) This is also the reason why the Slovak "bourgeois nationalists" in Slovakia exerted a nationwide pressure on Novotny.

Novotny's manner of dealing with the problem of rehabilitation contributed to his fall.

The first report on the political trials and the proposal for rehabilitation was produced in 1957. The members of the Committee who studied the problem included such people as Dubcek, Lenart, Prchlik, Graca and others, all of whom were leading liberals in 1968.

Novotny described the report as "irresponsible" and "unsatisfactory."⁵

Five years later, another Committee was appointed with the same agenda. The findings of the Committee were again disregarded by Novotny. Jiri Hendrych, responsible for ideology in the party's Central Committee, regarded them as a "provocation." Still another report was drafted which was read to the Central Committee in early April, 1963. Again there was no result.

By 1963, however, some but not all of the political prisoners were rehabilitated. The rehabilitation was incomplete even in the cases such as that of Slansky which were considered complete. Despite the fact that the Czechoslovak Supreme Court quashed the sentence against Slansky, Novotny maintained that Slansky should remain excluded from the party.

Similarly, thousands of other still living Communists were refused

readmission to the party. Such show "rehabilitation" caused not only confusion in the party, but also an open conflict and direct confrontation among various members at all levels of the party.

The second factor of conflict within the party has been attributed to the Czechoslovak Constitution of 1960.

The Constitution of 1960 was "Socialist." It stressed the leading role of the party. This emphasis was absent in the first "democratic" Constitution. It meant affirmation of and legitimacy for the party's conservative policies. The Constitution stressed the ideological dominance of the party; it said little to guarantee Czechoslovak citizens their human rights. The declaration that "Socialism was victorious in Czechoslovakia" was followed by another announcement that Czechoslovakia already was on her way to Communism. She was to be the first country among the "people's democracies" to reach such a level of Communist development.

The new "Socialist" Constitution thus replaced the former parliamentary-democratic one. The "Socialist" Constitution completely resembled the Soviet model. For instance, the Soviet declaration of the completion of the stage of Socialism had been announced just a year before, in 1959. Such dogmatically blind, mechanical following of the deeds of the Soviet Union confirmed Novotny's complete loyalty to "big brother."

Without analyzing the real conditions of Czechoslovak society, Novotny confirmed his dogmatic centralist methods, and shortly afterwards raised a wave of protest from many liberally-minded members of the party. Novotny reacted to such protest in Rude pravo of April 17, 1962, when he

said that the Constitution was to "cleanse our state of various marks of birth" of the past. Among the "marks of birth" were cited the "liberal pseudo-democratic principles of the division of power."

The division of power had been sharply criticized. The actual concentration of power had been in the hands of Novotny when, in 1957, he was elected President of the Czechoslovak Republic in addition to his post of the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.

The party apparatus was making countless organizational, administrative and economic decisions "unanimously", anonymously and inexpertly. This resulted in the universal irresponsibility, anonymity and political sterility of the party. "It was an old style and method, that had to be fundamentally changed."⁶

However, Novotny's "socialist" aspect deriving from the Constitution went even further. The year 1960 was to be a departure point in "Novotny's era." It was to be the decade of "slogans policy." The year is known for Novotny's three main political slogans: the first slogan - "By 1970, the development of agriculture will reach the level of industry; The second slogan - "By 1970, the standard of living of the countryside will reach that of the cities;" The third slogan - "By 1970, there will be one apartment for every family."

Those familiar with the problems of agriculture that followed all the Soviet models in farming realized that Novotny's declaration was pure nonsense. Not only farming, but also Czechoslovak industry was in trouble.

The standard of living in the countryside was not only low, it was decreasing even further. The youth were leaving the countryside and moving into the cities, thereby making it even harder to achieve another Novotny's goal - solving the apartment problem. The number who had to wait ten and even fifteen years for an apartment was actually growing. The party just forgot the "population explosion" in the cities. It had refused to rely on the expertise of economists or demographers.

The strong criticism of Novotny by many of the party officials was, of course, never made public. However, the party answered criticisms in the Rude pravo. On February 19, 1963, the Rude pravo accepted criticisms of the party by denouncing them: "The criticism that 'today's difficulties are only because of the Communists', are cries of anti-Communists."⁷

Any kind of criticism of the party policies had been labeled "anti-Communism", "neo-bourgeois nationalism", "giving up the struggle against the class enemy", etc., which only confirmed Novotny's dogmatism, conservatism and backwardness in understanding the reality of the life of an everyday citizen.

As 1970 was approaching, criticism of the party became even stronger. Politicians turned to more effective means of communication with Novotny. In Kulturny zivot, for instance, one writer openly questioned the right of Czechoslovakia to name itself a "Socialist Republic", pointing out many deficiencies of the party.⁸

One of the most outspoken Communists was, no doubt, Ludvik Vaculik,

a member of an all-Communist family. He denounced the Socialist Constitution of 1960 and the leading role of the party written into it by calling it totalitarianism.⁹ By giving the party its leading role, the Constitution, in fact, created a dynasty of power. The party directed the government and the citizen had no voice in or rights with regard to the party. Many advisory Committees to the party's Central Committee were created to give Novotny a detailed and convincing evidence that unity of state and party was pitiful. The concrete proposals of lawyers, historians, economists and sociologists in the form of worked out memoranda were turned down by Novotny, who found in them elements of "bourgeois nationalism", "revisionism", and "intellectual radicalism."

In 1966, after lengthy discussions, new proposals were put forward. It was intended that they might lead to the separation of the party and government, and consequently, to the end of Novotny's rule. However, not until the end of 1967 did the strong pressure within the party force Novotny to resign.

In sum, the "Socialist" Constitution along with the Novotny's senseless slogans, raised the wide wave of criticism from among the liberal party members. By questioning his dynastic power and his rule in the country, they gradually found themselves in an open conflict with Novotny and the clique of his loyal colleagues.

The third factor of conflict within the party may be attributed to the Novotny's supporters, who, when the crisis reached its climax, simply departed from him.

Relations between Novotny and his loyal colleagues were slowly but steadily worsening. He controlled all the key appointments. The "cadre policy" list for the appointment of all the party officials was recommended and approved by him. This list included members of both the party and the state. Party discipline gradually became a fetish. Labels for opposing opinions were at hand - revisionism, bourgeois nationalism, radicalism, opportunism, or anti-Communism.¹⁰

The power of the party lay in the Presidium, and its ten members were all Novotny's hand-picked men. However, his quarrel with people loyal to him seriously started in 1959, when the Minister of Interior Rudolf Barak (from 1954 to 1962) attacked Novotny's overwhelming rule in the party and the state, and advocated a division of the party and state functions. It was the same Barak who was the head of the first Commission of Inquiry into the political trials. It was well known, that Barak complained about Novotny to Khrushchev, mentioning difficulties in the society and Novotny's responsibility for them. The confidential letter also contained information about some members in the Czechoslovak presidium who were known to have taken part in the arrangement and proceedings of the political trials in Czechoslovakia in the 1950s. Unexpectedly, Khrushchev sent Barak's letter to Novotny.

In 1962, Barak was arrested and sentenced to fifteen years in prison.

It was known that Khrushchev had friendly relations with Novotny. In 1964, they vacationed together in a Slovak spa and, when Khrushchev

for "health reasons" "resigned", Novotny sent a letter to Brezhnev in which he expressed his regrets to the Soviet Union for having lost such a good chairman. Brezhnev did not forgive Novotny for this when the latter was fighting for his political survival. He came to Czechoslovakia on Novotny's personal invitation and without the knowledge of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia on December 8, 1967. When Brezhnev saw that there was strong opposition to Novotny in the Central Committee, he did not interfere and left with words: "Eto vashe dyelo" (This is your business.)¹¹

However, "brotherly" international relations between the leaders do not reveal the truth of Novotny's position in the party to the extent that internal relations do. Internal relations reveal a great deal about the concept of Novotny's "inner circle" and his tactics to keep the people in the "circle" loyal to him. It was not revealed until after the renewed trial of Barak's at the Supreme Court in Prague in 1968, when this writer also took part in the Court's proceedings.

The former Minister of Interior, Rudolf Barak, revealed clearly and openly that Novotny used bribery in the form of a blue envelope containing as much as twenty thousand crowns a month, to pay his closest friends in the presidium. These funds came from the public purse, of course. (By way of comparison, an average Czechoslovak citizen makes 1,500 crowns a month.)

The case itself revealed not only the relationship between Novotny and his "loyal" "inner circle" of high party officials, but revealed also, as the then newly appointed Chairman of the Czechoslovak Supreme

Court said to this writer, "the secrets of Novotny's political machinery and his reign of this highly developed nation. It is rather a trial of Novotny's political system."

Although, figuratively speaking, Novotny's system did not plead guilty, in 1968, it was forced to accept its defeat.

To conclude, the three factors of conflict within the party sped up the decay of the Novotny's conservative political bureaucracy and his dogmatism: first, political trials in which Novotny participated; second, criticism of the "Socialist" Constitution of 1960 and leading role of the party written into it, and, third, growing dissent among Novotny's most loyal associates. The conflict within the party itself caused the party to question its own structure, ideology and its policies full of empty phrases.

The Conflict Over Changing the Leadership

All three factors analyzed above no doubt sped up the political process in Czechoslovakia in 1968.

The liberals exerted more and more pressure on the conservatives. This pressure was strengthened by the social groups outside the party as well as by the population which was involved in the conflict either through the political discussions at the organized meetings or through the progressive mass media.

The incapability of the Communist Party to face the problems in the country caused its failure at the end of 1967. The conflict between the reformers and the conservatives revolved mostly around the state of the

economy and the leading role of the party. The conservatives continued to defend the retention of the party's monopoly of power. The reformers argued that the party was out of touch with the people, and that, therefore, it had lost its claim to this role. The discussions at the October 30-31 Central Committee meeting, however, did not resolve the issue of the separation of party and state. Novotny with some of his "inner circle" colleagues left for Moscow to take part in the official celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the October revolution. After his return, he found opposition to himself even from his loyal colleagues in the presidium.

The conflict between the conservatives and the liberals climaxed on December 8. Leonid Brezhnev arrived in Prague, apparently to exert himself on Novotny's behalf since no one in the Central Committee had any knowledge about his invitation. However, there was no sign of imminent Soviet intervention. Brezhnev considered the opposition to Novotny in the Central Committee as purely a Czechoslovak domestic affair. He did not interfere and left the next morning. The political crisis nonetheless continued and reached a peak on December 19-21. Novotny's First Party Secretaryship was at stake. There had been very strong pressure, this time on the part of the conservatives, not to stay in the way of division of the party and state.

The opposition to Novotny crystalized around Dubcek, a member of the presidium and the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Slovakia. Out of ten members of the presidium (including Novotny), four opposed Novotny. However, no agreement was reached at the time and the members

of the presidium and the Central Committee broke off their meetings until January 2, 1968.

At that time, Novotny found a new opponent in Jiri Hendrych, who was responsible for ideology in the party and who was considered the most loyal friend of Novotny in the presidium. They had known each other for a very long time. Both spent the war in the German concentration camp in Mauthausen for their illegal Communist activities. Both became secretaries of the Central Committee in 1952 and had been together in the party hierarchy ever since. Hendrych, however, realized that there was no other way for the conservatives to keep power any longer. His turn against Novotny, therefore, was in order to save his own political career. However, even when the deadlock was broken by Hendrych's opposition to Novotny, the latter still tried to save his First Secretaryship by accusing Hendrych of collaboration with the West, with anti-Communism, etc.¹² Novotny tried to make out of Hendrych the last scapegoat to save his post.

In order to resolve the issue of how the functions of the First Secretary of the party and of the President of Czechoslovakia should be divided, the Consultative Committee was formed. After a long discussion, the Committee announced at the end of January 4th, that the issue had been resolved and that Novotny had been defeated. However, Novotny rejected as a replacement such candidates as Smrkovsky or Sik because of their strong opposition to him. On the other hand, the Committee rejected such candidates as Lenart (the Premier) or Vaculik for their known collaboration with Novotny.

The next morning Novotny presented to the presidium and the Consul-

tative Committee his proposal that he be released from the office of First Secretary and that Alexander Dubcek be elected in his place. No one protested and Dubcek was unanimously elected. He was a compromise¹³ reached among the members of the presidium.

At this point it must be stressed that no "power struggle" took place between Dubcek and Novotny since Dubcek's candidacy was presented by Novotny himself. This kind of leadership change thus differs from all other previous takeovers in which a "power struggle" between two officials was involved. In Czechoslovakia in 1968, the predecessor chose his successor. This fact cannot be attributed to the "power struggle" between Novotny and Dubcek. Although Novotny was struggling for his post, there was no one who was personally anxious to become Novotny's successor. In fact, it was majority of the presidium members who were in the struggle with Novotny. There was a struggle between the new and the old, the struggle between the conservatives and the liberals. As a result, Dubcek emerged as an embodiment of the new, democratic movement, and not as the one who was anxious to become Novotny's successor.

Another significant point in the replacement is the manner in which Novotny was replaced. When Dubcek assumed his post of the First Secretary and Novotny was officially deposed, the latter was not ordered to be arrested as might be expected. Novotny still remained the President of Czechoslovakia. The Central Committee even thanked him for the "outstanding success that the party achieved in the country and in the international Communist movement, all of which were connected with his personality."¹⁴

For the first time in forty years, the leadership of the Communist

Party of Czechoslovakia was changed without any physical consequences to the predecessor and after a discussion lasting several months in which all democratic rules had been preserved.¹⁵

Also, for the first time, there was the leader of the Communist Party elected by the full Central Committee of one hundred members, not by fourteen hand-picked men of the Communist Party Presidium.

The manner in which the replacement took place in Czechoslovakia was democratic. It was a sign of a very strong democratic movement in Czechoslovakia. It bore all the marks of democracy. It proves the fact that the new liberal leadership in the Communist Party seriously intended to have democracy reintroduced to Czechoslovakia.

The change in the leadership was a culmination of the conflict within the party. It was not just a change of names. It was also a change of programs. The questioning of Novotny's rule also involved a questioning of the party methods and its rule in the society. Voting for Dubcek, therefore, meant voting for a new democratic program.

To sum up, the culmination of conflict within the party over changing the leadership in the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in 1968 had two particulars: First, there was no "power struggle" involved between the predecessor and his successor as it is known from the Communist experience in Czechoslovakia or elsewhere. Dubcek was a compromise choice. He presented a victory of the democratic movement over the old party conservatism. With Dubcek's coming to power, a new democratic system in the party was introduced.

Second, the manner in which the replacement of Novotny took place

confirmed the serious intention of reintroducing democracy to Czechoslovakia and the preservation of democratic principles such as political opposition, free election, etc. Voting for Dubcek on January 5, 1968, therefore, was not voting for just "another" politician. It was voting for a new democratic process in Czechoslovakia.

Democratization and Conflict

The change in the leadership in the early days of January 1968 did not mean that the long existing conflict with the party diminished or even disappeared.

Conservative forces of the party bureaucracy were still in the party, at all its levels, regions, districts and local party and governmental organs. Conflict seemed to be growing and the conservatives started opposing the new democratic measures and reforms in the society. Their political as well as personal existence had been threatened. It was even hard to believe that thousands of the apparatchiki would have to leave a comfortable way of life and would have to start looking for other civil employment for which they mostly had not been trained at all.

The new directives from the Dubcek leadership were expected both with fear and hope - the fear of the conservatives and the hope of those who preferred life in Czechoslovakia to be based on democratic principles.

How had the democratic principles been appreciated by the Dubcek leadership itself? What kind of changes did the Central Committee of the

party undergo?

It will be very helpful for this purpose to take a look at the composition of the leading members both of the Central Committee of the Communist party of Czechoslovakia and the Central Committee of the Communist party of Slovakia. The Tables (See Appendix) which were worked out for this purpose, reveal many liberal elements in both Central Committees. The Tables reveal the education of the high party officials and thus their competency in their field. Also the age category will be helpful in making a comparison between the older members, who can be considered as "cadres" in the party hierarchy, and the newcomers, who are, rather, experts in the society.

There had been three basic changes: First, the change in the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia was more complete than in Slovakia during the same time between 1967 and 1968. In Prague, out of 18 leading party officials, 11 had been ousted and as many as 13 were newly elected. (In 1970, out of 20 from 1968 16 were ousted.)

Second, the Slovak democratization process seems to be minimal in comparison with that in Prague. Out of 13 leading members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia, only one (!) was ousted. However, the Central Committee had been strengthened by seven newly elected members during the same 1967-68 period.

Third, there is a trend toward "professionalizing" the two Central Committees. More experts came to serve the party than ever before. The number of the university educated members in both Central

Committees increased in Prague from 8 to 10, and in Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia, from 7 to 10. (For a comparison of the development of the trend: In 1970, the number of university educated leading members decreased in Prague from 10 in 1968 to 6. In Bratislava, this decrease was even sharper and went as low as to 5 out of 10 in 1968.)

All three trends reveal that the democratization process was more profound in Prague than in Bratislava in 1968. It would be misleading, however, to assume that the Slovaks had been less democratically-minded than Czechs. On the contrary, the process of democratization started in Slovakia as early as 1963, when all of the leading members of the Central Committee who participated in arranging political trials or otherwise were associated with them, were ousted. While there still had been as many as seven leading members from the fifties in Prague, there was none in Bratislava.

By 1970 all three trends took a different path. The level of the educational structure decreased in both Central Committees. Most of the liberals, who did not identify themselves with the conservative policies after 1968, were ousted from their political scene. The political structure of the party after 1968 resembled rather that of pre-1968.

Another trend may be observed during 1968, which the composition of the leading members of the Central Committees (i.e. the Tables) does not reveal. It is the relation between the liberals and the conservatives. The latter were still allowed to remain in the party to have their contradicting views heard. The same applies to all the lower party

officials.

In his speech to the Central Committee, Josef Spacek, the liberal, suggested that a Marxist journal would be the best platform for conflicting or dissenting views for all of the party members.¹⁶

The party leadership expected and was prepared to compete with all kind of views, including non-Communist Marxist or non-Marxist views.¹⁷ Thus the party did not eliminate conflict. It was prepared to face the opposition. It was one of the most democratic principles on which the party was to operate.

In addition to the democratic principle of free opposition, another democratic principle in the form of the free elections of the President of Czechoslovakia was reintroduced on March 30, 1968. The secret ballot was used for the first time since the Communist takeover in 1948.¹⁸ The vote was 282 for Svoboda, whereas seven members of the National Assembly opposed him. The case of Josef Smrkovsky, the new chairman of the National Assembly, was even sharper. Out of 256 votes, as many as 68 opposed him and did not identify themselves with his candidacy. This broke down the pattern of unified and "unanimous" voting in a Communist state.

By preferring democratic principles and not its coercive power, the party in fact questioned the principles on which its structure was based. Such principles of Communism included, for instance, democratic centralism, the monopoly of power and the political bureaucracy in the society, and the possibility of the political opposition.

Democratic Centralism

The Dubcek leadership intended to change the party itself, its modus operandi, its structure and composition. The party possessed too much power, was too centralized, and was losing contact with society. Novotny's leadership too narrowly accepted Lenin's understanding of the concentration of power known under the term of "democratic centralism." This term means that ideas originate at the top of the party. The lower levels would become familiar with them in the form of directives, and, if permitted, which was not the case, they should propose changes or make their criticism to the party policies.

What Lenin understood under the term of "democratic centralism" was "centralization of power and a very strict discipline of the proletariat which would speed up victory of the proletariat over bourgeoisie."¹⁹ Thus, what Lenin had in mind was revolutionary conditions, the struggle with the class enemy, and not the conditions under which there are no "exploiters", i.e. bourgeoisie.

Lenin stressed centralization of power "under the concrete conditions of the society."²⁰ However, forty four years after Lenin's death, the conditions under which the Communist party operated in Czechoslovakia, in fact, differed to a great extent from those under which Lenin took power in Russia during the October revolution.

Contemporary Communist ideologists like the Czechoslovak, Stanislav Jagerman, overlooked Lenin's stress on the "different conditions under which the party is to operate." Jagerman understands the essence of "democratic centralism" in terms of "the most severe discipline of the party members", which, of course, does not leave much room for creative

activity, criticism, or even the opposition to the leaders at the top.²¹

In Czechoslovakia in 1968, proposals about the applicability of the Leninist concept of the party and its adjustment to the concept of "democratic centralism" to permit intra-party democracy were raised. This was news to the conservative world Communist ideologists. It included permission of greater genuine participation of the lower organs in party decisions. The masses of party members were to be granted greater power vis-à-vis the apparat or presidium not only through the publication of opposing views, but also through their elected organs within the party.

Elections, therefore, would have to be democratic, including secret balloting, and rotation of function.²² This was fully reflected in the new Party Statutes which sought to provide a new democratic and human framework for party activities, thereby placing the emphasis more on the rights of party members and their participation than duties and strict discipline as had been the case in previous Statutes.²³

The new democratic approach to the activities of the party would guarantee the members of the party the right to resign, the right of a member to be present at all proceedings against him, accessibility of information (to both party members and the public), limitation of term of office and offices to be held simultaneously, secret balloting, greater authority for the elected organs, and greater independence of basic party units.

In sum, by giving such democratic rights to members of the lower levels of the party, the party accepted the fact that the opposition

within the party would be increasing.

The party intended to change its whole structure and its ideology. It directly questioned the very essence of Communist ideology in practice, and very seriously intended to give the term "democratic centralism" its real democratic meaning.

The Monopoly Power

The party's intention to democratize Czechoslovak society is demonstrated even more dramatically by the separation of the top party and governmental functions at the January Plenum. This separation of power was to take place throughout the political structure.

As the Action Program of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia stated, the party was not the instrument of the proletariat, and, therefore, it had no authority for its "direct management, especially of the government or elected organs."²⁴ As Dubcek stated it, checks and balances providing mutual control should be reintroduced as a safeguard against monopolization of power.²⁵

In real life, this would result in getting rid of the party bureaucracy at all levels of the national economy. Experts would be required at the non-party positions. This was, prior to 1968, an exclusive privilege of the Communist Party. The party had complete control over all the levels of economy, culture, education and the society as a whole. As a result, ideological criteria had usually been considered first and only later did economic ones follow. Such party rule of the society resulted in irrational policies such as for instance, the

refusal of profitable cooperation with West Germany in 1956, with Austria in 1967, and with many other Western countries interested in the capabilities of the Czechoslovak people.

Separation of the party and state would give both of them greater independence in confrontations with each other and in exchanging their views. It would also give each a greater chance to initiate independent activities and to resist one another's pressure. It would enable both of them to respect each other, to avoid conflict, and to better regulate conflict when it did arise.

De-bureaucratization of Czechoslovakia was successful and was expected to take place at all levels of the national economy.

Giving the society greater independence, the party could also expect more opposition and conflicts with different social groups than before. It also might expect a direct threat to its very existence. Thus, democratization might result in a questioning of the existence of the party by the society, and not only of some of its Marxist principles as has been analyzed above. This possible threat to the party's existence had been carefully considered by both the party and the society.

On one hand, the party did not try to suppress those who opposed its policies, and, on the other hand, most people respected the party's responsibility for democratization and the social change in Czechoslovakia. It will be helpful, therefore, to have an analysis of Czechoslovakia's views on its Communist Party and its opposition to the party during 1968, and also to offer some predictions for the future.

The Possibility of Opposition to the Party

For the first time since the Communist takeover, a survey of opposition to the party was made in Czechoslovakia in 1968. This survey reflected the views of a representative sample of all groups of the country. Freedom of expression was secured, since censorship was abolished and since there was no sign of fear of persecution of any kind among the population.

Some may argue that Socialism in Czechoslovakia in 1968 was endangered by the democratization. Here, of course, we do not have in mind the Russian fear but rather that of other scholars interested in the Czechoslovak affairs. A result of the survey, therefore, may sound surprising.

We may argue that Socialism in Czechoslovakia had not been endangered at all. The basis for this statement may be found in our survey. (See Appendix.)

A majority of the population (87 percent) strongly rejected such a possibility. (See Table 1.) There had been absolutely no danger of antisocialist tendencies. Furthermore, eighty two percent of the represented people were not of the opinion that Capitalism was to be the road on which to go in a "new" Czechoslovakia after 1968. (Table 2.) Rather, the opposite is true. The Czechoslovak people preferred a continuation of socialist development (89 percent), and only a fraction, five percent desired a return to Capitalism. The strong desire for a continuation of socialist development can be explained in terms of having more security in employment and experiencing free education,

free medical care, free vacation and the two year allowance paid to mothers after giving birth to a child. All the advantages were not offered by the previous political system that prior to 1948. Moreover, what is even more surprising, those who accepted Socialism as the only way of social life in Czechoslovakia even wished to remain faithful to Marxism-Leninism (65.4 percent) (Table 4).

Of course, Marxism-Leninism can have different variations such as that of "Socialism with a human face", which represented the preservation of all the principles of democratic rights.

However, people expressed some concern about a "new" democratic system (18.3 percent), especially after having experienced a period of political trials and the arrest of innocent people in the 1950s. There was some doubt that the Communist Party would be capable, or, to say it more precisely, would be allowed, to make its policy democratic. People expressed some reservations about the party getting rid of all that dogmatism which had its roots in forty years of Communist existence in Czechoslovakia and in copying blindly all the senseless bureaucratic manners of the Russians and their slogans. The Soviets, in fact, have never known real democracy and they never have been able to understand its high value, the spirit which it can offer to the people. The Czechoslovak Communists, sorry to say, also felt the way their Russian brothers do.

Despite the fact that Marxism-Leninism was the source for twisting democracy of individuals, only 1.4 percent did not wish to remain faithful to it. However, those who desired to remain faithful to Marx-

ism-Leninism, also expressed their wish to have their individual's freedoms broadened (Table 5) without the interference of any other country opposed to such freedoms (Table 6).

The new democratic political system in Czechoslovakia was to give a possibility of democratic expression of several wants and desires of different groups and levels of the Czechoslovak people. As many as ninety one percent of the people agreed to the implementation of this promise, which was given them by the democratic Communist Party in its Action Program of April 5, 1968 (Table 7).

Given a new perspective, people also sought new concepts of politics which would enable them to fulfill their desires. People were convinced that more than just one political concept, or proposal, of the party should exist in Czechoslovak politics. The more people understood politics (because of higher education), the greater (94 percent was their desire for a multiplicity of political concepts and proposals of individual parties and groups (Table 8).

Respondents felt that the formulation of the political line should be the responsibility of the more democratic bodies such as the National Front, the National Assembly (the Parliament), or even public opinion - through the press, radio and television. This would prevent the concentration of power by any party, be it Communist or non-Communist (Table 9). This meant that democracy was not to be preserved by having only the Communist Party with its leading role attributed to it in Czechoslovakia (Table 10). Non-Communist parties would have to be given more independence than before. As many as 81 percent of the population demanded independence for non-Communist par-

ties (Table 11).

It is, however, very difficult to speculate how the conflict between the non-Communist parties and the Communist Party would be accommodated by the party. There could be only two possibilities: First, either the non-Communist parties would be allowed by the Communist Party to function independently from the party, or, second, the Communist Party would return after a short (or longer) period of time to its former policies of exercising its totalitarian power. Otherwise, it would have lost its leading role in Czechoslovakia.

Some of the Communist Party officials, however, were more optimistic and supported the idea that the party could successfully compete with other political parties.²⁶ The party was supported by the population to a greater degree than the anti-party movement. For instance, 300,000 new members had joined the Communist Party during first seven months of 1968.

Although the Communist Party was supported by the population, the people did not wish to have been directed by the party like puppets on a string. The equalization of the parties was sought in elections which would fulfill the democratic meaning of the independence of non-Communist parties (Table 12). However, despite the demands for independence of the parties, the survey revealed that a majority (43 percent) would continue to support the Communist Party (Table 13). As to trust in the Communist Party in general, as many as 51% trusted it, while only 16% of the population expressed distrust.

The survey also revealed that people were turning away from po-

litics, when more than one third of them expressed their wish to stay neutral (Table 14). (For a comparison: distrust of the Communist Party before January 1968 was 48% [Table 15].)

Trust in the Communist Party in 1968 derived from the party's new democratic policies which resulted in the remarkable democratization of political life.

Democratization was embodied in Dubcek's personality. As many as 85% of the population trusted him completely (Table 16). Lack of trust arising out of the opinion that the leadership of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia gives in to the antisocialist forces was as low as 0.8 percent (Table 17).

In sum, the great majority of the Czechoslovak population was for Socialism. Even if it was to be Marxist Socialism, it had to be democratic. It had to be "Socialism with a human face." The plurality of the system was to be assured in a system of elections by secret ballot of freely nominated candidates from independent political parties. The Communist Party would remain in power, but not as an unchallenged political hegemony. Its complete control over society would have been destroyed. However, the party became a vehicle for the fulfillment of the democratic desires of the Czechoslovak population. Thus, no revisionism of Marxism (not Leninism!) took place in Czechoslovakia in 1968. But the Soviet understanding of Lenin's principle of the monopoly of power, which was unsuited to Czechoslovakia's different conditions, had been completely rejected both by the party and by the society as a whole.

V. EVALUATION OF THE CONFLICT IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA IN 1968

The pressure of the economists, the Slovaks and the intellectuals, the students and the youth, the political parties and other political groups as well as the pressure from within the party itself, forced the Communist Party to regulate conflict rather than to suppress those in opposition to the party. In order to respect the demands of the population, the party had to change its means of communication with people so that consensus among them could be achieved. No suppression was to take place after 1968.

Although some believe that no Communist Party ever respected the demands and desires of the people, this did not seem to be the case in Czechoslovakia in 1968.

Two trends sped up the process leading towards the democratization of Czechoslovakia. The first trend was the economic decay of the country, and the second was the strong demand of the population for democratic rights deriving from the democratic political culture of Czechoslovakia's tradition.

The new process leading towards the democratization of the country, however, required new leaders in the party and their understanding of both economic and social problems of the country.

The new leadership under Alexander Dubcek was not involved in any of the political crimes of the 1950s, and was identified with those who suffered and demanded the elimination of negative phenomena in the policies of the party. Dubcek appointed new experts to the Central Com-

mittee, who understood Czechoslovak problems, the composition of society, its needs, wants and desires. Their advice for the new party policies reflected Czechoslovakia's life of the late sixties. It reflected the resistance of the people to the pressure of the party monopoly in the Czechoslovak economy.

The leadership respected the fact that the national economy could not be run by ideological slogans and some flourishing speeches. They could not change the society, and they would not put away the causes of the shortcomings in the economy and the society at large. A freedom of enterprise was being granted which, in the long run, would place Czechoslovakia among the most developed and appreciated nations in the world. This was to be achieved through the liberalization.

The policies of the new leadership changed. The leadership's approach to the problems of Czechoslovakia was democratic. Its policies were based on democratic principles such as free elections, recognition of the right of association, abolishing censorship, appreciation of the rights of the Slovaks and approving federalization of the country, etc. The party's approach towards the democratization of Czechoslovakia was based on a tradition of a strong democratic political culture in Czechoslovakia which would eventually triumph over a non-democratic political regime. The party was prepared to solve conflict between the different social groups and the party. The roots of conflict were deep in the basic relationship between them. The party, however, did not prefer conflict to be accommodated by suppression of those who were in its opposition. On the contrary, in 1968, the party was willing to satisfy

the demands of the social groups.

Although the previous causes of conflict seemed to have ceased to exist, opposition to the party was growing, especially on the part of the newly organized political groups and political parties. However, as seen from our analysis, the majority of the population fully supported Dubcek's leadership. This fact can be explained, first, by Dubcek's realization of the existence of national problems, and, second, by the leadership's identification with the aims of the majority and by meeting their demands.

Thus, no suppression of participants in conflict took place in Czechoslovakia in 1968. The Communist Party regulated conflict, which has been a very rare case in the history of conflict applicable to a Communist state. That is why conflict in 1968 was working smoothly and, what is the most important, did not take a violent form. In this sense, Czechoslovakia of 1968 did not fit the pattern of a violent conflict in a Communist state as were the cases of Poland, East Germany or Hungary.

As Lewis Coser argues in his study Functions of Social Conflict, conflict does not necessarily need to destroy a society. He is of the view that conflict may even work to reach a consensus among the people.²⁷ This consensus was achieved in Czechoslovakia by smoothing out the tension between those in opposition to the party and the party, which represented the whole society.

However, Czechoslovakia's case contains some irony. No violence took place in Czechoslovakia because the leadership had been strongly

supported by the population. On the other hand, the population supported the leadership because the leadership tried to make its policies democratic. It must be stressed that the Communist Party was not weakened. The opposite is true. As many as 300,000 new members joined the party just during the first seven months of 1968.

Thus, by regulating conflict, the leadership helped to achieve integration at the point of its further development, working at the same time against the structure of the party without intending to weaken it.

In no case did conflict in Czechoslovakia in 1968 imply the destruction of Socialism. Rather, restructuring was the aim. A new, integrated society was to be developed, since the Communist Party proved to be successful in accommodating conflict by smoothing out the tension between the party and the opposition by meeting its demands and by making the political system more democratic with the preservation of the basic principles of "Socialism with a human face."

In sum, the party was capable of accommodating conflict for the reason that it undertook a new course in its ideology. The party was less rigid than prior to 1968 and, although it was still the Communist Party, did not resemble its previous structure and policy. It was willing to change itself by questioning the basic principles of Communism (Lenin's), such as democratic centralism, and the monopoly of power with its political bureaucracy in the society. The party was undergoing its own restructuring and was laying down a new democratic basis

on which to operate. At this point, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia differed from all other Communist Parties, which do not consider it necessary to undergo the same changes in both their own structure and the society they rule in. That is why the conflict in Czechoslovakia in 1968 was not accompanied by violence as was the case in Poland, East Germany and Hungary.

Why then did Czechoslovakia's experience in regulation of conflict not prove to be successful? What caused Czechoslovakia to fail in her democratic experiment?

VI. WHY DID CZECHOSLOVAKIA NOT SUCCEED IN HER EXPERIMENT?

Two factors have to be taken into considerations: First, Czechoslovakia's domestic policy, and, second, her foreign policy with the Soviet Union.

In her domestic policy, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia was able to accommodate conflict by regulating it smoothly without violence. It must be stressed that in making her domestic policy, the Czechoslovak Communist Party was very successful. The problem was her foreign policy with the Soviet Union.

The Czechoslovak conflict of 1968 was leading to social change in the form of restructuring the political system, a situation which evoked suspicion in the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union relied and to a great extent depended on Czechoslovakia which has been a strong partner in the Communist bloc. The 1968 democratization, however, questioned the Soviet domination over smaller countries. The unity of the bloc, in fact, had been threatened.

By improving its own domestic policy, the Czechoslovak Communist Party, at the same time, created an international conflict with the Soviet Union. Czechoslovakia refused to participate at the Conference of the Warsaw Pact countries twice during 1968, and intended not to participate in the future to demonstrate that she was not an obedient colony of the Soviet superpower. Having this in mind, the Czechoslovak leaders did not seem to be greatly concerned what the consequences might be of such

a "policy of resistance" to the Soviet Union.

As expected, the Soviet Union tried to get Czechoslovakia back at the pre-1968 level at the Conferences in Dresden, Warsaw, Sofia, Moscow, Bratislava, and Cierna nad Tisou. Not only did Czechoslovakia refused to participate at the Conferences (except in Bratislava and Cierna nad Tisou for the cities are the part of the Czechoslovak territory), which in Czechoslovakia were called "a brotherly invitation on the carpet", but she also refused to stop the political mobilization in the country.

There are many explanations and reasons why the Soviet Union chose an armed suppression of Czechoslovakia.

The first reason involved the economic and strategic importance of Czechoslovakia. Czechoslovakia has been considered by some experts as having great military potential for the Soviet Union in the case of war.²⁸

Second, the Soviet Union feared that by allowing Czechoslovakia her "Socialism with a human face", the democratization process would spread to the other East European countries which would try to undergo the same political changes.

Third, the possible Czechoslovak success might be considered to be crucial not only for Soviet dominance in Europe, but also for its influence on the world Communist movement.

Another indirect and fourth aspect of Czechoslovakia's failure may be found in the weakness of the Dubcek's democratic system itself. Within Dubcek's leadership there were still strong conservative factions

which collaborated secretly with the Soviet Union. Dubcek was moderate and liberal and let conservative factions function within his liberal leadership rather than remove them from the new political system.

Finally, and this is the most important factor in Czechoslovakia's failure, the Soviet Union intervened only to preserve its own self-interests. What is called the "Socialist internationalism" is nothing more, and nothing less, than the preservation of Russian self-interests. Preserving the Russian style of "internationalism" may be considered as synonymous with preserving the old colonial order.

The absence of a more skillful policy toward the Soviet Union may be considered as a sign of political naivete on the part of the Czechoslovak leaders and of their irresponsibility to the Czechoslovak people.

Although it is painful, it must be said that Dubcek did not possess as great political wisdom on the international scene as he did on the domestic. He must have known that it was a pride of the Soviet ideologists to apply "peaceful coexistence" only in relation to states with contrasting political systems.²⁹ This fact had been very clear in the case of Hungary or any other cases where resistance to the Soviet Union was painfully punished.

The Brezhnev doctrine of "limited sovereignty"³⁰ fully justifies the existence of the Russian nationalism and its "russification" at the expense of any other nation. According to the doctrine, no country of the Communist bloc is considered to be sovereign. No country in the bloc is to be preserved by its own nation only. Soviet Russia has strongly

determined her "right" to intervene within the Communist bloc any time she wishes.

Therefore, Dubcek's statement that he was "surprised" by the Russian intervention of Czechoslovakia,³¹ makes him, as a Communist leader, politically naive, and very suspect. This is the case despite the fact that he was a democratic leader.

CONCLUSION

Conflict in a Communist state is "protracted"; its roots lie in Communism itself. People are deprived of their basic human rights and are not allowed to participate in decision-making or to share power. As a result, the party is often criticized. This criticism takes the form of a direct questioning of Communism and of the principles on which the Communist Party operates.

The Communist Party rarely tries to satisfy the demands of the population arising from the conflict. It rather chooses the form of suppression of participants in conflict. This pattern is typical to almost all the Communist states.

Communist development of Czechoslovakia was unique in the sense that the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia created four other non-Communist political parties to create the impression that it wished to operate on the democratic principles of government after the Communist takeover in 1948. However, the parties were not competitive and the population was not properly represented by the parties. Their corruption with the Communist Party was one of the causes of conflict in 1968 when the population openly demanded its basic human rights.

The questioning of Communism, which erupted into political conflict in 1968, took the form of a political struggle against the party in the two areas: outside the party and inside the party.

Conflict outside the party involved the social groups in their relation to the party. These groups included the economists, the Slovaks, the intellectuals, the students and the youth, the political parties

an other political groups, such as KAN, K-231, the Organization of Human Rights, etc. They questioned such basic principles of Communism as centralized planning, the "nationality question", the party's dogmatism and its leading role in the society, independence of the political parties and their equality to the Communist Party.

Conflict within the party involved the liberals and the conservatives. By taking over the power in the leadership, the liberals introduced democratic principles on which the Communist Party was to operate. The principles included free elections, the right of free speech and the possibility of the political opposition.

The new party leadership under Alexander Dubcek not only met the demands of the social groups but also itself questioned such principles of Communism as democratic centralism, the monopoly of power and the political bureaucratization of Czechoslovakia.

In 1968, Dubcek's leadership approved the new economic model in Czechoslovakia, approved the federalization of the country by creating the Slovak Socialist Republic, completed rehabilitation of the political prisoners of the 1950s, abolished censorship, banned discrimination against students and granted them the right of association, allowed political parties to be more independent, and separated the party and state. The party proceeded with the political debureaucratization of Czechoslovakia and lay down the basic democratic principles on which a new, restructured Czechoslovakia was to be built.

A new, democratic system was introduced in Czechoslovakia. It was an inevitable result of an effort of the party to stop any further decay

of the economy and to meet the demands of the people for the democratic rights they exercised prior to the Communist takeover in 1948.

Czechoslovakia did not fit the pattern of existence of violent conflict in a Communist state, as was the case of Poland, East Germany and Hungary. This was due to the capabilities of Dubcek's leadership and its willingness to regulate the conflict rather than suppress its participants. Those in opposition were not punished.

The Communist Party was supported by the population for its democratic policies, and the population, in turn, was granted democratic rights such as freedom of speech, press and enterprise.

Despite the successful regulation of conflict in 1968, Czechoslovakia did not succeed in her domestic experiment. The armed intervention of the Soviet Union in August 1968 was the result of her policy of self-interest and of her domination in the Communist bloc. Czechoslovakia's failure may also be attributed to Dubcek's weakness in perceiving Czechoslovakia's foreign policy in general and the Soviet Union's foreign policy in particular.

APPENDICES

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A Chronology of Events

1948

February 28 - The Communist takeover in Czechoslovakia

1952

Political trials of Rudolf Slansky and others

1953

Novotny came to power; Stalinist "iron and steel" concept of centrally directed extensive economic development fully adopted

1954

The Slovak "bourgeois nationalists" sentenced to long prison terms

1960

The "Socialist" Constitution adopted. The Czechoslovak Republic renamed the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic

1963

Some of the political prisoners of the fifties were rehabilitated. Ota Sik's proposals for economic reform: "intensive development"

1966

The 13th Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia adopted Sik's reform

1967

Summer	Novotny increased Slovak-Czech tension on his visit to Slovakia
June 27-29	Open conflict between the intellectuals and the party leadership climaxed at the 4th Congress of the Writers' Union. The writers criticize both domestic and foreign policy of the party
September	CC of the CPC met and expelled from the party such intellectuals as Vaculik, Klima, Liehm and others
October	Open conflict between the students and the party. For the first time, the students were beaten by the police
October 30	Plenum of the CC CPC criticizes openly Novotny
December 8	Brezhnev arrived in Prague to exert pressure on Novotny's behalf. CC turned against Novotny and the conservatives

1968

- January 4 Novotny was attacked in the Central Committee and forced to resign as First Secretary of the CPC
- January 5 Dubcek elected First Secretary of the CPC; for the first time, leader elected by the full Central Committee of 100, not by 14-man presidium
- January 21 Josef Smrkovsky, member of the CC CPC in a speech gave a support for increased freedom of speech and of a press
- February 27 News of General Sejna broke. He was linked to an alleged plot to keep Novotny in power
- March 5 First steps toward a relaxation of censorship. Revelations about the trials and political crimes in the 1950s
- March 22 Novotny is forced to resign as head of state
- March 23 Dresden Conference of five Warsaw Pact states
- March 28 General Svoboda elected President of Czechoslovakia despite popular call for Cestmir Cisar
- April 3 Government promises investigation of the death of former Foreign Minister Jan Masaryk, said to have been murdered by Stalin's agents at the time of the Communist putch on February 28, 1948

- April 4 Oldrich Cernik appointed Prime Minister. New Cabinet formed
- April 5 Action Program of the CPC published. Extensive civil rights and reforms promised. Dubcek's famous speech to the nation in which he called for "Socialism with a human face"
- May 5 Soviet presidium meets in Moscow - Dubcek, Cernik and others present
- May 8 Conference of East German, Polish, Hungarian and Bulgarian Party leaders in Moscow
- May 10 Soviet military maneuvers commence in Poland near the Czechoslovak border
- May 17 Alexei Kosygin, Premier of the Soviet Union and Marshal Andrei Grechko, Minister of Defence and former commander of the Warsaw Pact armed forces, visit Prague. Czechoslovakia agrees to Warsaw Pact maneuvers on Czechoslovak territory
- May 22 Tito praises Czechoslovakia's reforms
- May 30 CC CPC meeting - Dubcek announces Extraordinary Congress of the party on September. Antonin Novotny ousted from the party
- June 1 Soviet troops enter Slovakia for maneuvers

- June 19-30 Warsaw Pact armies engage in maneuvers, commanded by Marshal Yakubovsky
- Mid-June District party Conferences meet all over Czechoslovakia to adopt new democratic measures in their policies
- June 26 National Assembly meets. The censorship abolished
- 27 The "Two Thousand Words" published
- 28 Presidium condemns "Two Thousand Words" as counter-revolutionary (only subsequently to reverse this position)
- July 9 Prague denies necessity of convening a Warsaw Pact summit meeting because of its reforms
- July 10 Concern voiced about the stay of Russian troops in Czechoslovakia after the end of the Warsaw Pact maneuvers
- 17 Letter of the Warsaw Pact members criticizing Czechoslovakia's reforms published
- 19 CC meeting. Dubcek reassures people of his faith in a just Socialism and in reforms
- 29-31 Talks between the Czechoslovak leadership with members of the Soviet politburo at Cierna nad Tisou

- August 3 Bratislava meeting of the Warsaw Pact states.
Soviet troops withdrawn. Tito visits Czechoslovakia and is warmly welcomed
- 10 Soviets resume maneuvers in the Ukraine, along the Czechoslovak border
- 11 East German leader Walter Ulbricht is given a cool reception in Karlovy Vary
- 14 Soviet press violently attacks Czechoslovak reforms
- 15 Nicolae Ceaucescu, head of Rumania, is given a hearty welcome in Prague
- 20 Soviet and Warsaw Pact forces cross the Czechoslovak borders about 11 P. M. after a secret meeting of the Soviet leaders
- 21 Dubcek and other top politicians arrested by the Soviet army. The Central Committee and the Czechoslovak government strongly openly protested the Soviet armed intervention
- 22 Fourteenth, Extraordinary Congress of the CPC meets clandestinely in Vysocany factory, outside Prague
- 23 President Svoboda arrives in Moscow with his Cabinet
- 24 Dubcek and other top politicians released and allowed to participate in Moscow negotiations.

Leading Members of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, 1967

Name	Born	Nation- ality	Edu- cation	Period Joined CP	Became Member	Date Entered CC Pres., Sec.	Position Held
Oldrich Cernik	1923	C ^a	U ^b	1945	1958	1956	Vice-Premier & Chmn. of State Planning Commission
Michal Chudik	1914	S	E	1944	1958	1964	Chmn. SNC & Vice-Chmn of National Assembly
Jaromir Dolansky	1895	C	U	1921	1921	1938	Chmn. CPC Committee for Problems of Standard of Living
Alexander Dubcek	1921	S	S	1939	1958	1963	First Secretary of CPS
Jiri Hendrych	1913	C	S	1922	1946	1951	Chmn., Ideol. Cttee, CPC
Antonin Kapek	1922	C	S	1945	1954	1962	Gen. Mgr. CKD Factory, Prague
Drahomir Kolder	1925	C	S	1945	1958	1962	Chmn. Econ. Cttee, CPC
Vladimir Koucky	1920	C	U	1922	1944	1958	Sec. CPC, Chmn. Legal Cmn.
Bohuslav Lastovicka	1905	C	E	1926	1958	1964	Chmn. of Nat'l Assembly
Jozef Lenart	1923	S	S	1944	1958	1962	Prime Minister
Antonin Novotny	1904	C	E	1921	1946	1951	President of Czechoslov., First Secretary of CPC
Miroslav Patyrik	1912	C	E	1927	1949	1966	Chmn. ROH (Trade Unions)
Frantisek Pecha	1913	C	E	1932	1954	1966	First Sec. East Bohem. Reg.
Michal Sabolcik	1924	S	U	1945	1962	1963	CPS, Economic. Expert
Stefan Sadowsky	1924	S	U	1948	1966	1966	Sec. CPS, Chmn. West Slovak Region Nat'l Committee
Otakar Simunek	1908	C	U	1932	1954	1954	Vice-Premier, Permanent Delegate to Exet. Cttee COMECON
Lubomir Strougal	1924	C	U	1948	1958	1959	Agricult. Cttee of CPC
Martin Vaculik	1922	C	U	1945	1962	1963	Sec. CPC, Prague Municip. Cttee

^aC=Czech, S=Slovak, R=Ruthenian;

^bU=University education, S=Secondary, E=Elementary

Leading Members of the Communist Party of Slovakia, 1967

Name	Born	Nation- ality	Edu- cation	Period Joined CP	Became Member CC	Date Entered Pres. Secret.	Position Held
Frantisek Barbirek	1927	S	U	1948	1958	1963	Chmn. Slovak Planning Com- mission
Vasil Bilak	1918	R	S	1945	1955	1962	Sec., Ideol., CPS
Koloman Boda	1926	S	U	1945	1958	1966	Commissioner of Agricult.
Michal Chudik	1914	S	E	1944	1950	1957	Chairman of SNC
Vojtech Daubner	1913	S	E	1944	1950	1955	Chmn. Slovak Trade Union Council
Alexander Dubcek	1921	S	S	1939	1953	1958	First Secretary of CPS
Herbert Durkovic	1928	S	U	1945	1958	1966	Member, Ec. Ctee, CPC
Frantisek Dvorsky	1922	S	U	1945	1955	1958	First Sec. E. Slovak Region of CPS
Miroslav Hruskovic	1925	S	U	1945	1955	1963	Vice-Chmn of CPS Tech. Cmn
Jan Janik	1924	S	S	1945	1953	1964	Agricult. Ctee of CPS
Julius Loerincz	1910	H	S	1939	1953	1964	Chmn. "Czemadok" (Hungarian Cultural Organization) *
Michal Sabolcik	1924	S	U	1948	1958	1962	CPS Econ. Expert
Jozef Zrak	1933	S	U	1948	1962	1966	First Secretary, Bratislava Municipal Committee of CPS

* Czemadok is a Hungarian Cultural Organization in Czechoslovakia.

Leading Members of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, May, 1968

Name	Born	Nation- ality	Edu- cation	Period Joined CP	Became Member CC	Date Entered Presid. Secret.	Position Held
Frantisek Barbirek	1927	S	U	1948	1958CPS	1968	Acting Chmn of SNC
Vasil Bilak	1918	R	S	1945	1954	1968	First Sec. of CPS
Oldrich Cernik	1921	C	U	1945	1958	1956	Premier
Cestmir Cisar	1920	C	U	1945	1954	1958	Sec. for Educ. & Culture
Alexander Dubcek	1921	S	S	1939	1958	1963	First Sec. of CPS
Alois Indra	1921	C	S	1945	1958	1968	Minister of Transport
Antonin Kapek	1932	C	E	1945	1954	1962	Manager CKD Factory
Drahomir Kolder	1926	C	S	1945	1958	1962	Sec.CPC, Chmn. Ec. Ctee
Frantisek Kriegel	1918	C	U	1939	1966	1968	Chmn.NF, Chmn.Foreign Ctee
Jozef Lenart	1923	S	U	1945	1950CPS	1962	Former Prime Minister
Zdenek Mlynar	1930	C	U	1950	1968	1968	Head Ctee for New Ec.Model
Jan Piller	1922	C	E	1945	1958	1968	Dep.Min., Heavy Engeeniring
Emil Rigo	1926	S	S	1946	1966	1968	Chmn CPS org., E.Slov.Factory
Stefan Sadvsky	1924	S	U	1948	1966	1966	Chmn.Agricult.Ctee, CPC
Vaclav Slavik	1920	C	U	1945	1958	1961	Dir.CPC Instit. of Pol.sci.
Josef Smrkovsky	1911	C	E	1933	1945	1968	Chairman of Nat'l Assembly
Josef Spacek	1927	C	S	1946	1966	1968	S.Moravian Reg., Sec.CPC
Oldrich Svestka	1922	C	U	1945	1962	1968	Editor-in-Chief, <u>Rude pravo</u>
Martin Vaculik	1922	C	U	1945	1962	1963	Secretary of the CPC
Oldrich Volenik	1919	C	E	1945	1962	1968	N.Moravian CPC Reg., Sec.

Leading Members of the Communist Party of Slovakia, May, 1968

Name	Born	Nation- ality	Edu- cation	Period Joined CP	Became Member CC	Date Entered Presid. Secret.	Position Held
Frantisek Barbirek	1927	S	U	1948	1958	1963	Acting Cairman of SNC
Vasil Bilak	1918	R	S	1945	1955	1962	First Secretary of CPS
Koloman Boda	1926	S	U	1945	1958	1966	Commissioner for Agricult.
Vojtech Daubner	1913	S	E	1944	1950	1955	Chmn. Slovak Trade Union Council
Herbert Durkovic	1928	S	U	1945	1958	1966	Member CPS Econ. Committee
Frantisek Dvorsky	1922	S	U	1945	1955	1958	First Sec.W.Slovak Reg.CPS
Samuel Faltan	1920	S	U	1945	1968	1968	Sec. of Czechosl.-Soviet Friendship League
Miroslav Hruskovic	1925	S	U	1945	1955	1963	Vice-Chmn.CPS Tech.Comn.
Robert Harencar	1931	S	U	1958	1965	1968	Slovak Head of Youth League (CSM)
Jan Janik	1924	S	S	1945	1953	1964	Secretary of CC CPS
Ondrej Klokoc	1912	S	S	1931	1968	1968	Editor-in-Chief Pravda, Bratislava
Julius Loerincz	1910	H	S	1939	1953	1964	Chmn, Chemadok,Hung. Org.
Viktor Pavlenda	1928	S	U	1948	1968	1968	Econ. Sec. CC CPS
Michal Pecho	1913	S	S	1946	1968	1968	Sec. CC CPS for Ideology
Michal Sabolcik	1924	S	U	1948	1958	1962	Secretary CC CPS
Maria Sedlakova	1923	S	S	1948	1962	1968	Editorial Board, Pravda
Anton Tazky	1924	S	S	1945	1962	1968	Slov. Commissioner for Nat'l Committees
Jozef Zrak	1933	S	U	1948	1962	1966	First Sec.,Bratislava CPS Committee

Leading Members of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, November, 1969

Name	Born	Nation- ality	Edu- cation	Period Joined CP	Became Member CC	Date Entered Presid. Secret.	Position Held
Frantisek Barbirek	1927	S	U	1948	1958CPS	1968	Chmn. Slovak Planning Commission
Vasil Bilak	1918	R	S	1945	1954	1968	CP Sec. for Int'l Rel.
Oldrich Cernik	1921	C	U	1945	1958	1956	Federal Vice-Premier
Peter Colotka	1925	S	U	1947	1968	1969	Slovak Premier
Evzen Erban	1924	C	U	1945	1968	1968	Chmn. National Front
Jan Fojtik	1928	C	U	1948	1966	1969	Head, Czechosl. TV
Gustav Husak	1913	S	U	1933	1968	1969	First Secretary CPC
Alois Indra	1921	C	S	1958	1958	1968	Sec., Mass Organizations
Josef Kempny	1921	C	U	1945	1969	1968	Czech Prime Minister
Antonin Kapek	1923	C	S	1945	1954	1962	First Sec. Prague CC
Jozef Lenart	1923	S	U	1945	1950CPS	1962	Prime Minister
Frantisek Penc	1922	C	S	1945	1962	1963	N. Bohemian Sec. CP
Jan Piller	1922	C	E	1945	1958	1968	Chmn Trade Unions (ROH)
Karel Polacek	1913	C	E	1945	1954	1968	Chmn. Czech Trade Unions
Stefan Sadovsky	1928	S	U	1948	1966	1966	First Secretary of CPS
Lubomir Strougal	1924	C	U	1948	1958	1959	Federal Premier
Ludvik Svoboda	1895	C	S	1948	1949	1949	Army General, President of Czechoslovakia, Minister of Defence until 1968

Leading Members of the Communist Party of Slovakia, November, 1969

Name	Born	Nation- ality	Edu- cation	Period Joined CP	Became Member CC	Date Entered Presid. Secret.:	Position Held
Ladislav Abraham	1923	S	S	1946	1962	1969	Leading W.Slovak Reg.Sec.
Vincent Cislak	1924	S	U	1955	1969	1969	CPS Secretary
Peter Colotka	1925	S	U	1947	1966	1969	Premier, formerly Slovak Commissioner of Justice
Vojtech Daubner	1913	S	E	1944	1950	1955	Chmn.Slovak Trade Unions Council
Jozef Elsik	1924	S	S	1945	1968	1969	Head party org."Dimitrov" Factory
Bohuslav Graca	1926	S	U	1945	1968	1968	CPS Institute of History
Michal Hanko	1919	S	U	1945	1968	1969	Deputy Minister, Mining
Jan Janik	1924	S	S	1945	1953	1964	Commissioner for Agricult., CPC
Ondrej Klokoc	1912	S	S	1931	1968	1968	Editor-in-Chief, Pravda (Bratislava)
Jan Koscelansky	1926	S	S	1945	1966	1969	Leading Sec. E.Slovak Region, CPS
Albert Kostal	1927	S	U	1947	1968	Never	Chmn.W.Slovak Region National Committee
Ladislav Novomesky	1905	S	E	1933	(1944) (1968)	(1944)* (1968)	On Board Slovak Writers Union
Viktor Pavlenda	1927	S	U	1949	1968	1968	Econ.Sec.CC CPS, Professor
Ludovit Pezlar	1929	S	U	1948	1968	1969	CPS Sec, for Education, Culture & Art
Vladimir Pirozik	1926	S	S	1945	1969	1969	Leading Sec-CPS in M.Slov.
Stefan Sadowsky	1924	S	U	1948	1966	1966	First Secretary CPS
Eugen Turzo	1922	S	E	1945	1955	1969	Sec.W.Slovak Reg.CPS
Miroslav Valek	1927	S	S	1962	1969	1969	Slovak Minister of Culture
Jozef Zrak	1930	S	U	1948	1962	1966	Slovak Deputy Premier

* His membership was cancelled in 1954 when he was sentenced as a Slovak "bourgeois nationalist."

Leading Members of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, January, 1970

Name	Born	Nation- ality	Edu- cation	Period Joined CP	Became Member CC	Date Entered Presid. Secret.	Position Held
Vasil Bilak	1918	R	S	1945	1953	1963	Chmn. Slovak Planning Commission
Peter Colotka	1925	S	U	1947	1968	1969	Slovak Prime Minister
Evzen Erban	1924	C	U	1945	1968	1968	Chairman, Gederal NF
Jan Fojtik	1928	C	S	1948	1966	1969	Head Czechosl. TV
Dalibor Hanes	1914	S	U	1948	1970	1970	Deputy of Federal Assembly
Vaclav Hula	1925	C	U	1946	1969	1968	Deputy Min. for Finance
Gustav Husak	1913	S	U	1933	1949* (1968)	1944 (1968)	First Secretary of CPC
Alois Indra	1921	C	S	1945	1958	1968	Sec. CPS for Mass Orgs.
Antonin Kapek	1922	C	S	1945	1954	1962	First Sec. Prague CC
Josef Kempny	1920	C	U	1945	1969	1969	Chmn. Ostrava Munic. Comm.
Jozef Lenart	1922	S	S	1945	1958	1970	First Secretary CPS
Miroslav Moc	1929	C	S	1949	No	1970	Editor-in-Chief <u>Rude pravo</u>
Frantisek Penc	1922	C	S	1945	1962	1963	Chmn. CPC Usti n/Labem
Jan Piller	1922	C	E	1945	1958	1968	Chmn. Trade Union (ROH)
Lubomir Strougal	1924	C	U	1948	1958	1959	Federal Prime Minister
Ludvik Svoboda	1895	C	S	1948	1949	1949	President of the Republic

* His membership was cancelled in 1954 when he was sentenced as "bourgeois nationalist." It was renewed in 1968.

Leading Members of the Communist Party of Slovakia, January, 1970

Name	Born	Nation- ality	Edu- cation	Period Joined CP	Became Member CC	Date Entered Presid. Secret.	Position Held
Ladislav Abraham	1923	S	S	1946	1962	1968	Leading Secr., W.Slov. Reg.
Vincent Cislak	1924	S	U	1955	1969	1968	District Sec. W.Slov. CP
Peter Colotka	1925	S	U	1947	1966	1969	Premier
Vojtech Daubner	1913	S	E	1944	1950	1955	Chmn. Slov. Trade Unions
Jozef Elsik	1924	S	S	1945	1968	1969	Deputy Min. of Mining
Michal Hanko	1919	S	U	1945	1968	1969	Chmn. "Dimitrov" Factory
Jan Janik	1924	S	S	1948	1955	1964	Agricult. Comm. CPC
Ondrej Klokoc	1912	S	S	1931	1968	1968	Editor-in-Chief <u>Pravda</u>
Jozef Lenart	1922	S	S	1944	1958	1970	First Secretary CPS
Ladislav Novomesky	1905	S	E	1933	1944* (1968)	1944* (1968)	On Board of Slovak Writers' Union
Ludovit Pezlar	1929	S	U	1948	1968	1969	CPS Sec. for Education
Jan Pirc	1924	S	E	1957	1966	1970	Lead. Sec. E. Slovak CPS
Vladimir Pirosik	1926	S	S	1945	1969	1969	Dead. Sec. CPS Central Slov.
Stefan Sadvsky	1928	S	U	1948	1966	1966	Slov. Deputy Prime Minister
Bohus Travnicek	1929	S	S	1948	1969	1970	Deputy Editor-in-Chief <u>Pravda</u>
Eugen Turzo	1922	S	E	1945	1955	1969	Sec. W.Slov. Reg. CPS Ctee
Miroslav Valek	1927	S	S	1962	1969	1969	Slovak Minister of Culture

*Novomesky's membership was cancelled in 1954 when he was sentenced with the group of the Slovak "bourgeois nationalists". Rehabilitated in 1963.

The following survey of public opinion in Czechoslovakia in 1968 was sponsored by the Czechoslovak Institute for Public Opinion. Twenty polls were taken between April, 1968, and August, 1968, and covered the whole territory of the Czechoslovak Republic. More than 2,000 respondents were surveyed by 250 professional poll takers. The respondents represented a sample of all the social groups of the Czechoslovak population over 18 years of age.

The following Tables, however, represent only a fraction of the answers received by the Institute.

Table 1

Question: From some countries we hear the opinion that Socialism was endangered here by international antisocialist forces and that Czechoslovakia was on the road toward Capitalism. Would you say that:

	This is true	There is some true in it	This is not true	D/K ^a N/A
	percent ^b	percent	percent	percent
All subjects	1.2	6.8	87.4	4.6
Czech lands	1.0	6.8	88.9	3.3
Slovakia	1.6	6.8	83.9	7.7

^aIn this and the following Tables, D/K=don't know, N/A=no answer

^bNumbers in all the Tables are expressed as percents.

Table 2

Question:Some people talk about the danger of antisocialist tendencies and express fear of a return to capitalism. Do you subscribe to this fear?

Opinions	All	Up to 40 yrs	Over 40	Education		Member CP	Nonmember CP
				Lower	Higher		
1.Strongly do not subscribe	33	39	29	29	39	27	39
2.Do not subscribe	49	50	47	49	49	51	48
3.Sometimes yes, sometimes no	11	10	12	14	9	10	12
4.Subscribe	5	-	9	6	2	9	3
5.Strongly subscribe	1	-	2	1	1	3	1
6.N/A	1	1	1	1	-	-	-

Table 3

Capitalism vs. Socialism

Question:Are you for a return to capitalist development or for a continuation of socialist development?

1. For a return to capitalist development	5
2. For a continuation of socialist development	89
3. Don't know	6
	<hr/> 100

Table 4

Question:Do you want to remain faithful to Marxism-Leninism and to the ideals of the construction of Socialism based on the needs of our own people and nation?

1. Agree	65.4
2. Agree, but I doubt if this will be possible	12.0
3. I have reservations	6.3.
4. Don't agree	1.4.
5. D/K, N/A	<u>14.9</u>
	100.0

Table 5

Question:Do you desire to broaden the measures for individual's freedom?

1. Agree	86.2
2. Agree, but I doubt if this will be possible	8.6
3. I have reservations	1.5
4. I don't agree	0.0
5. N/A	<u>3.7</u>
	100.0

Table 6

Question: Do you agree that in order to crush grave disorder forces of another state should be used?

1. Agree	4
2. Perhaps, according to conditions	6
3. Don't agree	84
4. D/K, N/A	6
	<hr/> 100

Table 7

Question: Do you agree that the new political system has to make possible in the formulation of political decisions free and democratic expression of several wants and desires of different groups and levels of people in the socialist society?

	Nonmember CP	Member CP	Leading secretaries of the CPC and dis- trict org. of CPC
I agree that it should be so	91	87	85
I think it correspondes to present-day reality	37	57	71

Table 8

Question: Do you agree with the opinion that "in politics there must be one political line valid for all", or should there exist, side by side, many concepts and proposals of individual parties and groups?

Opinions	All	Education		Member CP	Nonmember CP
		Lower	Higher		
1. For many concepts	81	79	94	68	86
2. For one political line	17	20	4	31	13
3. N/A	2	1	2	1	1

Table 9

Question: If there should be only one political line valid for all who should create and formulate it?

The political line should be created by:	All	Education		Member CP	Nonmember
		Lower	Higher		
1. National Assembly (Parliament)	18	17	19	19	18
2. The government	6	7	4	3	7
3. The National Front	25	24	27	30	24
4. Public opinion through the press, radio, TV	22	19	25	13	24
5. The Central Committee of the CPC	8	8	8	21	4
6. Other political parties	2	2	2	-	3
7. All working people	9	12	5	6	10
8. Others	1	2	1	2	1
9. N/A	9	9	9	6	9
	100	100	100	100	100

Table 10

Question: Do you conceive democracy as a socialist democracy only when the Communist Party has the leading role?

Opinions	Leading Secretaries		
	Nonmember CP	Member CP	of the CP and district org. of the CP
Yes	11	61	97
Immaterial	6	14	1
No	83	25	2

Table 11

Question: Do you want the existing non-Communist parties to be really independent parties and equal partners to the Communist Party?

Expression of wants	All	Education		Member CP	Nonmember CP
		Lower	Higher		
1. Strongly wanting	40	35	48	23	45
2. Wanting	41	42	40	44	40
3. Sometimes yes, sometime no	11	15	6	17	10
4. Not wanting	5	5	5	11	3
5. Strongly not wanting	2	2	1	5	1
6. D/K, N/A	1	1	-	-	1
	100	100	100	100	100

Table 12

Question:In the past the elections were formal and the influence of voters on the selection of the candidates and the results of the elections was minimal. Which of the following possibilities, in your opinion, will contribute most toward democratization of elections?

	Total	Member CP	Nonmember CP	Education Lower	Hogher
1.Free choice of candidates without restrictions	29	40	26	24	37
2.Real possibilities and rights for functioning of non-Communist parties	22	12	25	23	20
3.Possibility of the creation of new parties	7	3	9	7	8
4. Possibility of independent participation in elections of voluntary organizations (ROH, CSM)	6	4	6	6	6
5.The real possibility of the use of the state media (press, radio,TV) by all the political parties	7	4	8	8	6
6.Insuring secrecy of elections	21	28	19	22	20
7.Other conditions	1	1	1	1	1
8.No need to change:previous elections were democratic	3	5	3	5	1
9.D/K	4	3	3	4	1
	100	100	100	100	100

Table 13

Question:To whom would you give your vote if there was an election this month, based on the independent candidacy of all political parties?

I would elect the following party:	All	Communists	Non-Communists
1. Communist	43	90	28
2. Socialist	13	1	17
3. People's	9	2	12
4. Blank ballot	6	4	7
5. D/K	27	3	34
	98	100	98

Table 14

Question:What degree of trust do you have in the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (June, 1968)?

1. Complete trust	11	
2. Trust	40	51
3. No trust but not distrust	33	(Neutral)
4. Distrust	12	
5. Complete distrust	4	16
	<hr/>	
	100	

Table 15

Question:What was your degree of trust in the party before January, 1968?

1. Complete trust	6	
2. Trust	17	23
3. No trust but not distrust	29	(Neutral
4. Distrust	28	
5. Complete distrust	20	48
	<hr/>	
	100	

Table 16

Question:As you consider the development of recent political events do you or don't you have trust in the new leadership of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia led by Alexander Dubcek?

	Have trust	Have trust with some reservations	Don't have trust	D/K N/A
All subjects	85.0	12.6	1.0	1.4
Czech lands	82.5	15.1	1.1	1.3
Slovakia	91.7	7.2	0.3	0.8

Table 17

Question:What reason do you have for the lack of trust?

1. Inconsistency of the individual members of the leadership of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in fulfilling the process of democratization	61.3
2. Lack of trust motivated by the fact that today the leadership of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia works under abnormal conditions and is subject to the pressure of foreign armies	22.7
3. Lack of trust because of the opinion that the leadership of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia gives in to the anti-socialist forces	0.8
4. D/K, N/A	15.2
	100.0

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