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ANATOMY OF A SATELLITE

by Dana Adams Schmidt

This revealing book — the work of a veteran foreign correspondent who covered Communist Czechoslovakia for his paper, the *New York Times* — is at once the inside story of how the Communists took over that country, and of what could happen to any Western democracy if and when the Communist Party seized power.

As Mr. Schmidt points out, the Czechs are a Western people, the only Western nation to fall to the Russians. Their roots are buried deep in the democratic traditions of the West. They are an industrial nation with a large, prosperous and well-educated middle class. They are, in fact, very much like us, and what happened to them might happen to us, or to any Western people, under the heel of Communist totalitarianism.

Mr. Schmidt came to Prague in April 1949. He left in May the following year, just one jump ahead of the Czech secret police, who had no use for a foreign correspondent devoted to digging up the facts and reporting them to his paper. Had he not left when he did, it might have been he, rather than William Oatis, who would now be incarcerated in a Communist jail.

ANATOMY OF A SATELLITE shows in detail how the Communists planned and executed their *coup d'état.* It pictures the tremendous economic upheaval that fol-

(continued on back flap)

To MOSCOW 50 Miles
Königsberg
Minsk
Mogilev
R. Dnieper
WHITE
Pinsk
RUSSIA
UNION OF
SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS
Kursk
Kiev
Kharkov
R. Dnieper
Lvov
UKRAINE
Dnepropetrovsk
R. Dniester
R. Bug
Nikolayev
RUTHENIA (NOW RUSSIA)
BUCOVINA
MOLDAVIA
Odessa
Sea of Azov
Kerch
Kerch Strait
Debrecen
TRANSYLVANIA
CRIMEA
TRANSYLVANIAN ALPS
Mouths of the Danube
Sevastopol
Yalta
RUMANIA
BUCHAREST
Constanta
Black Sea
BELGRADE
R. Danube
Varna
SERBIA
BULGARIA
BALKAN MTS.
SOFIA
Central Europe
NEGRO
THRACE
Istanbul
ALBANIA
TIRANE
MACEDONIA
GREECE
TURKEY
Aegean Sea

ANATOMY of a SATELLITE

by Dana Adams Schmidt

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To my mother,
without whom this book
would never have been written

Introduction

CZECHOSLOVAKIA is a country now ruled by Communists and through them, by Soviet Russia. It is a country where at least 120,000 innocent people — and among them the American newspaperman, William Oatis — have been thrown into concentration camps and prisons. It is a country that is being transformed in the image of its rulers.

But Czechoslovakia is also the country of T. G. Masaryk and Eduard Benes, the model democracy which, surrounded by dictatorships, clung to its ideal between the two world wars. And although the Communists have defeated democracy in Czechoslovakia, they have not succeeded in killing the Czech ideal. Although they seized the government on February 25, 1948, they have not been able to win the people. In their hearts, the Czechs, the westernmost Slav people, remain the easternmost representatives of democracy. Theirs is a tradition of many centuries of struggle under Germanic conquest for the preservation of their nation and their culture. Now they are struggling against a new kind of conquest, ideological conquest from the East.

Most Czechs persist in thinking in Western terms. Democracy, to the Czechs, still means parliamentary democracy, the multiple party system and rule of the majority — not dictatorship of the proletariat. Culturally and intellectually they look towards France, England, Germany and the United States — but not towards Russia. Their standard of living, their dress, their eating and drinking habits are western, not eastern, European. They are an industrial nation in which an intelligent and highly developed working class has been living peacefully with a prosperous bourgeoisie for generations. They are, in short, people very much like us — and the first Western people to fall victims to the Communists.

When I got to Czechoslovakia in April 1949, the Communists, who had taken power more than a year before, were just getting into full stride in their campaign to reorient the Czech people from West to East, to win them or break them.

To achieve their ends, the Communists have since then used every artifice of influence and pressure. Coldly calculating every step, they have outwardly transformed cultural life and economic life; they have purged and repurged the ranks of all kinds of intellectuals, driven out all identifiable Western influence, subjugated the churches, eliminated private enterprise, destroyed the independent farmer, ground the middle class down into the proletariat and imposed a police strait jacket on the whole people.

But the Czech people are the foremost representatives of democracy among the hundred million people who inhabit the satellite nations behind the Iron Curtain. While outwardly conforming to Communist pressures most of the time, they have maintained their inward integrity, quietly and stubbornly. They are keeping the faith.

They have done more than that. In this country, elements of the dispossessed middle class, often aided by priests of the persecuted Catholic Church, began resistance activity soon after the Communist *coup d'état*. They were joined by peasants resisting collectivization. And since the middle of 1950, the Czechoslovak workers, disillusioned by the Stalinist police state, have also begun to resist in many ways.

It may be that as the military power of the West increases, a way will be found to force the Soviet Union to withdraw peacefully into its natural frontiers and so to liberate the satellite nations, and with them, our friends the Czechoslovaks. If however, war should come, these people well behind the Soviet front will be our allies.

This is the story I have to tell. I have tried to lay bare the anatomy of a satellite, to reconstruct a complete case history of this first Western-type nation under Communist rule. Indeed, some Communists have regarded their work in Czechoslovakia as a laboratory experiment. Czechoslovakia's tragedy is that fate chose her to serve as an object lesson for the West.

My own experiences as *New York Times* correspondent in Czechoslovakia are only a small part of the story. Also, in Part I, I have included a full account of the Oatis trial and its repercussions.

Part II is devoted to the historical background beginning with Saints Cyril and Methodius in the ninth century and ending with the Communist *coup d'état*. Here I have suggested some lines of action that may prevent a recurrence, in the West, of the Czech Communist coup.

Part III is an analysis of the police state in its various aspects, of the

Czechoslovak people's resistance, and of certain ways in which we can help the resistance.

Part IV is a review of what the Communists have done to the cultural life of Czechoslovakia. In the final chapter I have examined Western culture's chances of surviving the Eastern Communist onslaught.

In Part V, I have described the progressive subjugation and integration of the Czechoslovak economy by the Soviet Union and the crisis in the Communist Party in the face of increasing economic difficulty and resistance, including the fall of Rudolf Slansky.

In gathering my information, I have had invaluable assistance from Dr. Otto Turacek of the *New York Times* Bureau in Vienna who has translated Czechoslovak newspapers and other publications, and from Mary and Wolf Salus who have also contributed their expert knowledge. I have had the benefit of consultations with the former Ministers of the Czechoslovak government, Petr Zenkl, Hubert Ripka, Vaclav Majer and Ladislav Feierabend, and with Ambassador Jan Smutny, formerly one of President Benes's aides, and Dr. Hugo Skala, formerly an official of the Ministry of Foreign Trade, and Paul Barton who edits *Masses-Information* in Paris. The State Department, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and K. S. Butler of the British Foreign Office have been very helpful. Finally, I owe a debt of gratitude for their assistance in revising and correcting the manuscript to Dr. Ivo Duchacek, a former member of the Czechoslovak Parliament, more recently broadcasting for the "Voice of America"; to Professor Roman Jakobson of the Slavonics department of Harvard University; to Theodore Morrison of the English department of Harvard University; to Professor Harold J. Berman of Harvard Law School, who kindly read and corrected the chapter on Czechoslovak law; to Tania, my wife, who patiently typed and retyped miles of manuscript; and to my mother, Mrs. Margaret A. Schmidt, for indefatigably reading proof.

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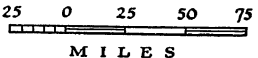
PART I

More or Less Personal

Czechoslovakia



CHAPTER I A Communist Capital

ON April 11, 1949, the sunny spring day when I arrived by train from Vienna in Prague's Wilson Station, the capital of Communist Czechoslovakia looked deceptively pleasant. Outside the station, at the edge of a park I saw the pedestal of Wilson's monument, flanked by two soaring pylons and a plaque explaining that the original had been removed and melted down by the Nazis but would be replaced by American friends of Czechoslovakia.

A taxi drove me around the park, past playing children, flapping flags and budding trees to the Hotel Esplanade. When I paid my fare the driver good-naturedly tried to charge twice the amount on the meter and I felt quite at home. A uniformed hotel porter took my bag, a suave concierge welcomed and registered me in English, and waiters in tail coats hovered nearby. My room, overlooking the park, was spic and span. The furniture was good, the water ran hot.

As the porter put down my bags my eye caught a sign behind the door advising foreign guests not to tip hotel employees. It said that Czechoslovakia was a "People's Democracy" and that in a "People's Democracy" employees would be insulted by tips. Just the same, I tipped the porter, and neither he nor any other Czech hotel employee I met during the next year ever seemed insulted by tips. The Communists had not yet eliminated all the amenities.

Dick Clark, the United Press correspondent, came over in his big American Buick and took me to Lippert's for a good meal with Pilsner "export" beer. He dropped me at the American Embassy where I spent the afternoon talking to American diplomats about Czechoslovakia. Then came cocktails and dinner at the apartment of the assistant press attaché, Elizabeth Eagan, a keen observer of Communist ways. Yet it was the sort of day — on the edge of the realities of life in Czechoslovakia — that leads casual visitors, and some not so casual ones, to the false conclusion that they know something about Czechoslovakia.

I wanted to dig a little deeper, and so, in the next days, I began by taking every opportunity to walk, just walk and look and listen.

I walked down to Wenceslas Square, the vast rectangle half a mile long and two hundred yards wide, within which much of Czechoslovak history has been made. It was seething with activity. Workmen, in blue denim overalls, were putting up red, white and blue Czechoslovak flags and crimson Communist banners along the sides of the square, erecting scaffolding on sides of buildings and hoisting up huge pictures and streamers inscribed with slogans. The biggest pictures were those of President Klement Gottwald, Lenin, Stalin, Marx, while other Communist leaders appeared in smaller sizes. In the shop windows there were more pictures, but I looked in vain for some of T. G. Masaryk or Benes. Some of the slogans, as I soon learned, read as follows: *For Fatherland, for Peace, for Socialism; Down with Imperialism and Warmongers; Forward with Gottwald to Socialism.* They were being put up in preparation for a coming Communist "Peace Congress" and May Day.

Martial music, punctuated from time to time by stentorian announcements, boomed from loud-speakers attached to the trees along the edge of the square. But the Czech crowd, bustling purposefully along, paid little heed. Only a few paused to watch the open-air puppet show installed between two buildings. The grinning puppets, bellowing in competition with the loud-speakers, were extolling the virtues of collecting old materials, old papers, old rags, old toothpaste tubes. Old materials would help make new ones, they said, help fulfill the five-year plan, raise the standard of living and foil the Anglo-American imperialists.

A few blocks farther at the end of the main street stood a fifty-foot-high bulletin board covered with percentages and symbols representing coal mining, building, textiles, food processing and other branches of industry. The percentages indicated that in the fourth month of the first five-year plan all production targets had been exceeded except in the case of coal mining.

In the main street I was puzzled to discover that many of the shops had the same name. I could stand in one place and looking first to the left and then to the right see four shoe stores all called ZDAR, which meant merely that they had all been nationalized and had become outlets of the national enterprise selling shoes. In a discreet corner of most of the other signs, where in other days a proprietor might have placed his own name, there now appeared the words *narodni podnik,* meaning national enterprise.

Another surprise was that the prices marked in some windows were obviously five or ten times as high as those in others. The high-priced ones were so-called "free market" stores, plentifully supplied with goods of all kinds to be bought without a ration card; the cheap ones were regular, rationed stores.

Every time I went through the downtown district I noticed crowds in front of the windows of the United States Information Service and the British Information Service. The Czechs stood there staring and staring at the pictures of things American and British. A great many sat inside reading, too.

Crowds stood for hours waiting to get in to any movie playing an American, English or French picture, no matter how old. They gathered at every opportunity, like fascinated children, around any parked American car. All American cars seemed enormous and luxurious in the midst of the midget vehicles customary in central Europe.

Russians and Communists must have been vexed by this display of interest in things American and Western, the more so since the Russian library, which occupied a prominent place in Wenceslas Square, and Russian movies showing at the biggest theaters, were always poorly patronized.

The newsstands at the corners did not seem to do much business either. They carried only Communist publications. The only foreign ones were such things as the *Daily Worker* of London, *l'Humanité* of Paris and of course an assortment of publications from Russia and the "People's Democracies." One day, however, through some vagary of the distribution system, I found a newsstand selling the *London Financial Times*.

As I roamed I looked carefully at the people. They were dressed in Western-style clothes, and neatly, with a bourgeois sort of care. The men, nonetheless, looked shabby, and the women were dowdy. In that, they were much like the average man and woman on the streets of Vienna, Paris, Rome or London in 1949. The striking difference was that here you rarely saw really well-dressed men and hardly ever a smartly dressed woman — unless she happened to be a foreigner. Here, furthermore, about one in six wore Communist Party buttons in their lapels — a little red hammer and sickle on a gold background.

These people's faces seemed strained. They did not rush, but in their stolid way they seemed under pressure. All day long, beginning very early at 7:30 A.M., they filled the streets, always pushing. They were not the type to linger long in cafés. Everything was always full, especially the streetcars. You never saw such a town for streetcars, clanking and lurching

along in endless, restless succession. They seemed to add to the town's heavy, tense atmosphere.

During my first few weeks, the Communist Press Chief, Dr. Evzan Klinger, head of the Foreign Office Press Section, and Dr. Kosta, head of the Ministry of Information's Foreign Department, and their staffs were at pains to give me, as the new correspondent of the *New York Times,* a "correct" impression of Prague as a Communist capital. I was given to understand that the Iron Curtain was a myth, that Czechoslovakia was ruled by a National Front including all parties, that the Communists differed from other parties only in that they were more progressive. The officials equipped me with diplomatic ration cards providing about three times as much meat, butter, coffee, and other scarce items as normal Czech consumers received, with a gasoline ration, and with a paper entitling me to buy imported whisky, gin and brandy. They explained that this was an example of the way they offered the foreign press "every facility" and hoped I appreciated it as a "guest" in Czechoslovakia. I could go anywhere and see anyone, they said. They asked only one thing, that I be "objective." This was standard treatment for new correspondents from the West.

The officials went through the motions of cordiality, but that is where it ended. They did not suggest a drink, or a meal, and they evaded my tentative invitations. Obviously they intended contacts to be restricted to the office. It was natural, therefore, that when my wife Tania arrived from Vienna in early May we fell in socially, not with Czechs, but with other Western foreigners. To meet Czechs required a special effort.

We soon discovered that the Western foreigners, nine tenths of them diplomats, lived quite well. At the top, so far as living standards went, were the ninety-odd Americans at the embassy and consulate, for, in addition to their Czech diplomatic rations, they had a well-stocked commissary of food and PX items trucked in weekly from Nuremberg. Their social life revolved around cocktail parties, dinners, dances and teas, which would have been fine occasionally to "meet people," but apart from the few high officials who accepted diplomatic invitations in the line of duty, the only Czechs who appeared were representative of the dispossessed capitalist class. Diplomatic social life, as a consequence, was an inbred, self-sufficient affair.

Thus, at a big cocktail party you might see the intellectual and gracious Foreign Minister, Vladimir Clementis, the enthusiastic Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade, Evzan Loebl, and a few lesser officials including the

press officers already mentioned. On such occasions, high-ranking Communists might have to rub shoulders with a countess who made her living as a typist, a dispossessed factory owner, a disbarred lawyer or the charming wife of a man who had recently been sentenced to two years in a forced-labor camp. It was among the latter group that most of the Western foreigners made their Czech friends. From this group foreigners could expect tips about whatever might be going on — and a steady flow of rumors. No party was complete without a new rumor.

The victims of the Communists had always heard that "something is going to happen next week," something to bring back the good old days. On one occasion they had heard that American parachutists had landed in Slovakia, or was it Moravia? Or was it that they were going to land? On another occasion the Russians were said to have decided to turn over Czechoslovakia to the Western sphere in return for concessions in the Far East.

Such were the dreams of painless liberation dreamed by the dispossessed. Some foreigners went to Czech concerts, opera and theaters, of which there were a great number, even though the purge of "reactionaries" had reduced the quality of the performances. But the most popular form of entertainment among foreigners was going out to the dozen de luxe restaurants and night clubs.

Friends took us to Didek's restaurant where, at about ten times the tariff in ordinary eating places, you could sit in an overstuffed chair and enjoy a thick steak while a pianist tinkled discreetly in the background. There, on one particular night, a drunken ex-textile mill owner poured out his troubles and loudly denounced the Communists to all who would listen. At first we thought he might be a *provocateur,* but then we decided a *provocateur* would never get that drunk. His days of liberty and drinking at Didek's were numbered. We were introduced to a restaurant called British Mess where the staff of the British and American Embassies ate well-cooked meals in a setting of dim lanterns and curios. At Monica's you could dance or listen to a zither and a sentimental Viennese violinist. The Es bar, underneath the Hotel Esplanade, had the best dance music while the Barbara still dispensed Scotch whisky. Out in the country there was René's which boasted French cooking and plenty of whipped cream.

Common or garden variety Czech people of course had nothing to do with this kind of life. Their standard of living, after a sensational postwar recovery, had nose-dived. Yet these people, now as always, had an enor-

mous capacity for healthy pleasure — hiking in the hills and sun-bathing on the banks of the Vltava river, or swimming or boating or skating, or playing tennis or doing gymnastics. On a Sunday afternoon thousands would take streetcars out to the big restaurant Barandov, where they could sit, jammed together in a herd, drinking thin domestic (not "export") beer, listening to the band and admiring the view of the river.

Tania and I talked about finding an apartment, but meanwhile got along with a room on the top floor of the Hotel Esplanade. Since we were violating the house rules both by keeping a dog (our boxer Cleopatra) and by cooking enthusiastically on a hot plate in our room, we found it expedient from time to time to pass around some American cigarettes, chocolate and instant coffee. Thereby we established a state of mutual affection between us and the hotel personnel extending even to those whom we suspected of being Communists. A package of American cigarettes was worth 200 crowns ($4.00) in Prague although in western Europe the "cigarette economy" had long since disappeared.

We were spied upon in many ways — our telephone was tapped and presumably our letters were opened and our wastebasket searched. The hotel reported those who came to see us. Our car had U. S. Army license plates (if we had obtained Czech plates we would have received special bright orange ones reserved for diplomats and other foreigners). Wherever we went the police, or the janitor of the house we went to, would note down our number.

But for the intrusion of the police it would not have been a bad life. The thing the police obviously wanted to know about us and about all other foreigners was whom we knew among the Czechs; that is, from whom we got our information. That made meeting Czechs an awkward business. We had the feeling we were compromising them.

To break out of the foreigners' social rut, Tania and I invited in half a dozen Czech Communist newspapermen for cocktails. We invited them weeks in advance so they could have no excuse for refusing. But when the time came only one of them showed up.

Just after I arrived in Prague, Vlasta Adele Vraz, the American head of an organization called American Relief for Czechoslovakia, who had an enormous circle of Czech friends, was jailed for seven days and then expelled on the grounds that she had engaged in illicit political activities. It was a sad way to end four years of passionate service for the Czech people. I went to see her at her apartment where she was packing to leave on April 17, 1949. I did not enjoy the frightened curiosity of her neighbors,

peering around corners as I approached her house, nor the profound shock that was reflected in her eyes.

At that time about 150 priests were under arrest and the Catholic Church's desperate struggle with the Communist government was just getting underway with a series of pastoral letters and circulars.

At Pilsen some fifty persons were arrested on May 5 for trying to place flowers on the cornerstone of a monument to the town's American liberators. Police dispersed the crowd who came to see the wreath laid by representatives of the American ambassador on the anniversary of the liberation.

Incidents of this kind created an ominous atmosphere for our new assignment. At the same time, we were both thrilled and appalled by the courage of certain Czechs who never let slip an opportunity to show how they felt, not even though they might pay dearly for their gestures. I am thinking not only of those pouring out their hearts in private, but of such men as the priest who came to me with a mimeographed pastoral letter hidden in his shoe, of the many other people who came with useful news tips about things the Communists would rather have suppressed, of the people who, once we had got acquainted, insisted we visit their homes, of the fat man who embraced me in the elevator one day on the sole grounds, he said, that I was an American.

We still had stouthearted friends among the Czechs. But obviously the Communists intended to crush them soon, along with all other remaining potentials of opposition. Obviously also the Communist coup had developed into a revolution — a creeping revolution — not bloody, but coldly calculated, step by step, penetrating deeper and deeper into the life of the nation each day.

CHAPTER 2 The Iron Curtain Crashes Down

ON May 31, 1950, a little over a year after my arrival, Tania and I departed from Czechoslovakia for good, and in haste, because I had been accused of espionage. But before I tell that tale I want to describe life as it was in Prague during our last few months, and explain some of the vital changes that had taken place during the year.

That spring the Communist Revolution was no longer creeping. It was rampant. The Communists no longer pushed people around. They kicked them. They were concentrating on breaking those whom they could not win, and had been ever since the previous October when they launched what the police called "Operation Class Warfare" in the form of a giant wave of arrests. Some ten thousand people, mostly of the middle class, had at that time been thrown into forced-labor camps, ostensibly for "re-education." The arrests have continued sporadically ever since.

Among the October victims there had also been some Communist officials, with three of whom I was acquainted — Dr. Loebl, Dr. Klinger and Dr. Kosta.

Dr. Loebl had headed a highly unsuccessful economic mission to Washington the previous April. Not only had he obtained no dollar credit and no relaxation of American export restrictions but his second in command, Dr. Hugo Skala, had defected the moment he reached Washington. Declaring himself a refugee he had turned over the mission's secret documents to the Americans. Now Dr. Loebl's office replied to telephone inquiries: "He does not work here any more," and it was widely believed in Prague that he had died during interrogation on a charge of sabotaging Czech trade with Russia.

At first the associates of Dr. Klinger and Dr. Kosta in the Foreign Office and Ministry of Information press offices had maintained that their chiefs were ill. Later they just shrugged.

It transpired that the illnesses were entirely political and very serious.

Dr. Klinger, a heavy taciturn man who received his visitors with a forced heartiness, had had a case of Trotskyism in the twenties. Although he had repented this disease, as so often among Communists, it had proved fatal in the end. Dr. Kosta, a fat and friendly fellow, had had the misfortune to publish a book on education which had to be withdrawn from circulation after the official Communist reviews had discovered it contained innumerable ideological errors. (Dr. Klinger died in prison in 1952, according to diplomatic reports, while Dr. Kosta was transferred from prison to an insane asylum.)

Much more serious was the report that both these men and Loebl had had a hand in inviting to Czechoslovakia and introducing to high government officials the Americans, Noel and Hermann Field, who mysteriously disappeared in the summer of 1949.

During the winter, on the heels of the middle-class arrests, there had been a drive to arrest and confiscate the land of the richer peasants, as a preparation for collectivization.

That spring, insecurity hung in the air. The strain was heightened by the merciless pressure for harder and harder work, faster and longer work under the five-year plan — tighter norms, more night work, more "shock workers," more "socialist competitions." These efforts plus two good harvests had, however, resulted in a steady, although not sensational, rise in the standard of living. But even so there were a series of small, angry strikes, particularly in the Kladno mining district.

The Communists shifted the fire of their class warfare from domestic enemies towards Western representatives and Western influence about the time Foreign Minister Vladimir Clementis was dismissed from office March 14, 1950. Foreign observers had considered Clementis a "Westerner" and the "most reasonable" Communist in the government — and the most vulnerable. His successor, Viliam Siroky, was a man who knew nothing of the West and its point of view — an excellent recommendation as the Communists see it.

Clementis's fall was the sign for the beginning of a hideous succession of political trials directed against Western foreigners, their Czech friends, and Western interests: a Dutch businessman accused of economic espionage; monks and priests accused of spying for the Vatican; clerks of the United States Information Service accused of spying for the American Embassy; Czechs from all walks of life accused of spying for the Americans. All were convicted, some executed, the rest imprisoned. It was heartbreaking.

On the anniversary of Pilsen's liberation by American troops, the American ambassador asked authorization to have embassy officers place wreaths on the pedestal of the monument honoring the American liberators. The Foreign Office refused, explaining that the Czechoslovak authorities would themselves organize all liberation ceremonies.

In line with this attitude, the Communists removed the sign on the road between Rokycany and Prague marking the farthest advance of American troops in May 1945.

One of the pylons flanking the pedestal of Wilson's monument outside Wilson Station blew down in a spring gale. So the Communist authorities removed the other one too.

The United States Information Service library had always been a source of irritation to the Communist authorities, because of the crowd that always hung around its windows. One day the library attracted a particularly large crowd by filling its window with pictures of famous personalities taken from *Time* magazine covers. There were Tito, Tallulah Bankhead, Ana Pauker, Zhdanov, Beria, Togliatti, Thorez, Marshall, Chiang Kai-shek, Princess Margaret Rose, Gregory Peck, and Cardinal Mindszenty. Above the group were written the questions: "Who are they? How many do you know?" and at the bottom of the window there was a key to the pictures.

An officious young man named Liehm who at the time occupied a desk in the Foreign Ministry Press Section telephoned American Embassy Press Attaché Josef C. Kolarek objecting to the picture of Mindszenty. He said that it was an unfriendly act of the Americans to identify Mindszenty as a Cardinal of Hungary because, said he, "In the eyes of Czechoslovakia he is a criminal." Kolarek obliged by removing the offending picture and replacing it with one of Fred Allen.

The same day the Communist daily *Rude Pravo* warned pro-Americans not to be beguiled into thinking that the USIS library was extraterritorial and to remember that there too they were subject to the government's authority.

Several months later, in October 1949, the Czechoslovak Soviet Friendship Society undertook to compete with the USIS window by renting the display cases on the walls adjoining, which were so close that a casual passer-by might imagine that they were part of the American display. The Communists filled their windows with cartoons about such subjects as "the sources of the American film industry"—a top-hatted effigy of Hollywood sitting astride a camera tripod, one of whose legs stood in a

truckload of Ku Klux Klansmen, another in a carload of gangsters and a third in a carload of drunken "bourgeois" types.

Another cartoon entitled "Who puts pressure on whom?" showed a caricature of a Wall Street capitalist sitting on top of President Truman who in turn was sitting on top of the White House.

To these sallies of Communist humor the USIS librarian replied by inserting in the American window, Donald Duck, Pluto and Mickey Mouse, their hair standing on end and their eyes wide with astonishment and consternation. Donald Duck pointing at the neighboring Communist cartoons, declared in his most indignant Czech: "Don't blame that on me," while Pluto said: "That's not ours," and Mickey Mouse said: "That's not ours either."

Although Donald Duck and Mickey Mouse made even the Communists smile, the Communists had serious intentions. I do not know what mysteries they imagined the library contained, but their secret police tried hard to penetrate into its inner offices. Two junior police officers went to the length of striking up a friendship with the Czech girl who usually carried the inner-office keys. They squired her around for weeks until she realized that all they were really interested in was her handbag, in which she kept the keys.

Finally the police arrested two Czech clerks of the embassy and made them confess to carrying out treasonable assignments for Kolarek—such as reporting on popular reactions to Truman's speech on the atomic bomb.

On April 19, 1950, the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry formally ordered the USIS libraries in Prague and Bratislava to close within forty-eight hours and ordered Kolarek to leave Czechoslovakia "within a reasonable time." Word that the library was closing quickly got around town and also word that it was giving away its books and other publications. Early the next morning Czechs began to converge upon the library, and they kept coming all day. About 5000 Czechs, nearly as many as had visited the library during the previous months, that day left it with their pockets and briefcases stuffed and their arms loaded with about 300 old books and 10,000 popular magazines, educational and technical manuals, medical symposiums, and State Department brochures in Czech, English, Russian and French.

When the staff began handing out 300 well-used phonograph records, a near-riot developed. In the melee some books, even including copies of the Congressional Record, were seized from the shelves by the enthusiastic Czechs. Tables and chairs were overturned.

Some Czechs who had been regular customers carefully told the American staff, "Don't forget us." A certain few *provocateurs* demanded books about war. They were told that most of the library's books emphasized peace.

As the crowd swelled and blocked the sidewalks outside the library doors at 4 P.M., six grizzly men stationed themselves just inside the door. Americans on duty offered them seats and copies of the State Department publication "Government by the People"; they declined both offers. The policemen stood there and glared, but the crowd was too excited to pay them much heed and as far as I could discover only a few people were taken into custody. One of those was Martin S. Bowe, American Military Permits officer who was taking pictures of the crowd. He was taken to a police station and held for several hours until the Foreign Ministry identified him.

The Communist measures against the USIS were but a prelude to those directed against the entire American Embassy. Using espionage charges raised in a number of trials as an excuse, the Communist government on April 28 ordered the American Embassy to reduce its staff of seventy-two Americans by two thirds. The Americans had to scurry frantically.

Meanwhile, the State Department had taken suitable reprisals against the Czechoslovak Embassy in Washington and had ordered the Czech Consulates in Pittsburgh and Cleveland to close down. The Czechs ordered the American Consulate in Bratislava closed and the Americans closed the Czech Consulate in Chicago. On May 23, one jump short of a break in diplomatic relations, a series of Czech-American reprisals and counter-reprisals ended with the Czechs ordering the American Embassy to reduce its staff to twelve Americans only. That is its present size.

The Americans were not alone in misery. The Dutch had been left with a legation staff of one man, after three others, including the chargé d'affaires, had been expelled on charges of espionage and of smuggling Czech citizens across the border. The British Embassy was put on edge towards the end of May by the arrest of Ladislav Pinkas, a naturalized British subject of Czech origin employed at the British Embassy.

The last diplomatic representative of the Vatican, Ottavio de Liva, was expelled on March 16 with the usual espionage charges. His departure cut off the hierarchy of the Catholic Church from regular contact with the Vatican, although there was no formal break in relations. So far as temporal affairs were concerned, the Catholic Church was now defeated, the state's police power triumphant. No longer could the bishops strike back

at the government by issuing pastoral letters and circulars. Nor could they hold meetings, or make their voices heard. Police surveillance isolated them from the lower clergy. And the bishops had at last been obliged to authorize the lower clergy to accept the government's new church law requiring them to swear loyalty to the government. Even so, the authorities, after releasing some three hundred priests from prison, still held about one hundred and fifty in May 1950. And in the same month the Catholic orders were mercilessly broken up by the forcible concentration of their members in a few monasteries. The other monasteries were closed.

Reporting these developments was a ticklish business for foreign correspondents. We got no help from the Czech authorities. On the contrary, Dr. Bedrich Runge, the strange, smiling Foreign Office press officer with a Lancashire accent, with whom we usually had to deal after Klinger's demise, lost no opportunities to stab Western correspondents in the back. At the Ministry of Information poor, cadaverous Dr. Rudolf Popper, who had replaced Kosta, repeated in reply to all questions, "I can not confirm it or deny it, I know nothing about it." (Dr. Popper was dismissed from his post in the summer of 1952, presumably because he is Jewish.)

These were days when the pressure of the political situation separated the sheep from the goats among the foreigners in Prague. While most of us were drawn ever closer to our embassies, there were others who escaped the pressure by throwing in their lot with the Communists. An English woman physician employed by the British Council, a former American military government official with his wife and four children, an American Negro, several Czech-Americans who had been disappointed with life in the United States, a girl clerk in the Yugoslav Embassy, and a few others asked the Communists for "asylum" in Czechoslovakia. These defections were usually marked by press conferences at which the person asking asylum was expected to denounce his country's government and all its works.

To the amazement of the foreign colony, a young Australian couple, long considered Communist, was suddenly expelled. Later we learned that the young man had refused to submit unquestioningly to the dictates of the party bosses.

Pleasure had pretty much fled from the lives of Western foreigners in Prague many months before Tania and I departed. The diplomats — especially the Americans — felt harried and humiliated. But they at least had diplomatic immunity. The rest of us who had no such protection felt just plain scared — four or five newspapermen, a representative of Pan-Ameri-

can Airlines, a representative of British European Airlines, some French and Italian professors, a Y.M.C.A. man, and some visiting businessmen.

You could never tell when a policeman would stop you in Prague. I suppose they were exercising the "socialist vigilance" the Communist newspapers kept talking about. One day Tania and I had taken the dog for a run in the fields just outside the city; we returned to our car to find it surrounded by half a dozen cops who were examining it carefully and wanted to know who we were. Exercising my supply of rudimentary Czech words, I asked, "Why?" But the cops just grinned and drove off. A few minutes later we observed that they were following us at a discreet distance.

Then again there was the affair of Tuetsch's microphone. Tuetsch was the extremely able and well-informed correspondent of the Swiss newspaper, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung.*

About 6 P.M. one evening he telephoned me at my office asking me to come immediately by car to his hotel. When I got to the hotel I found him standing nervously in the street. He jumped in the car and said, "Let's drive out to the Swiss Legation." Only when we had driven several blocks would he explain what it was all about.

He said he had that afternoon observed a little piece of wire sticking out between the floor boards in his room. With idle curiosity he had pulled it out and discovered that one end of it led up through a crack in the wall to the molding above his window. There he found a microphone. Then he began to explore the other end of the wire and discovered that it led out onto his balcony and around into the room next door. Climbing onto the balcony, he found the door to the adjoining room open and could see that the wire was connected to a radio loud-speaker.

It occurred to Tuetsch that if the people whose job it was to listen to the conversations he had in his room were to discover that he had found and disconnected the microphone they would surely try to recover it and thereby destroy the evidence of their spying. What Tuetsch wanted, therefore, was to get the microphone into a safe place.

At the Swiss Legation — opposite Archbishop Beran's palace at the top of Hradcany Hill — Tuetsch found no one on duty except a Czech porter. He did not want to risk entrusting his microphone to a Czech, so we drove to the American Embassy where I put the microphone in a safe place until the next day, when Tuetsch picked it up and presented it to the Swiss minister. He and the minister then went to the Foreign Office where

the minister lodged a formal protest. Two days later Tuetsch departed by air for Switzerland.

Tania and I clung gratefully to our hotel quarters (though we did from time to time examine the walls and floors for microphones), for it was now impossible for any American who did not already have an apartment, to obtain one. Permission from the Prague National Committee housing office was necessary before you could legally move into any house or apartment, and even when space was available the housing office simply stopped issuing permits to Americans.

Little by little we Americans were being forced back into the hotels, and our diplomats to a group of buildings which, with the ambassador's residence, formed a sort of compound.

The number of agreeable places to go to steadily contracted during our last months in Prague. The British Mess was deprived of its waiters by the Labor Office, which assigned them to what it called "productive work" in factories and mines. The proprietor and his wife tried to carry on by waiting on tables themselves, but soon thereafter he was arrested and sent to a labor camp and the place had to close down. The owner of Barandov was arrested and the big restaurant itself was nationalized. Thereafter the quality of food served declined rapidly. At Didek's the owner went to work in his own restaurant as a waiter after the place had been nationalized. The restaurant Diplomat was closed and converted into a students' club. And wherever we went of an evening there was a good chance that we would run into a police patrol checking identities. Any Czech found in the company of foreigners on such occasions would be closely questioned as to the reason for his keeping that kind of company.

A bleakness stole over the city as Communist rule tightened up. One evidence of this was the closing of the flower and vegetable markets, which as long as the citizens of Prague could remember had crowded the small squares in the old city. The municipality simply refused to renew the stall-keepers' leases and on March 18, 1950, the last of the stalls were loaded on trucks and carted away. Through my interpreter I talked to the owner of one of the last of the surviving stalls. She spread her fat red arms over her minute display of sliced carrots, leeks and sprigs of parsley and declared, "Yes, it will be our turn next. The Communists say our booths are eye-sores. Of course they don't look so good now that we have nothing in them to sell. All the flowers and vegetables go to the nationalized shops and to co-operatives and we have to sell parsley and pussy willows. Now

we must go to work in factories. I don't mind so much. But a lot of people will miss us."

That same day the embassy sent out to nondiplomatic Americans still in Czechoslovakia a circular that had a chilling effect on us all. The circular warned Americans that the embassy could not guarantee to help them if they received an order expelling them from Czechoslovakia nor even if they were arrested.

"In recent cases involving the arrest of American citizens by Czech authorities," the circular said, "access to prisoners by American consular officers has customarily been denied by the government of Czechoslovakia or only granted after protracted delay." Americans were advised to take this into consideration in connection with "personal planning."

As Americans we had become a group of high-class outcasts in Prague, living in the best hotels, receiving special rations, driving American cars, possessing precious dollars — but not to be spoken to unnecessarily, not to be invited out socially or officially except in cases of absolute necessity.

Social relations with Czechoslovakians were no longer merely awkward; they had become too dangerous for the Czechs involved. Sometimes when Tania and I were walking in the streets with our dog, Cleo, someone would make a friendly remark about the dog, but when they realized we were foreigners they would withdraw in haste and embarrassment. In the shops the clerks often seemed too frightened to speak English even if they could.

Yet there were little heart-warming incidents. For instance, as soon as other people in the shop were out of earshot, the clerk might burst into a torrent of eager English. If he had half a chance he'd be off with the inevitable story about uncles in Chicago and cousins in Detroit. On country roads people who noticed our American license plates would often smile and wave or salute. We felt that most Czechs liked Americans. They certainly like American things and American styles. The Communist newspapers found it necessary from time to time to warn against "decadent Americanisms," but I noticed that this did not have much effect on the kids who hung around the entrances of theaters which were showing American movies, or on those who stood in little circles staring avidly at American automobiles.

Some of our courageous friends insisted on keeping in touch with us in spite of the danger to them. For us and for them these contacts became precious. I felt much as I had in 1939 and 1940 in Berlin when, as a member of the United Press Bureau, it had been my assignment to keep in

touch with the Jewish community — keeping rendezvous on street corners, going around to people's apartments after dark, parking far away, walking around the block before entering to be sure no one was following, hoping that no inquisitive concierge would appear in the entrance. In Communist Prague, as in Nazi Berlin, I had to go about my legitimate business of gathering journalistic information in this abnormal and somewhat humiliating manner. I felt like a spy. The Iron Curtain had crashed down between us Western foreigners and our good Czech friends.

CHAPTER 3 Hasty Departure

ON the evening of May 30 I was sitting at my desk in my room at the Hotel Esplanade, gloomily leafing through a sheaf of Czech press translations — arrests, trials and editorial diatribes. The translator had drawn circles around several unpleasant references to me as the correspondent of the "American slanderous newspaper, the *New York Times*." One of them described how I had tried at a press conference to move out of range of a Czech newsreel camera. "Mr. Schmidt does not like the limelight," it said sarcastically.

More and more I was being forced back upon newspapers, announcements of the official news agency, and foreign diplomats, as my sole sources of information. Perhaps my presence here was valueless. Perhaps it was time for me to clear out.

Then, about 6:30 P.M., the telephone rang. Would I come down to the United Press, the voice said, a touch of panic in it. There was something urgent that concerned me, me personally.

I raced downstairs and the three blocks to the United Press office. The radio monitor was taking down a broadcast of the indictment in a trial to begin the next day. Nearly every Western diplomatic mission was implicated. And my name was there too, as a Western agent who had been in contact with two of the thirteen Czech defendants. With the help of Miss Mary Baker, an English girl who had once been my translator, I was supposed to have carried secret information from an underground resistance organization to the American Embassy.

Now I really was scared. I still feel ill when I think about it.

Of the long list of Americans mentioned, headed by former Ambassador Steinhardt, I was the only one still in Prague. At the time I did not recognize the names of the two defendants with whom I was linked, although later I realized that Miss Baker had introduced them to me at a social gathering. Just that. Certainly there was no espionage involved. But the truth was scarcely important. In a Communist trial an official charge is fact.

Important was only what the Communist authorities intended to do to me.

Russell Jones, then head of the U.P. Bureau, was banging out the story in bulletins and called: "Schmidt, you are famous!"

I thought of going back to the hotel and getting Tania and lighting out for the frontier in our car. Our papers were in order and we could, on paper at least, leave the country at any time. But such obvious flight would invite arrest. Someone suggested taking refuge in the embassy. I almost decided to try it. At least, I thought, I could bring Tania to safety there. But once in the embassy, how could we ever get out again without being arrested? And what if, as seemed likely, after the preceding months' events, the United States finally broke off relations with Czechoslovakia, and we were still in the embassy? Why not send Tania out by train and stay myself to try to straighten this thing out? No, this sort of thing could not be straightened out. I could not make up my mind.

"Anyway, I will write the story," I said to myself. "It will be my last one." I wrote the story and denied the charges. The next step would be to deliver it to the telegraph office one long block off. I did not like the idea of going out in the street alone. I looked out the window and saw a black sedan parked a hundred feet away and a man in a leather coat—just like the ones the secret police wear—walking up and down on the sidewalk.

Foolish fears, probably, but . . . There was a young Czech named Jan Stransky leaving to pick up the early edition of the papers, and I asked him to drop my story off at the telegraph office.

He must have done so, for it was printed. But the young Czech never came back. Jones and I sat around feeling miserable until 2 A.M. Then we locked the office and went cautiously down to the street. The sedan and the man in the leather coat were gone. No one bothered us. Many months later I learned that the young Czech was in a forced labor camp. When called as a witness in the Oatis trial in July 1951, he said he had been put into the camp because he had been caught trying to escape from the country. Whether this is true, and what happened that night, we have no way of ascertaining.

I woke up Tania and told her what had happened. I had not wanted to attract unnecessary attention by telephoning earlier. We did not sleep much that night. We could not decide what to do. I began to think back. Why hadn't I gone sooner? The handwriting had been on the wall, but I had preferred to take the risk and stay on a good story. What a fool I had been to bring my wife in here, after the obvious warnings I had had. We should have left quietly after the Cihost miracle affair. I should have real-

ized that that was a prelude to something worse. I went back over the affair in my mind.

The miracle was supposed to have taken place in Cihost, a tiny village of 300 flax farmers and woodcutters tucked away in the hills fifty miles southeast of Prague.

Foreign newspapermen in Prague had learned about it first from an item that appeared in the Communist daily, *Rude Pravo,* which denounced the "village rich" for spreading the tale. Jack Higgins and I were interested and decided to follow it up. Accompanied by a trusted interpreter, we drove for hours over rutted country roads searching for the village, until we finally got stuck in the snow and had to continue on foot through the snowdrifts. The villagers, we discovered, firmly believed in their miracle. Children we met on the road approaching the village chattered about it in wide-eyed wonder. And after sitting around the village tavern for a few hours we sufficiently won the confidence of some of the older inhabitants to get the story.

They were frightened and talked about the affair in whispers, but obviously felt a certain reflected glory.

"The cross over the tabernacle moved on three different occasions," the villagers said. "The first time, on Sunday, December 11, during the sermon our priest said 'He who is in the tabernacle and who is among us, he will help us.' At that moment the cross bowed, first to the right, then to the left and then leaned to the West."

Some said the cross bowed five times, but they all agreed that at the end it leaned to the West. It was a cross of linden wood about two feet high with a porcelain figure of Christ mounted on it.

The priest himself did not see the miracle. His awed parishioners came to him after the service to tell him. He was incredulous until nineteen of those in the congregation including a local Communist had signed a statement about it.

Thereafter, pilgrims began converging upon Cihost. They came on foot, by car and even in special busses. Communist police soon posted guards on approaching roads to turn these visitors away.

On Christmas Sunday, according to the villagers, the miracle recurred during the mass. And on January 8 the priest, entering his church in the morning, observed that the cross had again moved.

Obviously the Communists would not tolerate this for long. On January 23, Father Josef Toufar was arrested and his half-crippled churchwarden was arrested two days later. Two days after that, Communist officials

closed the church and confided the key to the local schoolteacher. The teacher was not in the village the day we arrived and we could not enter the church. We were told that it was unlocked once a week on Sunday so that visiting priests from the nearby parishes could hold mass.

That was all I had to do with the Cihost miracle; little did I realize that the Communists were going to make it a *cause célèbre,* with me in a leading role.

Now I could trace my troubles back to April 7, only a month after Higgins and I had written the Cihost story, when a booklet called *Excommunication, Miracles, and Sabotage* by Jiri Zak, published by *Rude Pravo,* went on sale in Prague. A whole chapter was devoted to me. It contained some perfectly accurate details about the vacation my wife and I had just taken and about the place where we lived in Prague, with an absolutely fictitious tale about my connections with the Papal envoy.

I wrote the story of this booklet for the *Times:*

> A booklet published by the Communist daily *Rude Pravo,* called *Excommunication, Miracles, and Sabotage* and written by Jiri Zak, which appeared in Prague bookshops today, includes a chapter largely devoted to this correspondent.
>
> It reports an imaginary conversation between the former chief of the Vatican's Internunciature, Msgr. Ottavio de Liva, and myself, in which I am said to fall in with his plans to publicize the Cihost "miracle" and propose a supplementary "American Century" miracle.
>
> The booklet's preface states that "it is not a document, and the dialogues of the enemies of the people's democratic countries have been put in the mouths of people dealt with by the author himself" to illustrate the methods by which the Vatican, acting on American instructions, attempts to undermine socialism in the people's democracies.
>
> The dialogues are imaginary, it is explained, because in Czechoslovakia microphones are not used and it is, after all, not speeches that matter but the "deeds and crimes of this group of desperados, deceivers, spies and saboteurs. . . ."
>
> "The important thing is to grasp the atmosphere in which one of the attacks upon our developing Socialist fortress began, developed and ripened, and for the just punishment of which the time has now come," it added.
>
> At one point in the pamphlet, those associated with the "miracle" are listed as "Ottavio de Liva, Archbishop Beran, Dana Adams

Schmidt, Dr. Moric Picha, Frantisek Silhan, Provincial of the Jesuit Order, Abbot Augustin Machalka, a trained spy, Dr. Jan Mastilak and others."

The supposed conversation with Msgr. de Liva has me clapping my hands and saying: "Wonderful, your Excellency, wonderful" as he unfolds his plan for a miracle in connection with the Holy Year. Msgr. de Liva promises to see that I get the story first while I "smile contemptuously" at the thought of my competitors, the correspondents of the United Press and the Associated Press, who will have to rely "solely on their own stale fantasy."

Msgr. de Liva then is said to explain the timing, whereupon this correspondent interposes: "It struck me that we should complete this action of yours by some kind of apparition, something that would correspond a little to the 'American Century' so that these simple people would immediately know that merciful God wants them to turn to the West."

And so it is decided that I should invent a supplementary miracle and send news of it to the *New York Times,* whereupon the "Voice of America" would take over and "our friends here will spread it." This correspondent, being "very well informed about the internal life of the Czechoslovak Republic," observes that the whole thing should be timed to interfere with spring agricultural work.

The pamphlet then jumps to the beginning of January when I am seen speeding in my car with "license number EE 17165" to Cihost, pondering last-minute telephone instructions from Msgr. de Liva and dreaming up my miracle.

There follows a more or less correct summary of an item I included in a dispatch on the Cihost "miracle," reporting a new version in which the Virgin Mary was said to have appeared in the clouds waving an American flag and followed by United States soldiers and tanks.

Preceding all this is a picture of the correspondent of the "slanderous newspaper the *New York Times,*" explaining why I was the "right man for de Liva and his plans."

Recalling my return from vacation, it quotes observations I supposedly made over teacups and calls me "a clever and temperate man." It says I am well paid "because correspondents in the people's democracies are well-rewarded because of the large amount of work and the fact that the work is connected with a certain danger."

Mrs. Schmidt, it is noted, "has good influence over him," and bids me not to overwork.

I am further described as a "grave, conscientious, serious man who

values his employer and who is valued by his employer . . . not one of those who misuse their position and turn the heads of young bourgeois women . . . who did not ever devote himself to the black market . . . a really good chap."

While they may be irrelevant considering the imaginary nature of the purported conversations, these observations may be made on the foregoing:

The first I and other correspondents ever heard of the Cihost "miracle" was a story in *Rude Pravo* denouncing the reactionaries who were said to be spreading it. It was on the basis of the *Rude Pravo* story, which was reported to the *New York Times* at the time, that John R. Higgins of the United Press and I in his car—not I alone in my car—took the trip to Cihost to get the follow-up.

Similarly, the first we heard of the Virgin Mary "miracle" was the story denouncing the tale-telling reactionaries in *Pravda* of Pilsen. And so far as I know, I never laid eyes on Msgr. de Liva until after he had been ordered to leave this country. Like any other reporter, I would have liked to have seen him before, but he refused to see the press.

I tried to make an appointment to protest Jiri Zak's pamphlet with Bedrich Runge, Assistant Chief of the Foreign Office's Press Department. He refused to see me. When, over the telephone, I insisted, he hung up. So I wrote him a letter of protest with a copy to the Ministry of Information and a copy to the author of the article.

I got one more laugh, albeit a rather uneasy one, from a fifteen minute movie entitled *Woe to Him Who Spreads Evil Rumors.* It showed the villagers of Cihost peacefully going about their business and worshiping in church until a limousine—supposedly that of the Vatican Chargé d'Affaires, de Liva—invades the village. A miracle ensues. Then the limousine is shown back at the Papal Internunciature in Prague from which telephone calls are being made to Rome.

Movie-goers were shown a system of levers and pulleys by which Father Toufar allegedly moved the cross, then, superimposed on a map, a line on a pulley leading to Hradec Kralove, seat of the octogenarian bishop Moric Picha, another leading to the Internunciature in Prague and another leading to Rome. Finally a line led across the Atlantic to the skyscrapers of New York where a blimplike capitalist ogre with multiple spider legs sat manipulating the entire system of pulleys.

But now on the morning of May 31, 1950, as I watched the dawn filter

through the curtains of our room and thought of the indictment in which my name had occurred, I wished I had taken the earlier warning more seriously.

I remembered that a week before the pamphlet appeared, Higgins of the United Press and Nathan Polowetzky of the Associated Press had both been refused reaccreditation on the grounds that they were guilty of "unobjective reporting." Considering this attack upon me in a pamphlet published by the Communist Party's publishing house, I had wondered why I had been exempted. Could it be that I had not been expelled because the police were keeping me for something worse? A police spy who was playing both sides warned me that I was being carefully watched, and informed me of the remarkable activities in which the police imagined I was engaged. They thought that I maintained a large network of informants and was, in particular, receiving reports from a metal-working firm (something like Kovomat, a name I did not even recognize). My friends agreed I had reason to worry. Although no Western newspaperman had yet been arrested in the Iron Curtain countries, the atmosphere was right for a first case.

In spite of everything, I had decided to hang on. My conscience was clear. I had done nothing but straightforward newspaper reporting, nothing that could be called espionage. What could they possibly hang on me?

I was still awake, thinking, at 8 A.M. when Russ Jones knocked on the door. He had had a phone call from the Ministry of Information inviting him to the big trial at Pankrac prison. So had Bobby Bigio of Reuters. So had Gaston Fournier of the Agence France-Presse. I alone had received no invitation to the trial. The reason was obvious. Still, it seemed expedient to show a bold front. I phoned Dr. Popper at the Ministry of Information and protested my exclusion. "I am sorry, Mr. Schmidt," he replied, "I know nothing about it. You might call the Foreign Office."

I called Runge. Could I see him right away? A personal matter, most urgent. The way he replied, in that comic Lancashire accent, I felt he knew exactly what it was all about. He complained that he was very busy. Meetings, you know. But I could come at 1 P.M.

One P.M.? That would normally be in the middle of his lunch period. I immediately began to have visions of being arrested at noon. That was the hour the police had chosen to arrest Pinkas, a British Embassy clerk, only five days ago. A clerk of the American military attaché's office had been arrested at that hour one day in October 1949.

With these forebodings pounding through my head I went to the

American Embassy. Ambassador Ellis O. Briggs, the counselor James K. Penfield, and the First Secretary Alexander Schnee, gave me helpful advice. Mrs. Penfield and Mrs. Schnee had meanwhile gone to see Tania to offer what help they could.

At length I came to this decision: If I were going to be arrested it would not matter whether it was in Prague or at the frontier. There was a good chance that the Czech bureaucracy had not yet got around to notifying border points to stop me. We might as well try getting out of the country by car.

There remained the hope that, instead of arrest, an expulsion notice was waiting for me at the Foreign Office. How wonderful it would be to get an expulsion notice and be released from this fear of arrest! With that in mind, and in spite of my qualms, I decided to keep my date with Bedrich Runge at 1 P.M.

He was not there. Instead a note at the reception desk said he had been called away and no one at the Foreign Office could see me until the next day. What, I asked, about the other people in his department? "No," the clerk insisted (in halting German), "you must come tomorrow." Not on your life, I thought. Tania and I had better start moving while we can.

Nonetheless, on my way back to the hotel I saw one more person, the reliability of whose information I trusted implicitly. He was a Czech in an important position, whom I dared see only occasionally, and I will not mention his name. He warned me that I might indeed be arrested in the next few hours. The Communists cared nothing for what the reactions of Western countries' newspapers might be. They were thinking only that they could use me for their own propaganda purposes in a big trial.

Tania packed in record time. I told her to leave most of my clothes behind. We would pretend we were leaving only for a few days, that I was merely taking her to Vienna for a breather.

I went through the motions of putting money in the hotel safe, and mentioned that I would pay my bill when I returned. The hotel people eyed me curiously. I was not fooling them, and I was glad that they were friendly. But I had to go on with the act. In the elevator the porter asked, his eyes wide, "We heard your name on the radio, Mr. Schmidt, what are you going to do?"

"Oh, those things happen in the newspaper business," I replied lightly, in German. "And while I am away," I added, "would you mind looking into my room to see that my things are all right?" I handed him a fat tip of 300 crowns.

As we walked out of the hotel I mentioned casually at the desk once more that we were going to Austria for a few days. And then we headed our car in the opposite direction, for the German border at Rozvadov.

There was one more delay, torturing delay, while we waited for the Allied Military Permits Office to issue our permit to enter Germany. Then, opposite the Alcron Hotel we kept a rendezvous with Dale Fisher, American Vice-Consul and Second Secretary, who had most generously agreed to escort us in his car. Not that he or any other American diplomat could have prevented my being arrested. But we thought that if anything happened it would be well at least to have a witness. And he would then be able to take care of Tania, see that she got safely out of the country. Thank God Tania had not become involved in any of this trouble.

Fisher led the way, winding slowly through the suburbs. Tania tried to keep cheerful and to make me eat a sandwich. I could not. I was watching the minutes slip away on the clock, hoping we would get across the border before the seven o'clock radio news. Everyone listened to that in Czechoslovakia. And supposing they mentioned my name on the radio just as the official was checking my passport? I signaled to Fisher please to "step on it," and he grinned.

A little nightmare scene evolved in my head. I would hand my passport to the frontier official, and he would study it a moment. Then he would lift his head and say, in thick Bohemian German: "Ah, Mr. Schmidt, we have been expecting you. Please sit down while I call the police."

We kept watching for road blocks. Usually there were three or four between Prague and the frontier. A smart cop might recognize my name and ask where I was going. What would I say? We encountered nary a road block — but we did meet a cop.

It was about ten miles from Rozvadov, at a point where I had missed a sign diverting us to a detour. Fisher was well ahead. I stopped to turn around and go back. And as I backed and turned on a narrow country road a policeman rose up out of the ground and stepped towards me. He was smiling, apparently desirous of giving me directions. So I stuck my head out the window, grinned broadly and inquired in rudimentary Czech, "*Prosim,* Rozvadov?" (Rozvadov, please?).

His German was better than my Czech, and he explained in detail, while looking at us, and our dog, and at the suitcases in the back seat. He must have read the newspaper stories that American diplomats were being expelled and assumed that we were among them, for he then declared categorically: "You are leaving the country. I hope you come back."

Then he leaned forward and with his head half through the window added softly, "And when you come back I hope you come with tanks!"

He stepped away from the car and saluted.

All I could say was, "Oh my God, oh my God," as we drove on. When the frontier post came in sight, we saw Fisher joking with the officials disarmingly. I followed in his footsteps. They stamped my passport. I had nothing to declare. They looked quickly in the car trunk, and then an official raised the barrier.

We drove through. A few hundred yards farther down the road, when we were out of Czechoslovakia for sure, I stopped the car and gave Tania a big kiss. I was so relieved that I forgot my passport at the German frontier post and had to drive back two miles to get it.

CHAPTER 4 The Trial of William Oatis

TWENTY-THREE days after I left Prague to avoid arrest, William Nathan Oatis, a tall, astonishingly thin thirty-seven-year-old Hoosier reporter, arrived to head the Associated Press bureau which had been without an American chief since the expulsion of Nathan Polowetzky three months earlier.

This was the first time that Oatis had been on his own at the head of his own bureau, and he threw himself heart and soul into a reportorial task that was well-nigh impossible, as Russell Jones of the U.P., Bobby Bigio of Reuters and Gaston Fournier of Agence France-Presse, the only other Western newspapermen left, explained to him.

Oatis was conscientious and meant to make something of his new assignment. His early life had been hard, and he had worked his way up, step by step. When he was a year old, his brother had been scalded to death, his father, Ross Oatis, left soon for Arizona to seek work, and his mother disappeared. He was brought up by his paternal grandmother, Mrs. Charles Oatis. He was a bookish boy, but well liked. He played the piano at young people's gatherings at church and took part in discussion meetings and dramatics. Friends recall that he made a fine apothecary in *Romeo and Juliet* because he was so thin and "could walk as an old man would."

He went to De Pauw University on a scholarship, but quit after his freshman year, in 1933, to join the staff of the *Marion Leader-Tribune*. One of the stories Oatis wrote then, about the death of Sport, a dog beloved by the whole town, is still kept under glass in Marion's Plymouth Club. On the *Leader-Tribune* and later on the *Marion Chronicle,* Oatis learned to be, above all, a diligent reporter. Once he horrified his colleagues by telephoning the Indiana governor at 1 A.M. to check a minor detail in the story he was writing.

In 1937 he joined the Associated Press in Indianapolis, and stayed there until 1942, when he went into the army. His friends could never under-

stand how he managed to pass the physical examination, for, aged twenty-eight, he was as thin as a wisp, 6 feet 1 inch tall and only 120 pounds in weight. Furthermore, he was so nearsighted that he could do little without his heavy, horn-rimmed glasses.

The army sent him first to the University of Minnesota and then to the University of Michigan, to study Japanese. As usual, Bill Oatis applied himself industriously and learned his lessons well. Nearly ten years later, the Communist police of Czechoslovakia were to insist that this special training had made him a "trained spy."

In 1946 Oatis went back to work for the Associated Press in New York, first on the news features desk and later on the foreign desk. In 1948 the Associated Press sent him to London.

There Oatis married Laurabelle Zack, a former employee in the Associated Press news library in New York. When he was assigned to Prague, his wife returned to the United States. She is now living in St. Paul, Minnesota, where she writes advertising copy for a department store.

In Prague, Oatis covered the usual news beats in the embassies and official offices, and looked for new ones. Always he took notes, which were filed away in a desk drawer at his office. It was said that only he could read these scrawls; but it would seem that the Czech police spies, who presumably rifled his desk, managed to decipher them since Oatis's notebooks were designated "documentary evidence" at his trial.

Oatis's gangling figure became a familiar one around town, as he dug methodically into the news. Ordinarily a mild-mannered fellow, the frustrations of work in a police state sometimes got under his skin, and Oatis would light out with a few well-chosen home truths at the Prague officials with whom he had to deal.

Oatis covered the Catholic Church's last resistance against Communist encroachment and the deportation of Archbishop Beran from the capital. He wrote about mass arrests among anti-Communists, and recurring purges among Communist officials. He managed to get a good deal of information, and his colleagues respected him. So, apparently, did Czech authorities, although for other reasons, for, on September 22, only three months after his arrival, the Foreign Ministry Press Department ordered Oatis to leave the country within a week. His accreditation, which had to be renewed every three months by the Press Department, had expired. "You are no longer *persona grata,*" Bedrich Runge told him. "Your behavior has been such as to justify our refusing to prolong your accredita-

tion. This is not a measure directed against the A.P. It is a measure directed against you personally."

But before the week was up the Press Department changed its mind and let him stay on. There was something fishy about this change of attitude — as it is easy to see now, Oatis would have been well advised not to take advantage of his reprieve. But he was ambitious and determined to stretch his assignment as long as possible.

At the beginning of 1951, Oatis had some pretty good stories. He learned that an assistant secretary-general of the Communist Party, Maria Svermova, and a district chief of the Communist Party at Brno had been arrested, and that Foreign Minister Vladimir Clementis had disappeared. He exploited every source, private and official, to find out the how and the why of these events. This, more than anything else, was to be held against him by the Communist authorities.

In April 1951, Bill Oatis discovered that he was being shadowed by secret policemen. After three translators in his office had vanished — presumably arrested — in March and April, Oatis told Tyler Thompson, Counselor at the American Embassy, that he was really getting worried about his own safety. But still he did not leave.

On the night of April 23, as he was putting his car away in his garage, the secret police arrested him.

It took the Communist police sixty-nine days to prepare William Oatis for trial. What they did to him and what went on in his mind can only be guessed, for the embassy's constantly repeated requests that he be allowed to see a representative of the embassy or of the Associated Press, or that he be allowed to consult a lawyer, were always denied by the Czech Foreign Ministry, until April 30, 1952, when Ambassador Briggs was allowed to see him briefly.

On Monday July 1, the Czechoslovak government announced that the trial of the "four-member espionage group of William N. Oatis" would start the next day. His codefendants were three translators who had worked in the A.P. office, Tomas Svoboda, Pavel Wojdinek and Peter Muntz. The announcement convicted the defendants in advance.

The Associated Press office in Prague, the announcement said, had been carrying on espionage for years under its successive chiefs, Abraham Goldberg, Richard Kasishke and Nathan Polowetzky, of whom the last two had been expelled for their "hostile activity." It continued as follows: "The direction of this center was taken over in June 1950, by the trained spy, W. Oatis. Under his leadership, the espionage network of the center was

finally completed, the nucleus of it being paid employees, all persons filled with hatred toward our republic and its people's democratic regime. These hostile agents in American service did not even stop at murder. . . ." It alleged that one of Oatis's agents, Miroslav Komarek, had supplied the weapon with which another agent, Josef Pavelka, had murdered a Czech army officer.

As the head of the A.P. "espionage center," Oatis had co-operated closely with the American Embassy, particularly the military attaché, "who gave him instructions and whom he supplied with espionage material." The American Counterintelligence Corps had "displayed a marked interest in this information and always attempted to discover to what extent the network had been unmasked in our territory and what new measures it should take." All this would be proved with notes in Oatis's own handwriting.

The three Czech defendants were full-time spies, the announcement went on. One of them, Tomas Svoboda, "when in contact with our working people tried to give the impression that he was a progressive journalist." The most recent activity of the group had been gathering reports on "the traitors Sling, Svermova and their accomplices."

The same day, in New York, the Associated Press declared its "fullest confidence that the conduct of William N. Oatis as well as his American predecessors in charge of A.P.'s Prague bureau conformed to A.P. standards of honorable and objective news-gathering."

Far from engaging in any devious operations in Prague, the A.P. pointed out, it had for some years had a contract with the official Czechoslovak news agency, C.T.K., providing for a mutual exchange of news in Prague and the installation of leased-wire facilities connecting the Prague C.T.K. office with the A.P.'s European news distribution system.

At 8 o'clock in the morning on July 2, Oatis was led from a prison cell in Prague's massive gray Pankrac prison to the prison's central courtroom. He was placed on a defendant's stand ringed by six microphones and a semicircular rail, so that the prosecutor was on his left, the defense lawyer on his right, and he faced the five Communist judges occupying a raised dais. Behind him were several hundred "shock workers" who, as a reward for their toil, had been given tickets to the trial, and who filled the spectators' galleries. The arrangement was the same as it had been at the trials of priests and of underground leaders.

Two American Embassy observers, Vice-Consul Richard Johnson and Mary Horak, a skilled American interpreter, were given seats in the last

row. They were a good hundred feet from Oatis but they could see that he was pale and even thinner than usual. He had on a neat blue suit. He was not wearing his glasses, and so could scarcely have seen the spectators. He stood with head bowed and shoulders stooped, staring at the floor while klieg lights set up by the Czech newsreel cameramen blazed around him.

No Western correspondents were in the courtroom. The Agence France-Presse correspondent, Gaston Fournier, having discovered that his entire Czech staff had been arrested while he was on leave in Paris, had not returned to his post. Russell Jones of the United Press had been transferred to another post, and Bobby Bigio of Reuters, learning that the police were looking for him, had departed in haste only twelve days before the trial.

The nearest thing to a newspaper reporter in the courtroom was Ivo Berounsky, a Czechoslovak employee of the United Press, who did a very creditable job. The following account of the trial is compiled from his report to the United Press and from the Associated Press story which was written in Frankfurt on the basis of transcriptions of the trial on the Czech radio, and of the very full record of the proceedings made by the two American observers.

After the indictment had been read, the president of the court, Jaroslav Novak, asked Oatis, "Did you carry on espionage?" The question was relayed to Oatis through earphones in an English translation provided by a young girl translator.

Oatis answered, "Yes."

Everything that followed was intended to substantiate that laconic "yes." Oatis had been held incommunicado for sixty-nine days since his arrest on April 23, and he had learned his lines faultlessly.

Calmly and without any sign of emotion he stood with his hands clasped behind him and stared at the floor as he testified, and mentioned diplomats, Czechs and fellow newspapermen who, he said, had also engaged in espionage. Among those he mentioned were:

Ellis O. Briggs, *American Ambassador*
Alexander Schnee, *American Embassy's First Secretary*
Lieutenant Colonel George L. Attwood, *American Military Attaché,*
and Colonel Philip D. Ginder, *his predecessor*
Tyler Thompson, *American Embassy Counselor*
Geoffrey Kirk, *British Embassy's First Secretary*
Anthony Snellgrove, *British Embassy's Third Secretary*
Colonel Young, *British Military Attaché*
Captain Guy Wheeler, *former British Assistant Military Attaché*

Charles Hockey, *British Vice-Consul*
John Clews, *British representative to the International Union of Students*
Colonel Gastaldo, *French Military Attaché*
Ram Goburdhun, *Chargé d'Affaires of the Indian Embassy*
Russell Jones, *United Press correspondent*
Robert Bigio, *Reuters correspondent*
Gaston Fournier, *Agence France-Presse correspondent*
Jan Stransky, *Czech employee of the United Press*

Oatis said that he had been given secret information by Antonin Kratochvil, an official in the Czech prime minister's office; an engineer named Polak, head of the defunct Pan-American Airlines office in Prague; Miroslav Gustav, a Pan-American employee; two waiters in the fashionable Alcron Hotel; and Vera Packova, a former A.P. employee who worked in the Grand Hotel Pupp in Karlovy Vary (Karlsbad).

As examples of "espionage," he mentioned that the United States Ambassador, Ellis O. Briggs, had given him information about Vladimir Clementis, the former Czech Foreign Minister, now in prison accused of attempting to overthrow the government. He said that his first information that Clementis had disappeared came from Tyler Thompson. "Did he say where he received that information?" the prosecutor asked.

"Yes," Oatis replied, "he said an unknown man telephoned the American Embassy and introduced himself as a member of the state security police."

As evidence of espionage carried out by Lieutenant Colonel Attwood and Colonel Ginder, he pointed out that they kept files and indexes on Czech officers and military units, and exchanged their information with the French and British military attachés. Alexander Schnee, he said, kept files on political events and personalities. Anthony Snellgrove at the British Embassy had a file on church affairs. The information he got from these sources, Oatis added, he often checked with the Chargé d'Affaires of the Indian Embassy, Ram Goburdhun.

In reply to questions by the prosecutor and the judges, Oatis said that the Pan-American employees, Polak and Gustav, gave him information on the arrivals and departures of distinguished visitors to Czechoslovakia. The former A.P. employee, Vera Packova, informed him about the Russian and "People's Democratic" diplomats who visited Karlovy Vary.

"What kind of people were these Czechs? What were their political beliefs?" the prosecutor asked.

"They were all enemies of the People's Democratic regime," Oatis replied.

Much of the first morning was taken up with an examination of Oatis's stories about the disappearance of Vladimir Clementis, the former Foreign Minister, who was arrested in January 1951. Although his stories were published far and wide, the prosecutor presented them, and the A.P.'s queries concerning them, to the court as though they were secret communications between a foreign government and its agent. The messages from the London and New York offices of the A.P. included inquiries about the number of Roman Catholic clergymen arrested, about the arrest of people in the Ministry of Foreign Trade, about the removal of high agricultural officials, and about the raw materials Czechoslovakia needs from the West.

The following is an excerpt from the transcript of the trial concerning the A.P.'s queries about Clementis:

> PROSECUTOR: Here are original documents marked L-23 . . . they are concerning instructions regarding details about the antistate activities of the Clementis group, at that time considered secret by our government. Your instruction also concerns not only Clementis but also others who were concerned with Clementis. What steps did you take?
>
> OATIS: First I was to find out if Clementis had disappeared. . . . I went to the American Embassy and got in touch with the clerk, Colclough, who gave me the address and number of Clementis's apartment. Then I went back to the office and got Svoboda and Wojdinek [Czechoslovak employees of the Associated Press] to go with me.
>
> Q: Why did you take these two with you?
>
> A: Because they could speak Czech.
>
> Q: What did you three do?
>
> A: We were ascertaining that Clementis was not in his apartment. We learned that he was not there and that security measures had been taken.
>
> Q: What did you do with this information?
>
> A: I sent the news to London.
>
> Q: Did you file this item? [Showing an exhibit.]
>
> A: Yes, that is part of that item.
>
> Q: Did you send more reports regarding Clementis? It is then possible to say that there were quite a number of them?
>
> A: I sent several such stories. Yes, that's true.

Q: Did you try to find out where Clementis was interned?
A: Yes.
Q: Your employers either in New York or London were interested in Clementis?
A: They were highly interested.
Q: You finally obtained a photograph? [Of the place where Clementis was held by the police.]
A: Yes, I did.
Q: Respective information regarding photograph did you send to London or New York?
A: Before I could do so I was arrested.

At the end of the morning session, the prosecutor asked Oatis:
Q: Do you have anything to add?
A: No. I made a full statement as it was drawn out of me by your questions and I want to add that I feel sorry for what I did.
Q: Do you hold any hatred for Czechoslovakia or the Czechoslovakian working people?
A: No.
Q: And yet you felt compelled to carry out these activities?
A: Yes, and this on instructions from my superiors in London and New York and under the influence of some Western diplomats.

Asked about his family background, Oatis said he came from a worker's family and that he, too, was a worker. When the prosecutor asserted that he was not a worker but an acknowledged spy, Oatis said he was still a worker and intended to continue being a worker.

Oatis for the first time showed a spark of resistance when, at the beginning of the afternoon session, he was asked whether it was not true that he had taken over an "espionage network" when he became Prague chief-of-bureau. He denied that he had taken over an "espionage network." He said he had only taken over Associated Press office personnel. To this the prosecutor rejoined tartly that it takes only two informants to form an "espionage network." Commenting on his predecessors, he observed that Oatis was "the most subtle, discreet and refined and consequently the most dangerous of them all."

Oatis also denied that he had anything to do with the murder of a Czech army officer, although he admitted that he had heard about it. The prosecution charged that Oatis's predecessor Polowetzky had received information from the alleged killer, Komarek, including details of new uranium mines, and had given this information to the American Military Attaché.

But Oatis asserted that he never met Komarek and did not know his name until after he was arrested. "I knew him only by the name of Joe, which is how Polowetzky called him before I came to Prague in a talk I had with him in London," Oatis explained.

Oatis said he began to worry about Svoboda, his chief translator, when two of the latter's brothers, who were close friends of "Joe," were arrested. After Svoboda himself was arrested, Oatis continued, he wanted to warn Komarek so he filed a story on the arrest. He said Komarek was in Paris at the time and that he hoped Harvey Hudson of the Paris A.P. bureau would warn the Czech.

Asked if he told United States Embassy Counselor Tyler Thompson about the murder, Oatis said, "Yes, but I did not go into details."

"We do not consider murder a detail in this country," the prosecutor commented sarcastically. This caused a titter among the spectators, who had been munching sandwiches and dozing most of the day.

> Q: The duty of every decent person in the world is to help uncover murderers. Do you consider that your moral duty?
> A: Yes.
> Q: Did you do anything to fulfill that duty?
> A: No, I did not. [Laughter.]
> Q: Why didn't you tell the state security organs?
> A: I wanted to protect Muntz and Wojdinek.
> Q: Yes, because all of you were in the dirty game later. Was your espionage activity in accordance with similar activity by other Western diplomats here?
> A: Yes, it was. I found out that most of the diplomatic and press representatives here were carrying out espionage so it was hard for me not to do the same. [Loud laughter.]
> Q: You were paid for this?
> A: Yes, that is true.
> Q: For espionage?
> A: Not specifically for espionage.
> Q: Did you pay your A.P. employees?
> A: They were paid in crowns and I sometimes gave them Darex coupons [hard currency vouchers for diplomatic stores, etc.] and cigarettes.

The three Czechs formerly employed by the Associated Press, Svoboda, Wojdinek and Muntz, were brought in towards the end of the day. They told about a "secret telephone line" listed under the name of Knetl which

Oatis used when he telephoned his secret contacts. A pistol which Polowetzky left in the office safe when he departed, they said, was later turned over to the former American Embassy Press Attaché, Joseph Kolarek. After each of the Czechs' testimony, Oatis was asked if he agreed, and on each occasion he prefaced his reply with the words "Generally speaking, yes." He vigorously denied, however, Svoboda's testimony that he had attended Czech Army maneuvers with Oatis. "I never attended those maneuvers," he said. "Perhaps Svoboda has a better memory than I have."

Svoboda stuck to his point and Oatis said: "Excuse my memory, I say."

"We are not saying you have a bad memory," said the prosecutor, a remark that was greeted by renewed titters from the spectators.

Under questioning by the judges and prosecutor all three Czechs declared that they "felt guilty."

"I deeply regret what I have done, and I think I have learned a lesson," concluded Svoboda. "We betrayed our country for cigarettes and chocolates."

The second day of Oatis's trial was devoted to testimony from eleven witnesses, to a statement by Oatis implicating other newspapermen and members of the diplomatic corps, to a summation by the prosecutor, and a brief plea of extenuating circumstances by the defense.

Oatis sat on a bench between two policemen with his back to the spectators, while the witnesses for the prosecution filed past. When he turned towards the spectators, the two American observers in the back of the courtroom could see that he seemed tired and haggard. He was wearing his glasses.

The first witness was Jiri Mucha, a Czech poet who until recently had been in high Communist favor, and had been permitted to live in a house facing on the courtyard of Hradcany Castle, the official residence of President Gottwald. In a weak and nervous voice, Mucha told the court that he had met Oatis at a party given by Peter Swan, the British ambassador's personal secretary. He was followed by Helena Kucerova, twenty-two, an employee of the Ministry of Public Works, by Miroslav Havelka, aged thirty, a former mechanic for Pan-American Airways, Vlasta Pankova, twenty-seven, an employee of Chemapol, and Matej Kubik, fifty-eight, a barman at the Alcron, Prague's biggest hotel. Also Jan Stransky, twenty-two, a former employee of the United Press, Josef Pavelka, the alleged murderer of a Czech army officer, and Jan Knetl, who owned the office next to Oatis's.

All of them admitted that they had given Oatis information "hostile" to the interests of the People's Republic. Havelka admitted, as examples of such "hostile" information, that he had told Oatis about the arrival and departure of important officials at the airport and about the case of a highly placed official who was at the last moment forbidden to leave the country.

Miss Pankova said she had first met Oatis in London before she returned to Czechoslovakia in 1950. She said he took her to lunch several times and that she gave him information on the arrest of Otto Sling, Brno district Party chief, and his attempt to escape. When this witness mentioned giving Oatis information about "partisan activity" in Slovakia, the president of the court cautioned her against using such a "noble name" for bandits.

Kubik told the court that Oatis frequently visited his bar to ask him about people who lived in the hotel or drank at the bar.

Jan Stransky, a small, wiry, and high-spirited young man, son of a well-known Prague family, told the court that he had been put in a labor camp in 1950 after attempting to escape from the country.

"Didn't you like it here?" one of the judges asked. Stransky laughed wryly and replied, "Some things I liked and some things I didn't."

He said that one Sunday when he had been given permission to leave the labor camp, he went to visit Russell Jones of the U.P. Not finding him, he called Oatis, who invited him to the A.P. office. He told Oatis he wanted to warn Jones that a girl employee of U.P. was working for the police, and Oatis told him to sit down and typewrite a note to Jones. Then Oatis asked him how he had been interrogated and about life in the labor camp. . . .

There was a stir in the court when Josef Pavelka, alleged to have murdered a Czech army officer, was called to give evidence. A whisper of "murderer" ran through the spectators' gallery. Pavelka, who admitted the murder, said he had never met Oatis but asserted that he had seen Miroslav Komarek, who had supplied him with the murder weapon, going into the Associated Press office. There was no attempt in court to link Oatis directly with the murder, although the accounts of the trial published by the Communist press implied that such a link had been established. Nor was there any explanation during the trial regarding the circumstances of this murder. On the one hand, Oatis said he had never met Komarek, and was not challenged by the court. On the other hand, Pavelka said he had never met Oatis. The only purpose of bringing the

entire affair into the trial was apparently to damage Oatis's reputation by implied association.

Another witness, Jan Knetl, said he had allowed Oatis to use his telephone in the adjoining office but declared excitedly that he was innocent of any crime and that he had a clear conscience.

After the witnesses had finished, the defense counsel, Dr. Bartos, told the court that Oatis wanted to add something to the evidence he had given the day before. Stooped and looking steadily at the floor, Oatis then spoke for fifteen minutes. He spoke softly, sometimes so softly that he was inaudible. He said he wanted to tell more about the Western correspondents and diplomats.

"Yes," the president of the court observed, "we know that you did not say all that was on your conscience."

"But I answered all the questions," Oatis replied. "The witnesses have pictured the espionage activity I engaged in. Now I want to say something of the espionage activity of those others."

First he spoke about the newspaper correspondents. The military attaché, Colonel Attwood, he said, had received two reports from Russell Jones, the United Press correspondent. The first, in January 1951, concerned "military questions in a certain Bohemian town involving the Ministry of National Defense." The second, in March or April, concerned "a number of army officers who had been arrested in connection with the case of Sling and Clementis."

Oatis's charge against Bobby Bigio, the Reuters correspondent, was that he had, in Oatis's presence, told Ambassador Briggs that a certain number of high officials had been dismissed. (This may well have taken place at Ambassador Briggs's weekly press conference, which consisted mainly of relaxing for twenty or thirty minutes in the deep leather arm chairs of his office and swapping any good stories those present had picked up during the week.)

"Gaston Fournier of the French news agency put out a news bulletin for the diplomatic corps in Prague which contained many espionage reports," Oatis continued. "I remember on one occasion it contained news of the arrest of an official in the Ministry of Agriculture." He added that a report on the disappearance of Clementis had been published in the bulletin. (This bulletin consisted of a summary of world news and was quite openly circulated to subscribers in Prague until the Agence France-Presse bureau closed down shortly before the Oatis trial.) "All three agencies sent news about Clementis," Oatis said.

Turning to espionage by diplomats, Oatis went on:

"The American Embassy received regular espionage reports from the British, Italian and French Embassies. Tyler Thompson [Counselor of the American Embassy] sent to Washington reports on the location of labor camps in Czechoslovakia. I believe the details were from Kirk [British Embassy First Secretary].

"Kirk gave me reports sometime in January on the connection between Svermova and Sling and told me of the case of the wife of a high political leader, who had been arrested, interrogated and later released.

"Kirk, Snellgrove [British Embassy Third Secretary] and Charles Hockey [the British Vice-Consul] spread slanderous reports of life in Czechoslovakia. Martin Bowe [Prague representative of the United States High Commission for Germany] gave me last October the news of a secret trial of the Czech hockey team, and in January a list of several officials who had been arrested or dismissed from several ministries."

Oatis repeated that American Embassy First Secretary Schnee and Military Attaché Attwood kept political and military files and that their opposite numbers at the British Embassy did likewise. Attwood, he recalled, had passed on to him unconfirmed reports about the suicide of some army generals and the arrest of others.

"I must add that I had a steady demand for such reports from New York and London. Now this was because my agency supplies news to various papers in the United States and in Europe . . . and it is interested in everything that slanders and is damaging to the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies. . . . It competes with other agencies . . . so I was under constant pressure from the New York and London service for news of this kind. I got it coming from the Czechs and diplomats and I sent it out to the agency. Sometimes news that I got from one source I gave to another. So I was a man in the middle. I am sorry I allowed myself to be used in this way." (Laughter.) This was Oatis's second public apology.

The prosecutor then introduced "documentary evidence." This consisted almost exclusively of Oatis's notes. The court was first shown photostatic copies and then the original notebooks.

Oatis, speaking in a very weak voice, identified the notebooks as a guard turned over the pages for him. The courtroom was absolutely silent except for Oatis's mumbled affirmations.

In one notebook, seven pages were covered by the names of army and air force officers who had been arrested. This was the information, Oatis

said, which Colonel Attwood had received from Jones and had passed on to him. Four pages contained notes on labor camps from Tyler Thompson. In addition, the notebook contained data on two Czech diplomats who had arrived in Czechoslovakia and who were not expected to be sent back to their posts, and information supplied by the British Embassy about the dismissal of a high official in the Foreign Ministry.

The second notebook contained the following items:

1. Data about Otto Sling and Vladimir Clementis.

2. The number of officials dismissed from four ministries — information supplied by Martin Bowe, the representative of the United States High Commission in Germany.

3. Characteristics of important government personalities and their activities.

4. Characteristics of high military officers — supplied by Snellgrove of the British Embassy.

5. Details about the arrest and the interrogation of high-ranking personalities — also supplied by Snellgrove.

6. Details about the escape of a high-ranking personality, not identified by the court — supplied by Tyler Thompson.

The notebooks were presented by the prosecutor with an air of triumph, as a sort of *pièce de résistance* and the clinching evidence against Oatis. The president of the court then asked that the court be cleared while military experts evaluated the evidence.

Later in the afternoon, the prosecutor opened his summation with a general attack on United States foreign policy. He declared that the United States was expanding its espionage network in an effort to weaken the Soviet Union and the "People's Democracies." Oatis had acted as a part of this network, although he was accredited to the Foreign Ministry as a journalist. "So long as the United States is ruled by sixty families, American journalists will be spies," he said. "But accreditation as a journalist does not exempt a man from Czech law." The prosecutor declared that Oatis was particularly dangerous because of his insistence on obtaining only accurate, verified information.

He asserted that the "crimes" of Oatis and his three codefendants merited "the most severe punishment" — a legal euphemism for the death penalty. "However," he added, "the law also prescribes that when there are extenuating circumstances the punishment may be limited to a term of imprisonment."

He made a distinction between the crimes of Oatis and the three A.P.

employees, Tomas Svoboda, Pavel Wojdinek and Peter Muntz. "Oatis is a foreigner," he said. "He was sent to this country by his 'bread-givers' to harm the People's Democratic regime, to slander the Republic and in every way to work against our people. The others, however, all Czech citizens, had every opportunity to assert themselves in the constructive work of our people. All the gates were open to them, yet fully conscious of what they were doing, they lined themselves up with the Western imperialists. Therefore, they deserve strict punishment."

In reply to the prosecution, Oatis's defense counsel, Dr. Bartos, developed the plea of extenuating circumstances. "I cannot deny the guilt of Mr. Oatis," he said. "This has already been sufficiently proven." But he hoped that the court would take into consideration four points:

First, Oatis's background as a worker; secondly, the fact that "it was difficult for a man in Oatis's position not to engage in espionage, because of the company he was in in Prague and because of the circumstances of his education." (He said that Oatis had been trained as a professional spy in two American military schools, at which he had been associated with Lieutenant Colonel Attwood.) Thirdly, Oatis was only a small link in the great chain of Western espionage; fourthly, he had confessed "voluntarily and spontaneously."

In view of these points, the defense counsel hoped that the court would impose the minimum sentence possible under the circumstances.

Defense counsel for the three Czechs also admitted their clients' guilt. They asked the court's mercy on the grounds that the three men had "become the victims of a ruthless, immoral trained spy who used clever methods to force them into espionage."

At the end of the second day of the trial, Oatis was called upon to make his final plea, consisting of a third and last apology. He said:

"I am sorry I went in for espionage in this country. I didn't do it because I am an enemy of the working class. I am from the working class myself. I did it only because I listened to the wrong kind of orders from abroad and came under the influence of the wrong kind of people here in Czechoslovakia.

"I hurt myself, I hurt my friends, and harmed the Republic and helped its enemies. I harmed the cause of peace and helped the cause of war. I repeat I am sorry for all this.

"Your security organ caught me and now you know all about me. I have talked freely here of what I have done in the hope that I can be of some help that way. This has been a matter of some moment to me because it is

likely to hurt me when I leave this country, but I thought it the best thing to do.

"Your security organs have treated me with great consideration, even though I did not deserve it. Your court treated me courteously. I thank you for all that. I know that I did the wrong thing. I want to renounce my espionage work forever. In view of my admission, I hope the court will be as lenient as it can. I am ready for your judgment. Thank you."

There was something about Oatis's final humiliation that struck the "shock workers" (workers who are able to produce more than the norm) in the galleries as humorous. Ripples of laughter intended to be heavily sarcastic ran through the crowd as he delivered these extraordinary lines.

As he was led out of the courtroom, Oatis raised his head and for the first time seemed to search the spectators. Perhaps he was looking for the face of a friend, someone who would give some sign that he understood. Understood what? That we will not know for sure until Bill Oatis is liberated. Perhaps all that needed to be understood was that he had been in the hands of the police for sixty-nine days, that even if he had had the good fortune not to be tortured he had unquestionably been subjected to most intense moral pressure, and that under such circumstances the ordinary human being is likely to conclude that it is sensible to say anything the jailers want said. After all, why should a prisoner expose himself to extra suffering when the whole world knows that confessions at Communist political trials are worthless?

On the other hand, could it be that Bill Oatis worked out a subtler scheme during his sixty-nine days in prison? Perhaps he wrote that final plea himself in the hope that his friends — who knew he was not a spy but a conscientious reporter — would read it in the light of what they knew to be the truth. Thus they would read "news-gathering" where he had said "espionage," and that he was "glad" where he had said he was "sorry." They would read that he had been treated abominably where he had said he had been treated well, and that he knew he had done the "right thing" where he had said he knew he had done the "wrong thing." Oatis's abject confession would be transformed into a noble declaration.

I do not find it difficult to believe that Oatis had this in mind as he scanned the courtroom. But I fear that he found no friendly faces. The two Americans, Mary Horak and Richard Johnson, were too far back in the courtroom for him to see. And while there were, undoubtedly, many among the Czechs who wanted to understand, few, if any, dared to show it.

On the Fourth of July, at 8:20 A.M., the state court in Pankrac prison

reconvened to hear the verdict and the sentence in the two-day trial of William Nathan Oatis and his three Czech codefendants. The four defendants sat on a long bench facing the five judges, each separated from the others by a uniformed policeman.

The president of the court announced that all were guilty of espionage. All were sentenced to prison: Oatis to ten years, Svoboda to twenty years, Wojdinek to eighteen years and Muntz to fifteen years. Their property was confiscated. The prison sentence could be reduced by half for good behavior. Oatis would be expelled from Czechoslovakia upon release.

Oatis had been spared the death penalty, the judge explained, because he had admitted his guilt and had helped in "exposing the espionage activities of Western diplomats and Western news agencies." Among those whom Oatis had "exposed," he mentioned particularly the United States Military Attaché, Lieutenant Colonel George L. Attwood.

Richard Johnson and Mary Horak could not see Oatis's face as the judge spoke, but a moment later they heard him say: "I accept the sentence of the court and ask that I be sent somewhere where I can do some useful work."

Then Oatis and the three Czechs were quickly marched out of the courtroom.

The same day, in Washington, the State Department issued a statement denouncing the Oatis trial as a "ludicrous travesty of justice . . . prepared and rehearsed in advance under police auspices and by customary Communist police procedure." This was, it said, an "attempted hoax on the intelligence of world opinion," and a "kangaroo court." The evidence was even flimsier than in most "trumped-up trials of this type," and the "confession" of espionage was merely "the admission of an American reporter that in the high traditions of his profession he was attempting under the most unfavorable conditions to report a true picture of conditions and events in Czechoslovakia as he saw them."

The Czechoslovak regime, the statement continued, had demonstrated "that it considers legitimate and normal news-gathering and reporting as 'espionage,'" that it "rejects completely the principle of freedom of information," and that it "fears truth, hates liberty and knows no justice." The baseless accusations against the American ambassador and other American diplomats were "invented as part of the entire propaganda performance in attacking the United States." The trial came as a "climax in the treatment of American citizens in Czechoslovakia."

The Department had (on June 3) concluded from this treatment that

"it was no longer safe for American citizens to travel in Czechoslovakia," and had invalidated American passports for travel in that country until further notice.

The Associated Press, too, issued a statement. "Even with the callous disregard of fundamental justice and equity which marked the procedure," the news agency said, "the Czech government had produced evidence which showed only that Oatis was engaged in the legitimate pursuit of news-gathering as free people understand it. The twisted, distorted interpretation placed thereon by the prosecutor was revolting to anyone grounded in democratic institutions and principles. The Associated Press will continue, by all means available, to seek Oatis's release from this cruel and unjust detention. We are confident that we shall have the assistance of freedom-loving people everywhere."

The Associated Press's confidence was not disappointed. From all over the non-Communist world, and especially from all parts of the United States, there arose loud and angry cries of indignation. Resolutions denouncing Communist "justice" and proposals for reprisals came in a flood.

The *New York Times* wrote, on July 3: "That an American newspaperman carrying out his normal functions in the collection of news should be arrested, tortured, and forced to confess in the Czechoslovakia that Masaryk and Benes created, is almost incredible." In Britain, the independent liberal *Manchester Guardian* pointed a moral to delegations of "peace workers" and others going to Eastern Europe: "Insistence on only 'accurate, verified information' may be a hanging matter." In Germany, the *Offenbach Post* pointed out that if Communist rules were applied in the West, a correspondent from the satellite bloc of countries who tried to find out where United States Secretary of Defense Marshall was planning to take a holiday, would be guilty of espionage. And the United States High Commission newspaper in Germany, *Die Neue Zeitung,* wrote: "Always the accusation is really against the West, but because the West is out of reach, they sentence human beings. The only question remaining is whether the wire-pullers behind such trials actually think their repetitious act is being taken seriously within the frontiers of their own country."

In the United States, the American Newspaper Guild, the National Press Club and the American Newspaper Publishers' Association issued angry protests. The American Society of Newspaper Editors urged that the Tass correspondent in Washington be excluded from congressional press galleries. (The Washington Correspondents' Standing Committee

later decided against this move because there were no technical grounds for excluding the Russian and because to begin by limiting freedom of the press would be a poor way to defend it.)

A wide variety of senators and congressmen broke into print with denunciations of the Communists of Czechoslovakia. Senator William E. Jenner declared hotly that if Oatis was not released the American Air Force should be sent into Czechoslovakia to get him out by force. On a more practical level, Senators Herbert O'Conor and Mike Monroney and Representatives John V. Beamer and O. K. Armstrong proposed economic sanctions against Czechoslovakia.

Finally, on August 14, the House of Representatives struck a real blow for William Oatis. It proposed the immediate severing of all commercial relations with Czechoslovakia until Oatis was freed. This resolution did not bind the Administration, but it was a recommendation that expressed the feelings of the Congress and the American people. On August 23, the resolution went to the Senate and was unanimously upheld.

A few days later, on August 28, President Truman let the new Czech Ambassador, Vladimir Prochazka, know that the United States meant business. Presenting his credentials, the Communist ambassador said that he hoped to make U.S.-Czech relations more cordial. The President replied that the best way to do that would be for the Czechs to send A.P. correspondent Oatis home. For five minutes, he gave the ambassador a dressing down. He said that relations had deteriorated "ever since Jan Masaryk was murdered." Before that time, the President said, relations between the United States and the Republic of Czechoslovakia had been "wonderful." A few days later, Truman added that the United States would take "whatever measures were necessary" to get Oatis released.

In the midst of the clamor for the release of Oatis, Representative Peter W. Rodino of New Jersey, in a letter to President Truman on September 4, recalled that there was another American in prison in Czechoslovakia — John Hvasta of Hillside, New Jersey. Hvasta, age twenty-four, is a former seaman and naturalized United States citizen who late in 1949 was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment on an espionage charge in Bratislava, capital of Slovakia. Hvasta studied in Czechoslovakia on the GI Bill of Rights for a time, and was later employed as a clerk in the American Consulate in Bratislava. He was discharged from this job by the consulate and soon thereafter was arrested.

The pattern of the measures being taken to obtain Oatis's release — which might also help Hvasta — was meanwhile taking shape, as follows:

1. A ban on travel by United States citizens in Czechoslovakia, imposed on June 3, was being rigidly enforced.

2. The movements of Czechoslovak businessmen in Western Germany were being restricted.

3. Czechoslovak imports into the United States were being subjected to delays, confusions and difficulties.

4. The Department of Commerce had made it known that because of "administrative problems" it could not grant certain export licenses to Czechs.

The next move came on September 10, when, at the initiative of the United States, the three Western Powers prohibited Czech airlines from flying over Western Germany. And the next on September 27, when the United States persuaded a meeting of the contracting parties to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade in Geneva to release the United States from its obligation to refrain from discrimination against Czechoslovak trade. As a result, President Truman on October 2 ordered all trade agreement benefits ended for Czechoslovakia on November 1, and the State and Treasury Departments joined in a move intended to cut Czechoslovak sales in the United States by as much as 75 per cent. This would be accomplished mainly by imposing "indefinite delays" upon issuance of consular invoices for goods the Czechs tried to export to the United States. Most goods imported without consular invoices would be subject to payment of entry bonds to the value of the merchandise, plus new and higher customs duties.

Even before the last American economic reprisals, there were signs that the pressure was taking effect. Vladimir Prochazka, the Czech Ambassador, intimated at a press conference on September 25 that Oatis's release might be negotiated if the United States would relax its economic restrictions against the Communist regime in Prague. This was in sharp contrast to his attitude a month earlier. Then he had said that the Oatis case was "juridically closed" and that Czechoslovakia would "not yield to any propaganda or economic pressure."

Now the Czech ambassador, in a more conciliatory mood, informed correspondents that he had received information very recently that Oatis was "quite well." He regretted that "conditions" made it impossible at present to discuss the Oatis case. Asked what conditions would be favorable to discussions, he said that would require "an atmosphere for an exchange of ideas and opinions and much calmer circumstances" than now exist.

Twice he was asked whether his government would consider starting negotiations if the United States relaxed its economic sanctions. The first time he replied that the two problems were not related and that Prague was not asking the withdrawal of the economic restrictions as a "ransom" for Oatis's release.

Then he added, as an apparent afterthought, that "there are no signs that they will be relaxed, and I won't comment until that becomes a reality."

Again he was asked directly: "Would relaxation of the economic pressures bring about the atmosphere you say is necessary for negotiations?"

"I think so, but there are too many details to go into that now," the envoy replied. The ambassador seemed somewhat harried. Perhaps he had gone too far in admitting the truth.

It was nearly nine months after the trial before Oatis was allowed to see anyone from the American Embassy. Nor, so far as it is known, was he allowed to communicate with any American other than his wife, Laurabelle. In mid-September, 1951, the Prague radio announced that he had been allowed to write to her "freely." This is what he "freely" wrote:

> I am sure that you must be surprised that I have been arrested. In explanation all I will tell you now is that I had been caught in espionage. . . . When I got orders to carry out espionage, I fulfilled them valiantly. Today I know very well how I harmed the interests of the Czechoslovak nation which honestly worked for world peace. . . . I am ashamed. . . . I share my grief only with you, dear. . . .

In St. Paul, Minnesota, Mrs. Oatis received the letter. She said: "I don't understand."

Meanwhile, Oatis's jailors were conditioning him for another appearance. In mid-March 1952, they had him dress up in his good blue suit and his spotted bow tie and led him again into Pankrac prison to testify against twelve persons allegedly associated with his "Associated Press spy ring."

Three of the accused, Josef Pavelka, Miroslav Havelka and Helena Kucerova, had been witnesses for the prosecution at Oatis's trial. Now Pavelka, alleged murderer of a Czech army officer, was sentenced to death; a man named Karel Hajek was sentenced to life and the others to long terms of imprisonment. No Western journalistic or diplomatic observers were present. Perhaps this was the last humiliating task Oatis's jailors had

in mind for him. The idea is suggested by the fact that on April 30, 1952, they at last allowed Ambassador Briggs to visit Oatis in his cell. In the half hour the two men had together, with a police official and two interpreters hovering nearby, Oatis did not tell the ambassador much. Or, if he did, the ambassador is still keeping it for the confidential use of the State Department.

Up to this point, I have put down all the facts I could gather about the Oatis case. Now I want to consider its meaning. Oatis was tried before a state court whose function it is to deal with political cases. Of the five judges, two were professionals and three "lay judges," appointed for their Communist political virtues. The lay judge's role is to insure the application of Communist principles of justice, especially to see to it that the "interests of the working class" remain paramount, and that there is no back-sliding into bourgeois-Western notions of "objective justice."

The procedure was more decorous than in most Communist political trials. It is usual for the judges and prosecutor to devote a large part of their energy to addressing the spectators, and for the spectators to take an active part in the proceedings by loudly expressing indignation, anger or approval. But at Oatis's trial, the judges and prosecutor stuck pretty closely to the business at hand, and the "shock workers" in the gallery were unusually passive. But this did not make it a fair trial by Western standards. The guilt of the defendants was considered to have been established beyond any possible refutation before the trial began, and was assumed not only by the prosecutor but also by the judges and the defense attorney. The judge, therefore, made no pretense of objectivity and the defense attorney confined himself to pleading extenuating circumstances.

Particularly shocking by Western standards was the fact that the defense presented no witnesses of any kind. In fact I have never heard of the defense calling a witness at a Czech Communist political trial. Even though the prosecution disposed of every advantage and the defense of none, nothing was brought out at the trial that could, by Western standards, be called espionage. By those standards, Oatis was a perfectly legitimate, hard-working and enterprising reporter. As a reporter it was natural for him to want to find out what important people were arriving and leaving the country, or vacationing at Karlovy Vary, or drinking at the bar. It was also natural, when the Foreign Minister disappeared, for Oatis to try to learn what had happened to him, to try to ferret out the news about other officials who had been arrested or who had escaped, and to

try to find out about life in labor camps. For him, as for any other reporter, exchanging information with diplomats and other news sources was normal news-gathering technique; if you give you are more likely to receive. And it should be noted that the activities that were held against Oatis by the Communists were only a small part of his news-gathering activity. With a Western devotion to "objectivity," he also reported what the Communist news agencies, newspapers, radio and government spokesmen had to say about the events of the day.

It seems to me that the Communists picked an extraordinarily poor subject for their trial. Strange spy, this, who kept his "secret" information in notebooks and unlocked desk drawers, who carried with him identification cards "proving" his identity as a spy, a card-carrying spy. Furthermore, no one with any knowledge of American newspapermen in general and the Associated Press in particular would believe for a minute that Oatis was a spy. They would not believe, for instance, that Oatis had received "instructions" from the military attaché. Among bona fide newspapermen that simply does not happen, and we know from his record that Oatis was a bona fide newspaperman.

But the Communists' conception of information and of the functions of newspapermen is different from ours. The idea that news might have value other than as propaganda is foreign to them. The only legitimately publishable information, so far as they are concerned, is that which comes from official sources. Anything else is espionage. Newspapermen have no right, in their eyes, to ferret out information that the authorities do not want published. Hence it is inconceivable to them that an American newspaperman should want to find out about the movements of Communist officials, arrests or dismissals, or life in labor camps simply because these things are "news." They can conceive of such curiosity *only* in terms of espionage in the service of a government.

The Communist conception of information is spelled out in the law under which Oatis was tried. It is a part of the Law for the Defense of the Republic of November 6, 1948, which, with minor alterations was incorporated in the new penal code in 1950. Under paragraph twelve of this law, a punishable act is committed by any newspaperman who makes public "information regarding any enterprise, institution, installation or measure that is important for the defense of the Republic or its allies, especially regarding the strength, fighting capacity, military movements or the movements of any other body of a military nature, in spite of the fact that on the basis of an official prohibition, or the nature of the in-

formation or other circumstances, he should have known that he was thereby threatening the interests of the state." It is also illegal under this paragraph to make public "information regarding a crime against the defense of the Republic if this information has not been released by the Ministry of the Interior, or the Ministry of Defense," and illegal to divulge "information regarding such a crime or the investigation thereof or its punishment."

Obviously this law is so all-embracing that the regime could at any time find grounds for prosecuting any newspaperman it found obnoxious, whether Czech or foreign. He might, for instance, have divulged a "measure" whose publication, for one reason or another, "he should have known" threatened the interests of the state. Or he might have got a scoop about the arrest of an alleged spy, or the escape of a prisoner, or an act of sabotage. In each case, both he and the person who gave him the story would be guilty of a crime.

Although these were not invoked during Oatis's trial, it is perhaps worth noting that under other paragraphs of this law it is illegal to make propaganda "for the suppression of the rights of the working people," or to disseminate any reports that might endanger "the security of the state, its defense, its currency, or the prestige of its public authorities, or that might cause a rise in prices, or panic buying or selling, or withdrawals of savings." It is also illegal to engage in "public warmongering."

Up to the time of Oatis's trial, however, no attempt had been made to enforce this law in the case of foreign journalists, although it had been on the books for nearly two and a half years. It was a dead letter. Now that the Communist authorities have chosen to awaken their monstrous law, of course, no Western newspaperman can do his job conscientiously and remain safe in Czechoslovakia, nor, for that matter, in any of the other satellite countries, all of which have similar laws.

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Why did the Czechs choose to invoke this law and stage the Oatis trial? The Czech Communists had staged trials of Western businessmen, of Roman Catholic clergy, of representatives of political parties representing Western ideas, and of Czech associates of Western diplomats. But they had never had a newspaper trial. As members of the only category of Westerners in Prague that the Communists had not yet brought before a court, the newspapermen felt their turn was bound to come.

And there were other, more specific, reasons for believing that the Communists intended to complete the series by trying a Western news-

paperman. Helen Fisher, formerly a member of the United Press staff in Prague and now a United Press correspondent in Belgrade, has told me that she did not return to her Prague post from a holiday late in 1948 because she received confidential information that the Czech authorities were even then planning to make her the star of a propaganda trial. And at the end of May 1950, I left Prague for the same reason. It is almost as though Oatis had taken my place.

The Communists attach great value to propaganda trials. They hope to discredit the representatives of the West, Western institutions and ideas, by filming, broadcasting and reporting the confessions, apologies and general humiliation imposed upon Westerners. They intend to create an atmosphere of fear and, in particular, suspicion of Western foreigners.

The Oatis trial also had the practical value, from the Communist point of view, of making it certain that for a long time to come they would not be troubled by visiting Western newspapermen. This is the way they want it. Before the Communists took over, there had been twenty-five to thirty Western newspapermen permanently stationed in Prague, and even after the coup the Western press had been more extensively represented there than in any other satellite capital. Now, however, safe from the prying eyes of Western reporters, the Czech Communists could relax in the knowledge that news from their country would be written only by "stringers" (the newspaper term for local employees who are usually paid by the story instead of receiving a regular salary). As Czech nationals, stringers are under the thumb of the Ministry of Information and the police, from whom they must have permission to accept employment from a foreign organization. I have known some "stringers" behind the Iron Curtain who were so nervous that they would not even file to their Western employers extracts from Communist newspapers unless these had been previously selected by the official news agency.

One young "stringer" who was not so nervous, incidentally, was Ivo Berounsky, who competently covered the Oatis trial for the United Press and several months later escaped across the Czech border into the Soviet zone of Germany. From there he bluffed his way, without a mark in his pocket or any knowledge of German, to Berlin. He now has a job with the United Press.

The Communist decision to arrest and try Oatis may have been precipitated by the concessions made by the United States to obtain the release of Robert A. Vogeler. Vogeler had been sentenced on February 25, 1950, to fifteen years in prison on a charge of espionage. The Hungarian Com-

munists agreed to release him on April 28, 1951, at the price of four concessions:

1. The Hungarian Consulates in New York and Cleveland which had been closed on January 15, 1950, were reopened.

2. United States citizens, whose passports had been invalidated for travel in Hungary on December 20, 1949, were again permitted to travel in Hungary.

3. Hungarian property seized by the Nazis during World War II and stored in what is now the American zone in Germany, was returned to Hungary under the terms of the Hungarian peace treaty.

4. The United States agreed, beginning on April 7, to shift the wave length of the Hungarian language broadcasts of the "Voice of America" to another channel, so that they would not interfere with broadcasts by Radio Budapest.

I have no physical evidence to prove it, but the fact that Oatis was arrested just five days before Vogeler's release suggests to me that the Czechs, who undoubtedly knew what was afoot in Budapest, decided that if the Hungarians could win concessions by holding Americans for ransom, they might as well do likewise.

The Hungarians did it again in the case of the four American airmen who were forced down in Hungary on November 19, 1951. The United States paid $120,000 in "fines," and the four men were released on December 28. It is true that on the same day the U. S. government reimposed against Hungary two measures which had been lifted as part of the price paid for Vogeler's release. The ban on travel by U. S. citizens in Hungary was renewed and the Hungarian Consulates in New York and Cleveland were again closed. But from the Communists' point of view the important thing was that the American government's willingness to ransom its citizens had been confirmed again.

Undoubtedly Oatis's freedom could be bought, too, by one or more of the following concessions: relaxing the restrictions the United States has imposed upon trade with Czechoslovakia; turning off the "Voice of Free Europe" broadcasts from Munich, which are now blasting the Czechoslovak ether; or allowing the Czechs to reopen the Consulates in Chicago, New York and several other cities, which they were obliged to close down in the series of reprisals and counterreprisals that followed the Czechs' arbitrary reduction of the size of the American Embassy staff in Prague.

Eager, as most Americans in and out of the State Department are, to make whatever sacrifices are needed to save Oatis, they are restrained by

the knowledge that concessions or payment of ransom in any form will encourage the Communists to do it again with other Americans as victims.

This realistic line of thought has prevailed in the State Department's handling of the Oatis case. The Department's problem is this: What can it do for Oatis without submitting to extortion? I believe the answer is simple enough. It might relax the economic or other retaliatory measures taken specifically because of Oatis. This would not represent ransom. Within this framework I think the Department can bargain with some prospect of success.

The economic retaliatory measures the U.S. took against Czechoslovakia are hurting. During the twelve-month period following Oatis's conviction, Czech exports to the U. S. dropped from more than $2,000,000 per month to about $200,000.

It is worth recalling that the threat of really significant economic pressure was sufficient, in December 1949, to obtain the release of a Swedish businessman named Holger Hjelm, who had been sentenced to three years in prison. The Swedish government very quietly made preparations to cut off iron ore shipments without which the Czechoslovak economy would be paralyzed, and Mr. Hjelm was sent home right away.

Unfortunately, the U. S. possesses no means of exerting pressure in such a vital sphere; but we might persuade the British and Dutch, and even the Swedes, to back us up. The British and Dutch still wield influence because they supply the Czechs with rubber, tin, copra and scarce nonferrous ores.

Distasteful as secrecy is to me as a newspaperman, it seems obvious that the less publicity the pressure gets the more chance it has of being effective. Showy demonstrations of pressure, such as President Truman dressing down the Czech Ambassador, may make Americans feel better, but they also make it a matter of political prestige for the Czech Communists to keep Oatis in jail. Demonstrations of public indignation may be inevitable in our relatively free Western countries, but they make it more difficult for the Czechs to give way; or rather, more difficult for them to get permission to give way from the Russians.

It is the tragedy of William Oatis that he has become a symbol in the struggle between East and West.

PART II

From Saints Cyril and Methodius to Gottwald

CHAPTER 5 Roots of Democracy

For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.

What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.

I. CORINTHIANS 14:14–15

WHEN he had become the first president of the Czechoslovak Republic, Thomas Garrigue Masaryk recalled that in 1918 when he visited the cemetery at Gettysburg, this thought went through his mind: "Our state, our democratic republic, would have to be based upon an idea; it must have a reason for existence which the world at large would recognize."

Such an idea, a national idea, a democratic idea, the Czechs have had since the beginning of their history. Whenever the idea has burned brightly, the Czech nation has been great; whenever it has flickered and failed, the nation has declined and gone under. The Hapsburgs suppressed the Hussite movement; Hitler smashed the Republic and the Communists have subverted it. But no invader has yet entirely extinguished the light of the Czechs' national and democratic idea.

Today the question is: "Can Russian Communism succeed where other ruthless regimes have failed?"

From Masaryk, the "liberator" of the twentieth century, the idea may be traced back to Frantisek Palacky, the intellectual "father of a nation" of the nineteenth century, and from him to Jan Hus, who anticipated the Protestant Reformation by one hundred years. And from Hus, the idea goes back to Saints Cyril and Methodius, Christian missionaries who came from Constantinople in the second half of the ninth century and

became the earliest exponents of national self-determination in central Europe.

Cyril and Methodius were Slavs from Saloniki whom the Court of Byzantium dispatched to Great Moravia, the first Czechoslovak state, about 863, in response to a request from Prince Rastislav.

Rastislav wanted missionaries who could teach his people in the Slav tongue because he feared the influence of German priests.

The Great Moravians of the ninth century were primitive people. They were just learning to use stone in addition to wood for the building of houses. But they felt that language was the basis of their national individuality. Already conflict with the Germanic peoples around them dominated their lives and provided the stimulus that made them achieve greatness.

Cyril and Methodius devised the first Slavonic alphabet and translated the liturgy into Slavonic. And, defending the equality of the Slav language against the German clergy, who called its use sacrilegious, they evolved a concept of equalitarianism.

In his *Life,* Methodius quoted his brother Cyril as follows: "Does not the rain sent by the Lord fall equally on everyone? Does not the sun shine equally for the whole world? Do we not all equally breathe the air? Do you not feel shame at authorizing only three languages and condemning other people to blindness and deafness?" (The three languages were Greek, Latin and German.)

Thus he challenged the German clergy. He quoted Saint Paul to them: "I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than 10,000 words of an unknown tongue." And he added: "A people without books in their own language is naked."

Eventually Cyril and Methodius traveled to Rome and obtained from the Pope the special privilege of using the Slav liturgy. Although the Great Moravian Empire, within whose borders the Slav liturgy was used, was destroyed by the Magyars only a few years later, the teachings of Cyril and Methodius were destined to survive. They were found and studied in a Prague monastery by Jan Hus, forerunner of the Reformation in Europe.

Hus also learned from the other Czech reformers who were protesting abuses in the Catholic Church, but the man from whose teachings he drew most was the English reformer, John Wycliffe (1320–1384).

Wycliffe's writings were carried back to Bohemia by scholars who accompanied Richard II's Queen, Anne of Bohemia, on her journey to Eng-

land. Hus read them eagerly and borrowed from them extensively. In England meanwhile, Wycliffe's teachings were carried on obscurely by the Lollards, flared up in a new form in the time of Cromwell and were transplanted by the Puritans to North America.

Through Wycliffe the Czech and American traditions are related. At the moment when the Puritans were beginning a new life in North America their spiritual cousins in Bohemia were beginning two centuries of struggle for survival under foreign persecution. The year 1620, when the Puritans landed at Plymouth Rock, was also the year when the Hussites were defeated by the Hapsburgs in the Battle of White Mountain.

Hus's movement began as a dispute between himself, as proponent of the philosophy of Wycliffe, and the German students and professors at Charles University.

At that time the Kutna Hora silver mines had brought wealth to Bohemia. The reign of Charles IV, elected Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire in 1346, had added glory to the prosperity of Prague. Charles had raised up castles, bridges and statues. He was patron to a Prague school of painting. He took a special interest in the Czech language and ordered the making of a Latin-Czech dictionary, the scope of which exceeded other existing Latin-vernacular dictionaries.

Meanwhile, attracted by commercial opportunity, many Germans moved into Bohemian towns, where they formed the top layer of the bourgeoisie. By the time Hus began preaching, Germans occupied the most important posts at the university and in the church. Bohemia was then far more advanced economically and culturally than the rest of central Europe, perhaps a century in advance.

The Czech bourgeoisie — shopkeepers, tailors and the like — resented the powerful and wealthy Germans and became the backbone of the Hussite movement.

To this lower middle class, Hus spoke fighting words. Indignant over an incursion into Bohemia by German troops in 1401, he declared: "The Bohemians are more wretched than dogs or snakes; for a dog defends the couch on which he lies, and a snake does the same. But us, the Germans oppress, seizing offices of state, while we are silent. Bohemians in the kingdom of Bohemia, according to all laws, indeed also according to the law of God, should occupy the first places in the Bohemian kingdom." As though he knew the problems with which the Republic would be beset more than 500 years later, he declared that "the Germans who

are in Bohemia should go to the king and swear that they will be faithful to him and to the country, but this will only come to pass when a serpent warms itself on the ice."

Hus's followers readily responded to his attacks on the corruption of the clergy, grown wealthy and immoral. They rallied especially to the doctrine of lay participation in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper in two kinds, bread and wine, which he adopted towards the end of his career.

After Hus had been convicted as a heretic and burned at the stake at Constance in 1415, the chalice, as symbol of the Hussite movement, became also a symbol of equality. If all men were entitled equally to the supreme spiritual goods, the corollary was that they were entitled also to equality in the lesser things of this world.

After challenging the special privilege of the priesthood to the sacrament in two kinds, the radicals among the Hussites, known as Taborites, went on to develop a socialist democratic ideology that was many centuries ahead of its time. Their notions of equality extended even to women, to the point that they advocated the training of female priests.

Many of the lower nobility were drawn to the Hussites because they, too, hated the wealthy German townsmen. In addition, they coveted the fat land of the Catholic Church which covered one third of the surface of Bohemia.

And the peasants were drawn in as followers. They, too, benefited from confiscation of church land. They responded to the symbol of the chalice and to the equalitarian, democratic ideas that grew out of it.

Indeed, quite apart from economic motives, the purity and nobility of Hus's message won followers in all strata of Bohemian society. Queen Sophia had been one of the regular members of Hus's congregation at Bethlehem Chapel in Prague. He became her confessor and through her he enjoyed royal protection for many years.

In 1419, the Hussites, led by the blind Jan Zizka, a military genius and a Taborite, defeated the Emperor Sigismund who had been largely responsible for burning Hus at the stake and who tried to rally Catholic Europe against the Hussites.

For the next two hundred years—although the Taborites were suppressed by more conservative elements—the Hussites survived as a Czech religious movement and as a democratic political movement. While many of the more moderate Hussites became members of the Lutheran Church, some of the radicals gathered in the "Unity of Czech

Brethren" founded by Peter Chelcicky (1390–1460). Insisting on absolute equality of all believers in the sight of God and the absolute sinfulness of bloodshed, the Brethren represented the most exalted spiritual form of the Hussite movement and were somewhat akin to the much later Society of Friends.

Gradually the Hussite movement declined, because the wealth of Bohemia was exhausted by long warfare against most of Catholic Europe. The Czech bourgeoisie, progressively impoverished as a class, fell under domination of an oligarchy which undermined the democratic nature of the Estates. The Estates consisted of a parliament composed of representatives of the clergy, the nobility and the merchants and artisans who formed an urban bourgeoisie. The nobility grew more conservative and feudalistic as its wealth was sapped by warfare. And as prosperity waned, the impoverished peasants fell into serfdom. It became difficult to stir them with Hussite ideals. The whole movement lost its force. Like many another movement that began with revolt, it became an oppressive orthodoxy.

In the Battle of White Mountain, near Prague, on November 8, 1620, the Hussites were defeated by the Hapsburgs, backed by the papacy and Spain. The Hussite leaders were executed. Czech Bibles and books were burned; the Czech state condemned; the Czech language proscribed. It is estimated that thirty thousand Protestants fled from the country after the battle.

One of the greatest Hussite scholars, Jan Amos Comenius, settled eventually in England. He was invited to Harvard University but declined because his wife feared seasickness and Red Indians.

Hapsburg oppression eliminated Bohemia as a source of spiritual and cultural leadership for several centuries. The Catholic attitude was reflected in the words of Ferdinand II who said, "Better a desert than a country full of heretics." The catalogue of confiscated properties in Hapsburg and Jesuit archives covers 1468 pages. The population of Bohemia is said to have been reduced from a peak of three million in the early Hussite period to a mere 800,000, first by the Hussite wars, then by Hapsburg oppression.

Although the Hapsburgs did not consciously pursue a policy of Germanization, it seemed natural to them to bring in German-speaking clergy, teachers and officials and to pass out Bohemian lands as rewards for their allies. In the depopulated Czech towns, German-speaking merchants and artisans found opportunities awaiting them. German became

the language of the towns and of the educated. Czech became the language of menials and peasants. Goethe, a sympathetic German observer, doubted whether the Czechs would ever be able to revive their native tongue.

Yet there were always some among the Czechs who preserved the national ideas and language. And when the Emperor, Joseph II, issued the Edict of Tolerance, in 1781, it is said that more than 50,000 Czech Bibles emerged from their hiding places and some 70,000 persons proudly declared their adherence to the native Protestant communions.

Here was a true and concrete demonstration of the power of survival of the Czechs' own ideas. Here their tenacity triumphed over tyranny. And here lies the seed of hope that the Czechs, as tenacious in the twentieth century as they were in the sixteenth and seventeenth, will triumph again.

The Edict brought to an end the Czechs' dark age and cleared the way for a national revival inspired by German romanticism and the French revolution. Half-forgotten folk tales, music and literature were then remembered.

Frantisek Palacky (1798–1876) reminded the Czech people of their history, made them understand its meaning as a national and a democratic idea. Above all, he rehabilitated the Hussites whom German and Austrian writers had dismissed as regrettable heretics.

Palacky enriched the Czech tradition by drawing upon French enlightenment, its liberalism and respect for human rights. From Kant, he borrowed the argument that political life must uphold the same moral standards as private life; from Hegel, the concept of life and history as struggle. In Czechoslovakia, he saw the struggle between Germanic authoritarianism and Slav, more specifically Hussite, democracy. He saw the Czechs as the first fighters for human freedom, for the equality of man.

The Hapsburg authorities tolerated this national awakening, for it was more cultural than political. Palacky saw no prospect of leadership from authoritarian Russia and showed only slight interest in the Pan-Slav movement for the political or cultural association of all Slav peoples, which was developing in his day. Although he coined the phrase, "We were before Austria — we shall be after it too," he did not believe in struggling for Czech political independence.

Many students came to Prague, Catholics as well as Protestants, Slovaks as well as Czechs, to sit rapturously at the feet of Palacky. Among

them was T. G. Masaryk, who absorbed everything Palacky had to say but differed with him on one vital point. Masaryk, as the years went by and the First World War approached, came to believe that there must be an active struggle for the political independence of a united Czechoslovakia.

CHAPTER 6 Masaryk, Father of the Republic

To me the Czech question is the question of human destiny.

THOMAS GARRIGUE MASARYK

THOMAS GARRIGUE MASARYK was the liberator of his country and the father of the Republic.

Representing his country in western Europe, Russia and the United States during the First World War, he dealt with such British leaders as Lloyd George, Balfour, French leaders such as Clemenceau, Poincaré, and finally American leaders such as Woodrow Wilson and Robert Lansing.

Personally, and with the help of Eduard Benes and Milan Stefanik, he did an astonishing job of convincing the Allied leaders that an independent Czechoslovakia (and Yugoslavia and Romania) were not only political, but moral, necessities.

He succeeded, partly because he represented a maffia, a group of Czech politicians in Prague who kept him informed and in turn were in touch with the profound and popular national and democratic forces of their country, forces that had been kept alive during three hundred years of Hapsburg rule by a national literature and music, by an admirable school system and by the Protestant churches.

He succeeded also because, better than any man of his time, he understood and was able to express the significance of his country's moral and intellectual past, its position in relation to the Germans, the Russians, France and England, and the United States, and its significance to the world. In Masaryk, the Czech national awakening reached its culmination.

Masaryk was born March 7, 1850, the son of a Slovak coachman of

the Imperial Estates at Hodonin, in Moravia. A brilliant academic career led him to a post at the University of Vienna and in 1882 to the Chair of Philosophy at the Czech University of Prague, which he held until 1914. For some ten years he also represented the Czechs as deputy in the Austrian Reichsrat.

This austere professor, who neither smoked nor drank, gradually built up a devoted following among Czech and southern Slav students. In the public life of an empire where corruption was taken for granted, his insistence on ethics attracted attention. Thus, he boldly exposed as forgeries a set of manuscripts which other Czech patriots had celebrated as national treasures; he angrily defended and won justice for a Jewish apprentice who was accused of ritual murder; and fearlessly denounced a deliberate political miscarriage of justice at a Zagreb treason trial in 1908.

Masaryk carried on Palacky's national self-assertion by reaching out intellectually beyond the Germans and Austrians to the living democracies of France, later England, and eventually the United States. As a philosopher his interest centered on Locke, Hume, Comte and John Stuart Mill, while at the same time he voraciously read English, French, and later American literature.

He was fascinated by Russia, but also repelled. Early in his career he rejected the mysticism of Russian thought, as he discerned it in Dostoevsky, as being unsuitable for the skeptical, practical Czechs. In spite of the enthusiastic pro-Russianism of most of his friends, Masaryk saw no hope of liberation or democracy from authoritarian theocratic Czarist Russia and was suspicious of Czarist Pan-Slavism. "I have no more use for empty talk about slavism," he wrote, "than I have for flag-waving patriots."

Although he had long believed in the reconstruction of the Austro-Hungarian empire along Swiss federal lines, he wrote later in his book *The Making of a State* that in the years just before the First World War, "I had already reached and expressed the conclusion that if democracy and sound government could gain strength in Europe, we might hope to win independence." Now with the beginning of hostilities he decided that the internal rot of the empire doomed it to destruction, and pinned his hopes on an Allied victory. An opportunity to do something towards gaining independence arose during World War I, when the Czechs, as part of the Austro-Hungarian empire, found themselves called upon to fight alongside the Germans against the Russians and the Allies.

Masaryk's first move in his campaign for independence was to send

an American Czech to London with the following instructions to H. W. Steed, foreign editor of *The Times:* "In London see Mr. Steed: tell him the Russians shoot at our boys when they want to surrender. Our boys wave handkerchiefs but the Russians shoot all the same. Tell Mr. Steed to find means of stopping it. Our boys want to go over to the Russians."

Within a few weeks Steed was able to send a hunchback, who was able to travel unhindered because he was exempt from military service, to Prague with the British reply: "Steed says the boys must sing 'Hej Slovani' at midnight." The sound of this Pan-Slav anthem would mean that the Czechs were about to cross the front to the Russian lines. Steed interceded effectively with the Russians, and from then on Slav desertions from the Austro-Hungarian forces mounted.

In December, Masaryk escaped to Italy and from there to Geneva and to Paris where he was joined by Eduard Benes, a young economist from the University of Prague, and Milan Stefanik, a young astronomer and an airman who had inside contacts in French politics. This triumvirate, to whom goes the credit for winning the diplomatic struggle for independence, formed the Czechoslovak National Council in Paris in 1915, after which Masaryk, leaving continental affairs in the hands of his friends, moved to London, which he regarded as the Allied political capital. There he remained for two years, buttonholing Allied statesmen and steeping himself in all the lore of British democracy, until May 1917, when the first stages of the Russian revolution brought some of his liberal Russian friends to power. Then he hastened to Russia to help organize the Czech legions formed of deserters from the Austro-Hungarian armies into units that could take an effective part in the war. With the Hussite chalice as their emblem, and regiments named after Hussite generals, they were responsible for Brusilov's last victory at Zborov, July 1917, and other Russian successes.

Now at last, in addition to the moral force of Czech democracy and national tradition, Masaryk had at his disposal physical force, a force that grew in Russia to 92,000 men, while in Italy and France other legions of 24,000 and 12,000 men were eventually formed. Their combined losses in dead were 4500.

When the Bolsheviks came to power Masaryk persuaded them to allow his legion to leave the country by way of Vladivostok. While preparations for the move were being made he was able to observe the Bolsheviks at close quarters, and he was distressed by what he saw.

Earlier, in his book *The Foundations of Marxist History* he had written:

> Marxism is an economic theory and philosophy, particularly a philosophy of history. The economic theory like every other science is a matter for scientific investigation, revision and improvement, and Marxian theory like any other must be open to criticism and free consideration. . . . Revolution or dictatorship can sometimes abolish bad things but they can never create good and lasting ones. Impatience is fatal in politics.

Of the Bolsheviks he had this to say in *The Making of a State:*

> People who believe they have reached the highest and ultimate degree of development, who think they have gained infallible knowledge of the whole organization of society, cease to think about progress and perfectibility and have one chief and only care — how to keep their power and position.
>
> Uncritical, wholly unscientific infallibility is the basis of Bolshevik dictatorship: and a regime that quakes before criticisms and fears to recognize thinking men stands self-condemned . . . The unnecessary, senseless, barbaric killing of human beings by the Bolsheviks always returned to my mind. . . . I would have attached our Corps to any army strong enough to fight the Bolsheviks and the Germans in the name of democracy.

Yet he remained objective about Russia and in the same book recognized frankly that "Republicanism was first strengthened among our people, as elsewhere, by the Russian Revolution of 1917." When, preceding the legion through Vladivostok, he stopped in Tokyo on April 10, 1918, he submitted a memorandum to the American ambassador arguing for Allied recognition of the Bolsheviks' government and, under the mistaken impression that the Bolsheviks would be succeeded by a democratic government, he argued as follows:

> All the small peoples in the east of Europe (Finns, Poles, Esthonians, Latvians, Lithuanians, Czechs, Slovaks, and Rumanians) need a strong Russia lest they be at the mercy of the Germans and the Austrians. The Allies must support Russia at all costs and by all means. If the Germans subdue the east they will then subdue the west.

By the time Masaryk reached Washington, D.C., the Legion had come to blows with the Bolsheviks and had begun fighting its way across

Siberia along the Trans-Siberian Railway. This romantic "anabasis" caught the imagination of the American public and unquestionably reinforced Masaryk's eloquence in winning the solid support of the United States for the prospective Czechoslovak Republic. All summer he was hailed as a hero in the United States, while the U.S. government and the governments of Britain and France officially recognized the Czechoslovak National Council and began to consult its members about the future of Czechoslovakia. Although he modestly disclaimed credit, Masaryk was certainly responsible for inducing President Wilson to modify the Fourteen Points to include Czechoslovak and Yugoslav national aspirations. On June 30, Masaryk brought Czechs and Slovaks together at Pittsburgh in an agreement which gave the Slovaks a moral, if not a legal guarantee that they would have their own administration, courts, schools, and diet in the new state. On July 4, 1918, a meeting of American-Czechoslovaks in Independence Hall at Philadelphia issued an unofficial declaration of independence; Masaryk followed it up with an official declaration from Washington, D.C. on October 18 in the name of the Czechoslovak National Council. Ten days later, on October 28, the maffia in Prague went into action and after a bloodless revolution proclaimed the Republic. On November 14, in Prague, Masaryk was elected President. A first coalition cabinet was formed with Karel Kramar as Prime Minister, Benes as Foreign Minister and Stefanik as Minister of War.

As first President of the Republic, Masaryk returned to a free Prague on December 21 and was installed in Hradcany Castle, the ancient residence of Bohemian kings and Hapsburg emperors high on a crag above the "Golden City."

Nowhere was the new Republic more esteemed and idealized than in the United States. With considerable justification Americans could consider the new state a model among republics and a reflection of their own highest political ideals. Its constitution borrowed as much from the American as from the French Constitution. In *The Making of a State,* Masaryk recalls standing in the cemetery at Gettysburg in 1918 and musing that the future Czechoslovak state would resemble America in that "we have no dynasty, no national aristocracy, no old military tradition in the army and no church politically recognized in the way they were recognized by the older states and particularly by the absolutist, caesarist, theocratic states."

Americans could take pride in the tenacity with which Czechoslovakia clung to its parliamentary democracy for twenty years while its

neighbors, Germany, Austria, Poland, and Hungary, lapsed into various forms of dictatorship. They might also note with satisfaction that the President of the new Republic was married to an American and took from her his middle name "Garrigue."

Many a visitor during the ensuing two decades was to note the vigor of Czechoslovak democracy, as it affected the willingness to compromise of factory owners and right-wing groups on the one hand and of workers and socialist groups on the other, and the general moderation of the country's political life. Class distinctions and extremes of wealth and poverty were far less noticeable than in the neighboring countries (although there was undoubtedly an overconcentration of ownership in basic industry). This was a nation of small businessmen, of shopkeepers, artisans and independent farmers, a bourgeois nation whose bourgeois values, respect for private property, economic independence and respectability extended deeply into the proletariat. Many Czech workers owned plots of land which they worked after hours.

In this state, liberty of the individual, of the press and of association and assembly was a reality.

Land reform and social reforms were among the first problems tackled by the new parliament. Under the Hapsburgs one thousand persons had owned 26 per cent of the total area of the country. A law of April 9, 1919, therefore gave the government the right to take over and redistribute all land in excess of 180 hectares of agricultural and 250 of diversified land (one hectare—2.471 acres). Eventually about half of 4,021,617 hectares found to be affected by the law was redistributed to small farmers, new farmers and co-operatives.

In the social field parliament in 1918 proclaimed the eight-hour day and authorized collective bargaining. Legislation followed, covering minimum wages for various kinds of work, minimum annual vacations of six days, inspection of factory working conditions, family allowances proportional to the number of children, and child welfare including such matters as milk stations in schools. An insurance act of 1924 covered half the population with compulsory accident, sickness, disability and old-age insurance. Although unemployment assistance was already in effect, parliament was working on an unemployment insurance act at the time of Munich. The development of co-operatives of all kinds was characteristic of the Republic. By 1935, 11.1 per cent of the total population belonged to 17,021 co-operative societies. Of these, nearly two thirds were agricultural co-operatives divided into twelve federations un-

der the general direction of a central co-operative. They included co-operative savings banks, and co-operatives for production, purchasing and building.

The new state's number one difficulty was economic, because its industry had been built on the market of the Austro-Hungarian empire. To survive, Czech industry had now to fit into the world market. It succeeded brilliantly, as witness the world-wide familiarity of the label "Made in Czechoslovakia." Unemployment was serious throughout the life of the Republic; but it declined from 920,000 in 1933 at the worst moment of the depression to 518,000 in 1938, and Czechoslovakia seemed well on the way to licking the problem when the Nazis struck. The Republic's standard of living was high and steadily rose. Its people ate more sugar, meat and fats, bought more consumer goods and had a higher per capita real income than the people of Poland, Hungary, or any Balkan country.

Taking over a highly developed Austrian educational system, the Republic threw out the Hapsburg practice of inculcating passive obedience and introduced experimental progressive education on a broad scale. The declared object was to develop independent thought on the one hand and co-operation on the other.

Among the Republic's outstanding weaknesses were the excessive number of political parties, the high proportion of racial minorities included in the Republic and—this was incurable—its geographic position as a salient in German territory. As Hitler rose in Germany and Czechoslovakia's international position grew more delicate, the weaknesses were accurately reflected in Czechoslovakia's parliament.

As Foreign Minister until 1935 and thereafter as President, Benes sought security in a system of international balance. He initiated a Little Entente which combined the small victors, Czechoslovakia, Rumania and Yugoslavia against the small vanquished nations, Austria, Hungary and Bulgaria. As protection against the potential enemy, Germany, he concluded an alliance with France on January 25, 1924, supplementing it later with a treaty in which France specifically promised military aid in case of German attack. Throughout the period before World War II the Republic remained more closely linked to France than to any other power.

To maintain the balance between East and West, Benes on May 16, 1935, concluded a pact with the U.S.S.R. providing for mutual assistance should either become a victim of unprovoked attack. A curious aspect

of this pact was that it was linked with similar ones concluded a few weeks earlier between the U.S.S.R. and France and that neither Czechoslovakia nor the U.S.S.R. was obligated to aid the other unless France did so. Thus the link with France became absolutely vital. This circumstance proved fateful at Munich.

Superficially the Munich crisis grew out of the demands of the German minority in Czechoslovakia. The country's total population of 14,729,536 was composed as follows, according to the census of 1930:

9,756,604	Czechs, Slovaks	66.24 per cent
568,941	Russian, Ukrainians	3.86
3,318,445	Germans	22.53
719,569	Magyars	4.89
100,322	Poles	.68
204,779	Jews	1.39

There were some minor justifications for the complaints of the Germans, as of the Hungarian and Polish minorities. They did not always get their full share of state funds or appointments in civil service and private industry. The Slovaks never did get the diet promised them in the declaration of intentions to which Masaryk had subscribed at Pittsburgh. The Czechs, reacting from their former subordinate role, were sometimes high-handed. But on the whole the Republic's record of treatment of minorities was excellent.

From 1933 on, the depression made it easier for the Nazis to win support among the Germanic elements of Czechoslovakia. Obsolescent Sudeten industries were harder hit than the newer ones in Czech territory, thereby creating an impression of discrimination. The Sudetens were furthermore struck by the contrast between their own troubles and the feverish economic activity — stimulated by Hitler's rearmament — on the German side of the border. They had resented their demotion in 1918 from their status as members of the dominant racial group in the Austro-Hungarian empire to that of a minority in a Slav state. Now they readily recalled that they had always considered themselves superior to the Czechs.

By 1935, the Sudeten Fuehrer, Henlein, won forty-four of the total seventy-two German mandates. After Hitler had annexed Austria in March 1938, all except the Social-Democrats and the Communists moved into Henlein's camp under the slogan, *Heim ins Reich* (although they had never historically belonged to the Reich). From then on there was

no use talking about minority rights. The rights of minorities were in any case only a pretext for Hitler. They were fuel for a Nazi propaganda campaign which, in its fury and the extent to which it was invented out of whole cloth, was nearly unprecedented. Not quite unprecedented, however, as was noted wryly by the members of the United Press Bureau in Berlin of which I was then a member. We discovered that some of the incidents reported, about innocent German women and children being tortured and driven from their homes by marauding Czechs, had inadvertently been previously used almost word for word in the propaganda campaign preceding the German Army's march into the Memel area of Lithuania.

The point was, of course, that Hitler was determined to destroy the little republic whose moderate, liberal, humanitarian, progressive and rational democracy was such a contrast to his own irrational hysteria. Czechoslovakia stood in the way of his plans for expansion to the south and the east, and he had already nearly engulfed and made it indefensible by annexing Austria.

Now Czechoslovakia's allies, particularly France, were put to the test. They failed. At Munich on September 29, 1938, France and Britain knuckled under to Hitler because they were not yet morally or physically prepared to fight. They agreed to let him annex what he claimed was ethnic German territory and even put pressure on Czechoslovakia to capitulate.

During the following months, German, Polish and Hungarian troops moved into Czechoslovakia and — without opposition — occupied 30 per cent of its territory with a population of 4,799,497 persons.

Throughout the crisis the Russian government and the Communist Party in Czechoslovakia favored resistance to the German demands. The Russians announced their readiness to honor their treaty with the Czechoslovaks and to come to their aid if France did so. Undoubtedly, of course, they realized they were safe in making such an offer, for, quite apart from their lack of relish for the idea of Communist support, France and Britain were not ready to fight.

But today the Communists never tire of pointing to that chapter of history and asserting that the "bourgeois" government of Czechoslovakia so greatly feared Communism that it preferred abandoning the country to the Nazis to asking Russia for help.

Six months after Munich, on March 15, 1939, the Nazis occupied the entire Republic. They proclaimed Bohemia and Moravia a "protectorate,"

made Slovakia a puppet state, and allowed the Hungarians to occupy Ruthenia.

I observed these events as a correspondent in Berlin for the United Press. Accompanying the German Army into Sudetenland in September, I saw the frenzied enthusiasm with which the Germans were received and the extreme arrogance of the Sudetens toward the Czechs whose fellow citizens they had been for twenty years. Later the Nazi Propaganda Ministry organized a press tour of the Protectorate in order, so it hoped, to disprove reports abroad that there had been anti-German sabotage at the Skoda Works, and passive resistance at many points throughout the land. The Nazis wished to show that the Czechs were getting along very well with their German masters. To the consternation of the Propaganda Ministry some of the foreign journalists, including myself, broke away from the official party and ascertained from Czech sources that, while there had in fact been little sabotage, there was a good deal of passive resistance and that the Czechs bitterly hated their Nazi masters. This to be sure was not difficult to find out, since the Czechs — just as they now do under Communist rule — after obediently delivering their official speeches would pour out tales of their resistance to the Germans as soon as the Germans' backs were turned.

What impressed me most on that trip were the *Herrenvolk's* studied and endless efforts to humiliate the Czechs. Our drivers, for instance, took pleasure in roaring through Czech villages at sixty miles an hour with Nazi banners flying and horns tooting. They stopped only when several of us angrily declared that we would take the first train back to Berlin if the drivers did not operate in a more civilized manner. I began to understand, then, the Czechs' deep feeling of antipathy for the Germans.

These were bitter days for the Czechs. The young men who had been called up when German pressure began, who had donned their smart new uniforms and manned an excellent network of fortifications along the frontiers, came home again, hangdog and defeated more utterly than they could ever have been in battle. Their proud uniforms now were meaningless. The Czechs stood by the roadsides with tears in their eyes and watched the Germans march into Prague. "Thank God," some said, "that Masaryk did not live to see this."

There was a stifling frustration about it all, a chilling humiliation. Hitler in Hradcany Castle! The castle of Bohemian kings, the castle of the first President of the Republic. The Republic and all the things it meant to many different men had been swept away. And not a hand

lifted in its defense. Most Czechs blamed Daladier and Chamberlain. Some blamed Benes. But somehow this was not sufficient. Big questions arose in many minds in those days, questions so big that there were no answers, the same questions that were to arise again some ten years later after another bloodless defeat.

Czechoslovakia had been betrayed; that was certain. But would it have been better to fight, even against hopeless odds?

Whose fault was it? Beyond the statesmen, did some blame attach to the people of Czechoslovakia? To the people of France and Britain?

Was there something wrong with Czechoslovakia? Something wrong with France and Britain? With the West and Western democracy?

CHAPTER 7 Benes Goes Home Via Moscow

Once upon a time there was a Carp who was an idealist. For instance, he maintained that it had never been proven that monks made soup out of the fish they caught in the stream. "They might have been put into the monks' pond," the Carp argued, "and they may be living there in luxury."

The Carp argued with his friend the Gremille about the nature of the Pike, concerning whose cruel disregard of the rights of other fish and voracious appetite dreadful tales were in circulation. For a long time the Carp refused to believe that such a thing as an evil Pike who ate Carp could exist. At last he declared he would like to meet the Pike and explain to him the nature of virtue and the advantages of brotherly co-operation between Pike and Carp. "Perhaps," the Carp insisted, "the Pike is only waiting to be loved, to have his heart and mind enlightened. Perhaps if one got to know him he would turn out to be thoughtful and kind."

Finally word about the idealistic Carp reached the Pike, who invited the Carp to appear before him at dawn. "I am not afraid," declared the Carp. "Why should I be? I'm not guilty of doing anything wrong."

"You are stupid," his friend the Gremille replied, "that's what you're guilty of. And fat, moreover."

When the Carp appeared, the Pike was not feeling very hungry, and he received the Carp quite graciously. "What calumnies have been

spread," thought the Carp. "This Pike is like any other fish. You can talk to him." And so they discussed relations between Carp and Pike.

At the height of the discussion the Pike opened his mouth to draw a deep breath of water and, quite accidentally, he drank the Carp down.

Fable by M. E. SALTYKOV

THE disaster of February 1948, when the Communists seized power in Czechoslovakia, may be traced back to Munich insofar as Munich undermined Czech confidence in the West and made the Czechs look to the East for allies.

During the war, Munich and its implications became the point of departure for Benes and other *émigré* Czech leaders. The more so since they could see, during 1942 and 1943, that the balance of military power was shifting eastward and that a victorious Russia would become the greatest military power in postwar Europe.

Nonetheless Benes believed that, while acknowledging Russian and Communist preponderance, he could maintain external and internal balance with the West. Czechoslovakia would have to be a twilight land between East and West in which Communists and non-Communists would collaborate; in other words, a bridgeland between East and West the integrity of which would depend on maintenance of good East-West relations.

Unfortunately this policy involved misunderstanding of the nature of Soviet power and of the nature of the Communist Parties which act as its agents. It assumed that the Soviet Union and the Communist Parties would operate according to the principles of liberal democracy. It left out of account Russian contempt for all that is weak. It failed to consider that Communists do not think it necessary to keep faith with non-Communists unless forced to do so, that for them the end justifies the means and the end is the increase of the power of the Communist Parties and of the Soviet Union.

To Benes and his colleagues, however, the policy of holding a balance between East and West appeared to be the only one by which they could hope to return to their countries. No matter how remote their chances of success, they felt they must try.

And until November 1943 when Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin met at Teheran, there really was an outside chance that Russian, and hence Communist, preponderance in Czechoslovakia could be avoided. That chance was sabotaged at Teheran by an oral agreement that placed Czechoslovakia in the Soviet sphere along with Poland, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia.

Churchill has privately told Czech leaders that he opposed this agreement. But he did not prevent it. In effect, as we shall see, it was to sabotage the rebirth of the Czechoslovak Republic.

Meanwhile Benes, disturbed by signs of tension between the Soviet Union and the Western nations and by Soviet propaganda blasts against the London Poles, had determined to conclude a treaty with the Soviets and to go to Moscow. He began negotiations in the summer of 1943 and flew to Moscow in December. In Moscow he signed a twenty-year alliance with the Soviet Union.

Benes did not know about the agreement at Teheran; and neither the Russians, nor the British, nor the Americans told him, although the British did a long time in advance advise him not to go to Moscow. The Pike must have smiled inwardly at the innocent Carp who did not know that he had already been swallowed.

In his memoirs Benes wrote that up to the time he went to Moscow he had no reason not to believe in the Soviet Union's word; but he added in a pathetic note—apparently inserted at the last moment before printing in 1947: "Was I wrong in my judgment then or not? Only the future can answer this question. Whether yes or no, my faith then was most sincere."

His book *Considerations Regarding the Slavs,* published in London in 1944, indicates that he had been trying pretty hard to convince himself that he and his country could get along with the Russians.

Perhaps forgetting Masaryk's distrust of the Russians and of dreamy Pan-Slav theories about cultural and political association of all Slav peoples, Benes now plunged into a wishful dream of Soviet Russian-inspired Pan-Slavism. Noting that the Soviet-Czechoslovak Pact of December 12, 1943, "clearly and categorically proclaimed the principle of the independence of Slav states" and that the Russian spokesmen whom he met in Moscow defended the principle of independence "in a most determined manner," he expressed the hope in his book that the Soviet authorities would "show the other Slav peoples that the independence of their states is and will be in no way threatened by the new Slavism." He hoped that

"a truly modern revolutionary democratic community of free Slav peoples would definitively develop and that all main Slav problems would thereby be solved."

"I am convinced," he wrote, "that if they really think this problem through, the Communist thinkers will come to the recognition that the new Slavism should be a policy of states and not of political parties," that is, not an instrument for spreading Communism.

Benes dreamed of an association of Slav states along the lines of the British commonwealth or of a regional league of nations in which the Soviet Union would respect the rights of its lesser partners and all would guarantee the security and independence of non-Slav neighbors such as the Rumanians, the Magyars, the Turks and the Greeks.

Benes was, however, not entirely devoid of realism at this time, for he also wrote: "All that would, to be sure, be automatically changed if the Communist parties should succeed in winning a majority or in taking power, or both, in the various Slav states. In this case these states would probably join a great Soviet federation regardless of international consequences and the leadership of Soviet Russia in all spheres would then be absolutely accepted."

The first shocking evidence as to the meaning, on the one hand of the Teheran agreement and on the other hand of the "principle of the independence of Slav states" as interpreted by Soviet Russia was not long delayed. In August a major rising against the Nazis began in Slovakia. The partisans seized control of a large area around Banska Bystrica. The British and American air forces quickly prepared scores of planeloads of arms, medical supplies and concentrated foods to be flown to two airfields in the area.

Because Slovakia was in the Russian military sphere, they asked for Russian clearance. It never came. The Germans were able to crush the rising and inflict murderous losses upon the partisans. But that was of lesser importance to the Russians than keeping out Western aid, for Western aid might also bring Western influence.

The Russians followed up this episode by, in effect, annexing Czechoslovakia's easternmost province, Ruthenia. This is an area of 4886 square miles inhabited by half a million "little Russians," related to the Ukrainians, who are by faith Uniates, that is, Roman Catholics with an Orthodox rite.

Russian troops had already penetrated into this area and the Czech government in London had assigned its Minister of Reconstruction and

Commerce, Frantisek Nemec, to act as its representative in Ruthenia in liaison with the Russians.

Without any previous build-up the Communist chairman of the Ruthenian National Council asked Nemec to leave the country because, he said, the council had decided to separate Ruthenia from Czechoslovakia and join the U.S.S.R. Nemec immediately flew to Moscow and protested to Molotov. But Molotov merely observed dryly that the Soviet Union "could not remain deaf to such an appeal from a Slav brother nation."

This sort of treatment at the hands of the Russians, combined with growing East-West friction, made it seem all the more imperative to Benes a few months later, when the Russians had liberated Slovakia, to return to his country via Moscow. He had grounds to fear that if he did not do so he might at the last moment be excluded from his country. Indeed, had Benes not appeared in Moscow and agreed substantially to everything that the Communists proposed, they would have denounced him as a traitor and tried to impeach him on the grounds that he had committed treason at the time of Munich.

In Moscow, early in 1945, Benes found himself accorded every external mark of honor, but usually obliged to do what the Russians wanted. Although before the war they had never won more than 10 per cent of the electorate, the Communists now argued that the whole nation had been united and inspired by Soviet Russia's leadership. This was one way of saying that the surge of the Russian Army from Stalingrad to the Carpathians had shifted the balance of power mightily towards the East.

In the first postwar government, which moved to Kosice in Slovakia on April 4, 1945, the Communists blandly insisted on eight out of twenty-three cabinet posts. They got two vice-premierships, the Ministries of Interior, Agriculture, Education, Information and Social Welfare, and the Undersecretariat of Foreign Affairs. To these, sad to tell, should be added the Social Democratic Premier Zdenek Fierlinger, and the ostensibly nonparty minister of National Defense, General Ludvik Svoboda, both of whom acted at all times as Communist agents.

This distribution of cabinet posts gave the Communists ascendency from the beginning: control of the police, of the army, of propaganda, and of the resettlement of Sudeten lands. It was just what they needed to prepare for the elections in 1946 and for the eventual *coup d'état*.

Benes moved to Slovakia with the rest of the government. He was so well guarded by his Russian allies that he could not move from his villa without special arrangement with the Russians. He and his government

could send messages out of the country only through Russian channels. In order to maintain contact with Western capitals, non-Communist elements in the government had to resort to secret radio transmitters.

The Kosice government drew up a program that made only one concession to the non-Communist sensibilities, and that one concession proved short-lived. It promised to aid private enterprise as well as nationalized enterprise and it put emphasis on government control rather than on nationalization of the economy in general. In other respects, however, it conformed to Communist desires.

Two of the Kosice program's provisions had very far-reaching effects. The first abolished the Agrarian Party, the Small Traders' Party and the Slovak People's Party on the grounds that they were contaminated by collaboration with the Nazis. The parties authorized by the new government were: Communists, National Socialists (Benes's party) Social Democrats, People's Party (Catholic), and, in Slovakia, the Slovak Democratic Party (a coalition of the remnants of outlawed clerical and peasant groups associated with Father Tiso, the chief of the Nazi puppet government during the war).

These parties agreed to work together in a "National Front" — ostensibly an expression of unity in a common cause but actually a device for subordinating the will of all political elements to the will of the Communists. The Communists imposed this device in all the satellite countries just after the war. Its operation was simple. Whoever disagreed with the Communists during meetings of the National Front was denounced as a fascist, a traitor or a spy.

The second important provision of the Kosice program abolished the old system by which local, district and regional officials were for the most part appointed from Prague and instead set up local, district and regional National Committees. The National Committees were composed of men appointed in equal numbers by each of the legally approved political parties. Their duty was to see that all administrative posts were filled and generally to supervise local, district and regional government.

Since the Communists had in most cases a head start over their rivals, and enjoyed the favor of the Red Army, from the beginning they were able to gain control of most National Committees.

Other points in the program were these: expulsion of the German and Magyar minorities; prosecution of collaborators by extraordinary courts; seizure of the property of Germans, Hungarians and collaborators; a new land reform; a comprehensive social welfare policy; extirpation of

German and Hungarian cultural influence; removal of all anti-Bolshevik remarks from schoolbooks; introduction of the study of the Russian language in the schools; creation of chairs of Russian history at the universities; and organization of an exchange of students and teachers between Czechoslovakia and the U.S.S.R. Alliance with the U.S.S.R. was to be the cornerstone of foreign policy.

CHAPTER 8 Americans Might Have Liberated Prague

IN spite of Benes's errors of judgment, in spite of the presence of the Red Army in Slovakia and in spite of Communist machinations in Kosice, Czechoslovakia might still have been saved for democracy and as part of the Western world if American troops had exploited their military possibilities and had liberated Bohemia with its capital Prague.

Why they did not do so can be easily explained. After hesitantly crossing the Czechoslovak border General Patton's army halted on the line KarlovyVary-Plzen-Budejovice (Karlsbad-Pilsen-Budweis) and at the specific request of the Soviet High Command did not move any farther.

The affair has been so consistently misrepresented by the Communists that it is worth quoting from the exchange of telegrams between Eisenhower as Supreme Commander and the Russian High Command, as preserved in State Department records.

In response to a detailed message from Eisenhower regarding American military plans, General Antonov of the Russian High Command, on April 25, 1945, sent the American military mission in Moscow a message intended for Eisenhower, including the following:

> The Soviet forces will conduct operations for the cleaning up of German forces from the east bank of the Elbe River north and south of Berlin and from the valley of the Vltava River.

In his reply Eisenhower stated:

> The Allied forces holding for the time being the line from the headwaters of the Moldau River approximately along the 1937 frontiers of Czechoslovakia in the Erzgebirge and Böhmerwald [Ore Mountains and Bohemian Forest], may advance to Karlsbad, Pilsen

> and Budweis, if circumstances should require it. This matter will be the subject of further communications as the operational plans are developed. It is noted that the east banks of the Elbe and the Vltava Rivers in this area will be cleared by Soviet forces. Local adjustment of contacts can be made by local commanders in the light of mutual knowledge of our operational plans.

On May 4 Eisenhower followed this up with another message, as follows:

> It is requested that you inform the Soviet High Command that we intend to advance immediately to the line Karlsbad–Pilsen–Budweis and to capture these points. Thereafter, we are ready to continue our advance into Czechoslovakia to the Elbe and Vltava for the purpose of clearing the west banks of these rivers in coördination with Soviet plans to clear the east banks if the situation requires it.

Quick as a flash came the reply next day from General Antonov for the Soviet High Command:

> The Soviet Command requests General Eisenhower to refrain from advancing the Allied forces in Czechoslovakia beyond the formerly designated lines, that is, Karlsbad–Pilsen–Budweis, so that a possible confusion of forces can be avoided.

He pointed out that in his message of April 25 he had meant that Soviet troops would clear the enemy "from *both* the east and west banks of the Vltava River."

The Supreme Commander dryly complied with Russian desires in the following message to the Russian High Command:

> General Antonov's intentions have been clarified by your telegram of May 5th and the allied forces are under instructions to remain at the line Karlsbad–Pilsen–Budweis. The ability of Soviet forces to advance rapidly for the purpose of clearing up the situation in the center of the country is presumed.

Behind this exchange of telegrams a desperate drama was being played; the people of Prague and of Bohemia pleading through their leaders that American troops advance and liberate their homeland, the Soviet Russians insisting on their rights under the Teheran agreement which made Czechoslovakia a Soviet military sphere. The point of all this was that Prague, the capital of Czechoslovakia, lies on both banks of the Vltava

and the Russians were determined that they, not the Americans, should liberate Prague. Once again the political advantage of being first on the scene outweighed all other considerations in the Russian view.

And so these telegrams give the lie to the absurd but recurrent Communist propaganda that the Americans deliberately refrained from liberating Prague because they hoped the Communist leaders, who had risen against the Nazis there, would be wiped out. The messages show that it was the Russians who, after the war in Europe had officially ended, insisted on turning what might have been a swift and happy liberation into a last-minute tragedy.

The situation at this time, as seen from the American lines, was vividly described in a journal to which I have been given access, written by an officer of the American Sixteenth Armored Division. He told about the liberation of Pilsen, about the echoes of the Prague rising as they reached the Americans, and about the end of the Vlasov army of renegade Russians whom the Germans had recruited from prisoner-of-war camps.

Of the American arrival at Pilsen on Sunday, May 6, 1945, he wrote:

> The exultation, excitement, and happiness of the Czech population of the city was beyond my powers to adequately describe. They staged an impromptu parade through the central part of the city in which our American soldiers in jeeps, weapons carriers, 6 × 6 trucks, armored cars and medium tanks participated. Every vehicle was loaded far beyond normal capacity with Czech men, women and children, many of the children mere babes in arms. As a soldier I could not approve of the wild display of enthusiasm of my troops, but as a man I could not find it in my heart to stifle the unbounded joy of the townspeople who had waited six long years for this specific occasion.
>
> Even if I had been inclined to stop it, there was little I could have done until the first wave of enthusiasm had passed. The parade lasted only a short time and then I quietly dispatched officers and non-commissioned officers to pull the military vehicles out of the parade and direct the drivers to report back to their units. Candidly it was a very unmilitary spectacle on the part of our troops, but I was reasonably sure there were not enough Germans left in the vicinity of Pilsen to cause any trouble, and it was an excellent morale builder for the liberated Czechs.
>
> And oddly enough, the thought went through my mind during the height of the parade, that nothing could have happened that would bring more strongly into the minds of the Czech people that contrast

between the German and the American soldiers. Although the parade did not last long, the celebration lasted all night and all the next day, and I am confident there were thousands of Czechs who did not even close their eyes during the night.

No sooner had the Americans set up headquarters in the Grand Hotel of Pilsen than emissaries began arriving from Prague:

> They urged us to come on to that beleaguered and distraught city and clear the hated Germans out of their midst. Between the time of our arrival in Pilsen and midnight the same day a total of 14 separate missions were received and heard from Prague. They all brought in substance the same message — urgent pleas and in many cases prayers that we come on to Prague and liberate them. Our official report to our next higher headquarters that Pilsen had been liberated brought back a prompt reply that under no circumstances would we proceed beyond a specified line, a general north-south line just east of Pilsen, and the penalty for violation of this restriction by either officers or enlisted men was a court-martial. Consequently, our reply to all visitors was the same, viz. that we were taking orders from our own higher headquarters, and could not go beyond our present position without appropriate instructions.

One of the visitors was a bit different. He was a civilian, or was dressed as one, and claimed to represent the German commander of Prague. The German commander, he said, would gladly surrender to any American force that moved on to Prague, even to a token force, but would not surrender to the Russians or Czechs. This emissary got the same answer as the others, that American troops could not go to Prague. But late the same day, May 6, the American forces in Pilsen received special instructions from higher headquarters:

> We received instructions to make ready a strong motorized escort, heavily armed, to conduct a high-ranking German staff officer to Prague who would arrive at a stated hour at the Pilsen airport by plane. This was done and the escort and the German staff officer left Pilsen shortly before dark. His mission was to arrange with the German commander in Prague to stop all fighting in that city and be prepared to surrender. The mission was accomplished.

This mission to Prague undoubtedly accounts for the reports that American patrols appeared in Prague on the night of May 6. Their appear-

ance gave a mighty stimulus to the rising that had begun the previous day; their swift departure bitterly disappointed and could not be understood by the valiant townspeople, who continued to send imploring messages to the Americans by courier and over the radio station which they had captured.

In his journal the American officer estimated that on May 7, 8, and 9, 175,000 to 250,000 refugees from Prague of all ages and nationalities entered the American lines through a road block set up about ten miles from Pilsen. Most were Czechs trying to get away from the attentions of approaching Russian liberators. But among them were also several hundred German soldiers in uniform and fully equipped, including an armored brigade, probably the remnant of the German military forces in Prague. These Germans may have surrendered as a result of the mission of the high-ranking German staff officer who had received an American escort into Prague.

Assigned to reception of the refugees from Prague, the American officer was standing along the highway beyond the American road block when General Vlasov arrived, seeking an opportunity to surrender to the Americans.

> A very large and handsome American limousine stopped beside me and a very impressive officer in a beautifully tailored uniform, groomed down to the last button, stepped out of the car, saluted very militarily, and in perfectly good English inquired where he could find the senior American officer present. I informed him that I was the senior American officer present, and was in charge of the activity he had just been watching. He then introduced himself to me as General Vlasov of the White Russian Army. I was a bit skeptical about this statement, though from his personal appearance and demeanor, he could have been Adolph Hitler himself, or Napoleon Bonaparte.
>
> I acknowledged the self introduction, returned his very snappy salute, and inquired if there was anything I could do for him. His reply was he wanted to surrender his entire White Russian Army to me. I asked him where his Army was then located and how many men he had. He pointed back over his shoulder to indicate the general direction, and stated they were a few miles in that direction, and he had an estimated 27,000 to 28,000 men and officers.
>
> I asked him if he had any proof of his identity, and I have forgotten what it was, but he showed me an engraved article, cigarette case, as I remember, with his name on it, and sure enough it was

engraved with the name of Vlasov. I told him very candidly I could not accept his surrender. His reply was to ask what he was to do; that he knew the fighting was to terminate in a few hours, and he had to do something with his army, he could no longer feed them after the fighting was over. He was entirely serious and earnest, and it appeared his concern was genuine.

I replied to him that I could not accept his surrender, but that I would give him a safe escort, commanded by an officer, to Corps Headquarters, and he could go back and talk to the Corps Commander, General Huebner. He accepted the offer, and before he left I cautioned him to return via the same route, and to stop at the roadblock, locate me, and give me the results of his interview. When he had departed, I sent another Staff Officer to get General Huebner on the telephone for me, and when the call was answered, I told General Huebner the story.

After about an hour, General Vlasov, with his entire staff still in the car, pulled up alongside me again, headed in the other direction. Again he alighted, saluted very smartly, and informed me that his surrender was not accepted by the Corps Commander. I then told him he was free to go, but that I would give him an escort to insure that he go safely beyond the heavy traffic.

That night the White Russian Army disappeared. The next morning I sent out some motorized patrols to locate the White Russian command and report its location, but it was nowhere to be found, and never was found. A great many individuals, reportedly former members of the White Russian Army, were later found in various localities within the American occupied zone of Germany. It is only a presumption on my part, but I am confident it is an accurate one that the General returned to his command, gave them the information that his offer to surrender to the American command was refused, and he then released his entire command from further service to or under him and told them that they were on their own from that time.

Before I left the ETO, I was informed that four general officers, including General Vlasov, had been apprehended by some Russian liaison officers within the American zone, that they had been released to Russia, and that as soon as they had been conducted across the line into Russian occupied territory, they were all summarily executed. I cannot vouch for the finale of this story, but there is every reason to believe it is true.

Any time from noon of May 6 on, the American Sixteenth Armored Division would have been ready to move on to Prague or any other

part of Czechoslovakia, the American officer wrote. "Not only were we ready, but hundreds of men in the command wanted and pleaded to go on to Prague, and could not understand why we did not go on."

A young Czech, who had spent the war in German concentration camps, escaped in April 1945, and arrived in Prague on May 1, has told me about Prague's rising against the Germans. His account, although it had better stay anonymous, is the best I have heard of this confused episode. This is his story:

> When I got to Prague the city seemed quiet and almost normal. There were no considerable German units on the streets — only normal Czech police. But Berlin had fallen, Hitler was dead. The U.S. army was moving on Pilsen and the Russians (Malinovsky and Konev) had taken Brno, driving the dissolving German units towards Prague. The ring around the capital was tightening and somehow we expected something dramatic to happen any minute.
>
> During the night from the 1st to the 2nd of May several bridges outside Prague were blown up by partisan units, and on the night of the 4th students tore off German street names. On the 5th the first barricades appeared and the first shots were fired.
>
> The Czech government in exile had for at least a year been warning officers that they would not be admitted to ranks of the new army if they did not take part in the resistance. As these fellows now appeared on the barricades we called them "naftalinky" [mothballs] since their uniforms still smelled of mothballs. Many students also appeared looking for revenge for the closing down of the universities. There were also a good many policemen who brought their weapons.
>
> Almost everyone agrees that the rising began at the radio station on the morning of the 5th when two announcers read the news in Czech only — instead of German and Czech. About the same time a man called Svoboda disarmed the guard at the front entrance of the radio station and was killed for his trouble. He was probably the first casualty.
>
> The Germans went to find out what was going on at the radio station and found that the announcers had barricaded themselves inside. The Germans tried to fight their way in and the announcers broadcast an appeal for all good men and true to come to their aid. A lot of people did. That was about noon. I remember that just after the broadcast a woman living opposite the radio station hung out a Czech flag and was shot by a German who had been eating in the radio station restaurant.

When the station was bombarded by the Germans on May 8th the announcers and technicians had fled to a church where they continued to broadcast reports of the fighting and music — mostly a Sokol march Lvi Silou [Lions' Strength].

I don't know whether anybody gave the two announcers orders to start the rising. I think it was spontaneous, and most people I have talked to agree. But the two announcers got small thanks for their trouble. They were dismissed soon after the Communists took control in February, 1948.

Their radio appeals for help were picked up in England and I know that at least one group of Czech airmen tried frantically to get permission to take their planes over and help. They apparently never got permission.

General Karel Kutlvasr became the military leader of the rising. He too got small thanks, for he was sentenced to life imprisonment sometime after the Communists took over on the charge of being involved in a plot to overthrow the government. From some Wehrmacht depot Kutlvasr managed to obtain old uniforms of the German Afrika Corps, and by May 7th most of the barricade fighters were wearing those sand colored outfits with arm bands in the colors of the republic and the initials "R.G." meaning Revolucni Garda.

The Germans were rather weak. Their forces consisted mostly of S.S. troops with some heavy tanks but no artillery. But of course the Czech forces were badly equipped too. The heaviest fighting took place in the outskirts of the city where the Germans were opposed by units of the Vlasov army who had both tanks and light artillery. And the Russians fought well, for it was their last chance to make up for having fought in the German army and perhaps win an opportunity to surrender to the American forces. Their losses were heavy and it was mainly thanks to their heavy equipment that the Germans surrendered to the Czech National Committee on May 8th. But it was too late for Vlasov's men to redeem themselves and several hundred of them were shot by the Red Russian Army which moved into town the next day. They were buried in the left hand corner of the central cemetery in the lower part of Mladonovicova. Very few people know that their graves are there.

When the Russians marched in they were enthusiastically greeted by the people of Prague who covered their tanks with lilacs and tulips, for it seemed that the weather had decided to favor the rising. It turned warm as a June day on May 5th and remained so.

On the 10th or 11th placards appeared on all corners showing Red Army tanks entering the city and the slogan "They came in time."

The lie was not too obvious, since not many people knew that the Germans had surrendered to the Czech National Committee the day before the Russians arrived, and there were still plenty of Czech patrols marching about in a war-like manner.

Very soon good will toward the Soviet Army turned to the opposite when the soldiers of Malinovsky's First Ukrainian Army began to steal, rape, and kill. With their irrepressible humor the people of Prague began to call the Russian Army "the league against Bolshevism" which was the name of a compulsory organization the Germans had set up during the last few months of their occupation.

Soon after the liberation, when I was quite ill, I was awakened late one night by the janitor who said that there was a Red Army officer outside asking for an interpreter. He wanted me to show him the town so I got dressed and spent the rest of the night roaming the city with him. When I asked him early in the morning how he liked Prague and its people the Red Russian officer answered: "I was there for the occupation of Dresden, Bucharest and Berlin, but nowhere were we welcomed so heartily as in Prague." It seems he saw no difference between a country which fought for its freedom and Germany.

A month or so after the Russians had arrived, a story went around that in a Brno cinema when a newsreel of the Yalta conference was shown with Stalin going with outstretched arms to greet Roosevelt, somebody in the theater shouted in Russian "Davay chasi." [Give me your watch.] This was directed not only at Stalin, but at all Red soldiers, who were notoriously fond of watches and who had managed to appropriate just about every timepiece in Communist Europe, sometimes wearing three or four on one arm. In the theater that night the lights were put on and there was a great rumpus, but the guilty man was never found.

CHAPTER 9 The Communists Prepare for Power

ALL through the summer of 1945 the Czechs and the Slovaks watched the "liberating" Russian Army streaming across their country — an avalanche of tanks and motorized vehicles, horse-drawn wagons and carts loaded with loot, and tough, grimy foot soldiers. The Red Army lived on the land, consumed the peasants' chickens, seized vehicles of all kinds, and requisitioned from the local authorities whatever else they required. The tales of pillaging and rape at that time in Czechoslovakia differ little from those told of the Germans.

Many a Czech found there was only one protection against the Red Army's arbitrary violence, albeit not a very sure one: A word from an influential Communist individual *might* save a man's automobile, his cow, or his daughter. And other Czechs whom one would not have suspected of Communist sympathies now flocked to the banner of the hammer and sickle because they hoped it might protect them from the consequences of questionable collaborationist activities during the Nazi occupation. Among these were many business and professional men who had traded with or provided services to the Germans, and many former members of the political parties that had been outlawed. It should not be difficult to understand why, in this atmosphere, most of the National Committees (local, district and regional administrative organs) elected Communists as chairmen while non-Communists tended to be stooges.

In December 1945, American Ambassador Laurence Steinhardt succeeded in arranging for a simultaneous withdrawal of the liberating armies from Czechoslovakia: the Americans from their corner in the southwest, the Russians from the rest. But the damage had already been done. The Czechoslovak people — even if they did not know what had happened at Teheran — felt psychologically surrounded by the Soviet Union, and abandoned by their friends in the West.

A development that further strengthened the hand of the Communists was the expulsion of three million Sudeten Germans, expressing a blazing chauvinism which vented itself in racial hatred. The director of music at the radio station even banned Mozart, Beethoven, Bach. Communists of German extraction had to eat humble pie in order to keep out of trouble, as in the case of Karl Kraibich, Czech Ambassador to Moscow and former leader of the Sudeten German branch of the Communist Party, who issued a statement as follows: "I, as a non-Czech and non-Slav, agree with the transfer of Germans."

There were some old-time Communists who recognized that racialism was contrary to all the theoretical precepts of Communism and said so in a newspaper called *Rudy Prapor-Die Rote Fahne* which the Czech and the German Communist miners published jointly in the Most-Duchcov mining district. They also formed a club called Pest-Die Faust. But their views went unheeded and their club and newspaper were quietly liquidated by the Party.

The Party was more concerned with the advantages it could draw from the expulsion of the Germans. In the first place, it enormously increased Czechoslovakia's dependence on the Soviet Union which, geographically, became the country's natural protector against the Germans, who sooner or later would want to win back the surrendered provinces. Secondly, the departure of the Germans placed in the hands of the Communist Ministries of the Interior and Agriculture new land, jobs, and small businesses which they could dole out to some two million Czechoslovaks.

Thousands of Czechs swarmed into the Sudeten district, and since many were interested largely in loot, this area was nicknamed "Alaska" and the looters, "gold diggers." This again served Communist purposes, for the looters had to play ball with the Communist-controlled police to avoid prosecution.

During the first months after the liberation the Communists rushed through a series of decrees nationalizing 60 per cent of Czechoslovakia's industry. They nationalized all banks, insurance companies, joint stock companies in basic industry and large-scale enterprises in other industries, thereby going far beyond anything the non-Communists had agreed to in the Kosice program. Thus, on October 24, 1945, the Provisional Government wittingly or unwittingly laid the foundations for the entire Communist economic program, and the government began, on the highest level, the destruction of the economic basis of the bourgeoisie.

This first stage in nationalization was facilitated by pre-war concentration of basic industry in the hands of a few banks and foreign interests. While small-scale enterprise remained typical in other spheres, 91 per cent of the country's coal mining was carried on by only seven firms; 99 per cent of iron ore was produced by only two firms; and 85 per cent of all coke was produced by four firms. A great deal of mining was controlled by foreign corporations. This form of organization made it fairly simple for the Nazis to take over; the Dresdner and Deutsche Banks moved into the financial field, the Hermann Goering Werke into industry.

Now it looked equally simple for the Czechoslovak government to take over. Furthermore, big businesses had undermined their moral position by extensive collaboration with the Nazis during the war. Benes felt obliged to agree that it would be "just to transfer them to public ownership."

A number of financial measures proved hard on businessmen and the bourgeoisie in general. Under a currency reform decree all money was withdrawn from circulation and placed in blocked accounts. New currency was issued at a rate of three units of old money to one of the new. Only five hundred crowns in new currency were issued to individuals, while commercial enterprises were granted one month's operating expenses.

To absorb the blocked accounts, totaling 250 billion crowns, a capital levy followed in the early summer of 1946: 30 per cent of all capital over 150,000 crowns, and up to 99 per cent of wartime profits exceeding 20,000 crowns. The maximum permissible wartime profit was set at 180,000 crowns ($3600). While these measures undoubtedly wiped out the gains of those who provided goods and services to the Germans during the war, they also deprived many others of legitimate savings and profits.

The Communists demanded and obtained extensive wage increases for workers of all kinds and began to agitate for a new, complete, unprecedented "womb to tomb" social security system providing protection against all the risks of life. The rationing system was arranged to the advantage of workers, and particularly in favor of heavy manual laborers. Voluntary (later not so voluntary) labor brigades were sent where labor was most needed — for reconstruction, in the mines, on farms. Competition was started among factory workers to increase production.

In opposing the influence of the Communists the non-Communist parties were ineffective. A large part of the bourgeoisie was left politically uprooted and without leadership by the abolition of the Agrarian, the Small Traders' and the Slovak People's Parties. And the remaining non-

Communist parties did not operate effectively enough to win their loyalties.

One of the difficulties was that just after the liberation President Benes toyed with the idea that only three parties should be authorized: a big workers' party consisting of the Communists, the Social Democrats and his own National Socialist followers (a non-Marxist party of long standing); a center party consisting of the Catholic People's Party together with the former Small Traders' Party; and a right wing composed of the former Agrarian Party and other conservative elements. Of course the Communists never had any intention of carrying out a merger with Social Democrats and National Socialists, but Benes at that time still believed in the possibility of "coexistence" with the Communists.

The Social Democrats in particular made the mistake of putting aside almost all their well-known pre-war leaders. The only one of the "old men" well known in the factories to appear as a candidate in the 1946 election was Benes's brother, Vojta Benes. The new secretary-general of the Social Democrat Party, Blazej Vilim, was absolutely unknown to the working class, as were Vaclav Majer who became Food Minister, and Bohumil Lausman and Zdenek Fierlinger who carried on a seesaw struggle for the Party chairmanship.

The Communists were hard at work infiltrating at all possible levels. They united under their leadership the trade union movement, which before the war had been split up into some seven hundred craft unions divided against one another on political lines. They succeeded in winning dominant positions in women's and youth organizations and most of the other so-called "national organizations." While they could not get control of the peasants' organization, they won support from many peasants by campaigning for a new land reform.

The Communists had a certain advantage in being the only party free of all responsibility for Munich and of having devoted much of their efforts in the underground to preparing their postwar political position. (For the moment everyone seemed to have forgotten the period of the Nazi-Soviet Pact when the Communists stood aside from the resistance movement and in some cases even collaborated with the Germans.) Furthermore the delusion was strong—Benes was its most prominent victim—that the Czechoslovak Communists were not like the others, that they were patriots first and Communists after, and that their methods were reformist and evolutionary rather than revolutionary.

The Communists cultivated this delusion (they still try it on Western

visitors to Prague). Klement Gottwald, chairman of the Communist Party, was quoted by William Diamond in his book *Czechoslovakia Between East and West* as saying in 1947 that the struggle against Hitlerism had cleared the way for "elements leading to socialism by peaceful evolution. I believe not only that we are capable of attaining socialism by routes different from the Soviet example but that we have already set off in that direction. With regard to parliamentary institutions they will have no more vigilant guardians than the Communists when they are written into the new Constitution." While admitting a general adherence to Marxism, the Communists soft-pedaled Marxist-Revolutionary terminology in public, and Vaclav Kopecky, Minister of Information, declared at this time that they sought to give Communism a "Czech interpretation."

In summary, the array of methods the Communists used to prepare for their accession to power, in the 1946 election, and eventually by more forceful means, makes an impressive picture. They exploited the situation created by Soviet military dominance and the liberation by the Red Army to gain control of key cabinet posts and patronage (police, radio, land distribution), to force through nationalization and currency reform decrees that weakened the economic position of the bourgeoisie, to win control of local administration, to infiltrate and control the "national organizations." They skillfully exploited their own wartime prestige, the worries of those who had collaborated with the Nazis, and the general hope that the Communists would turn out to be evolutionary rather than revolutionary, concerned with parliamentary rather than dictatorial government.

The parliamentary elections of May 1946 are generally conceded to have been fair, indeed the last free elections in Czechoslovakia. Balloting was secret. All legal political parties were free to say what they pleased. The Red Army was not present within the borders of the country to exert pressure.

My view is, however, that truly fair and free election was not possible in Czechoslovakia at that time. For that, it would have been necessary to remove the country from the shadow of the Soviet Union, of the Soviet zone of Austria, of Soviet-occupied Poland and Hungary. The Red Army was still too close. In fact, it came within an ace of being present in Czechoslovakia on election day. A few days before the election the Minister of Defense, General Svoboda, without consulting the government, agreed to allow Russian troops in Austria to be relieved by way of

Czechoslovakia. Only direct appeal from Benes to Stalin averted the move at the last minute.

In these elections the Communists won 38 per cent of the total national vote, rather more in Bohemia and Moravia and rather less in Slovakia. The Social Democrats won 12.8 per cent, the Czech National Socialists 18.2 per cent, the Catholic People's Party 15.8 per cent, and the Slovak Democrats 13.8 per cent. The wonder is, under the circumstances, that the Communists did not get even more.

CHAPTER 10 Ineffectual Anti-Communism

DURING the period between the 1946 elections and the Communist coup of February 1948, the old Czech spirit of democracy and independence flared up briefly in efforts to redress the balance between East and West internally, and in international relations. Suddenly realizing the vitality of this spirit, the Russians and Communists decided to snuff it out. The whole conception of sharing in a balance of power was a Western one and utterly foreign and repugnant to Russians and Communists.

The revival of democratic non-Communist forces coincided with the beginning of a sensational economic recovery. Czechoslovakia became the economic wonder of eastern Europe, similar to Belgium in the west. The streets of Prague were filled with American troops on leave and tourists who reveled in shopping and good eating. By the end of 1946, industry had reached 75 per cent of its 1937 level, foreign trade with the West had soared beyond all expectations and UNRRA had rejected the Czechs' request for further aid in 1947 on the grounds that they were the only people in Europe whose diet was on a pre-war caloric level.

Such well-being can be explained by a wide variety of circumstances. First, Czechoslovakia had suffered fairly little war damage except in eastern Slovakia and in the southwest between Pilsen and the border. The Germans had expanded some branches of the country's heavy industry and had accumulated stockpiles of raw materials at points beyond the usual range of bombers. The first postwar harvests were good considering the disorganization of the times, and Czech factories were rapidly finding export markets at high prices in spite of the inefficiency arising from swift nationalization. Finally UNRRA, beginning with 30 million dollars' worth of supplies in 1945, poured in 230 million dollars' worth during 1946. UNRRA was popular. All UNRRA trucks and supplies had the words "dodala UNRRA" stenciled on them, meaning "delivered by UNRRA,"

and it was a little joke of those days to ask "What is the Christian name of UNRRA?" The answer was "Dodala."

Meanwhile, from the time of the elections until the middle of 1947, there was no particularly overt Soviet intervention and no important new step towards domestic Sovietization, unless one were so to describe the two-year plan for 1947 and 1948. This plan was intended to surpass the 1937 level of industrial production by 10 per cent and prepare for a later five-year plan.

The political effects of growing material well-being were just what might be expected — the Communists lost ground and the anti-Communists or "democrats," as they often called themselves, began to take heart. Toward the middle of 1947, President Benes dared to plan to renew the pre-war alliance with France, in order to balance Czechoslovakia's ties with Russia. And on July 7 the cabinet dared to accept an invitation to a conference on the Marshall Plan in Paris. The immediate reason for accepting was not hard to see. Czechoslovak prosperity was menaced by a disastrous drought. The remarkable fact that Gottwald and the other Communist ministers voted the acceptance, along with the rest of the ministers, obscured the fact that by accepting, the government was courting disaster of another kind.

Premier Gottwald and Foreign Minister Jan Masaryk had already planned to leave for Moscow on July 9 to discuss a new commercial treaty with Russia as well as the proposed renewal of Czechoslovakia's alliance with France. Benes had prepared a letter to Stalin asking for a statement of the Soviet Union's attitude towards the proposed treaty with France. Now he added a second letter explaining the advantages to Czechoslovakia of the Marshall Plan.

Of the many reports as to what happened after the Czech delegation reached Moscow the most plausible are these:

Gottwald managed to see Stalin ahead of the rest of the Czech delegation on July 9 and returned to tell his colleagues, according to Josef Josten in his book *Oh, My Country,* "We shall not need to go to Paris. We shall get all we want from the Soviet Union."

This high-handed procedure by Gottwald infuriated the others and Gottwald had a hard time dissuading Masaryk from resigning on the spot.

As to what happened when Stalin received the whole group at the Kremlin at 11 P.M. that night, we have the authority of a report made by Dr. Arnost Heidrich, Secretary-General of the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Those present were: Soviet Premier Molotov; Czecho-

slovak Premier Klement Gottwald; Czechoslovak Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jan Masaryk; Czechoslovak Minister of Justice, Prokop Drtina; and Heidrich. The version of Heidrich's report that reached the State Department reads as follows:

> Stalin explained that the aim of the Soviet policy was to get the Americans out of Europe and Asia. Stalin emphasized that the United States pursues, through the Marshall Plan, political and economic aims which are opposed to those of the Soviet Union. This is the reason why Czechoslovakia cannot and should not participate in the Marshall Plan. For the United States the Marshall Plan is only a means to solidify their political and economic influence in Europe.
>
> Stalin mentioned that the Soviet Union and her allies cannot have any interest in increasing the political and economic influence of the United States in Europe. Czechoslovakia, therefore, must not assist in the realization of these American plans. The Marshall Plan will lead to a situation in which Germany would be used either as a military or an industrial basis against the Soviet Union.
>
> Czechoslovakia, which is an ally of the Soviet Union with the aim to prevent any resurrection of German aggressive power, cannot be both an ally of the Soviet Union and a participant in the Marshall Plan. It is a question of compatibility. The interest of the Soviet Union and her allies, according to Stalin, is to force the United States to abandon her positions in Europe and, step by step, in other parts of the world. Great Britain and France, if they have to rely on their own resources, are — according to Stalin — too weak to resist the interests of the Soviet Union and her allies.
>
> Stalin then emphasized that the United States will be obliged to evacuate her position in Europe, Asia and elsewhere, as a consequence of a deep economic crisis which the American system will be unable to avoid. Stalin did not make any mention of military measures. On the contrary, Stalin emphasized that these actions, the aim of which is to destroy the American power in the world, must not have any military character and must, therefore, not appear in such a way that would awaken American public opinion — as happened after Pearl Harbor — and, consequently, allow the American Government to start military counter measures.

This document sheds light on Soviet intentions in general. For the Czechs in 1947 the key words were: "cannot be both an ally of the Soviet Union and a participant in the Marshall Plan." Stalin gave the Czechs until 4 P.M. the next day to make their choice. Gottwald immediately

telephoned Prague. He called an emergency cabinet meeting for the morning of July 10. And when, the next morning the cabinet was in session, he repeated Stalin's words to his ministers over the telephone, Masaryk was obliged to confirm them.

Before the deadline the cabinet decided to withdraw its acceptance of the Paris invitation. To explain the withdrawal of their acceptance of the Marshall Plan invitation the ministers issued a communiqué stating that "Czechoslovak participation would be interpreted as a deed aimed against friendship with the Soviet Union and other Slav allies." These were, indeed, the very words with which Stalin had stated his position to the Czech delegation.

Benes, at this time, was at his country residence. He had just suffered his second stroke. (He had had a previous stroke in London.) When informed, Benes is reported to have said: "What can I do? Even if I had been in Prague I don't think I could have done anything to change what happened."

The most important thing that had happened (according to reports that reached diplomatic representatives in Prague much later) was that Stalin, shocked at the Czechs' independence in agreeing to go to Paris, gave orders that they must henceforth be kept strictly in line. From then on the Czech Communists took the offensive and, in retrospect, Stalin's insistence that the Czechs withdraw from the Marshall Plan conference may be considered the first stroke in the Communist coup. It was tragic that this development should have coincided with a serious break in the health of Benes, on whom the country's democratic forces depended for leadership.

The Czech leaders returned to Prague with a five-year trade agreement which the Communists noisily advertised as the solution to the drought prices. Millions of placards and paper seals issued by the Communist Ministry of Information covered the windows of streetcars, buses and house walls, assuring Czechs that they had to thank only the generosity of Stalin that they did not starve.

This agreement forced Czechoslovakia to throw far greater effort into heavy industry. Goods Czechoslovakia could have used for her own reconstruction, or sold for hard currency in the West, would go to Russia at prices fixed by the Russians.

Had Czechoslovakia joined the Marshall Plan she would have been tided over her drought crisis at the expense of the United States. Because the country had to accept what the Communist press called the Soviet

Union's "gift," the process of economic recovery was retarded, consumer goods progressively disappeared from the shops and the standard of living even of the favored workers declined steadily from that time until it reached rock bottom at the end of 1948.

In response to an appeal from Gottwald, Stalin, on December 1, granted to Czechoslovakia another 200,000 tons of grain—in return for commensurate additional burdens on Czech industry—thereby short-circuiting efforts by Masaryk to obtain grain from the United States. Poor Masaryk, who had warned over and over that any serious reduction in Czechoslovakia's trade with the West would undermine the Czechs' standard of living.

The official announcement of the additional grain allocation suggested that the Soviet Union would also give Czechoslovakia a loan of gold or hard currency. But no such loan has ever materialized. In any event, the five-year trade agreement put Czechoslovakia economically in the Soviet Union's pocket.

The day after the Czech leaders returned from Moscow the Communist Party scored another triumph by shepherding through parliament a new land reform law setting fifty hectares (124 acres) as the maximum size of any farm. It completed what the land reform law of 1919 had begun by breaking up the remaining large estates including one owned by the Schwarzenberg family totaling 130,000 acres.

August is the vacation month in Czechoslovakia when even Communists rest. But in September the Communist offensive resumed. They concentrated first on Slovakia because there they had to contend with the largest single anti-Communist party—the Slovak Democrats, who had won a smashing 61.43 per cent of all votes in the 1946 elections while the Communists had got only 30 per cent. The Communists' agents "discovered" documents "proving" that the leaders of the Slovak Democrat Party were engaged in espionage for a "reactionary power" and were plotting to overthrow the government.

Since they controlled the police, the Communists were able to get two out of three of the top secretaries of this anti-Communist party arrested. Simultaneously the Communists brought in truckloads of their supporters for "spontaneous demonstrations" in the streets of Bratislava demanding that the Slovak Democratic Party be abolished. Communist-controlled Prague radio and the Soviet Union radio stations joined in the campaign. While the Communists did not succeed in getting the Slovak Democrat

Party abolished, they did manage to deprive the party of three of its nine seats on the Slovak Board of Commissioners and to increase their own representation from six to nine.

This attempt to break the Slovak Democrat Party looked, in retrospect, like a small-scale dress rehearsal for the February coup in Prague.

The next step in the Communist offensive was a fantastic attempt on September 11, 1947, to assassinate three non-Communist ministers. They were the Foreign Minister Jan Masaryk, next to Benes the most popular man in the country; the Vice Premier Petr Zenkl, chairman of the National Socialist Party, largest of the non-Communist groups; and the Minister of Justice, Dr. Prokop Drtina, an outspoken anti-Communist, one of Benes's former secretaries and with Masaryk one of the few men who knew the full story of what happened during the Moscow negotiations in July. Each of these men was mailed a package, labeled perfume but containing bombs that would explode when the packages were opened. Suspicious clerks turned the packages over to the police before they were opened.

The Communist-run police made no progress in its investigation, which was not surprising in the light of the facts revealed when the Ministry of Justice undertook an investigation of its own. They were these: a Communist carpenter named Jan Kopka of the town of Krcman had admitted that he made the boxes in which the bombs were placed, but he had been released by the police. A Communist member of parliament, Jaroslav Jura-Sosnar, had personally inserted the bombs in the boxes, but the police had neglected to take fingerprints. Communist headquarters in the district capital of Olomouc had ordered the manufacture of the boxes with the full knowledge of the Communist district chairman, Dr. Alexei Cepicka.

Although these things were known in top-bracket political circles the non-Communist ministers never had the gumption to make them public nor to draw from them any political advantage. They did not protest when, in the midst of the investigation, Cepicka was made Minister of Internal Trade. This was the beginning of a Communist success story for one of the regime's busiest and most unpleasant hatchet men. He married Gottwald's daughter, succeeded the man he had tried to assassinate as Minister of Justice, became a minister in charge of the State Office for Church Affairs, and, in 1950, became Minister of National Defense.

About this time Zdenek Fierlinger, the crypto-Communist who was chairman of the Social Democratic Party, engineered a "working agree-

ment" with the Communists as a result of which a capital levy, previously rejected by the cabinet, was passed by the parliament in which Communists and Social Democrats together had a slight majority. Here, however, the Communists overplayed their hand and their offensive began to boomerang.

It was now obvious that Fierlinger was interested only in furthering Communist interests. The Social Democratic rank and file reacted by repudiating Fierlinger's leadership at the party congress at Brno on November 16. His fall was a great sensation. Bohumil Lausman replaced him, but unfortunately for the Social Democrats he was a vacillating man whose resistance to the Communists often seemed irresolute. After the Communist coup he accepted a cabinet post, but in 1950 he escaped from Czechoslovakia to Germany.

Fierlinger left the congress with the words, "I will be back in my position as chairman within six months." In fact, he was back in about three months, but in the meantime the Social Democrats and other anti-Communists made themselves clearly heard. The Social Democratic revolt against Fierlinger reflected a countrywide reaction. One of the things that fed anti-Communist opinion was publication of President Benes's *Memoirs*. Most of the critics skipped lightly over the sections advocating "coexistence" with the Communists and emphasized his later doubts about Communist sincerity. They dwelt upon the disclosures he made about the way the Communists had put the brakes on resistance as long as the Nazi-Soviet pact was in effect; 250,000 copies of the book were sold between October and the time of the Communist coup in February.

More and more protests against the Communists were heard in November, December and January. The Social Democratic headquarters denounced the Communists for adhering to the Cominform (Communist Information Bureau); it accused the Communists of using strong-arm methods in the factories in efforts to reverse the results of work council elections in which they were defeated; and it excoriated Antonin Zapotocky, the Communist chairman of the national trade union organization, for threatening to send to the mines workers who defied his organization's authority. The Social Democratic press published details of Gestapo methods used by the Communist police to obtain confessions. And the National Socialist press declared flatly that Czechoslovakia had made a dire mistake in not joining the Marshall Plan. Both Social Democratic and National Socialist newspaper offices were besieged by workers asking

for help in their struggle against the Communists in the factories. But the non-Communist parties were not capable of exploiting the tide of public opinion running in their favor.

Convincing evidence as to how the tide of public opinion was running was provided in January 1948 by a Gallup-type poll of the Ministry of Information's Institute for Research in Public Opinion. The results, supposed to be secret, leaked out. They showed that the Communists, who had got 38 per cent of the popular vote in 1946, could now count on only 28 per cent. Bitter information for the Communists, who could scarcely question the reliability of the poll, since the Ministry of Information was headed by a Communist and its poll had in 1946 been accurate to within less than one half of one per cent.

What would happen at the elections due in April or May? What would become of Gottwald's boast that the Communists would win 51 per cent of the votes? Above all, how could Stalin's order to keep Czechoslovakia in line be carried out if the Communist Party suffered a serious electoral reverse?

Although the idea of a *Putsch* comes easily to Communists' thoughts, it is likely that the Czech Communist leaders had, until then, imagined that currents of fear and opportunism would really carry them to an absolute majority in the coming election, and that they were surprised by the mulish reaction of public opinion.

Probably not until this poll was taken did the Communist leaders decide that an immediate end must be put to all this nonsense of democratic procedures.

Already there were indications that the second half of February might be critical. In protest against the government's decision to raise the salaries of civil servants — which the Communists opposed, apparently because it was not their idea — the trade union leader Zapotocky had called an enormous meeting of delegates from factory "works councils," which would bring 8000 pro-Communists into Prague on February 22. Minister of Agriculture Julius Duris had furthermore called a meeting of "peasants' committees" in Prague for February 29. And reports were in circulation that Josef Smrkovsky, commander of the Communist Party's secret forces, had been authorized by the executive committee of the party to alert the Workers' Militia, a paramilitary organization of factory workers, during the second half of February. The Workers' Militia had been formed in 1945 for the purpose of guarding national property against the Germans. It was to have been a voluntary spare-time guard service, but it gradually

developed into a full-time organization responsible only to the Communist chiefs of the trade union organization.

The non-Communist parties knew that something was afoot. I have been told by Czech politicians that they had evidence of half a dozen alternative Communist plans for a *Putsch,* but could never quite prove it or make up their minds what to do about it. They did not expect Communist action until March, just before the scheduled parliamentary elections. And so they temporized. Their fatal weakness was that they never buried their differences sufficiently to unite together in action, nor even conceived separate plans to stall the Communists. They were paralyzed by a sense of hopelessness.

CHAPTER II Communist Coup d'État

THE city of Prague in that month of January 1948, before the coup, presented a deceptively pleasant, cosmopolitan picture. The big downtown newsstands were stuffed with newspapers and magazines from England, France and Switzerland as well as from the east European countries that had gone Communist, and from Russia. The windows of the bookshops were piled high, especially with English and American literature, but also with a fair sprinkling of editions of Marx, Lenin and Stalin. There were plenty of American movies, and the theaters showed a special interest in American plays, although Soviet productions were not entirely neglected. Playful Americans and other Western foreigners on vacation seemed to be everywhere, in the hotels, restaurants and night clubs. There were no Communist counterparts, for Communist countries do not very often allow their citizens to play in foreign places. On the whole, after a casual glance at Prague, one might have said that "coexistence" was working well in Czechoslovakia.

Behind the scenes, however, the Communists were watching for their chance to change radically the picture presented by Prague. The chance fell into their laps, like a gift from the Communist heaven, in the form of a government crisis over Communist subversion of the police force.

The build-up for the crisis began in November and December when National Socialist spokesmen in parliament leveled a series of accusations at the Communists. They accused the Communist Ministry of the Interior of padding the rolls of the police force to the extent of 1500 men in Slovakia alone, of labeling non-Communist policemen as "unreliable" in police records, of secretly censoring the mail and of employing plain-clothes snoopers who reported on conversations in streetcars and trains and cafés. In January the word got around that the Czech secret police, the STB, had established direct liaison with the secret police of the Soviet Union. The old democratic conception of an impartial state security system was

obviously at stake. The Communists were setting up the apparatus of a police state under the very noses of the government in which non-Communists still held a majority.

On February 13 the cabinet was informed that the police commander of Bohemia, with the authorization of the Ministry of the Interior, had retired or transferred the eight remaining non-Communist regional commanders of police in the Prague area. This was the last straw. Overruling its Communist members after an angry argument, the cabinet decided by majority vote to instruct the Minister of the Interior, Vaclav Nosek, to reinstate the eight police commanders.

But Nosek did nothing of the kind. He simply did not appear at the next cabinet meeting on February 17. The Communist Premier, Klement Gottwald, listened to the angry protests of the non-Communist ministers and then declared the meeting adjourned after blandly explaining that in his opinion the cabinet had acted unconstitutionally, since it had no right under the constitution to interfere with the police. Later, in reply to a written demand that their orders be carried out signed by the non-Communist members of the cabinet, Gottwald assured the ministers that Nosek would come to the cabinet meeting of February 20 and would explain everything.

The day before this cabinet meeting, two men who represented the great powers' interest in Czechoslovakia arrived by air in Prague. One of them was Valerian Alexandrovitch Zorin, formerly Soviet Russian ambassador to Czechoslovakia and now deputy foreign minister of the U.S.S.R. who came ostensibly to arrange for grain deliveries and to attend the celebration of the thirtieth anniversary of the founding of the Red Army. The other was the American Ambassador, Laurence Steinhardt, who was returning from a visit to Washington, D.C.

During the six days of crisis that began with the cabinet meeting of February 20, the presence of Valerian Alexandrovitch Zorin was felt by the leaders of every political faction. Of course he had daily contacts with the leading Communists and in addition he made use of his supposed grain delivery mission to see many others, including Foreign Minister Masaryk, Food Minister Majer, Transport Minister Pietor and the chairman of the Social Democratic Party, Lausman. At the height of the crisis he is said to have telephoned to President Benes and to have brought decisive pressure but this cannot be proven. It is certain, however, that he was the human incarnation of the fear that the Red Army might intervene. There is no record of his ever having made the threat, but always it was implied

when he inveighed against the "reactionaries" and spoke of his government's solid approval of the aims of the Communist Party.

The democratic forces of Czechoslovakia looked to Ambassador Steinhardt as a counterweight to Zorin. Steinhardt brought back from Washington news that the United States would probably grant Czechoslovakia a credit for the purchase of twenty-five million dollars' worth of cotton. This was a fine thing for Czechoslovakia, but hardly what the non-Communist leaders needed at the moment. What they needed was political influence backed by military power, and that Steinhardt could not give them.

Many months earlier he had explained to Petr Zenkl, the National Socialist leader, that the non-Communists or democrats could not expect direct or indirect aid from the United States in case of a showdown between Communists and non-Communists. It was hardly necessary for him to have said so because the whole withdrawal of American forces from Europe at the time made it obvious that the United States was not equipped to take part in the politics of power.

February 20: Marked the beginning of the final crisis that ended democratic government in Czechoslovakia.

Before the cabinet meeting scheduled for that day the non-Communist ministers ascertained that Nosek had still not complied with the cabinet's order. Therefore, twelve ministers, representing the Czech National Socialist Party, the Catholic People's Party and the Slovak Democratic Party, refused to enter the cabinet meeting. Instead they sent letters to President Benes submitting their resignations on the grounds that it was impossible to continue to accept responsibilities in a government whose decisions were not respected. The ministers who offered their resignations were:

National Socialist Party: Dr. Zenkl, Vice-Premier; Dr. Stransky, Minister of Education; Dr. Drtina, Minister of Justice; and Dr. Hubert Ripka, Minister of Foreign Trade.

Catholic People's Party: Monsignor Sramek, Deputy Prime Minister; Monsignor Hala, Minister of Posts; Mr. Kopecky, Minister of Public Works; and Dr. Prochazka, Minister of Health.

Slovak Democratic Party: Dr. Kocvara, Deputy Prime Minister; Dr. Pietor, Minister of Transport; Dr. Franek, Unification of Law; and Mr. Lichner, Undersecretary for National Defense.

These men had no intention of really giving up their jobs. They intended their resignations as a tactical maneuver that would either force

the Communists to relax their grip on the police or would precipitate immediate elections pending which Benes would ask them to remain in office.

Later they insisted—although Benes's partisans denied it—that they had had an agreement with the President that he would, come what may, not accept their resignations without first consulting them.

The Foreign Minister, Jan Masaryk, a nonparty man, did not resign. Whether he would have been willing to do so or not is an open question but, in any case, he was not consulted.

Nor did the three Social Democratic ministers resign. Although such staunch anti-Communists as Vaclav Majer, the Food Minister, were getting stronger in the party every day, the pro-Communists were far from defeated and the leadership of Lausman, the party chairman, was weak. What the Social Democrats did do was to place their portfolios "at the disposal" of the Social Democratic Party presidium, which meant that they left the decision as to whether they should resign or not up to their party headquarters.

The Communists meanwhile set up a mighty clamor accusing the non-Communist parties in the government of all the things that they themselves intended to do. That was an old trick, but it still fooled many people. They issued a manifesto asserting that the National Socialists, People's Party and the Slovak Democrat members of the government intended to overthrow the regime, exclude the Communists and prevent "a decent free election."

The manifesto said in part:

> Recognizing the seriousness of the danger to the People's Democratic regime and the new Republic, the Presidium of the party has decided to take certain measures to forestall dishonest plans of reaction and safeguard the future peaceful development of the Republic.
>
> At this serious moment it is necessary for all working persons and all democratic and progressive persons to be in readiness and to be prepared with all their strength immediately to forestall any subversive intentions of reaction and to protect the interest of the state and nation.

It emphasized that the meetings of factory "works councils" scheduled for the twenty-second and of "peasants' committees" on the twenty-eighth of February would be of special significance in forestalling the subversive intentions of the reactionaries.

While the Communist-controlled radio broadcast the manifesto over and over again, an excited announcer on the public address system in all the main streets chanted as follows: "Stand by, stand by — save democracy. Be ready for anything. Your country is in danger. Citizens, it is your duty to be ready. Reactionary forces with their foreign supporters are stronger than ever. Be on your guard."

The ostensible basis for these inflammatory warnings was "revealed" by the Communist Minister of the Interior, Nosek, in an announcement that it had now been proven that the leaders of the National Socialist Party had attempted to sell state secrets to the British and Americans and overthrow the government. The state secrets allegedly concerned the synthetic gasoline plant at Most. It was all so pat and was such a classic example of the practice favored by totalitarian regimes of discrediting those whom they are about to destroy that it seemed laughable to outsiders. It was not so funny, however, for thirty-six members of the British-Czechoslovak society, who were immediately arrested as alleged participants in the plot.

In the midst of this agitation, Gottwald went to see Benes. There in Hradcany Castle, high above the swarming city, the two men, in whom all the opposing forces of the crisis converged, stood face to face, the one representing Communism and Russia, the other democracy and the West. Gottwald, the Party man trained in Moscow, a hard drinker, hearty, fat, perspiring, big-voiced, and in the prime of life, faced Benes, the disciple of T. G. Masaryk, a lawyer trained in the capitals of western Europe, clever, mild mannered and frail, an aging statesman nearing the end of his career, who had already suffered two strokes and was soon to suffer the third and last.

Gottwald urged the President to accept the resignations of the twelve non-Communist ministers. He asserted vigorously, although without any apparent logical basis, that the ministers who had resigned had committed a most reprehensible and irresponsible act. He declared that they had thereby "excluded themselves from the National Front" and must be replaced by men "more favorably disposed to the People's Democracy and the Soviet Union." As a substitute for logic Gottwald repeated to the President what had been said in the Communist manifesto and in Nosek's "revelations." Somehow Gottwald managed to carry with him, into Benes's quiet office in the castle, the passion of the leader of mobs. That was always his intention. For it was through the medium of public pressure that he hoped to bring pressure upon the person of the President.

This first day of the crisis Benes stood firm in rejecting the Communists'

demands and insisting that all parties must be consulted on the formation of a new government. Gottwald had already prepared, and prepared well, his answer to the President.

That night he set the whole revolutionary apparatus of the Communist Party rolling into action. Its elements were, first, the police; second, the mob; third, the Action Committees; and fourth, the Workers' Militia.

The police, under Communist control ever since the end of the war, on this night occupied the radio station, the post office and most other important public buildings. Their role was to stand guard and see to it that no one interfered with the work of the Communist mob or the Action Committees. The mob was brought into town in trucks from industrial districts throughout Bohemia to represent "the people" and to take part in mammoth meetings scheduled for the next few days. The Action Committees were summoned to meet by Communist Party broadcasts over Prague radio during the night. They were to be formed in every village and town, in every factory, office, club or organization — in fact in every organized body in the nation — to express the "will of the people." Finally, under cover of darkness, the Workers' Militia drew its arms from secret caches throughout the country and massed in the suburbs of Prague and other cities, ready to intervene if needed. The Communists would depend on them in case of civil war.

The most original elements in this revolutionary apparatus were the Action Committees. This was the first time they had been mentioned publicly. They had no legal foundation. They had been secretly organized months earlier among men on whom the Communist Party could depend, some of them members of the Party, some not. In every organization they formed a fifth column.

Now they were to embark on the extraordinary task of taking control of every organization of which they formed a part. They were to move into the executive offices, announce that they represented all the "democratic elements" and to lay down the law. That is, they were to dismiss or demote any officials they deemed undesirable from the boss down to the office boy and decree any changes of policy they saw fit. It was thanks to them that the Communist revolution in Czechoslovakia, while not bloody, was very thorough.

February 21: The Communist mob which had been brought into the city massed in the old Town Hall Square to hear Gottwald. Gottwald, a little drunk as he often was on such occasions, gave them a vivid account

of the fairy story about the plot of the non-Communist ministers. He shouted that they must never return to office and the crowd roared back its approval in rhythmic, full-throated cheers. Youthful Communist "cheer-leaders" stationed at strategic points provided the approved slogans and kept things at fever pitch. The radio and the public address system echoed the shouting and the roaring throughout the city. It was a frightening affair for the citizens of Prague, but it was only the beginning.

After the meeting, a workers' delegation proceeded to the castle to see Benes. Once again it was part of the effort to bring the pressure of the mob to bear on the man whose decision would determine the future. Benes received a delegation of five who claimed to represent the workers of Prague, Kladno, and Pilsen. They submitted four demands: that the President accept the resignations, that the resigned ministers be replaced by representatives of popular mass organizations such as the trade unions, that Gottwald remain as premier and that the resigned ministers never return to governmental office.

Benes spoke to the workers graciously but firmly, emphasizing that the solution to the crisis, whatever it might be, would have to be found in accordance with the principles of parliamentary government. For that reason, he assured them, he would never agree to any exclusion of the Communists from the government. Gottwald would remain as premier, "but if you suggest that someone else should be excluded, that also is going too far." In other words he rejected their demand that the resigned ministers should be excluded from any future government.

February 22: This was Sunday, but there was no Sabbath calm. The streets of the city's center reverberated with marching feet and martial music. The marchers were on their way to the great exhibition hall for the meeting of factory "works councils" called by Antonin Zapotocky. News spread among them that Ambassador Zorin was in town and that Moscow radio was broadcasting 100 per cent support of the Communist cause.

Technically Zapotocky had had no right to call the meeting together since he was the trade-union chief and the "works councils" were the elected representatives of all factory workers, whether they were in trade unions or not, and regardless of party.

But that situation suited Communist purposes perfectly, for in general only those favorable to the Communists would respond or be given tickets to enter the exhibition hall and the Communists could still claim that they

were dealing with workers representing all shades of political opinion. The Communist press asserted that the 8000 delegates of "works councils" represented "the largest and most powerful workers' parliament the country has ever seen."

As the principal speaker before the meeting Gottwald repeated the now well-known Communist story. He declared that the twelve ministers had planned "to reinstate capitalism and pre-Munich conditions, to set up an anti-working class government and to undo the achievements of our revolution in postwar reconstruction . . . to bring back unemployment, hunger and truncheon charges."

Zapotocky followed up with a demand for further nationalization which would affect almost all enterprises with more than fifty workers and would completely upset the agreements on nationalization the Communists had made with other parties. Then resolutions confirming what Gottwald and Zapotocky had said were approved by a vote of 7990 to 10. Some people who were there maintain that there were considerably more votes against the resolution, but that they were not counted. Some of the "nays" were beaten up and thrown out of the hall. One wonders who they were and what has become of them.

Meanwhile, the police were arresting outstanding anti-Communists from all walks of life. Among the first to be taken were the two state prosecutors who had conducted the Ministry of Justice's investigation into the attempts to send explosive perfume boxes to Masaryk, Zenkl and Drtina.

In towns and villages the length and breadth of the country the Action Committees were now busy purging the ranks of businessmen and civil servants. The extraordinary and terrifying thing was that their technique almost always worked. There was no resistance. Proprietors excluded from the premises of their own property, civil servants dismissed in disregard of all rights of tenure, all silently acquiesced, defeated by a universal conviction that resistance was hopeless.

February 23: During the morning four ministers were prevented from entering their offices by Action Committees in their ministries. They were the Minister of Justice, Drtina; Minister of Education, Stransky; Minister of Transport, Pietor; and Minister of Posts and Telegraph, Monsignor Hala. Even though their resignations had not been accepted by Benes, the Committees ruled that the ministers could not go on using their offices. The ministers submitted because there seemed to be no alternative, and it would have been useless to appeal to the police.

A little later in the day the Communist Minister of the Interior, Vaclav Nosek, followed up his allegations that the parties of the resigned ministers were engaged in treasonable activities by sensationally "disclosing" that documents found in a district headquarters of the National Socialist Party had proven that the party had planned to seize Prague radio station and stage an armed revolt in co-operation with foreign powers. The police promptly occupied and searched the National Socialist headquarters in Prague and arrested the secretary general of the party, Vladimir Krajina, who had the distinction of having put the Ministry of Justice on the trail of the perpetrators of the perfume-box assassination attempt.

As the arrests of anti-Communists mounted in number, thousands began trying to escape the police terror by getting out of the country. Nosek at once issued an order requiring Czech citizens to have a special stamp put on their passport by his ministry before they might leave the country. But he could not prevent a great many from finding the back door. A stream of refugees began to cross the border illegally by every conceivable means. They hid in cars, or trains. They went on skis. They walked wearily through the mountains, dodging frontier patrols and bloodhounds.

Gottwald now felt victory near. Early in the afternoon, after he had reported to Benes on the alleged plot to overthrow the government, he told newspaper reporters: "My viewpoint and that of President Benes are now much closer." Nevertheless, when Benes a little later received the twelve ministers who had resigned he showed no external signs of weakening. There was a certain awkwardness since the ministers felt that the President should have consulted them sooner. Finally, Monsignor Sramek, the crusty, seventy-eight-year-old head of the Catholic People's Party, made a little speech which he concluded as follows: "Mister President, we are prepared to stand any pressure exerted by the Communists, but it is up to you to hold out and to defend the just and democratic attitude of the non-Communist parties."

Benes replied simply: "If you do not slip, I shall not."

Outside in the streets of the city, jittery crowds got thicker in the late February dusk. The Communist daily *Rude Pravo* distributed among them a special free edition composed of reprints of Russian newspaper articles. One of them from *Izvestia* asserted flatly that the 200 million people of the Soviet Union stood behind the heroic fight of the Czechoslovak Communist Party against "reactionaries."

Not quite all the crowd had as yet succumbed to Communist pressure, however. One large group gathered in front of the National Socialist Party

headquarters chanting: "Down with the Communist terror," and a group of National Socialist students followed by some 10,000 people marched up the hill to Hradcany to assure Benes of their loyalty and confidence. Little could these rash enthusiasts realize how few hours remained for freedom of assembly or of the press.

In Prague the nationalized paper mills announced that they would not supply paper to "opposition newspapers," while in Slovakia the printers' union ruled that its members would print nothing "against the interests of the workers."

February 24: Although technically Czechoslovakia still had a coalition government, effective governmental authority had now passed into the hands of a Central Action Committee of which Antonin Zapotocky, the trade-union leader, was chairman and Alexei Cepicka was secretary. The Action Committees' fifth-column operations had taken control of the life of the country at all levels.

Minister of the Interior Nosek gave an official touch to their authority by ordering local governmental bodies to follow instructions from local Action Committees. Zapotocky authorized the Action Committees to install "national managers" in those factories with more than fifty employees whose nationalization had been demanded at the meeting of "works councils" delegates two days earlier.

It now appeared that the Communist fifth column operated even in the ranks of the supposed opposition political parties. Between ten and twenty deputies in the National Socialist and People's Parties (among them some future cabinet ministers) announced that they would no longer submit to the elected leaders of their party but would support Gottwald in the formation of a new government. There was Alois Neuman of the National Socialist Party, the future Minister of Posts; Emanuel Slechta, of the National Socialist Party, the future Minister of Public Works; and Reverend Josef Plojhar of the Catholic People's Party, the unfrocked priest who became Minister of Health—all skilled band-wagon hoppers.

The most skilled band-wagon hoppers, to be sure, were the pro-Communists of the Social Democrat Party led by Zdenek Fierlinger (alias Quislinger). Ousted as chairman of the party in November, he found the moment opportune to invade the Social Democratic headquarters behind a screen of thugs who manhandled and ejected anti-Communists such as Vaclav Majer and President Benes's brother, Vojta. There was a little

wrestling in the hallways as Fierlinger's men forced their way in, but no serious fighting.

Almost simultaneously a combination of Action Committees and strong-arm squads took control of the Social Democratic, People's Party and National Socialist publishing and newspaper plants.

By now an almost continuous demonstration by Communist supporters was going on in the downtown streets of Prague. There were no counter-demonstrations except by a few students who tried spasmodically to compete with the Communists by marching up and down chanting "We want the Republic of Masaryk and Benes," and "Remember the seventeenth of November." That was the day in 1939 when the Nazis massacred the students opposing their dictatorship. One student's proclamation read as follows: "To defend means to be willing to fight even if we know that the result will be the same as in 1939."

There were many people who at this stage thought that a civil war might break out. Among those who entertained such fears was Dr. Josef Beran, Catholic Archbishop of Prague, who in the last edition of the Catholic press before the Communists took control issued an appeal for reason and conciliation. There had been times during the life of the Republic when relations between the Catholic Church and the state were strained. During the war the Vatican had not recognized the Czechoslovak government in exile, but had recognized the Tiso puppet government in Slovakia. Now, however, the Archbishop spoke up for the Republic, for Masaryk, the President-Liberator and for Benes, the President-Constructor. Archbishop Beran's statement read in part as follows:

> First, I swear to you by the dear blood shed by our fathers and sisters in concentration camps and prisons. For the sake of the tears and pains of Czech women and mothers, awaken! I know that you do not want to provoke fratricidal combat, but this is not the way to avoid it. Think of your responsibility!
>
> Second, maintain the law! All have agreed in principle with the program of socialization. All were working for its fulfillment, and are willing to go on doing so. On the basis of law you can achieve more lasting reforms, even the most radical ones. Read history and convince yourselves!
>
> Third, do not destroy the heritage of the President-Liberator and the work of the President-Constructor. We, ourselves, have called them by these names. Their work is recognized by the whole nation. They have worked and suffered for you and your descendants. You

have always had confidence in them. Ingratitude is painful, and ingratitude is punished by interdict!

There was, however, less need for fear of violence than Beran realized. The struggle was almost over.

February 25: There was no civil war. Benes saved many lives. But among those whom he saved there were many who did not want to be saved at such a price.

The day began with an exchange of letters between President Benes and Gottwald. Benes reiterated that the crisis must be solved on the basis of parliamentary democracy, that is, as he interpreted it, by inclusion of all parties in a coalition government.

"You know my sincerely democratic creed," he wrote. "I must stay faithful to that creed even at this moment because democracy, according to my belief, is the only reliable and durable basis for a decent and dignified human life.

"I insist on parliamentary democracy and parliamentary government as it limits democracy. I built my political work on these principles and cannot — without betraying myself — act otherwise."

He observed that it was clear to him that "socialism is a way of life desired by an overwhelming part of our nation." But he added that he also believed that "with socialism a certain measure of freedom and unity is possible, and these are vital principles to all in our national life.

"Our nation has struggled for freedom almost throughout its history. History also has shown where discord can lead.

"I beg of you, therefore, to make these facts the starting point in our negotiations. Let us all together begin negotiations again."

Poor Benes. Almost at the end of the road, he still imagined that there could be a new beginning.

Gottwald replied by refusing once again to negotiate with the representatives of the three parties whose ministers had resigned. He repeated the old charges against them. But he had a new idea, an ingenious counterproposal which, at least in form, met Benes's insistence on the inclusion of all parties. At the same time the counterproposal would utterly defeat the President's intentions and would establish a Communist dictatorship. In short, it was a trick. Gottwald proposed to form a government with representatives of all parties. But the ministers would neither be selected by nor approved by the headquarters of the parties they ostensibly repre-

sented. They would be picked and approved by Gottwald. They would represent the fifth column which the Communists had so carefully built up in the ranks of their political opponents.

Gottwald justified this procedure by asserting that in consequence of the plot in which they had allegedly taken part, the old leaders of the three parties were no longer qualified to lead, were no longer representative, and had in fact aroused indignation among their own followers. "The members demand a rebirth of their own parties and of the National Front," Gottwald wrote sanctimoniously.

Early in the afternoon a group of anti-Communist students, variously estimated at anywhere from 1500 to 5000, tried to march up the hill through the narrow streets of the old city to Hradcany Castle to give Benes moral support. At a point in the Mala Strana district where the streets are particularly narrow, the students met the police. The marching column halted. Then the police came swarming out of the side streets and broke up the column with rifle butts. Most of the students fled, but some stood their ground and at least one was shot. He was taken to a hospital with a bullet in his stomach. One group of students got to the top of the hill, very near the castle, opposite the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but it is unlikely that Benes ever knew that the demonstration had taken place. This was the largest anti-Communist demonstration of the whole crisis and the only occasion, so far as I know, when there was any violence.

After reading Gottwald's new proposal for the formation of a government Benes invited him to come to the castle, and Gottwald left a mass meeting of 100,000 workers in Wenceslas Square to keep the appointment.

Friends who prefer not to be quoted have described to me the scene in Benes's office. Benes stood by the window looking down at the city. All the pressure of the mob, the Communist police, the Action Committees and the Workers' Militia — all the pressure of the Soviet Union that stood behind the Communist Party — seemed to bear down on his frail and aging shoulders. He turned to Gottwald, the man who represented this great revolutionary apparatus, and listened quietly while Gottwald, with growing violence of speech, went through all the old arguments and developed his tricky new proposal.

Gottwald walked back and forth, perspiring and gesticulating, while Benes again turned to the window and looked down at the city. No one knows what went on in his mind. Perhaps he realized that his fight was really already lost and that the Communists were already in physical control of the country. Still, there were things he might do. He could

go to the radio. He had promised several times that he would explain the situation to the country. No one would dare to prevent him from speaking if he chose to. Or he could now resign. That would, in itself, be an explanation. The country would understand it as a protest against the pressure exerted by the Communists. Or he could appeal to the army. The Communists had already gotten rid of many of the officers who had been in England and France, but there were still a great many on whom he could depend. Any one of these solutions might lead to civil war.

Gottwald talked and Benes thought. Suddenly Benes interrupted: "You are talking to me like Hitler," he said, wearily. Then he yielded. Benes accepted the resignations of the ministers and approved a new government list presented by Gottwald. Gottwald glowed. He bade the President farewell and raced to his waiting limousine. He rushed back to Wenceslas Square and announced his triumph to the howling mob.

CHAPTER 12 Aftermath—the Death of Jan Masaryk and of Eduard Benes

DURING the weeks that followed the Communist coup it was common to see bits of black burned paper floating from chimneys into the streets. People were burning private papers and books the way they had when the Nazis marched in. It was a period of apprehension when no one knew whether or not his friend might be working with one of the Action Committees. Again, as after Munich, there was a widespread feeling that Czechoslovakia had been betrayed by the West. And yet so much had happened in such a short time that a great many people did not fully grasp what a fundamental change had taken place. There was a good deal of wishful thinking that the new government would be like any other.

But the people of Czechoslovakia were soon to learn otherwise, as purge followed purge and decree followed decree, imposing revolutionary changes from which there was no escape. Ambassador Valerian Alexandrovitch Zorin, his work well done, departed for Moscow on February 28. The peasants, who had been called together by the Communists for a huge mass meeting in Prague on February 29, were no longer needed, and after a minimum of oratorical fireworks, they were packed off home again.

Having won control of the government with their triumph of February 25, the Communists' main concern now was to reinforce their grip on the country and to begin its transformation on the Soviet model. They set about expanding the work begun by the Action Committees during the crisis. Some foreign newspapermen who kept inquiring as to the legal basis for the operations of the Action Committees, were informed by the Minister of Social Welfare, Evzan Erban, at a government press conference as follows: "The Action Committees reflect the will of the people. The constitution made the will of the people decisive and therefore the Action Committees are perfectly legal."

This scarcely satisfied anyone except Mr. Erban, but that did not delay the purge. In the first six weeks after the coup, according to official figures, 2500 civil servants and 5800 employees of nationalized and private firms were dismissed. Many of these people were directed by the Labor Exchange to work in mines or on construction jobs. In addition, many were retired or demoted. Not a few were arrested.

Things moved rapidly in every sphere. Minister of Education Nejedly, for instance, had pictures of Stalin hung in schoolrooms and began a careful purge of schoolteachers. At the university, Action Committees removed the director of the law faculty, Karel Englis, and fifty professors of the philosophy faculty. In addition, they suspended eleven professors and two assistants at the technical and agricultural school, expelled thirty-two students of the law faculty and suspended others.

Lest the will of the people be exposed to improper influence, the Minister of Information on February 27 banned a long list of foreign publications including the *Chicago Tribune, Time, Life,* the *London Daily Herald,* the *London Daily Mail* and eight Paris newspapers. The ministry closed down six politically undesirable Czech-language magazines, while the journalists' federation expelled twenty-five Czech editors and about one hundred and fifty journalists. Similar purges were begun in all other professional groups.

Meanwhile the Communist Party was carrying on a determined membership drive. It announced soon after the coup that it had 1,400,000 members and was aiming at 2,000,000. Declaring that its ranks were now open to every honest Czech and Slovak, the Communist Party staged a "Gottwald Week," during which members of the Communist Party undertook to visit every non-Communist in the country. An avalanche of applications for membership followed.

There were those who joined the Party out of fear, those who joined for opportunistic reasons, those who joined cynically and those who joined with the intention of eventually working against it from inside. In any event, the people joined. If they needed an excuse for doing so, they had it in the fact that their leaders had not resisted the Communists. President Benes, the idol of the Republic, had accepted the new regime.

Jan Masaryk, the Foreign Minister, had agreed to serve in the government and he was, after Benes, the most popular man in the country. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that the people loved the genial, fun-loving, moody Jan Masaryk as they respected the more intellectual Benes. No one else — certainly none of the Communists — had

such a way of enchanting the Czech crowd, moving them to tears and to gales of laughter.

But then, on March 10, something happened that made almost all the Czechs and Slovaks realize that the Communists had done something dreadful to their country. Jan Masaryk committed suicide or was murdered.

He was found on the cobblestones beneath the windows of the bathroom in his suite in the foreign ministry, the Czernin Palace, at six in the morning. It will probably never be known whether he jumped or was thrown from that window. Although anti-Communists at the time believed that he had surely been murdered, many of his closest friends, such as Bruce Lockhart, the British diplomat and writer, have since then come to the conclusion that he killed himself.

Whatever the truth may have been, the news of his death plunged the city into an extraordinary demonstration of grief. Prague was a city filled with tears. Few people had anything but a grimace of distaste for the Communist version of his death which was announced after several hours of hesitation. This was that he had killed himself after realizing the perfidy of his Western friends who had sent him hundreds of letters and telegrams of censure after he had agreed to take part in Gottwald's new government.

The evidence that he may have been murdered consists largely of the presumption that the Communists must have realized that, sooner or later, he would escape and fight against them. And of all the anti-Communist leaders he would have been their most formidable opponent. Therefore, it is thought, the Communists determined to do away with him while he was still their prisoner and was at least outwardly co-operating with them.

There is also the suspicious fact that the police doctor who examined Masaryk and asserted that he had committed suicide, was himself found dead in his office a few weeks later. He, too, was pronounced a suicide. It has also been pointed out that it would have been difficult for so bulky a man as Jan Masaryk to have climbed to the window from which he was said to have thrown himself.

To understand why Jan Masaryk may have killed himself, one must know something about him, and it is worth taking time out to tell his story. For much of this material I am indebted to the intimate personal memoirs about Jan Masaryk written by R. H. Bruce Lockhart.

* * *

Jan Masaryk was dominated, first, by his loyalty to his great and austere father, Thomas Garrigue Masaryk, and later, to Eduard Benes. To their needs he subordinated all his talents, which were an astonishing combination of the romantic Slav, of the hustling American and the polished British diplomat.

As a young man he went to the United States, and had a hard time making his way until he got a job in Chicago from Charles Crane whose son, Richard, later became the first American minister to the Czechoslovak Republic. Returning to Czechoslovakia just before the war, he was mobilized in a Hungarian regiment of the Austro-Hungarian empire and spent the war as a real-life "Good Soldier Schweik," pulling the wool over the eyes of his Austrian and Hungarian superiors.

After the war he spent a period in Washington and was then sent by Benes to London as Czechoslovak minister. Here he came to love the English with a Slavic lack of restraint and an American enthusiasm. He delighted his fellow diplomats with his originality, his ability always to say the right thing at the right time, and the sentimental Slovak tunes he liked to play on the piano at the end of a party when the stuffed shirts had gone home. But he was still practically unknown in his own country where he had the reputation of being something of a playboy protected by his eminent father.

He did not become well known to his own people until he became the voice on the BBC program "London Calling" during the Second World War, when he and Benes were exiled together in London. Then all his talents combined to make him probably the most effective Allied radio speaker of the war. With all of his generous heart he told the Czechs and Slovaks about heroic Britain during the period when Britain was fighting alone, and he did all that could humanly be done to make them forgive Britain and France for the betrayal of Munich.

But he did more than this. Following his father's injunction to work with Benes, he guided Benes in his often difficult relations with the British and Americans, while at the same time bowing to what he thought was Benes's superior intellect. He did, however, question Benes's judgment about Soviet Russia. While recognizing that his country's safety depended upon good relations between the West and the U.S.S.R., he could not bring himself to trust or like the Soviets and their more obvious lackeys such as Zdenek Fierlinger and the group of Moscow Communists.

Masaryk suffered from great personal sorrows. The first great blow came when his wife, Richard Crane's sister, left him shortly before the

war. He had had no children and hoped that his sister's two sons would choose to carry on the name of Masaryk. But one of them was killed during the war and the other died of tuberculosis in 1945. It was during this period, just before the end of the war, that President Benes one day expressed the fear that Jan Masaryk might lose his mind.

As foreign minister of the post-World War II Republic, Masaryk fought valiantly to keep his country free. Always he denied angrily, and more and more in defiance of the facts, that Czechoslovakia was behind the Iron Curtain. But after he had been to Moscow in July 1947, and had heard Stalin order Czechoslovakia not to participate in the Marshall Plan, he told Lockhart bitterly, "I went to Moscow as the foreign minister of an independent state; I returned as a lackey of the Soviet government." Still he could not make up his mind to break with the regime. More and more he was a man living on his nerves, sleeping little and badly and covering his desperate state of mind with an unfailing flow of jokes and repartee.

Returning to Prague from the last U.N. session that he attended at the end of 1947, he stopped in London, perhaps to try to explain to some of his old friends why he had to submit to Soviet orders in international affairs. He had had offers to stay in the United States, and he could easily have stayed in Britain, but he told Bruce Lockhart: "You can leave your country twice, or as many times as you have the strength to fight. You can't do it to fight your own countrymen." That is perhaps a key to what happened later.

Jan Masaryk felt that it was his duty to stay with his people and do what he could for them. In particular he felt it his duty to stay with Benes. He may have been wrong, but his motives were high. So it was that he agreed after the Communist coup to enter the new government. So full of good will himself, he could not imagine how grim an affair he was getting into and believed that he could put the brakes on the new regime.

Nine days after the coup Jan Masaryk had occasion to drive to Benes's country residence at Sezimovo Usti. He found Benes, his father's trusted friend, the man he had served all his life, a wreck physically and spiritually. He could see that Benes's part was finished. Yet Benes said to him: "I had to bear the brunt of Munich when you were abroad. Now that I am old and ill you must stay and help me and the country."

The next day, March 7, was the anniversary of the birth of Thomas Garrigue Masaryk, Jan's father. Because of the false role into which he

had allowed himself to be drawn, Jan Masaryk was obliged that day to receive from the Communists an *in memoriam* decoration and to listen to them say that if T. G. Masaryk had lived he would have supported the new regime. That evening he went alone to visit his father's grave at Lany. No one can know what he thought as he stood there in the dark cemetery, but it may be that he then made his final decision. It may be that this decision seemed to him the only one that could wipe his slate clean of the errors he had committed since the end of the war, and the more profound errors he had committed since February 25 — the only decision that could bring home the truth to the Czech people, the truth about the new regime.

The day before, he had sent out to London his very old and close friend, Miss Marcia Davenport, an American novelist who had been with him throughout the grim days of the crisis. She had brought with her a message from Jan to Bruce Lockhart and to the head of the British Foreign Office, Sir Orme Sargent. The message was, as Lockhart reports in his memoirs, that Jan intended to escape at some international conference, that the resignation of the twelve non-Communist ministers had been a desperate mistake, and that the situation was even worse than it looked from the outside.

Obviously Jan Masaryk was torn between his desire to escape and fight the Communists from the outside, his hesitation to fight against his own people and his loyalty to Benes, and a sense that grave errors, including his own, had created a hopeless situation.

Jan Masaryk's body lay in state at the Czernin Palace all day on March 12, and 200,000 people stood in line in loops within loops from the palace to Hradcany Castle and down the hill to the river to pay their last respects. If this great crowd was aware of the mistakes into which Masaryk had been drawn, they now forgave him and remembered only his jokes, his kindness and his courage, for all of which they had loved him. As on the day that his death was announced, Prague was again a city filled with tears, that extraordinarily disturbing public weeping which is difficult for an Anglo-Saxon to understand. Men began to weep suddenly, uncontrollably, convulsively and unashamedly. So much had been lost in so short a time. Now they realized it. In Jan Masaryk the Czechoslovak people said good-by not only to the son but to the father and to the Republic he had founded and all that it had meant to them. This was the end.

The great demonstration of popular affection for the leading anti-

Communist personality in the country was deeply disturbing to the Communists. They immediately turned their attention to the remains of the non-Communist political parties, apparently fearing that they might yet prove the nucleus for some form of resistance. The secretary general of the Communist Party, Rudolf Slansky, assisted by a group of stooges drawn from each of the other parties, carried out a purge of party leaders. Thirty National Socialists and twelve People's Party deputies were read out of their parties in the first few days. Seventy-eight out of the three hundred deputies were excluded from parliament by the simple procedure of not authorizing them to sign a loyalty pledge to the new regime.

Some of the anti-Communist leaders escaped from the country and others were arrested. Among those who got away were the doughty anti-Communist, Vaclav Majer of the Social Democrat Party; the chairman of the National Socialist Party, Dr. Petr Zenkl; and the Minister of Trade, Hubert Ripka, another of the leaders of the National Socialist Party.

Two leaders who did not get away and are still living in Czechoslovakia were Monsignor Sramek, and Dr. Drtina. Monsignor Sramek, seventy-eight-year-old chairman of the People's Party, tried to save his organization from humiliation by declaring it dissolved and then attempted to flee the country. But he was caught as he was boarding a plane and was thrown into prison. Soon thereafter Sramek was allowed to enter a monastery where he is interned. Dr. Drtina, the former Minister of Justice, was found on the sidewalk in front of his house, unconscious and bleeding from severe head wounds, two days after the coup. The Communists said he had attempted to commit suicide by jumping from a window of his house. Perhaps so. There was reason enough for suicidal impulses. But many people believed that the Communists had tried to murder him. They had tried to kill him once before in the affair of the explosive perfume boxes, and they hated him heartily for the determination with which he had tracked down the Communist perpetrators of the assassination attempt. The police took Drtina to a hospital and have kept him in prison ever since, so that he has never had an opportunity to tell the truth about his defenestration.

The annihilation of the opposition parties was symbolized by the fact that a few weeks after the coup, the two strongest ones were obliged, on Communist advice, to change their names. The National Socialists became the Czech Socialist Party and the Slovak Democrats renamed the remnants of their party People's Union.

But the Communists were still a little worried that the parliamentary

elections due in May might reveal a spark of opposition. Having staged a *coup d'état* to avoid any expression of the democratic will of the people, they had no intention of allowing themselves to be frustrated by a mere election. In April, therefore, the puppets who had been installed as chairmen of all political parties agreed that the parliamentary election of May 28 should be held with a single list of candidates. This meant that instead of each party putting up its candidates separately, the election committees in each electoral district nominated candidates from each of the parties or from the so-called "mass organizations," such as the Prague Unions, the Society of Former Partisans, the League of Peasants (Communist Action Committee members, of course), and the Former Political Prisoners. The Central Action Committee endorsed these candidates. All the voter could do was to approve the list, or disapprove it by casting a blank ballot with a thickly printed "X" on both sides. The results of such an election were, of course, a foregone conclusion, and amounted only to a Communist demonstration. From that point of view some of the details of the election are worth noting.

There was no propaganda for those who might oppose the list, but bulletin boards throughout the country were covered with placards declaring that a vote of disapproval was a vote for "Hitler Germany." The main slogan read: "He who casts a blank ballot votes for the return of the Nazis to Czechoslovakia."

When it came to the actual voting the voters found that almost everywhere the screens which were to secure secrecy had been taken away or moved to make possible what the Communists called a "demonstrative" casting of votes. In some places the screens were so placed against windows that they were in effect transparent and the voters' actions could be observed. The envelopes were slightly transparent anyhow and so when the voter came out from behind the screen it could easily be seen whether the envelope contained a closely printed list of candidates or a blank with a thickly printed "X" on both sides.

But even these tricks and pressures could not secure the government a 90 per cent or better victory in the true Hitler-Stalin pattern. It was necessary to falsify the counting. There were some small places where the people conferred afterwards to see how they had voted and found that although almost all had voted against the Communists the official results were still 80 to 90 per cent for them.

The night after the election, a Czech of my acquaintance telephoned to one of the editors on the editorial staff of the Communist daily, *Rude*

Pravo, to ask how the results were shaping up. The editor proved to be a little drunk and replied, perhaps with unintended honesty: "They are not too good yet. We must wait until they are recounted and put right." The official results were these: of the total of 7,199,000 valid votes, 89.3 per cent were in support of the government, while the rest were blank ballots indicating opposition.

After the election, on June 27, the Social Democratic Party was merged with the Communist Party. It was one of a series of mergers of political, sports and social organizations with their Communist counterparts, all of which went almost unnoticed, for it was assumed by now that the only organizations that counted in Czechoslovakia were the Communist ones.

The final phase of the aftermath of the coup is the story of Benes's last days. On February 27 he received the new cabinet at Hradcany Castle for the swearing-in ceremony. It was quite an odd assembly: quislings, like the unfrocked priest Plojhar, who had become ministers by betraying their party leaders, loyal party men like Masaryk who had been drawn into the regime for varied motives, some Social Democrats who could hardly be considered independent from the Communists, and twelve members of the Communist Party.

The full list was as follows:

Prime Minister	Klement Gottwald	Communist
Deputy Prime Minister	Antonin Zapotocky	Communist
Deputy Prime Minister	Bohumil Lausman	Social Democrat
Deputy Prime Minister	Viliam Siroky	Slovak Communist
Foreign Affairs	Jan Masaryk	nonparty
National Defense	General Ludvik Svoboda	nonparty
Foreign Trade	Dr. Antonin Gregor	Communist
Interior	Vaclav Nosek	Communist
Finance	Dr. Jaromir Dolansky	Communist
Education	Dr. Zdenek Nejedly	Communist
Information	Vaclav Kopecky	Communist
Industry	Zdenek Fierlinger	Social Democrat
Agriculture	Julius Duris	Slovak Communist
Internal Trade	Frantisek Krajcir	Communist
Transport	Alois Petr	People's Party
Public Works	Dr. Emanuel Slechta	National Socialist
Posts	Dr. Alois Neuman	National Socialist
Social Welfare	Evzan Erban	Social Democrat
Health	Reverend Josef Plojhar	People's Party

Justice	Dr. Alexei Cepicka	Communist
Food	Ludmila Jankovcova	Social Democrat
Unification of Laws	Dr. Vavro Srobar	Slovak Freedom Party
Undersecretary Foreign Affairs	Dr. Vladimir Clementis	Communist
Undersecretary Defense	Dr. Jan Sevcik	Slovak Democrat

Addressing Gottwald, Benes said: "You have rightly stated, Mr. Premier, that it was for me not an easy decision to make; indeed, as you have said yourself, it was for me personally very difficult.

"I have given long and earnest thought to the crisis and I have come to the conclusion that your proposal should be accepted. You know how long we discussed this matter and considered the ways of dealing with it. But I realize that unless I accept your proposal the crisis would go still deeper and could even lead to such a rift in the nation as would end in general chaos. The state must be led and administered. You want to conduct the affairs of state in a new way and according to the new form of democracy. I should like to wish you, the nation and the state, that this way may prove a happy one for all."

In the afternoon Benes ordered the presidential flag taken down from the castle and he departed for his country home. He authorized this announcement: "The President of the Republic, Dr. Eduard Benes, and Madame Hana Benes, retired from the castle of Prague on Friday, February 27 and departed at 15:23 P.M. for their private home at Sezimovo Usti." He never returned to the castle, and came back to Prague only once, to hear the funeral orations for Jan Masaryk.

Eduard Benes was now failing fast. He could no longer do a full day's work. He suffered from lapses of memory. And on June 7, after allowing Gottwald to dissuade him twice from doing so, he resigned. He resigned technically in protest against the new Communist-inspired constitution which was brought to him for signature, and in a larger sense he resigned in protest against the Communist *coup d'état*. But it was too late, far too late.

On September 3, 1948, Eduard Benes, the President-Constructor, died of arteriosclerosis of the brain, and once again the hundreds of thousands stood all day, in loops within loops, weeping and waiting to pay their last respects. The people forgave Benes his mistakes and his weakness in the hour when they needed him most; and they made his name a symbol of the Republic they had valued so highly and which the Communists had destroyed.

CHAPTER 13 Lessons of the Coup d'État

THERE are several interrelated aspects to the lessons of the coup. There is the question of whose fault it was that the Czechoslovak Republic, victim of the Nazis in 1938, went under again in 1948. Twice without a fight. Closely connected are the questions of how the Communists did it — their technique in Czech internal affairs and in international power politics. Finally there is the question of whether the Communists can repeat what they did in Czechoslovakia in other parts of the Western world.

As the people of Czechoslovakia began to realize that the Communist coup had made them prisoners in an enemy camp as surely as if they had been conquered by an invading army, the old bitter questions they had asked after Munich were asked again. Whose fault? Was Benes to blame? Or the leaders of the non-Communist political parties? Were Czechoslovakia's friends in the West to blame? Were there some little-understood weaknesses in Czechoslovak democracy? In Western democracy?

The leaders of the non-Communist parties blame Benes, and Benes's partisans blame the leaders of the democratic parties.

The head of the National Socialist Party, Petr Zenkl, whom I met in Boston, Massachusetts, in November 1950, gave me the parties' explanation of why they undertook no public demonstrations against the Communists nor resistance during the crisis: "We were waiting for Benes to make a move," he said. "The people believed that as long as Benes was in office, all was well and that any demonstration, let alone violence, would be directed against the venerated chief of state. Our hands were bound as long as there was no overt gesture from him. Had he resigned demonstratively at the height of the crisis, our hands would have been freed. Or he might have appealed directly to the nation or called upon the army."

Zenkl maintained, furthermore, that the leaders of the non-Communist

parties had consulted Benes about their plan to resign and that he had agreed not to accept their resignations until a satisfactory solution could be worked out.

Quite different is the story told by Benes's partisans such as Jaromir Smutny, Benes's last *chef de cabinet,* whom I met in London in July 1950. "There was no previous arrangement with the party leaders," he insisted. "I took the telephone call announcing the resignations myself and told Benes; he was completely surprised. Of course the resignations were a terrible tactical error. Above all, it was a mistake for the three parties' ministers to resign without agreement with the Social Democrats and Masaryk. If the Social Democrats or Masaryk had been included in the resignations, the whole aspect of the situation would have been changed. But without them, it was folly.

"Benes realized that the resignations created a most serious situation but he was confident that he had the support of the majority of the people, and believed that if the need arose they would, with the leadership of the political parties, stage a popular manifestation. The disconcerting thing was, however, that day after day went by and no party brought a single man into the street for a counterdemonstration against the Communists.

"Benes himself thought of resigning. But he realized that although his resignation would cause some popular ferment this would not be enough. Nothing had been prepared. After their resignation we heard nothing from the ministers. Opposition to the Communists had no leadership — no inspiration."

So we see that the principal non-Communist elements blame each other. I have rarely met a Czech refugee who did not blame Benes or the party leaders or both for not resisting. But let us examine this problem of resistance more closely. This has been for many years an anguishing spiritual and moral problem for the Czechs. Arrogant foreigners often deeply wound them by ignorantly pointing the finger of scorn because they have twice succumbed without fighting.

As I have already reported, during the crisis of February 1948, one of the groups of students which dared to demonstrate against the Communists carried a banner reading: "To defend means to be willing to fight even though we know the result will be the same as in 1939." This was their way of stating one view of the problem — the view of those who say that there are times in the lives of nations as in the lives of individuals when it is better to fight against overwhelming odds than to surrender. This is the heroic moral thesis, and surely a valid one.

The fact is that the Czech people were ready to fight against overwhelming odds in 1938, according to most accounts of journalists and others who traveled through the country at the time. But President Benes and his government bowed to France and Britain, who insisted that Czechoslovakia should not fight. Benes imposed this decision on his reluctant people because he knew how woefully unprepared to fight were Czechoslovakia's Western allies. And although the Communists now blame him for not seeking Soviet assistance, his hesitation seems amply justified in the light of the Soviet-Nazi pact of 1939 and the ensuing period during which the Communists in Czechoslovakia did everything in their power to prevent resistance to the Nazis.

If Benes had, on the contrary, led his people into battle in 1938, the Czechs and Slovaks might have won a glorious reputation for heroism, but they would have been utterly crushed amidst enormous slaughter. A great many Czechs and Slovaks who later escaped and fought effectively against the Nazis in the ranks of Allied armies would have been trapped by the swift arrival of German troops in Prague. Benes decided therefore, for the first time, that the wise thing for the Czechoslovak nation would be to restrain heroic instincts and so to live to fight another day.

In 1948 Czechoslovakia again faced overwhelming odds. This time they were presented not by a German Army but by the Red Russian Army which stood on the country's borders backing up the Communist fifth column.

It is easy to say that Benes and the party leaders should have resisted the Communist fifth column even to the point of precipitating a civil war, to say that the army would have supported Benes and that the anti-Communists would have prevailed. This is probably true so far as forces inside Czechoslovakia are concerned, but it leaves out of consideration the threat of Red Army intervention.

I often hear it said that, if Benes and the party leaders had been as tough as the leaders of Finland, they could have defeated the fifth column, and the Red Army would still not have marched in. A little more nerve and Czechoslovakia would have won as much freedom as is enjoyed by Finland. But neither Benes nor anyone else in Czechoslovakia had any such assurance in February 1948. On the contrary, the Soviet Russian Deputy Foreign Minister, Zorin, was in Prague dropping hints that the Red Army might very well back up the Communist Party. There were rumors, probably spread by the Communists, that five Soviet Russian

divisions had been prepared for the occupation of Czechoslovakia and Czechs who studied the map could easily believe that this was true. Economically and geographically Czechoslovakia was far more important to Soviet Russia than was Finland. Soviet Russia needed the machinery and the manufactured goods that the Czechs could offer, while for the Red Army a servile Czechoslovakia, occupying the center of the European front, represented an invaluable bridgehead for attack against the West or a buffer for defense. At that time, furthermore, the men in the Kremlin knew that Tito was getting unmanageable and were in no mood to allow Czechoslovakia, too, to slip out of their grasp.

Neither Benes nor anyone else in Czechoslovakia could possibly be sure that the Red Army would not move in, but they were sure that they could get no help from the West. They did not need any high-powered military intelligence to know that. France and Britain had disarmed and American military power in Europe was represented by only a little more than the constabulary in the American zone in Germany. In addition, lest they have any illusions, American Ambassador Steinhardt had warned both party leaders and government representatives that the United States would not and could not intervene in case of a showdown.

The actions, or lack of action, of anti-Communist Czechs in February 1948, must furthermore be evaluated against the larger background. Munich had destroyed many Czechs' faith in the West. The sabotage of the rebirth of the Republic at Teheran, when Churchill and Roosevelt agreed that Czechoslovakia should be in the Soviet military sphere, had resulted in Western inability to aid the Slovak rising or take part in the liberation of Prague, and had condemned Czechoslovakia to the shattering experience of liberation by the Red Army. All this had served further to demoralize the friends of the West in Czechoslovakia. In the next couple of years Jan Masaryk and others tried over and over again to get a big loan which would reinforce Western influence in Prague; but they met only misunderstanding in Washington until the time the Marshall Plan was launched, and then it was too late.

These are the reasons why the friends of the West in Czechoslovakia felt isolated and abandoned and psychologically surrounded by the Soviet Union in February 1948. They created the moral atmosphere in which Benes for the second time put aside the heroic thesis of resistance and decided that the wise thing would be to bow to the Communists, while hoping that his people would find another day and perhaps another way to fight them.

Viewed in this light, I think that one may say that while Benes and the political parties must bear their share of responsibility, neither they nor any other part of the Czechoslovak nation can be saddled with the full blame for the lack of resistance to the Communists.

Benes can be blamed mainly for misjudging the Communists and Soviet Russia. He misjudged them perhaps because he lacked the strength of character and the deep insight of his master, T. G. Masaryk. His errors of judgment were not the kind that would have been made by the man who founded the Republic on austere ethics and cultural, political and economic affinity to the West. In contrast thereto, Benes tried to revive the Republic on a formula of mechanical balance between the forces of East and West. In place of moral conviction he placed agility in compromise; in place of wisdom, cleverness. An Englishman once called Benes "the political mathematician." But Benes, the mathematician, tried to square the circle.

In fairness I must add, however, that even this much criticism may be unjustified. It may be that Benes's decision and the inactivity of the parties in 1948 more or less unconsciously expressed a very small nation's formula for survival. I will come back to this in the chapter on Czech resistance to the Nazis and the Communists.

I believe that the gravest responsibility for what happened in Czechoslovakia in 1938 and again in 1948 lies with the Western powers and their weakness. The big and sure lesson of the coup, then, is that the West must keep strong and ready to fight if it is to survive and protect all parts of the Western world, even those parts which, like Czechoslovakia, are most exposed.

Thanks to the general pressure exerted by the balance, or rather the unbalance, of international power, the technique by which the Communists actually staged the *coup d'état* became possible and effective. There are lessons here for us. Having already told the story of what happened, I will try to describe the essentials of the technique.

Preparations for the seizure of power consisted very largely of Communist infiltration into positions of influence:

1. At the very beginning, in the first postwar government, Communists won key cabinet posts including the Ministry of the Interior with its control of the police, the Ministry of Information with its control of the radio and influence over the press, the Ministry of Agriculture with its influence over the peasants and land redistribution. Most vital for the Communists' purposes was the Ministry of the Interior. Little by little

they purged the police force and made it an instrument of the Communist Party.

2. The Communists won control of the National Committees, the bodies controlling administration on local, district and regional levels. Most of the chairmen were appointed at the time when the Red Army marched in and the Communists also took care to win control of such influential departments as those controlling allocations of housing.

3. The Communists won control of popular mass organizations such as trade unions, women's federations, youth groups, peasants' committees and former political prisoners' associations. Their most significant conquest was in the national trade union organization. By supporting many good and popular causes and by assiduous activity, they wormed their way into secretaryships and chairmanships that gave them control with the sole intention of turning the good causes and the strength of the organizations to Communist purposes. By a show of reasonableness they deluded their associates into believing that they were quite willing to take their place in a democratic scheme of things. In some cases they operated in complete disguise — as when they infiltrated and subverted opposition political parties.

4. In politics the Communists insisted with feigned patriotism on a National Front including all political parties. Within the front, with their usual assiduity, they sought out and won the controlling positions. At the same time they struggled to draw the Social Democratic Party into the Communist orbit in the name of "working class unity."

5. By legislation the Communists progressively weakened their "class enemies" — the bourgeoisie. Progressive measures of nationalization and increasing tax burdens sapped the strength of the bourgeoisie or middle class. And it might be noted here that certain parts of the bourgeoisie, notably the big land owners and the big industrialists, had destroyed their own claims to leadership in the nation by positive co-operation with the Nazis during the war. This was one of the factors that made it difficult for the non-Marxist parties to oppose nationalization.

When it came to the actual *coup d'état* a variety of elements went into action.

1. Action Committees went into operation in organizations of every type — clubs, political parties, government offices, business houses, factories, and so on. Claiming to represent "all democratic elements," they took control — made new policies for their organizations, hired and fired.

Secretly organized many months in advance, the Action Committees were composed of people who, while not necessarily members of the Communist Party, could be depended upon to act as agents of the Party. Their effectiveness, of course, depended upon the demoralization of anti-Communist elements brought about by the long-term infiltration already mentioned.

2. The trade unions and the Communist Party secretaries brought a huge mob into the center of Prague. In many cases the trade unions in industrial towns around Prague simply closed down factories for the day and sent the men off in trucks. Communist orators did the rest. The sight of the vast throng, marching through the streets, crowding and bellowing in the squares, was terrifying to the anti-Communists who had no similar machinery for staging demonstrations.

3. The role of the police was to stand guard to see that no one interfered with the operations of the Action Committees or the mob. Only occasionally did the police find it necessary to intervene directly.

4. The workers' militia, which had been organized soon after the war to guard factories against German sabotage and had since then fallen entirely under Communist sway, acted as the Party's paramilitary organization. During the crisis the militia was mobilized all over the country, received arms from secret caches and stood ready to intervene in case real disturbances developed. Probably they would not have been much use against the army, most of which was still loyal to Benes, but they were never put to the test.

5. Meanwhile all the organs of Communist propaganda were turned loose. The big theme of the Communist-controlled radio station and the Communist press was that behind the Communist Party stood the vast might of the Soviet Union and the Red Army. All listeners and readers were to understand that if things did not go as the Communists desired, the Red Army might intervene.

6. The former Soviet Ambassador to Prague, Deputy Foreign Minister Valerian Alexandrovitch Zorin, who had come to Prague ostensibly to supervise grain deliveries, implanted similar fears of Red Army intervention in the minds of non-Communist leaders and undoubtedly provided the Communist Party with guidance.

The obvious question that arises is this: What could the non-Communists have done to oppose the technique of the Communist *coup d'état?* I have said that the pressure of international power politics on Czech

domestic affairs really made the position of the non-Communists hopeless from the start, so that the answer to the question must necessarily be highly speculative. If one leaves aside the international factor, however, this much can be said:

1. The anti-Communists should have united, at least for the purpose of organizing opposition to the Communists. The short-sightedness with which the leaders of the party factions — Catholics, agrarians, lower middle-class supporters of Benes's party and socialist workers — put their mutual rivalries ahead of the fight against the Communists showed them to be men of little stature.

2. The non-Marxist parties should have bent every effort towards bringing the Social Democrats into the anti-Communist fold and keeping them there. Without them, the anti-Communists were practically without working-class support, for Benes's National Socialist Party touched only the fringe of the workers. Without a substantial segment of workers the anti-Communist combination was a very imperfect political combination, for democracy means *all* the people if it means anything at all. That was demonstrated by the history of the Czech Hussites who rose to greatness when they enlisted the support of all the classes of that time — the nobility, the rising Czech bourgeoisie, the artisans and the peasants — but who declined and fell victim to the Hapsburgs when the nobility became feudalistic, the bourgeoisie oligarchic, and when the artisans and peasants lost interest in the Hussite democratic ideal.

3. It seems obvious from the preceding points that the anti-Communists should have organized a paramilitary force. Paramilitary forces are illegal almost by definition and are not a pretty thing, but the non-Communist political parties would have been justified in organizing such a force considering what the Communists were doing. In the final showdown, the anti-Communists should at least have made use of the one form of force that remained at their disposal — the army, which the Communists had at that point not yet subverted.

4. It was not only physical force and organizational unity that the non-Communist parties lacked. They also lacked a unifying idea capable of competing with Communist ideology. The general idea of "democracy" was not sufficient. To say that the Czech anti-Communists should have evolved such an idea would of course be ridiculous, considering that the Western world is still groping for just that. But it surely would have been possible for the non-Communist parties to have been more active and positive in their approach to the practical problems of the day. They

need not have so often left the initiative to the Communists in such matters as land reform and social security.

Finally we must consider whether the methods used by the Communists to seize power in Czechoslovakia could be repeated in other parts of the Western world.

Ever since the Second World War, western Europe has in a very general sense occupied a position between Soviet Russia and the United States that is very similar to the position Czechoslovakia occupied from the end of the war until the coup. The Communists of western Europe have certainly tried to use the same methods that they used in Czechoslovakia. This is true particularly in the case of France and Italy, where the proportion of Communist voting strength was, and is, about the same as it was in Czechoslovakia before the coup. I will speak only of developments in France which is the key country of western Europe.

In France, where the Communists held positions in the cabinet until May 1947, they tried in 1945 and '46 to create a National Front of political parties with themselves in a dominant position, and when they failed in this they sought a "*bloc de gauche*" including the Socialists and Radicals. But they were never quite able in France to find a renegade Socialist who could split the rival working-class party in the name of "working-class unity" the way Nenni did in Italy, and Fierlinger in Czechoslovakia. Membership in the French Communist Party hovered around one million and the Party's voting strength around 25 per cent of the electorate.

Towards the middle of 1947 it appeared, however, that the Communists were not getting any stronger and that anti-Communist elements were regaining their morale. A Communist-led general strike late in 1947 in France proved ineffective and showed that the Communists could not count on complete control of the workers. Most conclusive were the French municipal elections and the Italian parliamentary elections, in the autumn of 1947, which made it clear that the Communists would not be able to win power in those countries by democratic means — the very point that would also have been made clear in Czechoslovakia in the parliamentary elections of May 1948, if the Communists had not intervened with their *coup d'état.*

Preceding or during the critical turning point in 1947 the Communists might have staged a *coup d'état* in France — or Italy — with a fair chance of success. But they waited too long. What happened while they were waiting, striving to infiltrate into more and more strategic positions and

to expand their mass following? Pre-Marshall Plan American aid and then the Marshall Plan itself had begun to take hold, and under the impact of this positive U.S. support anti-Communist forces in France and the rest of western Europe had really taken heart. They had begun to weed out the Communists from key positions in the government administration, in the police, in the armed forces and in economic life, to expose Communist "front" organizations for what they were, to track down Communist arms' caches, and to brand the Communist Party as an agency of a foreign power.

This process continued to gather ground during 1948, '49 and '50. Since the beginning of 1951 anti-Communist morale has received its most significant re-enforcement in the form of western European and United States rearmament and, above all, by the flow of American troops to Europe. Today the Communists have been pushed out of most of their positions of influence and their chances of staging a successful *coup d'état* in France or any other country of western Europe are very poor. In particular, they no longer are represented in the governments of France or Italy, and the police and armed forces of those countries are firmly controlled by anti-Communists. The Communist hold on trade-union life in those countries remains strong, but is being weakened by the support that American agencies have given to Catholic and to socialist trade unions, which are anti-Communist. In the French parliamentary elections in June 1951, the Communists declined 10 per cent in voting strength.

The overshadowing fact behind this shift of forces in France as in other west European countries was that the balance of military power had shifted mightily in favor of the United States and the West generally. No longer need the non-Communist elements of Europe feel abandoned or isolated or psychologically surrounded by the force of the Soviet Union. No longer need they fear the fate of Czechoslovakia.

But the struggle is far from over. It would be foolish to forget that there are many parts of the world where either U.S. power still seems remote and Russian power by comparison quite near, or where governmental machinery is more fragile than in Europe and more easily subverted. I am thinking of the Arab countries, Persia, India and Pakistan, China and the countries of Southeast Asia in all of which, in varying degrees, exist revolutionary situations made to order for the Communists. In these countries the West, including the United States, is more often thought of as the home of imperialism than as the home of democracy. These countries are seething with internal ferment caused by the impact

of Western-style industrialization upon ancient social and economic systems. Genuine currents of revolt against the massive poverty that went with the traditional systems have been set in motion.

In these countries the Communists are adapting their ideology to fit local religions, traditions and prejudices and are making steady progress. In attempting to find and support genuinely democratic forces in these parts of the world, the United States faces a problem even more difficult than that presented by western Europe. The Point Four program is a good beginning but only that.

Nor should one imagine that western Europe is out of the Communist woods yet. It is important to note that the decline in Communist Party voting strength has not been very great in France or Italy. The change for the better has been largely in the revival of anti-Communist morale. A majority of French and Italian workers are still voting Communist. In France and Italy the social situation is in some ways less sound than it was in Czechoslovakia before the Communist coup. In both countries the confidence of the workers in their employers, as a class, has been at a low ebb since the end of the war. In France some of this feeling may be due to the fact that many industrialists and other large employers of labor collaborated with the Nazis during the occupation. But most of it derives from the fact that French and Italian workers have lost faith in the ability or the desire of their employers to provide them with a rising standard of living. As a result, many vote Communist — not because they believe in Communism, but as a protest against the existing system.

United States aid, in its various forms, has propped up the capitalistic system in France and Italy, has carried out a veritable transfusion of life and strength. But this has not reformed European capitalism.

It is unfortunately true that the flow of American economic aid has been accompanied by a sharpening of class differences in France and Italy, resulting from the fact that profits have increased more rapidly than wages. The tendency has been for employers of all kinds to use American aid to reduce costs but not necessarily to increase output, reduce prices or increase wages. As a result the *patrons* — the employers as a class — both big and little, have done fairly well during the past four years while the employees, both the white collar and the laboring variety, have not done so well.

This state of affairs has been observed with consternation by a good many Americans, including labor-union leaders. In June 1951, the former European chief of the ECA, Milton Katz, admitted this to me with an

interesting explanation. He said that the French and Italian working class had been practically deprived of parliamentary representation by the fact that most of the workers in those countries had voted Communist. Since the Communist Party had been practically neutralized in the parliaments of those two countries and any initiative it undertook was almost foredoomed to defeat, the workers' votes were wasted. The chiefs of other parties, who did not represent workers, did not dare to risk the displeasure of their followers by sponsoring legislation in favor of the workers.

Certainly no American ever intended it that way. But Americans cannot be entirely absolved of blame. We must be blamed for our completely unideological approach to European aid. Beyond the general idea that anti-Communist forces should be encouraged and private enterprise protected, there was little awareness during the first years of American aid to Europe that European capitalism was a very different thing from American capitalism. The idea that European capitalism with its deeply rooted traditions of the high pegged price and the small, tight market might be incapable of dealing with the Communist threat only gradually dawned upon the American officials.

In 1951, however, some prominent Americans suddenly began to wonder whether it was really true, as Europeans had so often said, that America had nothing to offer Europe but wealth. They began to wonder whether American capitalism did not, after all, have an idea to contribute — an idea that would reform European capitalism and make it better able to defend itself against Communism. Paul Hoffman, the former Administrator of ECA, used his influence to get a shoe manufacturer named William H. Joyce, who happened to be his neighbor in Pasadena, California, appointed as Assistant Administrator for Production in the ECA. Joyce promptly began to say dramatic and brutal things that made French and Italian businessmen hopping mad. He was especially annoying because they could not dismiss him as a mad theorist. After all, he had made a fortune out of manufacturing shoes in the United States and had, on a strictly private basis, shown what could be done in Europe by lending his services to three failing European shoe companies just after the war and helping them to get back on their feet.

In a speech before the Northwest Labor Management Conference in Portland, Oregon, August 2, 1951, he asserted that it was very much the fault of French and Italian business management that in France the Communist-dominated General Confederation of Labor had 2,150,000 of

the country's total of 4,100,000 union members and that in Italy the Communist-controlled CGIL had 5,117,000 out of the country's 7,341,000 union members.

"The psychology of French and Italian management, with some notable exceptions," he said, "tends to be more feudalistic than capitalistic in the sense that we use that term in the U. S. Failure of the managements of both countries to share their profits more equitably with their workers has aroused resentments which Communist agitators, organizers and propagandists have canalized and crystallized into bitterness and anger toward the kind of economic system which gives opulence to the few and poverty to the many.

"Any management in any country which fails to deliver in terms of reasonably fair shares for the worker, and recognition that he is not a faceless man, but rather a human being with his own aspirations and strivings toward a better life, will simply invite sooner or later the threat of nationalization, or even that extremism exemplified by the influence of Communism in the labor movements of both France and Italy.

"French and Italian workers have not been attracted to Communism by virtue of ideological content, per se. They have been attracted to it because it has become for them the vehicle of vengeance, of protest, and of self-assertion against the kind of employer who deprives them not only of economic opportunity and security, but also of dignity as a human being on the job. The doctrine of inevitable class antagonism as against our own presumption of inherent mutuality of interests, will remain the tap-root of Communist influence in western Europe's Labor movements until the employers' attitudes undergo some fundamental change."

When Mr. Joyce came to Paris in September 1951 he had more to say. He pointed out that in a certain European country it took five hours of a workingman's time to earn a ticket to a football game and twenty-five hours of his time to buy a pair of shoes. In the United States, on the other hand, it took about an hour of a man's time to buy that ticket and five hours of his time to buy a pair of shoes.

For this state of affairs Mr. Joyce offered a remedy under the heading of "productivity." His definition of productivity had a technological aspect which he defined as "the search for the more adroit utilization of a man's hour," and a social aspect involving a reform of the practices of European capitalism. The former aspect is fairly simple and has, in the case of France, been pursued with the full co-operation of business management by sending well over one thousand Frenchmen on tours to the United

States to study American production methods. But the latter aspect is more controversial and has aroused a wave of bitter chauvinistic opposition. Joyce advocated antitrust laws on the American model that would prevent French businessmen, large and small, from engaging in their age-old practice of combining to limit production and keep prices high. He endorsed the Benton amendment to the 1951 European Aid Bill, providing that the money be used to water down the influence of cartels and to strengthen the free trade union movement. He proposed that enterprises receiving American aid should sign contracts binding them to use the aid to lower prices and raise wages. And he called for the introduction into France and Italy of "modern collective bargaining" as it is already practiced in America and northern Europe.

"If we look upon collective bargaining as only a means for establishing certain wage rates," Joyce said, "we become unconscious Marxists. We fall into their pernicious error that materialistic factors are the only ones that really count. We know that over and above a question of a comfortable bulge in the pay envelope the worker must feel that he belongs, participates, has a stake in the enterprise, has a vote in shaping his ways of work, that he can derive from his job the human satisfaction of pride, interest, recognition and advancement."

Joyce put his finger on the sore spot in relations between workers and management in France and Italy, and the basic cause of the strength of the Communist Party. The workers do not feel at present that they "belong." Mr. Joyce has accomplished his declared purpose of acting as a "catalytic agent." It remains to be seen whether the catalysis he has set in motion can effect any far-reaching changes in French or Italian capitalism. During the spring and summer of 1952, the French premier, Pinay, with his campaign to reduce prices, made encouraging motions towards reform of French capitalism. But this was the barest beginning.

Meanwhile the Communists of France and Italy are changing their tactics. Since the beginning of 1951 they appear to have abandoned both the idea of winning power through the votes of a mass following, and of doing so by a revolutionary coup. They are no longer trying to expand their membership. Instead they are weeding out the weaklings and the unreliables, the fellow travelers and the intellectuals. This was evident from an analysis of the candidates the Communists put up in the French parliamentary elections of 1951.

Some of the disillusioned intellectuals whom the Communists have recently cast aside have, in private conversation, offered this interpretation

CHAPTER 14 Life in the Police State

SOMETIMES, while we were living in Prague, I wondered whether the Communists intentionally organized things there so that a foreigner would be permanently involved in dealings with the police, or whether this state of affairs was merely a by-product of Czech bureaucracy. In any event, I found that I had to call on the police for one reason or another at least once every two weeks, sometimes more often.

Tania's and my resident permits usually had to be renewed once a month but at different times, because we had not arrived together. During 1949, I had a special journalist's multiple journey "exit, re-entry visa" renewable every two months; but for Tania I had to apply for a new "exit, re-entry visa" every time she made a trip outside the country. Beginning in 1950, I, too, had to apply separately for each trip. Multiple-journey visas were abolished entirely in 1952.

Furthermore, anyone, Czech or foreign, leaving his residence for more than forty-eight hours had to notify the police of his departure and return, in addition to registering with the police in whatever town he visited.

At the "foreigners' police" there were almost always long lines leading to doors on which were marked the names of various countries — one for the principal western European and American countries, another for southern European countries, another for the "People's Democracies" and the U.S.S.R. I saw Soviet Russians standing in line just like the Westerners. Perhaps the Russians were more used to it.

There were no chairs. So you just stood in line in that half-dark corridor and ground your teeth. Every so often a door would open ever so slightly, a glum face would peer out and say, "Next." In a twinkling, two or three people would slip through the door, and then, amidst groans and impassioned protests, all but one would again be expelled from the inner sanctum.

After sweating out such a queue for an hour or more, you would be

allowed to hand your passport to a person who studied it, compared it with the data in a file marked with your name, and finally filled out a slip allowing you another month's residence. On the rare occasions when there was not a crowd and I found myself alone with these officials, they were quite human, spoofing about the slowness of their bureaucracy and how angry the Americans got when they had to stand in line.

Getting "exit, re-entry" visas renewed was tougher. It involved standing in another queue, perhaps for an hour. Invariably I would then be informed that my name was "not on the list," and I would have to make a fresh application. I never did get my name on that list. On each occasion I would protest furiously until the police official suggested I take the matter up with the Foreign Office. But the best the Foreign Office press officers could do was telephone the police official I had just seen and advise me to try again next week. It was a futile circle, and finally one day I demanded that I be allowed to see the man who actually issued the authorizations for visas. "Authorizations come to us from the ministry," the official explained sadly. "I don't know who issues them over there. And even if you could find out, he wouldn't see you."

I think he spoke the truth. He and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials were powerless in these matters. All important decisions were made in the Ministry of the Interior; and the Ministry of the Interior was an unapproachable center of power, feared by Communist officials and the uniformed police as much as by any ordinary citizen. For in the Ministry of the Interior sat the men who controlled the secret police, whose agents were, one knew not where, but certainly everywhere.

The most powerful person in every office in Czechoslovakia these days is the police spy. The manager of a state-owned steel mill may think he is important, and the top-ranking Communist may think that he can overrule the manager. But the police spy can break either of them. They might never know what happened, because chances are that neither of them know the identity of the police spy.

When you enter the office of a business associate in Prague, you can scarcely realize that the desk in the corner is empty because the secretary who occupied it was arrested last week, or that the police spy who denounced the secretary is the pretty girl at the opposite desk who will, in a few hours, make a report to the police on everything you have said. And it is not just the offices of foreigners that are spy-ridden. Every Czech office, every factory, every club, every organized body of any kind has its spy. Usually it is someone in a strategic position to see what is

going on around him, perhaps a file clerk, or a private secretary, or a janitor, or even an elevator man, or a combination of these people. Janitors usually have to work for the police to keep their jobs.

Happy indeed is the executive who can find out the identities of the police spy or spies on his staff, and who can make a deal to protect himself and his friends.

The most dangerous police spies are the conscientious Party members who do it for nothing. They think it is their duty to report "treasonable" statements wherever they hear them. Then there are the ambitious fellows who want to show devotion to the cause, even at the expense of others. And there are the weaklings who turn in fellow workers because they are afraid somebody will inform on them for not doing so. Very different is the type whom the police recruit because, for one reason or another, he or she is vulnerable to pressure. Often spies of this kind will make a deal with the people whom they are supposed to spy against. But even a cozy arrangement with a tame police spy may not be sufficient protection if the police can bring enough pressure.

A great many undoubtedly are people who were in some way compromised by things they did during the Nazi occupation. It might be a girl who was friendly with a German colonel, or a man who took a job in a German office, or even someone who spied for the Nazis. After the war when they were about to suffer the penalty, when everything seemed lost—the apartment, the nice clothes—the Communist police said, "Work for us, and nothing more will be said about your wartime sins!"

Others have been recruited among those who attempted unsuccessfully to flee the country. "Go to work for us and save yourself a long jail sentence!"

And in other cases the police have exploited personal problems. I know of one man working for a foreign news agency whose wife needed some special hospital treatment, but who found it impossible to get her into the proper hospital. The police, always on the lookout for such situations, offered to help him if he would get them certain information about the news agency's news sources. He did not want to do it, but in the end he gave in and his wife obtained the treatment she needed. He covered himself morally by telling his boss in the news agency exactly what had happened and arranging to give the police inconsequential and misleading information. There is no harm in telling the story now because the man and his family have escaped from Czechoslovakia.

Czechs employed by foreigners are particularly vulnerable because the newspapers have made it abundantly clear that such work is unworthy of a good Czech. Beginning in April of 1950, Czech employees of American organizations were told, in effect, that if they did not quit their jobs they would be guilty of treason. In the ensuing six months a good many did quit, even though their background as employees of Americans made their future employment prospects dim. The police, of course, found it easy to recruit some of those who remained on the job.

The American Embassy arranged things so as to keep classified materials out of the reach of even the oldest and most trusted Czech employee. And it sent the Foreign Ministry a note asking for assurances that the government did not regard Czechoslovakian employees of the embassy as traitors. That, of course, was just a gesture. The Foreign Ministry did not reply.

In Frankfurt, a few days after I left Czechoslovakia, a young refugee told me of his escape from police efforts to recruit him as a spy:

"I had been working for the British —— Company for two years when a man named Hudec whom I knew slightly suddenly began to show an interest in me," he recalled. "He invited me out several times and insisted on paying. I didn't know quite what to make of it. Then one evening while we were dining at the Messinage, he asked how much I earned. I was embarrassed, but I told him the approximate figure.

"Hudec paused, as though calculating, and then asked: 'Would you like to earn twice that much?' Innocently I said, 'Yes, I would like it a lot.'

" 'Then, why don't you come to work for me?' he asked.

" 'But I don't know exactly what your work is,' I parried.

" 'I'm with the police,' he replied, forming the last word with his lips, almost silently.

"I almost choked on the mouthful of food I was swallowing. I couldn't eat another bite. I tried to say I was really earning enough and didn't think I could be of any use to him. But from that moment, he stopped asking questions; he just told me what I was going to do. To begin with, I was to steal the key to the strongbox my chief kept on his desk, make a wax impression of it and then drop the key on the office floor where it would soon be found, or else, even better, return it to its place before my chief noticed its absence. Obviously, Hudec already knew a good deal about the workings of that office.

"He gave me a telephone number I was to call as soon as I had done

this job, and implied that I would then be paid. I didn't dare say I could not do it. I was practically speechless. Should I tell my wife? Should I confide in my boss? The days slipped by and, in fact, I did nothing at all. But I was getting more and more frightened.

"Just a week later, Hudec phoned again and I agreed to meet him at the Café Erban.

"That meeting was different. Hudec no longer tried to win me or bribe me. When he knew that I had not done the job, he accused me of being a traitor. He sneered that he should have realized that a man who would voluntarily work for a capitalist Englishman could not be trusted. He wanted to know why I was so loyal to the foreigner. Was I helping him carry on espionage? Finally, he said that if I did not do the job in the next three days he would have to take 'stronger measures.' He meant I would be arrested, I suppose.

"During those three days I got my nerve back. Not only did I tell my chief what had happened, I got in touch with X. And when Hudec rang up the office next time, I had disappeared, and my wife with me. X hid us for four days in a farmhouse, until a guard was ready for us. We walked six hours through the hills at night and across the border into Germany."

Unfortunately, very few Czech spy stories have such happy endings. Usually the spy-recruit is dragged deeper and deeper into the services of the police.

The police spy lives on the fringe of a shadowy subworld composed of uniformed regular police, the S.N.B., and the secret police, the S.T.B. — a world of forced-labor camps, prisons, suspicion, denunciations, interrogators and torture.

Until May 23, 1950, this subworld was ruled by the Ministry of Interior, of which the normal head was the Minister Nosek, although the real "police boss" was a man named Reicin. On May 23, all police matters were transferred from the Ministry of Interior to a new Ministry of National Security, headed by Ladislav Kopriva; in February 1951, during the purge that followed Clementis's arrest, Kopriva got rid of Reicin. But the careers of police bosses in Communist states tend to be short. On January 23, 1952, Kopriva was replaced by a man named Karel Bacilek.

The police world is an expanding world in Czechoslovakia, as shown by the fact that budget allocations to the Ministry of Interior in 1950 were three times as large as for the previous year, while at the same time income from the forced-labor camps trebled. Running the forced-labor camps is

big business, for they farm out large quantities of laborers, to mines, factories, construction jobs and agriculture — an estimated 20,000 to 30,000 before the mass arrests in the autumn of 1949; 50,000 to 70,000 in 1950; 100,000 in 1951; and 120,000, according to well-documented diplomatic estimates, in July 1952.

The center of the police world is great, gray Pankrac prison on the edge of Prague, where the most important prisoners are kept, and where the principal trials are held, and where torture is most often inflicted. Another prison where torture is used is Ruzyn, just outside Prague near the airport.

In justice, it must be said that the Czech police are not as bad in this respect as are their Communist neighbors, in particular, the Soviet Union. But — I know of a cell in Pankrac prison built to accommodate eight persons in which about twenty men were kept for six months before being brought out for interrogation for the first time.

I know a man who was beaten with rubber truncheons almost to the point of unconsciousness — and then released with the apology that it had unfortunately been a case of mistaken identity. Another young man told me the story of his interrogation, after he escaped to Vienna. He was picked up on his way home from work, taken to the police station and there kept waiting in a dimly lighted anteroom for four hours. Other people were called out one by one and he was left alone, sitting on a straight chair getting hungrier and hungrier and more and more worried.

"I had an idea," he said, "that the police knew, or thought they knew, I was in touch with Y who had been smuggling people over the border. And then to my horror, I remembered that I had in my pocket a paper with Y's telephone number on it.

"It was nearly 10 P.M. and I had been there nearly four hours so I thought it would be reasonable to ask to go to the toilet. A guard said it was all right, and in the toilet I emptied my pockets and wallet. There were letters, addresses and notes. Even though harmless, they might require hours of explanation, so I tried to flush most of the stuff down the toilet. It didn't work, and the papers all came up again. What to do with that mess of wet paper? I didn't dare leave it there. Well, I took it out and ate it.

"A few minutes later a policeman called me into a brightly lit office. A smiling man in civilian clothes motioned me to an easy chair, offered me a cigarette and apologized for keeping me waiting so long. The police were terribly overwhelmed with work, he explained. He thought I could perhaps help them. It was possible that, through no fault of my own, I had

fallen in with some people wanted by the police. In a straightforward way he mentioned the name of the man whose telephone number I had swallowed.

"What a temptation it was to 'co-operate!' After four hours of fear, I had been met with smiles, a cigarette and a comfortable chair. It would be so easy now to tell him what I knew. No one would ever know it was I who had told. But I did not give in. I said I had never heard of Y. Little by little my interrogator's face changed. He grew stern; he asked detailed questions about my work and what I did on week ends, and about my friends. But I gave no hints. From time to time he consulted a file on his desk, apparently checking what I said against the records.

"By midnight he was angry, but I was gaining confidence. I was sure now that he had no proof of my relationship with Y.

"After midnight a friendly interrogator, a good-humored man, took over the questioning. I mentioned food to him and he declared that I should have some just as soon as we had finished our business. He was sure it would take only a few minutes.

"But we did not finish soon. Within an hour he had gone through the friendly phase, into angry recrimination. I suppose he was an ambitious fellow, eager to make a good showing. At 2 A.M. I mentioned food again. I asked for some coffee at least. My interrogator looked at me pityingly.

"'If you aren't feeling well, I'd better call a doctor!' he declared. He leered as though the idea had just come to him. 'Yes, we shall call the doctor and he will help you.'

So at 3 A.M. I was taken into another room, to wait for the doctor. In the next room I could hear an interrogation going on, a much worse one than I had thus far experienced. I would hear a question, a menacing voice and then the dull impact of a blow, and a sobbing voice replying. Then another question and a blow. I don't think I have ever listened to anything so horrifying in my life before. The more horrifying, because it occurred to me that 'the doctor' might mean the men who meted out police torture.

"If so, he never got around to me. After about an hour I was taken into another office and the questioning began again. Still no food. I can't even remember the details of the questions, or the faces of the people after that. I was too tired. But towards morning I was put down at a desk and told to write down the names of all my friends and what we did together and what we talked about and what I thought of them. In particular, I was to write down all I knew about Y. This was really harrowing because I was

so tired, and it required a lot of concentration to avoid saying anything that would incriminate my friends. In the morning about 7 A.M. I was given coffee, only coffee. And then the questioning went on again. Suddenly, after I had been at the police station nearly twenty-four hours I was told I could go. I think I had about convinced them I knew nothing. But I also knew it was time for me to get out of Czechoslovakia."

The foregoing is a picture of an important part of life in Czechoslovakia since it became the so-called "People's Democracy." The "People's Democracy" is defined by Communist Party theoreticians as a "dictatorship of the proletariat without the Soviet form." (Czechoslovakia still has the form even though not the substance of a republic and of parliamentary democracy.)

Dictatorship implies rule by a minority through use of force — the force of the police — in contrast to rule by the people or the rule of law. That is why the most accurate description of Czechoslovakia as it is today is: "Communist police state." For Americans who all their lives have taken relative personal security for granted, the dreadful meaning of those words is difficult to appreciate. In Prague, you learned what it means by feeling sick and weak upon finding out that somebody you knew had been arrested; nauseated by a note summoning you to a police station; angered every time you saw one of those unmistakable men in brown leather coats — the S.T.B. — secret police.

The objective of police ruthlessness in such a state is to make sure that those in power stay in power, and, to that end, to suppress all actual or potential opposition. Lacking the easy assurance of a government based on the majority of the people, the police state cannot tolerate opposition in any form, not even in the mildest type of political joke. It must be forever on guard, forever on the offensive against its enemies.

The enemies of the Communist police state are the class enemies of the proletariat. That means class warfare. Let me explain.

According to Communist doctrine, capitalists and the proletariat are the main protagonists in contemporary society, with the urban bourgeoisie and intelligentsia and land-owning peasants in between, to be won by one means or another, including force, by one or the other of the main protagonists.

There were periods, as in 1946, when the Communists won over part of the "in between" groups, the peasants, by promising land reform. But as of 1952, although there are no real capitalists left in Czechoslovakia, the mass of what remains of the urban bourgeoisie and intelligentsia and

the land-owning peasants is overwhelmingly sympathetic with the former quasi-capitalist regime.

The Communists have tried in vain to win them by propaganda, but the Czechs are a skeptical, hard-headed folk, not easily taken in by slogans. Simultaneously, the Communists have systematically broken the urban bourgeoisie and intelligentsia economically by taxation and confiscation, and undermined the independent peasantry by progressive stages of collectivization. But even after the economic basis of their class was wiped out, the "in between" groups remained hostile to the Communists, and still stood apart psychologically. The Communists regarded them as class enemies, as "remnants of capitalism."

Who exactly are the "remnants of capitalism"? They are entrepreneurs, artisans, professional men, shopkeepers and peasants owning more than fifteen hectares of land. Until the end of 1949, they were deprived of ration cards for textiles and shoes and obliged to live on the "free market." At that time they constituted about 20 per cent of the population. Today they probably constitute no more than 10 per cent — all people retaining a measure of economic independence and consequently dangerous people from the Communists' point of view.

Very likely, if the Communists had been willing to wait long enough, a generation or so, these old bourgeois and peasant groups would have died out. Because they lacked the economic means of perpetuating themselves, they would have been absorbed by the proletariat. But the Communists' watchword is "revolution" — not "evolution." Automatically, as other means failed, the Communists resorted to force, to the police — just as in 1948 they resorted to a *coup d'état* when it became clear that they could not win power by parliamentary means.

The massive use of police power after the Communists took over Czechoslovakia began on October 3, 1949. The police called it "operation T.B." It stands for "Tridni Boj" or "class warfare." It was directed against the urban bourgeoisie at all levels. At least ten thousand people were carried off to forced-labor camps during the ensuing six weeks.

In Prague, the police usually struck early in the morning, between dawn and 8 A.M. Two plain-clothes men of the S.T.B. accompanied by a uniformed policeman would ring and ask for the man on their list. There were no explanations. He had to come along.

Sometimes the policeman would instruct the man to take along warm clothing and food for twenty-four hours. Then he would be taken to a district police headquarters where a crowd of similar victims was form-

ing. After a few hours, a bus would move them to Prague's main collection point, an abandoned monastery called Svaty Jan (St. John) just outside the capital.

From there they were distributed to a network of labor camps throughout the country. Men in good physical condition would go to camps near factories, state farms or mines, including the uranium mines at Jachymov. A few days or weeks after they had been locked up, the men would receive notices informing them how long they would be held, and why. The notices came from special commissions (usually three men) of the local governing bodies called District National Committees who, by a law of October 1948, were authorized to impose forced-labor sentences up to two years without reference to a regular court.

A typical notice read as follows:

> On October 5, 1949, you were arrested and it was found that as a member and as a product of a capitalist milieu you did not find, and did not attempt to find, a positive relationship with the People's Democratic order of our republic. It is clear that you are a person extremely disposed against our People's Democratic order and Commission #137 has decided to enroll you in a T.P.

"T.P." are the initials for the Czech words "Tabor Nucene Prace" meaning forced-labor camp. The sentencing paragraph read as follows: *The Commission has . . . by decision of October 8, enrolled you in a camp of forced labor at Ostrov . . . for a period of two years.*

There was a note explaining that appeal was possible to the Ministry of Interior within fifteen days of receipt of the notice, but I never heard of a successful appeal. The commissions "enrolled" men in forced-labor camps not so much because of anything they had done as because of what they had been or still were — remnants of capitalism, in fact or at least psychologically. The Communists were determined to change both their economic status and their attitude and would doubtless renew the terms of their "enrollment" until this was achieved.

There were quite a number of practical reasons why the Communist regime carried out these mass arrests when and as they did. It was convenient in many cases to confiscate, first, the victim's private business, if he still had one, and second, his apartment or house and automobile, if any. The first eliminated many formalities in completing the nationalization process. The second helped relieve the shortage of good housing and transportation for loyal Party men. The labor camps helped relieve the

shortage of labor — even though they did not provide particularly efficient labor. Finally, the arrests provided a convenient opportunity for mass interrogation of members of a class suspected of antiregime activities.

From another point of view, the operation fitted neatly into Communist theory; and the Communists, in conformity with Lenin's injunctions, attach high importance to theory.

The arrests were, from this point of view, a fulfillment of the "white revolution" that began when the Communists bloodlessly seized power in February 1948. That revolution had followed a pattern Stalin envisaged in his book, *Problems of Leninism*. Therein he wrote that if in any country "capitalist encirclement" were replaced by "socialist encirclement," it was possible that the capitalists would "consider it expedient to make serious concessions to the proletariat voluntarily." That's about what happened in Czechoslovakia and the other satellite states, thanks to the presence or proximity of the Red Army after the last war.

This kind of revolution was, however, not entirely satisfactory to the Communists because it eliminated the violence by which the class enemies might otherwise have been physically destroyed. Mass arrests now provided a substitute that accomplished the same thing.

I hated to face my Czech friends the days of the first mass arrests in October 1949. As an American I still felt fairly secure and a little guilty because all I could do to help was listen compassionately to their woes. The full onslaught against the foreign "agents of imperialism," like me, had not yet begun.

I remember an elderly university professor — retired against his will by the Communists — standing in his parlor with his head high, fingering the gold watch chain across his threadbare black vest and declaring: "They've taken the apothecary at the corner, and the grocer downstairs, and my old friend Jan down the street. Now they've taken my son, too, and I suppose they'll be coming for me any morning now. Really, Mr. Schmidt, things can't go on like this much longer." He gave me a look of a kind I got to know well before I left Czechoslovakia. It meant, "It's up to you Americans to stop this. It's your duty to save us."

I often felt I had been through this before. It was in Nazi Germany where I was a correspondent for the two years ending in October 1940. The chief objects of the police persecution carried on by the Nazis, with their race theories, were the Jews. Under the Communists, with their class warfare, the pariah group is the bourgeoisie who are the chief, although by no means the only, object of police terror.

But the Communist police system is more complete. It invades the lives of more individuals more deeply. In both types of police state, the characteristic thing is that people "disappear," and that there is no redress, no one to whom friends or relatives can appeal with a reasonable hope that justice will finally be done.

CHAPTER 15 Blind Justice and Forced-Labor Camps

MOST Europeans and Americans share a basic concept that justice, to merit the name, must be impartial, objective and independent. We believe justice should stand apart and above the affairs of men and we take for granted the classic symbol of Justice, blindfolded, with evenly weighted scales in her hand. This is a common denominator in the Western concept of law, as it has been derived from Roman law or English common law and from the national experience of the various countries of the West.

In Czechoslovakia, culturally a part of the West, this concept went with the system of law inherited from the Austro-Hungarian empire and modified by the Republic. Since February 1948, the Communists have done away with Blind Justice. In the view of the Communist Premier, Antonin Zapotocky, expressed at a lawyers' conference in early 1949, "The old feudal and capitalistic society needed a blind justice, blind against all class lawlessness. But we have dropped the symbol of blind justice. Our people's democratic justice must have opened eyes and must not be afraid to turn even a searchlight onto the speedy removal of old crimes."

If we turn the searchlight onto the Communist concept of justice we find that it is without roots in the life of Czechoslovakia, a thing imported from the Soviet Union where it was developed during the past thirty years, partly on the basis of Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist theory and experience, partly in continuance of strictly Russian traditions. In some cases the Communists have chosen the most recent Soviet legal forms, in others they have chosen earlier forms, but always the model is Soviet Russian. Dr. Vladimir Prochazka, deputy speaker of the National Assembly (later Ambassador to Washington), was pretty frank about this when addressing the lawyers' conference in Prague, in 1949.

He said: "Only by incessant contact with the realities of the Soviet social order, by painstaking study of Soviet law and by following its further development, by constant study of the results of research made by Soviet legal science and by the correct application of this study to our conditions, can we develop our people's democratic legal order so as to make it a mighty instrument in the hands of the working people on the way to socialism."

The goddess has been replaced by "working-class justice," whose scales are tipped in favor of the ruling working class. As Minister of Justice, Dr. Alexei Cepicka made the point to the 1949 lawyers' conference by paraphrasing Andrei Vishinsky as follows: "Justice is nothing but the will of the ruling class incorporated into law." He held that in capitalist countries justice is objective in form only, while in practice it serves the interests of the ruling capitalist class. He and those who echoed his words claimed that their frank espousal of the interests of the ruling working class was more honest.

On this basis the Czechoslovak Communists have written new laws which cover the tracks of their terroristic class warfare with legality, and create a sham rule of law as a façade for the arbitrary rule of the Communist police state. They have copied large parts of the class warfare aspects of pre-1936 Soviet law (since 1936 there is supposed to be no more class problem in the Soviet Union) and covered them with a totally misleading gloss of phrases out of Czechoslovakia's liberal past.

The Communists' first step was to have parliament pass a new constitution, on May 9, 1948. A copy was sent out for signature to President Benes at his country home at Sezimovo Usti, where he had withdrawn after the humiliations of the February coup. But on June 7, the day before he was due to sign the constitution, President Benes resigned. This constitution, which preserved the forms but made a mockery of the spirit of parliamentary democracy, was the last straw.

The constitution opens with a "declaration," setting forth a Communist interpretation of history. The paragraphs that follow include most of the familiar guarantees of political rights, which have been either neutralized by subsequent laws or ignored in practice, and a new set of economic rights. The very first paragraph reads: "All citizens are equal before the law." But subsequent laws specifically favor the "workers" and put others at a disadvantage. Similarly, section III says that no one may be arrested without a warrant. A warrant must be presented at the time of

arrest or within forty-eight hours. This provision has been flouted on a massive scale.

Much of the rest of the constitution might well bear the title: "Freedom, but . . ." That is to say, the rights of man are mentioned, but each mention is qualified by the statement that it may be abrogated by law. Thus: "Personal freedom is guaranteed; it can be limited or withdrawn only by law." "Freedom of the home is guaranteed; it can be limited only by law." "No one may violate the secrecy of the mails . . . other written matter . . . except in the cases determined by law and in the manner set forth by law."

Similar limitations attach to the citizen's right to live where he pleases, his right to emigrate, the inviolability of private property and the right of compensation in case of confiscation of property. Citizens may express their opinions freely in writing or by any other means and may exercise the right of free assembly — except "as regulated by law."

The point is sometimes made that the constitutional rights of American citizens are inalienable because we have a system of judicial review of the constitutionality of legislation. That is, the Supreme Court is the ultimate arbiter. The new Czechoslovak constitution by contrast specifically states that guarantees of freedom may be limited by law, thereby making the legislature the ultimate arbiter.

This technical difference in itself is not conclusive. In most other countries of continental Europe, the right of the legislature to limit constitutional freedoms is at least implied even if it is not specified in the constitution. Yet in many of those countries the people enjoy a high degree of freedom.

One is forced to the conclusion that whether the guardian of freedom is a legislature or a court is not very important. The real difference between the guarantees of freedom in Communist-run Czechoslovakia and in the West, whether Europe or America, is one of state of mind. We in the West have inalienable rights and freedoms because, and to the extent that, we believe them to be inalienable. In Czechoslovakia, they are anything but inalienable because the constitution was conceived and implemented in a spirit of cynicism in which leaders and followers alike expected freedom to be shackled.

To get a balanced picture it should be borne in mind that the Communists consider that the limitations on political rights are in the interests of economic and social rights and that the latter are the more important. Thus the constitution guarantees the right to work, just wages, reasonable

hours, paid vacations, protection of health, and care in old age or in the case of incapacity. Women are guaranteed rights equal to those of men while at the same time they and young people are assured of special protection with regard to working conditions and in many other respects. These constitutional guarantees of economic rights have in fact been elaborately implemented by law, in particular through the National Insurance Law.

The framework for a system of social benefits had been built by previous regimes, but it may nonetheless be said that the "social" aspects of the regime are the basis for such good will as it has been able to engender. Extensions of old laws and new laws benefiting the working class made an impression on the workers especially during the first year of the regime. Since then, however, they have been overshadowed by the oppressive limitations on freedom that characterize the new "legal order."

Like all totalitarian regimes, the Czech-Communist regime seeks in legality a substitute for morality and has devoted infinite pains to elaborating its new laws. As Minister of Justice, Alexei Cepicka organized a "two-year plan" for the revision of the country's judicial structure, beginning in September 1948. Some seven hundred lawyers and representatives of workers, peasants and youth organizations, divided into commissions and subcommissions, have since then produced a new penal code, civil code and a separate family code, replacing all previous laws.

The first of the new law codes produced by Cepicka's committees of lawyers was the family code. It went into effect early in 1950. Here the Czechs, who had taken pre-1936 law as their model in matters affecting class warfare, chose instead the more recent Soviet tests. Skipping early Soviet experiments in free and easy marriage and divorce, they recognized healthy family life as a desirable foundation of society and ruled that marriage should be durable and divorce difficult.

In the new code the state, having displaced the church as registrar of births, deaths and marriages, and having decreed that civil weddings are legally valid without church ceremonies, sets itself up as patron of young love. Bride and groom are entitled to special leave from their jobs. They may obtain a special car at state expense to take them to the town hall for the ceremony. Then, to set up housekeeping, they may, under the National Insurance Act, obtain a grant of 5000 crowns ($100). They may also apply for a noninterest-bearing loan of 36,000 crowns payable over ten years. Six thousand crowns may be subtracted from the debt for every

child born. The costs of pregnancy, hospitalization and aftercare are met by National Insurance.

In token of her equality the woman is allowed (as in the U.S.S.R.) to retain her own name instead of adopting that of her husband. Man and wife are equal in matters of property, parental authority and custody of children in case of divorce. Property owned before marriage remains the property of each partner. Property acquired after marriage is owned jointly.

A new civil code went into effect at the beginning of 1951. Its highest purpose is defined as the protection of "socialist property," which may be state property or the property of co-operatives.

The state may administer the property directly through its ministries or departments; or it may entrust the administration to national enterprises (most nationalized industries, wholesale and export-import businesses have been organized into national enterprises called Narodni Podnik); or administration may be through communal enterprises (many artisans have been forced together into communal enterprises on a municipal level).

The code contains a new definition of legal personalities. They must be collectives whose "organization, purpose and function promote and guarantee fulfillment of the basic social and economic tasks laid down by planning for socialism." Although they belong to the state and can acquire property only in the name of the state, national and communal enterprises are held to have independent legal personalities, as do co-operatives.

The basis of private property is defined as being income from work rather than capitalist profit. While all means of production are held in common, the individual citizen may own that which he has earned by his own diligence. That is to say, the right to personal effects, household equipment, tools and even automobiles and small houses acquired in this manner, is guaranteed. In principle, land belongs to those who work it.

But property rights are circumscribed by the provision that the owner must use his property within the limits of official regulations and of the planned economy. The owner has no right to leave a machine unused or land untilled. If he does so, it may be confiscated by the representatives of the community.

In the case of land, it is specified that property rights must "serve the interest of all those who work on the land," and must not "hamper the further progressive development of the countryside." This, of course,

means simply that ownership of land is no safeguard against its being processed through the various stages of collectivization.

The right of inheritance is limited to close family relations on the grounds that this will strengthen the family. If the deceased has no children, wife or husband receives at least one half the property of the deceased. Other lawful heirs are the parents, brothers, and sisters, grandparents and persons who, without regard to kinship, lived at least one year in the household of the deceased. Legacies to others are limited to small amounts.

The new penal code, adopted by parliament on July 12, 1950, formally replaces the Austrian penal code of 1852 in Bohemia and Moravia and the Hungarian penal code of 1878 in Slovakia. Shattering prevailing concepts the code sets forth as its purpose "above all to safeguard the People's Democracy and socialist construction in the interests of the working people." Minister of the Interior, Nosek, speaking in parliament at the time of the code's adoption, predicted that it would prove "a powerful weapon in the hands of the working class. . . ."

To this end the code provides that "enemies of the people" (recognizable both by their attitude and by their social origin) should be more severely punished than workers for the same offenses. In the case of persons living the "decent life of a working man" sentences up to one year may be suspended, or they may be conditionally released after serving one half of their sentence (fifteen years in the case of life sentences). The degree of punishment is supposed to be determined by the degree of danger to society involved in the crime. No special consideration should be shown political criminals because, in the words of the Communist party's organ *Rude Pravo,* "anti-State criminals have the same selfish motives as thieves and murderers."

The penal code incorporates the "Law for the Defense of the People's Democratic Republic" of November 6, 1948, with some alterations which bring sabotage into the foreground as a crime bracketed with treason. Sabotage may take place not only in factories, but also in offices and public institutions. Any damage to the planned economy, even though caused by negligence, may be punished as sabotage. Damage to the public supply system by black-market activity may also be punished as sabotage.

The extensive sections on espionage make it their purpose to protect the interests both of Czechoslovakia and of her allies, meaning Soviet Russia and the other "People's Democracies." "Economic secrets" are treated

exactly the same as military and political secrets. Article 75 of the code defines types of secrets as follows:

(6) By state secret is meant everything that should be kept secret from unauthorized persons, in an important interest of the Republic, particularly in political, military, or economic interest.
(7) By economic secret is meant everything that is typical or important for economic enterprise, or that should be kept secret, in the common interest, from unauthorized persons.
(8) By service secret is meant an important fact that is connected with the activity of national committees, courts, or other authorities, public agencies, enterprises, or people's co-operatives, and that should be kept secret from unauthorized persons.

A section much used in recent years in prosecuting Catholic and other priests, is that concerning "misuse of religious office or similar function in order to exert influence upon matters of political life in a manner unfavorable to the People's Democracy." Another, which hangs always over the heads of journalists, defines types of information that may not be made public. I have quoted from it in the chapter on William Oatis's trial.

The penal code states that misdemeanors and all offenses not otherwise mentioned shall be dealt with under the administrative penal code which is enforced by the National Committees — governmental bodies on local, district and regional levels which are elective according to the provisions of the constitution, but which have hitherto been appointed by the Ministry of the Interior.

Discussing the code before parliament, a deputy named Yelinek made the point that the National Committees in their daily contact with the public would uncover many class enemies as well as others who were helping class enemies out of ignorance. This is the guiding principle of the code's section on administrative justice. It instructs National Committees to set up three-man commissions to deal with a very wide variety of offenses.

Within the purview of the commissions fall routine misdemeanors and also such offenses as interference with the recruiting, distribution or training of labor, unauthorized renting of rooms, and minor black marketeering. The commissions may impose sentences of up to two years in forced-labor camps, reserving maximum penalties for those whose offenses are "motivated by an obvious enmity to the People's Democratic regime or socialist construction."

Furthermore, under the law 247 on forced-labor camps of October 25, 1948, which has also been incorporated into the penal code, the commissions may send to forced-labor camps persons between the ages of eighteen and sixty who "shirk work or menace the structure of the People's Democratic order or the national economy."

Most of the persons who have been sent to camps are not of the type who are likely to shirk work. In addition to businessmen, both large and small, they have included professional men such as lawyers, accountants, artists and musicians, and others such as butchers, pharmacists and photographers.

"Menace to the structure of the People's Democratic order" must therefore be regarded as the key phrase. This clause has frequently been invoked on the pretext that the person concerned was living "in a provocative manner." A provocative manner of living might mean that he wore an Anthony Eden hat or carried a cane or that his wife wore a fur coat. The clause might also be invoked in the case of persons guilty of associating with those who later escape across the frontier illegally. But the most common application was in the case of persons who "showed an insufficiently positive attitude towards the regime."

Even this is not the end of the commissions' powers. They may order persons whom they have sentenced to vacate their homes, or place such persons' businesses or property under national administration, or simply put them out of business by taking away the permits and licenses under which they had engaged in trade. They may, at their own discretion, reduce or prolong labor-camp sentences on the basis of their estimate as to whether the persons involved will or will not "lead an industrious, orderly and irreproachable life." Finally the commissions may, after persons have been released from a labor camp, prohibit them from returning to their former place of residence or assign them to a new place of residence. This happens most often in the case of residents of the capital. In fact, it has served the Czech Communists in the same way that the mass deportations carried out in Budapest have served the Hungarian Communists in altering the class structure of the capital.

All this the commissions can do without ever giving the individual concerned a hearing. Nor can the individual have himself represented by a lawyer. His only recourse, as foreseen in the law, is a hopeless one — appeal to the Ministry of Interior.

In addition to the persons sentenced to labor camps through the procedures of administrative justice there are many who are sent to camps

after they have completed prison terms. They may be sentenced to spend from three months to two years in a labor camp by the parole commission attached to the regional tribunal. Like the courts, this commission is composed of two professional judges and three laymen and its decisions are, if possible, even more weighted by political considerations than those of the courts. It selects for postprison terms in forced-labor camps those prisoners whose crimes suggest that they do not like the "People's Democracy" and who, consequently, need re-educating.

The forced-labor camps were started immediately after the Communist *coup d'état*. Law 247 on forced labor, passed by the National Assembly months later, merely regularized their existence. It is now estimated by some diplomatic observers that there are 120,000 persons in forty to fifty Czechoslovak forced-labor camps. The camps are located near centers where labor is needed. At Kladno Dubi, for instance, there is one camp for workers in the Zapotocky mine and another for workers in the steel rolling mills. Several are located around the Jachymov uranium mines.

Few women are sent to the mines and they are separated from the men; all detained persons are examined medically to determine the kind of work to which they should be assigned. Since the majority of those sentenced range in age from forty to sixty years, a high proportion are not fit for heavy labor.

When they first arrive in a camp inmates are automatically classified in the "second category." From there they may be promoted to the "first category" or demoted to the third. While in the second category they receive 10 per cent of their net wages as pocket money and only a few privileges. If they get into trouble and are demoted to the third category they receive only 5 per cent of wages as pocket money, may have no leave from the camp and cannot write letters. After three weeks of good work and behavior they may, on the other hand, qualify for the first category, which carries with it considerable advantages. They may then receive 15 per cent of wages as pocket money, may receive extra food parcels in addition to the one per month allowed other inmates, may write more than the usual quota of letters, may smoke, may receive visitors, and may attend the camp movie on Sundays. Most remarkable, however, is this: Men in the first category may receive passes to the local town without supervision and may receive three days' leave after spending one month in the camp. Many actually do get these privileges, for I have met them in Prague while

they were on leave. It is the sort of amenity one might expect the gentle Czechs to attach to the brutal institution of forced labor!

Prisoners work ten hours daily, including travel time to work and back, or nine hours for those employed in the camp itself—from 7 A.M. until noon and from 1 P.M. until 5 P.M. On Sundays and holidays work begins an hour later and there is no work in the afternoons. In summer the inmates rise at 5 A.M. and in winter at 6.

Wages are paid according to the system of norms favored by the Communists. Needless to say the norms are tough; prisoners must be very lucky or skillful to earn as much as similar workers outside the camp. Earnings are sufficient, however, to provide for a maintenance allowance which keeps the inmates' dependents alive. After this deduction, and deductions for income tax and national insurance, for food and for pocket money, an amount not less than 15 per cent of net earnings is set aside in a compulsory savings account, payable upon release.

Under the law, rooms may contain twenty to sixty persons with seven cubic meters of space per person. Inmates must have straw mattresses on bedsteads or bunks and must get three meals daily. By all accounts the food is of fair quantity, including half a pound of rye bread daily and occasionally meat. According to camp regulations punishments may include reprimands, fines and withdrawal of privileges; corporal punishment may not be used, although beatings sometimes do take place.

In emulation of the Soviet euphemism the Czechoslovak Communists sometimes call these camps "corrective labor camps," and Premier Zapotocky in a speech in October 1949, at the height of the mass arrests, asserted that offenders were sent to labor camps to make them "proper citizens of the Republic." Interior Minister Vaclav Nosek was more frank. He said the object was to "wipe out the remaining traces of capitalist mentality."

Law 247 does in fact contain provisions regarding the re-education of inmates. They are to be "taught work as a civic duty and in order that their capacity for work may be utilized for the benefit of the whole community." At the same time the inmates are to be re-educated politically and receive "moral, technical and cultural instruction."

In compliance with the law, each camp has a special instructor responsible for providing inmates with "the possibility of being re-educated as members of the people's collective, with full status and every human right." Instruction takes place in the evenings, on Sundays and holidays.

Usually lessons last from half an hour to three hours. Some camps devote two to three hours weekly to instruction in Marxism-Leninism.

There are some indications that in addition to the regular forced-labor camps there are some special punitive camps, but I have not been able to obtain any descriptive details. On the whole, from the above and from the descriptions given by "graduates" of these camps, it would appear that life there is bad enough, but not so brutish as that in equivalent Soviet camps. The difference, as in the case of the system of administrative justice, is not an essential one, but one of degree. It may be regarded as the measure of the difference between the Czech and Soviet police states, and of the extent to which Communist rule in Czechoslovakia is modified by Czechoslovak national characteristics.

CHAPTER 16 Courts, Political Trials and the American Embassy

HAND in hand with the new codes of law has gone a general revision of the structure and composition of the judiciary. Between one third and one half of all lawyers, judges and employees of the judiciary have been disbarred or otherwise purged. Their places have been taken by Communists and dependable fellow travelers from whom no old-fashioned nonsense about the "independence of the judiciary" need be feared.

The proper role of judges in the new legal order was explained in May 1949, by the Deputy Minister of Justice, Dr. Antonin Dresler, as follows: "The independence of judges once had a progressive meaning. But it has become senseless in the People's Democracy. We want our people to be independent of the bourgeoisie. The new judge serves the working people, because their interests are also his interests." Other Communist leaders have admonished judges to abandon their tradition of "detachment." They and the entire judiciary must be brought "close to the people." They must avoid a formalistic attitude and learn that it is not the letter of the law that counts, but the interest of the working class. (The revolt against formalism is perhaps illustrated by the informal way in which the Communists equate "the people" and "the working class.")

A new generation of judges and prosecutors imbued with these principles is now being turned out by a special school in Prague at the rate of eighty to one hundred per year. Devoting ten hours daily to lectures and seminars the workers selected for these important functions are supposed to cover four years work in two years.

Defense lawyers, too, have been warned to mend their ways. They must understand that their first duty is not to win cases for their clients but to serve the general interest by helping the court.

As reorganized by the Communists, all courts are now composed of

senates of three or five persons in which the majority must be "lay judges." The professional judge is supposed to guide his nonprofessional colleagues, but the laymen have the final word. Were it not for the political intent with which they are selected, the laymen might in theory perform some of the functions carried on by the jury in American and British courts. But the political intent is always paramount. The system was copied from the Soviets, who introduced it in 1917, when they were in need of a class-conscious, politically slanted influence in the courts. As the need for special influence passed, the Soviets have gradually shifted back to dependence on professional judges and the procedure of the courts has become more formalistic. It may be assumed that the Czechoslovaks will, given sufficient time, evolve in similar fashion.

Meanwhile, up to the end of November 1951, some 50,000 part-time lay judges had been assigned to civil and criminal courts in Czechoslovakia after receiving three- or four-week courses of instruction. Their service, like that of a jury, is only temporary, since one of the ideas behind the system is that the lay judge must not become estranged from the occupation by which he normally makes his living.

In the lowest courts, those of the "first instance," there are two lay judges and one professional. Proceedings are generally carried on without lawyers at this level. Indeed, in the "People's Democracy" the need for lawyers is slight. The Communist argument is that in the old days the best that could be expected of a lawyer was that he help the oppressed. Since there are no longer any oppressed people in the People's Democracy, and all officials of the judiciary are eager to avoid injustice, why resort to lawyers? On the same grounds the Czechoslovak Communists have done away with many of the procedural complexities — whose purpose, at least in theory, was to safeguard justice — and have generally speeded up the work of the courts.

Courts of the "second instance," the district courts, are composed of three lay judges and two professionals and serve as final courts of appeal for most cases. The supreme court, composed of two lay judges and one professional, is limited as a court of appeal to cases affecting the public interest. Its task is to act as a sort of Communist watchdog, accepting for review or reviewing on its own initiative any court decisions it believes to be off the proper political beam. It does not concern itself with the constitutionality of legislation, of which the legislature itself (and through it, of course, the Communist Party) is the sole arbiter.

Because free legal advice is easily obtained and the delays and com-

plications so regrettably common in the West have been largely eliminated, Communist courts do at times dispense swift and sure justice, so long as there are no political considerations. Unfortunately, such cases are rare. The Communist concept of class warfare is likely to bring politics into even the smallest and simplest cases. The bigger the political aspect the bigger the trial.

Some trials are very big because they can be made to serve a political purpose, to drive home a political point, to discredit or intimidate certain categories of the Communists' enemies, to prepare for or to justify a particular political action. If the trials could serve none of these purposes, there would be no reason for holding them; the culprits could be far more easily and quietly disposed of. But because they can serve these purposes, the trials are staged in the largest halls available, often movie theaters, and the Communist propaganda machine is called in to exploit the proceedings. The press reports and the radio records *in extenso,* suppress only those aspects favorable to the defendant, if any. The galleries are jammed with picked workers, and peasants in national costume, and the crowd is encouraged to manifest its feelings, particularly indignation and class hatred. The atmosphere is often like that in a theater playing an old-fashioned melodrama. The audience greets the villain with hisses and boos and the hero (the prosecutor) with fulsome applause. Setting and procedure are in the old, well-tested Soviet style.

I had opportunities to be present at two such trials and have studied records of proceedings at a number of others, and I have found certain aspects most striking because of their marked contrast to Western practices.

In the first place, and this is basic, the judges never even pretend to be neutral. Their function seems to be to add such abuse of the defendant as the prosecution may have omitted for lack of breath. Secondly, the prosecution enjoys a privileged position. The prosecutor directs the pretrial investigation which is really the decisive part of the proceedings. By the time the defendant gets to court, his guilt has been established so far as the court is concerned. If it had not been established (to the satisfaction of the prosecutor) the defendant would not have been produced. All that is left for the court to do is to exploit the propagandistic value of the case and determine the sentence. Finally, as a result of these circumstances, the defense assumes a very subordinate role. The defendant has, in effect, been convicted in advance. All that the defense counsel can safely do for his client is to point out mitigating or extenuating circumstances such as the youth of the defendant, the bad influences or economic

pressures to which he was exposed, his full confession, his regrets and his desire to make amends. Under no circumstances would he challenge the assumption of the defendant's guilt.

All kinds of evidence are admitted without discrimination — hearsay, rumor, opinions expressed in newspaper editorials. There are long digressions for attacks upon *émigré* politicians for acts committed many years ago and related to the case at hand only in the vaguest manner. Nothing need be excluded so long as it casts discredit upon the defendant.

In general, the facts of a given case are only incidental. They are not the decisive factor. Decisive is what a man was or is, his class origin, his position in the economic and political structure of the country, his attitude towards the regime.

These were the characteristics of the series of political trials that took place in the great central courtroom of Pankrac prison in Prague, in the spring of 1950. They served as vital elements in a furious anti-Western campaign designed to sweep away all remaining Western influence in the cultural, economic and political life of the nation. To this end they were directed successively against Western businessmen, against the Catholic clergy, against American cultural services, against the American Embassy, and finally against Western diplomats in general and against internal opposition groups that reflected Western ideas. The very concentration of the trials during a period of only three months betrayed the intention to produce a political effect.

The first in the series, on March 3 and 4, 1950, was the trial of Johannes A. Louwers, thirty-five, a Netherlands citizen, who represented the artificial silk company AKU-Breda in Czechoslovakia. He was charged with economic espionage, with helping Czech citizens to escape and with getting their valuables out of the country. In addition to three persons tried in absentia, nine Czechs stood trial with Louwers on related charges — nine members of what the official news agency called "the so-called businessmen's class, who have been exposed as capitalist extortioners."

This trial illustrated the way the Communists have extended the concept of espionage to cover economic information of a kind freely available in trade journals in the West. Thus it was held against Louwers that he visited textile factories and asked "detailed questions regarding the number of machines, the kind of machines and the number of employees," and that in his office he kept a card index with "detailed information regarding individual textile factories."

The trial also provided a good example of the admission of hearsay evi-

dence. Louwers testified that the manager of the Dutch Airlines office had told him that Colonel Hasselman, the Netherlands military attaché, had in his office a map on which he marked the positions of Czechoslovak airfields and the dispositions of Czechoslovak military units. This bit of hearsay, innocuous as it may seem to Westerners (one wonders what a military attaché is supposed to do if he cannot get up such maps) was accepted as fact by the court, repeated over and over in various connections, and eventually used as a key piece of evidence on which the expulsion of the military attaché was based.

Presumably the trial was supposed to impress the Czech workers present, and through them the entire population, with the treacherous character of Western businessmen and diplomats and their Czech bourgeois associates. But members of the Netherlands Legation who were present thought that the trial was a failure from this point of view. In spite of numerous ringing prosecution speeches the workers demonstrated typically bourgeois reactions. They seemed impressed by Louwers personally — a husky, good-looking man with a record of wartime resistance activity, who stood up courageously to the usual judicial browbeating and gave his answers in a firm voice.

Instead of finding Louwers odious the workers seemed fascinated by the Scarlet Pimpernel aspects of his activities. He admitted helping arrange the "marriage" of a Czech friend's fiancée to a Dutch sailor so that she could obtain a Netherlands passport and leave the country; admitted smuggling out the seventeen-year-old daughter of another friend; and arranging through the legation to get out furniture, paintings, clothes and jewelry belonging to a long series of bourgeois Czechs. The workers merely chuckled over the story about Dr. K. Rodovsky-Chuchvalec who managed to get a Czechoslovak nationalized company to buy furniture belonging to a friend who had fled to France, and then persuaded the same company to export the furniture at a substantial loss to France where it was recovered by the original owner.

Louwers was sentenced to fifteen years in prison and his associates to long prison terms, and three members of the Netherlands Legation were ordered to leave the country.

The next political trials were those of thirteen Catholic priests, beginning March 20, and of ten high-ranking members of Catholic religious orders, beginning March 31. They were arranged as a sequel to the expulsion of Monsignor de Liva, the last diplomatic representative of the Vatican, on March 16, and served the practical purpose of motivating

liquidation of Catholic monasteries and convents in mid-April. In these trials, about which I have more to say in chapter 26 on "How the Churches Were Broken," the regime tried to portray the defendants as mere spies and agents for the Vatican and "Wall Street." It publicized all the gossip it could find about the personal lives of members of the clergy, and set forth, without danger of contradiction, the reasons why it believes the church should be subordinate to, and the willing instrument of, the government.

The main campaign of the season was, however, directed against the United States. While it came to full flower in April and May 1950, the origins of the campaign went back to October 21, 1949. About noon on that fateful day the Czechoslovak police arrested Samuel Meryn, thirty-nine, a clerk in the military attaché's office, who did not enjoy diplomatic status. Less than an hour earlier, the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs had handed the embassy a note, announcing the impending arrest, charging Meryn with distributing radio transmitters to a Czech underground organization, and demanding that the Secretary of Embassy, Isaac Patch, whose diplomatic status made him immune to arrest, leave the country within twenty-four hours because he had had a part in directing the underground organization's activities. The note further accused three former embassy officials of organizing, instructing, inspiring and supplying the organization. After nine days Meryn was released and expelled from the country, but it was obvious that a great deal more trouble was due when the Czech leaders of this organization stood trial. Before that took place, however, a number of other events greatly heightened tension between Communist Czechoslovakia and the United States. These were events of a kind that would not normally be related to court proceedings. They are related in this case only because the Communists have, for political reasons, so completely distorted the functions of the judiciary.

On March 24, the pilots of three Czechoslovak airliners with a total of eighty-four persons aboard, instead of flying to their scheduled destination at Prague, took their planes to Erding airfield, outside Munich. Aboard with them were members of their families and friends; twenty-six out of the eighty-four persons eventually elected to remain in Germany. The others were sent back to Czechoslovakia after they had been interrogated by intelligence officers of the American Army of occupation in Germany. According to American calculations these unexpected guests were served a total of 606 hot meals without charge, received liberal donations of cigarettes, matches and candy, and were taken on a tour of the air base by

their hosts. Most of them had a fine time. Among the bewildered passengers was Miss Katherine Kosmak, chief of the USIS library in Prague.

The drama of this escape by air and the attention it aroused threw the Communist authorities into a terrible fit of anger. They declared that it was a "gangster plot" and that the Americans had used "Gestapo methods" against those of the Czechs who were not in on the plot. Newspapers and radio frothed with furious details, such as that the Czechs were obliged to line up against a wall with their hands above their heads, that their personal documents were torn, that some of their possessions were stolen. Posters were slapped on downtown walls comparing these alleged American acts with Gestapo crimes, and as soon as the passengers who wanted to return were available they were paraded at public meetings and called upon to elaborate the horrors.

During the ensuing few months no Communist speech was complete without a reference to the "gangsters of Erding," no possible effort to exploit the incident was omitted. On April 6 an American citizen named George Shaw Wheeler, a former military government officer, declared at a press conference that the incident had been the last straw that induced him to break with the America of Wall Street imperialism and ask Czechoslovakia for "asylum."

Here was a genuine American from Rollingby, Washington, not to mention his wife, from Ketchikan, Alaska, who would confirm all the Communist allegations against the United States. The delighted Communist propagandists made the Wheelers a seven-day wonder.

Meanwhile the Communists were preparing another propagandistic coup, this time with the help of their police. At 8:45 o'clock on the morning of April 6 they arrested Ivan Elbl, a twenty-five-year-old Czech clerk of the United States Information library as he was leaving the apartment of Miss Katherine Kosmak, an American citizen who had for some time directed the USIS library.

The police kept Ivan Elbl all that day. Exactly what happened to him he has not been at liberty to tell, but it may be assumed that he was subjected to forceful Communist political persuasion. Elbl is a small, slender and mild young man; he is not the stuff of which martyrs are made. By midnight he had reached the point where the police allowed him to telephone Miss Kosmak to say that he was "all right" and would be around to see her next day. In an affidavit Miss Kosmak made later she observed that his voice sounded "very strange."

At 2:30 P.M. next day Elbl called at Miss Kosmak's apartment. He brought her a statement he said he had signed. In it he denounced Josef C. Kolarek, U.S. Embassy press attaché and USIS director, for supplying "slanderous and mendacious news for broadcasts of the 'Voice of America,'" thereby setting the tune for its anti-Czechoslovak propaganda. He asserted that Wheeler's statements a few days earlier had opened his eyes and that he could not go on with his work for the Americans, "lest I sink so deep that there would be no return to my own nation and lest I end in the ranks of our enemies."

All Czechoslovak employees of American organizations, he went on, would have to choose between the "road with the people, not only of our Republic but of all peace-loving mankind, and the road against the people, the road of treason in collaboration with the principal enemies of mankind represented today by American imperialism."

After Miss Kosmak had read the statement, he allowed her, in accordance with his instructions from the police, to cross out certain references to herself. Then he asked her whether she was still willing to marry him.

Knowing what he had been up against during a day and a half in the hands of the police, Miss Kosmak overlooked the fantastic statement her friend had signed. She answered "Yes." But she added that if she were to marry him then, or at any other time, she meant to do so on her own terms. In other words she was not going to submit to a shotgun wedding arranged by the Czech police.

Elbl departed, but returned that evening accompanied by two gentlemen who intimated that they were officers of the law. These gentlemen explained to Miss Kosmak that her reply to Elbl had not been "realistic." They explained to her that when Elbl's statement was published, and her relationship with him became known, she would undoubtedly be subject to disciplinary action by the U.S. government and that her career would be finished. She would be recalled and she would have lost everything: both career and the prospect of marriage.

On the other hand, the gentlemen reasoned, she could remain in Czechoslovakia where there was not only plenty of useful work for her to do, but she could marry Elbl. Thus she would save everything. For this solution she would have to pay the price only of abandoning her American citizenship.

But Katherine Kosmak was no Wheeler. The policemen argued long but in vain.

Ivan Elbl's statement was published April 11 and was followed the

next day by a similar statement by a girl named Ruzena Soumarova who worked in the same office.

The immediate practical purpose of these statements became clear two days later when two employees of Josef Kolarek's press office went on trial charged with high treason, espionage and insulting an allied state, meaning the U.S.S.R. The two defendants, Miss Dagmar Kacerovska, twenty-three, and Lubomir Elsner, twenty-eight, both translators, were the most guiltless and for that reason the most pathetic of all the persons tried during the anti-Western campaign. But the Communists, never doubting their ability to make a case against whomsoever they chose, made it a full-dress performance in the Pankrac prison courtroom. For this occasion they, for the first time, admitted Western newspaper correspondents. On previous occasions the newspapermen had always been told that all seats had been taken by "workers" and there was no more room. But now the Communists wanted publicity for their allegations. They believed that a conviction in this case would back up their allegations in the eyes of the Czech people and the world and justify the acts they had planned for the immediate future. That is why, on April 18, they had Dagmar Kacerovska sentenced to fifteen, and Lubomir Elsner to eighteen years in prison.

Shifting into action the next day the foreign ministry in a note to the American Embassy ordered the USIS libraries in Prague and Bratislava to close within two days and ordered Kolarek to leave Czechoslovakia "within a reasonable time." The note cited Ivan Elbl's and Ruzena Soumarova's statements and "facts obtained at the recent trial of two employees of the U.S. Embassy" and charged that Kolarek had "transmitted untrue, imaginary and slanderous" news to the United States for use in broadcasts to Czechoslovakia. Further, it charged that Kolarek had used his Czech employees to gather news and carry on espionage. The information they sought included Czech public opinion on military matters and measures taken for the security of the President. Finally, it asserted the USIS had attempted to deceive Czech authorities by inserting uncensored supplements into its news bulletin after the bulletin had been officially censored. The bulletins with supplements were then distributed at the USIS library.

The same day the Czech Communists took these measures, they began the long-awaited trial of the leaders of an underground organization allegedly directed from the building of the American Embassy.

The defendants were Veleslav Wahl, twenty-eight, a law student, and

Major Jaromir Nechansky, thirty-four, a career officer, and four other Czechs. It was heartbreaking to learn as the trial progressed that Nechansky's and Wahl's undoing had been brought about by the inexperience or carelessness of Americans, for a finer, more admirable pair of young men it would be hard to find. Both had distinguished themselves in the war against the Nazis and had, if one is to believe their testimony in court, risked everything in the struggle against the Communists.

Wahl, whose father and uncle had been shot by the Nazis in the course of the reprisals for the assassination of Heydrich, had run an organization called "intelligence brigade" in the vicinity of Prague during a great part of the war. Nechansky, an officer in the Czech forces in Britain, had been parachuted into Czechoslovakia in February 1945, had worked with his friend Wahl for a while and then appeared in Prague in time to take a leading part in the rising against the Nazis in May.

The charges brought against these men and their codefendants—and against some thirty other persons tried at related trials in the provinces—were an elaboration of the allegations made at the time of Samuel Meryn's arrest. Wahl and Nechansky and a third man involved in a related trial were sentenced to death and the others to very long prison terms. I have devoted a separate chapter to the tragic details of their story and have here concentrated on the purposes for which the Communists exploited the trial. These were, in general, to feed the flames of the anti-Western campaign and provide an excuse, in particular, for an order drastically reducing the size of the American Embassy.

On April 28, the Foreign Ministry asserted in a note that it had been proven in the Wahl-Nechansky trial that the great size of the American Embassy was due to its espionage activities. The Ministry therefore demanded that the American staff be reduced by two thirds "within a reasonable length of time."

To this the American Embassy reacted with shocked silence. The State Department did not reply. Nor did the embassy take any steps towards reducing staff which at that moment was seventy-two, including consular staffs in Prague and Bratislava. (It had been nearer a hundred a year before.)

Two weeks after the Czechs had delivered their note, on May 11, Russell Jones of the U.P. and I dropped in at the American Embassy. Many of the Americans were clearing out their desks. The Czech staff looked grim. But no one was authorized to say what was up. Ambassa-

dor Briggs was out. It took several hours of questioning, here and there, to piece together the story.

Ambassador Briggs, we learned, had been at the Foreign Ministry the previous afternoon and had been told that the demand that the Americans reduce staff by two thirds within a reasonable time was meant literally and that a reasonable time, namely two weeks, had elapsed. If the Americans did not get out within forty-eight hours, that is by midnight of the following Sunday, the Foreign Ministry "would not assume responsibility for their safety." This notice was delivered to the ambassador with all the vitriol and unpleasantness possible under cover of diplomatic niceties. It was, as an American official remarked, "about as peremptory an action as one government can take against another in time of peace." The effect which the Communists intended and succeeded in producing, this official continued, was "undignified and disgraceful." But the ambassador felt obliged to comply. Forty-eight American officials and their families would have to go. Those with cars were being organized into convoys, while the military attaché's plane was prepared to fly out others to Frankfurt.

On the morning of the twelfth, the Foreign Ministry, now in full anti-Western cry, followed up the ouster of the USIS by closing down the British Information Service library and the British Council. As preparation for this move the Communist police had obliged two Czechs on the staff of the British library to sign statements following the general lines of Ivan Elbl. But in the case of the British the Czechs did not trouble to stage a trial. (Incidentally, the windows of the British Information Service library had been hidden from public view since March by a seven-foot board fence erected around a trench at the bottom of which the Communist authorities asserted solemnly some telephone lines had to be repaired.)

Having dealt the British a blow, the Foreign Ministry found it possible the same morning to make a concession to the forty-eight Americans and their families whom it had expelled. The ministry now agreed to extend the time for them to get out until midnight of the seventeenth, thus giving them a total of seven days, counted from the night of the tenth.

This scarcely relieved the bitterness among the American families who had sat up late making lists of their most essential possessions to be rushed to the Foreign Ministry for approval by export authorities. Czechoslovak law required all persons permanently leaving the country to submit lists detailed down to the last handkerchief. Most of the lug-

gage of those departing was piled up in the embassy to be cleared and sent on later.

The embassy was a place of turmoil, filled with suitcases and boxes, of nervous laughter and tears in offices that would soon be empty. Most moved were the Czech employees who would stay behind, lose their jobs and have very poor prospects of being accepted for any other.

"I don't think I've ever had to face so many tears," one diplomat sighed. And he added that in a long career he had never known a government to give treatment of this kind "to representatives of another government with whom it was at peace and expected to continue diplomatic relations."

The most educated view among diplomats was that the expulsions and the closing of USIS and BIS were part of a Communist scheme to reduce Western influence to a predetermined level. Some attributed the sudden acceleration in execution of the scheme to the visits of Marshals Bulganin and Suslov and former Ambassador Zorin during the "Liberation Day" ceremonies on May 5 to 9.

It was not believed that the Czechs wanted to break off relations with the United States or other Western powers. But the Czech authorities were thought to be aware of the losses they would suffer by immediate countermeasures.

The countermeasures were not slow in coming. On the 13th, the State Department announced that it was closing two Czechoslovak consulates and reducing Czechoslovak diplomatic and consular personnel in the United States by two thirds. In London the British closed the Czechoslovak Institute and Library.

By midnight of the 17th, the forty-eight American officials—some seventy-two persons including families— had been hustled out of Czechoslovakia. But the exchange of reprisals and counterreprisals was by no means over.

On May 23, the Czech Foreign Ministry demanded that the twenty-four American officials still in the country be reduced by one half. A Czech note said the United States might "on a basis of strict reciprocity" maintain in Czechoslovakia four diplomatic officers, seven persons not on the diplomatic list and one other employee. Local employees (formerly about eighty) were to be reduced to seven.

The embassy had to comply. Half of the staff were given orders to stand by for evacuation on June 5. That meant that Ambassador Briggs would head the smallest embassy in the U.S. diplomatic service.

Meanwhile the Czechs, on May 25, took another crack at the British

by arresting Ladislav Pinkas, an elderly naturalized British clerk, who handled housing arrangements for the staff. At the time it was thought his arrest might start a cycle similar to that precipitated by the arrest of the American clerk Samuel Meryn. But there were no repercussions from his trial. He was sentenced to five years in prison on a charge of "activity directed against the security of the state." The Czech authorities refused to recognize his British naturalization.

The United States struck back again on May 27, by ordering Czechoslovakia to close its consulate general in New York. At the same time the State Department announced it would close its consulate general in Bratislava. At this point there remained little the Czech government could do in the way of counterreprisal, short of breaking off relations altogether. The little band of Americans left in Prague waited tensely. But the Czechs had had enough. They chose a different tack for their next move. It consisted of a trial of thirteen persons, including three women, who were directly or indirectly associated with anti-Communist political parties, and were accused of organizing underground activities. What little evidence of underground activity was introduced by the prosecution indicated that their activity was mild and mainly on an intellectual level. Yet the sentences were savage. Four of the accused were sentenced to death, five received prison sentences for life and the rest sentences ranging from fifteen to twenty-five years, while the court and the press heaped upon them an amount of abuse that was unprecedented even in Czechoslovakia.

The reason for this ferocity was that the accused were merely being used as symbols for the political elements that opposed the Communists at the time of the coup in 1948. Now at last the Communists carried out the plan they had toyed with for two years — to stage a trial that would, according to their lights, discredit all their past and present enemies. Among the accused there were, accordingly, mainly officials of the old Catholic Peoples and Social Democratic Parties. In addition, there were two journalists, two lawyers, an industrialist and a prominent Trotskyite.

Through these people the Communists hoped to strike at their foreign enemies. They alleged that the defendants had conspired with, or at least been in touch with, almost every one of the Western embassies and legations. Former U.S. Ambassador Steinhardt, former French Ambassador DeJean and former British Ambassador Dixon were implicated. So were many nondiplomatic foreigners formerly resident in Prague. Of the half-dozen Americans mentioned, only one was still in Prague — and that

was I. Having, in addition, received suitable warnings that I was to be arrested in connection with the proceedings, I departed from Czechoslovakia in haste.

With this trial the campaign reached its peak. Although there were many cruel sentences passed for political reasons in other trials, thereafter none assumed major political significance until the Oatis trial in 1951.

In looking back over the series of political trials it occurs to me that their technique cannot be separated from that of political calumny in journalism and speechmaking. These trials are political calumny carried on by other means.

And in this technique, the devilish thing is the way the Communists employ truth to lend credence to their most outrageous falsehoods.

In some of the espionage cases the Communists had considerable evidence against the defendants. In other cases they had no evidence at all and the defendants were indeed quite guiltless. But the proceedings were designed to sound alike in all cases to the outsider, who had no opportunity to study each case exhaustively. In every case, the prosecution and the press poured out the same vile political calumny.

I can illustrate the point on a journalistic level out of my own experience with the booklet called *Excommunication, Miracles, and Sabotage,* which *Rude Pravo* published early in 1950. The chapter which honored me began with easily verifiable details about my private life. It mentioned that I lived at the Hotel Esplanade, that I had just returned from a vacation, that I had a car. It mentioned the license number of my car. It quoted remarks I had actually made. And from there it passed quietly, so that the reader would not notice, into a world of pure fantasy in which I was depicted as cooking up phoney miracles with the papal envoy. This is the same technique the Communists regularly employ in their political trials.

CHAPTER 17 Close-up of Two Political Trials

IT may be instructive from many points of view to analyze some of the Communist political trials. First, I have chosen the Kacerovska-Elsner trial because the defendants were so obviously innocent of any real wrongdoing; because it was the first political trial to which Western correspondents, including myself, were admitted; because the proceedings were so greatly distorted in the press; and because the political objectives were so apparent. Second, I have chosen the Wahl-Nechansky trial because in it the correspondents were again admitted, because the Communist regime found such an easy pretext for devastating action against the United States representation in Czechoslovakia, and because of the intrinsic interest of the problems of resistance and espionage mentioned in the trial.

Two young translators employed in the offices of Josef Kolarek, American Embassy Press Attaché and Chief of the United States Information Service, were brought to trial on April 13, 1950, on charges of espionage and high treason. They were Dagmar Kacerovska, twenty-three, a buxom, pleasant-faced blonde, who sat near the entrance to Kolarek's suite of offices and with whom I had often exchanged greetings when I went to see Kolarek; and Lubomir Elsner, twenty-eight, the chief translator, an intelligent and obliging fellow, whom I had talked to occasionally when I needed an early copy of the embassy's daily review of the press or help on some translation job.

One day in early March 1950, these two young people left the embassy after their day's work but never reached home. For weeks neither their families nor the embassy got any clue as to what had happened to them, although they could guess. Their worst suspicions were confirmed when they traced Elsner and Kacerovska to Pankrac.

It was difficult for those who knew them to imagine that either Elsner or Kacerovska had committed a crime of any importance, but the Communist authorities attached great importance to their trial. The Western correspondents, to their great surprise, were informed by telephone by the Ministry of Information, on the evening before the trial, that they would be admitted.

Even with this official approval, getting into the trial was not so simple. We correspondents arrived at the courthouse shortly after seven in the morning. After milling around in a crowd of "shock workers" for some time, we found an official who would look at our press cards and who took us to an office on one of the upper floors. There the cards were examined at length and, after considerable telephoning, we were given slips of paper admitting us to the courtroom. The correspondents of the Associated Press, United Press, Reuters, Agence France-Presse, the Belgian News Agency and the *New York Times* were seated at a table well forward in the courtroom, in front of the "shock workers" and other spectators. We were supplied with an extremely competent girl translator who translated the proceedings into English in a low voice, phrase by phrase, while the correspondents seated around the table took notes.

The defendants were brought in past the correspondents' table. First was Dagmar Kacerovska looking very pale and scared. She seemed to have lost a lot of weight since her arrest and her severe black dress hung loosely. Lubomir Elsner followed. His eyes seemed sunken and tired behind the familiar horn-rimmed spectacles.

Although they passed close enough to have heard a whispered word neither of the two gave the newspapermen any sign of recognition. They walked to a bench in the center of the courtroom where, with uniformed policemen at each side and between them, they took their places facing the five-man tribunal sitting on a raised dais. Two of the judges, including the president of the tribunal, were professionals and wore black gowns edged with purple. Of the other three, who were "lay" or "people's" judges, two wore ordinary street clothes and the third the uniform of an army captain.

On the judges' right, also on a raised dais, sat the prosecutor, in a gown like that of the professional judges, and a pretty girl who was his assistant. The defense counsel was located to the judges' left, and — no doubt with unintended symbolism — on a slightly lower level than the prosecution.

After the indictment had been read, the judge leaned forward, looking

down from his dais at the defendants, and explained they should remember that spontaneous confession would be considered a mitigating circumstance. "Of course," he added, "no one wants you to confess to crimes you have not committed."

One of the reasons for inviting Western correspondents soon became apparent as the judges and prosecution began examining Miss Kacerovska's past as secretary and translator for Godfrey Lias, correspondent of *The London Times,* who left Czechoslovakia by government request on July 3, 1949. The object obviously was to scare the remaining correspondents, to scare their Czech employees, and to give the Czech public the idea that Western newspapermen were really spies.

Here is the way I took down one of the key passages in the exchange between the prosecutor and Kacerovska:

Asked to describe Lias's work, she replied: "He didn't act very openly towards me. He only gave me newspapers to translate. He got his information from other sources." She explained he had had her telephone to various people and invited "important functionaries" to his house.

> PROSECUTOR: Was Lias's work that of an objective journalist or was it a series of insults?
> KACEROVSKA: It was the work of a Western journalist.
> Q: What do you mean by a Western journalist? How can you recognize one?
> A: One who is convinced of certain opinions and will not be moved from them by contrary opinions or facts. One who believes everything that is not Western is bad.
> Q: Didn't you ever ask him: "How can you write untruthful things?"
> A: He spoke little of his work and ideas.
> Q: Then you in no way contributed to his lies?
> A: As I was his employee I translated what he told me to translate.

Thus Kacerovska accepted no responsibility for what Lias wrote and accused him of nothing more serious than imperviousness to "opinions and facts." Obviously this was inadequate for Communist propaganda purposes. *Rude Pravo* therefore reported approximately the same passages as follows:

> Asked to describe Lias's work Kacerovska replied: "His activity was double. His journalistic activity actually concealed his espionage activities."

Q: You contributed in no way to these activities of Lias?

A: I knew that certain prominent personalities gave him information on the basis of which he made his reports. [Following this the defendant admits that she prepared for Lias material about events in Czechoslovakia in a twisted manner to serve as a basis for even more mendacious news reports by the British capitalist journalist.]

Q: Did he write lies?

A: Yes. He also told me that it was not always necessary to agitate openly and that the most varied means may be used. He was the Western type of journalist.

Q: What kind of journalist is that?

A: For him everything is business.

Even allowing for the vagaries of translation it seems obvious that, for the benefit of Czech readers, *Rude Pravo* deliberately put into the defendant's mouth charges against Lias and admissions of complicity.

Since the main charges concerned the defendant's work in Kolarek's office in the American Embassy, the Lias affair was of course a mere side issue. The court devoted much attention to the procedure by which the two defendants had received their jobs at the embassy in the summer of 1949. They explained that they had been required to take an oath that they had not received their jobs by bribery, that they were not and never had been members of the Communist Party or any other organization devoted to the overthrow of the American government, and that they would not go on strike. Finally, they had to have their fingerprints taken.

With these facts the Communist press had a field day. Here are some extracts from what the official news agency distributed to the press on the subject:

> Seeking jobs by bribery is perhaps a natural thing in a state engulfed in crisis and unemployment, but it can certainly not be understood by citizens of a free Czechoslovak Republic whose right to work is guaranteed by the constitution. . . . The American Embassy furthermore asks whether the prospective employee is a Communist, but takes no interest whatsoever in whether by chance, as in the case of Elsner, he is a fascist. The oath of course amounts to an oath of loyalty to the American government and a rejection of the People's Democratic regime of Czechoslovakia, of which the defendants are citizens.

Regarding the fingerprinting, the agency continued: "How ridiculous and insulting! Is the State Department trying to collect pictures of all the dirty hands of the treacherous and criminal elements of the world?"

After indulging in remarks similar to those of the news agency, judges and prosecution turned to the actual charges against the defendants. The most important were these:

1. That they had helped Kolarek produce uncensored supplements for the USIS news bulletin after the bulletin had passed the special censorship required for foreign publications inside Czechoslovakia.

2. That they had helped Kolarek check information received in an anonymous letter to the embassy concerning security arrangements at Lany Castle, near Prague, where President Gottwald lived a great part of the time.

3. That they had helped Kolarek gather information about the reactions of the Czech intelligentsia, bourgeoisie and workers to reports that the United States was manufacturing a hydrogen superbomb.

The first point involved the "insults" to an allied power. The prosecution introduced excerpts from the bulletins, which were read aloud by the president of the tribunal to a raptly attentive courtroom. The "shock workers" stopped munching sandwiches in the galleries and leaned forward to hear about a State Department charge that speeches in the United Nations were distorted or not printed at all in the Soviet press; a CIO charge that the Soviet Russians murdered 15,000 Polish officers at Katyn, and that the Soviet Russians were employing more forced labor than the Nazis; a statement by Dean Acheson that mass arrests are characteristic of life in the satellite countries; and a statement by Hector McNeil, of Britain, that "there never was such a strong coalition against the Nazis as there is today against the Communists."

Fascinated as they were by this kind of talk, the workers did their duty with an outburst of indignant howls until the president of the tribunal, no doubt fully satisfied, threatened to clear the court.

The Czech press reports on this part of the trial proved oddly truncated. They avoided all mention of the existence of an internal censorship, so that the insertion of "supplements" did not make much sense, and they did not mention any of the information in the supplements.

Elsner and Kacerovska admitted their part in producing the Czech language part of the supplements, which were distributed to the public at the USIS library while the officially censored copies were sent out

by mail. But they contended they acted under orders. "Several times," said Elsner, "I pointed out to Kolarek that this was against the law and dangerous to employees. But he said nothing was wrong, that they were just official speeches of high U.S. functionaries."

KACEROVSKA [interrupting]: "You said the police censors were just dopes."

ELSNER: "I was just repeating what Kolarek said."

PROSECUTOR: "When you repeated the words of the Nazis that was your responsibility; you were just as responsible when you repeated Kolarek's." He was referring to the fact that Elsner had, during the war, for a short time acted as a translator of brochures on military subjects for a Nazi educational organization called the Kuratorium.

Both defendants maintained they had refused to help Kolarek find out about security arrangements at Lany, and no evidence to the contrary was introduced. But prosecution and judges nonetheless assumed guilt and belabored the subject.

"Do you realize that reports about security arrangements at the castle should not be given to unauthorized persons and might endanger the life of the President?" the prosecutor asked. The defendants said they realized it. The president of the tribunal added that the danger was especially great since the Americans were sending terrorists into the country from Germany.

Regarding the hydrogen bomb, Kacerovska maintained that she told Kolarek merely that "some of my friends don't believe the story and others are afraid," while Elsner asserted that he not only refused to report on Czech reactions but told Kolarek that "it might be considered a sort of espionage and it is not possible to do this." Elsner said his only part in the matter was relaying Kolarek's inquiry to the other employees in the office. As in the case of the inquiries about Lany, however, judges and prosecutor assumed guilt, and the prosecutor said: "Information such as that demanded by Kolarek can be used in a military sense. In launching an attack it would be advantageous for an aggressor to know the enemy's psychological reactions to weapons." He contended that by passing on the inquiry to other employees Elsner had become at least an accessory to the crime.

Finally the defendants were charged with failing to report to the police their knowledge that another translator employed at the American Embassy had escaped across the border to Germany. At a party for the Czech employees of the embassy, Kacerovska recalled, someone mentioned the

absence of Jiri Halaskova. "Kolarek looked at his watch and said: 'She won't be coming back any more.' I asked 'How come,' and he grinned: 'She got on the wrong train.'"

Much time was devoted to questions about the reports Kolarek sent to the "Voice of America" for use in broadcasts, but no evidence was produced to show that the defendants were responsible for the reports. Elsner said he had complained to Kolarek that some things in the broadcasts were untrue and that Kolarek had said that these were stories sent in by the news agencies. The president of the court then asked who were the correspondents of the news agencies and was informed by the prosecutor that the former correspondents of the Associated Press, Nathan Polowetzky, and of the United Press, John R. Higgins, had both been ordered to leave the country because of their "unobjective reporting."

The prosecution called two witnesses. One was an old friend of Kacerovska who gave her a letter to be forwarded through Kolarek to Ivo Duchacek, a former Catholic member of parliament, now a Czech language broadcaster for the "Voice of America." Kacerovska said that although Kolarek was willing to send out letters through the diplomatic pouch she did not give him this letter because she thought there was "something wrong with it." The second witness was a former employee of the United States Information Service whose testimony was apparently intended to show how the officially stated objectives of the USIS had been subverted by Kolarek.

Counsel for the defense did not call any witnesses and did not speak up until the very end of the proceedings. Then, accepting his clients' guilt in a general way, but without specifying the crimes, the defense counsel made the points that they were "mere tools" in Kolarek's hands, that they had acted under economic pressure since they could be dismissed without notice, that they did not mean to harm the Republic and regretted their crimes.

"Why did you do these things?" he asked Elsner.

Elsner replied that he was at first impressed by Kolarek's words of friendship for Czechoslovakia and only much later realized what he was really up to.

Defense counsel asked him whether he realized he could be fired within the hour if he did not comply with orders.

"Yes," said Elsner, "on one occasion when I objected to the supplements Kolarek said he could get plenty of other employees to do the

work." He asserted he had planned to quit, but had postponed the move "because of my mother-in-law's death."

What did the prosecution prove against Dagmar Kacerovska and Lubomir Elsner? They brought no evidence to back up the espionage charges, which the defendants denied. The only charges that stood up — because the defendants admitted them — were that they participated in the preparation of supplementary pages for the USIS bulletin (thereby insulting the U.S.S.R.) and they had not complied with the law requiring citizens to report to the police any information they might get about illegal border crossings. The offenses seemed picayune.

Could these be the real reasons why Dagmar Kacerovska was sentenced to fifteen and Lubomir to eighteen years' imprisonment? I do not think so. The real reasons were quite simply that both had worked for the American Embassy and in particular for the Information Services of the embassy, and that the Communist authorities thought the trial a fitting preparation for the expulsion of a large part of the American Embassy staff and for closing down American information services.

As we were leaving the courthouse we found the prosecutor in the corridor surrounded by a gesticulating group of workers. They were — incredible as that may seem — protesting the leniency of the sentences and demanding that the prosecutor appeal the case, as is possible under Czech law, and demand the death sentence for Elsner and Kacerovska.

Why were these workers engaged in so degrading and inhumane a performance? I do not believe that they had lost all sense of justice nor that they were a group of selected monsters. I believe that they considered their action solely in political terms. They thought that their demonstration was required of them, politically.

We now come to the second of the trials I have undertaken to analyze.

Allegations that members of the American Embassy staff in Prague had built up a "resident network of spies" directed from the building of the American Embassy, were made in a note from the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the embassy on October 21, 1949 and in the indictment of six men whose trial began on April 19, 1950.

In order to avoid the confused complexities of the trial I am going to boil down these allegations and the charges made at the trial into a consecutive story. Of course, *I cannot vouch for the truth of any part of the story,* for there was no way of checking the allegations made in con-

nection with this Communist political trial. They were, of course, categorically denied by the American Embassy.

Walter Birge, a thirty-six-year-old career diplomat, came to Prague in November 1945 as a political officer in the service of Ambassador Steinhardt. Towards the end of 1947, Birge met Veleslav Wahl, a twenty-seven-year-old law student, and the two soon became good friends. As I have said, Wahl's father and uncle had been executed by the Nazis, and he had spent most of the war heading an "Intelligence Brigade" which gathered military information in Bohemia and transmitted it to London. Now Wahl was as anti-Communist as he had been anti-Nazi during the war.

Soon after the *coup d'état* of February 1948, Birge invited Wahl to cooperate with the United States Intelligence. Wahl accepted and introduced, as a possible collaborator, his close friend Jaromir Nechansky, a thirty-three-year-old major in the Czechoslovak Army. During the war, Nechansky had served with Czech Army units in Britain, had volunteered for parachute service, and had been dropped into Czechoslovakia in February 1945. There he had at first joined his old friend Wahl in intelligence work and had then gone on to Prague to take a leading part in the rising against the Nazis. Nechansky imagined that he would receive some sort of recognition for his services after the war, but instead he was assigned to an obscure post in a provincial garrison. He was bitterly resentful and blamed the Communists for his ill-fortune.

Birge met these two men in the comfortable flat which Wahl's mother had salvaged from the family's wartime misfortunes. They chose this place to meet because it was in the same building as the Swedish Legation and they calculated that the legation would serve as a cover for their comings and goings. As an extra precaution, Birge used the cover name of Black at these meetings.

Birge talked earnestly to Wahl and Nechansky. "During the occupation you had the dictatorship of the Nazis," he told them. "Now you have the dictatorship of the Communists. Every man worth his salt must join in fighting it." He promised them all possible support, personally and on behalf of the United States Government. He predicted that the United States Government would bring diplomatic and perhaps economic pressure to bear upon the Communist regime of Czechoslovakia.

Wahl and Nechansky talked it over. They both considered themselves "absolute socialists" and wondered whether they were right in working with the "capitalistic" Americans. But they decided that the most impor-

tant thing was to oppose the Communist regime. They agreed with Birge that all should join in the fight. They believed that somehow the Americans would help bring about a change in the regime. Just how this was to be accomplished remained undefined. Wahl and Nechansky were willing to help the Americans by engaging in espionage but they had certain reservations. They told Birge from the start that they were not prepared to take part in sabotage or terrorism (or so they said during their trial.)

At their fourth meeting, Birge proposed that the espionage network should be equipped with radio transmitters, and Wahl and Nechansky readily agreed. Birge explained that the transmitters would have to be handled by someone else who was more of a technical expert. For this purpose he arranged for Nechansky to meet another American secretly at a railway station. Nechansky was to approach the man who had been described to him and give him "regards from Mr. Myer."

The meeting took place, and the two men went for a walk in a nearby park to discuss the material equipment needed. They decided that each of the two espionage groups then in formation should receive two radio transmitters, spare parts and a code. Although Nechansky did not know it at the time, the man with whom he was dealing was Spencer L. Taggart, an American Embassy Attaché who had spent some years in Czechoslovakia before the war as a Mormon missionary and who consequently spoke good Czech.

According to Nechansky's testimony at the trial, Taggart also had this to say about the general principles along which the network should be run: "It should be so organized that it could function perfectly in case a break in diplomatic relations or war made it necessary to interrupt the flow of information through the usual channels of communication."

A week later Taggart brought along Samuel Meryn, a thirty-nine-year-old Czech-speaking clerk of the military attaché's office, to another meeting in a suburban park. After that Taggart withdrew from active participation and Meryn and Nechansky met every seven to ten days to discuss the work of the organization and to plan the handing over and the use of the radio transmitters.

Meryn insisted that the groups should "not engage in any particular activity now, except for gathering information on directives from abroad." He said that the groups should be "kept intact for the time when their services were needed." Meanwhile they should learn the use of the transmitters and codes and then put them away.

While these contacts and discussions were going on, Wahl and Nechansky were also looking around for collaborators. They sought "people who were against the regime, who were not compromised by their past, and who were not too well known," according to Nechansky's testimony. One of the first whom they enlisted was a friend of Nechansky's named Vekoslav Loucsky who lived at Horni Litvinov, near Most in northwestern Bohemia. Loucsky was a fifty-one-year-old, former manager of a watch factory who had been dismissed by the Communists. He was a hunchback. Through him the network acquired the services of Deacon Frantisek Tomiga of Horni Litvinov. Tomiga was a short, slight man who hated the Communists for what they had done to the Roman Catholic Church.

Wahl brought into the organization a friend named Milos Sprysl who lived at Pisek in southern Bohemia. Sprysl was a tall, balding twenty-nine-year-old clerk who attributed his failure to get on in the world to the Communists. He did not profess to have any understanding of the political issues involved, but put his faith in Wahl about whom he said, at the trial, "he understands those things." Sprysl said he thought he was working for a Czech *émigré* government and that he did not know that the American Embassy was involved until he received a radio transmitter from an American agent.

In May 1949, almost a year after he had started organizing the network, Birge was transferred by the State Department to another post. Before leaving, he arranged for Isaac Patch, another secretary of embassy, who was new in Prague, to continue providing the political direction. But Patch met Nechansky and Wahl only once and told them that Colonel André Dechaine, the air attaché, would take over direction, with Miss Louise Schaffner, a junior secretary of embassy, as intermediary. Colonel Dechaine never took part in any meetings and Louise Schaffner met Wahl and Nechansky only once before the organization was broken up in October 1949.

The organization built up by these people had five parts:

1. The Zapad (meaning Western) group, led at first by Vekoslav Loucsky and later by Deacon Tomiga at Horni Litvinov, near Most.

2. The Pisek group, named after the town of Pisek in southern Bohemia, led by Milos Sprysl.

3. The Blackwood, alias Cyril, escape group, led by Otto Toulacka, which was originally directly in the service of the American Embassy, helping particularly important anti-Communists to get across the fron-

tier. Later, in the spring of 1949, the escape group was merged with the Zapad group through the intermediary, Louise Schaffner.

4. The Jihlava group which was to be led by Dr. Smolin in Moravia. This group never got beyond the planning stage.

5. An industrialists' group which was to be organized by Karel Loris, fifty-one, a friend of Wahl's father and formerly an engineer in a glass factory. When Wahl knew that he was about to be arrested, he asked Loris to take over leadership of the Pisek group and Loris agreed. Wahl's idea was that Loris with his greater age and experience should act as a counselor to Milos Sprysl.

Of these groups, only the first three ever became really "operational." The Zapad group was directed mainly by Nechansky while Wahl concerned himself mainly with the Pisek group. At the trial Nechansky described Samuel Meryn as "the soul of the whole undertaking." He it was who gave Wahl and Nechansky passwords for use with the American military authorities in case they should ever have to cross the borders into the U.S. zone unexpectedly. And he it was who carried out the ticklish job of delivering the all-important radio transmitters to the Zapad and Pisek groups.

The arrangement with the Zapad group was as follows:

Vekoslav Loucsky waited at the 15-kilometer stone on the road to Karlovy Vary, pretending that something was wrong with his car. Meryn, driving his own Hansa (a German make), stopped and offered to tow Loucsky to town. Under cover of this activity, Meryn handed over the two transmitters, spare parts, directions for operating and codes.

Somewhat later Meryn delivered identical equipment to Milos Sprysl for the Pisek group. He parked his Hansa at a point on the Strakonice-Pisek road and waited until Sprysl drove up. When Sprysl stopped and asked the way to Strakonice, Meryn gave him the wrong direction. Thus the two men knew that they had made the right contact and within a few moments the equipment was transferred.

The transmitters were hidden away. Where those supplied to the Pisek group were hidden was not disclosed at the trial, but those received by the Zapad group were stored in a barn belonging to one of Deacon Tomiga's parishioners at Cesky Jiretin. Radio telegraphers, secretly recruited, began to study the American codes. They were difficult. At their regular meetings Meryn and Nechansky discussed sending some of the telegraphers to Western Germany for a two weeks' training course. They did not doubt their ability to get the men across the border and

back, but the idea was not carried out, mainly because of the fears of the telegraphers themselves. Instead, Nechansky worked out a simpler code of his own which he gave to Loucsky for use in case they should ever be separated and should want to communicate secretly.

At the trial it was brought out that Nechansky's confidence in his American associates was not perfect, for he did not pass on his private code to Meryn and he told the court: "I realized that the ruling class in the United States is against socialism while I am for it. That is why I wanted my own code."

The leaders of the network used code words in speaking of each other in the course of their operations. Nechansky became "Slavik," meaning "Nightingale"; Loucsky became "Slava," meaning "Glory"; and Tomiga became "Milena," meaning "Beloved."

All this was, however, mere shadowboxing. Men who had risked so much naturally craved action. As many resistance leaders had learned during the war, it is hard to stick to the principle of "prepare and wait."

Nonetheless, they did receive some assignments or suggested assignments. Birge inquired about a *coup d'état* allegedly prepared by General Kutlvasr, the general who had been in military command of the Prague rising against the Nazis. He also asked about unpublished reports of the Communist Party's central committee and of the Prime Minister's office, about the number of Communists in the army and about the equipment at military airfields. Louise Schaffner had questions about workers' morale, the Communist Party's organization in the ministries and the purge at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Nechansky and Wahl could not help very much in finding out the answers to most of these questions. Their organization was still in process of formation. They did not yet have men in key positions.

Wahl was impatient. He constantly pressed Sprysl to expand his activity. Sprysl managed to get some reports on Czech frontier police stations which he received from Otto Toulacka, alias Cyril, along with a map of guard arrangements and a list of the heads of police stations. On other occasions Sprysl, with Toulacka's help, produced reports on the China clay industry in the frontier area, on security arrangements in the Sumava area and on a Regional National Committee.

But Wahl was not satisfied and angrily upbraided him for slackness. Under this kind of pressure, Sprysl took to sending in phoney reports. When he did not want to, or feared to do the things required of him by Wahl, he simply reported that he had done them or more.

The most important subject on which the network succeeded in gathering information was uranium. Wahl got wind that a new uranium mine had been opened near Jachymov, but the Pisek group could not find out anything about it. Nechansky, after talking the matter over with Meryn, put Loucsky of the Zapad group to work on the uranium report; Loucsky, in turn, enlisted the help of Deacon Tomiga. Tomiga soon thereafter came up with a map showing where the uranium had been found. He also supplied photographs of industrial plants at Horni Litvinov. Maps and photographs then passed back up the line through Loucsky and Nechansky to Samuel Meryn and the American Embassy.

This sort of thing was still not enough to satisfy the burning zeal of the Czechs who composed the network. Loucsky, in particular, demanded action. He said he had contact with another group that was equipped with arms and explosives and demanded similar equipment. He and Deacon Tomiga insisted that at least the radio telegraphers should be armed. But Wahl and Nechansky steered clear of violence. This was in accordance, apparently, with their principle that they would carry on espionage but would not engage in sabotage or terrorism.

Wahl and Nechansky maintained this principle during the month of May 1949, when Wahl learned that a *Putsch* was in preparation. He could not find out much about who was involved in the plot, which remains mysterious to this day, but he was dubious for political reasons about its chances of success. Nechansky was dubious for military reasons. The Communists were still too strong in Czechoslovakia and the friends of the West too weak.

Nechansky therefore ordered Loucsky to do nothing unless he got specific orders. Wahl called Sprysl to Prague to inform him about the impending *Putsch* and to warn him to participate only if it became evident that it was going to succeed. Then and only then were he and his friends to seize the offices of the local National Committee in Pisek (local government organization). In fact this *Putsch* was snuffed out by the Secret Police before it really got started.

As was probably inevitable in an organization of this kind, individual members of the network acquired a variety of pistols, rifles and submachine guns which they imagined they might need for their personal protection. These were displayed on a table in the corner of the courtroom during the trial, along with two American-made radio transmitters.

After Birge's departure the Czechs became increasingly restless. They pondered political issues and they pondered the future. Toulacka, the

head of the escape group, sent Wahl four questions through Sprysl. He wanted to know: 1. What are the international prospects? 2. Will there be a *Putsch* against the Communists? 3. If a *Putsch* takes place, will it be announced by radio and what shall we do? 4. What if the Germans cross the border in connection with future international developments?

Wahl's answers were not very satisfactory, but the best he could offer from his limited knowledge. He said he thought "important changes" would take place in East-West relations within four months (this was early 1949), but that he did not expect a war. He said he could not tell yet whether there would be a real *Putsch* or how it would be announced. If the Germans should cross the border, he said, "shoot them down."

Wahl and Nechansky themselves drew up a memorandum which they sent to Birge through the American Embassy. They deplored their lack of contact with the embassy since his departure, the lack of specific instructions and the delay in completing the equipment of the groups.

In June, Meryn telephoned to Nechansky and indicated, by circumlocution, that he had received Birge's replies to the memo. The answers Meryn supplied at their next meeting were these:

Future relations between the American representatives and the network should be governed by the following principles: The groups would receive the rest of their equipment and would thereafter remain in a state of readiness. They must hand in a list of the names of their radio telegraph operators and disclose where the radio transmitters were hidden and make a full report on their possibilities of carrying out espionage. If the international situation grew worse they would receive specific tasks. Meanwhile they were to cease direct contacts with Americans in Prague in order to avoid compromising the American Embassy.

Wahl and Nechansky agreed and set about supplying the information required. They also agreed to return to Meryn the radio codes and instruction manuals that had proven so difficult, and those in Sprysl's possession were actually returned.

But it was too late to avoid compromising the American Embassy. Several members of Loucsky's group had already been arrested. Louise Schaffner got a mysterious telephone call. The voice said to her: "Peter Blackwood is in Pankrac and sends regards to Cyril." This was either a barbarous jest by a member of the secret police or a tip from a friend. In any case it meant that the secret police knew about Otto Toulacka, alias Cyril, alias Blackwood. The secret police were closing in.

On October 21, 1949, Samuel Meryn was arrested. He was held for

nine days and then expelled. At the same time the Ministry of Foreign Affairs expelled Isaac Patch on twenty-four hours' notice. He was the only member of the embassy who had had contact with the espionage network who had not by that time been transferred to another post.

Nechansky and Wahl came up for trial in the following April. They and one of their associates were sentenced to death and were executed. The others received long prison sentences.

I would not like to jump to extreme conclusions on the basis of the web of unproven allegations of which this account is composed. I am convinced, nonetheless, that Wahl and Nechansky, two excellent and courageous men, were the victims of amateurish bungling. I believe that one must ask several pointed questions on the subject: Did the ambassador then in Prague, Joseph E. Jacobs, know what his subordinates were up to? I have reason to believe that he did not know until it was too late. But if he were informed, why did he permit his staff to engage in such operations, for which they were evidently not qualified and which were bound to diminish their usefulness as diplomats? This tragic episode should be pondered carefully by the governmental agencies in Washington now responsible for intelligence work behind the Iron Curtain.

CHAPTER 18 What Happened to Them?

John and Elizabeth Fisher
James Miller Robinson
Dr. Arna E. Rides
The Wheeler Family
The Field Family

IN November 1949, the foreign community in Prague was titillated by news that John Fisher, an Australian generally regarded as a Communist, and his wife Elizabeth had been expelled by the Communist authorities on three-days notice. No one could find out why.

From a variety of sources, including Fisher himself, whom I met in London in the summer of 1950, I pieced together the story of Fisher's victimization by what he himself described as a "small mixed bag of Australian political neurotics." It provides a picture of the type of men to be found in the leadership of "Western" (including Australian) Communist Parties, and of the intrigue, back-stabbing and petty jealousy that goes on among them—a picture of an idealist ensnarled in the web of the Communist Party and the Police State.

John Fisher is the son of Andrew Fisher, leader of the Australian Labor Party and Prime Minister for many years. He grew up with a feeling that the Labor Party lacked crusading zeal and fire. His sympathies soon turned to the Communist Party, but he did not join.

When he was twenty-five years old, in 1935–1936, Fisher went to Moscow for a year as a newspaper correspondent. His admiration for Russian Communism apparently unshaken by the Stalin-Hitler pact, he asked the Australian government to send him to Moscow for "good will work" in 1940. Nothing came of this. But in September 1942, when the battle of Stalingrad was on, Fisher and his wife Elizabeth, a high-speed typist, arrived in Moscow. He worked for the Australian radio and BBC, then for the new Australian Legation, and cultivated the friendship of Communist political exiles from Czechoslovakia.

In 1945 the Fishers moved to Prague. John, now thirty-four years old, tall, gaunt and serious, got a job with the Czechoslovak Ministry of Information whose Communist chief, Kopecky, he had known in Moscow, another job broadcasting twice weekly over the Prague radio, and part-time jobs as string correspondent of International News Service and other organizations. Shunning politics insofar as possible, Elizabeth Fisher did well as correspondent on economic topics for McGraw-Hill. Although it was hardly enough to provide a margin for saving, between them they made enough to keep a well-furnished four-room apartment, to eat well and dress decently. Fisher felt himself both a friend of the Communists and a champion of good East-West relations. They had two children. Altogether, they were reasonably content. And their content made them the objects of their Communist friends' jealousy and suspicion.

In September 1948, Fisher wangled a part-time assignment covering the United Nations General Assembly in Paris for Radio Prague. In the U.N. dining room one day he was invited to the table of Dr. H. V. Evatt, Foreign Minister and Attorney General of Australia and President of the U.N. General Assembly. It wasn't Fisher's fault that he was the son of a former Prime Minister. But that didn't prevent a "red rumor" from flashing round Communist circles that Fisher was "in Evatt's pocket," that he was a "Social Democrat," indeed, a "prop of Imperialism."

Back in Prague, just before Christmas, Fisher was banned from the air. He protested to one of his high-ranking friends of Moscow days and was quickly reinstated, with back pay and an apology. But John Fisher was on the political skids now.

In the spring of 1949 he got an idea that he could make himself useful to the World Federation of Trade Unions and approached the Australian delegate, Ernest Thornton, member of the Australian Communist Party Central Committee, who was on his way to Moscow.

Now it so happened that the memory of early unemployment and misery in England had left Ernest Thornton with a burning hatred of the British, a sense of frustration and an impatient ambition. He was hoping to impress the Russians with his qualities as an "iron Bolshevik," and merciless denouncer of the enemies of the working class so that they would back him for one of the federation vice-presidencies lately left vacant by the withdrawal of British and American trade unions. It came naturally to him in these circumstances to heap scorn upon the British, and equally naturally to John Fisher to insist that Anglophobia was un-Marxist.

Thornton quickly countered by loudly denouncing "that pro-British fellow." Thornton's henchmen, a journalist named Rupert Lockwood and an artist named Noel Counihan, gleefully echoed the cry. On their own initiative these two junior Communists, themselves professionally frustrated, worked up a lather of envy concerning the "luxurious life" enjoyed by the Fishers in Prague. When Fisher appeared, a few weeks later, as a delegate to the Paris Peace Conference, Lockwood and Counihan denounced him to conference president Joliot-Curie, as a fake Communist.

In May 1949, the President of the Australian Communist Party, R. Dixon (real name Clifford Reginald Walker), came to Prague for the International Communist Congress organized around the Czechoslovak Party Congress, and Fisher saw an opportunity to recoup his political fortunes. He met Dixon at the airport and put him up at his apartment for the night. Dixon gave Fisher to understand that it was the Australian Communist Party policy to brand the British, more particularly the British working class and Communist Party, as a backward force. The aim was to force the British Communists to step up revolutionary activity in British dependencies.

A man of more sincerity than perspicacity, Fisher did not hesitate to share with Dixon his views on Anglophobia. He suggested that the British, and in general the Western way of life, had some good features.

This sort of talk annoyed Dixon. It was hardly what he had come to Prague to hear. He felt doubly annoyed when the Communist congress brusquely disapproved of the Australian Communist policy regarding the British. A sensitive man, Dixon felt belittled by this rebuff and turned his resentment against his erstwhile friend Fisher. Herein he found an eager assistant in Rupert Lockwood, who had become his press secretary. Lockwood sniffed around Prague for "negative remarks" about Fisher and came up with the following: that Fisher was living in Czechoslovakia in order to enjoy an easy life and avoid the sharpening political struggle in Australia; that he was not so "progressive" as he pretended to be; that he "overrepresented" himself; that he had gone to the Paris Peace Conference without the approval of the other Australians in Prague; and finally, that the Czechs were "very displeased" with him.

With this evidence Dixon confronted Fisher. He declared that the Fisher household would have to depart, first from Czechoslovakia, and second from the continent of Europe. If they did not leave Czechoslovakia they would be expelled. Fisher, in a state of some agitation, demanded that he be shown the Czech who was displeased. He said he was

quite willing to return to Australia if there was anything useful he could do there. But he declined to be rushed out of Czechoslovakia on false charges.

Dixon thereupon ordered Fisher to leave. He justified the order on these interesting grounds: He said that although Fisher was not a Party member he had long been a class-conscious man in the service of the working class, and as such "had to obey" the President of the Australian Communist Party in those countries under Communist rule. Presumably Dixon followed this up with a formal denunciation, for, on November 9, the Fishers received a police order to leave Czechoslovakia within three days. They protested to the Foreign Office, and in the case of Elizabeth Fisher, who was an accredited journalist, the order was withdrawn with an apology.

Fisher simply ignored the expulsion order. He declared he would sit tight and wait for "time, the great healer," to do its stuff. He sat in his apartment furiously writing letters of protest, some of them twenty pages long. But this time his Moscow friends did not respond.

Elizabeth Fisher had had enough. She booked a train ticket out of Prague for December 16, and, at the last moment, John Fisher left also, although he still insisted that the "real leaders" of the Party were not responsible for and certainly regretted this blunder committed by subordinate police officials.

The Fishers moved to London, and found London inhospitable. Anti-Communists would not help Fisher because they considered him a Communist. Communists would have nothing to do with him because they said he had been "declared black" by the Australian Communist Party. British Communists were inclined to agree with their Australian colleagues, regardless of the latter's Anglophobia, that "anybody working anywhere near the Communist movement should not argue when the whip is cracked at him."

Fisher, now desperately trying to make a living as a free-lance journalist, went right on arguing, first in London, later in Rome. The only satisfaction he got was that Ernest Thornton had been relegated to a liaison job in Peiping, that Rupert Lockwood had been refused a visa to Czechoslovakia in the summer of 1950, and he himself received from the chairman of the Australian Communist Party Control Commission an official statement to the effect that the Party knew "nothing against his good name."

* * *

An American Negro named James Miller Robinson walked through the gate of the American Embassy in Prague one day in June 1949, and slapped down on the guard's desk his passport and a letter stating that he had renounced his American citizenship, which "was second class at best." In February 1950, Dr. Arna Rides, an Englishwoman heading the medical and scientific section of the British Council, announced that she had resigned, flayed the council for putting the interests of the British government ahead of culture, and asked the Czechoslovak government for "asylum." And in April of the same year, a former American military government official, George Shaw Wheeler, and his wife Eleanor, followed suit by lambasting American "gangsterism" and asking "asylum" for themselves and their four children.

James Miller Robinson is from Chicago. He says he has relatives "all over Chicago," most of them poor. Robinson didn't finish high school. Instead he started picking up odd jobs. The family needed money. Then the depression came along, and jobs were scarce. A thoughtful, intense young fellow, Robinson felt keenly about his abbreviated education, his insecurity, his position as a Negro. When, in 1936, some friends asked him to join the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in Spain, he jumped at the opportunity. For a year and a half he fought and slogged up and down Spain, and then, defeated, penniless and dejected, he returned home to a round of alternating employment and unemployment that left him always insecure. "That made me feel old," says Robinson.

In 1948, friends prevailed upon him to quit his job with the International Projector Corporation and use his slender savings for a trip to the Sokol sports festival in Prague, Czechoslovakia. Robinson and his friends had a wonderful time. He heard a lot of hot talk about Communists and a "*coup d'état,*" but he had no quarrel with the Communists. The important thing to him was that in Prague the color of his skin, instead of being a handicap, was a distinction. People took an interest in him because he was black, and Robinson appreciated it. When his friends went home, he stayed on and looked for a job.

On June 6, 1949, Robinson sat on a sway-backed bed in a third-class hotel in Prague and told a reporter: "I would rather die than go home and shine boots. I'd probably be lynched, anyway. I don't like undignified treatment." Directly over his bed he had stuck up with thumbtacks pictures of President Gottwald, Lenin and Stalin. On the wall at the foot of the bed he had hung a poster on which he had painstakingly scrawled

Czech words in large letters. He thought it would take him two years to learn Czech.

"Here I am at thirty-five, beginning life again," he announced with some satisfaction. He said he was not a member of the Communist Party, but had joined the Sokol sports organization and a trade union, and hoped to get a chance to study mechanical engineering. "I know there are good schools in the States," he observed, "but my chances as a Negro and a worker are nil."

Robinson still wore an American gray tweed suit and blue hat. He said he was working forty-eight-hours weekly as plumber for the Kolben Danek metal-working plant and earning 4000 crowns monthly ($80.00). "That may not sound like much," he explained, "but I pay only 250 crowns ($5.00) monthly for this room, and after eating I have plenty left for movies and concerts. But the main thing is, I can work with dignity."

Robinson showed the reporter a copy of the letter he had left at the American Embassy. It read in part as follows: "I renounce my citizenship to the United States of America which was second class at best. I no longer pledge allegiance to the U.S.A. whose foreign policy is geared for war and aggression and whose home policy, among other things, is thought-persecuting. . . ."

Nine months later, in March 1950, James Miller Robinson became a citizen of Czechoslovakia.

Dr. Arna E. Rides is a very tiny Englishwoman, five feet tall, and slender, who stands very straight, brushes her black hair straight back, wears steel-rimmed eyeglasses, and challenges the world with black, snapping eyes. She has an M.D. degree from Sheffield University, is thirty-six years old and unmarried.

After receiving her degree, Miss Rides held several posts in British hospitals, but got little opportunity to develop her specialty, children's preventive medicine. Then she got a job with the British Council, an organization devoted to propagating Britain's culture in all its forms in foreign countries. Right after World War II the council sent Miss Rides to Czechoslovakia where her duties were to arrange scientific lectures, distribute scientific literature and keep in touch with scientific people.

Intensely conscientious as always, Miss Rides visited nearly every children's hospital, sanitarium and camp in Czechoslovakia. The Czechs re-

ceived her cordially and showed a great deal more interest in hearing what she had to say than anyone had ever shown in England. After the Communists took control of Czechoslovakia in 1948, however, she began to encounter suspicion. This she met by expressing her approval of the new regime whenever possible and by a display of her personal friendliness.

The result was that some anti-Communist Czechs denounced Miss Rides to the British Council as a Communist in October 1948. Council officials did not take it seriously, however, and did nothing. Miss Rides meanwhile succeeded on the whole in maintaining her Czech contacts and making new ones. She knew more Czechs than any other person on the council staff. She made good friends among them, and some of her colleagues allege that she even found romance. Be this as it may, she was happy.

On January 9, 1950, Miss Rides received what the British call "compassionate leave" to visit her dying mother at Worcester Park, Surrey. And while she was in England, her head office informed her that she had been transferred to London and should return to Prague only long enough to pick up her personal belongings.

Miss Rides's mother died. She had no interest in returning to London. She wanted to stay with her friends in Czechoslovakia and so, to that end, as usual, she moved fast and intensely.

She caught a plane back to Prague, and went, not to her British Council office, but to her Czech Communist friends. On February 4 she called a press conference and announced her decision. She charged that the council's staff had shut itself away in an ivory tower to which came only the grumblers and enemies of the present regime and those who hoped to find help in leaving the country illegally. During her last visit home, she said, she had found widespread fear of unemployment, seen "luxurious American cars in front of first-class West End hotels, and bars overcrowded with businessmen," and had heard of American arms shipments to be used against peace-loving peoples. These evils, she concluded, were caused by the subservience of the Labor government to the United States. In order not to be obliged to betray her ideals she had therefore quit the British Council and joined "the forces of peace."

For two days in succession thereafter, Jack Higgins of the U.P. and I tried to call at Miss Rides's apartment, but were turned away by blank-faced plain-clothes policemen who took our cards and shook their heads. On the third day she consented to see us, "for just a minute, because I am

going out." She sat on the edge of a chair and, like a very small cobra, darted her replies to our questions:

"No, I have no intention of giving up my British passport. I feel myself to be essentially a British person. . . . I have not been offered a particular job here, but I will certainly place my knowledge of English medicine at the disposal of the Czech medical press. . . . I despise Americans who esteem their fellow men according to their incomes."

As we departed we still were not sure what really made Miss Rides throw in her lot with the Communists, but Higgins was on the right track, I think. He was trying to remember a quotation from Koestler about "poor little Cinderellas who want to destroy the world in which they were never asked to dance."

Foreigners would identify George Shaw Wheeler, forty-three, of Rollingby, Washington, and his wife Eleanor, forty-four, of Ketchikan, Alaska, and their four children, as American types. Mr. Wheeler is a powerfully built, tousle-haired, open-faced fellow. Mrs. Wheeler is a neat, energetic and smiling housewife. Both have a rough-hewn, outdoor look about them. Their children, of whom the oldest is fifteen-year-old Frank, are lively but well behaved and, as of April 1950, were still wearing American blue-jeans.

Wheeler was a War Department economist during the war and after the war went to Germany as head of the De-Nazification Branch and policy chief for labor offices in the American zone of Germany. Yet this man and his wife, on April 6, 1950, asked the Czechoslovak government for asylum and the possibility of "offering our training and knowledge to the world fight for peace."

At a press conference called for the purpose, Wheeler maintained that the immediate motive for his move was his indignation about the "typical gangster plot" by which, on March 24, three Czechoslovak transport planes had been flown to Munich. In Munich, American occupation authorities had welcomed the twenty-six fugitive crew members and their families, and subjected the fifty-eight other persons aboard to "brutal and unlawful treatment," indeed to "Gestapo methods."

Furthermore, Wheeler denounced the "frauds" of the Marshall Plan and other U.S. foreign aid. He felt "ashamed" of American espionage activities, of the "criminal counterintelligence corps" and of American journalists "whose ideals are dollars."

He disclosed that he had had a great deal of trouble in his de-Nazi-

fication job because "representatives of international cartels and trusts" such as Robert Murphy and Brigadier General William Draper, Jr. had intervened to protect Nazis. This trouble led in 1945 to his being called before the loyalty board of the U.S. Civil Service Commission and "accused of associating with Negroes on an equal social basis and of favorable attitude toward democratic and antifascist organizations." In 1946 it led to his being called before a loyalty board of the U.S. Military Government and "accused of trying to carry out a 'Communist policy' in Germany." Finally he was called before another military board to account for his activities in 1947.

On each occasion he was cleared, he said, but towards the end of 1947, he was nonetheless dismissed without explanation. He then moved to Prague where he lived as a student and lecturer in economics at Charles University and occasional correspondent for the *National Guardian,* a left-wing New York periodical.

I asked whether, in the light of his statement, he thought he could return to the United States, and he replied that he expected to, someday, when the Truman administration was out of the way.

That evening the United States Embassy issued a statement that "at any time Mr. Wheeler wants to come back to the United States to cast his vote for whichever administration he likes, he is perfectly welcome."

Mrs. Wheeler, in her press conference statement said: "We love our country and its people, but for that very reason we cannot accept or reconcile ourselves to a hostile and aggressive policy, such as our government executes, when we know the truth behind this policy and know what is actually going on."

Her personal disillusionment, she explained, grew out of her work for the Religious News Service. She complained that her editor would not use stories about "full religious freedom here," and would print only stories, untrue stories, showing the contrary.

Her children, now happily adjusted in Czech schools, fared less well elsewhere, she added. Her eldest son "was beaten up every day" in Virginia for being a Yankee and playing with Negro boys his age. The American school in Berlin had a "rowdy Coca-Cola, chewing-gum and comic-book culture," and raised the children in a "super-race atmosphere."

While the press conference provided some hints as to the real reasons why the Wheelers threw in their lot with the Czech Communists, I felt I was really on the trail, a few weeks later, when I heard from mutual acquaintances that the income Wheeler had been receiving from the farm

he owned in Virginia had, for some reason, dried up several months before his press conference. With Russell Jones of the U.P., I went to see him, spent half an afternoon talking with him and his wife in their large, but bare, suburban apartment.

The Wheelers had never mixed much with other Americans in Prague and since their defection had dropped completely out of sight. But now they seemed glad to see American newspapermen. I had a feeling that they were glad of an opportunity to assert, however indirectly, that they still felt themselves American. We talked about everything under the sun — Germany and the Nazis, Czechoslovakia and the five-year Plan, America and the Truman administration. From it all I got a number of strong impressions:

1. That the Wheelers were worried about the possibility that they might somehow be deprived of their American passports. They had been informed that an American can lose his citizenship by voting in a foreign election, by swearing allegiance to a foreign government, or by making an affidavit renouncing citizenship and they had done none of these things. But they gave no hint that they appreciated the wider implications of their actions or the consequences they might one day have.

2. That ideologically they were not Communists, but very foggy liberals. They approved developments in the Czech economy, but did not sound like Marxists when discussing the American economy and its problems. They brushed off the Czech police terror with references to American lynchings and police third-degree methods.

3. That fear of losing his job had been a big thing in Wheeler's life; that he had valued very highly his job with the military government, which gave him the assimilated rank of colonel and was the best he had ever had.

4. That hatred of the people who had, as he believed, done him a terrible injustice by firing him, and the desire to avenge himself, were now dominant factors in his life.

5. That the immediate and decisive reason for his defection was that it provided him at a single stroke with a solution to the economic problem that arose when his stateside income dried up, a means of remaining in Czechoslovakia and an opportunity for vengeance.

Looking back over the cases of James Miller Robinson, Arna Rides, and the Wheelers, I think one may conclude that, ideologically, none of these people was a Communist. The key to their defection is that each, for his own reasons, wanted very much to stay in Czechoslovakia.

To do so they needed a little slip of paper from the police called a residence permit. And for that the police expected a price. In giving up his citizenship Robinson at the same time bought immunity from American authority. But Arna Rides and the Wheelers paid a price of a kind that they have had to pay over and over again. They have had to hand over their knowledge of British medicine and American economics and military government. It is difficult to escape the impression that if they had been possessors of any secret about the atomic bomb they would have handed that over too. And they have had to devote themselves to propaganda of steadily increasing virulence against their own countries, radio speeches, speeches in factories, speeches to meetings, interviews and articles. Their only hope of respite is that the Ministry of Information will at last tire of their line and tuck them away in dusty, back-room translating jobs, to be forgotten until the day of reckoning with their own people. The question will then arise—indeed it is already important—whether Miss Rides and the Wheelers did not commit treason, although their countries were technically at peace. Is it not to be expected that British and American jurists will soon formulate a new concept of "treason in the cold war?"

Are their offenses the same as those committed by Robert Best, Axis Sally, Tokyo Rose and Lord Haw Haw?

Noel Havilland Field, a tall, white-haired American of aristocratic demeanor, about forty-five years old, disappeared from his hotel in Prague on May 12, 1949, and in subsequent months three other members of his family disappeared while looking for him. They were his younger brother Hermann, his wife Herta, and his adopted daughter Erika Glazer-Wallach. Their disappearance is one of the most sinister and most tantalizing mysteries of the postwar period.

Noel Field, who had been living in Geneva, Switzerland, for several years, went to Prague early in May 1949, apparently to gather material for a book or for magazine articles. It was his second trip behind the Iron Curtain since the war. A year earlier, he had written to Alger Hiss, then president of the Carnegie Foundation for International Peace, asking for advice about magazine writing. In a letter of reply dated May 7, which was later produced at Hiss's trial, he suggested that Field try the *Nation,* the *New Republic, Harper's* and the *United Nations World,* and suggested several people he might get in touch with.

In Prague, Noel Field took a room in the Palace Hotel. He did not get

in touch with the American Embassy. His many Czech friends, including high-ranking Communists, kept him busy. On May 12, he checked out of the hotel. In early June, an acquaintance who tried to find him there was told by hotel employees that he had left "hurriedly," asking that his room be kept; and a week later he had telegraphed from Bratislava that he was leaving for Budapest.

Later the hotel employees said that about the last of June, he had telegraphed from Vienna asking that his baggage be turned over to a man named René Kimel of Bratislava who would call for it, and that on July 12 Mr. Kimel had called at the hotel, paid Field's bill, and taken the baggage.

While Noel Field was visiting Czechoslovakia, his brother Hermann, director of building planning for Cleveland College of Western Reserve University, was in Poland studying architectural developments. For him, too, it was the second trip behind the Iron Curtain since the war. After a tour of Poland in 1947, he had reported enthusiastically to a meeting of the Progressive Citizens of America on the "creativeness" and "democratic vitality" of Polish reconstruction. He had many friends in Poland. At the beginning of the second war, as a member of the Quaker Relief Committee, he had won something of a hero's reputation for helping anti-Nazis, including many prominent Communists, to escape from Czechoslovakia.

On August 22, 1949, Hermann tried to fly from Warsaw to Prague, presumably to look for his brother. His friends said good-by to him at the entrance to the customs and passport control offices and departed, assuming that he would get aboard a Czech National Airlines plane. Instead, he disappeared. The last trace of him was a picture post card he and two friends sent to an architect in the United States on the day of his departure.

Hermann Field's name appeared on the Polish passenger manifest, but a Czech stewardess struck his name off the Czech copy, showing that he was not aboard the plane.

Noel's German-born wife, Herta, who had followed him from Switzerland to Prague in August, meanwhile waited in vain for Hermann to arrive at the Prague airport. After that, she too disappeared.

The fourth member of the family, Erika Glazer-Wallach, whom Noel and Herta had adopted in Switzerland during the war when she was in her teens, flew from Paris to Berlin on August 26, 1950, apparently bent on finding her lost relatives. She checked through the customs and security

controls at the airport, walked out into Berlin and then, like the other three, disappeared.

Who were the Fields? And what happened to them? Were they spies? If so, for whom? Or were they double agents? Were they cynically betraying their country or were they intellectual idealists who put their political convictions ahead of national loyalty? Or were they serving their country all the time? An examination of what is known about the Field family may suggest an answer.

Noel and Hermann Field were born in the United States. Their father was of Swiss origin and their mother, a Quaker, was of English origin. When the brothers were still very young, the family moved to Switzerland where the boys went to school in Zurich. Noel returned to the United States to study at Harvard, while his brother attended a school of architecture.

During the First World War, Noel worked for the Y.M.C.A. in Russia, and later was that organization's general secretary in Czechoslovakia. A few years later he went to work for the State Department, and rose rapidly to a responsible position in the Western European Department. In 1936 he resigned from the State Department and took a job with the League of Nations in Geneva, Switzerland. He was employed in the disarmament section. During this period Alger Hiss, as was disclosed at his trial, wrote a letter to Francis B. Sayre, United States High Commissioner for the Philippines and former Assistant Secretary of State, recommending Noel Field as a possible assistant, but nothing came of the recommendation. In 1939, Noel Field was in charge of the League of Nations division at the New York World's Fair. The next year, after the beginning of the Second World War, he was hired by the American Unitarian Association to head its Marseilles office, where his main task was to help war refugees. After the Germans marched into Vichy France, he was transferred to Portugal and then back to Geneva by the Unitarian Association. In 1945, he became director of the European Division of the Unitarian Service, with headquarters in New York. Soon thereafter, however, he left the Unitarians and moved back to Switzerland where he was living, without any definite employment, when he undertook his fateful trip to Czechoslovakia in May 1949.

So much for the part of Noel Field's life that was public. He led another, much more significant, undercover life, which began in 1934 when he met Hede Massing, at that time a member of a Soviet Russian spy ring in Washington. In her book, *This Deception,* she recounts that

Noel Field at this time "looked like a cross between Anthony Eden and André Gide," was lanky, had a mane of soft wavy brown hair and "wide, beautiful, intelligent eyes." While physically prepossessing, he seemed mentally and emotionally insecure. He was neurotic and hypersensitive, "tormented by problems of politics, sex and destiny" and given to impulsive and unbalanced acts. Hede Massing reports an astonishing occasion when, as a special "present" to her, he mounted the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington and, at the top of his voice, sang the "Internationale" — in Russian.

Both Noel and his wife Herta were hypochondriacs who talked a great deal about their physical ills, according to Hede Massing. Herta, she writes, "was always eagerly . . . trying to live up to Noel's conception of an interesting and worth-while companion. It was obvious that Noel had come from a better station in life, with more money, more tradition and more culture." Herta was an attractive blonde woman with hair drawn into a bun at the back of her head, lively bright blue eyes, a well-modeled nose, a wide mouth and protruding teeth. She spoke fluent English with just a trace of a German accent.

Having told her Russian boss about Noel Field and his position in the State Department, Hede Massing got an order to recruit him for the "apparatus." It was not an easy assignment. She had to work slowly, and as she worked she found herself attracted more and more to Field during endless discussions on music, particularly Wagner, psychoanalysis, in which he was well versed, and literature. To recruit Noel Field, she explains, she had to effect a deep spiritual conversion, because "people like the Fields . . . could not be bought with money." Noel Field at this time had numerous connections with Communists who urged him to join the American Communist Party. Hede Massing tried to dissuade him, because such membership would detract from his usefulness as a spy. Then, according to her book, she discovered that someone else, a man named Alger Hiss, was also trying to recruit Field for service in a Soviet espionage "apparatus." In the late summer or early fall of 1935, Hede Massing met Alger Hiss at dinner in Noel Field's home, according to her book and testimony she later gave at Hiss's trial. On the witness stand she said:

"At the meeting, I said to Hiss, 'I understand that you are trying to get Noel Field into your apparatus.'

"He said: 'So you are the famous girl who is trying to get Noel Field away from me.'

"I said, 'Yes.'

"He replied: 'Well, we will see who is going to win.'

"I said: 'Mr. Hiss, you are competing with a woman.'

"Then I don't know if I said, or he said: 'Whoever is going to win, we are both working for the same boss.'"

Hede Massing was the winner. Noel Field agreed to work with her, but at the same time he was stricken with qualms about betraying his country. And a week after he had been recruited, in 1936, he announced his decision to quit the State Department and take a job with the League of Nations.

In Switzerland Noel Field found time for a great deal more than working for the League of Nations. The former president of the Swiss Communist Party, Jules Humbert Droz, who later abandoned the Communist cause, has written that Noel collaborated with the Swiss Communist Party and "rendered great service to the U.S.S.R.," and a former high-ranking Soviet military intelligence officer, General Walter Krivitsky, has furthermore disclosed that Noel was in touch with his agents in Switzerland. He also found time, just before the war, for a trip to Moscow, where he again met Hede Massing. Hede and her husband Paul were then in trouble with the Soviets. They thought they could get some help from Noel Field, whom they knew to be a "highly valued member of the apparatus." But they got little response from Noel. Furthermore, he seemed unmoved by the story of the "liquidation" of a mutual Communist friend named Ludwig.

"Instantly it hit me," Hede Massing writes in her book. "He was going to be another one of the naive, unbelieving, staunch Soviet-supporting innocents. He did not *want* to know. He had found something in which to believe, and he was not going to give it up because of a few measly bullets."

Noel's work for the American Unitarian Association brought him back to Switzerland in the first years of the war. Although Allen W. Dulles, who was head of the Office of Strategic Services in Switzerland during the war, has said publicly that he knew Noel Field only as one of the many Americans stranded in Switzerland during that period, it seems likely that, in addition to his refugee relief work, Noel Field was also working for American military intelligence, acting as a liaison with East European Communists. There would have been nothing inconsistent about his assuming such a role, since Soviet Russia was, after all, an ally during the war.

The last time Hede Massing saw Noel Field was in 1945, when he came to New York as director of the European Division of the Unitarian Association.

"His hair had grayed and he had gone blind in one eye," she writes. "He was more handsome than ever, a gaunt, torn man. He looked harder and more manly than I had seen him before." On this occasion the Fields and the Massings quarreled. Hede Massing, who had definitely broken with the Stalinists, accused the Fields of still being "with the Russians, in the same or another apparatus." Noel denied that he was "still with the Russians," but added that this "does not imply that I am anti-Stalinist. I wanted to indicate that I have no organizational ties."

"Noel," said Hede Massing, "I take you to be a Russian agent. I will not be able, nor do I wish, to protect you, should the authorities find out about you."

The authorities did find out about Noel Field. According to Hede Massing, they had been suspicious of him as far back as 1938. In the autumn of 1948, Whittaker Chambers, testifying before the House Un-American Activities Committee, accused Noel Field of having operated an espionage ring in the State Department in the middle thirties. The committee sought Field, but found that he was in Geneva and outside their jurisdiction. In 1949 Hede Massing published three articles in the *Saturday Evening Post* which revealed a great deal more about Noel Field. That he should have gone back into Communist-held territory after these revelations, is a token of the unrealistic attitude that characterized Noel Field's life.

After the disappearance of Noel and his wife and brother, the American Embassies in Prague and Warsaw made inquiry after inquiry and protest after protest at the Czech and Polish Foreign Ministries. They got almost no satisfaction. The only glimmer of light was shed by the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry, which finally provided the following information in January 1950:

First, that Noel Field had arrived in Czechoslovakia with only a two weeks' residence permit, which, according to police records, had not been renewed. The Foreign Ministry presumed that he must have left the country, although it regretted that there was no record thereof. (This was technically possible at the time, since, surprising as it may seem, the Czech frontier officials did not until somewhat later begin to keep a record of everyone leaving the country. They merely stamped the travelers' passports.)

Second, that Hermann had positively not arrived from Warsaw.

Third, that Herta had left Czechoslovakia on September 6, 1949.

This reply did not really help solve the mystery; it did not even disclose by what route or for what destination Herta had, allegedly, left the country.

There was a hint as to Hermann's fate in a speech made in Prague on March 2, 1950, by Ladislav Kopriva, a member of the Communist Party Central Committee. Announcing the expulsion from the country of Vilem Novy, the former editor of *Rude Pravo,* Kopriva asserted that he had betrayed state secrets to an "agent of a Western espionage service." The circumstances Kopriva described indicated that this "agent" could be none other than Hermann Field. He said that the "agent" had helped Novy to flee from Poland to England at the beginning of the war, and that Novy had maintained contact with the "agent" ever since, in spite of warnings he had received from the Party. Novy had gone so far as to bring the agent to Czechoslovakia after the war without the Party's knowledge, and to help him gather important information.

Now Hermann Field had in fact helped Vilem Novy to get out of Poland and away to England, and the two men were good friends, as the Western reporters were able to learn from other Communists associated with *Rude Pravo.* This inquiry disclosed also that both Hermann and Noel Field were friends of a number of leading Communist officials who had been exiles in London during the war and who had recently been arrested. These men included Vladimir Clementis, the Foreign Minister whose "resignation" had just been announced, and who was later arrested, the former press chief of the Foreign Ministry, Dr. Evzan Klinger, the chief of the Ministry of Information's foreign press section, Dr. Kosta, and the deputy Minister of Foreign Trade, Dr. Loebl, all of whom had disappeared in October 1949.

On September 1, 1950, there was another hint, from East Germany. Six East German Communist Party members were expelled from the Party on the grounds that they had maintained "close relations" with "the American spy, the 'Good Samaritan,' Noel Field." Field was identified as a "superagent" on the staff of Allen W. Dulles in the O.S.S.

Finally, on March 3, 1951, the Associated Press reported from Geneva, Switzerland, that Czech refugee circles had heard that Noel Field had been brought from Moscow to confront Clementis, who had meanwhile been arrested. The confrontation was said to have taken place in Kolodeje Castle where Clementis was being held. On April 20, the Associated Press carried a report from the same sources that Noel Field, after being kept

in Prague for two weeks, from February 22 to March 7, had been returned to Lubianka Prison in Moscow. This was the first indication that Noel Field had been taken to Moscow. It seems likely to be true, and it would not be surprising if the entire family, Noel, Hermann, Herta and Erika had all been arrested, not by the police of any of the satellite countries, but by the Soviet Russian secret police. The whole family knew important Communists not only in the satellite countries but in Soviet Russia as well. Now that Noel had been thoroughly exposed in the Hiss trial and in the articles and book written by Hede Massing, neither he nor the rest of the family could be of any further use to Soviet Russia. On the contrary, they might be extremely dangerous. What could be more logical from the Soviet Russian point of view than to kidnap the whole family?

Perhaps Noel or Hermann will reappear as a witness in the trial of some Czech or East German Communists who have fallen from grace. But neither is likely to reappear as a free man.

There remain, however, two people who still have hope, and who are fighting as best they can for the Fields — Hermann Field's wife, who is living in a London suburb, and a sister Elsie, who is living in Urbana, Illinois. Mrs. Hermann Field has tried telegraphing, on the one hand, to the Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, and on the other hand to the Czech Minister of the Interior, Vaclav Nosek, and the Polish Minister of Security, Stanislav Radkiewicz. To Acheson she appealed for action, and to the Communist ministers she appealed for mercy for her husband who had been "nearly killed" saving the lives of refugees after the Nazis invaded Czechoslovakia.

The sister, Elsie, who is a doctor of medicine, told newspaper reporters on September 2, 1950, that she was convinced her brothers had been arrested in order to serve as "a convenient nail on which to hang guilt of treason of high-ranking persons whom the Cominform desires to liquidate." On July 20, 1951, Elsie Field wrote in a letter to the *New York Times:*

> For nearly two years, Mrs. Hermann Field in London, friends, and I in this country have continued to make every effort to locate them [the Fields] and to get the State Department not only to hold the country on whose territory they were arrested responsible for them but to take determined and drastic steps against that country in the form of sanctions, diplomatic and economic.
>
> I am convinced that had the State Department acted in a downright manner and shown that the United States will not tolerate

such treatment of United States citizens by Communist countries the subsequent arrests of our citizens would have been prevented. The United States could have gained both prestige and respect from these countries and the American passport would have had some real status. Instead, by letting the Cominform countries get away with their action in the case of the Fields, the United States has, in the eyes of the Communist world, been reduced to a miserably weak and low stature. It has in effect given the Cominform countries assurance that they can safely arrest, kidnap and imprison our citizens.

Strong and determined State Department action, resorting to reprisals if necessary, for the Fields would have prevented the later arrests — would have spared Robert Vogeler the tortures of his trial and imprisonment; would have spared William Oatis the tortures of preparation for his mock trial and the conviction.

I hope with all the energy that is still in me that the Department of State will act, not just talk, when the freedom and lives of American citizens are involved; that the Associated Press, all of our press, will not be beguiled, as I was, by the repeated declarations from our top diplomats that use of sanctions would throw us into war, would endanger our whole nation.

ELSIE H. FIELD, M.D.

Miss Field's fighting words are admirable; they make a lot of sense as a general statement about protection of American citizens in Communist countries. It would be a lot easier to apply the general statement to this case if we knew for certain whether the members of the family who have disappeared were espionage agents, and for whom, and whether they were double agents. The State Department's motives in the matter are inscrutable, and rightly so.

CHAPTER 19 The Czechoslovak Armed Forces

THE CZECHOSLOVAK Communist Party, like any other ruling Communist Party, maintains its position in the state mainly by use of uniformed and secret police. From the days of the *coup d'état* on, however, the Party has felt threatened by, or at least embarrassed by, the existence in the state of another organization exercising force, namely, the armed forces. The army and the air force had always maintained their own hierarchy of authority, united with political authority only at the highest level; they had always cultivated their own traditions, which had nothing to do with the traditions of the then growing Communist Party; they insisted that they should be free from political interference, and the Communists knew that by political interference the officers and many of those of lower rank meant Communist interference. The armed forces were undoubtedly an anti-Communist force, although they never had an opportunity to operate as such. Once in power, therefore, the Communists inevitably devoted urgent and continuous attention to creating a new Communist Army in place of the old one.

The old Czechoslovak Army dates back to the First World War when many Czechoslovak units of the Imperial Austro-Hungarian Army broke away and joined the allied forces of Russia, Italy, France and Britain. At the end of the war when these units returned triumphantly to their homeland they came as living expressions of the triumphant national idea. Ever since, the Czechoslovak Army and the national idea have been closely associated in the minds of the Czechoslovak people.

The army of the new Czechoslovak Republic was a small but doughty force. As a natural consequence of the close Franco-Czechoslovak alliance it was trained according to French military doctrines. Its equipment came from the Skoda Works and was of the best. Unquestionably this army

would have fought the Nazis in 1938 or 1939 if the politicians had given it a chance. But fate did not permit the soldiers of the Czechoslovak Republic to fight together as an army. The best of them scattered across the frontiers and joined the French Army and the British and eventually the Red Army in the struggle against the Nazis. The Czechoslovaks served with distinction; most distinguished of all were the Czechoslovak units with the R.A.F.

After the Second World War the Czechoslovak armed forces were composed of two distinct elements—the men who had served with the Red Army and the men who had served with Western armies. There were some 1500 so-called "Western" army officers, and some 400 airmen who had served with the R.A.F. in the postwar Czechoslovak forces. These men at least—and probably many of those who had been with the Red Army, too—would have been ready to fight to save their newly liberated country from falling into Communist dictatorship. But again, when the critical moment of the Communist *coup d'état* came in February 1948, the politicians did not give them a chance.

Immediately after the *coup d'état* the Communists went to work purging the army of Western elements. This was the first prerequisite for the development of a new army on Soviet lines. The easiest part of the job consisted of dismissing those officers who had openly shown themselves enemies of the Communists before February. More difficult was the purge of those who found it wiser to conceal their feelings. Against these the Communists mobilized their secret police which ferreted out such "information" as was published in *Rude Pravo* on February 9, 1949, "disclosing" the names of twenty-eight generals who had allegedly been ready to seize power ever since the summer of 1947.

The first officer of the topmost rank to be purged was General Janousek, chief of the air force, who was sentenced to death late in 1948 after he had been caught trying to leave the country illegally. Later his sentence was commuted to eighteen years' imprisonment.

The next top-ranking victim was the army's postwar deputy chief of staff, General Heliodor Pika, who was convicted of high treason on January 28, 1949, and was hanged. At a secret trial before a State Court in Prague, he was accused of supplying the British secret service with political, industrial and military secrets between 1945 and 1948. Furthermore, he was accused—and this probably carried most weight with the court—of providing the British with secret information about the Soviet Union

while he was chief of the Czechoslovak military mission in the Soviet Union during World War II.

Then on May 16, 1949, General Karel Kutlvasr, leader of the Prague uprising of May 1945, was sentenced to life imprisonment for participating in a "plot to overthrow the government." The State Court of Prague sentenced three men to death and nine others to long prison terms in connection with this alleged plot. They were accused of maintaining contact with the secret service of a foreign power, transmitting state secrets of military, economic and political nature to that power by radio, and accumulating weapons and explosives. The arrest of Kutlvasr, one of the country's most popular military personalities, took place in December 1948, but was not made public until February 3, 1949.

The cases of these three generals were representative of the charges against, and the fates of, most of the other "Western" officers and higher noncommissioned officers purged before or since. The Communists were in a hurry, for Czechoslovakia was both the last of the countries to be drawn into the Soviet orbit and the one with the highest proportion of "Western" officers. They purged the corps of reserve officers along with the regulars. The air force, with its high proportion of "Westerners," got special attention. All aircraft were grounded for a week after the coup while the political reliability of flying personnel was investigated.

Altogether four or five hundred "Western" officers and higher-ranking noncommissioned officers have been arrested — most of them in the first two years after the Communists took over — and 1000 or more have been dismissed from the armed forces, or, if they were lucky, prematurely pensioned. Several hundred army and air force regulars have succeeded in fleeing to the West (and most of these hope someday to take part in a military campaign to drive the Communists out of their country). Small wonder that foreign military observers estimated, a year after the Communists had taken over, that the Czechoslovak armed forces had declined 10 per cent in numbers.

While the purge of Western elements was in progress — in a desultory fashion it is still going on and is unlikely to be finished for many a year — a number of other processes were going on in the Czechoslovak armed forces. The organization, the size of units, the hierarchy of ranks, the type of commands used and the type of insignia were all revised so that Czechoslovak units might, in time, be conveniently fitted into a Soviet force. At the same time the units were re-equipped with Soviet-made weapons. The Czechoslovaks could make all kinds of weapons of their own, but they

have not been encouraged to manufacture anything except light military equipment. The cautious Russians prefer that for the heavier weapons, artillery and tanks, the Czechoslovaks should be dependent on the Soviet Union.

Finally, to replace the purged men, new officers drawn from the ranks or from the working class were trained. This process was probably the most important of all. The first Communist officers' training school opened in October 1948 with eighteen-year-old volunteers from factories and farms. The sons of the bourgeoisie were excluded. For younger proletarians the government, in March 1949, opened two military schools named after the Hussite hero, Zizka of Trocnov, at Moravska Trebova in Moravia and at Spisska Nova Ves in Slovakia. Here, war orphans and the sons of workers and peasants were given an opportunity to complete their secondary education in preparation for study at the military academy. The Soviet Suvorov military academies, established in 1943 for war orphans, served as models for the Czechoslovak institutions.

The type of army the working class officers were to command was described in the preamble of the law on military service which went into effect on October 1, 1949. It stated that the army is a political as well as military organization and that its duty as the army of the People's Democracy is to defend the interests of the working class and the "accomplishments of the national and democratic revolution."

In the same spirit, the new soldier's oath of loyalty began with the words: "I, citizen of the people's democratic Czechoslovak Republic, solemnly swear . . . ," and ended as follows: "And if I should violate this my solemn oath may I be punished by the severe laws of the people's democracy and by the general hatred and contempt of the working people." Neither in the oath nor in the ceremony, which is administered once a year, is there any religious touch. Instead of raising their hands in an oath before God, soldiers, noncommissioned officers and officers step forward individually to tables decorated with Czechoslovak and Soviet flags, read the oath aloud and sign it.

Under the military service law, all males between the ages of seventeen and sixty become liable to military service. They must do two years' military training beginning at the age of nineteen and must take part in periodic refresher training thereafter. Military service was made voluntary for women except in times of emergency.

In the new Czechoslovak Army, military service is conducted entirely according to Soviet Russian principles. Recruits spend their two years of

military service more or less isolated in barracks. Short leaves are accorded only as special reward. The heads of recruits are shaved. The traditional form of address of "Mister" followed by the rank has been abolished. Instead officers have to be addressed as "Comrade" followed by the rank. Outside of military service ordinary soldiers may address officers with the familiar second person singular, but in service they must use the formal second person plural. Military discipline is severe and is characterized by two features unfamiliar in Western armies. Any soldier possesses the right, at least in theory, to appeal to his highest superior or to report to him. He is even required by the regulations to report any misuse of army property or other abuses he may observe, and Minister of Defense Alexei Cepicka complained soon after he took office that men in the ranks were not lodging enough complaints against their officers. He meant, of course, the "Western, bourgeois" officers. The other feature unfamiliar to Westerners is that the military discipline regulations also provide rewards for exceptional service. These may consist of a public citation, remission of punishment, gifts of money, up to ten days' leave, or transmission of a special report concerning the individual's service for publication in his home town.

Military maneuvers are carried on under warlike conditions with live ammunition. Improvisation and camouflage are especially cultivated. Yet military training in the field occupies a relatively small part of the time of recruits and regulars alike. Much of their time is devoted to insistent political training. Every morning they hear a half-hour interpretation of political events. During the day they are likely to be exposed to a lecture or two emphasizing the superiority of Stalinist Communism as well as of Soviet military theory and practice. They are told that there can be no "coexistence" of the old French military doctrine and the new military doctrines based on Marxism because the one is based on the exploitation of man by man and the other on the interests of the working class. In the evening they may engage in some cultural activity such as attending one of the three soldiers' theaters in Prague, where they will find their political lessons served up again in the guise of entertainment.

After about four months of combined military and political training recruits are often sent to join a "voluntary brigade" doing work of "national importance." The regular army now spends most of its time in this sort of activity. The work may be in agriculture, in the mines, on road construction, building projects and sometimes in factories. Units of the regular army are required to "adopt" a state farm or a group of co-opera-

tives near their camp so that they may help the farmers when needed, and the farmers are in turn expected to supply extra food to the army units.

In this army any private can, in theory, qualify for officers' training and rise in rank without limitations. At all levels promotions are not by seniority but according to merit and the results of periodic examinations. The regulations sound democratically ideal until you realize that by "merit" is meant mainly that the individual has a good Communist record.

Long before the purge of Western-minded bourgeois elements in the army was over and the installation of new officers, new methods of organization and new equipment had been completed, the Communists began the inevitable and continuous process of purging their own ranks in the army.

The first stage in the purge of Communists began in April 1950 with the appointment of Dr. Alexei Cepicka, President Gottwald's son-in-law, as Minister of National Defense, replacing General Ludvik Svoboda. The General was "kicked upstairs" into a vice-premiership "in charge of sports," which proved a steppingstone to political oblivion. At the same time Colonel General Jaroslav Prochazka was appointed Chief of Staff replacing General Drgac and Colonel General Bohumil Lastovicka, and General Bedrich Reicin became Deputy Minister of Defense. General Reicin assumed the duties of chief of army intelligence and was reputed to enjoy the confidence of the former Soviet Ambassador Zorin, now Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister. He and Lieutenant Colonel Kopold, chief of the army's cadre section and son-in-law of Maria Svermova, deputy secretary general of the Communist Party, became the principal Kremlin agents in the army.

The second stage in the purge of Communists began in the autumn of 1950 when Generals Reicin and Kopold were removed and arrested for complicity in an antistate plot allegedly hatched by Maria Svermova and the secretary of the Party at Brno, Otto Sling. Generals Prochazka and Lastovicka were removed in February 1952 and replaced by Major General Vaclav Kratochvil who became chief of staff and Major General Vaclav Thor who became Deputy Minister of Defense. And as usual these changes at the top were merely the foam on the wave that engulfed hundreds of lower-ranking officers although the purge among Communists did not affect quite so many men as the earlier purge of "Westerners."

I will leave the explanation of this purge, which was connected with Rudolf Slansky's fall, to a chapter on politics and confine myself here to noting the effects on the army. The sudden removal of many of the new

Communist officers, hard on the heels of the removal of so many experienced "Westerners," has undoubtedly shaken morale and weakened the Czechoslovak Army as a fighting force.

It may be, however, that this decline does not greatly worry Dr. Alexei Cepicka, who has managed to keep firmly in the saddle astride the armed forces since early 1950. For him there appear to be two big objectives: first to keep the Russians out of the army insofar as possible, to convince them that he, son-in-law of the President of the Republic, will safeguard Soviet interests and that they do not need to appoint a Soviet citizen such as Poland's Rokossovsky to head the army; second, to keep control of the army domestically for himself and other intimate supporters of President Gottwald.

In the first objective he has succeeded, although the large Soviet military mission of nearly 1000 men headed by Colonel General Nikolai Ivanovitch Gusev is an ever-present reminder that the Russians are there to take over in case of need.

In the second objective, too, he has succeeded, by purging the friends and supporters of Rudolf Slansky who happened also to be Gottwald's rivals and the outstanding "Muscovites" in the army. Slansky, who had had a hand in directing partisan activities in Czechoslovakia during the war and fancied himself a military expert, had built up some personal following in the army while the officers corps was being renewed. Now the Slansky group was swept out of the armed forces.

The Soviet Russians appear to have found it convenient to accept Cepicka as their man and to give him a free hand in getting rid of the Slansky crowd without worrying about the effects on the military effectiveness of the armed forces. Why?

From the Soviet point of view the political reliability of the Czechoslovak Army is more important than anything else. They have doubts about the loyalty of the Czechoslovak forces to the Soviet Union, as well they may, considering the Western political and cultural past of the Czechs and their record during the First and Second World Wars. And the Soviets are willing to accept whoever seems best equipped to keep this army in line politically.

The Soviets cannot forget that Czechoslovakia occupies an extremely important sector on their western front. There is still truth in Bismarck's dictum that he who rules Bohemia rules Europe: main east-west and north-south lines of communication pass through Bohemia; Slovakia extends to the Danube River Valley; and the Tatras in Slovakia or the lower

mountains of the former Sudetenland might serve as important lines of defense.

The Czechoslovak armed forces, now totaling about 150,000 men, plus 100,000 men in the security police, necessarily form a cog in the Soviet Union's military machine in the west. Here the Soviets themselves maintain about 600,000 men. The satellites contribute another 1,000,000 men in regular armed forces plus about 800,000 in security police units.

Within this force the Czechoslovaks along with the Poles have been assigned an anti-German role, while the military attention of the other satellites has been directed towards Titoist Yugoslavia, towards Greece and Turkey. In a war between the Communist world and the Western powers the probability of Czechoslovak desertions would be lessened if they were employed against the Germans. Only a few years ago all political elements in Czechoslovakia, as in Poland, united in ruthlessly expelling some millions of Germans; to the old fear and hatred of the Germans has now been added the fear of the Germans' return. Thus the Soviets, while condemning nationalism in principle, in fact turn it to their own ends.

In time of war the Soviets would probably try to use the Czechoslovaks in defensive operations on their own soil, and preferably against Germans. If this did not prove possible, they would try to use the Czechoslovaks behind the lines as service troops.

With these limitations to their usefulness in mind, the Soviets have, nonetheless, endowed the new Czechoslovak armed forces with Soviet weapons. On May Day, 1950, I saw some 280 Russian-built tanks roll through Wenceslas Square. They included about 150 T–34 medium Stalin tanks, the type used by the Chinese in North Korea, and a variety of Russian and Czech self-propelled, antiaircraft, antitank and other guns. The motorized units rode in what appeared to be Studebaker six by six trucks or very faithful Russian imitations. In new, well-cut uniforms the troops looked smart. Their equipment looked up-to-date. But this after all was a parade and it would be a mistake to draw from it too many conclusions. Western observers suspected that the tanks accounted for Czechoslovakia's entire armored force, but they could not be certain.

The Czechoslovaks have two armored divisions (Hungary two, Rumania three, Poland four). This, however, does not necessarily indicate the total number of their tanks since the trend in the satellite armies is to have one tank battalion in each motorized division. The total number of tanks in the satellite armies was probably between 2000 and 2500 at the beginning of 1952.

One of the most effective Czechoslovak units — and most reliable from the Communist point of view — is the motorized security police division. This division gets the best of whatever equipment is available; its unchallenged position as a military elite is illustrated by the fact that its recruits are paid no less than ten times as much as ordinary army recruits.

The Czechoslovak air force was at first kept very small for political reasons. The first group of flying officers recruited exclusively from workers' and peasants' families was ceremoniously commissioned on June 18, 1950, and Cepicka took the occasion to assert that Czechoslovak industry was in a position to deliver complete aircraft of the most modern models. Since then the air force has rapidly expanded with both Soviet and Czech makes of jet aircraft.

All the Czechoslovak armed forces have expanded steadily since the first convulsive purge of "Westerners" in 1948. In 1951 Czechoslovakia followed the general trend among the satellites by spending 15,623,000,-000 crowns on the armed forces out of a total budget of 166,200,000,000 crowns, which was about twice as much as she had spent on the armed forces in 1948. The figure did not include the security police expenditures which were hidden in the estimates of various ministries. In the budget for 1952, armed forces expenditures rose to 22,400,000,000 crowns.

Each year Czechoslovakia, like the other satellites, spends more, and a larger proportion of total expenditures, on her armed forces. Each year she devotes more of her national income to heavy industry representing an arms-making potential even if it does not actually represent arms production. Each year Czechoslovakia is more nearly prepared for war. When will Czechoslovakia, and the other satellites, and their Soviet Russian rulers be ready?

Military observers in Prague and other Communist capitals have tended to estimate that they will have reached a state of full military preparedness by the autumn of 1952. But such estimates depend on the definition of preparedness and are little more than guesses. Of certain things, however, I am convinced, on the basis of all that I know about the Czechoslovaks: the Russians and the Communists are purging and training and bullying in vain; that in time of war the Good Soldier Schweik will be heard from once again; that the Czechoslovak armed forces will desert the Red Army at the first opportunity, while the Czechoslovak people sabotage their Soviet masters where it will do the most good.

PART IV
The Sovietization of Mind and Spirit

CHAPTER 20 Eastern and Western Cultural Traditions

IN his work *Problems of Leninism,* Stalin set development of national cultures as an immediate objective; he had, as an eventual objective, the fusion of these cultures into a single "socialist culture."

Communist propagandists always stress the first of Stalin's objectives; and they divert attention from the extensive efforts already being made to realize the second one. These efforts consist of imposing Soviet Russia's Eastern cultural heritage on parts of the Soviet sphere, such as Czechoslovakia, where the national heritage is specifically Western. It is, in fact, as much or more a Russian thing than a Socialist thing the Communists are imposing.

Few people realize how deep and historical is the cultural gulf between Russia and the West. In the development of that gulf there were three stages: the doctrinal schism between the Churches of Rome and Byzantium in 1053, which was reinforced by the great difficulty of communication between East and West imposed by marauding Arabs; the first Crusades, beginning in 1096, which strengthened the Church of Rome; and the Tatar invasion of Russia beginning around 1237, which completely cut off Russia from the Western world for some two hundred years.

Even before the schism a good foundation for a separate and autocratic development in Russia was laid by Vladimir I of Kiev who became a Christian in the year 989, brought Greek priests from Byzantium, and established the Christian church as an institution firmly under his control as the monarch. He imposed Christianity from above, and all that went with it in the way of cultural life, literature, art and poetry, and subjected them to the authority of the crown. In the centuries that have followed, Russia has never departed very far from this pattern. For a short time in the tenth and eleventh centuries, and even in the twelfth, a splen-

did Christian civilization developed around Kiev. The city's many churches were renowned throughout Europe. The city maintained overland contacts with Rome and other Western centers, and its culture was in some respects a synthesis of East and West.

But then came the Tatars, and the Russians were cut off. Before, during and after the Tatar invasion, the Russians tended to copy the Tatars and to be preoccupied with their great eastern territories. As a consequence, Russia was not affected by Western cultural developments. Though in the West, Catholic theological studies led to the early development of universities, Moscow University was not founded until many centuries later — in 1750. Nor did Russia share in the intellectual movements of the Renaissance and of humanism, out of which grew the Western conception of the value of individualism and of human freedom.

After the invaders had been driven out, Russia was too much concerned with internal problems to be touched by the ethical and religious currents of the Reformation which shaped much of Western thinking and stimulated the rise of modern democracy.

Russia remained isolated by her great distances, the autocratic rule of the czars, and the economic backwardness of the country. While towns were developing in the West, and with them artisans and the bourgeoisie, Russia's development lagged, even though Peter the Great and others before and after him imported scholars, engineers and artisans from Sweden, Holland, England, Italy, France and Germany. It became a habit of mind among many Russians to look to the West for progress and culture. "Cultured" Russians were those who spoke French or German and more rarely English. These influences made the eighteenth century fruitful both economically and intellectually in Russia. But in the nineteenth century, Russia slipped far behind the rest of Europe again. For this there are a great many explanations. One of the most convincing is that, because coal resources were not easily available and were far removed from iron-ore deposits and from population centers, Russia could not keep up with the development of the steam engine. Not until the twentieth century, especially under the Soviet regime, were effective efforts made to overcome the particular economic problems set by Russian geography.

The economic decadence of the nineteenth century was accompanied by a reaction against the "Westernizers" and the rise of "Slavophiles" who insisted that Russia should concentrate on the values of specifically Slav literature and art. Much of the work of the Slavophiles was creative, but their resentment of Western influence was a powerful source of isolation.

This is a contradiction in Russian life that has persisted down to the present Communist regime. Stalin, who at first told his followers they must "catch up to and overtake the West," later embraced the Slavophiles, including their most recent fatuous insistence upon Russian priority in science and all other spheres of endeavor. At the same time, he has carried to its *reductio ad absurdum* the czarist principle that all manifestations of cultural life must be in the service of the state.

The essential difference between East and West in terms of culture can be distilled into a definition. The definition perhaps has in it an element of caricature, which can, I think, be used to point up the truth: The peculiarity of Western thought lies in its insistence upon form, procedure, method, technique, as a means of excluding prejudgments and attaining substantive truth. Although the East has produced much wisdom, it has been deficient in developing intellectual tools, apart from the inner psychological processes.

The East is content to be right, to know the truth, content to believe its rightness on authority. Because it has its predetermined idea of what the truth is, the East is not much concerned with the method by which the truth is attained. The West insists on choice; that is an essential part of its technique in seeking truth. There must be freedom to pick alternatives; as the archbishop said in *Murder in the Cathedral:*

> *The last temptation is the greatest treason:*
> *To do the right deed for the wrong reason.*

This difference in method applies to political ideology and political practice, to literature and art, to journalism, to science. On the one hand is dictatorship, more or less totalitarian. On the other hand, fixed rules of procedure protect the public's freedom of political choice; the techniques of objectivity in journalism offer the public freedom to pass its own judgments on public issues; for the writer, artist or scientist the method consists of full freedom to choose his own method — and the public remains at liberty to accept or reject his output.

During the entire czarist period and even under Communist rule between the two wars, Russia's internal weaknesses and troubles were such that Russian cultural influence extended very little beyond her borders. The generalization can stand even though Russian influence was to some extent carried to Poland and the Baltic countries by way of conquest, and into the Greek Orthodox part of the Balkans by way of Russian help in liberation from the Turks, and into all the Slav countries by way of Pan-

Slav feeling. The predominant cultural orientation of the entire area Russia was to absorb or reduce to the status of satellite, remained Westward until the end of the Second World War. Hugh Seton-Watson states the case well in his book *East European Revolution:*

> The social structure and political regime of Eastern Europe (except Czechoslovakia) between the World Wars were nearer to those of imperial Russia than of Western Europe. But its culture was far more Western than that of imperial Russia had ever been. And cultural traditions, though held most strongly by the fairly small educated class, or intelligentsia, penetrated also to other classes, including even the impoverished peasantry. The influence of school and of Catholic and Protestant churches insured this.

Elsewhere he points out that in this area:

> . . . scientific discoveries, literary and artistic influence and the main political ideas all came from France, Germany, or Anglo-Saxon countries. East European intellectuals thought themselves to be part of a single European culture and their ambition was to be accepted as equals by their Western colleagues.

In this picture the great exception was and is Czechoslovakia. Not only was Czechoslovakia Western in culture, but also in social structure and political regime. Indeed, Czechoslovakia is not geographically, nor in any other sense, an eastern European country. She is central European. She may today be classified with eastern Europe only as she is among the countries that Russia has swallowed up since the Second World War, and is, as a result, now increasingly cut off from her neighbors to the West and more closely integrated with her neighbors to the east.

To bear out the point, to appreciate the enormity of what is happening in Czechoslovakia today, it is necessary to know how Czech culture developed. The essential facts are worth recapitulating.

At the beginning of the story of Czech culture are Saints Cyril and Methodius, Christian missionaries from Constantinople, who, in the year 863, while Christianizing the Czechs, almost succeeded in establishing a link between the civilizations of East and West. But conquest by the Magyars and the Franks of the Greater Moravian Empire, which covered much of the area of modern Czechoslovakia, eliminated this possibility. Cyril and Methodius are remembered best by Europeans as the first champions of national self-determination. Their writings survived for the Czech scholars who gathered around central Europe's first university, founded

in Prague by Emperor Charles IV in 1348. One of these scholars was Jan Hus whose ideas at the end of the fourteenth century and the beginning of the fifteenth anticipated the Reformation.

After the defeat of the Hussites by the Hapsburgs in 1620, the Czech Hussite intelligentsia and bourgeoisie were scattered across Europe, where their intellectual and moral influence undoubtedly contributed to the German and Swiss Reformations, to the Puritan movement in England, and eventually to eighteenth-century rationalism and the French Revolution. But meanwhile the Hapsburgs suppressed the heretical Hussite communions and prohibited the use of Bibles in the Czech language. Austro-German influence became so dominant that the Czech language almost disappeared from the towns. Goethe, who sympathized with the Czechs, thought it doubtful that they would ever be able to revive their national language. And indeed, German remained the indispensable second language of all educated Czechs until the founding of the first Republic in 1918. It began to die out after World War I, but remained in very wide use until the expulsion of the Germans from Czechoslovakia in 1945. In the year 1950, I found that I could get along with German in the Czech lands, although it was not always a comfortable thing to do. Almost all educated Czechs and a good many others had a working knowledge of German or better, but they did not always like to use it. Many would rather struggle with sketchy English or French than use the language of which they had purged themselves when they expelled 3,000,000 Sudeten Germans from their Republic. Little by little, of course, wartime and post-war passions are being forgotten—by anti-Communists, under the realization that if Czechoslovakia is ever to be liberated from Communist tyranny it will probably be with the West Germans as allies; and by Communists, under the influence of "international proletarianism" which pictures the Germans of the East German Republic as completely reformed good neighbors. Cultural exchanges between Czechoslovakia and East Germany, usually in the form of traveling orchestras and choral groups, are getting more and more frequent.

The German language might have driven Czech out of Bohemia altogether had it not been for Emperor Joseph II's Edict of Tolerance in 1781, which made possible the movement of "National Awakening," early in the nineteenth century. This revived consciousness of national integrity, drawing inspiration from romanticism and the French Revolution, was from then on the spur in intellectual and artistic life. Czech thinkers once again became keenly aware that they were Czechs, and Slavs, and

they returned intellectually and ethically, if not religiously, to the Hussite tradition. The greatest leader of this movement was Frantisek Palacky, who passed his enthusiasm on to his pupil, T. G. Masaryk, first president of the Czechoslovak Republic.

Starting in about 1870, Czech intellectuals began to look beyond Germany to France, and to some extent to England, for foreign inspiration. From time to time there were efforts to make contact with Russian intellectual life for, as Slavs, the Czechs felt a natural admiration for the only sovereign Slav state; but initiatives in this direction were repeatedly disappointed. Nor did the Pan-Slav idea, which came naturally to the "awakeners," develop into anything more than a sentimental movement.

Karel Havlicek, hero of the 1848 Revolution and founder of the Czech journalistic tradition, traveled to Russia and returned appalled by czarist absolutism. And T. G. Masaryk, although he loved Russian literature, shared Havlicek's aversion to the autocracy in imperial Russia.

The Czech people, however, did not take readily to Russian literature, for Russian mysticism did not suit the practical, skeptical Czech. Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Turgenev and other Russian writers remained little known to them, and even Czech writers knew these authors largely through their influence upon French literature.

After the First World War, the Czech cultural world turned more and more toward France for inspiration, and followed faithfully the epidemic of intellectual "isms" which broke out in Paris between the two wars. Especially popular was Charles Louis Philippe, whom the Czech writer F. X. Salda called the "freshest, most human French writer, and the one closest to the Slavs." Yet while they followed Paris for literary and artistic inspiration, many Czech intellectuals were politically influenced by the Russian Revolution. It was easy for them, as Slavs, to believe in the Russian millennium. Nevertheless, as the years went by, most of them, like Havlicek and Masaryk before them, were disappointed. The 1936 purges and the Soviet-Nazi pact disillusioned them. As citizens of a small country, the Czechs were especially sensitive to the Soviet attack on Finland, just as their fathers had been to the ruthless suppression of Polish revolts against imperial Russia in 1863.

After the Second World War, pro-Western Czech intellectuals were drawn spiritually toward America, devouring avidly the writers of whom they had been deprived during the war. The bookshops were full of Faulkner, O'Neill, Hemingway, Sinclair Lewis, Steinbeck and others. The general public crowded endlessly into the United States Information Service

library in Prague in search of answers to what seemed to them, as Europeans, the mysteries of America. They looked for leadership, intellectual and ideological, from America, but I fear they were never quite satisfied.

The Czechs had not forgotten their old attachment to Paris, nor their affection for England, but after the great betrayal of Munich, England and France were a little discredited. French culture, especially, seemed tarnished. Still, this did not prevent the existentialism of the Frenchman Jean-Paul Sartre from having a great postwar vogue.

Opposing the Westerners was a furious crowd of Communist intellectuals who derided all cultural currents from the West as decadent and bourgeois.

It was a time, and that time has not yet passed, when culture got more than usually mixed up with politics and economics, mainly because the Communists insisted that everything — even to the remotest manifestation of culture — was, and must be, determined by political and economic ideology. The course of Czech cultural life after the Second World War therefore depended on the course of East-West rivalry.

In Czechoslovakia this conflict never really took the form of a debate between capitalism and Communism. Capitalism, in its old form, had been thrown out by sweeping nationalization of basic industry right after the war. Most of the men who might have spoken up for capitalism had been silenced by charges of collaboration with the Nazis.

The fact was that almost everyone in Czechoslovakia accepted some brand of socialism after 1945. The debate became one between socialists with Western orientation and Communists with Russian orientation.

The policy of President Benes, and the regime of which he was the head, was to synthesize socialism and the rights of man. And for a time he seemed to succeed very well. Politically, the "democratic" parties coexisted with the Communists; economically, private business coexisted with a large nationalized sector; culturally, the "Westerners" coexisted with the strident new exponents of Soviet culture. This was the nature of the attempt made by Benes and his regime between 1945 and 1948 to bridge the gulf between East and West. The Czechs who, in the time of Cyril and Methodius, made their first attempt to build this bridge, failed in the twentieth century as they had in the ninth. The ideologies did not prove irreconcilable; it was the Russian element that foredoomed the attempt from the beginning. The authoritarian heart of the East was incapable of admitting coexistence. Mutual tolerance was a typically Western bit of methodology;

representatives of the East in the Communist Party could not rest until they had imposed what they knew to be the truth.

Before the impossibility of coexistence was finally proved by the Communist *coup d'état* in February 1948, some of the anti-Communist intellectuals, who believed both in socialism and in the rights of man, had a good deal to say. Among the most interesting were Vaclav Cerny, literary historian and editor of the *Critical Monthly,* and Jindrich Chalupecky, a young art critic and essayist. Cerny, pointing out that Marxism was originally a Western idea which happened to be realized in the Byzantine-Oriental culture of Russia, believed in the possibility of reconciling Eastern and Western forms of Marxism, and Eastern and Western cultures. In matters of human freedom and of literature he was diametrically opposed to the Communists. "I will not sacrifice the smallest part of human freedom," he wrote in 1947. Yet he believed at that time in the sincerity of the Communist writers who had joined with him in a wartime underground manifesto guaranteeing absolute freedom of literature.

Chalupecky was more astute politically. In 1946, during the East-West honeymoon, he wrote in the quarterly *Listy* that it was impossible to reconcile "past and future, East and West, Bergsonism, psychoanalysis and surrealism with Marxism." He protested against the limitations which the uniform cultural program of the Soviet Union would impose if applied to Czechoslovak culture. He thought the U.S.S.R. could be an antidote to the decadence he discerned in the Western world, but he would not go along with the Communists in wholesale identification of Western culture with political reaction. He objected to the one-sidedness of Soviet culture.

A critical approach of this kind was of course intolerable to the Communists. So far as I know, Cerny and Chalupecky are still living in Czechoslovakia, but, like many others, they have been silenced. Let us now examine what the Communists have done to the Czech cultural life.

CHAPTER 21 Socialist Realism

AS soon as the Communists were firmly in power in February 1948, they forced upon the Czechoslovak cultural world their own theory of art, literature, history and science. In each branch of cultural activity, they proceeded to purge and reorganize. Their object was not merely to change Czech literature, art, historical scholarship and science. This was just the beginning. They had set out to change the entire character of the Czech people, to break their thousand-year-old Western traditions, to create what they sometimes called "socialist man," actually an Eastern, Soviet Russian man.

The Communist Party "line" for all kinds of cultural activity is called socialist realism. It was expounded by Professor Ladislav Stoll, top Communist Party theoretician, at a Congress of National Culture on April 10 and 11, 1948.

In the future the one and only valid intellectual and artistic standard would be socialist realism. This was nothing new. Zhdanov and others in Moscow had discussed it aplenty. But it was very new in Czechoslovakia where almost everyone, even Communists, used, and had always used, standards common to the West.

Socialist realism is a theory that all artistic inspiration should come from "the people," especially from the workers and from their work, or from the material things with which the people work. The form of artistic expression may vary according to the artist's personality, so long as it is easily understandable by the people; what really matters is the ideological conception behind the form.

On this theme Stoll expanded at great length. He attacked the exponents of art for art's sake who, "posing aristocratically as princes of poetry, vaunt their loyalty in the service of pure beauty, unsoiled by life, people who are without the burning, creative inner soul of the artist."

He attacked poetic solitude, formalism and rationalism which are, he said, "the way of people who live remote from real life, who formally and

laboriously seek out the decoration of unusual association of words, colors and forms for the cold speculations of their brains, in order to cover their own embarrassment, so that they can thereby hide their spinelessness and inability to breathe into their work strong, original, truthful ideas inspired by life itself, and hence to give it newly discovered form."

Great art, he said, "has always been popular in a true, noble sense of the word, has always been conscious of its close bond with the working man." Great art has also understood the poetry of matter, he said: "Consider how a tinsmith, for instance, looks at a piece of copper plate, or how a potter looks at a lump of potter's clay, how a carpenter sees a plank of ashwood when a sweet-smelling spiral of shavings curls up under his hands on the plane. That is the relationship in which matter, to use Marx's words, smiles upon men with its poetic splendor."

To attain these standards Stoll declared the artist must break once and for all with avant-gardism and modernism. These conceptions, he observed, served their progressive purpose in capitalist society in the past when the "young Czech bourgeoisie" and the "money-makers" were victorious in Czechoslovakia and the best poetry was, quite naturally, "full of longing, sadness, loneliness and individualist defiance." There was, then, "something tragic, even heroic about this individualistic nonconformity."

But today in the People's Democracy, he went on, "it is laughable, indeed, to want to repeat the individualistic and subjectivist attitude of the end of the last century, to ape the non-conformists who quite rightly refused to have anything in common with the world of the rich young Czechs since the latter at that time were becoming the managers of the country and only required culture as an additional decoration to their Japanese screens and artistic palm-trees."

Today, he said, there must be an end to "all those dilemmas into which some artists lead people in their pictures, plays, poems and novels, those uncertainties which used to be expressed in the dishonest word 'interesting.' "

Today, "the main prerequisite for the success and victory of the new art is a conscious return from the world of abstract ideas to the full-blooded reality of life."

Today, "the artist must realize with the profoundest joy . . . that he can remain a revolutionary without coming into conflict with the state, without conflict with the ministers and representatives of the state who in fact are striving after the same thing and working in common with the

artist to break the old curse of gold and set up new human rights in place of hypocritical charity and philanthropy."

Other points made by Stoll were these:

1. The artist can never stand aside from the struggle of the people for socialism. If he would be an artist he must join in the struggle.

2. The artist should let himself go. That is, he should "cease to be ashamed of his natural human feelings, of his burning enthusiasms . . . because people want to be gripped by an artistic work. And they are quite right in wanting this . . . they want to be moved to tears or to laughter . . . to thunder applause."

3. Literary critics and theoreticians must not be merely formalistic and esthetic in their criticisms. They should try to popularize the classics of literature among the people. They must "achieve a socialist outlook on the whole treasury of classical, national and world literature, an outlook that completely revalues everything . . . not only Pushkin, Tolstoy, Saltykov-Shchedrin, Gorki and Majakovsky, but also Homer, Dante, Cervantes, Shakespeare, Rousseau, Rolland, Moore, Saint-Simon, Morelly, etc."

4. If Czech art fulfills its task its product will be "greater than contemporary Western culture." (A nice bit of irony, considering that Czech art has been part of Western culture for a thousand years.)

Stoll pretty well covered the field of socialist realism. Minister of Information Vaclav Kopecky and Minister of Education Zdenek Nejedly have since then brought it up at every possible opportunity, and even President Gottwald has chimed in.

Addressing the Congress of Czech Writers on March 7, 1949, Gottwald warned that under present circumstances "unwillingness of a writer to associate himself with the life of the country . . . amounts to taking the side of bankrupt reactionaries." And Kopecky on the same occasion urged the writers to read Zhdanov and to go out to the factories and villages in order, "in immediate contact with the world of socialist construction to find new materials, new heroes, the heroes of work."

Strictly as a theory of art, "socialist realism" is, in my opinion, both intellectually and artistically tenable. It is tenable as one of many theories of art, just as Marxism is tenable as one of many interpretations of history. What is not tenable, of course, is the claim to exclusive rightness. This is the point where the Communist Party and, through the Communist Party, the Eastern, Russian tradition of autocracy enters. Just as in the case of Marxist socialism, it is the Russian element in the background

that makes it impossible in any country dominated by the Communist Party for "socialist realism" to coexist with other theories.

There is one point in Ladislav Stoll's exposition, where he defends this point of view, which I should like to quote before taking up the Communist conception of history and the fate of the various branches of cultural life in Czechoslovakia:

"How often have we heard the enemies of socialism, under the pretext of protecting the autonomy of culture from politics, maintain that socialism will require poets and artists to forswear their mission, that it will require them to versify political leaders, to write political theses in rhyme, to decline the word 'people' in all its cases, to write, paint and compose propaganda, to create tendentious art 'à la thèse,' etc. In short, that it will require the equivalent of 'breaking up the piano to heat the room with.'"

With his usual thoroughness Stoll has described precisely what has in fact happened to Czech culture. As an illustration, there is a poem about Stalin that was read over Radio Prague by Anthon Harendra Nath on December 21, 1950:

Your face is not the face of just one man, nor even of your own people.
Your face, Comrade Stalin, is the face of the entire world's human history.
You are the gardens of the future, the orchards of the future,
The sunshine and the rainfall feeding harvests which feed the mouths of those who toil and tend the growing harvests.
Men, women and children sing of you; grand machines, magnificent tractors celebrate you in every revolution of wheel and belt.
The pistons of strong engines never weary of spelling out your name;
And all these million pairs of hands are your own pair of hands.
Giant of the Revolution, Comrade Stalin, you are the world's hope, the world's dream, the world's ambition.
You are another name for immortality.
Earth is grateful to you, Comrade Stalin; sunshine is grateful, since you have made it rush into the homes of millions once imprisoned in the dark.
Fields adore you, for you have made them green with plenty,
Every inch of soil is choked with worship of you who have decided to feed the people.
Only cowards deny that you are the authentic parent of all nations; of all nations and all countries.

Only the lips of hirelings twitch when they pronounce your name,
Only bastards deny your parenthood, only stooges slander, only traitors utter vile falsehood,
But you are the power house of man, lighting the homes of millions from afar,
Giant energy, electrifying the world by tyrants darkened,
Power house who lends unstinted illumination to those who draw your power.
But woe to them who tamper with that power, for even as it can illuminate it instantaneously electrocutes.
Comrade Stalin, on your birthday the world salutes you!

CHAPTER 22 Falsification of History

CZECH democracy is based on a philosophy and an interpretation of Czech history. By pervading Czech education and literature, democracy has become part of the mental and moral inheritance of the nation.

The Communists have tried hard to capture, harness and abuse this consciousness of the past and its meaning. That is to say, as a basic step toward Sovietization of Czech culture, they have falsified or distorted Czech history, sometimes to fit their theories, sometimes to fit Stalinist expediency. The Communist system of historical falsification in Czechoslovakia begins with the big basic lie that the Czechs are an eastern European people. Beyond simply asserting this, Communist historians regularly trot out the fact that the ancestors of the Czechs were Christianized by missionaries who came from the East — Byzantium. Some of the Czech Communist leaders, imperfectly informed about their country's history, have played with the idea of creating a cult of Cyril and Methodius, that would be in opposition to the Catholic Church. In the summer of 1949, these Communists were thrilled to hear that the Czech archaeologist, Vilem Hroby, had found a skeleton in the ruins of a ninth-century church at Stare Nesto in Southern Moravia; they believed that these might be the bones of Saint Methodius. The location of the bones was in accordance with an ancient Southern Slavic text called *The Life of Constantine and Methodius,* whose author is unknown, but which is quoted by Palacky in his history of Bohemia. In this manuscript it is written that Methodius "is buried in the great church of Moravia on the left hand side, in the wall behind the altar of the Virgin Mary."

In July 1949, I heard André Simon, the writer, who was then high in Communist counsels, tell the story of Methodius's bones with enthusiasm. But a few months later my Communist sources discouraged the idea that these were really the bones of the saint. More than a year later, at Harvard University, Professor Roman Jakobson, the philologist, who had

spent twenty years of his life teaching at Masaryk University in Brno, Czechoslovakia, told me that Czech scientists actually still believed that they had found Saint Methodius's bones, but that the Communist leaders had had second thoughts on the subject. For, examining history more closely, they could not fail to realize that a cult of Cyril and Methodius would strengthen not the East, but the West. The saints came from Byzantium, but they composed their differences with the Church of Rome, and Methodius was appointed by the Pope Archbishop of Greater Moravia and Pannonia (Hungary and Croatia).

In their accounts of the history of the Hussites, the Czech religious and social reformers of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Communists have officially endorsed the writings of Frantisek Palacky, who saw in the Hussites the high point of Czech history and the basis of the Czech democratic tradition. This is the interpretation of Czech history that was also favored by T. G. Masaryk. In employing this interpretation, the Communists have at the same time made a mockery of it. Palacky's liberal and national idea becomes a revolutionary national idea. The religious significance of Hussitism disappears in exclusive emphasis upon its social significance. And because the Hussites had a radical wing, the Taborites, who developed a kind of Christian Communism, then presume to identify their contemporary materialist Communist movement with the Hussites. Thus, posters advertising historical exhibitions in Prague throughout 1949 showed a worker carrying a hammer and sickle, superposed upon a picture of a Hussite warrior. The Communists wish to suggest to the public that their party is the true inheritor of the noblest, most glorious period of Czech history—the true democratic defenders of the nation against the reactionary Germanic hordes.

By the same token, the Communists identify their enemies of today with the enemies of the Hussites, the present Catholic Church hierarchy with the Catholic Hapsburgs who ruled Czechoslovakia from 1620 to 1918. In order to brand the present Catholic hierarchy as antinational and antisocial, and to stir up feeling, they republished anti-Catholic speeches made at the time when Hapsburg rule was collapsing, entirely ignoring the fact that in subsequent years most of the Germanic elements in Czechoslovakia's Catholic hierarchy were removed and that the Republic reached a *modus vivendi* with the Vatican.

Any suggestion that the period of the Hapsburgs was not one of absolute darkness sends the Communists into paroxysms of fury. Hence Josef Pekar who, two generations after Palacky's death, devoted his at-

tention to the achievements of the periods before and after the Hussites, has been labeled "ultrareactionary." In June 1949, the Communist cultural weekly *Tvorba* accused him of showing "national indifference" because, instead of viewing Hussitism as an entirely independent Czech achievement, he interpreted it as a product of earlier periods and influences in other parts of Europe. Pekar's books are now almost unpurchasable in Prague. Similar fates have overtaken other historians, usually for their alleged "antinational" tendencies. Nationalism is still almost as important to the Communists as it was in the days when the Germans were being driven out of Bohemia. They still find it useful to stimulate popular support with emotional nationalism, although they call it by another name. When nationalism suits their purposes, they call it "socialist patriotism"; when it does not suit their purposes, they call it "bourgeois nationalist deviationism."

The only important approved living historian is, conveniently, Minister of Education, Zdenek Nejedly. Before the Second World War, he was known mainly as a historian of music and a biographer of T. G. Masaryk and Lenin. But now he has published a *History of the Soviet Union,* and the first volume of what is to be a seven-volume history of the Czech people.

In their account of the founding of the Republic, the Communists almost forget to mention the founding triumvirate, T. G. Masaryk, Eduard Benes and Milan Stefanik. They trace the origins of the Republic to the Russian Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 and contend that the members of the "*entente impérialiste*" merely acknowledged what they could not prevent, in the hope of gaining thereby a maximum influence in the new state. Masaryk, in his book *The Making of a State,* acknowledged the influence of the Russian Revolution on Czech public opinion. He wrote that "republicanism was first strengthened among our people, as elsewhere, by the Russian Revolution of 1917." Benes went further in acknowledging the Revolution's influence. But the Communist claims, as usual, are exclusive.

According to the booklet *Czechoslovakia on the Road to Socialism,* published by the Ministry of Information in 1949, the first Republic would have been a "socialist" one from the start, had it not been for the perfidy of the Social Democratic leaders and the violence of the bourgeoisie. The people's hope of socialism, the booklet says, was destroyed by the split in the workers' movement in 1920 when Social Democrats and Communists separated into two parties, and by the brutal

suppression of the general strike the Communists launched at that time.

In Communist eyes, these two events of 1920 were of capital importance. The Communists emphasize them in order to make it appear that the Communist coup of 1948 was the natural culmination of a long internal struggle going back to the beginning of the Republic. Thus they disguise the coup's real nature as a monstrous imposition by alien forces.

With Munich in September 1938, there begins a veritable jungle of Communist distortions and falsifications, among whose luxuriant growth it is sometimes hard to recall the facts. Munich was a "sellout" by the Czech and Western bourgeoisie who preferred submitting to the Nazis to receiving Soviet aid, the Communists say. Indeed, it was a sellout, but the facts, as I understand them, had nothing to do with the bourgeoisie as a class. France and Britain insisted that Czechoslovakia capitulate because, being physically and morally unprepared to fight, they felt obliged to make a deal with Hitler.

The Communist interpretation was stated by Gottwald in rich Marxist prose: "At Munich it was the class interest of the reactionary upper bourgeoisie in England and France which required that the Hitler regime be saved at the expense of Czechoslovakia. It was the class power of the reactionary upper bourgeoisie in Czechoslovakia which ordered the capitulation and sacrificed the interests of the State, the Republic and the nation to the class interests of the cream of the upper bourgeoisie. . . ."

Of course, a point that the Communists do not mention is that from the time Ribbentrop and Molotov signed the Nazi-Soviet alliance in August 1939, until the Nazis invaded Russia in June 1941, the Communists in Czechoslovakia secretly sabotaged the resistance. Official propaganda tries to give the impression that Communist resistance never flagged.

Later on, the Communists did some splendid work in resistance but it is not true—even less true here than in most of the rest of Europe—that they did it all. The middle class, particularly intellectuals, civil servants and officials of the pre-war Republic, bore the brunt of the resistance and of the losses most of the time. The Czech government estimated in 1945, after six years of Nazi occupation, that 38,000 Czechs had been executed. The victims came mostly from the middle class.

Quite unjustly, the Communists claim entire credit for the Slovak rising of August, September and October 1944. They blame the Western powers for failing to send aid to the insurgents and suppress the fact that the Russians, who claimed this as their sphere and presumably

wanted to keep out Western influences, refused clearance to British and American planes ready to fly to Slovakia with ammunition, food and medical supplies. Although the Russians did send the air-borne brigade of Colonel Prikryl, part of the Czech forces in the Soviet Union, to reinforce the insurgents, I believe that the Soviets were not particularly interested in saving the rising, any more than they were interested in saving General Bor's rising in Warsaw. The type of leaders capable of launching a national rising were not the type the Soviets wanted to preserve in a satellite state.

The account of the liberation of Prague is, if possible, even more seriously falsified. Attributing their own practices to the Americans, the Communists charge that the American Army deliberately lingered at Pilsen, instead of rushing to help the insurgents in Prague, because the Americans hoped that the Communists, who had launched the rising in Prague, would be wiped out. (In point of fact, the rising was by no means a predominantly Communist affair.) They repeat that allegation annually on the anniversary of the rising, quite ignoring the documents the State Department has published showing that the Soviet High Command told General Eisenhower to keep out.

To this false charge, the Communists usually link the charge that the American Air Force during the last days of the war deliberately bombed Pilsen, Ostrava, and other points, in order to eliminate postwar competition of Czech industrial capacity. Public mourning for the victims of these air raids is accompanied by extravagant denunciations of the brutal American reactionaries.

The classic example of falsification as practiced by the Communists may be seen in the farce of the *coup d'état* of February 1948. This, they maintain, was not at all a "Communist coup" but the defensive reaction of the "people" against preparations for a *Putsch* made by the bourgeois political parties — the National Socialists, the People's Party and the Slovak Democratic Party. In some accounts they even claim that the bourgeois *Putsch* was planned by Americans.

The booklet *Czechoslovakia on the Road to Socialism* contends that the bourgeoisie saw in the crop failure of 1947 "their big chance to show up the incapacities of the Gottwald government to carry out the Two-Year Plan, and to discredit the People's Democracy." Therefore, they thought it would be easy to stage a *Putsch* that would drive the Communists from the government. As evidence for the existence of the bourgeois plot, the Communists cite the following: "subversive activity" car-

ried on by the Slovak Democratic Party; the revolt against Zdenek Fierlinger, the fellow traveler, in the Social Democratic Party in the autumn of 1947; and the caches of arms allegedly found at a National Socialist provincial headquarters only a few days before the coup. The booklet asserts that "bourgeois reaction" was planning a "repetition of 1920." It is all very unconvincing. Nor could it be made convincing, for the bourgeoisie and all the anti-Communists were pathetically unprepared.

It is interesting, even though nauseating, and extraordinarily reminiscent of the Nazis, to find the Communists giving legal justifications for their *coup d'état.* This *tour de force* was accomplished by Minister of Justice Alexei Cepicka in an address to a conference of lawyers on September 23, 1949. He began by placing the "revolution," not in 1948, but in 1945 (that was wartime, which was sufficient cover for extralegal activity). "No one denies," he said, "that the People's Democratic state of Czechoslovakia was created by a revolution and that therefore the People's Democratic Law has its roots in the revolution of May, 1945, and in the time of the resistance struggle, and everyone knows that this was a bloodless revolution, without fratricide, fighting and without exterminating the enemy class." Cepicka continues that in February 1948, "everything went legally and according to the constitution." It was not necessary to violate the constitution and law in order to remove reactionary politicians from political life, as they "left the government of their own free will." They were thrown out of the political parties by their own party members. The government was "completed strictly in accordance with the constitution," whereupon the parliament voted confidence in the new government and the President of the Republic approved that procedure. The fury of those who failed in their *Putsch* attempts resulted from the fact that "the people were able to cement their power in the state without a single shot, without disorder or economic chaos."

True, the constitution was not violated; its spirit was merely dishonored. Technically, as I have already pointed out, the ministers left the government voluntarily. They were thrown out of their own parties, but only after the Communists had taken power and had subverted those parties. The vote by which parliament voiced confidence in the new government was not a free vote: scores of members had been suspended or had fled abroad, and the rest were under great pressure. Finally, Benes "approved" this procedure with a heavy heart because, rightly or wrongly, he did not believe in resistance, and wished to "avoid civil war."

One of the few true points in Cepicka's statement is that there was

no fighting or extermination of the "enemy class." Instead, the Communists set about Sovietizing their class enemies in Czechoslovakia, by propaganda and education, and, in the final analysis, by force.

Since the coup, the Communists have tried, little by little, to distort or extinguish the memory of the founders of the Republic. T. G. Masaryk is still remembered each year, but each year a little less. The Communist weekly *Svet Prace,* on March 2, 1950, was unconsciously revealing when it wrote that Masaryk "'still' belongs to the eminent and leading personalities of the past, and it may 'still' be said that he was an important factor in the political and cultural life of the nation; notwithstanding numerous and by no means petty reservations." The newspaper complained that "Masaryk belonged with all his mind, feeling and personality and with all his works to bourgeois society," and he "did not grasp the historical role of the working class." Even worse, after the Bolshevik Revolution, he "began to hate the Soviets." The newspaper added that Masaryk erred in his historical interpretations. He had seen only the ideals and moral motives of the Hussites and had disregarded the Hussite Revolution "as a manifestation of class warfare."

President Eduard Benes, to whom the Communists still paid lip service during the first year after the coup, has now been almost entirely relegated in the public print to the role of "Wall Street lackey" and "enemy of the Soviet Union." His efforts to bridge the gulf between East and West are forgotten or dishonored.

All these manipulations of history, which we would call intellectual dishonesty, seem normal enough to the Communists. For, as the Minister of Information, Vaclav Kopecky, declared on the thirtieth anniversary of the founding of the Czech Republic:

"History belongs to those to whom the future belongs. It is true that history has been written in the past by the bourgeoisie and its historians. That is over now. Now we begin to write the history of our Republic, and we do so from the viewpoint of our class truth, from the viewpoint of working-class truth."

CHAPTER 23 The Correspondents, the Press and the Public

SINCE the Oatis trial, there have been no Western correspondents in Prague. It may be of interest, however, to tell how the Western correspondents worked in Prague before the Oatis case, and to describe the Communist press, which became the correspondents' chief source of information.

I have often been asked what were our sources of information in Communist Prague. Of our private news sources I have already said a good deal in chapters one and two, and here I want only to add a note about the dangers of using such sources in a totalitarian country. Members of underground resistance groups frequently sought contact with Western correspondents. Some wanted to tell their stories, others wanted help of some kind, and others merely to get messages to the American Embassy. They felt that the correspondents would be both interested and sympathetic, and of course we were. But we had to explain to people of this kind that our job was to convey public information for publication in newspapers, and that we could not compromise our ability to do that job by getting involved with secret information. These anti-Communists found it difficult to understand our scruples, and, of course, in the case of Oatis, such scruples were finally shown to be in vain. As a matter of fact, under the law anyone was subject to prosecution merely for having knowledge of the existence of underground organizations or of anyone who was even planning to cross the border illegally, and for not reporting this knowledge to the police.

I had an experience of this kind with a middle-aged Czech whom I met a few months before leaving Prague. On several occasions we met and drank a few beers while he told me stories about life in Communist Czechoslovakia. I soon realized that he either was, or pretended to be, not only an anti-Communist but in contact with people who were helping

anti-Communists to escape from the country. One evening he invited me to meet a friend of his, and I foolishly accepted without inquiring too closely into his friend's identity. He asked me to drive out into one of the industrial suburbs, and then directed me into an unlighted street lined by warehouses. There he asked me to stop while he went to get his friend.

"Who in the devil is your friend," I asked, "and what is he doing out here?" Only then did my acquaintance admit that he had thought it would be "interesting" for me to meet one of the men who headed a group smuggling people over the border. I tried to explain to him that, for the reasons I have already given, this would not do. Furthermore it occurred to me that this could be a trap set by the police for me. The result was that I left my Czech friend in the dark street amidst the warehouses, and drove off. We met again later and he grinned apologetically about his effort to trap me into an involvement with his escape group.

The most obvious, though hardly the most useful news sources were official offices. Theoretically we could always go to the Ministry of Information or the Foreign Office Press Department and ask questions or ask for an interview with some official. I made every possible use of this approach and during 1949 managed to interview three or four cabinet ministers and officials in the State Planning Office and the Church Office of the Central Action Committee of the National Front. It took weeks, sometimes a month, to line up each of these appointments. And sometimes I tried getting appointments directly, short-circuiting the Information Offices. But it rarely worked. Czech officialdom was on its guard. I kept half a dozen requests for interviews on file at the Ministry of Information at all times, but after the beginning of 1950 it was pretty useless. From January 20, when I returned from my vacation, until May 30, only one of my requests was granted. It was an interview at Social Security Headquarters.

Gloomy Dr. Rudolf Popper, at the Ministry of Information, would sometimes offer to try to find out something. But he hardly ever succeeded. There was no authoritative Czech official to whom correspondents had ready access on a day-to-day basis. There was no one who could be described as a "government spokesman."

What we were up against was illustrated by my difficulties in trying to get a description of the trial of Catholic monks which was held in April 1950. Because the Western correspondents were unable to get tickets to enter the courtroom, I called up the official news agency to ask whether

its reporter could not supply me with some graphic description of the scene in the courtroom. After some hesitation, the agency's editor said that if I had not been admitted to the courtroom, there must be some reason for my exclusion, and that under those circumstances he did not think that his reporter could tell me anything at all that had not already appeared in the newspapers. On this same occasion, several of the correspondents tried to find out the first name of the president of the panel of five judges. The secretary who performed this chore was told by a voice in the courthouse that "We are not allowed to give away any information over the telephone." And we never did find out that man's first name.

Finally, there were the diplomats as sources of information. The best-informed diplomats in Prague (as in a great many capitals I have visited) were the British. They were not always the first with the news, but they were usually right. The French were no help in Prague, although I later got invaluable assistance from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Paris. Scattered among the other diplomats were a number of useful individuals, some well informed on Catholic Church affairs, others on economic developments.

Naturally the American correspondents gravitated to the American Embassy, headed by Ambassador Joseph E. Jacobs from December 1948, until October 12, 1949, and thereafter by Ambassador Ellis O. Briggs. Most of the American diplomats were anxious to help. A few, such as Milton Fried, the Labor Attaché, were brilliant in their interpretations of Czech news. But, as the hot winds of fear dried up the more productive sources of information, and Communist pressure on Western foreigners increased, the embassy and the newspapermen alike were reduced more and more to swapping rumors with each other, and to milking the Communist press. A sad parody of reporting that was. The only thing that could be said for it was that, little by little, we got pretty well acquainted with the Communist press.

The biggest, most authoritative, and most professional newspaper is *Rude Pravo* (Red Truth), central organ of the Communist Party, which celebrated its thirtieth birthday in September 1950. Then it had a staff of 160, and a circulation of 800,000. (A year later, incidentally, on the thirty-first anniversary, official publications gave this figure as only 750,000.) In its format, which is larger than any other Czech newspaper, and its long, pedantic, arrogant editorials, it reminded me a lot of *Der Voelkische Beobachter,* in its time the central organ of the Nazi party.

Rude Pravo was always the newspaper to be read first. So far as views went, you had read all the newspapers when you had read *Rude Pravo*. It was only the craving for news, a scrap here and a scrap there, that drove us to plow through the other newspapers, each ostensibly representing a separate organization. The most important ones were the following: *Lidove Noviny,* organ of cultural organizations, which said the same things as *Rude Pravo* in bigger words, and also contained literary reviews; *Lidova Demokracie,* ostensible organ of the People's Party (Catholic) which occasionally had original snippets on Church matters; *Svobodne Slovo,* ostensible organ of the Socialist Party (once upon a time Benes's National Socialist Party); *Prace,* organ of the trade unions, which sometimes had useful economic items; *Mlada Fronta,* organ of the youth organizations, by far the brightest of the newspapers until its editor was purged early in 1950.

Among the periodicals, we had especially to translate *Tvorba,* which dealt with political and cultural matters; *Hospodar,* on economics; and *Fonkcionar,* the Communist Party monthly which sometimes contained frank instructions to Party members. *Tvorba* and *Hospodar* were suppressed in the autumn of 1951 during the great Slansky purge. The reason may be that so many of the staff had been purged that they could not carry on. In place of *Tvorba* a Czech translation of the Soviet Russian *New Times* now appears in Prague. The provincial press, too, had to be watched. It often contained items that had escaped the Prague press. Altogether there were fifteen dailies in the country with a total circulation of about 2,250,000.

Reading the press, the same old slogans and diatribes day after day, was incredibly dull, and made the more tedious because most of us could not read Czech, and had to do our reading in translation. But everything had to be read, just the same, and carefully, because news beats became largely a question of zeal and judgment in getting hold of the right newspapers and translating the right items first. The man who obtained the early editions of tomorrow's papers first had a chance of being "exclusive." For a while, for instance, it was hard to get copies of *Katolicke Noviny,* the government-sponsored religious journal, because the official distribution agency would send it only to priests, and all priests had been ordered by the hierarchy to return their copies unopened. But I managed to keep ahead of my colleagues by finding a priest who was willing, instead of returning his copy, to mail it to me.

The biggest scoop anyone ever got in Prague was gained from an

early edition of *Rude Pravo* containing the announcement of the Cominform break with Tito. The announcement was premature, and the edition was recalled. But it was too late — the foreign correspondents had already picked it up and sent it abroad. After that, *Rude Pravo* refused to distribute its early edition, the one intended for the provinces, to foreign correspondents. They had to wait until the Prague edition was put on the streets in the morning.

There was also always the hope of finding a nugget of news in one of the columns of turgid political jargon. Such, for instance, was the story of the miracle of Cihost which we found in *Pravda* of Pilsen (I have described this event in chapter three) and the graphic description which we found in a Bratislava newspaper, also called *Pravda,* describing a riot in the village of Levoca in which the local Communists were mobbed. There was the day in the summer of 1949 when we discovered that in the trade union newspaper *Prace,* an engraver had inscribed a tiny swastika on the arm of a trade-union official whose picture appeared on the front page. You could see it only by holding the paper up to the light. And that is what thousands of people in Prague did that day.

Things like this could happen partly because the Czechoslovak Communists, unlike their Russian cousins, used a system of postcensorship rather than one of precensorship. This meant that it was up to the editors of a newspaper to guard against the publication of any politically unsound material. After the newspaper appeared, the editors were held responsible. In the case of the swastika in *Prace,* the engraving department was fired, but so far as I know the culprit was never discovered.

This system of censorship was applied to the foreign correspondents. It meant that they themselves had to gauge what they could get away with, and be prepared to bear the consequences when their copy was published. The Nazis used the same system for foreign correspondents in Berlin during the first few years of the war. Both the Nazis and the Communists figured that the fear of being expelled or arrested was more effective than the blue pencil. This censorship by intimidation was implemented at the beginning of 1950 by regulations requiring foreign journalists to obtain a renewal of their accreditation every three months. It was by refusing to renew accreditation that the Czech authorities expelled Oatis's predecessor Nathan Polowetzky and the United Press correspondent John R. Higgins at the beginning of April 1950.

Apart from the nuggets of information that appeared in spite of the Czech censors, the most likely source of news in the Czech press con-

sisted of "criticism and self-criticism." This is a Communist procedure apparently designed to provide some of the advantages derived in the West from a free interplay of public opinion. At its meeting in February 1951, the presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party adopted a long resolution laying down in detail the ways in which various party organs must treat criticisms made by the rank and file members. It required local committees of the Communist Party to report to the persons who had brought the criticisms on the way in which their criticisms or suggestions had been used, and this within a fixed period of time. One day in the spring of 1950, *Rude Pravo,* which takes the lead in this kind of thing, published an item that in a certain factory a steam shovel had been left unused for five months, although it was needed in other places. As a result the factory manager was fired, another man was imprisoned, and the shovel was put to work. Concerning this item the cultural weekly *Tvorba* editorialized in August 1950, that many people think shortcomings should first be discussed within the organization. They do not realize, the journal asserted, that "the educational significance of criticism consists precisely in its public nature." It warned that the management of factories must not attempt to seek out and persecute workers who contributed such criticism. As for the objection that hostile foreign propaganda could make use of the information, it quoted Stalin as saying that Bolsheviks could never be hurt by capitalist chatter about their shortcomings.

The newspapers produced an astonishing variety of criticisms. On one occasion the trade union organ *Prace* complained that workers at Karlovy Vary "very often go to concerts wearing only shorts. And when they are asked to dress properly they say: 'No bourgeois will prevent us from feeling comfortable.'" *Mlada Fronta* reported one day that its reporter had been to a ball at which one of the guests wore a costume decorated with the insignia of the five-year plan and another a beret marked "shock worker." "We should like to remind the people concerned," the newspaper remarked stuffily, "that if they want to propagate the Five-Year Plan and socialist competition they will have better opportunities for doing so in the factories than at balls." The same newspaper complained another day that those members of its staff who were perfectly proportioned were well-enough clothed, but that "those to whom nature has given a few extra kilograms or centimeters can wear out two pairs of shoes without finding any clothes that fit." Furthermore, it complained, shorts could be found only in white, and then only in sizes suitable for

ten-year-olds. "Is this because they can cut more small garments from one piece of material?" it asked.

One of the most outspoken items of criticism ever published in the Czech Communist press appeared in *Rude Pravo* on October 17, 1951. "Our most important coal mines in the Ostrava-Karvina region are operating in an absolutely unsatisfactory manner," the newspaper stated. "The principal reason for this shameful state of affairs lies in serious mistakes made by our economic organizations and organs of the Party," it continued.

"Superficially," it said, "the cause of unfulfillment of plans is lack of labor, and in fact manpower in the Ostrava mines has been allowed to decrease by about 5000 since 1947 while labor turn-over and absenteeism has steadily increased. But the real trouble is that party and economic organizations have not fostered 'new working methods' taught by Soviet experts. Negligence in respect to technical progress is shown by the fact that correct norms are not set." The newspaper went on: "Existing norms are out of date. Production has declined." Bureaucracy and disorganization, said the paper, had favored "development of subversive activity by class enemies. . . . Communist organizations have ceased persuading and leading the workers. Communists viewed clear faults with indifference and often even gave bad examples. Many Communists have been unable to cope with backward attitudes or with subversive efforts by reactionary elements."

Most of the information for such critical items came from worker correspondents and unsolicited letters. *Rude Pravo* had 5000 worker correspondents scattered through the country, and got about 120 unsolicited letters every day. Although the right of every worker to point out mistakes and shortcomings was celebrated as an expression of socialist democracy, it nonetheless behooved critics who criticized "from below" to be careful. There was a fine line between democratic criticism and "interfering with working morale" or spreading "subversive rumors." Worker correspondents sometimes tried to keep out of trouble while doing their jobs by working out their "criticisms" in advance with the persons whom they criticized.

A more common and much safer form of criticism came "from above." The most voluble critic was, and is, Premier Antonin Zapotocky, who does not hesitate to tell the workers from time to time that they are getting paid too much considering their low productivity and the low quality of goods produced. Sometimes a Communist district headquarters issues

a statement pillorying some subordinate for "using dictatorial methods." This appears to be a favorite excuse for liquidating particularly unpopular Communist functionaries.

Quotes from critical items make easy copy for Western correspondents. But they are tricky. They easily give the Western reader a false impression that things are falling apart in the Communist world. There is always a temptation to generalize from a single criticism. The best procedure, I found, was to collect critical and laudatory items on every subject for weeks, and even months, until you could fit them together like a mosaic. Then it might be possible to see a trend. Even so, this remained a most inadequate form of reporting. The tragic joke of it, as illustrated by the Oatis trial, was that the Communist authorities regarded such collecting and collating of information as a kind of espionage.

Communist newspapers make no concessions to what some American editors believe to be the tastes of the masses. There are no funny papers. There are very few pictures. The stories are long and abstract; there are no hatchet slayings and no stories about love nests. On the other hand, there are also no bright, informative news stories, nor any human-interest items. Just solid gray columns of Communist political interpretation. The nearest thing to a feature the Communist newspapers were likely to carry was the description of life in Moscow by a correspondent of the young people's newspaper *Mlada Fronta* on July 20, 1949. "It would be hard to find another European capital," he wrote, "where the streets are so crowded with fine automobiles as they are in Moscow. In Moscow it is not pompous millionaires but workers and *kolkhozniks* who own the luxurious Ziss autos.

"Workers and *kolkhozniks* who live in true prosperity crowd the Moscow show rooms where automobiles sell for 16,000 rubles [more than $3000]. The price is within the reach of every diligent worker. In the course of time, everyone can save 16,000 rubles, especially since apartments, electricity, gas, etc., are almost free in the Soviet Union.

"If you come to a building where Stakhanovites are holding a meeting you get the impression that no less than a session of diplomats or a banquet is going on — there is one beautiful car after another.

"Another specialty in Moscow is the taxicab, again the luxurious Ziss. They all look like new, painted light gray, with windows decorated in white lace. They are extremely cheap, so that a worker in a hurry doesn't hesitate a minute to take a taxi. Also planes are a common means of

transportation. The average citizen thinks nothing of hopping a plane for any long trip."

This undoubtedly was an example of socialist realism.

Gustav Bares, a good Communist and member of the Communist party central committee, coined the slogan in the autumn of 1950 that "No one can work well without reading the Party press every day." But it was no use. The people simply would not read that stuff. It was too dull and repetitive and, for that matter, amateurish, most of the best journalists having been purged and replaced by Party stalwarts. In the old days, I was told, the streetcars would be full of people reading newspapers. But now such sights were rare. People read books, or nothing. I remember the same thing happened in Berlin after the Nazis had taken over the press. Circulation figures would mean little in proving the contrary, since millions of people are obliged by membership in the Communist Party or some other "mass organization" to subscribe to the Party press.

If a Czech wanted very seriously to read about what was going on in the world, he could, until April 21, 1950, slip into the United States Information library in downtown Prague and read the *New York Times.* The international edition of the *Times* hung conveniently near the door and was always in use. That continued until the day the library was closed by order of the Czech government. I could never understand why the Communists did not prohibit the display of the *Times* at the same time they banned the *New York Herald Tribune* early in 1949. Perhaps it was because the *Tribune,* unlike the *Times,* attempted to carry on a regular commercial distribution through the official distribution agency, Orbis. There may still be Czechs who see copies of the *New York Times,* the *Herald Tribune,* and other foreign newspapers received by diplomats and foreigners. But for most Czechs the only sources of information, as distinguished from propaganda, are foreign radio stations. While listening to them is not illegal, passing around what foreign stations say may be classified as spreading subversive or alarming reports, and may be punished by prison sentence. Certainly a reputation as a frequent listener to foreign radio stations will go down as a black mark in Party and police records. Yet this is a risk hundreds of thousands take every day. The Czechs are as well equipped as any people in Europe when it comes to radios. There are nearly three million of them in the country. Listening to foreign radio stations became a habit during

the war. Between the Czech people and Bruce Lockhart of the BBC there is a case of true and enduring love: if Lockhart said it, it must be true. When I wanted to find out the Czech reaction to some event, I had to be careful to get what the Czechs were thinking and not what the Czechs had heard Lockhart say on the radio.

The "Voice of America" gained considerably in popularity in 1949 and 1950, especially after it set up a relay station in Germany that made it even easier to pick up than the BBC.

The powerful new 135-kilowatt transmitter of Radio Free Europe which began broadcasts from Europe on May 2, 1951, now dominates the foreign radio scene in Prague with its sheer volume and persistence. With an uninterrupted morning-to-evening "full radio menu" beamed directly on Prague and run by anti-Communist refugee Czechs, it is undoubtedly the boldest thing in "psychological warfare" ever attempted in time of peace. Radio Free Europe has the advantage of being part of a private organization called the National Committee for a Free Europe, which derives its funds from the "Crusade for Freedom." Hence it is not subject to the restraints that must necessarily be imposed upon an official organ of the American government, such as the "Voice of America." It need not fear that as a result of diplomatic pressure it will be told to "take it easy," and it is not pulling its punches. An example of its rugged technique has been to denounce Communist police agents by name, as in the following:

> In a moment you will hear the names of several dangerous Bolshevik informers and agents of the Communist police. Hello, Bratislava! Radio Free Europe calls the citizens of Bratislava! In the Registry [office] of the Resettlement Bureau and National Reconstruction Fund is employed one comrade A——. We are warning you against this person as emphatically as possible. She is a dangerous agent of the Communist police. Her task is to recruit for the State Security Police new agents and informers among young people.
>
> A—— is about 170 centimeters tall and blonde. She concentrates her attention especially on young men whom she seduces and then blackmails into collaboration with the State Security Police. We warn you against this fanatical Stalinist informer working primarily among employees.
>
> Among the collaborators and unfortunate victims of this woman is the academic student V——, we repeat V——. Be on your guard also against this miserable creature who is a victim and tool of A——, and thus, indirectly, an agent of the police.

In an effort to combat the American radio offensive the Czech Communists have done a number of things. In the first place, since midsummer of 1951 they have begun jamming the American broadcasts, even though this is extremely difficult in view of Czechoslovakia's geographical location, and extremely costly in tying up Czech broadcasting equipment. In addition, they have begun to introduce the Soviet system of loud-speakers. The sale of powerful individual radios is discouraged, and the people are encouraged instead to gather in clubrooms and the like to hear programs relayed over a loud-speaker system. As I have said, private listening to foreign radio stations is still legally acceptable, but it is discouraged by extralegal pressures, such as unannounced checkups in private homes by the political police to see what stations the owners are tuned to.

On this subject, the Prague weekly *Tvorba* on February 15 published a letter from an indignant Communist reader who wrote:

> I discussed with a well-known comrade the unashamed way in which lies are broadcast from abroad. It excited my repugnance to hear this Communist laughingly admit he often turned on the "Voice of America." He gave out that he found himself entertained by its stupidity and also wanted to be informed what lies it was telling so that he could combat them.
>
> I cannot agree with this. I maintain that listening to the enemy's voice cannot be reconciled with Communist morals and the morals of Czechoslovak workers.
>
> How could one listen to those who dropped potato bugs on us, as well as spies, murderers and saboteurs? We drive away spies, murderers and liars. Let us also drive away their lies.

CHAPTER 24 The New Education

THE Communists believe they can penetrate Czechoslovak society most pervasively by taking over the educational system from top to bottom — a process that has proved particularly painful in a country long proud of the high standards and liberal traditions of its educational institutions.

Whereas the schools of the First Republic — schools of a great many kinds — tried in general to encourage independent thought, the new educational system seeks to shape a "socialist man," blindly loyal to the leadership of the Communist Party; and whereas the people's aptitudes and prospects as individuals were guideposts of the old education, the Communists train pupils to conform strictly to the needs of planned economy.

To clear the way for their type of education the Communists, soon after they had taken power, set about eliminating all competing influences such as parents and church. Taking the view that no one is too young for politics, they began introducing Communist symbols and the collectivist attitude at nursery schools. Attendance was made compulsory for five- and six-year-olds, and will become compulsory for all, from the age of three, as soon as sufficient buildings are available. For those below the age of three, there are crèches.

By August 1950, there were 147,437 children regularly enrolled at nursery schools and the Minister of Education Zdenek Nejedly declared that every effort must be made "to enroll particularly children of rich parents who have thus far evaded general basic collective and socialist education." Since then, no new figures have been published, so it may be presumed that enrollments have not increased as rapidly as was hoped.

The nurseries also serve the very practical purpose of enabling mothers to take jobs and thereby relieve the labor shortage, and to that end the Ministry of Education in 1951 extended the system to centers for "all-day care" of school children of all ages.

Parents have been organized into "parents' committees," very different from American parent-teacher associations. Instead of exerting influence upon the schools, the committees were devices for "educating" parents to understand, in the words of *Rude Pravo,* "that the new school is a political school" and that "it is best to bring up children in the home according to the principles set in the school." The newspaper added that "even children from politically unreliable families could find a positive attitude towards the regime if only their parents did not stand in the way."

The only sense in which parents are now allowed to exert influence upon the schools is by urging more thorough application of "socialist" principles. On the other hand, the children may often exert great pressure on their parents, as may be seen from the following news item, published on February 15, 1950 by *Mlada Fronta:*

FATHER, WHY ARE YOU NOT A SHOCK-WORKER?

> Teachers of the Chlumcany elementary school asked the children to bring to school photographs of their parents who are shock-workers, so that they may be publicly displayed. A father came to school and complained to the headmaster that his little daughter had wept because he was not a shock-worker. He was a good worker, nevertheless.

Another item, published in *Rude Pravo* on January 27, 1949, told how school children were helping to increase deliveries of farm produce at Jesenice, near Sedlcany. The children of farmers were asked to tell their teachers every morning when they got to school how much milk their parents had delivered to the central delivery point. Each report was carefully written down and checked. As a result the deliveries of milk increased by thirty liters per day. As the newspaper wrote, the children had appealed to their parents' consciences.

Religious influence, particularly that of the Catholic Church, was broken by nationalizing or closing church schools and obliging the churches to dissolve their youth groups. Although church schools were not numerous in the Czech lands, and had already been nationalized by the Benes regime in Slovakia, the Catholic Youth Organizations effectively competed with the Soviet-style Union of Czechoslovak Youth until the Communists took over. Technically, religious education is still permitted within the public schools on what might be called a "leased-time" basis — that is, certain hours are set aside during the school day

when children may be instructed by priests or lay teachers of whatever denomination their parents designate. Except in the villages, however, the number taking advantage of this opportunity is dwindling, and the teachers of religion must skate lightly over the meaning of what they teach lest it conflict with official doctrine.

All private schools, even driving schools, have been nationalized, and private teachers of music, singing, dancing, gymnastics or any other subject must be authorized by the Communist-dominated District National Committee. The Communists wish to make quite sure that no one will receive instruction from teachers whom they have fired from public schools for political reasons.

As fast as they could write and print new ones, the Communists have junked the excellent schoolbooks of the First Czechoslovak Republic. By the beginning of the 1950–1951 school year, they had distributed 8,000,000 new texts whose political line was very clear and simple.

In the second grade, children now begin to spell out stories about "the construction of the People's Democratic Republic." Third graders are taught in their readers to be "patriots — conscious members of the working class who love the Soviet Union and honor labor." In the fourth and fifth grades, ten- and eleven-year-olds read about "the stupefying teachings of the bourgeois schools concerning justice in our Democratic Republic." They hear about "Jindra, the shock worker," and Marek's stories of "courageous work."

Commenting on the new texts, the daily *Lidove Noviny* concluded that "Our children are just beginning to breathe the pure air unspoiled by the errors of the First Republic. They are breathing the air of the birth of socialism." A reviewer in the weekly *Tvorba* added that "We must fight for the souls of children and instill in them the firm resolve to build up socialism and sincere friendship for the Soviet Union and the working people of the whole world. . . . We are going to carry on the fight . . . sometimes even against the parents. . . ."

One afternoon in July 1949, a group of officials of the Pedagogical Institute of the Ministry of Education earnestly explained to me the principles on which the new textbooks and elementary education in general were being evolved. They make seven points which I will quote directly.

> 1. In addition to imparting social knowledge we try to create character. That is, we try to give the children a scientific world view [presumably a Marxist view] and educate them as moral beings: people who love their country. Patriotism does not mean nationalism.

It means love of parents, neighbors, working people in the whole world; it means love of the majority of the American people also. Morality means creating in the children the love of work and putting manual labor in its right place — not something to be looked down upon.

2. We start with the needs of society and then define the needs of education. We begin education with a system of a general knowledge and broad shaping of personality.

3. We seek a new relationship towards common property [generally nationalized property].

4. Under the heading of collectivism we teach children to subordinate their personal egotistical interest to the interests of the whole.

5. Children should get acquainted with higher culture — that is, socialist culture in the nation and progressive culture all over the world.

6. Our textbooks begin by giving the people knowledge that is not compartmentalized but interrelated. On higher levels, [beginning about age eleven], subjects are classified into social science, [geography, history, political economy, the constitution]; natural science, [biology, physics, chemistry]; political economy; and philosophy.

7. The teacher is supposed to be a guide, not a dictator. We have dropped the idea of letting children do as they please. Children take part in education but do not use the project method. Especially we reject the Dewey method of placing manual work at the start of knowledge. This we do because it leads to a limited selection of materials to be learned and prevents getting the broad picture. If there is too much concreteness the children are not led to abstract thinking. This may lead to narrow professionalism.

New directives for primary school institutions were issued for the 1951–1952 school year on the basis of the recommendations of the presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, on July 18, 1951. The presidium adopted a resolution including the following "ideological improvements" to be made in primary school teaching:

1. The Czech and Slovak languages "will be taught in the light of Stalin's essay on 'Marxism and Philology.'"

2. Basic Russian "should be spoken and written by all pupils by the time they finish study in elementary schools." Children should have mastered the Cyrillic alphabet by the age of nine.

3. Political education "should be based on a comprehensive study of

the constitution and the policy of the Communist Party. . . . It should show our youth the glorious example of revolutionary fighters and of the international workers' movement, especially that of the founders of the Soviet Union, Lenin and Stalin."

4. In geography, "old pictures in textbooks glorifying life in capitalist countries . . . must make way for careful study of the Soviet Union. Bourgeois objectivity and cosmopolitanism are still too much in evidence in geography."

5. In history, textbooks must "clearly unmask the bourgeois, anti-popular and anti-Soviet policy of the pre-war Czechoslovak government and show the true reactionary side of Masaryk and Benes."

6. Science lectures must be supplemented by "excursions to co-operative farms, factories and by practical work in laboratories. . . . More attention must be paid to Michurin and other Soviet scientists."

7. In teaching children to read, the Czechoslovak schools will give up the "American" method consisting of learning to read entire words instead of learning to read the alphabet.

Secondary schools presented the Communists with a difficult problem in that the pupils were not as malleable as their juniors and included a high percentage of children of anti-Communist families. Indeed, most of the distributors of anti-Communist leaflets in the first days of the regime were secondary-school students. If such students were allowed to remain in the schools, the Communists argued, they would be a disruptive element, but if they were expelled there would be no more opportunity to "re-educate" them. Now practically all children are allowed to continue schooling until they reach the legal school-leaving age which the Communists have raised from fourteen to fifteen. After that, however, children whose political attitudes are "unreliable" or who have middle-class parents, are unlikely to pass the examinations required for further study.

The new school law of April 21, 1948, abolished the traditional "gymnasium" which, in a variety of forms, has long been characteristic of central European secondary education. In its place, the Communists introduced a new uniform type of secondary school with many innovations. The curriculum now comprises fourteen compulsory subjects, including Russian. Among elective subjects there may be one more foreign language, including Greek or Latin. In the study of all foreign languages, emphasis is on literary reflections of the class struggle. Students are to be shielded from "damaging influences of decadence and cosmopolitanism, which come to Bohemia mainly from Paris." No longer may Czechoslo-

vaks be "admirers of the decadent literature of the French bourgeoisie."

As might be expected, more stress than hitherto is put on natural sciences, and in biology and allied subjects Lysenko's doctrines prevail.

A new subject has been introduced: history, geography, civics and philosophy gathered together in a single Marxist "Study of Society."

Study hours have been reduced from thirty-three to thirty per week, and compulsory subjects confined to mornings so that students may have more time for the Union of Czechoslovak Youth, sports, and such popular stunts as taking over the administration of a town for a day. Most student activities are carried on by a variety of "student circles" whose interest might be anything from learning shorthand to amateur dramatics.

Academic standards unquestionably have gone down. In the matriculation examination the Ministry of Education has ordered, students' maturity is to be assessed according to "how they have mastered the scientific world outlook and are able to turn their experience to practical use," as well as the extent of their "People's Democratic awareness." In oral examinations, "only the most fundamental things" are to be asked in each subject, in order to avoid "superfluous detail."

So that the political elements in the examinations may be properly evaluated, representatives of the Regional Action Committees of the National Front, and of the Regional Committees of the Czechoslovak Youth Union have been invited to join teachers on the examining commissions. All of this, of course, amounts to an arrangement to prevent children of non-Communist or anti-Communist background from passing the examination and continuing their studies.

Because they could not be trusted to carry out new directives the Communists fired or retired about a quarter of the old secondary-school teachers and a great number of primary-school teachers. The rest they sent, and are still sending, to political training courses during vacation periods. But the regime has placed its main hope on a new generation of teachers now beginning to come out of twenty-one training schools for kindergarten and nursery-school teachers, thirty training schools for elementary-school teachers, and the three-year university courses required for secondary-school teachers. Consistent with the importance which they attach to education, the Communists raised all school teachers' salaries about one third beginning in the school year 1950–1951.

The Czechs have always loved schools, and the Czech Communists are no exception. They have set up a variety of special schools for technical and political training, and above all for the training of workers. They hope

thereby to meet the demand for trained men and at the same time to contribute to the ultimate aim of all the educational processes — the creation of a new working-class intelligentsia. By far the largest number of students is involved in special political training. In the second "year of party schooling" 90 per cent of the 1,750,000 members and candidates of the Communist Party attended various courses. There were 82,427 elementary courses; 26,820 Marxist-Leninist study circles for more advanced members; and 1716 advanced evening courses. On an average, classes comprised ten to fifteen people and met twice a month. In addition, a few of the most advanced Party members were sent to district and regional Party schools or to the central political Party school in Prague.

Vocational schools without number, including some to train "social foremen," have mushroomed. The newspaper *Obrana Lidu* even suggested one day that if something could be done to give the cooks in workers' canteens some ideological education it might improve their cuisine.

The Communists are most earnest, however, about cramming courses intended to qualify workers taken straight from assembly lines, mines and farms for university study. In 1949, 752 workers graduated from these courses; in 1950, 1305 — and the number will probably continue to rise. Thus far, almost all have gone in for various forms of technology. Only a few score qualified for the study of law, philosophy or politics.

Very similarly, unspecified numbers of workers have been graduated as army officers in July of each summer since 1949. On the occasion of the first graduation ceremony, *Rude Pravo* wrote that they had completed four years of work in one year in spite of difficulties presented by the fact that many students, who had been workers for years, "had forgotten how to study and found that the courses were completely foreign matter." The newspaper explained that it had been necessary "to teach courses as much as possible from the practical side." It had to be remembered that the students came directly from manual work and it was necessary to make them understand by practical methods. The teaching of Russian was related to instruction about Soviet culture, about the Soviet Army, and about the work of Soviet youth. Extensive use was made of films.

At the universities, the Communists have either purged the ranks of professors and students or hemmed them in with tight scholastic and political discipline, and have reorganized administration and curriculum along Soviet Russian lines.

Because the Nazis had closed down all universities during the occupation, there was a more than ordinary rush to institutions of higher learning after the war. Of these, there were twenty-one (including seven technical schools with a total of 642 teachers and 47,000 students) when the Communists took control in 1948. The most important were Charles University and the Technical High School in Prague, Comenius University in Bratislava and Masaryk University in Brno. In the spring of 1948, sixty-one professors and assistant professors were fired or retired. Several were arrested, the very first being a law professor who had been imprisoned by the Nazis. According to an International Union of Students report, fourteen were later readmitted to the universities and some others got less important posts at other institutions or were allowed to engage in research. But at the same time a dozen or more others were picked up as "reactionaries." Minister of Education Zdenek Nejedly's explanation was this: "We don't want to lose anybody, but there is no room in our universities for conscious enemies of the People's Democracy."

Although the weeding-out process has continued steadily, Nejedly has eliminated only the best-known and most articulate of the "conscious enemies" among these men of learning; there are many more whom the Communists cannot get rid of without disrupting the universities, for there are not enough qualified Communists to take their places. But the anti-Communists must toe the line, at least in public, under the direction of the Communist Rector, Dr. Jan Mukarovsky, who was appointed on April 7, 1949.

The students, whom the Communists have since the war regarded as the "greatest bearers of reaction" and who have indeed proved to be the most politically courageous element in the nation, were purged in the early months of 1949. All were required to appear, individually or in groups, for a *proverka* (Russian for "test") before a committee composed of one representative of the Communist Students' Organization, a representative of the Ministry of Education, and one or more faculty members. Over 3900 of them failed the examination and 2400 others did not turn up and were considered to have failed, according to the official Czechoslovak news agency on March 17, 1949. About 3000 appealed and about half of these were eventually allowed to resume their studies, particularly those engaged in engineering and other practical subjects. The rest were directed by labor exchanges to manual labor, in construction, factories and mines. They were assured that if they showed "good working morale" they might still be considered for readmission to the universities. And a

few have actually succeeded in getting back, more because the Communists needed their skills than because they had been converted.

Although the authorities insisted that they were mainly concerned with weeding out "slackers," the main object of all the expulsions was to get rid of the "bourgeoisie" at the universities. At the same time a drive to recruit worker students was in progress. And by the class year 1950–1951, official statistics showed that the proportion of students of working-class origin had risen to 40 per cent, compared with only 6 per cent in the year 1947–1948.

Foreign students are encouraged. I believe that Prague is becoming the main world center of Communist education outside of Moscow, partly because its relatively high standard of living makes it attractive to foreigners, and partly because the Russians do not want a large number of foreign students in Moscow.

The Czechoslovak Union of University Students offers about a hundred scholarships yearly to foreign students. These include at least thirty scholarships for colonial students, among whom there were, in 1950, seven Indonesians who had defected from Netherlands schools, and several Vietnamese who had defected from French schools. In addition, the Ministry of Education offers some hundreds of scholarships on the basis of international reciprocity. When I departed in May 1950, there were still five Americans in Prague on such scholarships, although the Czechs had not granted any Czech students visas for study in America since 1948. The number had dwindled from twenty the previous year. Some of the Americans had quit because they would not stand for political interference with their studies — mostly Slovenic history and languages — others had been expelled by the Czech police. One of them, Savel Kliatchko, formerly of the Universities of Chicago and Columbia, was arrested as a spy while touring in Slovakia in the summer of 1949, held incommunicado for five days, and finally released after a wild ride in a police car driven by a drunken cop who turned the car over in a ditch. The Americans who hung on did so for a variety of reasons. Some had relations in Czechoslovakia. One had a Czech fiancée who could not get an exit visa. A few were genuinely interested in Slavic historical materials available in Prague libraries. And a few were eager Communists. One American girl displayed a Czech Communist Party button in her lapel.

Communist expectations that the sons of the bourgeoisie would easily be replaced at the universities by eager young workers have been disappointed. An article in *Lidove Noviny* early in 1950 observed that

whereas in previous years the number of candidates for university study usually greatly exceeded the capacity of the institutions, at the end of the previous school year, the opposite had been observed. It said that there had been "a sudden drop in the number of secondary-school students desiring to continue their studies at the university, to such an extent that first-year classes could be filled only with great difficulty, even after the final registration date had been postponed several times."

Under the circumstances, the article pointed out, there could be "no question of real selection of students, since the lack of candidates made it necessary to accept almost all in order to avoid having to close down certain classes." In an effort to remedy the situation, it said, secondary-school teachers had been assigned the task of persuading likely candidates and their parents of the advantages of university study—truly an extraordinary situation in a country where the extent of popular eagerness for higher education is proverbial. Obviously many potential students have been appalled by the purges and political intrusions; those of bourgeois background have simply stopped applying, and many others have been convinced that real scholarship has fled from Czechoslovakia. Perhaps there have even been a few who have been deterred by the new requirement that students engage in four months of manual labor before taking up their studies.

The law on universities of May 18, 1950, introduced a rough approximation of the Russian university system in place of the prevailing central European system. The most characteristic change effected by the law was that it removed the theological faculty from the university and attached it to the State Office for Church Affairs. Thus the faculty around which the universities had originally been founded in the Middle Ages, was segregated.

Eliminating the autonomy of which the universities had been proud for centuries, the law provided a State University Commission appointed by the Ministry of Education to supervise university affairs. In the future, the President of the Republic would appoint the rectors at the head of each university while the Ministry of Education named the deans heading each faculty. Traditionally these officials had been elected by the faculty. Faculty members themselves lost the privilege of unlimited tenure; the Ministry of Education might now remove or transfer them at will.

The life of the university has been transformed in the light of the provision in the law assuring free higher education to the extent of full sup-

port to all those who "devote all efforts to becoming technically and politically qualified in the building of socialism." In line therewith, an Action Committee composed of Communist professors and students began by decreeing that, despite age-old traditions to the contrary, lectures and seminars would henceforth be compulsory. Periodical quizzes were instituted, a practice quite foreign to European tradition.

The Action Committee put study itself on a "collective basis." It instituted "study circles" in every department — languages, philosophy, history — each consisting of ten to thirty students. With a chairman who is usually an outstanding student, and a secretary who is usually an outstanding Communist, these circles now meet weekly to confer on their studies and on Marxism-Leninism. Attendance is required. Each circle has to evolve a yearly plan of work which, just as in industry, is broken down into weekly plans. Circles dealing with the same subjects engage in "socialist competitions."

A new study plan, approved by the State University Commission, went into effect in the academic year 1951–1952. The new plan lays down a complete course of study from the first year to the completion of each course, enumerating the number of subjects to be taken each year, and the number of hours to be devoted to each subject every week. Finally it provides for progressive specialization in various study courses. Progressive specialization is described in the Czech press as "the most distinctive feature of the new plan," since it will enable students to take jobs as soon as they finish their studies. The choice of specialization is not left entirely to the student under the plan, but is determined "by the needs of the various branches of economic and political life."

Some subjects have been stricken from the curriculum, others added. New subjects, taught by newly appointed teachers, are Marxism, the Labor Movement, and the History of the People's Democracy. Among those eliminated is sociology. In reply to several professors' arguments in favor of continuing this subject, the weekly *Tvorba* laid down the line, which had its bearing upon other scientific subjects as well:

> There is no such thing as neutral science. The nature of every science is determined by the special interest of a particular class. So the science of sociology is an ideological weapon of the bourgeoisie against the only right theory of the development of society — against historical materialism. This theory can never be made more fruitful by sociology, for all its methods, theories and conceptions are metaphysical and antihistorical. For its needs in planning the economy,

> for instance, progressive science in the People's Democracy may use political economy, statistics and other supplementary sciences. But progressive science does not need a science of sociology and rejects it fundamentally; yes, even the term "sociology" is objectively unjustified and should be used only to identify the bourgeois science of society which is to be destroyed.

In reorganizing the Academy of Science to conform more closely with its Soviet model, Minister of Education Nejedly regretted, in June 1949, that there was as yet nothing in Czechoslovakia that could be called "Marxist science." Announcing the formation of a "Soviet Institute," where Soviet lecturers and experts on the Soviet Union would meet in connection with the Academy of Science, Nejedly declared: "We must get rid of the ballast that was imported into our country from the West."

The most important approach to "Marxist science" was made in October 1949, with the opening of the College for Political and Economic Science in Prague. This institution, with Ladislav Stoll, leading Communist Party theorist, as rector, has about a thousand students distributed among three faculties: economics, which is the largest; political and diplomatic, which trains future administrators and diplomats; and political, which trains teachers of Marxism-Leninism and political editors for press and radio.

The students' schedule is intensive. They study fifty-six hours a week for four years, after which there may be more study for a Ph.D. Even leisure time is supervised. Everything is studied from a Marxist point of view. Eventually the Communists hope the new institution will eclipse Charles University, whose old non-Communist traditions die hard.

In his inaugural speech at the College for Political and Economic Science, Professor Stoll explained that in their entire educational system the Communists seek to create a new working-class intelligentsia. For the time being they must tolerate some of the passive elements of the old bourgeois intelligentsia — managers of business enterprises and factories, engineers, lawyers, doctors, scientists, teachers — without whose skills they cannot as yet get along. For the time being a bourgeois with an important skill can "get by." But when the transition is completed, the Communists mean to have raised their own intelligentsia of the working class. Here is what Professor Stoll said:

> The fact that talented workers are now joining the universities is not only a matter of making good the injustice of the past. This

problem goes far deeper than may appear on the surface. For the whole question must be seen in connection with the leading position of the working class in society — within the state:

> Industrial workers who came into being as a new social type during the nineteenth century differ basically from all other classes and sections of society. They differ in their relations towards the forces of production, their organized co-operation, their working discipline, their typical humor and their socialist consciousness. They represent a new type of the collective type of man, and opposite him stands the petty bourgeois as the typical individualist, who thinks only in the spirit of his own "ego." "Ego" will solve the problems of his happiness in life, at the cost of the happiness of others; "ego" will always be employed, and so on.
>
> And how different, radically different, is the socially conscious worker of today: the worker who is able to produce machine parts with the precision of one one-thousandth of a millimeter, who every day creates the most beautiful and ingenious things to serve mankind.

Quite another picture of the education of working-class youth may be derived from an analysis of the most recent legislation on the subject. By an order of the Ministry of Education on March 15, 1951, examinations were introduced for all young people leaving school at the age of fifteen. Ostensibly designed to help in deciding the child's future trade or course of study, the examination provided a means of backing up decisions already made by the economic authorities on the future of the young. The examining committee, before which the pupil appears in the company of his parents, consists of representatives of the Labor and Welfare Commission, of the Commission of the District National Committee in charge of recruiting manpower, and of a representative of the District Trade Union Council, in addition to the director of the school, the teacher and the person in charge of the Union of Czechoslovak Youth.

This committee does not really examine, but informs parents and pupil of his classification. A member of the committee explains to the fifteen-year-old that in selecting his profession the committee has taken into consideration both his capacities and the needs of the planned economy.

While there is a possibility of appeal from the decision of the committee to a higher body attached to the Regional National Committee, it is unlikely that any young person rejected by the committee will be able to enter one of the trade schools or institutions of higher learning.

On January 22, 1952, the government followed up the Ministry of Edu-

cation's arrangements for selecting talented workers by announcing that those who had been rejected might get an opportunity to continue their studies at night. The following were announced as newly organized institutions of night study: a five-year technical school; a four-year general high school (*lycée*); a two-year school for foremen; and a teachers' training school. To get into one of these night schools, a worker must be chosen by the management of his factory, in agreement with the Party organization and the trade-union group.

With the system of the selective examinations and night schools, the Czechoslovak state was equipped to obtain the necessary amount of youthful manpower and to channel it where the economists said it was needed. But as Jaroslav Kolar, secretary of a section in the central trade union headquarters, wrote in *Mlada Fronta,* towards the end of 1951: "It is true that we are getting enough recruits from the technical point of view, but we must still eliminate the reasons why many young workers still run away."

The solution to this problem was Law 110, of December 27, 1951, which bound the young worker for a period of three to five years to the job assigned him by the Ministry of Manpower. This law is described in more detail in the chapter: "The Workers Turn Against the Communist Party."

Law 110 completed the totalitarian web the Communists have spun, since 1948, around the youth. As the web has drawn tighter, the young people — who largely supported the Communists in 1948 — have turned against the Party in growing numbers, instead of being more and more closely aligned with the objectives of the regime.

As a postscript on education I must mention the three thousand or more Greek children in Czechoslovakia. They are among the 28,000 Greek children scattered throughout the People's Democracies including Yugoslavia. Some were carried off from the villages of northern Greece by Communist guerrillas, while others were brought out by fifty to seventy thousand Greek adults, most of them Communist sympathizers, who are scattered throughout the same countries.

Occasionally I saw some of the children — handsome and intelligent-looking — when their choir sang at some festivity, or when two or three of them were sent to "Peace Conferences" for propaganda purposes. But the Czech authorities would not allow Western newspapermen to visit the camps in which they live. What little I could find out about them

indicated, however, that they are being trained as Communist Janissaries against the day when, as the Communists believe, they will return to their own country as "liberators." With this in mind, the Czechs and other Cominform authorities have kept the children together in camps where they are carefully educated in their own language. Teachers were put through a six months' training course at Tuylkes near the Soviet Russian frontier in Rumania in 1948 and given refresher courses in the capitals of each of the "People's Democracies" in 1949. Applications from individual Czechoslovaks to adopt the children have been rejected on the grounds that they must be "brought up as Greeks."

In Czechoslovakia the trade unions administer the camps and all reports agree that the children are well fed and clothed. A group of three hundred were sent to eastern Germany in 1950 to learn trades. And the Czech press sometimes runs stories about young Greek apprentices who have become brilliant "shock workers." Those in their twenties get military training in guerrilla fighting at secret camps in the mountains of Slovakia or are sent to Bulgaria where Greek guerrilla units are being kept ready for an opportunity to renew strife in Greece.

The older Greeks are of less interest to the Communists. The Czechs appear to regard the seven thousand of them in their country mainly as useful laborers who have been scattered around in industry and agriculture where most needed. I know of several of these who brought their children with them but were obliged to put them in camps so that they might take advantage of the camps' educational facilities. The Czechs have been more civil than have the other Cominform countries to the International Red Cross which is still attempting to recover the children for Greece. The Czechs even admitted recognizing 138 names among some 5000 which the Greek government had collected from parents who wanted their children returned to Greece. But, notwithstanding United Nations' agreements regarding the return of displaced children, I do not think the Czechs are any more likely to return their Janissaries than are the rest of the Cominform countries.

Commenting on the campaign conducted by Queen Frederika of Greece to get the children returned to their native country, the newspaper *Pondelník* wrote on January 30, 1951: "When these children return to Greece there will be no more Queen Frederika."

CHAPTER 25

Literature and Publishing, Films, Theater, Music and Art

BOOKS, pictures, plays and films are, in the eyes of the Communists, ideological weapons. For that reason, as soon as possible, they welded writers, journalists, artists, actors and all other breeds of "artists and intellectuals" into monolithic professional associations where their activity could be most easily supervised.

A writers' conference, for instance, was prevailed upon in March 1949, to unite existing organizations into a single Czechoslovak Writers' Union to which only 220 Czech and 60 Slovak writers were admitted, along with 100 young "candidates." No writer who does not belong to the union can get his work published.

Within their professional associations, the "artists and intellectuals" are circularized, called together for meetings, instructed in the way they should go, and well taken care of so long as they behave. Their association sees to it that their fees are more than enough to live on, arranges vacations for them at well-appointed rest camps, and keeps them up to snuff politically. When the watchdogs of the Communist Party decided in July 1949, that scientific writers, for instance, were "politically naïve" and "isolated from the people," a series of two-week training courses were arranged for them involving "swimming parties" and "singing in the morning"—all intended to instill in them the proper "People's Democratic" attitude.

Similarly, in December 1950, the Writers' Union brought a group of writers to the industrial center of Ostrava for a week so that they might, by talking to the miners and their wives, to steel workers and foundry men, "learn what their readers want of them, how they have satisfied or failed their exacting new public."

Vilem Zavada, who rates as "poet of Ostrava . . . where the pulse of the new life is beating faster than anywhere else," is a writer of whom the Communists approve. After that tour, he wrote that it was the writers' propagandistic duty to

> *. . . burst in on people*
> *And open up their souls*
> *To make them draw well*
> *And burn with a fierce flame.*

Of the miners he wrote:

> *Like hunters in a wood of stone*
> *Miners at the coal face listen*
> *To the whisper of the stone,*
> *The crack of wood in the tunnel,*
> *The splash of water beyond the barrier,*
> *The silence when the breeze drops. . . .*

In the summers of 1950 and 1951, the Union of Czech Writers held a three-week course at Dobris Castle near Prague for young writers who seemed likely to absorb the new literary standards. This year there were forty-two such young writers who gathered to hear lectures by established Communist authors such as Prime Minister Zapotocky, Jan Drda, chairman of the Writers' Union, the Chilean poet, Pablo Neruda, the French writer, Jean Laffitte, and the Czech literary critic Pavel Reiman. Reiman brought them up to date on Stalin's recent articles on linguistics in which he asserts that the basic task of all cultural workers is to act as "the engineers of the soul." The way to do this, Reiman explained, is to follow the principles of socialist realism built on "the great progressive literature of the past," including the works of such men as Aeschylus, Cervantes, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Pushkin, Gogol, and Tolstoy. According to Reiman, writers who would follow in that tradition "must fight against everything which stems from decadent bourgeois culture, the idealistic and formalistic theories through which the reactionary ideas of imperialism penetrate the intelligentsia." The outstanding feature of this decadent literature, he said, is pessimism, the pessimism of Rilke in Germany, of Rimbaud and Gide in France. It is the literature of "naturalism" which concentrates on exterior descriptions of life in all its grimy detail but without perspective or solution. It is also the "objectivity" which portrays life as something from which the author stands apart, which does not touch him, and which gives the same importance to the birth pangs

of a cow as to the death pangs of a great hero. Here also belong mysticism and romanticism, "the refuge of writers who turn away from life and refuse to face reality, who put the sound of words above their content and form above everything."

Reiman declared that the socialist writer refuses the amorality of the bourgeois writer just as he refuses pessimism. Socialist realism, he said, is distinguished from earlier realism on which it is founded, in that it expresses the cultural effort of the new social classes. The modern creator of realistic literature must feel himself "a part of society and an active doer who cannot be indifferent." That is to say, he must take an active part in the "fight for peace" and in the "building of socialism" and of "proletarian internationalism."

Socialist realism, Reiman explained, has a broader scope than the earlier realism because it is able to see the great possibilities of the future beyond the difficulties, successes and failures of the present. He saw no conflict between "revolutionary romanticism" and socialist realism even though there had been such a conflict between traditional romanticism and realism. The harmony that could be established between the two approaches to literature was well expressed in the title of Julius Fucik's book on the Soviet Union, *The Land Where Tomorrow Means Yesterday*. Finally Reiman told the young authors that socialist realism recognized the importance of craftsmanship even though it refused formalism, "pure form" and "ideal beauty."

A writer who does not belong to the union cannot even get a publisher to look at his work, and even if he does it will never be accepted for publication if it is not written the way the Communists like it. This was made certain by the Publishing Act of April 1949.

Under this law a Czechoslovak Publishing Council in the Ministry of Information took over the assets of 335 private book publishers, 56 music publishers and 180 firms publishing works at the expense of the author. The publishing business was reorganized into thirty-one publishing houses with thirteen branches, each controlled by a "collective" organization such as the trade unions, the unified village co-operatives, the political parties, youth organizations, foreign trade monopolies, et cetera. Their output has to be approved by the Publishing Council's commission of experts. It works like this:

A member of the union writes a book and persuades the editors of one of the thirty-one publishing houses that it should be published. The edi-

tors, then, in the words of the law, submit it to "the appropriate sector of the publishing section in the Publications Department in the Ministry of Information and Public Culture." This office passes it on to the Publishing Council or one of the council's commissions of experts. On the basis of the Publishing Council's recommendations the ministry decides whether or not the book should be published. Books on Communism and, above all, those written by Communist bigwigs, are most likely to survive this elephantine process.

During 1950 and 1951 the top-ranking "best seller" in Czechoslovakia was the *History of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks,* printed in an edition of 406,000, which seems rather a lot for a country of 12,-500,000 among whom the overwhelming majority hate the Communists. But that is only the beginning. None other than President of the Republic Gottwald is the country's most successful author. He simply collects his speeches into volumes, gives them a title, and then the presses roll. And how they roll! During 1950 and 1951 his book *Ten Years* was published in an edition of 401,000, and his *With the Soviet Union Forever* in an edition of 100,000. The third volume of his collected works appeared in September 1951. In addition, large numbers of his books *On Culture—Tasks of the Intelligentsia; For a Socialist State for Socialist Justice* and *About Czechoslovak Foreign Policy* have appeared in print.

Although quantitatively he plays second fiddle to the President, the Prime Minister, Antonin Zapotocky, is a novelist of some ability. In two years 140,000 copies have been printed of his book *New Fighters Shall Rise,* which is about the struggles of his father as a socialist organizer before the First World War. Stage and movie versions of the book have been produced, and the Prime Minister has followed up his success with second and third volumes. One of them, *The Stormy Year, 1905,* depicts the repercussions on socialist groups in Prague of the unsuccessful Russian Revolution of that year; while the second, *Red Glow Over Kladno,* concerns the effects of the Bolshevik Revolution on the founding of the Communist Party in Czechoslovakia. In heroic terms, the three volumes relate the development of the Communist Party from a lowly "Workers' Mutual Benefit Society" in a provincial Czech town into a mass movement in the early twenties. Lavish praise by Czech reviewers aside, Zapatocky has told his story in lively, popular style. His books are full of interesting people and excitement, plots and clashes with the police.

A collection of Stalin's works has been printed in an edition of 200,000. The collected works of Lenin are still being published in forty volumes,

100,000 copies each. And a two-volume edition of Marx and Engel has appeared. If the Czechoslovak people are not converted to Communism, it will surely not be for lack of reading matter on the subject.

Among Czech professional writers, the most successful is Julius Fucik, whose poetry has considerable force. He wrote his most famous work on scraps of paper in intervals between interrogations and tortures by the Gestapo who, at last, executed him; 400,000 copies of his work, *Report from Under the Gallows,* have been printed, and, in contrast to the strictly political tomes, a good many have been bought voluntarily. Here are some samples from this book:

> There came the day when you could no longer doubt that I was still alive; pain, the twin-sister of life, reminded me of the fact in unmistakable fashion. . . . My wife alone remained ignorant of my fate. Solitary in her cell, only one floor below me and two or three cells further along, she was living in hope and dread . . . and meanwhile I was lying face-downwards on my pitiful mattress, and every morning and every evening struggling obstinately onto my side so that I could sing for Gusta the songs she loved. How could she fail to hear me when I put so much fervor into it?
>
> Today she knows, today she can hear me — although she is much farther away now than she was then. And by now even the warders have got used to the idea that cell 267 sings, and by now they have even given up thundering on the door for us to be quiet.
>
> Cell 267 is singing. I have sung all my life, and I don't see why I should stop now, just at the end. . .

The Communists ended their "World Congress for the Defenders of Peace" in Warsaw in November 1950, with the last words written by Fucik before his execution:

> I have loved life, and for its beauty I went out to fight. I loved you, people, and I was happy when you returned my love. I suffered if you failed to understand me. If you think that tears wash away the sad dust of grief, weep a little. But no regrets. I lived for joy, I am dying for the cause of joy, and it would be doing me an injustice to place on my tomb the angel of sorrow. . . .
>
> We always reckoned with death. We knew that if we fell into the hands of the Gestapo it meant the end, and we acted accordingly even here. My play, too, is coming to an end. I have not written the end; I do not even know what the end is to be, for this is no longer a play, it is life.

In life there are no spectators. The curtain is going up. People, I loved you. Be on your guard.

Before the war a book that sold 5000 copies was regarded as a success in Czechoslovakia, and the Czechs are voracious readers. The extraordinarily large editions of political works are, of course, being sold by pressure on Party and trade-union members, on members of the Union of Czechoslovak Youth and the Union of Czechoslovak women, and so on. In order to remain in good standing, one has to do compulsory reading. The great volume involved even enabled the Ministry of Information to cut the price of books about 20 per cent in 1950.

Altogether, some 59,000,000 books were printed in 1949 and some 60,000,000 in 1950. In 1951 there was less boasting about the number of books printed and it is probable that publishing was cut back because of the year's economic difficulties. Books are distributed by 555 shops supervised by a section of the Ministry of Information called "Books for the People" and by a network of lending libraries centrally controlled by the Ministry of Information. Private enterprise has been entirely excluded from book distribution.

Quantitatively, Marxist-Leninist theoretical literature is favored, followed by school textbooks and technical literature for workers. After that come reprints of classics. The Communist line regarding classics is that "socialist culture and literature" is linked with the values of "progressive culture" of the past. Classics are not only not rejected, they are given prominence in proportion to their "progressive elements." The Communists profess, furthermore, to see a close relationship between "socialist realism" and "classical realism."

New editions of Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, Tolstoy, Balzac, Dickens and other standard classics have been duly published, always with forewords, guiding the reader to the "progressive elements." The best things in Czech literature since the year 1800, in Communist eyes, are being incorporated into a 150-volume "People's Library," the first volumes of which have appeared. A similar Slovak series is also being produced. Out of all the treasures of their literary past, the Czech Communists have selected for most intensive popularization the works of Alois Jirasek, who, in the second half of the nineteenth century, produced historical novels a little in the manner of Sir Walter Scott, under the inspiration of the historian Palacky. The comic aspect of it is that Jirasek was a fierce anti-Communist. After suppressing the anti-Communist parts of his work, the Communists

find that what remains fits their conception of realism and progressive literature. His work ranges from legends of the founding of the Czech nation through novels and plays based on the Hussite era and the ensuing Hapsburg conquest, to biographies of the Czech National Awakeners.

Some cynics have professed to explain the boom in Jirasek's works with the story that the mistress of the Minister of Education, Professor Nejedly, is a niece of Jirasek. In any event, there is nothing halfhearted about the Communist popularization. In 1951, in honor of the hundredth anniversary of his birth, selections from his works were printed in thirty-two volumes, in an edition of more than 50,000. In the autumn of 1951, no less than six Prague theaters had Jirasek plays in their repertoires. Meanwhile, he is not only constantly placed in the cultural sections of the newspapers, but pictures of him are displayed in bookstores. Large plaster statues of him have been set up at several points in the city of Prague.

While certain elements of the literary past are glorified in this manner, the Czech Communists have quietly, and it seems to me rather shamefacedly, tried to eradicate others. In the first months after the coup, they went through the motions of purging libraries of the works they found most objectionable. But more often than not these books were merely put out of sight by friends of Western culture, and kept in the libraries. In July 1949, a national collection of "unusable" books from private libraries netted 184,448 kilograms of pulp, according to press reports. But so far as I know, that was the only drive of the kind.

New books by new authors are at the bottom of the publishers' lists. They have not had a great deal to offer since the war. While anti-Communist writers have been silenced or have escaped abroad, a whole series of the best Communist writers died during the war or immediately after. The most brilliant of these was probably Julius Fucik. F. X. Salda, who, while not a Party member was sympathetic to the Communists, was the most productive of these authors. Others were S. K. Neumann, Bedrich Vaclavek, and Eduard Urx, and the poet Frantisek Halas who died at the age of forty-eight on October 27, 1949. Although Halas was an old Communist campaigner, and as such got a job as chairman in the Publications Department in the Ministry of Information, he has nevertheless been violently criticized by the chief party theorist, Ladislav Stoll, for his lack of "socialist realism."

Of those still living, among the older generation of Communist writers the most prominent are the novelist Ivan Olbracht and the poet Vitezslav Nezval. Olbracht, now the dean of approved writers, was a Communist

journalist in the 1930's. Then he left the Communist Party and did not return to it until after the war. A gifted writer, he is best known for his bitter, class-conscious novels of life in Ruthenia, the mountainous, impoverished easternmost province of Czechoslovakia, which was annexed by Soviet Russia after World War II. His best novel is *Nicolas Shuhaj the Brigand,* the true story of a Robin Hood of the Ruthenian forest—a romantic tale told in realistic terms. A reviewer in the bi-weekly *Prague News Letter* declared that it "ranks with the finest works of European literature and is one of the greatest novels of socialist realism ever written." Of his book *Anna the Proletarian,* apparently the most celebrated of his works, the same reviewer said frankly that it is "a well-written, sympathetic propaganda novel rather than a historical novel of artistic pretensions." It is the story of a country girl who comes to the capital as a pilgrim, marries a young worker, and through him experiences the "betrayal" of the working class movement in 1920.

Nezval, known as a surrealist before the war, got into trouble after the war because of what the Communist reviewers asserted was the discrepancy between the dialectical materialism to which he paid tribute, and his introspective, idealistic and associational poetry. But Nezval was not one to hide his head in shame. In an article in *Rude Pravo* about the deceased Communist leader Josef Haken he found an opportunity to defend himself indirectly. "He liked us, and we loved him," Nezval wrote of Haken. "He understood us and he fought for us. He rebuked leftist deviationists who from time to time slipped into the cultural leadership of the Party and who tried to teach lessons to avant-garde artists by mechanical application of revolutionary ideas in the realm of art."

Somewhat to the surprise of outsiders, Nezval won out and is now more celebrated than ever. Insiders were not so surprised. They recalled that in earlier days Nezval had been one of Klement Gottwald's and Vaclav Kopecky's drinking companions. The title of Nezval's latest collection of poems is *Songs of Peace.* Others, whose success is more journalistic than literary are Jan Drda, the bushy-haired, indefatigable president of the Writers' Union, and Jiri Hronek, the president of the International Organization of Journalists. Drda's outstanding work is *The Silent Barricade,* which purports to be the story of the Prague rising. His most recent effort has been *The Red Scarf,* a collection of stories published in September 1951. His prose is florid and hasty but fills the requirements of "socialist realism." Hronek in the autumn of 1950 published *Peace Against Dollars,* which is advertised as revealing imperialist preparations to en-

slave the world, in accordance with plans laid down for world domination by the Nazis.

There are many younger writers of whom little has been heard except resounding pledges to produce great work. Of them the *Prague News Letter* wrote that "a violent rejection of form for the sake of content is now being overcome, and form, which expresses content and is determined by it, is the aim of the younger as of the older poets. . . . Books are being written about the people of today, the men and women of village and factory who are changing the old society and battling the outworn ideas. A factory springs up from the ruins of a monastery—a symbolic but typical theme, only one of many that have been promised." The kind of work in which these young authors are engaged is indicated by reports on their current projects in the Prague press, in September 1951. Thus Jiri Marek, a state prize winner, had just finished a book of stories about the Soviet Union called *Joyful Meeting,* and had begun a novel about life in Ostrava, where a new industrial city is being built. Vojtech Cach was engaged in producing his second play, about pre-war miners' strikes; Alena Bernaskova, author of a successful play about the struggle for Iranian oil, was working on a film script about an incident in which Czech police were said to have shot at groups of children during a pre-war workers' demonstration; Frantisek Kubka was preparing to publish a collection of political essays called *Little Stories for Mr. Truman.*

In the new writing, traditional romantic themes are fast disappearing. If "boy meets girl" at all in a novel, it must happen while they are engaged in some collective activity, for instance, working together on a "brigade." Certainly they must not meet in some frivolous way, say at a dance, or by moonlight in a country lane. The effect is sometimes strained and less than "realistic." In fact, the writers who work in the shadow of the Communist Party seem to drift unconsciously away from reality into idealizations, or caricatures of the prescribed social types: the high-minded proletarian *versus* the slavering, ruthless capitalist. These are black and white abstractions, not real people.

Never, not even in Nazi Germany, has the margin of freedom within which creative originality may express itself been so narrow and uncertain as it is in the Communist world today. I have heard it said by Communist apologists that many an artist dependent on a private patron in the past also faced delicate problems in pleasing the taste and vanity of his patron. The great difference, however, is that then there was at least a small chance of escaping and finding a more satisfactory patron. In a

Communist world, there is no escape, no other patron. Yet I believe that exceptional talents may sometimes overcome or get around even the barriers set by Communist authority. It would be foolish, I think, automatically to dismiss every literary or artistic product of the Communist world as worthless.

The Czechoslovak book fare also includes a large proportion of translations — 732 out of a total of 3668 titles published in 1949, for instance. Of the translations, no less than 450 were of Soviet books. In addition, 104 books were published in foreign languages, mainly Russian. Among the Russian works, after those on Communism and classics, Ilya Ehrenburg takes pride of place. Other recent titles are Vershigora's *Man with a Clear Conscience* which is said to arouse emotional memories of the liberation of Czechoslovakia by the Red Army, Makarenko's *Road to Life* about homeless children, and Boris Polevoi's *We Are the Soviet People.*

But "progressive" Westerners are also included. For Americans it may be interesting to know that Howard Fast ranks first among American writers, as the great contemporary artist. I have seen him compared even with Tolstoy. Most of his writings have been translated, the latest being *My Glorious Brothers; The Unvanquished; The American.* Of him the daily *Lidove Noviny* observed confidently: "Fast will not go astray like so many other once-promising Americans." The reference was no doubt especially to Steinbeck and Upton Sinclair who have dropped from favor since they made clear their anti-Communist feelings. Some of Hemingway and Theodore Dreiser have been translated, and most recently Norman Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead.* Sayers and Kahn's *Great Conspiracy* was enthusiastically welcomed.

Among recent English books, Saxton's *Great Midland* and Gallagher's *Revolt on the Clyde* have found special favor. The Frenchman Pierre Daix has found admirers for his book *La Dernière Forteresse.*

Finally, German writers are again in vogue, usually in the original German, which a great many Czechs can read. Thomas Mann's works have been reprinted, also those of Hans Marchwitza, cultural attaché at the East German Embassy in Prague. Other recent successes from the West have been *River Arms,* by the late Portuguese writer José Gomes Pereira Pinto, *The Storm,* by the Chinese author Dzhou Li-pcho, and the South Americans Pablo Neruda, and Antonio de Castro Alves.

A handy guide to approved Westerners was provided by Minister of Information Kopecky when he said, in March 1950: "We are proud of the fact that Jorge Amado [a Brazilian] found refuge with us, and that

our doors are always open to Robeson, Mme. Joliot-Curie, Aragon, Eluard, Gabriel d'Arboussier, Gutusso, Howard Fast, Andersen-Nexo, Pablo Neruda, Bernal, and Mulk Raj Anand." And he added: "We do not divide our cultural relations with the peoples of the West, North, and South by Iron Curtains as our opponents do, but open them to all those who fight together with us for world peace and progress."

In other words, for those who agree with him, Mr. Kopecky has prepared no Iron Curtain.

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Directives for the Czechoslovak film industry were laid down by the General Committee of the Communist Party in March 1950. The main points were the following:

1. Movies are one of the finest, most effective instruments for the ideological education of the people.

2. Movies must "fill the Czechoslovak people with optimism and faith. . . . In this respect Soviet films are a great example."

3. The vast majority of films must be devoted to present-day problems concerned with the construction of socialism. Much more attention must be given the problems of village life.

4. Comedies are acceptable but must not be mere nonpolitical entertainment. Rather, they must be a "sharp political weapon ridiculing the remnants of bourgeois views and customs and emphasizing the positive, humorous and optimistic features of the present."

5. The artistic standard is "socialist realism." All subjects must be taken from real life.

About the same time, the chairman of the Council of Czechoslovak Film Directors, Jiri Hendrych, told his colleagues to concentrate on the following subjects in their pictures: "the industrialization of Slovakia, the development of the Ostrava industrial district, the conflicts and emotions of the life of a worker in these times, the new type of working women, the changing village scene as the countryside is transformed by socialism."

These were the official directives that got published. Unofficially, I learned from Czechs associated with the film industry that they were told in effect: "For heaven's sake, make some pictures that people will go to see. . . . A man who has spent his day at a factory bench or behind the plow cannot be expected to want to see only films about factory workers and farm laborers. . . . Give them some variety and entertainment value, something to overcome the public's preference for Western films." At the same time, thirty-six of Prague's seventy-four cinemas featured Western

movies, including the American picture *The Woman in the Window* and Britain's *Great Expectations.* Altogether, there were fifteen American movies, six British, six French, one Dutch, two Norwegian, one Danish and one Swedish film.

The Woman in the Window had had no advance publicity and was described by one critic as having "no message for the human being of today . . . a superficial thing, without the slightest educational mission either in directing, acting, subject matter or ideas." That, however, and anything else from Hollywood, was apparently just what the Czechs wanted. They queued up for hours in front of out-of-the-way suburban movie houses to see ancient Laurel and Hardy comedies, while the big downtown houses showing ideologically impeccable Russian and Czech films stayed empty.

There was a story in circulation about an old peasant woman who came to Prague and was given a ticket to a Russian movie. The attendant at the entrance to the cinema felt sorry for the old lady and handed her a rifle.

"What's this for?" cried the old woman.

"You are going into that huge auditorium," replied the attendant, "and it is dark, and you will be the only person there. I thought that you would like to have the rifle so that you would not feel afraid."

This sort of thing was apparently too much for the Central Committee. At the same meeting at which it drew up directives for the film industry, it decided that all Western movies must be withdrawn from circulation. Since then only a few scattered "progressive" Western films have been permitted, and many a Czech has simply given up going to the movies. For carrying out its mission the Czechoslovak film industry had at its disposal considerable means. During the occupation the Nazis had greatly expanded the studios at Barandov, a Prague suburb, and the Communist Ministry of Information, after completing five new studios at Barandov and starting another at Bratislava in Slovakia, now claims that the Czechoslovak studios are the largest in central Europe. An interesting supplementary device recently developed by the Czechs is the Theater of the State Films which is devoted exclusively to plays suitable for filming. At this theater, it is said, actors who will eventually appear in a movie have a chance to test audience reactions to their abilities.

In 1951, Czechoslovakia planned to produce more than forty full-length feature pictures. Three of these are worth describing because they are representative. All are adapted from plays. *Grinder Karhan's Shift* deals

with the beginning of the "shock worker" (*stakhanovite*) movement and the "humorous" efforts to overcome the workers' traditional opposition to the "speed-up," now that "workers' management" has replaced the "capitalist bosses." *The Churchwarden and the Hen* is the story of a strong-minded farmer's wife who is finally won over by the "co-operative" [read collectivist] movement. The big landowners who tried to sabotage the "co-operative" are represented by the churchwarden who is at last exposed and converted.

New Fighters Shall Rise, which is probably the Czech studios' major effort of the year, is adapted from the play, which was in turn adapted from the book written by Premier Antonin Zapotocky about his father. It shows his father gradually arousing the political consciousness of poverty-stricken villagers at a meeting of the "Mutual Aid and Self-Education Society," and reaches its climax in the funeral of the village pauper, who before his death has grasped the human dignity of which the "criminal capitalist social order" had robbed him.

Performances such as these from the entire Communist world are shown each year at the Film Festival at Marianske Lazne and Karlovy Vary in July and August. The 1950 festival, attended by the Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Andrei Vishinsky who had been taking the cure at Karlovy Vary, was held under the slogan, "For Peace—For a New Man—For a More Complete Man." A Soviet film in color made at Barandov took the Grand Prize. The film was *The Fall of Berlin,* directed by M. E. Ciaureli, and with music by Shostakovitch. The Czech actors Jan Werich and Novakova played the roles of Goering and Eva Braun. It is the story of a stakhanovite named Ivanov and his girl friend Natasha, separated by the war, reunited in conquered Berlin at the moment when Stalin arrives to congratulate the Red Army. Into the background are woven the Stalin-Churchill-Roosevelt meeting at Yalta, scenes from Stalin's and Hitler's headquarters, and the last days in the Fuehrer's bunker, including the marriage of Hitler and Eva Braun, which gives more the impression of a party of madmen than of a wedding.

Speaking in connection with the presentation of this film, its Russian director said: "Often we are taken to task because of the tendentiousness of our films. But I ask you, is there such a thing as a work of art without tendency? I don't think so. Beginning with Sophocles and ending even with contemporary writers, every work of art worthy of mention unquestionably agitates for something." The Czech judges judged accordingly. The "Peace Prize" went to another Soviet film called *The Conspiracy of*

the Doomed, giving the Communist version of the coup in Czechoslovakia in such a way that it might have happened anywhere.

The "Fight for Freedom Prize" was given to a Chinese film, *China's Daughters,* about Chinese girl partisans. And the "Social Progress Prize" went to a Czech film, *They Were Steeled,* about the struggles of the Czech working class. The picture *Give Us This Day,* directed in England by Edward Dmytryk, one of the "Hollywood Ten," got honorable mention.

Along with the panegyrics about these pictures in the Czech press went bitter denunciations of Western pictures in general and Hollywood in particular. While films of the "People's Democracies" seek "the fullest reflection of the new, happy life, the new forces and the reconstruction of our society," declared *Rude Pravo* in connection with the festival, "capitalist films portray abnormal men, psychopaths, maniacs, the insane, swindlers, murderers and suicides, and alcoholics. They offer lying, unreal entertainment, maudlin love stories completely lacking in ideas, designed to distract the public's attention from real life, suggesting delusions about happiness and satisfaction attainable in capitalist society."

Reading this and much more like it, it occurred to me that some of the Communists' bitterness may be caused by the fact that no matter how much they advertise Communist pictures, the Czech people go right on preferring Hollywood. The Czechoslovak film industry may have fulfilled the official public part of its Communist directives, but it has fallen down in carrying out the unofficial directives to produce more variety and entertainment value.

The 1951 Film Festival showed no great changes in the type of films produced in Czechoslovakia and other parts of the Communist world. The outstanding features were the Soviet films—all in color—*The Donbas Miners, In Time of Peace, Cavalier of the Golden Star* and *Moussorgsky.* Communist China had four entries and North Korea a documentary in color called *May Day, 1950,* depicting the "prosperous life of the Korean people a month before the gruesome attack of the American imperialist forces."

The East German Republic presented two full-length features. The first, *The Sonnenbrucks,* is about the life of a professor and his family between 1943 and 1948, as they watch the "return of the fascists" in western Germany. The second, called *The Cold Heart,* is notable for its remarkable color and trick photography.

Bulgaria showed the second full-length film produced in that country,

called *The Alarm* and directed by Zachari Zhandov. It is about life among Communist partisans and a family of divided loyalty.

One British-made film, *The Browning Version,* was shown and a speech made by its director, Anthony Asquith, won him a warm reception.

The two Italian films were *The Road to Hope* and *No Peace Under the Olives.*

The French director Louis Daquin presented *Address Unknown* and *God's Anointed.* Finally, the French delegation showed a documentary which they claimed had been made secretly in France, showing the fight of French dockers against the loading of war materials.

The Czechoslovak people love the theater. There are fourteen theaters producing stage plays in the capital and thirty-seven outside. A village theater organization with ten teams specializes in playing for villages with less than one thousand inhabitants.

While the stage is supposed to be as much devoted to ideological education as the screen, the repertoire companies find it easier than do the film companies to keep their public happy because they can lean on a variety of classics and old popular stand-bys.

As throughout Europe, the Czech theater is organized on the repertoire system. That is, a company of actors sticks together at its own theater indefinitely and develops a repertoire of many plays. Shakespeare's *Merry Wives of Windsor* and *The Taming of the Shrew;* Shaw's *Joan of Arc* and *Mrs. Warren's Profession,* along with Molière, Maxim Gorky, Chekhov and Ostrovsky have continued since 1948 as standard offerings. Even though many of the best actors have fled the country or been purged, plays of this kind still meet with popular approval.

But it is a different story with theaters such as Theater D51 and the Realistic Theater, which specialize in new plays in the footsteps of the stage version of *Grinder Karhan's Shift.* Theater D51 during the 1950–1951 season produced *Who Is More,* propagandizing in favor of labor in the mines and manual labor generally, and against the bourgeois preference for white-collar jobs. *Duchov Viaduct,* by Vojtech Cach, at the Realistic Theater pursued a similar theme. Both plays were probably inspired by the Soviet production *Makar Dubarava,* by Kornejchuck, which was in the repertoire of three different theaters simultaneously during the 1950–1951 season. In addition to the usual classics, six theaters have in their repertoires plays by Alois Jirasek, ranging from *Jan Zizka* about the military hero of early Hussite times, to a light, sentimental piece called

The Cradle. The National Theater, for the second season in succession, gave a play called *South of the Thirty-eighth Parallel* concerning the struggle of the South Korean people under the American occupation; a Soviet play called *People, Be on Your Guard!* based on Julius Fucik's account of his struggle against the Nazis; and another Soviet play, *Court of Honor,* which is advertised as dealing with "the dangers of cosmopolitanism in science and the nature of true patriotism." The Army Theater had a Chinese play, *The Girl with White Hair,* in which a peasant sells his daughter to his landlord as a servant, to pay his debts. The landlord rapes and beats the girl, who flees to the mountains where her hair turns white as she lives in a cave with her newborn child. The Realistic Theater continued three of the previous season's successes. They were the Soviet play *Sparrow Mountains,* in which two young people with deviationist tendencies are brought back to the right line by their schoolmates; *Scheherazade,* by Alena Bernaskova, in which Britons and Americans compete for Persian oil; and *Duchov Viaduct,* which has already been mentioned.

Another highly advertised Soviet play is Lavrenev's *Voice of America,* an unlikely tale about a progressive army captain who runs afoul of a reactionary senator, gets a dishonorable discharge and is arrested. The senator offers him his freedom in exchange for a five-minute speech on the "Voice of America" branding the Soviet Union as an aggressor. It sounds to me more like goings-on on the Communist side of the Iron Curtain!

To balance the heavy fare from the East, theater managers find it advisable to import occasional productions from the West such as *Finian's Rainbow.* In the heavily Czechosized and Communized version of this show the elf of the original play is replaced by hulking Jan Werich (who was known on Broadway during the war), in the guise of a water sprite at the bottom of a well. Somewhat unaccountably the Marshall Plan keeps bobbing up. But Werich still succeeds in making it a good show. When I departed in 1950 it was in its third season, and the Czech version of "How Are Things in Gloccamorra" had become almost a national song.

An American play of a very different sort was Howard Fast's *Thirty Pieces of Silver,* depicting the "Fascization of America," which had its world première at Prague's Chamber Theater on March 16, 1951. Fast wrote the Czech stage manager regretting that he could not attend the first night, because he was unable to obtain a passport.

> You see, I am a real prisoner here, behind the Iron Curtain which actually exists [he wrote]—behind the terrible and monstrous curtain which separates the United States from the rest of the world.
>
> In a country of shame and humiliation, traitors and impostors have become the most honored citizens in a country in which the ruling class deliberately undermines the honor and courage of the average person. I do not have to emphasize that in such a country free culture and literature cannot exist. None of the Broadway stages will perform my play. The American commercialized theater and film today has no room for anything but dirt, pornography and vulgarity.

In pursuit of the illusive formula of popular appeal for their own new productions, some companies are now holding regular meetings with groups of workers, while others invite workers to dress rehearsals and consult with them. *Duchov Viaduct* was visited and criticized by a group of miners, for instance, while a group of visiting foreign journalists criticized the conception and portrayal of American and British characters in *Scheherazade*.

The Realistic Theater has tried to gain greater depth of characterization by requiring its actors to write out a life story of the character whose part they are playing, including the time covered by the play. It has also tried enlivening the dialogue by allowing the actors to improvise their own words during rehearsals instead of using the author's. (This sounds a little like the practice of which authors complain so bitterly in Hollywood.) Despite all efforts at introducing innovations, the Communist theaters still fail to produce creative drama. Perhaps it is because the consultations with the workers are phony, being merely political rallies at which Party zealots make suggestions such as that the "reactionary" in the play should be made less convincing. The workers are never really consulted; even while going through the motions of consultation, the Communists are still telling them, not asking them. If an actor writes out his character's "life story" he must, of course, draw "correct political conclusions" from it. One might say that when propaganda comes on the stage, human understanding and artistic insight slip out to the exit.

During the first months after the coup, so much half-baked propaganda and Soviet stuff was thrown at the public that, as in the case of the movies, people stopped buying tickets. The public was satiated to the point where people will still not turn out voluntarily, even for a good new production or a Soviet play or film. This problem has, however, been taken care of by Communist organization, and now the theaters are jammed with a new

kind of audience. You don't see evening dresses or tuxedos even on opening nights. The seats are filled with factory workers for whom the organization "Art for the People" has bought whole blocks of seats; or with members of the Union of Czechoslovak Youth, or of other "mass organizations." "Unorganized" individuals often have trouble getting in. Altogether, whether they like it or not, more people are seeing more theater in Czechoslovakia than ever before.

For the very young, Prague boasts three puppet theaters, a special legitimate theater and a special movie theater. Puppets remain a Czech specialty, and several successful puppet films have been made, some humorous and some telling eastern European fairy stories. At the most famous of the puppet theaters, the Spejbl and Hurvinek Theater, a show called *Circus Dudlik* performed entirely by marionette animals, was to be seen in the spring of 1951. The City Theater for Young People meanwhile was playing a new version of *The Three Bears*. The three bears escape from a circus and return to the woods, where they try to build a house. After many mishaps and much merriment they discover that only by working together can they build a house that will stand. An alternative show is *How Honza Didn't Become King*. Honza slays a dragon and is introduced at court. When a courtier advises him that "The world depends on good manners" he replies: "I thought it depended on work." He declines to kiss the king's toe and insists on eating bread instead of frogs' legs. In October 1951, this theater presented a Communist version of *The Gingerbread House* in which Hansel and Gretel, tired of eating wholesome meals and helping with household chores, are lured by an old poacher to his cottage in the woods. Here, instead of the promised gingerbread, they find dry crusts and plenty of hard work. After that they feel different about eating mother's soup and helping her with the dishes. Eventually they are set free by sympathetic animals.

The Young People's Cinema was at the same time showing an American picture, *The Adventures of Mark Twain*.

With Communist rule, there has come to Czechoslovakia "socialist music." And Prague radio is now grinding out marches and choral music in truly Muscovite style. Composers are urged to turn out more music for "daily use"—songs for "shock workers," marches for brass bands and dance music. In January 1951, the Czechoslovak Composers' Union proudly recorded publication of 212 new songs for workers. The Czechoslovak State Song and Dance Group, and the Army Song Group (named

after the Minister of Education's son Vit Nejedly) are busy popularizing them. The Minister, Zdenek Nejedly, who was a music critic and historian long before he became a minister, watches over the proceedings carefully.

In 1949, the Spring Music Festival for which Prague has long been renowned was still a fairly neutral affair. While considerable fuss was made over Paul Robeson and Soviet musicians, the Swiss composer Arthur Honegger was also invited to visit Prague to direct some of his own compositions, dissonances and all, and the performers could still feel that their art was above politics. But by the spring of 1950 the festival had become frankly and fully political. Foreign participants were asked to sign a proclamation endorsing the demands of the World Committee of Defenders of Peace. Soviet artists, including David Oistrakh the violinist, Emil Gilels the pianist, and Kiril Kongrashin the conductor dominated the scene. The opening performance, coinciding with the anniversary of the liberation of Prague by the Red Army, was a stirring cantata with soaring choruses called "Stalin's Order of the Day No. 268" by Vaclav Dobias.

For the 1951 Festival, the East German conductor Hermann Abendroth, Musical Director of the National Theater in Weimar, was invited to conduct Beethoven's "Ninth (Choral) Symphony," which annually brings the Festival to its climax. The emphasis on this occasion was more than ever on Soviet performers who carried off all the main prizes.

Dobias is by far the most successful composer of the day in Czechoslovakia, perhaps partly because he is always on the spot with new compositions for state occasions. After the Communists took over he produced "1948 March." He wrote "Czechoslovak Polka" before the inauguration of the two-year plan and, always adaptable, rewrote it in more elaborate form for the inauguration of the five-year plan. He is also the author of a popular song called "Come Brigading With Us" and of a cantata called "Stalingrad." But his greatest success has been the cantata "Build Up Your Country and Strengthen Peace," for which the World Committee of Defenders of Peace at Warsaw awarded him a gold medal in 1950.

Dobias is good, according to the Communists, because he is particularly successful in assimilating and using traditional folk music while at the same time boldly experimenting with harmony. They say he matches the grandeur of the classics and is one of the greatest composers of our time.

On the other hand, a composer such as Victor Kalabis is not so good, according to the Communist daily *Lidove Noviny,* because his music is

"most powerful while its effect is the saddest and most depressing; it knows no merriment, nor any bright prospects." Whereas "the Czechoslovak working people demand music which will express what everyone feels and experiences and which wholeheartedly assists in creating a joyful life on earth." Further comments on Czechoslovak music were contributed by the Russian composer Aram Khachaturian who is chairman of the Symphonic and Chamber Music section of the Union of Soviet Composers. After attending the conference of the Union of Czechoslovak Composers in April 1950, he complained about the lack of useful Czechoslovak composers, remarked that Czech jazz was deficient in virtuosity of performance and richness of rhythm, and singled out the work of the composer J. Seidl for criticism. His cantata, "People, Be Vigilant!" the Russian said, was impressive but lacked "national character and fresh and easily remembered melodies, and suffered from a surplus of modulation, polyphony and climaxes, which disturbed the democratic form of the work."

Working under directives of this kind, Czechoslovak composers are not likely to produce anything very original. For inspiration they are tied to folk music and the classics. For, just as in literature, the Communists do not deny the past, they merely pick out from the past what suits their purposes. According to their theorists the grandeur of classics by Beethoven and Bach, for instance, and the simple melodies of Smetana can be understood and appreciated by anyone, with or without musical education, and are hence democratic and worth imitating. A selection from the past along this line was made in an anthology of one hundred phonograph records issued in July 1951. They include examples of liturgical and secular music of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Hussite marching songs, the works of the early baroque composers and examples from the works of musicians up to the time of Smetana, the greatest of Czech composers.

By comparison with these selections, the Communists say that the esoteric products of modern Western composers can be understood by only a handful of people who have studied music and hence are undemocratic and reprehensible.

In no sphere does "socialist realism" appear as a misconception more clearly than in the plastic arts.

Although many people did not think much of the kind of painting and sculpture produced between the two wars by Czech artists inspired by Parisian models, there can scarcely be any outside the Communist

Party who esteem the work now being turned out on lines determined by political doctrine.

I was fascinated to discover the similarity between works of "socialist realism" and the sort of things German artists were encouraged to produce during the Nazi regime. Abhorrence of abstractions and anti-intellectualism are common to both Nazi and Communist theories of art. They insist that art must be inspired by "real people" and be understood by the same. In their efforts to make their pictures of "real people" something more than photography both Nazi and Communist artists tend to try to make them heroic. The effect usually is merely loud and dull. It occurs to me that perhaps there is a "totalitarian school of art."

The Communists call upon their artists to turn out immense quantities of this kind of stuff, to embellish not only Party propaganda posters and booklets, but work kitchens, meeting halls, schools and public buildings of every description. Not individuals but public bodies such as ministries and national enterprises are the principal buyers of art. And the principal show window for new works of art is the "House of Art," which has been set up in what was, in the eighteenth century, a church attached to the monastery of the Hibernians. Most pictures and sculptures on sale here have been produced according to themes suggested by the Union of Czech Artists and by artists subsidized by the Ministry of Education. It works like this:

The artist submits first studies of a projected work of art to a board of the Ministry of Education. The project is submitted to groups of workers (and, I suppose, some artists). If the Ministry decides, after that, to accept the project it will undertake to pay the artist a monthly advance for as long as six months. The artists undertake to finish the project within a certain period.

At any time during this period the artist may decide to withdraw the project or the Ministry may decide to reject it. In either case the money the artist has received counts as payment for the work done. When the project is completed, accepted and sold, the Ministry deducts the amount of the advance from the price received by the artist.

Under this system the Communists boast that there will be no more artists starving in garrets. The advances they receive amount to the salary of a higher civil servant (of course if the projects are not accepted, they get no advances).

There are some artists who are enthusiastic for the new system. Prominent among them is Vaclav Rabas, sixty-six-year-old landscape painter,

famed for his autumnal coloring, who carries the title of "national artist." He is on record as having said: "For me, the Communist Party is the bosom of security and the spring of my artistic urge." Another enthusiast is seventy-seven-year-old Max Svabinsky, whose mosaic of the baptism was installed in St. Vitus Cathedral just before Christmas, 1950, and whose portrait of the Communist hero Julius Fucik won a prize from the Czechoslovak Peace Committee in 1951.

Among younger artists, too, there are the painters such as Lahoda and Antonovic and the sculptor Servitova who spent many months painting and sculpturing in a factory, then exhibited their work in factories to the workers. No poetic seclusion for them. They followed out the "socialist realism" prescription to the letter, and the Ministry of Education thought the result so good it moved everything into a big exhibition hall in the center of Prague.

Others have broken with their former techniques. Frantisek Gross, previously known as a surrealist, has been painting industrial subjects such as the synthetic gasoline plant of the Stalin Works at Most. The surrealist Frantisek Hudecek now paints miners and "shock workers." Lev Simak, an impressionist, has "developed" according to Communist critics, in the direction of realism.

Who is sincere and who is insincere in embracing new techniques and theories of art is, under the circumstances, an open question. After viewing an exhibition called "Art Harvest of 1950," devoted to historical themes and contemporary subjects such as hewing coal and plowing up the boundaries between farms, a Czech reviewer observed that "sometimes mistaken zeal in the search for realism leads to bad painting." Perhaps, however, the bad painting was not entirely due to mistaken zeal. Many artists who now dash off their official assignments in "socialist realism" for the sake of their daily bread, continue in private to venerate other schools of art.

CHAPTER 26 How the Churches Were Broken

ARCHBISHOP Josef Beran of Prague, a tiny, gently smiling figure beneath the tall jeweled miter on his head and the gold and silver stole over his shoulders, gripped the pulpit railing, leaned forward and spoke in a loud, clear voice, but tense with emotion, to three thousand men and women pressed into Strahov church and overflowing into the monastery garden outside.

"I don't know how many more times I will be able to speak to you," the archbishop said. "Whatever happens, don't believe that I have surrendered." A murmur and a wave of sobs went through the church as he paused.

It was June 18, 1949. Negotiations between the Roman Catholic church and the Communist state had broken down. The Czechoslovak Council of Bishops had found a police-installed microphone hidden in their conference room. They had protested to President Gottwald. They had made public a series of letters to cabinet ministers protesting against the suppression of Catholic newspapers and periodicals, interference with Catholic education and other efforts to force the church out of public life and back behind the walls of its churches. The government's insistence that it would administer the entire educational system "in the spirit of Marxism" made further church-state negotiations "vain and hopeless," the bishops had said.

The government, for its part, had arrested about 150 priests on charges of various kinds of antistate activity. A week before the archbishop's appearance in Strahov church, it had founded a so-called Catholic Action which was supposed to win support among the lower clergy and Catholic laymen and to bring pressure to bear on the bishops to submit to the government's demands. Finally, the government had, only three days earlier, placed Archbishop Beran's palace under police surveillance and

installed in his consistory a government "plenipotentiary." The church-state struggle was nearing its climax.

"I know what you expect of me," Archbishop Beran continued. "You can imagine what I would like to say and how I would like to say it. But I won't say it because I don't want this fine old monastery of Strahov to be persecuted.

"Perhaps very soon you will hear all sorts of things about me from the radio. You may hear that I have made a confession, or other things. But no matter how often you hear these things, I hope you will believe in me. If you hear about the conclusion of an agreement between church and state you should know that I would never conclude an agreement that would infringe upon the rights of the church and the bishops."

Half-suppressed moans rose from the densely massed crowd, rising and falling so that I could no longer hear the archbishop's voice. But my secretary, Mary Baker, stationed just below the marble pulpit, took down his words.

As the archbishop concluded and turned from the pulpit towards the altar, he seemed to falter and two church servants grasped his arm. He leaned heavily on the silver and gold staff in his hands, tapping it audibly on the flagstones. What he had to say, evoking the "confessions" of Cardinal Mindszenty a few months earlier, seemed to have exhausted him.

At the altar the archbishop prayed for the youth and for Catholics wavering in their faith, that they might not be misled, and for "Judases who betrayed their priestly calling by allowing themselves to be tempted by short-term successes and material benefits."

Then, refreshed by his prayers, he walked steadily down the aisle, raising his hand high for all to see as he blessed the people. Church servants could scarcely clear a path for him as men and women strove to touch his robes. One servant followed carrying a bouquet of white carnations which a little girl had pressed into the archbishop's hand when he arrived.

The crowd outside surrounded his car weeping and chanting, "Long live the archbishop," "We won't give you up" and "We believe you." The car, with people clinging to its sides, could barely move forward. As it turned, a woman slipped under the wheels and was slightly injured. The driver had to reverse to release her.

Heedless of the gathering darkness, and the cold rain carried by a rising wind, the crowd, now singing hymns, streamed down the hill from Strahov monastery behind Archbishop Beran's black Tatra automobile.

They gathered in front of the archbishop's palace and sang and chanted until he came out on the balcony and quieted them. "I have faith in you," he said. "I trust you. Have faith in me. . . . Now I suggest that you go home peacefully." And they heeded him and dispersed.

The next day was Sunday, the nineteenth of June. Archbishop Beran went to St. Vitus's Cathedral, only a few hundred yards from his palace, to deliver his sermon. Attracted by the prevailing church-state tension and the archbishop's sermon of the previous evening, an enormous crowd began, before seven o'clock in the morning, to flow from all parts of the town through the crooked streets that lead up the steep hillside to Hradcany Square and St. Vitus's Cathedral. But the police were up even earlier and had prepared obstacles to dampen the ardor of the crowd. Across the bottom of the main street leading up the hill, they had set an old bus in such a way that it blocked the street and half the sidewalk. In the narrow gap remaining stood several policemen asking all who would pass for their identity papers. To inquiries about the bus, they replied with straight faces, that it had unfortunately skidded, that one man had been killed and three injured.

Halfway up the hill, six more policemen stood across the street with arms akimbo, again asking for papers, and suggesting that some church other than St. Vitus's would be nearer and less crowded. The performance was repeated a third time just below the square at a point where the road narrows.

So far as I could see, the police did not prevent anyone from reaching St. Vitus's Cathedral; they just intimidated people, hoping they would turn back. Some did. But the great cathedral was nonetheless filled as rarely before.

After a half-hour's solemn high mass, the archbishop opened his sermon with a startling announcement. He told the congregation there were *provocateurs* among them and urged all to remain calm. Catholic priests who had mingled with the crowd had warned the archbishop, as I learned later, that some two hundred Communists, members of the Workers' Militia and plain-clothes policemen were on hand and planned a disturbance.

When Archbishop Beran launched into an attack upon the "un-Catholic and schismatic" Catholic Action movement sponsored by the government, the Communists went into action. Whistles and catcalls echoed in the cathedral. They drowned out the archbishop who, standing at the top of the chancel's steps in all the splendor of his robes, looked infinitely weary

and sad. He stopped speaking, listened for an instant to the clamor, then turned, and knelt before the altar. The cathedral was filled with confusion and angry shouts. Many of the congregation followed the example of the archbishop and fell to their knees. A whole class of twenty teen-aged boys knelt in a side aisle and loudly followed their teacher in prayer. Men and women wept openly. Some surged forward towards the altar, others made for the exit. A few began to argue angrily with the Communists and at least one man was led from the church, presumably by a plain-clothes policeman.

Suddenly a voice began singing the national anthem. The turmoil halted, and some seven thousand voices—including the Communists—took it up in a mighty roar.

When the singing ended, Archbishop Beran tried once more to speak, asking that children be allowed to leave quietly. But he was once more drowned out by a new wave of whistling and catcalls.

After a moment's hesitation the archbishop began to leave the cathedral down the southern aisle farthest from the group of Communists. Monks rushed forward to clear a way for him. Yet he was almost thrown from his feet by the throng surging forward to touch his hands or garments. Gradually, as they followed the archbishop out of the cathedral and through the archways and courtyards that lead to the archbishop's palace, they fell to chanting a prayer: "Oh Lord defend us from evil and from all adverse things. May the heavenly hosts fight on our side and defend us."

The archbishop abandoned plans for a Corpus Christi Day procession. He returned directly to his palace while the crowd gathered in a dense mass in the square and began to clap and chant: "Long live the archbishop."

In his quarters in the palace, Archbishop Beran found four policemen who ordered him to stay away from the balcony facing the square in which the crowd had gathered.

Meanwhile the Communists had moved into the square, and while the Catholics, facing the archbishop's palace on the north side of the square called in vain for the archbishop to show himself, the Communists shouted "Long live Gottwald" in the direction of the President's residence on the east side of the square.

The rival voices rose wildly, angrily. There was one priest who, at the top of his lungs, implored the people to avoid trouble and go home, but a little monk in black, obviously of a different opinion, streaked back and forth across the square yelling shrilly for the archbishop. A giant with

a bald head and cauliflower ears also pushed doggedly through the Catholic throng, glaring and booming: "Long live Gottwald."

Within a few minutes the Communists were reinforced by uniformed police. About one hundred marched into the square behind a police car with a loud-speaker, and the Catholics, shouting imprecations, began to disperse.

Since that day the Catholics of Czechoslovakia have not seen their archbishop. Beran withdrew into his palace and stayed there. The government insisted he was free to leave the palace at any time, and would be provided a police escort for the purpose. But the archbishop, in a letter to the State Prosecutor, made public on August 11, maintained that he was "interned," was not permitted to receive visitors or correspondence except post cards and publications. "I am deprived of all personal freedom and all rights as archbishop," he wrote, "and this without any investigation and without the decision of any court or any official authority." He complained that the government's plenipotentiary, Dr. Miroslav Houska, sitting in his consistory, freely disposed of the archbishop's property and used his official stamps and seals although he, as archbishop, had declared the consistory dissolved and all letters emanating from it invalid.

The Communist police controlled all incoming and outgoing correspondence, telephone calls and visitors. As an extra precaution, they kept a man stationed outside the door to the archbishop's private quarters. Had the archbishop accepted the government's offer to let him leave his quarters with a police escort, he would have been, in fact, in the custody of the escort provided him. Rather than accept that kind of freedom on the government's terms, he preferred to follow the example of his predecessor, the Archbishop Kaspar, who refused to have anything to do with the Nazis and lived in isolation within his palace for two years until he died in 1941.

It may be presumed that by thus breaking contact with the Communists and isolating himself, Archbishop Beran sought to avoid unnecessarily giving the Communist authorities a pretext for intervening against himself or the hierarchy in general. He realized that after the incident at St. Vitus's Cathedral his appearance in public would precipitate a popular demonstration in his favor, a Communist counterdemonstration, and subsequent Communist reprisals. Beran did not want demonstrations; he wanted to keep the structure of the church intact as long as possible. His tactics were the opposite of those employed by Cardinal Mindszenty who preferred to challenge the Communists openly.

To understand the Communists' reluctance to proceed directly against Beran one must know something about him.

Born December 29, 1888, son of a Pilsen schoolteacher, he was a brilliant student and was sent to study theology at the Pope's university in Rome. Having been ordained a priest and having acquired a degree of doctor of theology, he returned to Bohemia just before World War I, bent on an academic career.

As a chaplain during the First World War, he became religious headmaster of all schools in Prague in 1925, and in 1932 was appointed Rector of the Prague Priests' Seminary and full professor of theology at the Theological Faculty of Charles University.

Josef Beran is a frail little man, only five feet two inches tall. He is ascetic in his personal habits and an indefatigable worker; yet those who know him say he is cheerful and sometimes even gay. He has a reputation for sincerity and courage, and is popular and much admired. These are the qualities that got him into trouble with the Nazis, who feared his influence. On July 6, 1942, he was arrested by the Gestapo and sent first to Tesin and then to Dachau concentration camp. There he mended socks, tended a garden and swept streets. He caught typhus and nearly died. When discharged from the camp's hospital at the age of fifty-five, he weighed less than a hundred pounds.

Liberated by American troops and returned home, Beran was, on February 7, 1946, appointed by the Pope to fill the vacant archbishopric of Prague. A week later President Benes received him and awarded him the highest Czechoslovak military order, the War Cross 1939, and the Czechoslovak Military Medal First Class. Both Benes and Beran were eager to avoid general renewal of the church-state conflict that had plagued the early days of the Republic, and they easily solved all problems as they arose.

When the Communists took power, Beran remained eager to preserve church-state peace and accepted their protestations of "good will" at face value. He pronounced a solemn *Te Deum* in St. Vitus's Cathedral for the new Communist president, Klement Gottwald.

Meanwhile the new archbishop was gaining a considerable following. He liked to get around to meet as many as possible of the one thousand clergy in his diocese. In spite of his exalted state, he was never pompous. The clergy, and the faithful, found him simple, direct, friendly and often humorous.

As his popularity grew the Communists began to take growing notice

of the archbishop. They didn't like him any better than the Nazis had.

Except for the library in which he carried on some theological research, Beran was not interested in the rococo splendors of his palace. The French tapestries, reputedly worth $1,500,000, in the reception rooms, and the costly silverware and Sèvres china in the banqueting rooms, were not to his taste. He reduced entertaining to one annual diplomatic tea, the last of which was held in 1947.

It is true that the archbishop could not have lived lavishly even if he had been so inclined, having been deprived by land reform and nationalization of the income from 25,000 hectares of land, several textile mills, breweries and hotels which belong to the archbishopric. In any event, Josef Beran confined himself pretty much to his personal quarters on the second floor of the palace where he was waited on by two nuns and a manservant. He had a reception room from which he could look out over the walls of the Hradcany Castle into President Gottwald's gardens, a room in which he slept and ate, and a small bare chapel.

It was to these quarters that Beran withdrew on June 19, 1949. But he did not withdraw into idleness. While spending much time in prayer and working on a study of a twelfth-century religious figure known as Agnes of Bohemia, he continued, to the extent possible under the circumstances, to lead the Catholic Church's struggle against Communist encroachment.

His number one antagonist was Dr. Alexei Cepicka, who directed the regime's campaign against the church, first as an official of the Central Action Committee of the National Front, and later as minister in charge of the State Office for Church Affairs. Cepicka is the government hatchet man, ruthless, arrogant, with a perpetual, slightly cynical smile. He was born in 1910 at Kromeriz in Moravia, son of a post office clerk, joined the Communist party at the age of nineteen and became a doctor of law at twenty-five. The Gestapo deported him to Auschwitz and Buchenwald. Following the liberation he rose rapidly in the Communist Party and became Minister of Commerce in 1947. After the coup he was appointed Minister of Justice.

The church-state issues that confronted Beran and Cepicka were technically four:

1. The government demand that all members of the clergy take a special oath of loyalty, not to the Republic, but to the "People's Democratic regime."

2. The government demand that the Catholic Church withdraw its

order prohibiting the clergy from accepting political office in the People's Democratic regime. Specifically at issue here was the case of the priest Josef Plojhar who had accepted the post of Minister of Justice in the government and had, as a result, been suspended by the church from the privilege of reading Mass. The priests Josef Lukacovic, Slovak Commissioner of Public Works, and Alexander Horak, Slovak Commissioner of Posts, were similarly affected.

3. The church demand that the government restore freedom of Catholic schools, press and periodicals, publishing houses and other institutions.

4. The church demand that the government pay compensation for property confiscated by way of land reform or nationalization.

From the government's point of view, by far the most important point concerned the oath of loyalty. As government spokesmen maintained over and over again, if the bishops would only take such an oath the government would gladly grant all church demands. The oath the government proposed read as follows:

> I promise upon my honor that I shall be faithful to the Czechoslovak Republic and her People's Democratic regime, that I shall not do anything that would be against her interest, security or unity. As a citizen of a People's Democratic state I shall comply conscientiously with the requirements which grow out of my position and I shall in accordance with my ability endeavor to foster the general welfare of the people.

Harmless as this might sound at first reading, to the church it meant that the clergy would have to go along with the entire "People's Democratic" program, and it was consequently unacceptable. The clergy could swear loyalty to the Republic in any way desired, the bishops said, but they could not swear loyalty to a Communist regime. The church insisted, furthermore, that all antichurch measures already in effect, including the limitations on the archbishop's freedom, be rescinded as a prerequisite to further negotiations.

The two points of view were obviously mutually exclusive. Compromise was not possible unless one side or the other yielded on what it considered essentials.

This was a situation in which Cepicka had all the advantages. The extent of this can be appreciated only if one realizes that, in contrast to western Europe and the United States, there has never been any real separation of church and state in this part of the world. Under the

Hapsburgs, the church was glad to identify itself with, and to receive subsidies from, the government with whose general aims it sympathized. But now the church found itself financially dependent on a regime with whose aims it did not sympathize. The church's background of association with the Hapsburgs was in itself a political weakness.

Furthermore, and this was decisive, the Communist regime alone possessed police power which, unrestrained by any Western notions about the objectivity of police power, it employed with telling effect when it felt the need. Nonetheless, as in politics, the Communists were anxious to give the impression that they were putting across their church program by persuasion. Their tactics were to divide the higher clergy from the lower clergy and then the people and the entire church from Rome. They used their "Catholic Action" to make it look as though the pressure brought by the Communist Party and the government were being brought by the lower clergy and the lay public.

It was not the Communists' purpose, at this stage, to destroy religion. They knew they could not do that. Therefore, they skipped the early experiments in atheism of their Russian mentors and took the post-World War II relationship between the Orthodox Church and the government of the Soviet Union as their model. Their aim was to make the Catholic Church and all other churches dependent, subordinate and useful tools of the regime.

The church could defend itself only with appeals to the loyalty of the clergy and the faithful on one hand, and imposing church punishments on the other hand. Archbishop Beran, in his effort to keep the ranks of the clergy and the faithful unbroken, managed to maintain a flow of pastoral letters, circulars, declarations and memoranda throughout the spring, summer and autumn of 1949. But month by month it got harder and harder to carry on as the government hemmed in all the bishops with legal restrictions and police supervision. Under the new laws, the clergy could not meet together without the approval of a Communist authority. The hierarchy therefore had to keep in touch and transmit instructions by secret couriers. The church had no means of getting anything published inside Czechoslovakia. All it could do was to keep foreign correspondents informed. This it did by devious means, sometimes by shoving copies of pastoral letters and circulars under correspondents' doors, sometimes by mail, sometimes through third parties and sometimes through mysterious meetings on street corners. The news the correspondents cabled abroad quickly came back over the radio stations of Europe and

America, thus informing the Catholics of Czechoslovakia, comprising 75 per cent of the country's 12,500,000 population.

With all the handicaps from which it suffered, and whether it liked it or not, the Catholic Church became a rallying point for the anti-Communist forces of Czechoslovakia. From a short-term point of view the church could not win. But the clergy were confident that the long run would prove the church's spiritual resources stronger than the Communists' police power and dialectics. In any event, it was going to be a long, hard struggle.

The incident of June 19 in St. Vitus's Cathedral, when the Communists shouted down the Archbishop Beran, opened a period of bitter church-state struggle that lasted until October 14 when the Communist regime imposed its own unilateral "solution" in the form of two new laws regulating church affairs.

The same day the Communists were demonstrating in St. Vitus's, priests in churches throughout the land were reading the first of two pastoral letters in which the church struck out against the persecution to which it was already being subjected. The second letter was read on Sunday, June 26. The country was electrified. It had been a long time since the Communists in Czechoslovakia had heard anyone answer back. And the Communists were beside themselves with rage.

Having got wind of what was afoot, Miroslav Houska, the government plenipotentiary occupying Beran's consistory, sent out express letters to every church in the diocese ordering the clergy not to read the pastoral letter. Similar plenipotentiaries in other consistories did likewise. The Ministry of Interior dispatched police to many churches during the night demanding surrender of all copies of the letter. Nonetheless it was read in almost all churches. Some priests gave the police one copy of the letter but kept another. I know of a priest who learned the first and shorter of the letters by heart and recited it to his congregation from memory.

Since the two letters are slightly repetitive, I will summarize them together. In the first place, they pronounced the "*ipso-facto* excommunication" of all those who had brought into being or supported the Communist-inspired "Catholic Action." That meant that these persons were automatically barred from receiving the sacraments without necessarily being specifically named by the church authorities. Every man would know in his own heart whether the excommunication applied to him or not.

The pastorals explained that the church was still willing to negotiate

with the government, but only if restrictions on the church's rights — including the freedom of the archbishop which had been completely "curtailed" — were first lifted. There was a "painful situation in which the church had already lost that which was to have been the subject of agreement. . . . We gladly render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's, but it is impossible to sacrifice to him that which belongs to God."

Agreement had been prejudiced by six measures taken by the government, the pastorals said:

1. A public campaign was being carried on against the church.

2. The religious character of the family and parents' rights to educate their own children were being undermined.

3. The Catholic press and publishing houses and even the church's own *Catholic Gazette* had been suppressed.

4. Almost all church schools had been taken over by the government; religious teachers in the public schools had been instructed in "how to teach religion in the spirit of materialism" and at seminaries compulsory instruction in civic sciences had been introduced "to insure that in the end even our clergy would be educated in ideological materialism."

5. In many cases the pay of clergy had been stopped for political reasons. Church property was being subjected to a forced inventory.

6. Signatures of clergy and laymen in support of the "mass Apostasy" of the state's Catholic Action were being obtained by subterfuge and pressure.

"On the whole," the pastoral concluded, "it is possible to say that religious activity outside the church is now impossible and often the faithful are afraid to go publicly into the churches because they are afraid they will be accused of reaction and their means of existence threatened."

The clergy were ordered to return the copies of the government *Catholic Church Gazette* unopened and, in a separate note, they were instructed in the future to listen to Vatican radio for instructions.

On June 25, the day before the second pastoral letter was read, a special issue of the *Catholic Church Gazette* published decrees by the Ministry of Education requiring the clergy to obtain the Ministry's approval before transmitting to the public or to priests any further pastoral letters, circulars, instructions or statements. Another decree required the clergy to obtain permission from District National Committees before gathering together in meetings. And a third officially invalidated all "church punishments imposed for political reasons."

On the basis of these decrees, the police began arresting priests who

read the second pastoral letter on June 26. Many of those who were not arrested were fined by District National Committees. But it was not so simple as that. The Catholic peasants of Slovakia and Moravia were very fond of their priests and, using fists and clubs and scythes, in many places they drove out the police who came to arrest the clergymen.

In the Zilina district of Slovakia, the Workers' Militia and regular troops were called out and the district placed under martial law for two and a half days. But before order was restored at least two persons had been killed, many a policeman had been beaten up or had the tires of his automobile slashed, and in most cases the police had to depart without their intended prisoners. All the rest of the summer, until harvest time, devout Slovak and Moravian peasants and their womenfolk stood guard in relays around the homes of their parish priests.

Months later, when the excitement had died down, the police quietly arrested not only the priests they were after, but the peasants who had taken the lead in defending them. It is hard to beat the police state.

In the midst of the excitement in Slovakia, there appeared the Chargé d'Affaires of the Papal Internunciature, Gennaro Verolino, who chose the week following the second pastoral letter for a tour of Slovak bishoprics. The Communists saw to it that he and his party were refused hotel accommodations, were repeatedly halted on the road by police, and twice taken to police stations for identification.

When he got back to Prague, Verolino protested angrily to the Foreign Office about the treatment he had received in Slovakia. The Foreign Office replied that his tour "must under present circumstances be considered a demonstrative act against the Czechoslovak government and gross interference in the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia," and the press, at the same time, began a shrill campaign denouncing the Vatican's envoy as a spy and the mastermind of the church's campaign against the state. Verolino departed for Rome on July 13, probably just ahead of an expulsion order, and the Czechoslovak government declined to issue a visa to his successor.

The day Verolino departed, the Vatican fired its biggest gun against the Communists. The Sacred Consistory Congregation published a declaration excommunicating all Communists and Communist supporters. Catholics might be excommunicated for reading or distributing Communist publications. Although the excommunication applied to Catholics all over the world, the events immediately preceding it made it seem directed especially against Czechoslovakia.

The Czechoslovak Communists reacted quickly. On July 15, Dr. Alexei Cepicka, then Minister of Justice, declared that any attempt to enforce the Vatican excommunication decree would be treated as high treason. The warning was passed on to the bishops and the heads of the Catholic orders — Franciscans, Dominicans, et cetera — at meetings to which they were summoned by District National Committees during the ensuing week.

While threatening all priests who applied the excommunication decree, Dr. Cepicka at the same time disclosed a project for the new church laws which would make the state the sole source of financial support of all churches, and required the clergy to take an oath of loyalty to the regime in order to obtain such support. "The churches will be relieved of all financial worries," he declared sanctimoniously, "and will be able to devote themselves fully to religious activity." The salaries provided under the new law do not seem very high by American standards, but they nearly doubled existing salaries. Under the law the basic salary of a clergyman would be 36,000 crowns ($720) per year, rising every three years by 3600 crowns. In addition there would be annual allowances ranging from 12,000 crowns for priests in the first grade to 48,000 crowns for those in the fourth or highest grade. A priest might legally be deprived of his salary on grounds of political unreliability, and District National Committees would be specifically authorized to impose sentences of up to six months' imprisonment or up to 100,000 crowns in fines by administrative procedure, that is, without trial, for violations of the church laws.

The new laws would provide the clergy with full National Insurance, health insurance, and old-age pensions. About the same time, the press publicized plans for special recreation centers for clergy, nuns and other parish employees in the leading spas. They would — if their political records were clear — be able to relax in luxury at the cost of slightly less than $1.50 per day.

In one hand the Communists carried a weapon, in the other a stick of candy. With this combination they thought they could break down the Catholic Church.

The Catholic Church fought hard to keep its clergy in line, and throughout the summer and autumn of 1949, the ranks of the higher and lower clergy, with very few exceptions, remained intact. There were some who were tempted by the government and then drew back. Such was Father Josef Fiala, who allowed himself to be appointed a government's "national administrator" of Charitas and who made a number of speeches reflecting

Communist views. Then one day he disappeared. It was learned that, rather than face excommunication, he had withdrawn into a monastery. On the other hand, there was the case of Dr. Frantisek Ondarek, apostolic administrator of Cesky Tesin, who on September 17 issued a statement approving the financial sections of the new church law. This was the first serious breach in the solid Catholic Church front.

To help maintain the solidarity of the clergy, a group of priests circulated a mimeographed declaration of loyalty to "our beloved Archbishop Dr. Beran and all the Czechoslovak bishops." All priests were asked to read it in church, sign it, and return it to their bishop during July and August. These secret circulars, approved by the bishops, at the same time gave the priests pithy instructions on their conduct:

> Don't sign anything [it said]. If summoned to a District National Committee, don't go. . . . If fined, don't pay. Demand imprisonment instead. . . . Don't let the so-called "Catholic news" be distributed in or near your church. . . . Destroy orders of the government-occupied consistory. . . . Refuse offices offered by the false consistory.

Priests who had signed statements supporting Catholic Action were told to disclaim them publicly in church. If they failed to read the pastoral letter of June 26, they were instructed to do so now.

In order to strengthen their own ranks for the days of trial which they anticipated, the bishops decided to consecrate two new bishops. Almost the entire council of Catholic bishops therefore gathered at Trnava in Slovakia on August 14, to consecrate Monsignors Ambrose Lazik and Robert Pobozni as bishops "*in partibus infidelium*." This formula meant that their function was entirely spiritual, not administrative, thus technically avoiding the necessity of asking the government for approval of the appointments. What annoyed the Communist authorities, however, was not so much the evasion of this, as the fact that 12,000 Catholic believers crowded into Trnava in spite of police efforts to keep them away and made the consecrations a demonstration of Catholic solidarity. They were doubly annoyed when they discovered that the consecrations had been the occasion for an unauthorized meeting of the bishops at which they drew up a memorandum to the government. The memorandum reasserted the bishops' willingness to negotiate on the terms set forth in the pastoral letters of June and upheld the church's right to declare excommunication since "membership in the church is quite voluntary and

the church has every right to sever association with members who do not adhere to its teachings and who disturb church discipline."

A third new bishop was consecrated secretly in Prague on September 18. Since a gathering of bishops necessary to carry out the full consecration ceremony had become almost impossible, Father Kajetan Matousek was consecrated bishop "*in partibus infidelium*" by only one bishop, Antonin Eltschkner. At thirty-nine, Matousek was the youngest of sixteen Czechoslovak bishops. He was assigned to join Eltschkner as Beran's second auxiliary bishop.

In September the Catholic Church waged its final campaign against the projected church laws. The vicars, to whom the archbishop had transferred all administrative duties following the occupation of the bishops' consistories by government agents, drew up a declaration rejecting the projected laws and got more than 90 per cent of the clergy to sign it. Therein the clergy affirmed that they were "determined to accept Church offices only from the hands of Church dignitaries" and "would rather carry on with their present salaries" than accept the terms of the new laws. They branded the disciplinary powers conferred upon National Committees as "most anti-social and unfair."

Meanwhile the Communists increased their pressure. President Gottwald threatened darkly that "no one will be allowed to disrupt the Republic." Premier Zapotocky hinted that recalcitrant priests would be arrested, no matter what their rank. And the Communist press proclaimed that agreement would be reached with the Church "even against the bishops," leaving it to the public to try to figure out what that might mean.

Following up their threats concerning excommunication, the Communists made an example of an unfortunate priest named Alois Fajstl, chaplain of Sebranice near Litomysl in eastern Bohemia. The State Court of Prague sentenced him to eight years imprisonment, confiscation of property and loss of civil rights on the charge that he refused to give Extreme Unction to a sixty-seven-year-old woman who admitted that she was a member of the Communist Party. The good woman recovered and denounced Fajstl, who denied the charge to the end, but refused, on the basis of secrecy of confession, to give the content of his conversation with the sick woman. The case looked pretty much like a frame-up, but the Communists publicized it widely. Several other priests were sentenced to prison for declining to give avowed Communists church weddings.

Arrests and trials multiplied. The names of thirty priests and church

functionaries arrested on various charges reached me in the first three weeks of September. The police questioned almost all vicars in connection with the circulation of the declaration signed by 90 per cent of the clergy. On September 19, Theodor Funk, secretary to Archbishop Josef Karel Matocha of Olomouc was sentenced to ten years in prison on a charge of "high treason." He had circulated copies of a Vatican "explanation" of the excommunication of Communists and Communist sympathizers.

Towards the end of the month, a meeting of the Communist Catholic Action functionaries at Olomouc decided that in future their organization would monitor all sermons, would interview children, organ players and church servants regarding the moral life of priests, and would select "special persons" to study the conduct of every individual priest "even in confessionals." By this time some two hundred priests were under arrest. The stage was set for the new church laws.

There was one more statement from Archbishop Beran, somehow smuggled out of the palace, in which he warned that approval of the projected church law was "treason against the Church." Then, on October 14, the Communists imposed their unilateral "solution." Parliament passed the new church laws.

The first law created a State Office for Church Affairs, headed by a minister of cabinet rank. Dr. Alexei Cepicka, moved from the Ministry of Justice, got the job. His ministry's task was to regulate the affairs of all churches, monasteries, and other religious organizations of whatever kind. It might veto appointments to church offices if the candidates were not deemed politically reliable, and it might even make appointments if the church failed to find a suitable candidate.

The second law, as I have already said, about doubled the salaries of the clergy and required them to swear an oath of loyalty in the form the Vatican prohibited, in order to get their salaries. The clergy were, in effect, placed in the position of civil servants.

"It would be intolerable," Dr. Cepicka told parliament, "if our people's money were used to betray the interests of our nation and state." This made it "natural" for the government to examine the reliability of candidates for priestly functions. One hundred and fifty selected members of the clergy of all churches, Catholic, non-Catholic, Protestant and Jewish, sat in the gallery in all their regalia and duly applauded. It was a pathetic spectacle.

The Catholic Church now faced a critical test. Since it had been absolutely adamant in its rejection of the terms of the new law, many thought

the bishops must now choose between martyrdom and surrender. And most non-Catholic observers believed that, firm as the unity of the church had hitherto shown itself, it would be broken if any attempt were made to consign the 6000 secular clergy and some 14,000 monks, nuns, lay brothers and others to martyrdom.

Several weeks after the law went into effect, on November 1, some of the bishops were allowed to meet in Prague and others were consulted by couriers. The bishops sought a middle ground. They declared that they would not, themselves, accept the new salaries or take the oath, but they authorized the clergy below the rank of bishop to accept the salaries as compensation for confiscated church property and to take the oath with a mental reservation, that it did not commit them to do anything "contrary to the laws of God or the Church or the natural rights of men."

Unfortunately, turn them as you would, the new laws were grappling hooks with which the government was determined to pull down the old structure of the Catholic Church.

From then on the story of the church is one of dissolution and humiliation. Early in 1950, the stories of miracles — the moving cross of Cihost and the Virgin Mary appearing in the clouds of western Bohemia — probably did the church more harm than good, though they stirred the devout peasants. They were not endorsed by the church and were probably the result of hysterical pro-church feeling.

The State Office for Church Affairs began operations with a course of instruction for its own officials at which the officers' objectives and the means by which they were to be obtained were developed in detail. From confidential sources I obtained a report on what the officials were told.

The lecturer admitted that elimination of religion, "that reactionary element of middle-class society," was the ultimate objective. But only when a classless society had been obtained, then the religious spirit would "die down of itself."

To fight religion directly while 75 per cent of the people were still believers would only alienate the masses. Furthermore "it is necessary to create in the West the impression that Communism is not against religion, but only against the capitalism of the hierarchy."

One big step already taken was the destruction of the economic independence of the churches, the lecturer said. The next was to change the attitude of the Catholic clergy towards the Vatican. There must be an open break between the clergy and the bishops and at the same time a separation of the people from the clergy.

To this end, politically reliable persons must "penetrate the organic structure of the church." Nominations and transfers within the church must be carefully checked. A complete file must be developed of all believers who regularly go to church. Leading positions in "Catholic Action" must be given to church employees such as organ players, caretakers, bell ringers and even domestic servants. In order to maintain a certain tension between employees and priests, the former would, for the time being, receive no salary. "Catholic Action" must see to it that priests were constantly surrounded by politically reliable persons. Priests could be very useful if they could be prevailed upon to encourage the people to work harder and undertake voluntary tasks. But "never can we trust them too much." They should not mix too much with workers nor should too many be admitted to the Trade Unions or the Society of Friends of the U.S.S.R. Each priest should be studied to establish his weaknesses and inclinations. A good way to establish a priest's attitude was to send someone to confession who would begin by saying, "You know, father, I am a member of the Communist Party."

People who had in the past signed petitions demanding that the bishops come to an agreement with the government might now be asked to draw the logical conclusion. Since the bishops had refused to agree, these people should be urged to leave the church, to join some other denomination, or to remain without religion. Any who left the Catholic Church should be steered towards the Orthodox Church, which was preferred "because of its favorable attitude towards socialism," or to the Czechoslovak Church, "because it is adaptable to anything."

In the months following this course of instruction, the State Office for Church Affairs dealt the Catholic Church blow upon blow.

On the grounds that the Roman Catholic Church had not complied with the law requiring it to ask government approval of its nominees, the Church Office, on February 15, appointed its own "administrator" to succeed Andrej Skrabik, deceased bishop of Banska Bystricka in Slovakia. In reply to this first application of the powers conferred on the Church Office by the new laws, the Vatican promptly excommunicated the government appointee, Dean Jan Dechet. Archbishop Beran, in a statement countersigned by twelve of the bishops, warned that any other member of the clergy who accepted church offices from the hands of the government would also be excommunicated. This was the only communication signed by the archbishop that had come to my attention

since the previous November, and it is the last of which I have any knowledge.

The Church Office brought Dean Dechet to Prague for a press conference to which Western representatives were not invited. We went to the conference anyway and found Dean Dechet a mousy little man who acted rather upset by the whole affair. With obvious anguish, he explained that excommunication meant, among other things, that he could not be buried in a churchyard and, if by mistake he were buried in one, he might be dug up and his ashes scattered to the wind. At this point, Dr. Cepicka shut him off and proceeded to issue a "last warning" to the bishops. "It is not possible for us to tolerate this hostile attitude of the bishops any longer," he declared.

Meanwhile the press was waging an angry campaign against Ottavio de Liva, the last remaining diplomatic representative of the Vatican at the Internunciature. The Communist papers maintained that the thirty-nine-year-old Italian had never been recognized as chargé d'affaires, that he was plotting against the security of the state, and had (with the assistance of Dana Adams Schmidt) dreamed up the Cihost miracle.

On February 15, de Liva was expelled, and the same day Jack Higgins of the United Press and I, who had been trying to see him for months, at last succeeded in getting an appointment. Monsignor de Liva saw us at 10 P.M. and seemed very worried. Beyond cautioning us over and over to be careful, he told us only one thing of interest. He said he had visited Father Toufar, the priest of Cihost, who said his cross had moved miraculously. "I told him," said Monsignor de Liva, "he should move the cross back to where it had been, and I added that if I were in his place, I would have it nailed down, for if God wants a miracle to take place, he will do so, nails or no nails."

De Liva's departure cut the last link between Rome and the Czechoslovak hierarchy and deprived Archbishop Beran of the only foreigner he was still allowed to see.

April was a tragic month in the persecution of the church in Czechoslovakia. Ten high-ranking members of Catholic orders were brought to trial before the State Court in Pankrac prison on charges of high treason and endeavoring to overthrow the government. And, as a direct sequel, on the night of April 13, police rounded up the members of most of the Catholic orders throughout the country and "concentrated" them in certain monasteries.

This was the first major church trial, and very much a propaganda affair. The newspapers carried little but the radio broadcast transcriptions from the courtroom throughout the day. The courtroom galleries were packed with factory workers and peasants in national costumes, or so the Western correspondents heard on the radio. As on the occasion of other important trials, the correspondents went wearily out to Pankrac at 8 A.M., stood in line, were shunted from office to office, had their credentials examined with care, and were finally told that there was no more room.

Every effort was made by the prosecutor and the judges to humiliate the defendants, especially the most high-ranking ones, Frantisek Silhan, Provincial of the Jesuits in Czechoslovakia; Augustin Machalka, Abbot of the Premonstrant monastery in Nova Rise; Bohumil Vit Tajowsky, Abbot of the Premonstrant monastery at Zeliv; and Dr. Jan Mastilak, Redemptorist Rector of the Theological Institute of Oboriste in Slovakia.

A typical bit of cross-questioning by the prosecutor, Dr. Karel Cizek, as broadcast over the radio, went like this:

> CIZEK: Do you know Father Hucka?
> SILHAN: No.
> Q: What would you say then if this man says that he submitted reports on the Banderites through your orders?
> A: I do not know about that.
> Q: What do you call a man who deliberately does not tell the truth?
> A: A liar.
> Q: Thank you, that will do.

By similar dialogue Cizek suggested that other priests were thieves and murderers.

The Banderites were anti-Communist guerrillas who operated in the Ukraine and southern Poland and occasionally in Slovakia, for more than a year after the end of the war. Some of them escaped through Czechoslovakia to Germany where Colonel Bandera established a new headquarters in Munich.

In brief, Silhan, who had maintained "official" contacts with the Papal Internunciature, was accused of being the "main pillar" of Vatican espionage in Czechoslovakia. Machalka and Tajbowsky were, among other things, accused of complicity in staging the Cihost miracle. Dr. Mastilak was considered particularly suspect because he had been trained at the Collegium Pontificale Russicum and the Eastern Institute in Rome. It was

alleged that even before the war he had engaged in smuggling spies into the Soviet Union and that he returned from Rome to Slovakia at the time of the liberation in order to spy on the Red Army.

Each order had its subversive specialty, according to the prosecution. "The Premonstrant Order" it alleged, "had the task of preparing an armed uprising and hid weapons in monasteries for that purpose. The Jesuits conducted espionage and, together with the Redemptorists, damaged the moral education of youth, disrupted the Czechoslovak Youth Association, and made religiously fanatical youth the ready and unthinking instruments of foreign reaction. The Franciscan Order was primarily concerned with the villages in an effort to induce Catholics to sabotage the socialist reconstruction of the countrysides and to prepare an armed uprising. The Dominicans generally supervised the Church's anti-State activities."

Little evidence was produced to back up these general charges. An interesting legal basis was, however, laid for convictions in this and future trials by Professor Hobza of the law faculty of Charles University, who set forth a Communist view of the legal relationship between the Catholic clergy, the Pope's diplomatic representatives and the Vatican.

The professor denied that the Papal Internunciature had any right to have "official contacts" with Czechoslovak bishops or other clergy or to exert any authority over them other than a religious one. He said the regime rejected the idea "that any foreign functionary could, on the territory of a foreign state, apply a law created outside the state . . . neither the Czechoslovak bishops nor the faithful are subject to the jurisdiction of the Pope. They are exclusively under the jurisdiction of the State authorities and lawful courts."

He held that the Catholic Church was not organized according to international law, and that therefore relations between the people, the internunciature, and the bishops, had not an international, but a purely ecclesiastical character. He declared that Czechoslovak Church functionaries who, upon instructions from the Pope's diplomatic representatives, called upon their ecclesiastical subordinates to violate civil law thereby committed a crime.

The court held that the defendants had put their loyalty to the Vatican ahead of their loyalty to the state, and had used ecclesiastical discipline to enforce the same attitude among their subordinates, and had thereby committed a crime. For this and other alleged crimes, it sentenced Dr. Mastilak to life imprisonment and the others to from two to twenty-five years' imprisonment.

That same day, April 5, 1950, the press launched an angry campaign denouncing the monasteries as "nests of espionage and profligacy" and "an unnecessary survival of the Middle Ages."

The newspapers reported that at Filipov there were sixteen rooms for four Gregorians; while in Opava one member of the Order of German Knights inhabited a provost's house of thirty rooms. Indignantly the newspapers disclosed that the Premonstratensians of Strahov monastery had meat three times a day, wine twice a day, and, in addition, four liters of beer. At Spisska Stvrtok in Slovakia, they asserted, the monks still kept pictures of Tiso, Tuka, Hlinka and other wartime "collaborationists" on the walls of their monastery. And so on, for eight days. Then, on the night from April 13 to 14, the police swooped down upon almost all monasteries in the Czech lands and carried off the priests and monks, including lay brothers, and took them to "concentration points."

All Jesuits were, for instance, taken to a cloister at Bohosudov where they were put to work on a nearby pig farm. All residents of Salesian institutes were taken to the cloister of the Cistercians in Osek near Duchkov where some kind of factory was to be established. The heads of the various institutions were concentrated at Zeliv.

In Slovakia the entire operation took place a week later. Nuns were rounded up in the Czech lands and Slovakia a few days after the monks.

The procedure was not always genteel. The monks and nuns usually got only a few minutes to gather up some possessions and food before they were bundled into trucks. Some who objected were arrested. In their new quarters, the monks had to sleep on the floor and received little food. *Agents provocateurs* circulated among them, advising the younger members that if they turned against their superiors, they would be released and assigned to a comfortable church. To spy upon the clerics, the police concealed a microphone in the walls of the cloister of the Cistercians and probably in other places.

As a consequence of this roundup, many churches were left empty, and the Communist Catholic Action could offer some splendid plums to excommunicated "patriotic" priests. Such patriots were quickly identified as "Plojharovci" (after the excommunicated priest Josef Plojhar), and the churches in which they officiated, overcrowded for months previously, suddenly were empty. At the entrance of St. Ignatius's Church, the following notice was pinned up: "The Church and cloister have been confiscated. The priests were taken away for forced labor. Mass is held by an excom-

municated priest and whoever takes communion shares in his sins."

The roundup was officially admitted in an announcement that vacated monasteries would be converted into "hospitals, social institutions, and workers' apartments."

[According to a report published by the *New York Times* on May 5, 1952, there are now scattered throughout the country about fifty incarceration points for Roman Catholic priests. Some are in former monasteries or convents, where the priests are held as laborers in factories, mines, on farms, and in sawmills.

At Hejnice, young priests are being "re-educated" by heavy farm labor; at Kunzvart, priests are cutting timber. At Mocsomok, near Nitra, a camp has been established for recalcitrant priests whose official terms of sentence have expired, but who are not released. Other camps are located at Bory and at Semily.

Nuns are interned at Bily Kamen, Bohosudov (Carmelite order); Broumov (working in textile plant); Gottwaldov, Chomutov, Krasna Lipa (working in stocking factory); Krnov (Carmelite order, working as farm laborers); Nove Zamky, Philipsdorf, Trnava (from the Bratislava convent of Notre Dame); Turnov (from a convent at Litomerice); and Varnsdorf (nuns from Roznava and Jiretin, now working in textile plants).]

Just before the Easter holidays in 1950, bishops throughout the land received police orders not to leave their residences, apparently, mainly to prevent them from going through with plans to initiate new priests. For the Communists had planned to train a new kind of priest. These would be graduates of seminaries supervised by the State Office for Church Affairs.

Accordingly, the Church Office, in July 1950, dissolved existing institutions for training priests and decreed that, in the future, Catholic priests would be trained only at the Cyril and Methodius Faculties in Prague and Bratislava. Priests of other denominations were assigned four institutions. The Communists did not doubt that they would be able to find bishops willing to initiate the graduates. They had confidence in the effect of their combination of whip and candy stick. In the case of the higher clergy, to be sure, it was mainly the former that came into play, in the shape of a series of further trials.

A most distinguished cast was selected by the Communists for the trial that began December 2. They were: Dr. Stanislav Zela, Suffragan Bishop and General Vicar of Olomouc's archdiocese; Dr. Jan Opasek, Abbot of

the Brevnov monastery in Prague; Dr. Stanislav Jarolimek, Abbot of the Strahov monastery in Prague; Dr. Cihak, Prelate of the Metropolitan Chapter at St. Vitus's Cathedral; Dr. Jaroslav Kulac, Canon at St. Vitus's; Dr. Antonin Mandl, Director of the Priest's Missionary Union; Dr. Jan Boukal, first secretary to Archbishop Beran; and the Salesian priest, Vaclav Mrtvy.

As usual, all were accused of espionage and high treason and, as usual, all received long prison terms. In the course of the trial, it was disclosed that at the end of 1949, the Czechoslovak bishops had set up a kind of "shadow hierarchy" in the hope that it might carry on after the regular hierarchy had been eliminated. Dr. Cihak testified that Archbishop Beran had secretly appointed him and Suffragan Bishop Matousek his deputies to carry on the fight in case of need. Archbishop Matocha of Olomouc, now as much under house arrest as Beran, had passed on his powers to Dr. Zela, and Dr. Tomasek (not on trial) had been secretly ordained Bishop of Olomouc.

The trial of the bishops, towards which the Communists had long been working, began January 10, 1951. Those selected for the trial were Jan Vojtassak, seventy-three, Bishop of Spisska Nova Ves; Dr. Michel Buzalka, sixty-five, Suffragan Bishop of Trnava; and Pavel Gojdic, sixty-two, Supreme Representative of the Greek Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia. All were accused of spying for the Vatican and abetting "American plans for a Third World War" and also, somewhat belatedly, of collaborating with the Nazis. For espionage and treason, Vojtassak was sentenced to twenty-four years' imprisonment, and the other two to life imprisonment. In addition, Bishop Vojtassak was fined 500,000 crowns (approximately $10,000) and the others 200,000 crowns each.

Shortly thereafter, six more distinguished clerics occupying more subordinate positions in the service of the bishops were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. This brought to twenty-eight the number of distinguished churchmen who had been brought to trial.

The destruction of the Catholic Church was almost complete. There would be other trials of churchmen, no doubt, but the main job had been done. The structure of the church, the hierarchy, had been broken down. The Communists had dared to bring bishops before a lay judge and to throw them into prison; to herd monks and nuns into concentration camps, and nothing had happened to stop them. Since 1948, some six hundred priests had passed through prisons. Now there were about two hundred priests in prison.

The remaining bishops were practically prisoners. They could do nothing without official permission. Hence there were no more troublesome pastoral letters or circulars. The peasants no longer sat up all night to guard their priests — they had too many worries of their own, having been engaged in a struggle against collectivization since the summer of 1949. Some parents had even stricken their children from church registers rather than associate them with such persecuted institutions.

For the Catholic Church this was a bitter time. But the Czech Communists were pleased. They felt they were one jump ahead of their colleagues in Poland and Hungary. The Czech tactics had rendered the church helpless and agreement with the bishops unnecessary.

To tidy things up, the Czechs had still to solve the problem of Archbishop Beran. In his palace, that stood so embarrassingly close to the President's residence in Hradcany Castle, the archbishop, silent and isolated though he was, had become a dangerous symbol. He must be removed. But the Czech Communists wanted no martyr, no Mindszenty.

Their solution was as follows: On March 10, 1951, the State Office for Church Affairs very briefly announced that Archbishop Beran had been ordered to live outside the Prague diocese and fined because of his negative attitude to the church laws. There was no mention of where the archbishop would live, or the amount of the fine.

Deputy Prime Minister Fierlinger, now in charge of the State Office for Church Affairs, said, concerning the archbishop: ". . . it is obvious that he could not be permitted to remain in such a responsible position. . . . Our People's administration adopted a very lenient attitude towards Archbishop Beran. . . ."

Archbishop Beran was moved to a castle near Moravska Ostrava, where, as soon as his presence became known, groups of Catholics gathered under the windows of the building to receive his blessing. Vexed by these demonstrations, Communist authorities, in June 1951, moved him to a monastery near the Austrian frontier in which members of the Catholic Church had been concentrated in April 1950.

Meanwhile in a series of arrests and illegal appointments, the Communists had secured control of the Metropolitan Chapter of St. Vitus's Cathedral. The new chapter prevailed upon Dr. Opatrny, Beran's Vicar General, to resign, and then on March 8, elected Dr. Antonin Stehlik to the post of Capitular Vicar. As such he would exercise the powers of the archbishop in the absence of Beran. In a quiet sort of way, the Communists

thus staged a coup that gave them control of the very pinnacle of the church hierarchy.

A few days later, Stehlik and four bishops humbly took the oath of loyalty to the Communist regime, specifically recognizing the validity of its church laws. The bishops who capitulated were Dr. Josef Carsky, Bishop and Apostolic Administrator of Kosice; Dr. Moric Picha, eighty-two-year-old bishop of Hradec Kralove; Dr. Stepan Trochta, Bishop of Litomerice; and Dr. Ambroz Lazik, Bishop and Apostolic Administrator of Trnava. Trochta had often shown signs of friendliness to the authorities, but Lazik was one of the two new bishops appointed, in August 1949, to help strengthen the church hierarchy in its struggle, and old Bishop Picha had a thousand times defied the Communists. It was hard to understand their capitulation. A fifth churchman, Antonin Eltschkner, seventy-one-year-old Titular Bishop of Zephyrium and auxiliary to Archbishop Beran of Prague, had sworn an oath of loyalty on February 18, 1950.

As spokesman for the collaborating bishops, Carsky declared: "We shall not recognize Church administrated punishments nor shall we apply them to clergy and laymen if such punishments are imposed for political reasons."

In line herewith, the Prague Ordinariate informed the Minister of Health, Plojhar, that it had lifted the ban by which he had, since June 15, 1948, been suspended from his functions as a priest.

The Vatican's sanction against these rebellious acts was excommunication. On March 17, the Sacred Consistory Congregation, which is headed by the Pope, declared the excommunications of all those who had participated in the banishment of Beran or who had illegally accepted church offices, like Stehlik, who was mentioned by name. But the Vatican decree could no longer have any effect on events in Czechoslovakia. The Catholic priests stood alone, cut off from all church leadership, with only their consciences to guide them.

Since Archbishop Beran was banished, many more members of the clergy have fallen in line with the Communists. By the end of April 1951, nine of Czechoslovakia's thirteen remaining bishops had taken the oath of loyalty to the government. (Bishops Vojtassak, Buzalka and Gojdic had been sentenced to prison terms in January.) To make doubly sure of the control of the hierarchy, the government has appointed canons and vicars-general in all dioceses to administer church affairs, whether the bishops liked it or not.

On June 9, 1951, the Czechoslovak Council of Bishops—or at least the

nine bishops who had taken the oath of loyalty — resumed official contacts with the government. They sealed their capitulation by recognizing the government's theological institutes in Prague and Bratislava as legitimate training schools for priests, and by abolishing the "shadow hierarchy" that had been created by Archbishop Beran. Within the "shadow hierarchy" special powers had been secretly given to certain churchmen charged with replacing the bishops threatened with imprisonment or prevented from exercising their functions. And in return for these major concessions, the government toned down the activities of its "Catholic Action," refrained from appointing "patriotic priests" to positions where they would attract much public attention and, during the rest of 1951, did not exploit religious pilgrimages for political purposes.

Of the four bishops who have not taken the oath of loyalty, one is Archbishop Matocha of Olomouc, whose rank entitles him to succeed Archbishop Beran as chairman of the Council of Bishops, but who has been under house arrest in his palace since November 1950. Another, somewhat surprisingly, is Dr. Robert Pobozni, Bishop and Apostolic Administrator of Roznava in Slovakia, who was the first Slovak bishop to collaborate with the regime. According to some reports, his "collaboration" got him so involved in politics that he was placed under police surveillance after the arrest of Vladimir Clementis early in 1951.

In view of the great difficulty in obtaining accurate information on the circumstances that have brought about the collaboration of some members of the Catholic clergy with the Communists in Czechoslovakia, the Vatican has acted with great prudence and has in only a few cases declared excommunications by name. Without in any way approving the actions of the collaborating bishops and others, it has, for the time being, left unchallenged the explanation which is repeatedly offered by the collaborators in private, that their acts are necessary in order to insure the survival of the church; that it is better, for instance, to have a theological institute at which priests must attend political lectures in addition to their other work, than to have no training of new priests at all.

In a statement which Pope Pius XII issued on October 27, 1951, he did not make critical references to the collaborating members of the Czechoslovak hierarchy. On the contrary, he praised the majority of the clergy for their "tenacious fidelity to their ancestral religion." He exhorted the bishops and clergy to remain united with Rome because he had a "firm hope" that their oppressors would eventually be overthrown.

The Pope said that religious persecution carried on by the Communist

regime in Czechoslovakia involved efforts to raise a new generation of atheists and a campaign of falsehoods which attempted to represent the Holy Father as an "enemy of the people."

"Remember this above all else," the Pope declared, "men can rob you of your liberty, they can afflict you with torment, they can subject you to public derision, they can cast you into prison, they can even put you to death; but they can never pluck the Catholic faith from your breasts nor sully your conscience." Most of the Catholic clergy in Czechoslovakia, even those whom the Communists think they have taken into camp, are heeding the Pope's exhortation.

The other churches, representing 25 per cent of the population, smaller, and divided against each other, fell victims to the Communists' combination of blandishments and pressure more quickly than did the Catholic Church. It suited the Communists to play off the Protestants, with their Hussite traditions, against the Catholic Church by granting favors to the former and reviving the memories of old conflicts between Protestants and Catholics. They succeeded in making most of the leaders of the Protestant and other non-Catholic denominations take oaths of loyalty to the regime and to accept state financial subsidies during the year 1949.

To complete the picture I will review what happened to these other churches.

The Czechoslovak Church, with 800,000 to 1,000,000 members, is the largest non-Catholic denomination. It was formed by a group of theologically progressive priests who broke away from the Church of Rome in the first days of the Republic. They retained much of the Catholic ritual, but developed a theology akin to that of the Orthodox Church. They did not recognize the Pope nor believe in the Virgin birth or miracles. They permitted their clergy to marry and allowed women to become priests.

The willingness of this church to adapt itself to the new political circumstances has led the Communists sometimes to refer to it, derisively, as a "woman" among churches. The head of the church, the Patriarch Dr. Frantisek Kovar, declared at a general synod of his clergy in February 1949, that Communism "must be viewed as a historical force which, guided by the will of God, shows the way ahead; it must be viewed as a co-fighter for social justice with whom it is necessary to co-operate with sincerity." In return for such good will, the Communists have seen to it that the Czechoslovak Church got a good deal of confiscated property. It received three

times as much, per capita, in state subsidies during 1949 as did the Catholic Church.

Although there have been rumors from time to time that the Communists intended to give the Czechoslovak Church special status as a national church, it is not sufficiently large for the role. Thus far the Communists have contented themselves with efforts to encourage its growth. Early in 1950, for instance, the State Office for Church Affairs helped recruit a special group of seventy workers who were given six months' training and sent into the border regions to win converts for the Czechoslovak Church.

Even more favored by the Communists, however, is the small Eastern Orthodox Church, with some 90,000 members. Before the last war it was associated with the Serbian Orthodox Church. During the war, its leadership was almost wiped out by the Gestapo after the assassins of Himmler's deputy, Reinhard Heydrich, took refuge in the cellar of their church in Prague. And in 1945 the revived Orthodox Church united with the Russian Orthodox Church and invited a number of Russians to replenish the ranks of its hierarchy.

In February 1950, the deputy of the Moscow Patriarch of the Orthodox Church, the Metropolite Nikolay and some other high-ranking Russian priests, visited Czechoslovakia to install two Orthodox bishops at Olomouc in Moravia and at Presov in eastern Slovakia. Several months later, members of the Greek Catholic or Uniate Church, numbering several thousands, followed the example of Uniates in other satellite countries by "voluntarily rejoining" the Eastern Orthodox Church. This meant little change in their rites, but required them to renounce their loyalty to the Pope of Rome.

Another church much approved by the regime is the small Unitarian Church with 10,000 members headed by Karel J. Haspl.

At the other end of the scale, so far as the government is concerned, are the Slovak Lutherans with 400,000 members and the Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren with 260,000. Until forced to accept it by law, the Slovak Lutherans declined government financial assistance on the grounds that it would give the state excessive influence over priests; and its clergy remain chary of providing the government with many useful political resolutions. The Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren, formed out of a union of Calvinists and Lutherans, claims to inherit the tradition of Jan Hus. This is the church to which T. G. Masaryk belonged and most of its leaders are politically akin to the Slovak Lutherans.

The best-known spokesman, although not the head of the Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren, however, is an apologist for the Communist regime, Dr. L. Hromadka, Dean of the Kominsky Protestant Theological Faculty in Prague. He was known in the United States during the war as a lecturer at Union Theological Seminary. At a church conference in May 1950, for instance, he warned his colleagues that "the present changes are a reality we have to build upon, even though many people would prefer not to acknowledge that fact. . . . The liberal era inevitably passes away because the basic ideas of modern men have broken down." He took the oath of loyalty on December 3, 1950, before Minister Zdenek Fierlinger, Chief of the State Office for Church Affairs, and sent a letter to the chairman of the Security Council of the United Nations protesting against the "police action of the United States against North Korea."

Now that the Communists have broken the church organizations, what remains? I believe that Christianity remains — Christianity in a sense broader than any of the church organizations, a profound anti-Communist force the Communists cannot get their hands on.

The mutual hatreds of the Hussites and Catholics now seem of no more than antiquarian interest. The day T. G. Masaryk hoisted the black Hussite flag with the red chalice above Hradcany Castle, and the Papal Nuncio withdrew from Czechoslovakia in a huff, seems very far away.

For the Communists have also accomplished this with their persecution of the churches. They have united Catholics and Protestants, as never before, against the common enemy.

CHAPTER 27 Can Western Culture Survive?

WE know that the Communists of the Soviet Union are capable of destroying nations by mass deportation. They have done so in the case of the Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians, and in the case of the Volga Germans and other ethnic groups in the Soviet Union. The day may come when they will use such methods in the satellite countries of eastern Europe but, for the time being, the Communists of the Soviet Union, together with the Communists in the satellite countries, are concentrating all their energies, not on physical destruction but on an effort to change the very nature of the people. In Czechoslovakia they are using a combination of propaganda, education, and control of all cultural media, backed up by the police; they are trying to break down a thousand-year-old cultural heritage and to impose the Eastern culture of the Soviet Union. They have begun the twin processes of Russianization and Sovietization.

Will they be successful? Can Western culture survive? These questions have been dramatically raised by the completeness with which the Communists in Czechoslovakia have taken over all means by which public opinion can be expressed — press, periodicals and radio; by the way in which they have purged and regimented artists and intellectuals requiring them both literally and figuratively to "sing in the morning," and always according to the principles of "socialist idealism"; and finally by the way the Communists have silenced, subverted or taken over the churches.

The Communists' weapons are mighty. Behind the scenes of cultural activity always hovers the fear of arrest, interrogation, labor camp or prison.

Since they own the country, by way of nationalization, the Communists also dispose of unlimited means of economic pressure. Thus they have found it expedient to offer generous scholarships to all students whose atti-

tude is right. Those whose attitude is wrong are lucky if they can stay in school after age fifteen. Teachers who co-operate have had their salaries raised; others have been fired and assigned to manual labor. Approved writers have had their fees increased by the nationalized publishing industry and approved journalists are quite well off compared with their pre-war conditions. Composers and painters who keep away from "decadent Western bourgeois abstractionism" may receive generous grants and advances from the state organizations who are their only customers. Actors, too, assured of year-round employment in the state-owned film industry and theaters, are better paid. The clergy of all churches have been obliged, whether they like it or not, to receive increased salaries from the state; indeed, in their campaign to bring the churches to heel, the Communists made the salaries a basic point, linked with oaths of loyalty to the regime. All this is a form of bribery.

Concomitantly, the impact of contemporary cultural media on the public has been broadened, at least statistically. A publishing boom has been precipitated by compulsory reading—people have to read party literature in order to hold their jobs. Theaters and concert halls have been filled as never before by an organization called "Art for the People" which buys whole blocks of tickets and assigns them to offices and factories. The workers get the tickets free or for a nominal sum, and they use them too, if they know what is good for them. Painting and sculpture have been brought to the people by decoration of public places on a large scale, and by awarding temporary works of art to prize-winning "shock workers."

There is a touch of irony in the fact that the churches, especially Catholic churches, are also more crowded than ever before. Even if the bishop has been arrested, isolated or forced to collaborate with the regime, the people still feel that the churches are basically anti-Communist and find solace in church ceremonies and worship.

Since they control all forms of publicly organized life, the Communists can bring their influence to bear at will, not only through all the usual cultural media which I have described, but also through many far-flung and seemingly unrelated enterprises. Many of these are innocuous enough in themselves, but they always serve to tighten the reins of Communist control.

In their efforts to transform the Czech into a "Soviet man," there is no phase of life too remote or obscure to interest the Communists. Here are a few examples of many of the measures they have taken:

The Ministry of Information maintains a branch devoted to the control

of public amusements, including public dancing, floor shows, circuses and shooting galleries. In 1950, it ordered all social clubs, amateur dramatic societies and chess clubs to register with the ministry. And on July 12, 1951, the National Assembly adopted a law whose purpose was officially stated to be "to reduce progressively the number of organizations many of which are of *petit-bourgeois* character and to merge them into mass organizations."

This law meant the immediate liquidation of 61,668 associations, and left only the following seven recognized by law: Revolutionary Trade Union Movement (the national trade union organization); Association of Czech Farmers; Association of Slovak Farmers; Union of Czechoslovak Women; Association of Sokol; Czechoslovak Red Cross; Association of Soviet-Czechoslovak Friendship.

Thereafter, any other organizations desiring to function were required to have their statutes approved by the nearest Regional National Committee or by the Ministry of Interior, and to report all their activities, the names of their offices, the state of their finances, and their plans for meetings. National Committees may send representatives to any meeting, and intervene "for the protection of popular democracy or public order."

Long before this law was announced, the Communists had been systematically infiltrating and taking control of the Sokols, whom they have not trusted since the anti-Communist demonstrations of 1948, but whom they dared not abolish. After a severe purge of old Sokol officers, the regime unified, under the name of Sokol, all the country's physical culture and sports' organizations. This was accomplished at the ninth Sokol congress in Prague in June 1951. On that occasion, former leaders of the "proletarian physical culture federation" took the leading positions, and it was proclaimed that the Sokols had been cleansed of "bourgeois reactionary conceptions" and had become a true organization of the masses, dedicated to "scientific socialism, socialist patriotism, love of the Soviet Union and the international solidarity of workers."

When the Czech worker goes on a vacation, he does not by any means escape from "central direction," as is indicated by an item published in November 1950, in the illustrated Communist weekly *Halo Nedelni Noviny*. The writer complained that Communist delegates to the International Film Festival in Karlovy Vary "not only smoked and spit on the ground, but laughed and shouted at one another so loudly that this place which should serve as a health resort resembles St. Matthew's fair. They sat on the grass; they threw paper everywhere; they played cards late into

the night in the hall or on the terrace of the Wilson Hotel; they sang songs which were by no means in good taste, and they got drunk."

The workers' Communist mentors have also campaigned against the use of alcohol. At Presov, in Slovakia, automobile drivers were asked to sign the following pledge early in 1950:

> I know that drunkenness is a survival of capitalism, a saboteur of the Five-Year Plan, and that alcohol drives us back towards capitalism and misery and retards our progress towards socialism. Therefore I promise upon my honor not to drink spirits, to be able to handle my car at all times, not to drive fast, and always to think of the life, health and property of my fellow drivers.

Through the youth organizations the Communists dispose of almost unlimited opportunities for influencing the young. All children like parades, military exercises, summer camps, winter sports, singing, club houses with ping pong and games, and uniforms. They get all that from the Pioneers and the Union of Czechoslovak Youth. And, beguiled by these things — by-products of any totalitarian political movement and quite unrelated to the central issues — children are tempted to conclude that Communism is swell.

Youngsters like badges, and so, for the more studious, the Communists have thought up the Fucik badge (Julius Fucik was the Communist poet executed by the Nazis). To get the badge they have to pass an examination on a number of books that "give a clear and true picture of life and which are also works of art in the fullest sense of the word." The first of six groups of books consists of speeches by President Gottwald to young people; similar works by Lenin, Stalin and Kalinin; the constitution of the Czechoslovak Republic; and a novel called *Against the Whole World* by the Communists' favorite historical novelist, Alois Jirasek. The second group of books consists of what would in the United States be called "proletarian novels," and the third, of three Soviet novels, and so on.

The Communists also fulminate against jazz — although they still tolerate it — and against loud-colored ties and socks. They disapprove because they consider these items American.

On quite a different plane, but of the utmost importance in the cultural reorientation of the country, is the plan to rebuild the capital, to make it a "new, socialist Prague — a workers' city." The city is not to be allowed to get very much larger. It now has 930,000 inhabitants and it is to be kept

down to 1,000,000. These inhabitants are, however, to be predominantly working-class producers. Although up to the end of October 1951, the Communists had not staged mass deportations from Prague like those carried out in Budapest, the mass arrests among the bourgeoisie in the autumn of 1949, and spasmodic continuations of the arrests since then, have already effected a shift in the population structure in favor of the workers. Some governmental and other administrative offices are also being moved away from the capital in order to make room for factory workers.

According to plans for reconstruction and development of Prague, the architectural glory of the old city, with all its symbols of a freer Western past, is to be overshadowed by a mighty new district of huge public buildings, including a new Communist Party headquarters, built in the neo-classical Soviet style. On the Letna Heights overlooking the Vltava River and the city, a huge new national art gallery is to rise around a great statue of Stalin, and the base of the statue, reverently composed of stones from every province of Czechoslovakia, was laid in 1950. What the Communists want to do is indicated by the review in the weekly *Tvorba* on March 29, 1950, of a book on old Prague by Mrs. J. Svoboda. The reviewer takes the writer severely to task for "singing the praises of the exploiting class and instilling into the reader the idea that the beauty of Prague is due solely to the nobility and the bourgeoisie . . . the harmfulness of the whole publication lies in its attempt to revive just those dead and false traditions that the Czechoslovak people have finished with forever."

An almost ideal opportunity for cultural reorientation is offered by the plans to build entirely new industrial cities near Kosice, near Zilina, and at Moravska Ostrava. In these places, what the Communists call "typically socialist cities" are rising. According to advance notices there should be great improvement over present conditions. All dwelling units will be centrally heated, and the standard three-room apartment will accommodate, at the maximum, a five-member family. The streets will be wide and lined with trees, and the houses so planned that they will catch the sun throughout the day.

There will be parks, swimming pools, playgrounds, and, of course, all kinds of communal facilities in line with the "socialist way of life" . . . communal restaurants, communal laundries, and neighborhood nurseries. There will be "houses of culture," club rooms, and, of course, quarters for the Communist Party.

If the regime can fulfill these glowing plans they should go far towards

making people forget the past, in the enjoyment of a better Communist present and future. But performance thus far does not indicate that the Communists will be so successful.

Hand in hand with Sovietization goes Russianization. The basic step in that direction is mass instruction in the Russian language. Several million Czechoslovaks have learned some Russian since 1948, and several million more are still at it. Apart from the schools, where Russian instruction begins at the age of eight, the trade unions sponsor "People's Russian Courses" which claim to impart a working knowledge of the language in twelve lessons. The Soviet-Czechoslovak Friendship Society, which had 1,890,000 members in the middle of 1951, offers more advanced instruction. In May 1951, its classes were attended by 300,000 students of whom 120,000 were industrial workers. The Communists are explicit about the importance of this instruction.

The newspaper *Lidove Noviny* on October 16, 1949, explained that Russian must be taught not only "because it is the language of Tolstoy, Turgenev, Gogol, Pushkin and Dostoevski, but because it is a highly important means of ideological party education, the medium of all progressive peoples all over the world and a powerful instrument of socialism." The magazine *Slovansky Prehled,* numbers 7–8, 1949, explained that Russian was important "because it is the powerful language of Lenin and Stalin and because for centuries it has been our link with the great Russian nation. It was our support in the time of the resistance, it was our strength in the time of the struggle for national freedom. It raised and developed our culture. For us it is the first language of world brotherhood on its way to Socialism, and the first language of those who defend peace."

The Soviet Ambassador, M. A. Siline, quoted in the newspaper *Lidova Demokracie* on May 13, 1950, urged the members of the Soviet-Czechoslovak Friendship Society to: "Learn the Russian language so that you can study the works of Lenin and Stalin more thoroughly and in the original. Adore Stalin, go to the school of Stalin, live according to Stalin's example, speak like Stalin, love the people like Stalin, fight for Socialist construction like Stalin, fight for peace like Stalin."

The Soviets' aim in the sphere of linguistics, as I see it, is this: After dominating the satellites politically and economically they intend to insure their cultural domination by imposing the Russian language. As a first step, Russian will eliminate German, English and French as the second language, not only of educated people, but of the working masses. Thus, little by little, Russian will become the common language of all the peo-

ples in the "Socialist bloc" of nations—a zonal language. In some dim future, according to Stalin's linguistic theories, after the "victory of socialism throughout the world," a common world language will arise, and this, he concedes, will be neither Russian, English, German nor French, but a "new language which will have absorbed the best elements of the national and the zonal languages." (Stalin's reply to Comrade A. Kholopov, July 28, 1950.)

As part of the new orientation the main moving picture theaters show Russian movies, and every major theater plays at least one Russian play weekly. Each year, on November 7, the anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, every theater presents a Russian play. The anniversaries of the principal Russian writers are all elaborately celebrated.

There is a lively cultural exchange between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union. Such writers as Ehrenburg and Simonov visit Prague from time to time and Soviet musicians and scientists dominate the scene at Czech musical festivals and scientific congresses. Soviet exhibitors occupy the largest area, by far, at the annual Prague trade fair. Groups of Soviet Kolkhoznik visit Czechoslovak peasants to teach them Soviet farming methods, and Russian gymnasts and football players tour the country. These are some of the categories of people whom the Soviets send to Czechoslovakia, very consciously to *teach,* while the Czechoslovaks send similar representatives to Russia, equally consciously, to *learn.* Even the world champion Czech runner Zatopek was careful, after a visit to the Crimea, to report that he had "learned" a great deal from the Soviet athletes whom he had defeated. In 1949 there were 120 Czechoslovak students in the Soviet Union. By October 1951, the number had grown to 300, and it may be presumed that the numbers will continue to grow.

While cultural relations with the Soviet Union are being made closer and closer, relations with Western countries are being, or have been, cut off. The practice of sending students to Western countries to study at the expense of the state was, for instance, discontinued in 1948 and in early 1950, after a series of Czech athletes had escaped to the West, sports relations with the Western countries were almost completely broken off.

I have already discussed Czechoslovakia's traditional Western orientation sufficiently and do not want now to labor the point that the trend imposed by the Communists since February 1948, is a monstrous and unnatural one. But I must mention that during the entire period from 1918 to 1939 only two plays by Soviet Russian authors were presented by the National Theater in Prague—one by Katayev and the other by Kor-

neychuk. Nor was there any preference for Russian music. The study of the Russian language was quite exceptional.

Practical hints for Russianization sometimes crop up amusingly in the press. The Trade Union daily *Prace,* for instance, in July 1950, discovered that in Russia nearly every counter in an office or store has on it a calculating machine made of twelve wires, each with ten little balls, just like the ones familiar to American first graders. What a dandy idea, wrote *Prace* in effect—just what we need. They are fast, reliable and cheap! A man named Vojtech Kreihansel promptly produced a booklet intended to popularize the device.

When, in this fashion, one tabulates the resources of Communist and Soviet cultural influences, it seems like an irresistible steam roller. Yet the Communists and Soviets have certain cultural weaknesses inherent in their system.

Intellectual dishonesty makes their message unconvincing to all but the most naïve. For instance, distortions of history, especially when they include very recent events, have a way of destroying confidence. There are always people who have personal knowledge of the facts. The basic dishonesty of the "peace campaign," which involves a most flagrant distortion of the events of the day, has become apparent to more and more people, and the peace slogan, which seemed a potent Communist weapon in 1949, has been progressively devaluated by repetitive propaganda, high-pressure, signature-gathering campaigns and belligerent mass rallies.

Their great weakness lies in the fact that the Communist and Soviet intellectual and artistic standards are low. Their newspapers, literature, art and music are dull, lacking invention and originality. They are stunted, not only by ideological limitations, but by the arbitrary interpretations of those limitations by political authorities such as Zhdanov and Stalin himself in Russia and Ladislav Stoll, Kopecky and Gottwald in Czechoslovakia. Indeed, there is no intellectual life in Communist Czechoslovakia—only a juggling of slogans.

Artists and intellectuals have been reduced to the status of press agents for the Communist Party and publications of all kinds to the position of house organs for the Party. These press agents are employed to do a dishonest job. They must forever try to inculcate the myth of the Communist millennium by disregarding unpleasant realities and pretending that the dreams of the future have already been achieved, or are about to be achieved. This is the real face of the "socialist realism."

The Czechs are no naïve peasant people to be impressed by such a performance. On the contrary they are highly educated and noted for their skepticism. And they find the Communist and Soviet Russian performance contemptible. They are bored stiff. They do not read the papers unless they feel they have to; they would rather hear the BBC or the "Voice of America" or the "Voice of Free Europe." Unless they are forced into organized parties they stay away from Communist-inspired and Soviet Russian shows.

The Western cultural heritage in Czechoslovakia shows great persistence under the Eastern onslaught. I do not want to be overoptimistic or to minimize the strength of the enemy, but I do want to show that there are grounds for hope. A vital point surely is that the Czech people still actively show that they enjoy and want the cultural offerings of the West. They flock to Western movies and plays when they can. They made the Prague USIS library the busiest in Western Europe and on the day it was closed by the Communists in April 1950, they staged the memorable demonstration which I described in chapter two. Undoubtedly the element most consciously attached to Western values of all kinds is the bourgeoisie, the Communists' "class enemy" who is being squeezed out of existence. One might have expected that under the influence of all the vilifying propaganda, and in their own interests, the workers would have turned against this new pariah-class — the independent businessman, from shopkeepers to factory owners, and all the professional men, artists, writers, engineers and others who have not adjusted to the new system and who live in the shadow of forced-labor camps. But it was my observation in 1949 and 1950, supported by subsequent information, that the workers had done nothing of the kind. Sympathy for the representatives of former social status and respect for their opinions and attitudes has been preserved. Furthermore, the opinions and attitudes of the West and the cultural values of the bourgeoisie have, in this country, penetrated deeply into the social structure, into all classes. And the Czechs do not change quickly. Even in the ranks of the supposedly simon-pure Communists, so-called Western bourgeois attitudes keep cropping up.

I cannot forget a certain group of Czech intellectuals who, considering themselves tried-and-true Communists, spent an incautious evening together in Prague, drinking beer — and complaining.

"Before we were in power," one of them lamented, "I used to go abroad once a year. Now I cannot even get a passport. It's ridiculous. As though I could not be trusted, I who fought for Communism since the twenties."

Another, a department head in a ministry, complained that whereas he used to receive several English and American newspapers in his office, "now all I am allowed to have is clippings from business and financial sections dealing with our work. We are not supposed to see the rest of the paper."

A doctor said he felt his work was handicapped because he could no longer get American medical literature. "Of course, the Russian journals are excellent," he added apologetically, "and I am learning Russian."

I know there are many persons who struggled and intrigued for the Communist Party for many years to whom it has come as a shock that the regime they have created is a strait-jacket regime, denying most of the values they had taken for granted in the old days. They had used freedom as a slogan for so long that they believed in it; and when the millennium arrived they were not quite prepared to admit that their slogan was a fraud.

To this may be added the story of the sergeant and the corporal of the Army of the Czechoslovak "People's Democracy" standing on a frontier, gazing out to the West. It is dusk, and they are lost in thought. At last the sergeant asks:

"Corporal, what are you thinking?"

"The same thing you are thinking, sergeant."

"Well, if that is so, then you are under arrest."

"Why?"

"For treason."

I believe my point about the persistence of Western cultural heritage may be supported by classifying the elements of which the heritage are composed. As I see it, the heritage is composed of elements on an intellectual level, and elements on a traditional level, and is perpetuated in various ways on both levels.

The intellectual level is the level of critical thought. On this level the cultural heritage with everything it implies is passed on consciously from generation to generation. It is passed on publicly by means of mass communications, that is, by the press, periodicals and radio, by cultural expression and by formal education; privately it is passed on by formal or informal teaching in the family.

Once they had seized control of the government, the Communists found it easy to take over mass communications, cultural expression and education. Those among the intellectuals, the most conscious bearers of West-

ern culture whom the Communists could not conveniently buy off, they have destroyed. Thousands of such men — teachers, journalists, writers, artists — have had to sacrifice their careers, homes and friends, and often more, because they would not be bought off, would not sacrifice their intellectual integrity. Many are in prison or in labor camps, many have escaped to the West.

It is easy to see that in public the Western heritage has been practically eliminated. But there is another realm which the Communists have not been able to penetrate completely. This is the family. In spite of the rival claims of nurseries for the very young, of the Pioneers and the Union of Czechoslovak Youth for boys and girls, many children continue, in the family, to learn something of the truth about their country's past, about the liberation and the Communist coup, about America and about Soviet Russia and the values for which they stand. I have been puzzled to find some Americans questioning the effectiveness of the family because they had read about children whom the Communists had trained to spy upon and to denounce their parents. That has unfortunately happened. But I would suggest that this happens no more often than the instances where American high school children have taken to smoking marijuana. Neither one nor the other is typical conduct. In spite of everything, the family remains a prime educational influence in Czechoslovak society, and one that more often than not operates in the support of the Western heritage. Consider for a moment how a family can link the generations and the years . . . suppose a grandfather of sixty-five passes on an idea he acquired in youth to his fifteen-year-old grandson. It is the sort of thing grandfathers often do. And suppose this boy, when he reaches the age of sixty-five in turn passes the idea on to his fifteen-year-old grandson. A period of one hundred years has been spanned. Of such stuff is made the memory of a people in its simplest form.

On the traditional level the cultural heritage consists of largely subconscious concepts which are passed on more by symbols than by conscious effort. Although they try in many ways to do so, the Communists find it difficult to intervene in this process.

Here is the surest hope for Western cultural survival in the event that the Communist regime proves long-lasting. Even if every one of the old-regime intellectuals were eliminated, the cultural heritage would persist by this process in other social groups.

The concepts to which I refer may concern the bourgeois scale of values — the importance and meaning they attach to the various virtues and vices,

to freedom, property, nationality. They may concern the people's preferences in political and economic systems, or their taste in the arts, or in food, drink and clothing.

The symbols and legends by which attitudes and concepts are passed on are both public and private. The most obvious form of the public symbol is the flag. Though he may never have given an hour to the study of history, the Czech who sees the red, white and blue of his national flag waving at the head of a parade is very likely to feel a surge of national pride. And he may experience more complex associations concerning the Republic and democracy. In any event, I observed that at the May Day parades of 1949 and 1950, the sight of the massed banners of the Czechoslovak Republic drew louder cheers than anything else in the parade. It is characteristic that the Communists, with their red banners and their hammer and sickle, have tried to raise up symbols rivaling the national flag.

In a city like Prague there are ten thousand public symbols: the buildings of the old city, dating back to the times of Hus; Hradcany Castle, where dwelt the kings of Bohemia, the first Czechoslovak President, and also the conquerors of Czechoslovakia; St. Charles bridge with its statues of saints, which is probably the most exquisite sight in the city; the new bourse building where parliament meets; and all the great blocks of modern flats built during the First Republic. Each one of these and many more are symbols with messages for the Czechs who look at them. Each has its story of the Western past. The spires of St. Vitus's Cathedral will, for a long time, represent the Catholic Church of Rome to the Czech people, and not the pseudo-Catholic Church run by the State Office of Church Affairs.

Not even the Communists dare destroy old and revered symbols. And so they try to steal them, to give them a new meaning, and to raise up new public symbols of their own. For instance, the day may come when they will try to dissociate the church from the belief in God. But that is obviously far off. After thirty years they have made little progress in that direction, even in the Soviet Union.

The profound significance of the plan to rebuild Prague lies in its effect on the minds of the people. Stalin's statue stands higher than old Hradcany, and the glory of the Communist present is to outshine that of the Western past.

Even more difficult for the Communists to overcome are the millions of private symbols with which all homes abound. If a man had no books in

his house to pass on the heritage of the past consciously — and that would be a rare situation among Czechs — his family would still be surrounded by objects which, as symbols, perform the same service unconsciously. It would be a rare Czech home in which the child would not find objects that would transmit to him something of the cultural values of the past. It might be a picture of President Benes or of Masaryk. They are still very common, especially in the country. Even though the schoolbooks may gradually stop mentioning Masaryk and blacken the memory of Benes, the honored place their pictures occupy may arouse a schoolboy's curiosity, and parents or grandparents may pass on to him their own memories of, and attitudes towards, the President-Liberator and the President-Constructor.

The objects that have symbolical value, of course, vary from individual to individual, from family to family. An old clock may, for family reasons, symbolize in one man's mind the days of the Hapsburg empire. For another, a painting may suggest the days when artists could, without qualms, draw inspiration from Paris. A vase, a set of china or a piece of furniture may all be significant symbols of days gone by. Or an empty place on the floor, where once there was a carpet, may for some people symbolize the liberation by the Red Army and the night Soviet troops were billeted in the house. By his possessions a man is linked to his past. There is little the Communists can do about that, except to separate man from his possessions. They have been doing just that with considerable enthusiasm. But it is slow work. People manage to hang on to the more personal and significant items.

In one way or another, on the conscious intellectual or the unconscious traditional level, every man grows constantly out of his past. There is no such thing as the "man without an umbilical cord" nor, for that matter, do the Communists try to create such a man. Convenient as such a creature might be to them, they realize that he could never be real. Instead the Communists try to mislead men about the nature of their parentage.

If I may be permitted to shift metaphors, I would say that the Czech national cultural heritage is like a plant with very deep roots. Above ground, like the flowers of the plant, are literature, drama, art, journalism, the most refined and conscious expressions of the cultural heritage.

The same metaphor may be applied to religion, whose flowers are the churches. The churches long have given expression to the Christian morality (and often to the cultural tradition) of the Czech nation. The time may come when the Communists will go beyond destroying the independence

of the churches and will seek to abolish them in an effort to kill religion. But the roots of Czech religion are deep in the Christian morality of the Czech people; deep in the people's subconscious.

The plant and its flower may be cut down, as they have been cut down in Czechoslovakia, but the roots are tenacious, and, when the time is favorable, will generate new flowers.

Over the centuries the Czechs have given ample evidence on which to base such confidence. They have developed a distinctive national character which embodies their secret of survival — survival of the national idea, of the national culture, of the nation. No nation in Europe can boast of more continuity in cultural, not to mention political tradition, from the days of Saints Cyril and Methodius preaching national self-determination in the ninth century down to the present.

The Czechs demonstrated their capacity for survival after the Battle of White Mountain in 1620, when Catholic forces of the Hapsburgs defeated the Czech Hussites. The catholicization that followed was hardly to be compared with the Sovietization now going on. But it was fierce enough. The Hussite leaders were executed, and some 30,000 of their followers were obliged to flee. By way of comparison, about 50,000 have fled from the Communist terror in Czechoslovakia — but the number would be many times as great were it not for frontier control.

The Hapsburgs burned Czech Bibles and books and, in the ensuing years, the German language entirely displaced Czech in cultured circles. But Czechoslovakia's cultural roots remained sound. There were always some Czechs who kept up the traditions.

Under the Nazis the Czechs again demonstrated their stamina. The Nazis closed the universities. They vacillated between exterminating the Czechs and Germanizing them. They tried to make the German language and the German culture dominant again. This is not the place to speak of what the Czechs accomplished in the way of physical resistance to the invader, except to say that what they did, they did intelligently, with calculation, so that it counted. With a minimum of dramatics the Czechs kept their own council and bided their time. Their heritage of culture and democratic and national faith remained intact. And after the war this heritage burgeoned with new and brilliant life until the Communists, as agents for the Soviet Union, took over.

It is true that artists and intellectuals have been bought or destroyed, and that as a consequence the press, literature and the arts have become instruments of Soviet cultural invasion instead of bearers of Western cul-

ture. It is true that a combination of force and bribery broke a part of the Christian churches. But the whole culture of a people extends beyond the limitations of any single institution. It is a subtle thing, infinitely varied in its forms of expression and in the means by which it perpetuates itself. Often it survives even in those who would destroy it. It survives even after all the usual forms of expression have been wiped out.

I believe the Czechs will again preserve their heritage. With all the pervasive, engulfing effects of Communist and Soviet cultural policy, I do not believe that they can, in any foreseeable future, reorient the Czech people from West to East, that is, completely change the very nature of the Czech people.

With all their scheming, the Communists have not yet devised a means of extinguishing the cultural memory of a Western people. The Czechs are tough-minded.

PART V
Exploitation, Resistance and Purge

CHAPTER 28 Sovietization of Economic Life

IN summing up the life of Communist Czechoslovakia, it can be said that the Soviet Union stands at the beginning of the chain of cause and effect. Soviet demands upon Czechoslovakia are spelled out in trade "agreements" which are renewed and expanded from time to time. Each time Soviet needs call for a new "agreement," Czechoslovakia's economic plans have to be revised. This has made necessary one complete revision and several partial revisions of the Czechoslovak five-year plan. Each revision shifts more of the country's resources into heavy industry because the Soviet Union wants the products of Czechoslovakia's heavy industry for itself and other People's Democracies. Light industry, including consumers' goods, is cut down commensurately. The cost comes out of the Czechoslovak standard of living, still the highest in the Communist world. Although many Czechoslovakians were deluded by the Communists at the beginning of the regime, they are now resisting this exploitation. One of the ways they resist is by producing less.

At the same time, the Soviet Union, through Communist Party and trade-union officials, puts the heat on the workers to increase production. The heat is applied in the form of purges, individual and collective. The purges began in early 1950 and reached a climax on November 27, 1951. Here, at the end of the chain of cause and effect, Soviet schemes appear to have gone slightly awry. For President Klement Gottwald has used the purges to get rid of some of the Soviet Union's most devoted agents, who happen also to be his personal enemies.

Here, in the form of a chronology, is the relationship between Soviet demands and events in Czechoslovakia:

Stalin's move on *July 9, 1947*, preventing Czechoslovakia from joining the Marshall Plan, led to the conclusion of the first five-year trade agree-

ment between the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia on December 11, 1947. In order to fulfill Soviet requirements Czechoslovakia had to carry out extensive nationalization of her industry and had to introduce a five-year plan beginning on January 1, 1949. The plan shifted the center of gravity of the economy from light industry to heavy industry.

Soviet requirements were raised progressively in 1950; in consequence several industries had to introduce "super plans." Nonetheless, until November, small but steady gains in the standard of living were achieved. Prices were reduced and goods became more plentiful.

On *November 3, 1950,* the U.S.S.R. imposed a new trade agreement sharply increasing the burdens on Czechoslovak industry for the period 1951–1955. November 1950 proved a turning point. From then on difficulties and setbacks piled up inexorably.

On *January 21, 1951,* the price of bread and flour had to be raised because the Soviet Union was withholding grain shipments in reprisal against delays in Czechoslovak industrial deliveries. Insistent Soviet pressure made necessary a complete revision of the five-year plan which was announced on *February 22, 1951.*

On *March 1, 1951,* bread and flour rationing were reintroduced.

On *March 13, 1951,* the Soviet Union imposed a special trade agreement for the balance of the year, thereby making necessary further revisions of the five-year plan as announced on April 10, 1951.

On *July 1, 1951,* free market prices of food and manufactured goods had to be raised and the meat ration was cut. The government explained it had to take these steps not because of shortages but because of "overconsumption." This was one way of describing inflation. In July the government published monthly figures of five-year-plan fulfillment for the last time, presumably because figures for the first half of the year showed a progressive decline in the percentage of fulfillment.

On *October 15 and 16, 1951,* the presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the cabinet adopted a resolution castigating the "absolutely unsatisfactory" output of the principal coal mines and blaming Party and trade-union functionaries. It seemed evident towards the end of the year that the myth of the five-year plan and the rising standard of living it was to bring about was falling to pieces and that the Communist Party was losing its hold on the workers of Czechoslovakia.

In 1952 the process of disintegration continued — combined as ever with dynamic expansion of heavy industry to meet the needs of the Soviet Union.

Far from discouraging industrial development in the area they control, the Soviets insist on it. They also insist on determining its nature and rate. For this is industrialization, not for the sake of the countries being industrialized, but for the sake of the power (and presumably eventually the prosperity) of the Soviet Union. This is the core of the Soviet Union's system of exploitation in eastern Europe.

As an incidental effect of precipitate industrialization the biggest, most basic economic problem in eastern Europe is being solved — namely, rural overpopulation. Some eastern European peasants who had lived in abject rural squalor for centuries have improved their material condition. So much the better.

But — and this is the point of our story — the Soviet Union's system of exploitation has meant no material improvement in the case of Czechoslovakia. It has, on the contrary, meant deterioration of Czechoslovakia's standard of living. It has meant for Czechoslovakia what it would mean for any of the other Western, industrial, middle-class nations. The explanation is that, in contrast to the peasant economies of the other satellites, Czechoslovakia's economy was already industrialized on a west European level. The rough Soviet hand has transformed the Czechoslovak economy from a delicately balanced, fine-edged precision instrument at the service of the specialized markets of the whole world, into a lopsided bludgeon in the exclusive service of the Soviet Union. It is as though New Jersey had been captured by, let us say, the combined states of the deep South and had been obliged to subordinate all New Jersey's interests to those of the South.

As I have already pointed out in earlier chapters, the first steps in the economic Sovietization of Czechoslovakia were taken immediately after the liberation in 1945, when the Communists, although not yet in power, already exerted decisive influence in many respects. The first was nationalization of some 60 per cent of the country's industry by a decree of October 24, 1945. I do not mean to say that nationalization necessarily leads to Sovietization. The British example has surely proved the contrary. But in Czechoslovakia's particular circumstances, nationalization played into the hands of the Communist Party and the Soviet Union.

The decree nationalized all mines, foundries and power plants. In other branches of industry, enterprises with more than a certain number of employees, varying between 150 and 500, were nationalized.

This was the period, from mid-1945 until 1947, when Czechoslovakia staged a historic experiment in the coexistence of socialism and capitalism

in economics and in all other spheres of life. The theory was that the capitalist and the socialist sectors would not try to swallow up one another. It was a theory of tolerance.

Although the capitalist sector was broken up to a great extent by the confiscation of property belonging to Germans and to persons charged with collaborating with the Nazis, and although the nationalized and cooperative sectors gained ground slowly, the experiment seemed on the whole to be working. The balance between the sectors was not upset by the two-year plan, which went into effect at the beginning of 1947. This was a short-term reconstruction plan designed to repair Czechoslovakia's relatively slight war damage, to raise industrial production to the level of 110 per cent of 1937, and the standard of living at least to the level of 1937.

Coexistence of socialism and capitalism, of East and West, in the life of Czechoslovakia was, however, cut short in July 1947 when Stalin himself intervened to prevent Czechoslovakia from joining the Marshall Plan. Perhaps if Czechoslovakia had succeeded in sending delegates to the Marshall Plan Conference in Paris at that time, the onus for cutting short the period of coexistence, for burning the bridges between East and West, would have fallen upon the West. But that was by no means clear in July 1947. For the Marshall Plan organization was open to all, and even the Communist Gottwald was in favor of accepting the invitation to go to Paris.

The Soviet dictator cut short the economic revival of Czechoslovakia based on her traditional world-wide trade pattern. From that point on Czechoslovakia has been obliged, in all economic affairs, to give the interests of the Soviet Union precedence over her own.

As a sequel to Stalin's categorical "No," the U.S.S.R. undertook to supply Czechoslovakia's deficiency in grain arising out of the 1947 drought, and Czechoslovakia on December 11, 1947, signed a five-year trade agreement with the Soviet Union. The agreement provided for a steady increase in trade with the Soviet Union until it reached an unusual turnover of 200 million dollars in 1952. Czechoslovakia, which in 1937 had done only 1.6 per cent and in 1947 only 5.7 per cent of her total foreign trade with the U.S.S.R., was to increase the percentage of trade with the U.S.S.R. to 16 per cent at once, and to 30 per cent by the end of 1950.

During the first year of the agreement the Soviet Union was to supply 400,000 tons of wheat and corn (later increased to 600,000 tons), 65,000 tons of Russian fertilizers, 20,000 tons of cotton, and unstated quantities of iron ore, manganese, chrome, alloys, wool, cotton, oil, phenol, phos-

phates. In return Czechoslovakia would send shoes, textiles, glassware and the like to the U.S.S.R. But most Czechoslovak deliveries would consist of products of heavy industry, in particular, railway cars and locomotives, machine tools, cranes and power plant equipment. This "agreement" constituted the first in the series of Soviet demands that were to transform and dislocate the Czechoslovak economy in the ensuing years. If the Soviet demands were to be met, the manpower and resources devoted to heavy industry would have to be greatly increased; light industry would have to be restricted. A new and more ambitious economic plan would be required. And the successful fulfillment of the plan would require a degree of control over the entire economic process obtainable only by far-reaching new measures of nationalization.

Some analysts, with a penchant for economic explanations of events, have seen in the economic necessities resulting from Russian demands the reason why the Communists seized the opportunity in February 1948, to stage a *coup d'état*. Certainly this first five-year trade agreement would never have been fulfilled, even in its first stages, had there been no coup.

By the beginning of 1948 the structure of industry was approximately as follows:

Nationalized enterprises	61%
Private capitalist enterprises	20%
Confiscates	15%
Other public enterprises	4%

This was the economic background of the mass meeting of Communist workers which gathered in Prague on February 22, 1948 in order to exert pressure on President Benes. The Communists called it a "Congress of Works Councils and Trade Union Organizations." It passed a resolution demanding further nationalization as follows:

"The entire internal wholesale trade, all foreign trade and the large department stores and chain stores, the liquor industry, the manufacture and distribution of drugs and pharmaceutical products, as well as all capitalist enterprises employing more than 50 persons . . . also all enterprises of the building industry, printing firms, spas, sanatoria and hospitals."

Soon after the Communists had taken over, this demand became the government program, with the result that before the end of 1948 the share of capitalist enterprises in Czechoslovak industry as a whole dropped to 5.1 per cent. The capitalist element was excluded altogether from wholesale trade, foreign trade and international transport. It remained pre-

dominant for the next year or so, however, in retail trade, among small artisans, and in agriculture.

The Communists retained only the most efficient wholesale houses and liquidated the rest. Following the same policy in foreign trade, they concentrated all imports and exports previously in the hands of some one thousand companies in twenty, later twenty-nine, state monopolies. International transport was concentrated in a single state monopoly.

Some of the nationalized properties were American-owned. The American Embassy in Prague estimated that thirty to fifty million dollars' worth of American property had been affected by the various nationalization measures. The largest, amounting to several million dollars, was the property of Socony Oil, which had conducted a large distribution business in Czechoslovakia before the war. Others included Corn Products Refining, Standard Oil of New Jersey, and International Telephone and Telegraph Company. There were about one thousand smaller claims, most of which concerned real estate.

The Communist regime admitted, in principle, the Americans' right to compensation, and a Czech trade delegation that went to Washington in April 1949 attempted, entirely unsuccessfully, to use the claims as a lever for obtaining an American credit and relaxation of American trade restriction. No compensation has ever been paid to the United States. But the British, who have become Czechoslovakia's largest Western trade partner, have been more successful than the United States in obtaining compensation for nationalized property, as I will explain in dealing with Czech-British trade.

After the Communists had taken power in February, the Czechoslovak economy went into a deep decline during the rest of that year so far as consumers were concerned. Never, since the last days of the war, had shop shelves been so empty. Uncertain of their future, businessmen tended to hoard whatever goods came their way. The black market flourished. Most of the gains in the standard of living made since the end of the war were wiped out.

Part of the explanation for this state of affairs was that UNRRA had ended its operations in Czechoslovakia in the previous year, also business was disorganized by the new measures of nationalization; but mainly it was that grain deliveries with which the Soviet Union had tided Czechoslovakia over the drought of 1947 had to be paid for immediately in consumers' goods. The Communists did not draw attention to this fact, but

instead praised the Soviet Union for its generosity and assured the public that a better life awaited them under the five-year plan that was to succeed the two-year plan at the beginning of 1949.

The Czechoslovak people were told that the five-year plan would raise the standard of living. They were not told that the real purpose of the plan was to provide the Soviet Union with what she wanted for herself and for the other satellites. This was reflected in plans for a pronounced shift away from the traditional pattern of Czechoslovak industrial production, away from textiles, glass, porcelain, gloves, toys, and towards heavy industry. Czechoslovakia was to become the "tool room of the new democracies," supplying electric generators, machine tools, mining equipment and the like.

Imports formerly received from capitalist countries were to be progressively replaced by imports from "states with planned economies." Czechoslovakia would get her cotton and wool from the U.S.R.R. and Bulgaria, iron ore from the U.S.S.R., zinc from Poland, lead from Bulgaria and Rumania, aluminum from Hungary, manganese and chromium from the U.S.S.R. and Rumania, leather and tobacco from Bulgaria, coal from Poland and so on.

The reorientation of foreign trade was desirable, economists argued, because it would make Czechoslovakia independent of the economic crises to which, according to their theory, the capitalist part of the world is doomed to fall victim.

Here are the basic figures in the plan for the five-year period from 1949 to 1953. A total of 336.2 billion Czechoslovak crowns would be invested, as follows:

	Billions of Crowns for Investment
Industry	131.9
Agriculture	26.8
Building	4.6
Transport	52.9
Public Works	47.1
Social Services, Culture and Health	72.9
	336.2

The five-year plan envisaged the gradual raising of the national income (or national product) by 48 per cent over the level of 1948. This would

be accompanied by a rise in the general average consumption per head of 30 to 35 per cent, and more in the case of essentials such as meat, fats, milk and textiles.

To achieve this, it was calculated that the total industrial productivity must rise 57 per cent. This meant the following increases in individual production sectors:

	Per Cent Increase over 1948
Engineering (or metal working)	93
Mining	35
Power	52
Iron and Steel	49
Chemicals	62
Glass	12
Clay Ceramics	59
Woodworking	26
Textiles and Clothing	68
Paper	41
Leather	43
Sugar Refining	43
Spirit Distilling	6
Beer Brewing	68
Flour Milling	30
Food Processing	79

The center of the whole plan was the engineering or metal-working industry, which was to expand 93 per cent. This industry included manufacture of machine tools, optical and precision instruments, electrical equipment, aircraft, automobiles, locomotives, agricultural machinery and foundry equipment. Within the metal-working industry, the heavy-engineering sector—that is, such things as blast furnaces and power plants—was to double and in some instances treble its output. Quoting Stalin in his book *Problems of Leninism,* President Gottwald described heavy engineering as "the main link" in the plan, on which all other links depended. By concentrating on the development of this sector he believed he would make possible a rate of growth in general industrial output equal to that which takes place in capitalist economies only in "boom" periods.

During the five-year period the total labor force was to be increased

by 426,000 persons. Labor in industry would increase by 254,000 or 18 per cent, labor in building by 105,000, or 50 per cent. Describing the rising productivity of those employed as "the most important single condition for the attainment of objectives," the plan called for the following increases in productivity:

Over-all Industrial Productivity	32%
Building	53%
Agriculture	20%
Transport	30%

Some of the individual goals for increases in productivity were:

Engineering Industries	35%
Coal Mining	11%
Lignite Mining	20%
Electricity	58%
Paper	35%
Leather	43%

From the point of view of a high official of the regime, the significance of this economic plan was described by Dr. Josef Goldmann of the Institute for Economics and Social Research of the Socialist Academy in Prague in a pamphlet published in 1949 called *Planned Economy in Czechoslovakia:*

> Here, for the first time in history, is a country with a predominantly industrial economy, with a relatively high standard of living, which has socialized, if not all, at least the greater and the decisive part of the means of production . . . economic planning in Czechoslovakia, therefore, is of outstanding significance for the whole world. It constitutes a precedent, in so far as the experiences gained in a country with an economic level similar to that of many highly developed capitalist countries are far more easily applied than those of other states engaged in planning their economies.

His point was that the precedent provided by Czechoslovakia is very different from that offered by the peasant lands of the Balkans, or for that matter the Soviet Union. And he went on to elaborate the point in a manner quite contrary to the Kremlin's later doctrine that there is only one way to "Socialism," namely the one blazed by the Soviet Union. This was probably held against Goldmann at the time of his arrest in early 1952. He wrote:

> Whilst, then, the fundamental notion of a planned economy in all its far-reaching historical significance had already been propounded by the creators of scientific socialism, the forms of organization of economic planning were not, and could not be, foreseen by them. . . . Our error would be equally great if we, who are in a much more favorable position [than Russia was] in this respect failed to study Soviet planning as diligently as possible, as it would be if we attempted to transfer Soviet planning methods in their present highly developed form to our own quite different conditions.

Economic planning is directed by the State Planning Office whose head has cabinet rank. The actual work is carried out by the Central Planning Commission consisting of fifteen men. Under the commission are eighteen subcommissions dealing with the principal branches of the economy.

Working parties from each industry or other economic sector draw up plans for production targets, raw material and power requirements, labor requirements, investment and further development. These are co-ordinated by the subcommissions and eventually by the Central Planning Commission. In this manner an over-all plan is evolved.

The next step is to produce more detailed "operative plans." That is, the global plans for the year for the various industries are broken down into quarterly and monthly periods among the individual economic units.

The original five-year plan consisted largely of production targets. Since then, the operative plans have introduced refinements, of which the most important is financial planning. Instead of calling for production in terms of quantity only, the financial plans lay down the expenditures to be made for each operation. In addition, each year industries and individual factories are called upon to draw up "counterplans" which correct or exceed the targets set by the central planning authority. Ostensibly on the basis of such counterplans, but actually in order to satisfy Soviet demands, heavy industry and mining have from time to time introduced "superplans" designed to raise production without raising the consumption of raw material.

That the Czechoslovak five-year plan with all its modifications is determined by the needs of the Soviet Union and is co-ordinated with planning in the Soviet Union is fundamental. But the existence or extent of co-ordination between the Czechoslovak plan and those of other satellites is uncertain, except in the case of Poland with whom Czechoslovakia

signed a five-year Treaty of Economic Co-operation in July 1947. Within the framework of this agreement, a network of commissions and sub-commissions has been set up to develop the "Silesian Ruhr" extending across the frontiers of both countries and to build a Danube-Oder Canal. Czechoslovakia has provided the machinery and engineering skill, and Poland the buildings and labor, for a power plant and several factories. In the metal-working industry some products are made in Czechoslovakia, others in Poland, and then assembled in one or the other of the two countries.

But generally speaking the U.S.S.R. appears to have discouraged a lateral planning among the satellites, perhaps because the practice might decrease their dependence upon the U.S.S.R. and give them a sense of unity. The C.M.E.A. (Council for Mutual Economic Aid), created at a meeting of countries in the Soviet sphere in Moscow in January 1949, was at first advertised as the "Molotov Plan," and an answer to the Marshall Plan, but has shown itself to be little more than a device through which the Soviet State Planning Committee controls planning in the satellite states.

According to a *Tass* communiqué published on January 25, 1949, the purpose of the C.M.E.A. is to "provide mutual aid in technical and material respects and exchange of economic experience between the participating countries." C.M.E.A. was described as an "open organization" which others might join "if they agreed with the council's fundamental principles." Participation in the council was said to be unconnected with any special obligation and to infringe in no way upon the political or economic sovereignty of the members. Decisions would be taken only with the consent of those participating and all were to enjoy equality. Whereas the Marshall Plan was claimed to be directed against the U.S.S.R., the C.M.E.A. was said to be devoted only to mutual help and co-operation.

Little else has been published about the council in Moscow or the satellite capitals, but in May 1949 I learned from diplomatic sources in Prague that a permanent secretariat had been established in Moscow with Josef Goldmann as principal secretary. In June 1949 diplomatic sources in Washington disclosed that the participants had signed a secret protocol under which the council was to operate for twenty years. The Soviet Union was to contribute fifty million rubles annually towards the operation of the secretariat, while any additional expenses would be met by the other members.

Again, according to diplomatic sources in Prague, the Czechoslovaks in the summer of 1949 made an abortive attempt to transform the

C.M.E.A. into an organization within which the Soviet Union would provide active assistance to its satellites. The Czechs maintained that the Marshall Plan and the United States discrimination were having a detrimental effect on their economy and could be offset only by Soviet aid.

In confidential reports to the government at this time, Czechoslovakian industrial experts made the following points: The country was suffering from a shortage of lead because of shrinking imports from the United States; available iron ore was insufficient because Sweden demanded payment in dollars; Egyptian cotton, animal hair, nylon products and artificial silk were all hard to get on Western markets; the United States would not grant credit for the purchase of cotton nor issue export licenses for airplane lubricating oil, artificial resin, solvents, aniline dyes, sulphur or pharmaceutical raw materials.

The experts complained that Czechoslovakia was short of coal-loading machines, bulldozers, oil-drilling machinery, ball bearings, and all kinds of spare parts. Furthermore, they accused the United States of holding up delivery of $30,000,000 worth of supplies for which payment had been made. Among these were such items as installations for the state mint, mining machinery, and a $16,000,000 hot-strip rolling mill to be set up at Vitkovice. Shipment of the latter was to have begun in the spring of 1949 under a contract concluded in 1946 with the United Engineering Company of Pittsburgh and Westinghouse. (It was finally seized by the U.S. Treasury on January 18, 1952.)

Three particularly revealing reports were turned in by mining, metalworking, and chemical enterprises. *Ceskoslovenske Doly* (Czechoslovak mines) wrote:

> Difficulties exist in the imports of mining machinery, instruments and time fuses, and consequently production is suffering. . . . Mechanization cannot be realized as planned and instead of reducing physical efforts even more must be demanded from labor if the plan is to be fulfilled.

Kovo wrote:

> It is a well-known fact that the shortage of ball bearings and special measuring instruments is causing serious difficulties in production . . . because of a shortage of special automobile body pressing machines the production capacity of motor vehicles has been very low. The shortage of X-ray bulbs and special electronic equipment is threatening exports to the U.S.S.R.

Finally *Chemapol* wrote:

> The Marshall Plan economic offensive is being conducted in hidden ways. Disregarding the cases of an open refusal to grant export licenses from United States (direct discrimination) our export capacity will be affected unfavorably by the fact that we will not be able to cut our production costs to such an extent as has been the case in Western countries where production has been modernized and helped by effective American aid.

Eloquent as was this testimony to the success of the Marshall Plan and to the need for Soviet aid, it in no way moved the Soviets. Soviet aid continued in its own peculiar way. Whatever goods the U.S.S.R. delivered had to be paid for promptly and well. The only aid she dispensed free of charge was ideological, and the acceptance of ideological aid was compulsory.

The general principle for the economic development of Czechoslovakia or other satellites was laid down by Stalin in these words:

> Why did capitalism triumph over feudalism? Because it raised the level of the productivity of labor, because it permitted man to obtain an incomparably larger quantity of products than did the feudal regime, because it made society richer. Why can and must Socialism inevitably defeat the capitalistic economic system? Because it is capable of creating more efficient methods of work and higher levels of productivity, because it can produce more and make society richer than the capitalist system.

To turn this prediction into reality, the Communists have devised a great network of measures which may be roughly divided into organizational measures and psychological measures.

Once they had carried through their nationalization program and laid down their five-year plan, as already described, the Communists, in April 1949, began a thorough reorganization of industry which continued through the summer of 1950, and was resumed in late 1951.

The main objects were to decentralize the administration of factories and to concentrate authority for their management in the hands of factory directors.

Before April 1949 major decisions in factories had to be signed not only by the manager but by the representative of the trade unions, the

local Communist Party organization and the works' councils. Thereafter the factory manager alone was given full authority, and also held responsible.

At the same time the managements of the larger factories took charge of smaller related enterprises, thereby eliminating the need for some of the government's bureaucratic control machinery. The object was to shift the center of gravity of the economy from government offices to factories, and to shift responsibility from bureaucrats to factory managers.

Finding that the Soviet system of mammoth enterprises did not suit the complexities of their economy, the Czech Communists began splitting up the existing national enterprises into smaller units. Thus, in June 1949, the existing four national enterprises dealing with foundries were split up into six enterprises and in the heavy machine construction sector twenty enterprises were split up into sixty-four new ones.

By the end of 1949, 389 national enterprises had been divided up into 672, as follows:

	National Enterprises
Mining	24
Electric Power	37
Iron and Steel	12
Heavy Machine Construction	57
Precision Instruments	50
Light Industry	58
Automobile and Aircraft	25
Chemicals	38
Building and Ceramics Materials	90
Glass	41
Wood	53
Paper	33
Textiles and Clothing	127
Leather, Rubber	26
Printing, Films	1
	672

During 1950, the number of national enterprises in industry was further increased to 683 and a so-called "budget system" was generally introduced in most enterprises. This meant that the management had to follow not only a production plan but also a financial plan, which set the amount of money that could be spent on raw materials, equipment and wages.

Hand in hand with the reorganization of industries went a campaign to reduce the number of private retail outlets and small artisans shops. These, together with the peasants, represented the last strongholds of capitalism in Czechoslovakia.

Private shops which, at the end of 1949, still handled 40 per cent of the country's retail turnover and employed about 80,000 persons, were practically wiped out by the end of 1950. At that time their turnover had been reduced to one per cent of the total. The more desirable premises were taken over by the national distribution houses and co-operatives and the rest were closed down entirely.

The nationalized wholesale houses squeezed the private shops out of existence by the simple process of withholding supplies from them. The big nationalized distribution enterprises and co-operatives with alphabetical names, like Zdar and Jar, took over the more desirable premises and closed the rest. As a rule the shopkeeper was paid a minimum sum for his premises and stock and he himself was assigned to a job in some other shop. As a matter of principle, former shop owners were not allowed to work on their own premises. Communist editorialists explained that former private shopkeepers were likely to have "reactionary mentalities" and that they were less likely to cause trouble when moved to unfamiliar surroundings.

Shifting the 460,000 persons who were employed in 180,000 artisans shops at the end of 1949 to "higher forms of production" proved a more difficult affair. The regime promoted "communal enterprises" of artisans. In some towns, for instance, communal enterprises of plumberies or carpentries were set up. Whoever wanted the services of a plumber or a carpenter had to get in touch with the communal enterprise, and he would then be assigned to the service he needed. In Prague, a group of barber shops and a group of photographers established communal enterprises. Former independent taxi drivers were also gathered into a communal enterprise. But on the whole artisans did not fit into these "higher forms of production." Many thousands of them continued private operation through 1950 and 1951.

In order to man the industrial machine they planned, the Communists had to expand their labor force. The five-year plan called for an addition of 426,000 persons. But from where were these additional workers to come? Soviet Russia, Poland and the Balkan countries could expand their industrial labor force almost without limit because they could draw upon great reserves of manpower among the peasants. Czechoslovakia,

however, which had lost more than two and one half million in population by the expulsion of the Sudeten Germans, including a high proportion of skilled workers, had no reserves of peasant labor except in some parts of Slovakia. In the Czech lands, agricultural authorities even complained in 1950 that they were suffering from a shortage of 13,000 permanent workers.

The Czechoslovak Communists found their principal manpower reserves among "superfluous employees" in production, distribution and administration, and then among women.

Commission after commission went through the factories and offices trying to figure out ways of getting the work done with less manpower. For instance, early in 1950 it was announced that 30,000 of the 80,000 persons still employed in private retail distribution would be transferred to "production."

The Communist attitude towards women's work is well illustrated by the decision of a court in Bratislava on January 23, 1949, which denied alimony to a divorced woman. Basing itself on the constitutional provision that it is the right and duty of every citizen to work, the court ruled that the woman would have to support herself.

To draw married women into employment, the Communists recognized that they would have to make arrangements to care for the children and, for this reason, they rapidly multiplied the number of nurseries, kindergartens and school canteens.

It was easy to see, during 1949 and 1950, that shopgirls were replacing salesmen, waitresses replacing waiters, and conductresses replacing conductors on streetcars and trains. Women were also employed as traffic policemen but the Communists held that, in accordance with Soviet precept, women could do heavier labor too. The newspapers were filled with stories about seamstresses who became lathe operators, typists who became engine drivers, and salesgirls who found that they could earn much more as cement mixers or by sorting coal in a mine. A typical story was that of a construction plant at Brno-Zidenice which formed a "locksmiths' collective" entirely composed of girls. Another was about a twenty-year-old girl named Hanna Hlackova who operated a crane for a year and then, for good measure, learned to pour steel. By the end of 1950, about one third of the members of the National Trade Union Organization were women. While in 1951 total industrial manpower showed a 4 per cent increase over 1950, the percentage of women therein employed increased from 31.8 per cent to 32.7 per cent.

Conscious of the labor shortage, the Communists eagerly hung on to about 200,000 of the most skilled Germans after all the rest had been expelled. In June 1949, the Germans were given five months during which they might apply for regranting of Czechoslovak citizenship, of which they had been deprived at the time of the expulsion. But very few wanted to stay in Czechoslovakia. Some 50,000 at that time had already applied to the American Military Permits Office in Prague for transfer to Germany, and they eagerly volunteered for inclusion in a transfer of 20,000 to which the Czechoslovaks consented in 1950. It was rumored from time to time that some of the expelled Germans would be invited back into Czechoslovakia to help ease the labor shortage, but except for a few hundred individual cases, nothing came of this. Communists have, however, prepared the ground for such a move in the future by explaining to the Czechoslovak public that the Communist Germans are very different from the breed they have traditionally feared. With a Marxist twist, they have taken over the theory of the "two Germanies" — the authoritarian militarist Germany now associated with the Bonn Government, and the liberal democratic Germany now associated with the East German Republic. The view that "a German is always a German," the army newspaper *Obrana Lidu* wrote in March 1950, is "senseless, noxious and basically reactionary." After all, Germany gave the world the first socialist scholars and such a martyr as Ernst Thälmann. "The Germany of Max Reimann and Wilhelm Pieck must not be confused with that of Adenauer; the Germany of Thomas Mann with that of Krupp and Thyssen." On this basis Pieck visited Prague in 1951 and Gottwald visited Communist Berlin in 1952.

The Communists tried to continue the Sudeten cottage industries on a factory basis. At Jablonec, for instance, where there had once been 12,000 individual competing family enterprises, men, women and children fashioning bijouterie and blowing glass in cottages scattered through the hills, they set up sixty factories. As of old, these now make scarabs for Egypt, aigrettes for Bedouin turbans, edelweiss pendants for Switzerland, seed beads and antique bracelets for the United States, and brooches, baubles and glass eyes for the whole world. They have added a new line of party buttons for the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies. But the Communists have found that factory methods cannot entirely replace generations of craftsmanship, and they have had to leave the making of the highest quality and most complex products to the expelled Germans on the other side of the border.

When I visited the Sudeten, Communist officials explained that before the war, three and a quarter million persons, including half a million Czechs, lived in the predominantly German areas. Most of the Germans lived on very poor land and developed their cottage industries because they could not make a living at farming.

After the war, up to the end of 1947, according to official statistics, Czechoslovakia expelled 2,727,633 Germans, 800,000 of whom went to eastern Germany and the rest to the western zones. Their places were taken by only 1,750,000 Czechoslovak settlers, making the present population of the former German areas 2,500,000. From the roads in the so-called Sudetenland, in 1950, I saw village after village of empty cottages, doors swinging on broken hinges, windows smashed and the interiors stripped of every useful object. The Communists insisted they had no intention of repopulating the area to its former density because, they said, most of the Sudetens had lived in poverty, managing to eke out a living from the poor soil only by engaging in cottage industries.

"In the future," an official of the Ministry of Interior's Resettlement Office told me, "we hope to make a better living for a smaller number of people by gathering poor farmland into co-operatives and cottage industries into modern factories."

Many of the Sudeten industries which the Communists considered uneconomic have been dismantled. Some of the machinery has been converted into scrap and some, particularly textile machinery, has been exported. Yet other plants which had strategic value have been shifted to Slovakia. Slovakia has become the most important center of new industrialization for three reasons. Firstly, the Communists attached strategic importance to the fact that it is further removed from the country's western borders than the industrial areas of Bohemia. Secondly, its poor peasantry represent a reserve of manpower. And thirdly, its mountains contain valuable unexploited natural resources of coal and ores and its rivers a great potential of hydroelectric power.

Thus the most backward third of Czechoslovakia has been transformed, since the Communists took over, from a predominantly agricultural into a predominantly industrial area. Out of 48,000,000,000 crowns ($960,000,000) earmarked in the 1950 budget for capital investment, 30 per cent were devoted to Slovakia.

In his booklet on planned economy in Czechoslovakia, Dr. Josef Goldmann stated that in 1949 eleven hydroelectric power plants were being built in Slovakia and were due to be completed by 1952. He wrote further:

> In the metal sector, eleven plants altogether are being built, including seven heavy and light engineering factories and four electrotechnical works. In the chemical sector, a plastics industry and a pharmaceutical industry are coming into being. An extension of rail manufacture is being undertaken in existing plants and a new plant is being built in Bratislava. . . . Production is being enlarged also in the leather and rubber sector. Among other works, a new tire factory is being built in Puchov. A number of food-processing plants are projected or under construction.

By the end of 1949, thirty-two new industrial plants had been opened. Another twenty-three were opened in 1950. The Communists calculated that in 1950 production reached 300 per cent of the pre-war level and the national income 142 per cent of the pre-war level.

The Communists sought to increase their financial resources by a variety of devices. The first of these began during the last four days of 1948 with a complete inventory of all consumer goods in shops and warehouses throughout the country. For this purpose all shops were closed during the last four days of 1948. When the shops reopened on January 1, 1949, some of them had been transformed into "free market" shops in which food and manufactured goods could be purchased without ration cards, but at prices 400 per cent above those for rationed goods, and sometimes higher. The difference between the free-market price and the rationed price was to go to the government treasury as a so-called "general tax." The free-market shops were crowded from the beginning in spite of the astronomic prices. The following prices prevailed in 1949:

Commodity	*Crowns per Kilo*	*Dollar Equivalent*	*Price (Crowns) on Ration*
Coffee	1500	30.00	—
Tea	2000	40.00	—
Sugar	250	5.00	15
Chocolate candy	400	8.00	100–150
Beef	220	4.40	65
Butter	400	8.00	90

The effect on the economy of the 400 free-market shops established in the first years was that of a sponge sopping up excess purchasing power. In effect, the government had created its own black-market sys-

tem from which it collected the profits. Ordinary black marketeers did in fact very largely disappear during 1949. Government spokesmen explained that the free market was acting as an incentive to the workers who produced more in order to earn more so as to make free-market purchases. Certainly the shops were crowded from the first and it was officially claimed that during the first half of 1949, 41 per cent of free market customers were workers, 23 per cent peasants, 22 per cent civil servants and 14 per cent professional persons and those engaged in private enterprise. From the government's point of view the general tax on free-market operations proved a smashing success. It produced more than 50 per cent of the government's revenue during 1949, 1950 and 1951. In the 1952 budget it was expected to raise 86.5 percent of the national revenue.

At this time the government also opened *Darex* shops in Prague, Bratislava, Karlovy Vary, Kosice and Pilsen. In these shops holders of dollars, Swiss and Belgian francs and pound sterling could obtain coupons with which to buy goods normally reserved for export. Since foreigners were the only persons who could legally possess foreign currency in Czechoslovakia, the government in April 1949 announced an "amnesty" for holders of unregistered foreign exchange. By allowing all possessors of foreign currency to shop at Darex, with no questions asked, the authorities hoped to tap and clean up concealed resources of foreign exchange. These shops, too, proved popular among the Czechoslovaks who turned in private hoards of foreign currency to buy "for export only" products, but it may be presumed that very few of the customers were workers.

The 1952 budget totaling 323,528,941,000 crowns was subdivided into the following expenditures:

	Per Cent of Total
Investment in National Economy (including 92,000 million crowns for capital investment) 217,500,000,000 crowns or	67.2
Social Welfare, Health, Science, Education	18.2
National Defense and Internal Security	6.9
Administration	6.2
State Department	1.5

This budget was nearly twice as high as that for 1951 because it included the budgets not only of all the local district and regional national

committees and the national insurance budget, but also the figures for the national enterprises. It included all the main financial resources of the national economy, and constituted a master financial plan for the country.

In the interests of simplicity and efficiency the government on February 14, 1950, decided to establish a State Bank which would take over all the rights and obligations of the Czechoslovak National Bank, the Zivnostenska Banka in Prague, the Slovenska Tatra Banka in Bratislava, and the Postal Savings Bank. The new bank had a capital of 3000 million crowns. Its net profits were to go to the State Treasury. Outside of the State banking system there remained only an investment bank.

The reorientation of the Czechoslovak foreign trade, about which I have already said a good deal, may be illustrated by the following figures. In 1937 Czechoslovakia received only 8.2 per cent of her imports from the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies and sent them only 9.1 per cent of her exports. In 1947, 20 per cent of her imports came from the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies, and she sent to them 18 per cent of her exports. Trade with the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies increased from 45.5 per cent of total turnover in 1949, and 55 per cent in 1950, to 60.5 per cent in 1951. (According to the Moscow English-language magazine *News*, between 1947 and 1950 Soviet-Czechoslovak trade increased more than five times, Soviet-Polish trade more than twice, Soviet-Hungarian almost five times and Soviet-Bulgarian more than twice.)

In 1947 Czechoslovak trade with the Soviet Union amounted to 57,409 million crowns, or slightly more than one billion dollars. In 1949 it grew to 79,707 million crowns, or more than one and a half billion dollars. Figures for 1950 and after were not published separately from the percentages given for trade with the U.S.S.R. combined with east European satellites.

After the five-year trade agreement concluded with the U.S.S.R. in December 1947, the next major change in Czechoslovakia's trade with the U.S.S.R. was made in a treaty announced by the Minister of Foreign Trade, Dr. Antonin Gregor, upon his return on February 24, 1950, from Moscow where he had been negotiating since the previous November. Gregor declared triumphantly that "through this agreement the food of our population is secured." He said that the import of 460,000 tons of Soviet wheat would make it possible to continue to sell bread and flour without ration tickets even if the harvest should be a poor one. In addition

Czechoslovakia would get 100,000 tons of corn and more than 150,000 tons of fodder.

"This aid," Dr. Gregor went on, "is especially important because in many cases it includes such raw materials as can be obtained in capitalist states only with great difficulty." At the head of a long list of unspecified quantities of every imaginable form of raw material, he mentioned that Czechoslovakia would receive 1,300,000 tons of iron ore. This compared with only 800,000 tons received in 1949 and with about 1,000,000 tons delivered by Sweden during each of the years 1949 and 1950.

The other items listed were: butter and meat in "quantities sufficient to cover the needs of the population"; oilseeds, rice, tea, lentils; 1300 tons of iron ore, ferroalloys, nickel, aluminum, pig iron, silver, platinum; crude oil, petroleum distillates, synthetic rubber, asbestos, sulphur, fertilizers, industrial timber, and raw materials for chemical production and foundries; cotton, wool, flax and jute; roller bearings and other industrial equipment.

Items published as forming part of Czechoslovak deliveries to the U.S.S.R. were: pipe, rails, cables, steam locomotives, power and other equipment, sugar, footwear, textiles and glassware.

Gregor said that Czechoslovakia would import far more capital goods from the Soviet Union than ever before. "As our workers have seen from several samples, this Soviet machinery is in every way as good as, and in many cases better than, American machinery. The discrimination conducted particularly by the U.S.A. will not harm us in any way."

The total weight of goods to be imported from the U.S.S.R. in 1950 was estimated at 3,000,000 tons. This would require at least 200,000 fifteen-ton railway trucks to transport it and an average of twelve trains daily. In view of this great volume some of the goods would have to be transported across Poland or by way of the Danube river.

Gregor assured the Czechoslovak public that goods sold by the U.S.S.R. were priced at the lowest world market levels and that Czechoslovakia would have to pay only half the transport costs prevailing in ordinary international traffic. "Although we are a small state dealing with a great power," he said, "the agreement concluded is an expression of complete equality and full consideration for our sovereignty. What is more, it shows full understanding for the interests of Czechoslovakia."

In this conclusion Gregor misled the Czechoslovak public, for the new treaty imposed very heavy burdens on the Czechoslovak industries, and made it necessary to introduce immediately superplans in coal min-

ing and heavy industry. The mining industry was obliged to raise its production targets, although already suffering from chronic labor shortage. Heavy industry undertook to complete its 1950 plan five or six weeks earlier so as to make it easier for the other branches of industry which depend on heavy industry.

A typical by-product of the new agreement was that Czechoslovakia in 1950 found herself unable to fulfill contracts for the delivery of steel pipes to Holland because her entire capacity was monopolized by commitments to the U.S.S.R. Soviet deliveries of cotton and of hardening materials such as molybdenum were delayed or insufficient, according to reports reaching business circles in Prague, and as a result Czech factories were sometimes idle and exports sometimes defective.

The characteristic thing about the new orientation of Czechoslovakia's trade was that it developed much faster with the U.S.S.R. than it did laterally with the other satellites. Poland, as I explained earlier, was an exception. With her, trade rapidly climbed to six or seven times the pre-war level. With East Germany trade developed rapidly after a small beginning in 1949.

Czechoslovakia's third largest trade partner after the U.S.S.R. and Poland was Yugoslavia, until June 1949, when an "incident" between a group of Czech mechanics and Yugoslav militiamen gave the signal for breaking off commercial relations. The process was completed on October 4, 1949, when Czechoslovakia officially denounced her treaty of friendship with Yugoslavia.

This was an extremely serious development for the Czechs, who depended on Yugoslavia for copper, zinc, lead, iron ore, hemp and foodstuffs which they exchanged for Czech pig iron, coke, automobiles and machinery. They had put off the evil day until the last possible moment, well after the U.S.S.R. and other "People's Democracies" had broken off trade with Tito. On March 2, 1949, long after Tito's expulsion from the Cominform, the Czechs dared to sign an agreement with Yugoslavia maintaining trade at the same level as in 1948, but Soviet disapproval foredoomed the agreement to a short life.

Czechoslovakia's most important partner in the West is Great Britain, with whom she signed a five-year trade agreement on September 28, 1949. The Czechs were to send roughly 11,000,000 pounds sterling worth of goods to Britain. In return the British were to send to Czechoslovakia only 8,000,000 pounds' worth of goods. The difference of 3,000,000 pounds

would be applied to compensation claims for British property nationalized by the Czech government, and to old debts.

In this way the Czechs would in a period of five years pay five million pounds compensation, representing about two thirds of nationalized British property, and ten million pounds representing about half of all Czechoslovakia's other debts to Britain.

Czechoslovak exports to Britain include textiles, glass, ceramics, motorcycles, leather, rubber and paper products, timber, furniture, chocolate, sugar, canned fruit and fruit juice. In return Britain exports to Czechoslovakia many goods which might be classified as of strategic value. They include copper, tin, copra, rubber and wool.

Before the war the United States was second only to Germany as a market and a source of supply for Czechoslovakia. In those years Czechoslovakia bought about sixty million dollars' worth of goods from the United States, and exported to the U.S. about thirty million dollars' worth. Her imports consisted of machinery, cotton, wool, iron and steel goods, hides and leather, pig iron, scrap and alloys and petroleum products, in that order of importance. Her most important exports to the United States were bijouterie of all kinds, beads, textiles and glassware.

After the war, American purchases in Czechoslovakia resumed at about the old level, but Czechoslovakia, short of dollars, had to cut her purchases in America so that in 1948 and 1949 her trade with the United States balanced at around thirty million dollars each way. After that the growing tension between Czechoslovakia and the United States rapidly reduced trade in both directions. Since the Oatis trial in 1951 it has practically come to a standstill.

Czechoslovak trade with other members of the west European group of nations has also been on the decline, sometimes because of Western restrictions on the export of strategic materials to eastern Europe, but just as often because the Czechs were unable to supply what western purchasers wanted. The overriding claims of her trade with Russia, the restrictions on the export of strategic materials from the West and the uncertainty of deliveries of raw materials from the Soviet Union made it difficult for the Czechs to maintain old business connections. Compared with 1950, in 1951 Czechoslovak imports from the U.S. dropped 55 per cent; from Britain, 40 per cent; from France, 50 per cent; and from Holland, 60 per cent.

It is natural for most Westerners to view this as a salutary development, considering the shocking behavior of the Czechoslovak govern-

ment. But the case is not clearcut. It can be argued also that restriction of trade with Czechoslovakia and the other satellites hurts western Europe as much as it hurts the satellites, and drives the latter even more firmly into the arms of the Soviet Union. It would follow from this argument that there is some advantage to the West in keeping the door open, or a foot in the door, for some trade behind the Iron Curtain. Trade of this kind, furthermore, makes it possible to maintain contacts behind the Curtain that would otherwise not be possible.

A practical compromise between these two views has not yet been found. The United States, which stands to lose little, although it may increase its international relief burdens, is inclined to break off economic relations entirely, Britain to preserve them in so far as the materials sent to the satellites are not of direct military value.

The increase in productivity envisaged by Stalin in the passage quoted a little earlier in this chapter could not be attained by organizational measures alone. The workers' whole attitude had to be changed. Measures to that end, which may in a very general sort of way be classified under the heading of "psychological," have been elaborated into a complex system involving the trade unions, direction of labor, "voluntary brigades," differential wages and privileges, campaigns against absenteeism, and finally a variety of "speed-up" devices.

What the Communists are after is a system of incentives to replace those prevailing under the capitalist system. And as a starter they have found it necessary to root out the identification in the people's mind of Communism (or, as the Communists always say, "socialism") with equalitarianism.

Just after the beginning of the five-year plan in 1949, the trade-union journal *Tvorba* published the first of a long series of articles explaining that many people entertained wrong notions about equalitarianism. The notion that "we all have the same stomach" and should for that reason receive the same reward for our labor is "foreign to socialism," the journal said, and it went on to explain that true socialism was served by a new system of eight wage categories then being introduced into industry. The lightest work, and the lowest pay, was in category one, the most skilled and difficult in category eight. The wage differential between each class was 12 per cent, but factory managers retained the right to make adjustments in order to compensate workers for dangerous or unhealthy work. In addition, wherever the piecework system had been introduced, the

worker could increase his earnings by producing more, in short, by becoming a "shock worker." "We would be poor managers," *Tvorba* concluded, "if we did not offer those who give the best performance the best wages. Everywhere reward must be only in accordance with performance. That is a socialist fundamental with which we can overcome capitalism."

Other publications explained then, and have been explaining ever since, that socialism also meant a differentiated supply and distribution system so that the workers, and especially the factory workers, would be better supplied than the rest of the population.

Inequality of distribution is maintained by special rations for workers, on the one hand, and by the existence of the free market on the other. In 1950 and 1951 there has been a tendency to cut down on the special rations so that the workers must try to earn more and buy on the free market if they want extra goods. But factory workers in general and miners still get, not only extra rations for heavy labor, but special allocations of poultry, game and fruit. They often get free tickets for theaters, movies and sporting events. Sometimes they get free working clothes and shoes. And they are entitled to priority in the allocation of housing.

The special privileges are manipulated so as to attract workers to the parts of the economy where they are most needed. Thus, workers in heavy industry are offered priority in building family houses. One third of the expense is borne by the state while the other two thirds are paid off within fifteen years by the house owner.

A special effort has been made to attract men to the mines because at the end of the war, when German labor conscription ended, most of the young men had eagerly escaped from mining. Most of those who remained were over the age of forty. The postwar regime therefore raised the wages of miners 50 to 85 per cent; reduced their weekly working hours from forty-eight to forty-six; granted them paid vacations of twenty-one to thirty-five days yearly, as compared with vacations of fourteen to twenty-eight days accorded others workers; allocated extra money for miners' housing; and enabled them to retire at fifty-five instead of the usual sixty or sixty-five.

In spite of these inducements, however, men continued to drift away from the mines until the Communist regime in 1951 and 1952 invoked its powers of labor conscription. Efforts to recruit miners' apprentices in 1950 ended in total failure. Unbelievable as it may sound, according to official admissions more than half the new apprentices ran away. The law on

"State Manpower Reserves" of December 19, 1951, was required to put the young workers under legal constraint to remain at unpopular work.

Detail work in keeping the workers in line and putting across the regime's labor policy is done by the lower echelons of Communist functionaries, by the works' councils and, above all, by the trade unions.

The functions of the single great national trade union organization, in which membership is theoretically voluntary but actually unavoidable for almost all workers, have, from the point of view of a Westerner, been distorted out of recognition. No longer does the trade union fight the worker's battle with management—instead it represents management (and indirectly the government) and is expected to devote itself to getting more work out of the workers. It is up to the trade union to see to it that wages are not raised unduly, that there is no slacking, and to goad the workers into taking part in programs of "shock work" and "socialist competition." Only in its social services, particularly very extensive recreation and vacation programs, which are available to the workers at little or no cost, does the traditional function of the trade union survive. The trade union's activities are financed by dues and a united workers' fund into which 10 per cent of the profits of national enterprises are paid.

The trade unions are expected to help recruit workers and keep them on the job. Although supported herein by a law regarding mobilization of labor, the Czechoslovaks at first avoided the cruder forms of compulsion practiced in the Soviet Union. The Minister of Labor Evzan Erban reasserted the principle of voluntary recruiting of labor on January 12, 1950; but he was discarded and disappeared from public life in the great purge that followed Slansky's fall in September 1951.

Thousands of men have been transferred from one job to another or have been frozen in their jobs against their will and under pressure from the trade union, the Party or related organizations. In the course of 1951, 77,500 persons employed in white-collar jobs in administrative services of the government or nationalized enterprises were transferred whether they liked it or not to what the Communists call "productive work." Since most of them knew no trade that meant they were assigned to unskilled labor.

If a man is out of work, he is obliged by law to register at the labor exchange. He is not obliged by law to take the job the labor exchange offers him, but he would certainly run into a lot of trouble if he did not. It is illegal for him to live without working; his slender margin of freedom consists of the possibility of finding a job on his own before he reports to the labor exchange. Having found his own job, the man must get it ap-

proved by the local labor office. If later he wishes to quit the job he must also have approval from the labor office, unless he is quitting with the agreement of his employer. If the man changes jobs three or more times a year, his work book will be marked with an "F" for "fluctuator." He must always present his workbook, containing a complete record of his employment when he takes on a new job.

To meet temporary or extraordinary labor requirements in the mines or agriculture, the regime depends on "voluntary brigades." There are, undoubtedly, some young enthusiasts who still volunteer for these brigades, though the percentage was much greater in the first two years of the regime. But as a rule the brigades are recruited under pressure. For instance, just before I left Prague in May 1950, the newspapers carried an item that three employees of the Alcron Hotel, the largest in Prague, had volunteered for work in mines. I asked about this among the employees of my own hotel and was told that they were particularly unpopular and had therefore been selected as "volunteers" at a meeting of their fellow workers. About this time, the newspapers also announced that all employees of the Prague district Civil Court had decided to do six months of voluntary work in industry "in order to get to know the workers." Court employees in half a dozen other towns came to the same decision at about the same time. In the post offices, the proper trade union and Party officials at this time launched the slogan "every administrative postal employee into production for six months." In Pilsen and some other towns, local arrangements were made requiring secondary-school students to do six months' manual labor before they could accept any white-collar job.

During 1949 and 1950, between fifteen and twenty thousand persons were employed on long-term brigades of three or more months, and more than 180,000 persons did "voluntary" work bringing in the harvest in those years.

Because of the intense pressure to increase productivity, and the temptation to supplement meager rations with kitchen gardens or by scrounging in the countryside, factory workers and miners often do not turn up at their jobs. In the mines at Ostrava, absenteeism often runs as high as 30 per cent, and in other lines of work to 20 per cent. Theoretically, absenteeism could be punished as a violation of the law for the fulfillment of the five-year plan, but that was a last resort. The Communists began by deducting one day from the paid annual leave to which workers are entitled for every day of absence and in 1950 raised the penalty to two

days. In 1951 prosecutions began and scores of miners were sent to forced-labor camps for absenteeism.

So many workers reported sick during the summer of 1950 (when they wanted to work in their gardens) that some factory managements and trade unions together organized committees to visit the "sick" in their homes and check up on their health.

The basis for the speed-up systems introduced by the Communists is piecework. This has been introduced into about 80 per cent of all industrial work and even into some forms of office work.

On the basis of piecework, it is fairly simple to set norms of production — so many pieces per hour. Norms were established in each enterprise by commissions composed of foremen, technicians, "shock workers," timekeepers and trade-union representatives. Their recommendations were usually followed in "collective contracts," signed between the factory management and the local trade-union branch, laying down the amount of work that would be turned out in a given time with given materials and for a given wage. Any resemblance between this arrangement and a labor-management contract reached by collective bargaining was, however, entirely misleading. There was no real bargaining since all parties involved were equally controlled by the state. In mid-1951 even this form was abandoned and norms are now imposed by executive order.

"Shock workers" must make a pledge in writing to maintain their higher performances for a given length of time and may then be issued a book entitling them to special rations. They might, for instance, be able to buy an extra kilogram of butter and half a kilogram of sugar per month.

"Shock workers" are likely to get a lot of publicity which is supposed to inspire others. One well-advertised "shock worker" was a woman weaver named Anna Vackova, who, in July 1949, added twenty-four spindles to the thirty-six she was already tending. She said she had done this because she had been inspired by the Ninth Communist Party Congress. Then Anna Vackova heard that another woman was tending sixty-six spindles and she promptly raised her own quota to seventy-two. "This," said *Rude Pravo,* "is a true type of shock worker. . . . She was perfectly fresh when she finished her shift and declared that she would visit those who claimed that it could not be done and would show them."

Also much publicized at the time for her "shock-working" exploits was a cow named Bystricka on the state farm of Dolni Sucha who produced

36 liters of milk daily and later increased to 45 liters. The newspapers said that her udder had a circumference of one meter sixty-five centimeters.

As fast as the "shock workers" show what can be done in the way of increasing production, the other workers are supposed to copy their methods and do likewise. Norms are revised accordingly from time to time. Needless to say, both this process and the "shock workers" themselves are unpopular, and efforts to cheat in the calculation of output and wages reach massive proportions. The workers protect one another and lie in each other's defense. This practice was denounced by *Rude Pravo* in the summer of 1950 as "false solidarity." It said the proper attitude of workers was illustrated by the miner in the Zapotocky mine who put up a notice on the bulletin board reading as follows: "I demand that section 4 be closely watched as it is not working as it should. They must take more care to fill the carts fully." The newspaper commended the Columbus mine for its initiative in putting up a notice on its bulletin board as follows: "While the whole people were working with the greatest exertion for the fulfillment of the five-year plan, these comrades slept." A dozen names followed.

Much as the regime desires increased productivity, it is not always happy about paying the extra amounts earned by "shock workers." It has therefore become a socialist virtue to renounce the advantages they have won. Thus *Rude Pravo*, on January 13, 1949, reported on an exemplary group of young workers in a Brno factory who had succeeded in reducing the time for making a diesel injection system from 300 minutes to 243 and thereupon asked to have their rate of pay cut from 78 to 63 crowns. Other young workers in the same factory reportedly asked to have their rate of pay for piecework cut from 24 to 18 crowns, and finally to 16 crowns per piece "because their improved productivity enabled them to earn as much as before." Similarly, following a speech by Premier Zapotocky in 1950, in which he said that it was improper for "shock workers" to receive special rations at low prices, thousands of "shock workers" "voluntarily" turned in their booklets, and declared (according to the Communist newspapers) that they could earn enough to buy all they needed on the free market.

Another method of extracting extra work is the socialist competition. This may be between individual workers, between shifts in the same factory, or between factories. (The winners are likely to be rewarded with a large-sized picture of President Gottwald, or the collected works of Lenin.)

More profitable to some of the workers has been the effort to encourage "improvers and inventors." In 1949, 109,152 suggestions for improvements in industry were made, and of these 55 per cent were accepted. According to official figures, the improvements resulted in saving nearly three billion crowns. Rewards totaling 56,609,293 crowns were paid to the "improvers."

From time to time exhibitions of improvements or inventions are held and selected "improvers" publicized. On May 22, 1950, for instance, President Gottwald sent a public letter of appreciation to Frantisek Hamr and Frantisek Valasek who had constructed a new machine simplifying the making of gears.

On the occasion of great events such as the Party Congress or Stalin's birthday, workers are encouraged to make special pledges to produce more or to save materials. Before the Ninth Party Congress in May 1949, workers made pledges of "gifts for the Republic" totaling more than a hundred million dollars in value. A typical gift was that of the workers of the Celakovice rolling mills, who promised between February and Congress time to save more than one-and-a-half million crowns by more economical use of raw materials and by raising their general productivity by 15 per cent.

A group of East Bohemian coal miners promised on this occasion to reopen an old mine which "the capitalists" had said contained no more coal. The women of the village Hlucin near Ostrava promised to fatten 622 pigs. The employees of the Ministry of Finance promised to catch up on all back work and collect a hundred-and-forty-six wagonloads of waste paper.

Not all pledges concern production, however. On the occasion of the Party Congress, a writer named K. J. Benes announced that he had written "an extensive social political novel" and a story for the movies as his "gift for the Republic." Third-grade pupils in a Prague school promised to give up the purchase of marbles and ice cream and to form a "shock brigade of cleanliness" which would punish every pupil who came to school unwashed or uncombed.

Until November 1950, the regime scored some economic successes although it labored under great difficulties.

By comparison with conditions in 1948,. when the economy hit rock bottom, the standard of living rose slowly but steadily during this period. On October 1, 1949, bread and flour were taken off ration. Bread continued

to be sold at the old, low-rationed price and flour at a slightly higher one. Potatoes came off the ration too. It was quite a triumph for the regime. From then on, prices on the free market were cut fifteen times, six times including the most important items, until at the time of the last cut on October 27, 1950, prices were about one half what they had been at the beginning of 1949. Even so, the free market was far from cheap. Butter still sold at 330 crowns ($6.60) per kilo, lard at 280 crowns ($5.60), sugar at 140 crowns ($2.80), bacon at 300 crowns ($6.00) and pork at 150 crowns ($3.00). A man's shoes still cost 1028 to 1556 crowns ($20.00 to $30.00).

During this period, the clothing ration was increased and its price reduced. After January 1, 1950, professional men and the remaining private entrepreneurs and peasants with more than 15 hectares, who had been excluded from the clothing ration in 1949 and were obliged to clothe themselves at free-market prices, were granted a clothing ration along with the rest of the population. The Communist-controlled National Committees, it should be noted, however, retained the right to withhold these rations for political reasons.

The grant of a clothing ration was, of course, a very small sop indeed to the 20 per cent of the population who continued to be ground down by discriminatory legislation and by confiscation of their property. Some of the rise in the standard of the other 80 per cent could undoubtedly be attributed to the losses sustained by the former middle classes, the "remnants of capitalism."

The trend towards shifting more and more goods from the ration to the free market was not an unmixed blessing for the workers because most of the goods they had to buy on the free market still cost 25 to 400 per cent more than they had cost on ration.

Since it was officially estimated in 1950 that the average worker earned 18.92 crowns per hour (38¢) which would amount to about $75 a month, obviously most workmen had to be content with what they could get on the ration, which was much cheaper, but insufficient for their hearty tastes. The ration included 240 grams of lard, 280 grams of butter and 200 grams of margarine per month.

At the end of 1950, President Gottwald claimed substantial improvement in the standard of living by citing the following figures for annual consumption per head, as compared with pre-war figures. In Poland consumption of butter had risen from 3 kilograms to 4.85; margarine from 3.30 kilograms to 4.10; lard from 4.40 kilograms to 4.50; sugar from 20

kilograms to 27. He said that, in 1950, 12,700 bicycles, 240,000 radio sets and 33,600 sewing machines had been sold.

Until very near the end of 1950, the Communists undoubtedly had reason to believe that they might achieve the goals for food consumption set by the five-year plan. The intention was to increase consumption of eggs and milk in the town, and of meat in the country. Special attention was to be given to increasing the production of butter and the supply of fruit and vegetables. Altogether, the calory intake of the Czechoslovak people was supposed to rise by 25 per cent between 1949 and 1953. It was estimated that in 1953, the intake of adults should vary between 2460 and 2865, that of pregnant women would be around 3200 and that of heavy laborers 4400 per day.

Throughout 1949 and 1950, the average wage rose slowly, albeit much faster than the regime wanted. Up to a certain point, the government's policy was to bring about a leveling of wages and, by the end of 1950, the number of wage earners in the lowest and in the highest income groups had been considerably reduced. The government did not, however, allow the leveling process to affect high earnings of "shock workers." In the textile industry, for instance, an average worker in 1950 earned 16 crowns an hour, while "shock workers" earned as much as 28.

Between 1946 and the end of 1950, there was a nominal increase of 73 per cent in the wages of workers and of 56 per cent in the wages of white-collar employees. But calculations of what happened to the standards of living based on wages alone would be most misleading. This is partly because the official rate of exchange of fifty crowns to one dollar, at which the value of wages in dollars is calculated, is unrealistic; in 1950, 350 to 400 crowns could be bought for one dollar on the black market of any central European capital. Also it was because prices in Czechoslovakia were tightly controlled and many rationed items remained astonishingly cheap, in terms of crowns. But most of all, it was because the Czechoslovak worker received, in addition to his ordinary wages, a variety of other payments called his "social wage." In 1950, the Czechoslovak government calculated that the "social wage" amounted to 31.86 per cent of an income of 34,776 crowns per annum earned by a worker with one child. The breakdown is shown on page 382.

I will take up the more important items in this table one by one. First, on an average, Czechoslovak workers until recently got three-and-a-half-weeks' paid vacation annually. This, said the Czechs, was the longest in the world. In 1949, 200,000 workers, and in 1950, 250,000 workers spent

	Crowns	Per Cent of Income
Paid vacations	2,093	6.01
Paid holidays	1,035	2.97
Compensation for lost wages	345	0.98
Army recruits allowance	15	0.04
Christmas bonus	1,350	3.87
Allowance for child	1,800	5.17
Allowance for canteen meals	1,200	3.44
Recreation allowance	91	0.26
Special issue for workers (rationed goods)	391	1.12
The employer's contribution to national insurance	4,064	8.00
Total	12,384	31.86

their vacations at little or no cost to themselves at resorts in the mountains or at watering places run by the trade unions. It became almost impossible for persons not connected with the trade union to make a reservation at a good skiing resort or spa. Children, at the same time, were taken in ever-growing numbers, to spend their holidays at children's camps.

However inconvenient this might be to the occasional foreigner or the "remnants of capitalism," it was a program that went over in a big way with the workers.

Second, family allowances, varying with the number of children in the family, became an important element in many budgets. A man with three children who earned 5500 crowns monthly got 600 crowns for each of his children. Furthermore, he paid only 118 crowns on taxes whereas a bachelor with the same salary would pay 533 crowns.

Third, meals in factory canteens provided the worker with extra meat and fats, in addition to his ration, at minimum prices. For seven crowns, he was likely to get as much soup as he liked, a little meat, as much knedleky (Czech dumplings) as he wanted, potatoes and perhaps cabbage or some other vegetable, coffee substitute, a bun and cheese.

Fourth, national insurance, which includes every form of what is called social insurance in the United States, was developed beyond anything to be found in other countries, including Britain, Sweden and New Zealand.

Building on the foundation of Czechoslovakia's excellent pre-war insurance system, the Communists brought the entire population under their new scheme, in addition to wage earners. Benefits were paid not only for old age and sickness, disability, and the like, but for special reasons such as maternity. A new pension was established for widows.

In estimating standards of living, it must therefore be taken into consideration that the Czechoslovak worker has been relieved, by the national insurance scheme, of almost all the economic risks that beset mankind elsewhere. That is, he has obtained a maximum economic security. To this may be added the psychological elements of satisfaction which some workers derived, at least during the first year or so of the regime, from the idea that they had thrown off their old capitalist bosses and were now the ruling class.

Until November 1950, the Communists felt that on the whole they were licking their production problems. The Minister of Industry, Kliment, in a speech on April 5, 1950, went into details about the kind of successes that were being attained:

First, after a recent "shock-workers' week," smelting time for a given operation had been reduced from ten hours and twenty-two minutes to eight hours and forty-nine minutes.

Second, at the Svit Works at Gottwaldov "striking successes" had resulted from the introduction of a more perfect system of socialist administration and a weekly control of planned targets.

Third, in one automobile factory, the time needed for producing an automobile had been cut from 450 hours to 285, and of a motorcycle from 128 to 64.

Fourth, in the pharmacological industry, 4000 kinds of products had been reduced to 800 "because many sorts of medicine are nearly the same."

Fifth, the Centropen Company, producing iridium points for fountain pens, was turning out ten thousand pieces monthly, or ten times as many as in 1948, although it had increased its manpower by only 50 per cent.

The regime claimed that almost all production targets were reached during 1949 and 1950. Industrial production, in general, the Communists claimed, was 15.3 per cent higher in 1950 than in 1949 in the country at large, and 25 per cent higher in Slovakia. Heavy industry, they said, produced 19 per cent more in 1950 than it did in the previous year. These figures were probably near the truth, for it was only in the last few months

of 1950 that the Communists began to "cook the books." Long before that, however, they had specialized in misleading statistics. For instance, in the March–April 1950 issue of the planning journal, Ludvik Frejka of the State Planning Office wrote that in 1949, hard coal production was 126.7 per cent of the average production in the years 1929–1938. A checkup of production in those years showed that it averaged 13.16 million tons. Assuming the 26.7 per cent increase reported by Frejka, this would mean that in 1949 coal production was 16.67 million tons, or *less* than production in the last normal pre-war year, 1937, which was 16.78 million tons.

Despite some economic gains, there were signs of trouble on the horizon. The shortages of raw materials which I have mentioned were keeping part of the labor force idle. Foreign observers estimated this hidden unemployment at 150,000 in 1949 and somewhat less in 1950. In November 1950, the government prohibited the use of nonferrous metals except when required for reasons of health or security, and a complete inventory of all stocks of raw materials was carried out as of December 31, 1950. Finally, on February 18 the Central Supply Bureau of the Ministry of Heavy Industry assumed control of all supplies of cobalt, niobium, tantalite, molybdenum, wolfram, nickel, vanadium, titanium, zirconium, ferrochrome, and ferrosilicon. Lack of these hardening alloys and specialized raw materials combined with the inefficiencies of a nationalized and bureaucrat-ridden economy to undermine the quality of exports. For instance, I was told by a Dutch buyer that although the Czechs had formerly made the best diesels in Europe his firm found it necessary to change the ball bearings of all Czech diesels, because those with which they were now being delivered would ruin the engines within a few months. The same Dutchman told about a small factory which produced a material used by dentists for taking impressions of teeth. One delivery of this material to a Danish client had been returned because the material crumbled. The factory called in an expert who found that an important ingredient had been omitted. Another shipment was sent out to Denmark but soon came back for the same reason. The expert was called in again and established that the vital ingredient had still been omitted. The instructions for correcting the production formula had, it seemed, simply got lost in a morass of red tape. "Could this have happened in a privately owned factory?" my informant asked. It was his view that Czech exports were suffering less from Western discrimination than from inability to compete on the Western markets.

An Italian buyer in quest of textile machinery left Prague in disgust

because, he said, "They told me they could make what I was after but it wasn't provided in their plan, and so they wouldn't."

Much propaganda was created about a raw-materials saving system developed by a Soviet *stakhanovite* named Lydia Karabelnikova. Workers were supposed to put aside unused raw materials so that one day a week or a month they could work solely with the materials they had saved.

On the internal market there was plenty of disorganization too. *Rude Pravo* complained that so many sieves were being delivered to hardware stores in 1950 that every family in the country would have to buy one weekly for a year to get rid of them. But the manufacturers declined to stop making sieves on the ground that they were prescribed in the plan for the year, which they were determined to fulfill. Meanwhile pots and pans and electric light bulbs remained critically scarce. The bad quality of razor blades became the butt of comedians' humor.

A block of new flats at Letov, near Prague, was splendidly equipped with washing machines; but they could not be used because waterproof switches had not been provided.

Pravda of Bratislava summed up the kind of difficulties that many branches of production and distribution were meeting by this report on the problems being met in the construction of a gigantic new steel plant at Turciansky Svaty Martin, south of Zilina in northern Slovakia:

> Twice as many technicians are needed as are available. There is a shortage of machine spare parts; a cement mixer has been idle for a month because of a shortage of ball bearings. Nails and electrical equipment are lacking. The shortage of building timber is acute. The planning of buildings reveals big mistakes. The plans did not arrive on time, or were changed when the buildings were already finished. . . . Some comrades must be blamed for lack of care which caused great losses of supplies by theft and fire.

The difficulties added up to this: Production costs of all kinds were soaring; during 1950, for example, according to government figures, wages rose 17.5 per cent, but productivity rose only 7 per cent. In order to fulfill production targets, too many marginal factories and mines had been put into production; too much inefficient labor had been employed.

The one-year trade agreement the Soviets imposed on February 24, 1950, caused additional severe strain. The economic plans for the year had to be revised with "superplans." For the most part these consisted of restricting other parts of the economy so as to leave more resources for heavy

industry. The original five-year plan had, for instance, called for an 8 per cent annual increase in the output of leather and rubber goods intended for internal consumption and trade with the West. During the first half of 1950 this branch of industry, however, increased only 4 per cent. Nonetheless, the revised plan for 1950 provided that the entire year's output should be 5 per cent less than in 1949. (The director of this branch of industry was later dismissed because output of leather and rubber goods declined only 1 per cent.)

Heavy industry, meanwhile, was asked to raise output by 17 per cent for the year, and it was to do this not by increasing the amount of labor, machines and raw materials but by discovering "unused reserves." This sounded like a call for making "bricks without straw"; yet Czechoslovak ingenuity might have met the challenge had it not been for the imposition of even greater burdens in a new five-year trade agreement for the period from 1951 to 1955, announced on November 3, 1950.

The new five-year trade agreement involved an annual exchange of goods 50 per cent higher than between 1948 and 1950. Deliveries of Soviet iron ore would be increased two and one half times; copper, four times; aluminum, three times; while lead, zinc, nickel, tin, pig iron and non-ferrous metals would also be imported in larger quantities. Total Soviet deliveries would amount to 20 million tons, as compared with 3 million in 1950. Czechoslovak deliveries of industrial goods would rise commensurately.

In announcements of the agreement, it was also mentioned that new branches of industry would be established in Czechoslovakia with the help of Soviet experts — an ominous note indeed since Czechoslovakia had, until then, alone among the satellites, been spared the attentions of Soviet experts.

CHAPTER 29 Disintegration and Expansion

NOVEMBER 1950 was a major turning point in the development of the economy of Communist Czechoslovakia. Announcement of the onerous new trade treaty with the Soviet Union coincided with a buyers' panic, apparently precipitated by rumors that the Polish currency reform would be followed by a similar one in Czechoslovakia. A spontaneous "slowdown strike" in the mines was beginning to spread to the factories. The workers were resisting official attempts to "harden the norms" and close the gap between the rise in wages and the slower rise in productivity.

Then, on January 21, the government announced a measure, in itself minor, but of major significance as an indication of what was happening to the Czechoslovak economy. It announced a rise in the prices of both bread and flour. Considering the political importance that politicians all over the world attach to the price of bread, it may be imagined with what reluctance the Communist government made this decision. The price of flour had been raised once already, on October 1, 1949, when flour and bread were taken off ration; but the price of bread had, at that time, not been changed. The progression in flour and bread prices may be seen in the following table:

	CROWNS PER KILOGRAM	
	Old	New
Wheat flour (first quality)	7.00–13.00	21
Wheat flour (second quality)	6.00–7.50	12
Rye bread flour	5.80–7.50	12
Bread, ordinary coarse loaf	5.00–5.00	8

The government explained that the increase had become necessary because the quality of flour had been improved, and because so many peasants and others were using the cheap and plentiful bread to feed animals. It also blamed hoarders. A hoarder was defined as anyone who accumu-

lated more than four kilograms of flour, three kilograms of fat or five kilograms of sugar, and the government announced that it would introduce legislation under which hoarders could be sentenced to twenty-five years in prison.

But this explanation was not believed by very many people. Why, it was asked, had there been no trouble about peasants feeding bread to their animals in 1950, and why should hoarders have suddenly become so active? Another explanation, originally based on confidential information reaching diplomatic missions, rapidly gained currency. This was that Czechoslovakia had fallen behind in deliveries of machinery and precision instruments to the Soviet Union and that the Soviet Union had in reprisal embargoed deliveries of grain to Czechoslovakia. In one case, reported by the *New York Times* correspondent in Vienna, John MacCormac, a shipment was called back after it had actually passed a frontier station. According to his information, the Soviets had been angered by Czechoslovakia's decision to fulfill 1950 commitments for industrial deliveries to Western countries, in order to obtain raw materials, while at the same time postponing deliveries to the Soviet Union until 1951.

This explanation gained further credence on March 1, when bread and flour rationing were reintroduced. The weekly ration was set at the same level it had been before October 1, 1949: one and one half kilogram of ordinary bread, one half kilogram of white bread in the form of rolls, buns or pastry, and one kilogram of flour. Although this was quite adequate in point of quantity, the psychological effect was even more devastating than the rising prices in January. Press and radio, and the members of the government, were hard pressed to explain to the public that whereas it had been a wonderful thing on October 1, 1949, to end bread and flour rationing, it was now a very fine thing to put them back on ration at higher prices.

Led by President Gottwald, the government redoubled its earlier charges that the fault lay with the "village rich" and even the poorer peasants who had fed the cheap and plentiful bread to their animals. Denying reports that the Soviet Union had held up grain deliveries as "an impudent lie," Gottwald explained that the Soviet Union had promised to supply to Czechoslovakia 600,000 tons of wheat before the 1951 harvest, and that part had already been delivered; 308,000 tons of barley and corn would be delivered during the same period, so that total deliveries from the U.S.S.R. would "exceed the quantities which she delivered to us in 1947–1948 when Czechoslovakia was threatened with famine."

Meanwhile the regime's planners had been working out a complete revision of the five-year plan. The revision did not mean that Czechoslovakia's economic leaders were yearning for new fields to conquer. It had become necessary mainly to enable heavy industry to meet the Soviet requirements laid down in the new five-year trade agreement. In addition, the revision coincided with similar moves in the other satellite states intended to co-ordinate their economic development with the second Soviet postwar five-year plan which began in 1951.

As announced by Minister Jaromir Dolansky of the State Planning Office at the annual meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party on February 22, 1951, the new plan called for attainment of the goals of the original five-year plan in three and a half years on the average. Investments which had amounted to 157 billion crowns in 1949–1950 would rise to 558 billion crowns in 1951–1953. By the end of 1953, the percentage of national income devoted to investment would have been increased from 23.4 to 29.6 per cent.

With this investment over-all industrial production would rise 98 per cent over that of 1948, instead of 57 per cent as envisaged in the original plan. Heavy industry would rise 130 per cent instead of 70 per cent. Special attention would be given to heavy engineering. Output of machine tools would rise three times above peak pre-war production and the output of automobiles to four times that of pre-war. In production of ball bearings, Czechoslovakia would become self-sufficient, "thus defeating the attempts of the West to slow down Czechoslovakia's development."

The largest increases were scheduled for Slovakia where industrial production would increase by 168 per cent, or twice as much as the 83 per cent originally planned. Heavy industrial production, originally supposed to be doubled by 1953, would be quadrupled. In general, industrial development in Slovakia would be 72 per cent faster than the average for the whole country. Whereas in 1937 the ratio of industrial to agricultural workers had been 1:12 and in 1950, 1:43, in 1953 it would be far greater.

To achieve this extraordinary program it was calculated that the labor force in the whole of Czechoslovakia must increase by 780,000 by 1953, instead of by 426,000 as originally scheduled. Of the new workers, 350,000 would go into heavy industry. And 77,500 new industrial workers would be obtained by shifting manpower from the civil service and other administrative work.

Dolansky explained that the entire program depended on a "vast development" of domestic resources of raw materials. Heavy industry, in par-

ticular, would benefit therefrom. By the end of 1953, most heavy industrial exports would go to the Soviet Union, and the Soviet Union would supply most of Czechoslovakia's needs in imported raw materials for the light and consumers' goods industries.

The coal-production target had therefore been raised by 20 per cent, that is, to an annual production of 54 million tons. Even more dramatically, the target for mining ore had been raised 2.7 times, that is, to nearly 4 million tons annually. Mining of nonferrous metals would be doubled, thereby completely compensating for Western discrimination and the rupture of trade with Yugoslavia.

Apart from seeking to obtain its objectives by unprecedented exploitation of domestic raw materials, the revised plan sought to do so by construction of gigantic new industries, iron and steel plants and power plants. These soon became a main source of the country's economic difficulties.

The Communists claim that foreign capitalists, who were in predominant control of Czechoslovak mining before the war, neglected prospecting for new resources and did not attempt to use improved mining and refining processes, which would have made it possible to exploit low-grade deposits. The possibilities of expansion are great. The Ostrava-Karvina bituminous coal field represents about one tenth of the whole Upper Silesian coal basin, of which it is the southern extremity. The main lignite basin, located in the Most area on the northwestern side of Bohemia, is believed to have a reserve of 5,000,000,000 tons. In addition, there is another large basin between Karlovy Vary and Cheb. These resources make Czechoslovakia one of Europe's biggest lignite producers, contributing 16 per cent of the world's supply.

Expansion plans also call for a much larger output of synthetic gasoline at the Stalin Works at Most, where it is produced by hydrogenation of lignite.

Iron ore with an iron content of 35 per cent was rejected as too poor to be used by capitalistic entrepreneurs, the Communists allege, but is now being exploited by methods that even aroused the admiration of American experts. Communist mining organizations have resumed production in six disused iron ore mines, are expanding sixteen mines and planning to construct seventeen new ore processing plants by 1955. This program will make Czechoslovakia one of the biggest producers of iron ore in Europe.

The Communists claim also to be exploiting new sources of mercury, tungsten, antimony and copper ore. Most important are the mines at Jachymov on the Czech-German border, where the traditional mining of silver and cobalt — nickel — bismuth ores have given way since the war to the mining of uranium. Technically the property of the Jachymov Ore Mines National Corporation, the uranium mines are actually under the exclusive control of the Soviet Union. Little is known about operations at Jachymov except that they have been progressively and intensively expanded with a large use of forced labor.

Drilling for oil is also being pushed by the regime. There were about 1000 bore holes, mostly in the region of Gbely and Hodonin near the Slovak-Moravian border, when the Communists took over. They are now exploring new fields between Gbely and Bratislava. Communist experts believe the country can make itself self-sufficient in oil.

So far as resources go, Czechoslovakia is a rich little country. Expansion is limited less by nature than by man. The Communists have been frustrated by the reluctance of the United States and most other Western countries to sell them drilling and loading machinery, but their most significant difficulty has been the resistance of the miners to intensification of their work. In late 1950, there was a drop in performance — immediately following the intensive drive leading up to Miners' Day on September 12 — which was so marked that it can only be described as a spontaneous slowdown strike. Since then, there has been little recovery. A similar slowdown strike followed the speed-up for Miners' Day in 1951. The miners have responded neither to blandishments nor to threats. The indispensability of their work gives them a feeling of security.

The giant projects, many of which had been started in 1949, began to make themselves felt uncomfortably in 1951, as they swallowed up ever-growing quantities of cement, timber and steel, far beyond anything the Czechoslovaks had experienced in the past. The Czechoslovaks were coming to grips with overinvestment. To keep all the projects moving, they had to give them absolute priority in industry and transportation, and in the allocation of labor and raw materials. As a result, other branches of the economy were plagued with delays and confusion. But even this did not suffice. While strangling the economy and sapping the five-year plan, the giant projects themselves could not be kept up to construction targets.

The whole program seemed too big for the Czechoslovak economy to digest, more suited to Soviet Russia with its vast resources of manpower and material than to the tightly meshed, delicately balanced economy of

Czechoslovakia, with its labor shortage and its dependence on imported raw materials.

The most publicized and probably the largest project was for the construction of iron and steel plants near Moravska Ostrava. The first steel was poured in the new plants there on February 29, 1952; but the whole project is not due to be finished until 1963. How much more iron and steel will come out of these plants has not been disclosed, but there is a suggestion in the published stories that two new cities with a population of 150,000 and 50,000 (and, in the best Soviet tradition, with streets seventy-five meters wide) are to be built, while the old city of Moravska Ostrava is to increase its population by 200,000.

All through 1951, the newspapers published urgent appeals for volunteer workers for Ostrava and other big construction projects, and accounts of the heroic exploits of "shock workers" and workers' brigades already on the spot. In August, 3500 members of the Czech Youth Movement put in a month's brigade work at Ostrava and the government launched a campaign with the slogan "One thousand builders for Ostrava." Thus, the Bratislava division of the Czechoslovak Construction Enterprises sent off two brigades at the beginning of August, reportedly made up of its best workers who had "volunteered" for two months' work at Ostrava. One thousand schoolteachers devoted the better part of their summer vacations to brigade work, and the workers of Ostrava "spontaneously" offered to give one million hours of voluntary work to the construction of the new steel plants.

To popularize work at Ostrava, the newspapers published "human-interest" stories such as the one about a cement-mixing crew composed of former butchers who, despite their unfamiliarity with the work, surpassed the norm by 48 per cent and made a "socialist pledge" to raise this to 60 per cent.

As large or larger was the Foundry Combine — Hutny Kombinat — construction of which began near Kosice in eastern Slovakia in the autumn of 1951. According to the Czechoslovak press this foundry, usually referred to as HUKO, will produce one million tons of steel annually, when completed in 1955.

Another project called for construction of a complex of iron and steel plants south of Zilina, in northern Slovakia. They are to be finished in 1953, and involve construction of a new town for the workers (but the streets will be only fifty meters wide). In all other industrial centers of the country new plants are going up. Plans are being drawn for a hydro-

electric plant on the Danube modeled on the Dnieprostroy, which would produce more electricity in Slovakia than formerly in the whole of Czechoslovakia.

Plans for capital investment in 1952, in which the giant projects played a dominant role, exceeded the 1951 figure by more than 28 per cent. One of the results thereof, the Czechoslovak press reported, would be that Czechoslovak pig iron production would soon exceed that of Austria, Italy or Sweden. By 1955, it was claimed, Czechoslovakia would be the sixth largest steel producer in the world.

It should be noted that the construction of great new iron and steel plants is not peculiar to Czechoslovakia. Hungary is putting up a big one at Dunapentele; East Germany has one called Huettenkombinat Ost, near Fuerstenberg-on-the-Oder; and Poland one near Cracow, which Polish propagandists say will be the biggest in Europe.

After the last war the Soviet Union extended its broad-gauge railroad system up to the present Polish, Czechoslovak and Hungarian frontiers. New transshipping stations were built: at Cierna and Tisou in Czechoslovakia; at Przemysl in Poland; and at Zahony in Hungary. These facilities were, however, insufficient for the enormous expansion of trade between the satellites and the Soviet Union, and in particular, for the movement of Russian iron ore to the vast new iron and steel plants.

To supplement the railway line that crosses the Carpathians by the Uzhok pass and runs to Uzhorod and Csop, and to link the HUKO iron and steel plants with the Soviet Union, another mountain crossing into eastern Slovakia was needed. Such railway lines exist but pass through Polish territory. Hence, it is believed, in the Polish sector a broad-gauge line is being laid from Lvov to eastern Slovakia through the Lupkow pass. This international situation would explain the name given the new railroad which is variously referred to as the "Alliance Line" and the "Friendship Line."

Traffic between Poland and the Soviet Union is being expanded by construction of an additional track from the U.S.S.R. to Lvov. Hungary is building new transshipping stations at Vasarosnameny and Hidasnemeti.

In addition Czech and Polish planners have revived the pre-war plan for a Danube-Vistula-Oder canal. Within the framework of the Czechoslovak-Polish investment and trade agreement of July 1947, the two countries will dredge and straighten the upper Vistula and the upper Morava. Work has begun between Kozle on the Oder in Poland and Moravska Ostrava in Czechoslovakia and a canal will be built from Moravska Os-

trava to the Morava river which will be made navigable to its confluence with the Danube just above Bratislava. The whole project, it is estimated, will cost 650 million dollars. When it is finished, iron ore barges can be moved from Russia through the Black Sea, up the Danube and to the doorsteps of steel plants in Hungary and also in Czechoslovakia, Poland and East Germany.

The development of communications is the most tangible expression of the progressive integration of Czechoslovakia and the other satellites into the Soviet Union's orbit, economically and, let us note in passing, also militarily. The Soviet Union is building a transportation system over which she could, in time of war, quickly mass her armies east of the Carpathians. For such Soviet armies, the new and vastly expanded heavy industries of Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary and East Germany would serve as arsenals.

Integration with the Soviet Union involves exploitation of marginal sources of raw materials, forced expansion of industry, employment of various forms of more or less forced labor, and, as result, rising cost of production. A succession of remarkably frank statements by Communist leaders in 1951 testified to this situation. In many cases the official complaints reflected inflationary pressures and deliberate resistance by the workers.

The president of the Czechoslovak Trade Union, Frantisek Zupka (who had replaced Zapotocky in 1950) admitted on March 6, that the quantity of coal then being extracted per miner per day was less than it had been before the war in spite of the improvement in working conditions, mechanization, socialist incentives and "shock-worker" movements. This was a sensational admission in view of the propaganda on rising production heard throughout 1950 and 1951.

Premier Zapotocky on this occasion complained that the miners had still not understood the need for extra work. He told about a delegation of miners who traveled to Prague and managed to present to President Gottwald personally their protest against working on Saturday afternoons. "It was hard to explain to them," Zapotocky said, "that that which was a revolutionary and bolshevik claim on the part of labor in the capitalistic era today has become a counterrevolutionary act, indeed a sabotage of the construction of socialism."

In another speech on April 13, Zapotocky added that he had found in the mines lack of zeal, ill-will and laziness, and he threatened: "I will not

hesitate to send to labor camps all those who protect slackers in factories and mines."

Raising his sights to the economy in general, Zapotocky discerned three main defects. They were: insufficient use of productive capacity; excessive bureaucracy; and the disproportion between the rise in wages and the rise in productivity. The most serious defect lay in the domain of wages. "We have shaped our policy according to theories, issuing decrees and rules," he declared, "and we have wound up with chaos, even anarchy." As a result, he said, many factories were running at a loss.

As an illustration of this point, he reported that the starch industry had raised wages by a total of 46 per cent since 1949, but had increased output by only 5 per cent. He told about a plumber in Bratislava who did 224 hours of work on a certain job, including 41 hours of overtime, and was paid 60,939 crowns. "Cabinet ministers earn only about one third of what that plumber got," Zapotocky declared with indignation.

From time to time all through the first half of the year, radio appeals were made to consumers not to rush the shops for "delayed rations" since impatience merely caused disorganization in the food market. One could say that the buying public was in a permanent state of panic.

Beginning in the month of June, a series of regional conferences of the Communist Party were called to deal with the pressing economic problems. The keynote of these meetings was set in a speech by the Deputy-Secretary General of the Party, Josef Frank. Frank disclosed that production of coal and oil had reached only 84.5 per cent of the planned targets in the first five months of the year. In the month of May, output in the principal coal field, Ostrava, had been 85.2 per cent of the planned target; at Kladno it had been 97.7 per cent and at Pilsen 87.3. In the last four months of 1950, 1406 apprentices had abandoned their places in homes for mine apprentices and in the first three months of 1951, 1550 others had done the same. He said that the coal industry needed 16,000 more workers, the building industry 15,000. Heavy industry generally was lacking 38,000 workers. At the present rate of progress, he warned, the targets of the five-year plan could not be fulfilled.

The situation in agriculture, he said, was critical. The livestock population had sharply decreased in the first quarter of the year and the meat supply had become extremely unsatisfactory as a result of a "simply incredible" shortage of fodder. The supply of milk and eggs to the cities was deficient. In May, for instance, the milk supply had been only 81 per cent of the planned figure.

For all these deficiencies, Frank blamed Communist Party functionaries and state officials. This was the line for the purge that was already drawing wider and wider circles.

The meetings of the regional committees of the Communist Party were climaxed on June 26, 27 by a special meeting of the Central Committee of the Party which sought solutions to the country's problems by establishing a new relationship between management and labor and by raising prices.

Sweeping aside the last pretenses of consulting, let alone bargaining, with labor, the Central Committee authorized the managements of national enterprises to fix wages by executive order.

The Central Committee announced that there would be a reduction in the meat ration and a general increase in the prices of free market food and manufactured goods. Somehow word must have got around that this decision was impending because, for a week before the meeting of the Committee, buyers swarmed into shops of all kinds, buying up everything that was not rationed. This was Czechoslovakia's second buyers' panic in seven months.

Explaining the new price scales to the public taxed the ingenuity of the Communist propagandists. Repeating the kind of performance they had put on when bread was put back on ration, they now explained that whereas the reduction in free-market prices in 1949–1950 had proved that the standard of living was rising, the rise in free-market prices in July 1951 was also evidence of a rising standard of living.

The propagandists asserted that the consumption of meat on the free market was actually seven times as high in 1951 as it had been in 1949, but that the distribution system had now been upset by forged ration tickets and by the failure of reactionary peasants to keep up with production goals.

In this connection, *Rude Pravo* wrote on July 3: "The temporary difficulties we are now encountering are due to the fact that in Czechoslovakia consumption and the standard of living are rising swiftly." It added that some of the difficulties were due to "discrimination abroad and particularly by American imperialists . . . as a result of which we can only get certain essential raw materials with great difficulty and their prices are rising on the world market."

Explaining what some humorist called "the prosperity-famine," other newspapers reported that the amount of goods sold on the free market in 1950 had risen over 1949 by the following percentages: 34 per cent for butter; 137 per cent for coffee; 21 per cent for chocolate candy; 36.5 per cent

for textiles; 114.6 per cent for clothes and 53 per cent for shoes. While these percentages looked impressive at first glance, they were less so when it was considered that the free market was only beginning its operations in 1949, and that the decline in the standard of living did not really begin until November 1950.

A curious thing about the food shortage in Czechoslovakia was that the harvest in 1950 had been good. Imports of food from the U.S.S.R., furthermore, were considerably higher even than in the drought year of 1947, at least according to official statistics (750,000 tons of grain in 1951). Unless the Communists were concealing some secret such as the formation of large stocks of food as a war reserve, there was probably an element of truth in the official thesis of "overconsumption." But this thesis missed the real point about the food shortages that had been affecting not only Czechoslovakia but such agricultural satellites as Hungary and Poland for a year or more. This point was overindustrialization. In all these countries large numbers of men who had been both producers and self-suppliers on farms had been transferred to the towns as factory workers. In their new occupations, they earned more money than ever before but depended on food that had to be shipped from the farm to the town. Their ranks, furthermore, had been supplemented by hundreds of thousands of women formerly occupied only in their homes. These facts explained rising consumption figures, though the increases in total consumption did not necessarily imply improvement in the standard of living of individuals.

After the month of July 1951, the Czechoslovak government ceased publishing monthly figures of plan fulfillment. The reason may be discerned in the cumulative failure revealed by the first seven months' figures. These showed that heavy industry was not keeping up with the increases assigned to it in the revised five-year plan. The rate of increase in productivity per worker also declined during the first seven months of the year. The rate at which productivity increased was slower in heavy industry than in light industry and slower than it had been in heavy industry a year or two before.

Whereas in light industry and in the food industry during the first seven months, the increase in productivity was less by half that provided in the plan, in heavy industry it was 2.2 per cent instead of 12.1, and in the building industry, where a sharp rise of one third had been provided in the plan, no figures were made public at all.

The gap between the plan and results may in part be accounted for by increased objectives set in some sectors in April, when the plan was again

partly revised following further Soviet demands. In April, however, the only figures published concerned the increase which productivity was supposed to attain by the end of the five-year period in 1953, by comparison with 1948. The increases were 64 per cent for heavy industry, 59 per cent for light industry and 60 per cent for the building industry. This would mean an annual increase in general productivity of 16.4 per cent — a target which seemed highly unlikely; it would put Czechoslovakia ahead of all other industrialized nations. (See page 357 of preceding chapter for original productivity goals.)

According to figures from the Czechoslovak Statistical Office in 1952, the plan for 1951 industrial production was fulfilled by 99.7 per cent, which brought the volume of production in absolute figures 22.9 per cent above 1950. Plan fulfillment in heavy industry was 98 per cent, or 22.9 per cent above 1950. The poorest result was in the case of coal for which plan fulfillment was 91 per cent, while no comparison with 1950 was given. In light industry, plan fulfillment was reported as 102.9 per cent, or 10.9 per cent above 1950 figures. And, in an effort to prove that the standard of living was not declining, the statistical office stated that targets for manufacture of clothing, footwear, textiles, glass, paper, and furniture were all fulfilled and frequently surpassed. Manufacture of working clothes was 34 per cent higher than in 1950.

The foodstuffs industry fulfilled its plan by 98 per cent, or 5.7 per cent more than in 1950. Total agricultural production was reported 6 per cent above 1950. It was stated that the following increases were achieved in 1951 compared with 1950: butter, 7 per cent; artificial fats, 15 per cent; cheese, 11 per cent; fruit and vegetable products, 20 per cent; tobacco, 26 per cent; cigarettes, 8 per cent.

As previously noted, however, the numerical increase in the working population, including many men and women who were formerly self-suppliers on farms, and the consequent increase in the total national payroll, far outstripped the increase in output of consumers' goods and food. How else could rising prices, reduced rations and buyers' panics be explained? The balance of the country's economy had been upset suddenly, too suddenly, as indicated by the official claim that general industrial production had increased 22.9 per cent and agricultural production only 6 per cent in 1951. As for the deficiencies in plan fulfillment (especially in the case of coal), the very fact that the regime felt obliged to admit them at all, suggested very serious difficulties.

Now if the plan had been a purely Czechoslovak affair, the Czechoslo-

vaks might simply have admitted their miscalculations and revised it downward. Unfortunately for them, however, the plan was tied to Czechoslovakia's trade commitments to Soviet Russia. According to official figures, the target for imports from the Soviet Union plus People's Democracies in 1951 was 55 per cent of the total foreign trade, and 60 per cent was actually achieved; the target for exports was 59 per cent and 62 per cent was reached.

The figures for trade with Russia alone in 1951 were set in an agreement signed by the Minister of Foreign Trade, Gregor, who returned to Prague in March, drooling with more than the usual obsequious gratitude. The grain Czechoslovakia was to receive (not as a gift but in strictly commercial exchange for industrial products), he called "a fraternal assistance," "a new immense and immeasurable aid." As for the agreement, he said, "we are happy to have signed it and thank the U.S.S.R. all the more now that we are back in Czechoslovakia.

"If we had to cover our needs by purchases in capitalist countries," Gregor explained, "we could not make ends meet. If we had to buy only a part of this merchandise in capitalist countries, we would have to export more, thereby impoverishing our internal market. By selling to the U.S.S.R. the products we have manufactured with Soviet raw materials, we will profit much more than from trading with capitalist countries."

It seemed to many an observer that Mr. Gregor protested too much. His language suggested that bread rationing had to be resumed because he had failed in his mission to obtain enough grain to prevent it. The most astonishing point in Gregor's statements, however, was that Czechoslovakia would not be able to balance her imports from the Soviet Union by exports during the first half of the year, but that "the Soviet Union in no way objects to this adverse balance of trade." Whatever else this might mean, and whether the Soviet Union objected or not, this was certainly confirmation of the reports that had been reaching diplomats for months that Czechoslovakia was not keeping up with her exports to the U.S.S.R.

All through the year, the necessities of trade with the U.S.S.R. continued to haunt Czechoslovakia in ways very different from anything mentioned by Mr. Gregor. Quite apart from the major burden of having to reorient their whole economy to suit the needs of a large neighbor, the Czechoslovaks were exposed to a series of bullying techniques, including the following:

1. In spite of official statements that the Russians were charging world prices or less, Prague was often obliged to pay much more for Soviet raw

materials than the world price. On one occasion, Prague paid 6000 crowns per ton for Russian wheat whereas Canadian wheat could have been had for 5452 crowns including freight.

2. The Russians imposed conditions regarding delivery dates and quality which could not be met. Every delay cost the Czechoslovaks a large fine which was deducted from the price. In the case of some shipments of Skoda products the price set at the beginning was in this way reduced by half.

3. Having obtained Czechoslovak goods at low prices, Moscow decided to re-export on a large scale. At Prague trade fairs, Soviet agents sought out visitors interested in Czech goods and then offered them the same thing, but cheaper.

4. Goods delivered by the Soviets were often below contract standard, but no one suggested that they should pay any penalty. Thus, Czechoslovak industry received chrome ore containing 30 per cent less chrome than called for, phosphates of a grade too low for economical use, and sulphuric acid that had been shipped in dirty tankers. Soviet cotton not only did not fit Czechoslovak spindles but had to be supplemented by cotton from other sources.

5. The Soviets declined all responsibility for goods damaged en route. On several occasions, freight cars arrived empty, having been looted in the U.S.S.R., Poland or East Germany. But the Czechs had to pay for the goods as shipped.

The cumulative effect of excessive economic burdens and inflationary pressures towards the end of 1951 led to the complete purge and reorganization of the Communist Party and the economy, which I will take up in the next chapter.

The breakdown in the mines was described in words of unprecedented force in a resolution adopted first by the Central Committee of the Communist Party at a meeting on October 15, and by the cabinet a day later. It dealt with the coal mines in the region of Ostrava, but the problems it described were general. Here is an extract:

> Our most important coal field, that of Ostrava-Karvina, is working in an absolutely unsatisfactory manner. . . . The main reason for this shameful state of affairs lies in serious shortcomings and mistakes in the activity of our economic organisms as well as of the organizations of the Party, extending all the way from factory committees to the Central Committee. . . .
>
> In appearance the immediate cause of the non-fulfillment of the

> Plan is the shortage of labor and the excessive turnover in employment. In spite of the growing tasks, the number of regular workers in the Ostrava-Karvina mine field has diminished by about five thousand since 1947; in the course of the year, from August 1950 to August 1951, the total number of regular workers in this coal field declined by 1500 while the number of civilian members of brigades also declined by about 1500.
>
> Nor have we been able to handle the enormous turnover in employment. In the course of the year 1950, 9903 regular workers left their jobs while 8247 other workers replaced them. Furthermore, during the year 30,000 workers recruited for brigades averaging four months' duration succeeded one another in the mines in order to make up for the lack of regular workers. This endless coming and going of so large a part of our manpower constitutes one of the main obstacles to the fulfillment of the Plan. . . .
>
> At all levels of economic organization direct management has been replaced by a complicated system which resulted in a general flight from responsibility and grave disorder, in a diminution of the activity and initiative of the workers and in the creation of a center of subversive activity by the class enemy. . . . On the whole the Communists have not led socialist emulation movements; they were by no means indefatigable agitators for new techniques and methods of work. . . .
>
> Contrary to Bolshevik principles the Communist organization, with a few exceptions, has ceased persuading and guiding workers in the struggle for the execution of the Plan. . . . Even worse, the Communists themselves have for the most part viewed the growing mistakes with indifference and by their incorrect attitude have very often set a bad example for the others. . . The weakening of political work among the masses has sometimes been such that many organizations have not been able to deal with the backward state of mind nor the subversive agitation of reactionary elements.

In a speech a month after publication of this resolution Premier Zapotocky reflected bitterly that the improvements in miners' insurance, miners' working and living conditions, had been "a waste," since the country had not got a single ton of extra coal as a result. And on December 4 the government struck out against the laxness of working practices. It ruled that effective January 1, 1952, workers in the mines and heavy industry would forfeit their claims to extra rations if they "fail to attend their work regularly and miss more than two shifts per month without good reason."

Whatever material gains had been made by some elements of the popu-

lation in 1949 and 1950 were progressively wiped out as the year wore on to its end. Even among the lowest-paid manual laborers, who had gained most, the number who could say they were better off than before the war dwindled steadily.

Some revealing facts were broadcast by Prague radio on February 2, 1952. It said that meat sales in Czechoslovakia had declined 2 per cent in 1951 because only 76 per cent of the planned quantities of pigs had been delivered. Meat prices had been raised and rice and sugar substituted for part of the meat ration. Forty-one thousand tons of meat had been imported during the year but this had proved insufficient. The government had therefore issued directives for the increase of meat production; steps would be taken in 1952 to harvest hay in state forests, on military training fields and airfields, and in the prohibited frontier zone.

According to *Rude Pravo* on December 9, 1951, the daily basic diet, without supplements, was 40 grams of meat, 40 grams of sugar, a little less than 190 grams of bread, 14 grams of margarine and 6 grams of butter.

Here is the picture as drawn by a French diplomat in a report at the beginning of the winter of 1951–1952:

> We are just about back to where we were in 1948 as regards food and the general supply situation. Black marketeering, which had practically died out during 1950, has started again as more and more things are put back on ration and free market supplies are restricted by exorbitant prices.
>
> After the increase in price and the rerationing of bread on February 21 and March 1, and the general increase in prices on July 1, the next blow to the consumers was the announcement on September 21 that potatoes would be rationed. This measure caused some surprise as the potato harvest was good and potatoes are one of the basic essentials in the Czechoslovak diet. Perhaps it was made necessary by some new industrial uses of potatoes or because the peasants have been using more potatoes for feeding purposes since bread went back on ration.
>
> The potato ration is seven kilograms per person per month at the old free market price. Additional quantities may be bought on the free market at double the old price.
>
> The meat ration, which was cut on July 1 to 1100 grams per person per month, is still at that level now that cold weather has set in. The varieties of meat available on the ration are very limited. Usually there is only beef of low quality. Veal is reserved for the sick,

> while mutton and pork have practically disappeared from the market. On the one day per week when some butcher shops sell meat without ration coupons, at free market prices, the queues are a block long.
>
> The seriousness of the meat shortage lies in the fact that meat is the main source of protein. Fish is almost entirely lacking; the prices of poultry are astronomic; game is almost entirely reserved for factory canteens and restaurants; eggs are scarce; and milk, whose fat content is very low, is rationed to one eighth of a liter per person per day. Milk can be bought on the free market but only in certain dairies where customers must stand in queues for several hours before they are served.
>
> Dried vegetables such as lentils, beans, split peas can not be found and fresh vegetables have now nearly disappeared. At times, nonetheless, the market is flooded with a single product, such as cucumbers. After a few days they disappear entirely and are replaced by something else.
>
> Manufactured goods — textiles, household equipment, radios, bicycles etc. — have risen 15 to 40 per cent in price since July. High-quality goods seem to have disappeared entirely. Shoes are the only things that have not risen in price.
>
> Pharmaceutical supplies, even the most common ones, such as aspirin, can be bought only on a physician's prescription. Scarcer items such as penicillin can often be had only on the black market.
>
> The rise of 80 per cent in the price of gasoline has reduced automobile traffic and increased transport costs.
>
> The cost of all kinds of services — repair work, doctors' services for those outside the national insurance system, tailoring — has risen in proportion to other prices.
>
> Considering the severe revision of norms now being enforced, which means a reduction in money incomes, and the sharp rise in prices, it is undeniable that there has been a general reduction in the public's purchasing power.

In one of the French Embassy's dispatches to Paris at this time, reference was made to a remark attributed to the Soviet economist E. Varga, in Budapest in the summer of 1950. The remark was that the People's Democracies were "still living too comfortably — beyond the means of their planned economies."

This was exactly what some far-reaching Czechoslovaks had feared from the day the Communists took over. For a time they were confounded by gradually improving material conditions. But in 1951 and 1952, while

Czechoslovakia still enjoyed the highest standard of living in the Communist world, she was being forced down, step by step, to the level of the great power that dictated the economic plans and cast its shadow across eastern Europe.

I feel that a postscript to this chapter is necessary by way of caution. With all their difficulties, with all their fiascoes, in spite of the workers' resistance and in spite of — perhaps also because of — the deteriorating standard of living, Stalin's Communists are doing great things economically. It is easy to be misled by the daily newspaper stories which almost always emphasize the element of failure without doing justice to the element of success in the lives of the Cominform satellites. But Stalin's Communists, in the words of Hugh Seton Watson, in his excellent book *The East European Revolution,* are swiftly transforming these countries "out of recognition." They are piling up steel-making capacity. They are developing lines of communication. They are building up the war-making potential with which they hope some day to sweep what they call bourgeois capitalism, what we call Western civilization, out of western Europe.

CHAPTER 30 Collectivizing the Peasants

THE objective of Communist agricultural policy is collectivization. By collectivization, the Communists seek to destroy the independent peasants whom they regard as the last bastion of capitalism, to proletarianize the peasants, and to make them as dependent on the state as the factory workers in nationalized enterprises. They seek also to introduce industrial methods into agriculture, thereby releasing manpower for use in the factories and producing more food for the growing factory and other urban population.

Although only a minority of the people in Czechoslovakia lived on farms (19.4 per cent in the Czech lands and 45.9 per cent in Slovakia in 1947), and collectivization consequently lacked some of the decisive quality it had in predominantly agricultural eastern European countries, the Communists proceeded with collectivization in Czechoslovakia with their usual systematic ardor. In their view the old peasant class was implacably anti-Communist and hence, even though relatively small, constituted an ever-present danger to the regime. In the Communists' opinion the old forms of production in agriculture would, furthermore, not be able to meet the expanding production requirements of the five-year plan.

For Western observers the fact that the ratio of agricultural to industrial population in Czechoslovakia was similar to that prevailing in most Western countries lent a special significance to the way the Communists went about attaining their objectives in this country. Here, too, were represented all types of farming, from the most primitive to the most highly developed. In Slovakia subsistence farming predominated. The Slovak peasant was akin to his Balkan neighbors and even to the miserable Russian muzhik; ploughing was done with oxen, only occasionally aided by horses; for a peasant to own even a motorcycle was a rarity; electrification was in many regions confined to the big estates which had their own generators and might supply nearby villages. In Moravia the standard was a little higher. Here the peasants were, and still are, very proud of

their light farm horses. In Bohemia the standard was highest. Some peasants were prosperous enough to own their own cars, and many could be called commercial farmers, who applied scientific methods and were similar to the most advanced Western farmers of Denmark or Holland.

For the poorest Slovak farmers the Communist collectivization was likely to bring some material improvements; for the more prosperous ones of Moravia and Bohemia it was more likely to involve a lowering of the standard of living. For all, however, collectivization meant uprooting the entire traditional way of life. The Communist regime imposed on the peasant a far more radical change than it did in the case of the factory worker, the professional man or any other urban group.

If the peasants of Czechoslovakia had fully realized, in the first years after the war, what the Communists had in mind, they would have resisted fiercely from the start. But the Communists always concealed their ultimate objectives. They spoke to the peasants only of alluring short-term programs, and even managed to win the political support of a large percentage of them in the 1946 elections. First it was taking over the land of expelled Germans, then it was land reform, then "mutual assistance" and material advantages to be gained by joining Unified Agricultural Co-operatives. Not until the end of 1949 did the Communists begin to speak openly of "collectivization," and even then official spokesmen laughed off as "absurd" allegations that they were preparing "kolkhozes," as though there could not possibly be any comparison between a Soviet Russian *kolkhoz* and a Unified Agricultural Co-operative.

Early in 1950 the Minister of Information, Vaclav Kopecky, declared defensively: "We Communists never said that the agrarian question would be fundamentally settled by the distribution of land to small and medium farmers." But that is the impression the peasants were deliberately given. As Dr. Jiri Kotatko explained, with brutal clarity, in his speech to the association of Czechoslovak Journalists in March 1949, this was a matter of Communist tactics, just as it had been in Russia in 1917. The meeting was a closed one, but the text of his remarks eventually reached a Western embassy. They included the following: "Looked at from the point of view of tactics, in the Soviet Union land was given to the peasants to win their support for the revolution. . . . In Czechoslovakia land reform preceded a change-over to social forms of production because otherwise the support of the peasants would not have been gained for the working class during the February events [the Communist coup]."

In other words, land reform was a bribe with which greedy small and medium peasants and land-hungry laborers were corrupted; just as in Russia in 1917, the redistribution of land was only a phase, or more precisely a stratagem, on the way to collectivization. But the circumstances under which the Communists took this first step towards collectivization in Czechoslovakia were very different from those that prevailed in Russia, where redistribution of land had a progressive significance as a move from feudalism to capitalism. Until 1917, the land in Russia had been divided into small lease-hold farms operated at enormously high rents, in money or in kind, with primitive tools, by small tenants and their families. By contrast the redistribution of land in Czechoslovakia was reactionary in that the biggest estates had already reached an advanced capitalist phase. The big estates, including the ones belonging to the Catholic Church, financed themselves with bank credits, were highly mechanized and produced large surpluses. With only a few exceptions feudalism had been wiped out by the land reform of 1919, which broke up the estates of the Austrian and Hungarian gentry.

In Czechoslovakia the ground was prepared for the Communists by events occurring immediately after World War II. The expulsion of two and one half million Sudeten Germans and some hundreds of thousands of Hungarians suited the Communists, and they encouraged it actively. On the one hand the expropriated Germans made potentially good raw material for Communist agitators. On the other hand the Czechoslovak Ministries of Agriculture and of the Interior, including the Resettlement Office, all run by Communists, were used to select and influence many of the Czechoslovaks who rushed in to occupy land seized from Germans, Hungarians and a good many persons accused of collaborating with the Nazis.

Altogether 2,944,000 hectares of land, including some 300,000 hectares in Slovakia, were seized (of this, 1,217,154 hectares were cultivable, constituting 22.2 per cent of the total cultivable area). Of 196,000 former Sudeten farms, 140,000 were taken over by Czechoslovaks. About 250,000 hectares of land were too poor to interest the Czechoslovaks who abandoned it to weeds, marshes or forest. A large area between Karlovy Vary and Sokolov was turned over to the army and air force as a training ground.

At this time the Communists, posing as the protectors of the little man, also championed the new land reform law of July 1947. Supplementing the land reform of 1919, it broke up the remaining large estates and made

fifty hectares (123.5 acres) the maximum amount of land any individual might legally possess.

Under the terms of the new land reform another 891,000 hectares of land including much church property were seized and redistributed. Thus a total of nearly four million hectares of land, or one third of the agricultural area of the country, passed into new ownership. Dr. Jiri Kotatko, the Communist Deputy Minister of Agriculture, had ample grounds for the satisfaction he displayed in reporting to a press conference in the spring of 1949 that since the war about one million persons — small and medium farmers, former farm laborers, factory workers and others — had received allocations of land. He said that 200,000 families received farm land and 500,000 land for gardening or building purposes.

Here was a new peasant group, far less conservative, more malleable, and more dependent on the state, than the old peasant families who had in many cases occupied the same farmsteads for generations and who had often even used the same ploughs their fathers and grandfathers had used.

An outline of the future of Czechoslovak agriculture under the Communists was provided by four basic laws — the five-year-plan that went into effect in January 1949; a law of January 1949, defining the functions of machine-tractor stations; the law of July 21, 1948, creating a Central Council of Co-operatives; and the law of February 23, 1949, laying down the methods for forming Unified Agricultural Co-operatives and their functions.

Under the five-year plan for agriculture the gross value of agricultural production was to reach 105 billion crowns in 1953. This would represent an increase of 16 per cent over the 90.5 billion crowns' worth of production that had been planned for 1948, or an increase of 37 per cent over the production actually achieved in 1948.

The Communists' claim that their plan would raise the standard of living depended on a progressive increase in animal production. Whereas in 1948 total agricultural produce was 65 per cent plant and 35 per cent animal, by the end of 1953 the proportion was to be 48 per cent animal and 52 per cent plant. In other words, it was calculated that the Czechoslovak people would eat less bread and more butter and eggs and meat. The shift was reflected in the amount of land to be devoted to various kinds of crops, as seen in the table on page 409.

From this it may be seen that cereals will decrease in acreage. Taking the average area under cultivation from 1934 to 1938 as one hundred,

	PERCENTAGE OF ARABLE LAND				
	1934–38	*1948*	*1949*	*1950*	*1953*
Cereals	33.2	30.3	27.7	26.3	25.2
Root crops	18.4	16.7	18.1	18.8	19.1
Fodder	15.7	19.9	23.9	23.7	25.5

wheat will decrease to 90.1 and rye to 56.9. Root crops, especially sugar beets, will increase, and fodder, needed for the expanded animal production program, will increase most substantially. By the end of the five-year plan the number of cows is to increase by half a million.

The machine-tractor stations, formation of which was begun in a small way in 1947, were authorized by the new law to exact the forced sale of farm machinery from individuals who, in their judgment, were not using it properly. In this way up to February 1951, 16,000 tractors, 20,000 binders and 17,700 threshing machines were purchased from the wealthier farmers at very low prices. The instructions to the machine-tractor stations were to help the small and medium farmers, but "not on the basis of scattered land or imperfect small production." They were to use their near-monopoly of machinery to foster the "introduction of higher forms of production with the help of Unified Co-operatives." The Communists hoped, furthermore, that as "workers," the elite of the new order, the personnel of the machine-tractor stations, would exert political influence on the peasants.

The law creating a Central Council of Co-operatives gathered together under a single national headquarters agricultural, consumers' housing and most other co-operatives, while the law on Unified Agricultural Co-operatives gathered together the existing co-operatives on the village level. Preparatory committees composed of five to ten peasants were authorized by the latter law to begin forming Unified Agricultural Co-operatives. When they had won the support of a substantial number of villagers they might ask the Central Council of Co-operatives for recognition as a Unified Agricultural Co-operative. It is worth noting that the law made no provision for consulting any local organization; approval by the Central Council would be sufficient.

Newly formed Unified Co-operatives took over the physical assets and memberships of previously existing co-operatives. Members were transferred to the new organizations automatically unless they specifically asked to be excluded. Necessarily, the new organizations' functions covered a wide range. They dealt with everything except banking. Under

the law they were to bring about a consolidation of scattered strips of privately owned land; to promote the mechanization of agriculture by signing contracts with state machine-tractor stations; to sign contracts with the state for the amount of agricultural produce to be delivered by the co-operative and in some cases by the whole village; to organize communal sowing and harvesting; to purchase fertilizers and other supplies needed by the farmers; to improve the quality of crops and livestock; to raise the cultural and social level of the peasants and to "ease the work of country women." Within this framework many Unified Co-operatives soon established communal pigsties, communal poultry houses, communal laundries and nurseries, canteens and training centers for farm workers. Obviously the functions of the co-operatives in influencing the life of the peasant could be almost unlimited.

Particularly characteristic was a provision in the law that the activities in the co-operatives "may apply even to nonmembers . . . if the public interest demands it." Thus the Unified Co-operative might spread its wings over the whole village in which it had established itself. It would be almost impossible for any peasant to stand out against it and insist on his independence. If he did so he might find that he could get no seeds, no machinery and no labor.

With these laws in hand the Communists formed the first thirty Unified Village Co-operatives in the spring of 1949. The struggle between the Catholic Church and the Communist state was approaching its climax at this time and almost all the peasants fervently supported the church. Hence they were even more than usually suspicious of the Communist innovations. Communist functionaries had to move slowly. At first they suggested only that the peasants would do well to plant all the strips of property in a given area to wheat or some other suitable crop. When it came time for harvesting, they suggested that the work would be easier if done jointly. But communal harvesting was actually carried out in only a few hundred villages. In the autumn of that year 314 villages did their autumn field work and sowing jointly.

On February 22, 1950, Rudolf Slansky, Secretary General of the Communist Party, reported that 2412 Unified Village Co-operatives and 1316 preparatory committees had been set up in Czechoslovak villages. This meant that there was a nucleus for collective organization in one out of every four villages in the country. But most of these organizations were still strictly on paper. Their co-operative activity was confined to sharing the use of machinery. Only 124 of the co-operatives established up to that

time could qualify as "models," according to Slansky. These he divided into three types:

1. Those that carried out joint sowing and field work, used both co-operative and private machinery but still preserved the boundaries between private strips of land.

2. Those that carried out joint sowing and field work, had ploughed up the boundaries between strips of land, and divided up the crops or income among members in proportion to the amount of land they owned.

3. Those that transferred all their land to the co-operative for joint cultivation and divided the income more according to the work done than according to the size of the land contributed. Of these there were only thirty.

None of the Unified Co-operatives formed up to that point was a truly "socialist" fourth type, Slansky said. To qualify as such they would have to divide up income only according to the amount of work done. He noted that the transformation of the village was a "much more difficult task than the reconstruction of industry along socialist lines." In industry there had been, on one side, a relatively small number of capitalists and, on the other, a very numerous group of class-conscious workers who demanded nationalization of industry. However, in agriculture there was, on one side, a far more numerous class of village capitalists and, on the other, hundreds of thousands of small producers who were working people, but at the same time private owners of land. Among them, Slansky said, "the medium farmer forms a hesitant element with many prejudices against socialism. He fears innovations, particularly such innovations as the socialist transformation of the village."

To win the small and medium peasants for co-operative work, he said, "long, patient and systematic work of the Communist Party is necessary. That work cannot be replaced by anything else. The transition of the village to socialism cannot be carried out in a day. It cannot be dictated from above, nor can it be forced upon the peasants by threats."

One of the ways in which the Communists tried to get the peasants, especially those in Unified Co-operatives, interested in improving production was by organizing "Michurin clubs." These were supposed to be a link between the peasants and scientific-research workers, who were attempting to develop improved seeds, fertilizers and fodder in accordance with the theories of the Soviet agrobiologists Michurin and Lysenko. Public meetings were held in the villages to explain the meaning of these

theories to the peasants. The impact of the new, collectivized ways was further lessened by the provision that each member of a Unified Agricultural Co-operative was entitled to half a hectare, and in poor mountain regions to one hectare, of private farm land on which to grow vegetables for his family and fodder for his own farm animals. Not only are members of the co-operatives allowed to, but they are asked to keep one cow, one or two calves, a few pigs and sheep, and as much poultry as they can take care of.

All peasants were urged to copy the methods used on state farms whose area steadily increased from 1.2 per cent of the total agricultural area in February 1948, to 5.7 per cent at the beginning of 1949, and to nearly 10 per cent at the end of 1951. At the same time the number of employees on state farms increased to more than a hundred thousand. Apart from contributing substantially to total output, the state farms acted as models in the use of machinery and fertilizers. They supplied seeds and breeding cattle to the peasants and showed how the yield of milk per cow and the yield of crops per acre could be increased.

In connection with the state farms ten huge "combines" for fattening pigs and a number for raising calves and poultry, as well as several fruit-raising combines were established in 1949.

The biggest of these, built entirely with "volunteer" labor at Smirice near Hradrec Kralove, was called Gigant. Beginning with 10,000 pigs capacity, Gigant was rapidly expanded to an annual output of 120,000 pigs per annum. It was equipped with its own slaughterhouse, which would save the transport of live animals to Prague, and a factory for processing the by-products such as fat and bristles. Similar, but smaller, pig-feeding stations were set up at Most, Liberec Rozmberk and Gottwaldov. The newspapers waxed eloquent over the prospect of pork. "People work on Sundays and holidays, they work without asking for wages because they know that all the results of their work will be returned to them in full measure and more." Apparently delighted with every detail, the newspapers added that in accordance with directions given by the Soviet agrobiologist Michurin pigpens were being built 155 meters long and 15 meters wide, with a capacity of one thousand pigs each. The interiors were arranged so that the pigs would have a feeding area, a resting area and plenty of fresh air.

In spite of all efforts, however, production remained disappointing. In 1949, although the planned production of wheat, rye and oats was stated to have been achieved, the peasants still managed, according to official

estimates, to conceal and withhold from delivery 17 per cent of the wheat crop, 30 per cent of the rye crop, and 34 per cent of the oat crops. Total production was, furthermore, well below the target in the case of sugar beets (78 per cent), hops (64.5 per cent) and fodder (90 per cent). The 1950 harvest, and more particularly the collecting of the harvest from the peasants, was only a little better. Compared with 1949, according to official figures, the gross value of agricultural and livestock production increased by 5.3 per cent. Fulfillment of delivery quotas for rye was 20.2 per cent worse and in the case of wheat improved by a mere 3 per cent. Improvements in output of other crops were greater, particularly in the case of sugar beets, which rose 80.2 per cent.

The Communist answer to all production problems was "co-operation," "mechanization." They pointed out that Czechoslovakia could easily produce the machinery needed for large-scale mechanized agriculture, that on the low plains of Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia large-scale farming on Soviet (or North American) lines was economical. The wine-growing areas in Moravia and Slovakia, the orchards along the Labe, and even the poor meadows of the Sudeten borderlands and Slovakia could be run more economically in larger units, the Communists maintained. The Institute for Agricultural Research reported that the time required for spring planting was usually two or three weeks less on co-operative farms than on private farms, that co-operative work on the farm would double or triple production per man-hour. It said that the co-operative farms were steadily improving their fields per hectare while the private farms lagged behind.

Hoping to convince the peasants of the advantages of "higher forms of production," the Communist Party sent out a steady flow of instructors and lecturers to the villages. On one week end at the beginning of 1950, 500 men went out from the town of Brno alone. Many of these instructors had been hastily trained, had little practical knowledge of farming and were, as the Communist periodical *Fonkcionar* admitted in June 1949, "terrifying examples in the eyes of the peasants of the kind of leadership they would have to accept if Unified Co-operatives were formed." Some of the instructors did not heed Slansky's admonition to "go slow" and tried to rush the peasants into forms of organization approaching Soviet *kolkhozes*. But good or bad, almost everywhere they went Communist instructors were badly received by the villagers. Not a few were beaten up and chased away. *Fonkcionar* wrote on June 7, 1949, that capitalist

elements were "moving from passive defense to actively organized procedures." They had, for instance, succeeded in breaking up preparations for public meetings "with the help of organized thugs" at Podebrady, Kladno and Dobris.

Tvorba reported cases of "sabotage, terror, violence, arson and destruction of community and private property." It complained that functionaries pressing for "higher production forms" often were not safe.

The Communists accused the Americans in western Germany of trying to help the "reactionaries" in Czechoslovakia by dropping Colorado beetles in boxes and bottles during the summer of 1950. They said that the beetles spread through the countryside devouring the crops, and sent the American Embassy a note charging that, in June 1950, American aircraft had dropped the beetles in the districts of Touzin, As and Cheb. The note said that most of the beetles were found on highways, in the streets of the town of Sokolovo, and on rooftops in the region of Ceske Budejovice, where they would not have appeared if the forces of nature alone had been at work.

In 1951 the beetles reappeared in 3477 localities, according to the Deputy Minister of Agriculture Yaroslav Matocka, who declared in an address to Czechoslovak peasants: "By rendering the American beetles harmless our people will frustrate the plans of the imperialist warmongers and strengthen the mighty camp of peace led by the great Soviet Union." On June 21, 1951, ten Soviet aircraft of the Polykarpov type landed at Prague airport to help in the regions most threatened by the beetle, namely, Usti and Labem in North Bohemia, Karlovy Vary and Pilsen in West Bohemia, Ceske Budejovice in South Bohemia.

Although the Communists chose to call the beetles "American" and allies of the "reactionaries" and "village rich," the peasants realized well enough that the scourge had been spread from eastern Germany by the forces of nature, and rich and poor peasants readily joined with whoever would help them in fighting the beetles.

The heart of anti-Communist resistance activity was among the peasants who owned more than twenty hectares of land. Since they were the object of official discrimination they would often become involved in quarrels about grain, milk or other deliveries; and from time to time it happened that one of them, in a fit of fury, would stab or shoot an official of the National Committee or a Communist Party functionary. In flight from the police, such a peasant might take to the hills and forests, might find others in a similar plight and might try to build up an anti-Communist

partisan unit. So-called "medium" peasants with from five to twenty hectares of land also became involved in resistance activities in some communities, for they, as a group, had little use for the Communists. They had been relatively well off and content, and they loved the fields that had belonged to their families for generations. Communal laundries and such held no charms for them.

Partisan groups mainly composed of peasants were formed in this manner in the more remote hills of Moravia and Slovakia in the summers of 1949 and 1950, and again in the summer of 1951. But they did not last long. The Communists' security organization has become too effective to permit the prolonged existence of partisan units of the kind that flourished in eastern Europe in the first months after World War II. (UPA, the Ukrainian liberation army, was the principal organization of this kind, and included the followers of Bandera, the famous anti-Communist partisan leader who was active all over eastern Europe after the war, and who is now living in western Germany.)

Partisan activity represented class warfare in its most direct form. But only rarely did the struggle flare into honest violence. More often it was a cold war, deliberately fostered by the government organized with laws, ordinances and regulations. Always the government, backed up by its police, had all the ammunition.

In the first few years after World War II the Communists had sought the support of all the peasants by stirring them up against the holders of more than fifty hectares of land. After such estates had been broken up by law their technique changed. They identified themselves with the "small and medium farmers" and incited them against those owning more than twenty hectares. Of these groups by far the largest were the small peasants with up to five hectares of land. According to the agricultural census of 1949, out of 1,507,097 agricultural enterprises in the country, 1,046,282 belonged to peasants with up to five hectares. While they constituted 69.4 per cent of the total number of peasants, they owned only 15.2 per cent of the total of 11,792,441 hectares of land in agricultural enterprises in the entire country.

This was the group to which the Communists mainly looked for political support in the countryside. For them, struggling to make a living on so little land, collectivization could really bring material advantage even if it did mean giving up the ancestral land.

The medium farmers with from five to twenty hectares numbered 414,167 and owned 34.9 per cent of the land. These made a much more

doubtful group from the Communist point of view. But the Communists needed them for their knowledge of agriculture, their managerial skill and the large percentage of the land they controlled, and Communist leaders repeatedly warned against excluding the medium peasants and allowing the Unified Co-operatives to become organizations composed only of the smallest peasants.

Peasants with twenty to fifty hectares numbered 35,159, or 2.4 per cent of the total number of agricultural enterprises. Their land amounted to 8.8 per cent of the agricultural area. These were the village rich. Although the Communists had taken the initiative in setting fifty hectares as the legal maximum, they now discovered that persons owning more than twenty hectares were extremely antisocial, although they would not often be considered very rich by non-Communist standards. These persons were dubbed the "village rich," the Czechoslovak equivalent of the Russian "kulak." *

The fact was that to put across collectivization the Communists needed a scapegoat against whom to organize the small and medium farmers. Against this enemy the press and radio inveighed endlessly. They accused the "village rich" of exploiting their smaller neighbors, or of deliberately sabotaging the five-year plan in particular and the national economy in general. The Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Dr. Jiri Kotatko, warned in a speech on April 18, 1949: "There are not good and bad 'village rich'; there are only capitalist exploiters of the countryside." Whenever one of the "village rich" failed to meet his delivery quotas he must not only be fined or imprisoned, his land must be confiscated and allocated to smaller peasants, Unified Co-operatives or state farms. (In practice the state farms were usually the beneficiaries of confiscated property.) This was the general line for the system of discrimination. A great variety of measures were devised to put the line into practice. They included the following:

1. The "village rich" were almost never allowed to join Unified Agricultural Co-operatives. Nor were they usually allowed to sell their property in excess of twenty hectares. Thus they were frozen into their role as public enemies, doomed sooner or later to have all their property confiscated. The danger of "infiltration" of the co-operatives by the "village

* In addition another 11,489 agricultural enterprises larger than fifty hectares covered the remaining 41.1 per cent of the area — Unified Agricultural Co-operatives, state farms, experimental stations, nurseries, etc. Of the total 11,792,441 hectares about six and one half millions were considered arable.

rich" was a theme of which Communist leaders never tired. In the words of Rudolf Slansky, "We know from the experience of the Soviet Union that the kulaks are even more dangerous inside than outside the co-operatives and that they never relent in their fight against the co-operatives."

2. Although they might not sell their land, the "village rich" could be forced under the law on machine-tractor stations to sell their machinery. The Unified Co-operatives furthermore assumed the right to use any buildings which they deemed the "village rich" did not need.

3. The Communists concentrated the tax burden almost entirely on the shoulders of the "village rich" and exempted all peasants with up to twenty hectares of land from income tax, land taxes and the general turnover tax.

4. After the Communists took power, state machine-tractor stations began charging four different prices for the rent of their machinery. The lowest price was for Unified Co-operatives who had organized communal sowing and field work in the entire village; the next lowest, for Unified Co-operatives who had organized communal sowing and field work on at least fifty hectares; a substantially higher price was for farmers with up to twenty hectares but who had not joined Unified Co-operatives; and the highest price, about twice as much as that for the first group, was for peasants who owned more than twenty hectares.

5. The distribution of clothing by ration coupons offered another convenient means of discrimination. In 1948 and 1949 farmers with more than fifteen hectares (there was no explanation as to why this level was chosen instead of the more customary twenty hectares) were excluded from the clothing and shoe rationing system. They had to supply themselves on the free market along with professional men, artisans and other private entrepreneurs. At the beginning of 1950 all sections of the population were granted clothing and shoe coupons, but members of the Unified Co-operatives got special advantages, beginning in May. Members of Unified Co-operatives who had ploughed up the boundaries between private strips of land could buy clothes at rationed prices but without delivering any ration coupons. Members of co-operatives who had not yet ploughed up the boundaries between private strips of land were permitted to buy clothing by giving up only half the usual quantity of clothing coupons.

6. The most effective forms of discrimination were undoubtedly the variable delivery quotas, set at the beginning of each year as "contracts" between the Unified Co-operatives or individual farmers and the local

National Committees representing the state. On the grounds that they had better equipment and better land the larger farmers were required to deliver more per hectare than the smaller ones. Furthermore, they had to grow the less profitable field crops while the smaller farmers were encouraged to raise cattle. "This is a weapon we must learn to use in every single village and against every one of the village rich," *Rude Pravo* wrote on January 15, 1949. A model system of discrimination as reported by the same newspaper on February 11, 1949, existed in the village of Slany where a farmer with 46 hectares was required to deliver 29.01 hundredweight per hectare of wheat; a farmer with only 6.96 hectares had to deliver only 21 per hectare; and a small farmer with only two hectares only 20 per hectare.

7. The authorities began to collect payment for land distribution in 1945–1946 in the border areas. This led to the formation of an exceptionally high proportion of Unified Co-operatives in the borderlands. Slansky explained bluntly in his speech of February 1950: "Here," he said, "there is a special situation in which Unified Co-operatives are more easily formed because conditions of life are difficult and because the necessity of paying installments for land acquired makes the farmer's life harder." In fact, there were quite a few farmers who abandoned their land in the border areas once they realized that the government's ultimate objective was collectivization. "If we are to lose the land in the end anyway," they said, "why should we make sacrifices to pay for it?"

Even better, according to the newspaper, was the system of discrimination used in the village Krasna Hora, in the district of Havlickuv Brod. There the big farmers were obliged to deliver all their milk without keeping any for themselves. The amount of milk they delivered was set according to their property and not according to the number of their cows, and in one case, reported by *Rude Pravo,* a farmer who did not keep cows at all was obliged to buy milk from other farmers in order to keep up his deliveries.

To enforce the system of discrimination, commissions representing the local National Committee, usually composed of workers from a nearby factory, succeeded one another in endless succession in their inspections of the property of the "village rich." They searched the barns to see if the farmer were hiding some produce for sale on the black market or withholding fodder to increase the number of his pigs and cattle. They measured the land he had sown to various crops to see whether he had acted in accordance with the production plan and counted his cattle to see if he had reported them correctly. If it wanted to, such a commission, nosing

around a farm, would be sure to find something wrong that could start another one of the "village rich" on his way to ruin.

Here are some examples, taken from the Communist press in 1949 and 1950, of the way in which this form of class warfare was carried out, and is still being continued in so far as there are any "village rich" left.

A peasant of Velky Prilepy near Prague who had fallen behind in his deliveries was sentenced by a district court to four years' imprisonment and a fine of 300,000 crowns ($6000). The peasant's land was confiscated, and thus he was wiped out as an independent farmer.

A Communist Party member of Odelena near Prague was accused of not fulfilling his quotas and neglecting his land "because foreign radio broadcasts had misled him into expecting an early change of regime." He got two years in prison and a 50,000-crown fine. His land was confiscated. In the district of Susice the farmer K. Masek, owner of 24.25 hectares of land, was supposed to plant 2.45 hectares with potatoes, but he planted only 1.83 hectares. The district National Committee therefore fined him 20,000 crowns; Frantisek Kaspar of Hodecin was fined 25,000 crowns for "not starting to sow on time."

In another village near Prague, a man was sentenced to three years' imprisonment, a fine of 250,000 crowns and confiscation of his land, for hiding grain. Caha Roseky of the Brno district was sentenced to one year in prison, loss of civil rights and confiscation of property for hiding apples. Vladimir Kneisl of Branai was fined 150,000 crowns and had his land confiscated for making false reports about the number of cattle he owned. Two other farmers in the same district had their land confiscated on the grounds that they were not managing it properly.

Similar penalties were imposed upon other peasants for such crimes as "failure to deliver three wagons of oil seeds," slaughtering pigs without permission of the local National Committee, or "failure to co-operate with the plan for saving fertilizers. A peasant named Ladislav Sous, of Horovice, near Prague, his wife and two employees, whose crimes included composing "shameful verses" about leading Czech and Russian personalities, got stiff sentences. After debating the case until 3 A.M., a district court sentenced him to four years' hard labor and 200,000 crowns' fine, his wife to six months in prison and 200,000 crowns' fine, and their employees to two years' hard labor each. In almost all other cases the entire property of the convicted was confiscated but on this occasion the court decided to take one half of Sous's property of forty-six hectares. This left him still in the outcast category of "village rich."

In all the more serious cases the conviction was underlined with a statement to the effect that the convicted had "deliberately hindered the fulfillment of the five-year plan and so committed the crime of sabotage."

How many peasants have been sent to prison or to labor camps can only be guessed, but the figure must by now have reached several thousand. The more fortunate of the "village rich," who do not end up behind barbed wire, are driven from the land and must go to work in the factories. This, too, is quite in accordance with the Communist policy of getting rid of the elements most attached to the soil.

The "socialist sector" of agriculture expanded swiftly during 1950, while 1951 and the early part of 1952 was a period of consolidation devoted to developing lower type into higher type co-operatives. This may be seen in the following table based on figures in Communist publications:

	Unified Agricultural Co-operatives
Spring of 1949	First 20
End of 1949	about 700
Spring of 1950	about 3,000
End of 1950	about 5,500
Spring of 1951	about 6,000
End of 1951	about 6,500
July of 1952	about 7,669

Since there are 13,000 rural communities in Czechoslovakia the table would suggest that more than half of the country's agriculture has been collectivized. And in Communist propaganda that impression goes uncorrected. But the figures are misleading; such fragmentary breakdowns of the total as are available indicate that the process of collectivization is far from complete even in the communities endowed with Unified Co-operatives.

In an article, "For a Lasting Peace, for a People's Democracy," in the *Cominform Journal* published in Bucharest on August 10, 1951, Slansky wrote that as of June 15, 1951, there were in Czechoslovakia 5812 Unified Agricultural Co-operatives and 1761 preparatory committes. He said that there were 2284 co-operatives of the third type. Here the real introduction of socialist principles begins in that the peasants are expected to derive the greater part of their income in accordance with the amount and value

of work done, and only a lesser part in accordance with the amount and value of land they contributed to the co-operative. Only 156 had graduated to the fourth and highest type of co-operative, he said.

This meant that there are still 3372 Unified Co-operatives of types one and two in which the principle of private property rights is very largely maintained, and the peasants either merely use the available machinery in common or, if they have ploughed up the boundaries between properties, are in the position of shareholders in a corporation, deriving revenue in exact proportion to their property. The critical stage is in the transition from this type to type three, and rather less than half the co-operatives had made the transition at the time Slansky wrote.

Slansky wrote that in June 1951 there were 225,000 farmsteads in villages in which Unified Agricultural Co-operatives had ploughed up the boundaries. In such villages 65 per cent of the farmsteads had been brought into the Unified Co-operatives. However, Unified Co-operatives which had ploughed up the boundaries existed only in one fifth of all villages, and in these villages only two thirds of the small and medium farmers had joined the Unified Co-operatives. Unified Co-operatives, state farms and other "social" forms of agriculture, he reported, owned 25 per cent of the arable land and produced 25 per cent of the wheat, 21.7 per cent of the rye, 29.3 per cent of the sugar beets, 18.8 per cent of the potatoes, 57.4 per cent of the flax; they owned 20.2 per cent of the cattle. As of June 9, 1951, there were 220,000 head of horned cattle and 158,000 pigs in co-operatives.

While the Unified Co-operatives have obviously won an important place in the country's agriculture it would seem that Slansky's warning, in his speech of February 1950, against "rushing for quantity" has been heeded. At that time he said: "We must ensure more careful political preparation for establishing new Unified Agricultural Co-operatives, for the transfer of lower to higher types, for ploughing up the boundaries in more co-operatives, so that all this will take place when the peasants have been thoroughly convinced." He maintained that sound co-operatives, immune to infiltration and sabotage by the "village rich," must be based on free choice and persuasion by example. This example should consist of increasing crop yields, growing herds of cattle, and progressive substitution of machinery for heavy farm work.

Now that Slansky is under arrest, his caution is likely to be used against him. It will probably be called sabotage when he appears for trial.

Meanwhile the machine tractor stations and the state farms with their pig-feeding and other types of combines expanded, too. Up to early 1951

the tractor stations had forced the richer peasants to sell 16,000 tractors, 20,000 binders, and 17,700 threshing machines. The tractor stations controlled about three quarters of the agricultural machinery and the Unified Co-operatives most of the rest. Obviously the prospects for private farming were dim.

Since the Soviet Union was the official model and mentor, the Czechoslovak government eagerly sent peasants there to learn what they could, both in regard to "higher forms of production" and agricultural technique. The visitors, of course, gave glowing accounts of what they saw in the Soviet Union — when interviewed by the Communist press — but I have heard private reports channeled through Western embassies that the Czechs were appalled by the brutish squalor even of the model *kolkhozes* they were taken to see.

In 1951 their visits were repaid by a Soviet delegation of forty-three members led by the Deputy Minister of Agriculture, I. I. Chorosilov. Faithfully the Czech press recorded the advice given by members of the delegation who visited unified co-operatives, state farms and tractor stations. At a meeting in Detrichov, Nina Smirnovova, a "heroine of socialist labor" and an expert on calf raising, explained that the diet of newborn calves should consist mainly of their mothers' milk during the first ten days. On the seventh day, hay should be added to the milk. After three weeks, fodder should be introduced to the diet and whole milk replaced by skimmed milk. The Czech farmers nodded with grave interest, according to the press.

The newspapers also told about Maria Dedinska, a Czech pig breeder whose heart "throbbed excitedly" when she asked the Soviet guests to tell her how to breed and feed sucking pigs. Hero of Socialist Labor Nikolai Gregoriovitch Belin "smiled a broad, youthful smile when he spoke of his work, and Maria understood every word, although she had never learned Russian."

The peasants who had visited the Soviet Union joined officials of the Ministry of Agriculture on tours of the countryside during 1951 in order to pass on the lessons they had learned in the Soviet Union to their fellows. The touring commissions tried to introduce to the co-operatives and state farms the system of "socialist incentives" already in use in the factories and a variety of agricultural methods which, while certainly not unknown in Czechoslovakia and other parts of the world, had undoubtedly been highly developed in the U.S.S.R.

The commissions established progressively "hardening" norms for various kinds of farm work and encouraged "socialist competition" between co-operatives. The winner of one such competition for harvest work was the Unified Agricultural Co-operative at Pobezovice of which Minister of Agriculture Duris said proudly: "All peasants in this co-operative work together. They have a working plan for the whole year which has made it possible to transfer fifty-six workers to other kinds of work."

Agricultural methods copied from the Soviet Union were reported in the press to include deep ploughing, crossing different types of wheat, alternating cereals and leafy plants, using selected seeds, contour ploughing, regulating humidity by planting protective forest belts. Soviet methods in the care of livestock included artificial insemination, more frequent intensive feeding and more frequent milking.

A less readily acceptable form of Soviet influence expressed itself in increases in five-year plan goals for agriculture announced in February and April of 1951. The figures and details of the increases for agriculture were, however, not made public beyond a statement that more attention must be given to industrial crops such as oil-bearing plants, tobacco, medicinal plants, flax and sugar beets which would render the economy more independent of imports from capitalist countries.

Presumably in the hope of attaining the new goals, the government on June 5 issued detailed directives for 1951 harvest work in three kinds of communities: those where higher types of Unified Co-operatives, two, three and four, had been established; those where lower-type co-operatives, type one and preparatory committees, had been established; and those where there were no co-operatives.

1. In communities of the first kind, members of the co-operatives must draw up a complete harvest plan to ensure the speediest possible threshing and delivery of grain, the timely repair of machinery and transport, and the proper storage of seed, hay fodder and straw. Permanent work groups should be assigned to certain fields throughout the entire harvest period so that each individual would have time to become thoroughly familiar with his tasks. Each group should hold a daily meeting to discuss its work. In the interests of maximum efficiency, the use of machinery should be planned by the nearest machine-tractor station.

2. In the lower type co-operative, where boundaries have not been ploughed up, special emphasis should be placed upon keeping a careful record of every type of work performed. On the basis of these records

it would be possible to make sure that those members of the co-operative who performed only manual labor were not put at a disadvantage in relation to those who contributed land and equipment.

3. Where there was no Unified Co-operative, a harvest commission set up by the local National Committee, the Farmers' Union and the small and medium peasants should draw up plans for communal harvest work. The commission should try to persuade as many small and medium peasants as possible to use their labor, machines and draft animals collectively during the harvest so they might grasp the advantages of higher production forms.

The government directive also urged factories to conclude "contracts of association" with unified agricultural co-operatives. The contracts would obligate the factories to furnish labor and materials for the construction of co-operative buildings and the repair of machinery and to send brigades of voluntary workers to help with the harvest. Factory accountants were asked to help the co-operatives with their accounts and financial problems. In return the co-operatives would send food to workers' canteens and during the winter months would send men to the factories to supplement their labor force.

At the end of 1951 the Communist authorities reported that agricultural production for the year was 6 per cent above that of the preceding year and that the plan for the production of grain had been exceeded by 12,000 tons. While details were scarce, indications were that it was a pretty good year. The fact that in July the Ministry of Agriculture offered the peasants an additional 200 crowns for each hundredweight of wheat, malt or barley and an additional 175 crowns for each hundredweight of rye delivered above the quota, suggested that the regime was still having trouble separating the peasants from their crops. Otherwise it is unlikely that it would have made such an offer at a time when consumers' goods were increasingly scarce and inflation a rising menace.

Certainly the Communist Party gave many indications of dissatisfaction with the results of its agricultural policy. In April, Smrkovsky, director-general of state farms, was dismissed and a little later he was arrested; the managers of dozens of state farms were subsequently dismissed or arrested. The managers of the pig-feeding stations were in trouble too, accused of mismanagement and sabotage; one was arrested for feeding his pigs twice instead of four times a day, thereby depriving the people of pork, sabotaging the five-year plan, et cetera.

At Party meetings more complaints than ever were heard about mis-

takes in planning, the inexperience of the peasants, and the bureaucratic or autocratic attitude of the Communist functionaries who were in charge of co-operatives. Peasants who had been accustomed to managing five or ten hectares often found themselves overwhelmed by the problems of managing several hundred hectares when elevated to managerial posts in co-operatives. Bastovansky, the secretary-general of the Party in Slovakia, formulated a general complaint when he accused local Slovak Party officials of "corporalism." "Too often," he asserted, "comrades think all they have to do is give orders; they treat the medium peasants like kulaks and antagonize the smallest ones."

In June the executive committee of the Party sought a general remedy in decentralization of controls over Unified Co-operatives, state farms and tractor stations. Local national committees were entrusted with the task of allocating machinery in the villages. In the autumn, in line with a similar trend in industry, the government went a step further. It ruled that effective January 1, 1952, intermediary controls would be eliminated and machine-tractor stations and state farms given far-reaching autonomy in managing their own affairs, subject only to general directives from the Ministry of Agriculture. (On September 11, 1951, in the course of the general upheaval connected with the purge of Slansky & Company, Julius Duris was replaced as Minister of Agriculture by Josef Nepomucky.)

Clearly the Communists in their pursuit of "higher forms of production" were still wrestling with problems of organization and personnel. It would be rash to predict at this stage that they will, or in what ways they will, succeed or fail in solving their problems. In evaluation of the present status of their efforts, however, I think one may conclude:

Collectivization is spreading irresistibly, but at a rate considerably slower than indicated by official statistics.

The efficiency of the Unified Co-operatives and state farms is increasing slowly but is still much lower than the Communists expected. Agriculture, including the "socialist sector," has lagged consistently in fulfillment of production plans.

Even among the poorest peasants the Communists have lost most of whatever support they once had. The peasants, including those organized into Unified Co-operatives, continue to resist the Communists by means of nonco-operation and by concealing crops whenever they have the opportunity.

CHAPTER 31 Resistance

WHEN the Czechoslovak people see a blow coming they have a habit of ducking. They duck out of sight and then after a while they come up again and look around to see what they can do about the fellow who swung at them. The Czechoslovaks are a canny race. They know they are a little nation and that if they stood up to the first blow they would be destroyed. Instinctively they bide their time, waiting to strike back when and where it will count most.

That is exactly what has happened in Czechoslovakia since the Communist *coup d'état*. And now we are reaching the time when the Czech people, after ducking the first mighty Communist blow, are coming up, looking around and beginning to do something about it. They are resisting the tyrant in every way known to man, and, as we shall see, particularly in ways suited to their national character.

I have begun with this affirmation of Czech resistance because the ability and will of the Czechoslovak people to resist has been questioned since they went down without a fight in 1938 and in 1948. In recent years it has been fashionable for diplomats in Prague to remark, over cocktails, that no resistance is to be expected from the Czechoslovaks. They are wrong. They do not know the facts and they do not know Czech history or the character of the Czechoslovak people.

How do we know about Czech resistance? Even if there were not direct evidence from Czechs recently escaped from their country, every political trial and arrest reported in the Communist press bears witness to the existence of resistance. To be sure, in some cases the charges brought by the Communists are pure fantasy, but in other cases the "bands of terrorists" and "treasonable conspiracies" about which the prosecution rages represent very real underground resistance organizations.

Every day's broadcasts of "Radio Free Europe" and the "Voice of America" are based on the voices of resistance groups — men and women with courage and intelligence who gather information about life in Czechoslo-

vakia and send it abroad. Every escape across the border represents resistance, not only of those who took the risks involved in getting out of the country, but of those who organized it.

The severe economic difficulties that have beset Czechoslovakia since late 1950 reflect resistance by the workers and peasants with growing effectiveness. The workers are resisting the speed-up, night work, "hardening of the norms," "shock work" and "socialist competition"; the peasants are resisting collectivization and excessive demands for the delivery of farm produce to the state.

Finally, the fall of the Secretary-General of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, Rudolf Slansky, and the complete purge and reorganization of the Party, indicate a ferment of discontent, even if not of resistance, among the members.

The first signs of resistance after the Communists had taken over came in the parliamentary elections of May 1948. Unwilling to vote for the regime, and realizing that voting against it was useless, many people managed to insert photographs of T. G. and Jan Masaryk and of Benes into their balloting envelopes. Others inserted papers with rude phrases directed at Gottwald.

A little later that summer during the Sokol festival, there was an organized demonstration of shouting for Benes and against Gottwald. It began among a crowd of girls in the arena and was taken up by Sokols waiting their turn to march into the arena. A direct broadcast of the proceedings was at that moment in progress and after about a minute and a half the sound was turned down and the commentator went into an impromptu description of costumes while the police arrested some of the people they believed to have led the demonstration.

Resistance of this kind, jokes and public shouting, recalls the way resistance to the Nazis began. For instance, after the battle of Dunkirk the Germans distributed a leaflet with a caricature of Churchill running after a bus and saying: "He missed the bus." Many of those leaflets were stuck on the posts at Prague bus stops where they were amended by Czechs waiting for buses with the words: "It doesn't matter, in five minutes there will be another bus." After the Germans had invaded Russia they issued pictures of tremendously ugly Russian prisoners of war and the question: "Are these your brothers?" All over Prague Czechs wrote the answer on the posters: "Yes, and they will beat you regularly." When things began to get tougher for the Germans in Russia they put up placards showing Hradcany Castle, then the residence of the German Reichsprotektor,

Karl Hermann Frank, with a horrible red hand over it and the word "Bolshevism." The catch line was: "If it catches you, you die." Again the reply was added (in a rhyming couplet): "We aren't afraid, we don't live there."

More serious forms of resistance to the Nazis were carried on from the beginning by intellectuals, former officers and civil servants, and other middle-class elements. Students were the most active because they resented the closing of all universities and were bitter about the hostages the Nazis took on the occasion of the funeral of Jan Opletal on November 17, 1939. On May 27, 1942, the Deputy Protektor, Reinhard Heydrich, was assassinated by a group of Czechs who had been flown from London and dropped by parachute. In reprisal the Germans shot about a thousand persons and razed the village of Lidice, thereby stimulating more hatred and resistance. The Czech government has estimated that the Nazis executed 36,000 people in Czechoslovakia during the occupation, and a very high percentage of these were intellectuals and others of the middle class.

Worker and peasant resistance was, however, delayed by the extensive means of seduction of which the Germans disposed. Exhausted by long unemployment and disillusioned by Munich, coal miners, steel workers, textile workers, and all others whom the Germans needed, found themselves very well paid. Food supplies were still adequate and the Germans supplied extras for overtime. Sunday shifts were rewarded with a half bottle of rum, ten cigarettes, a hundred grams of meat tickets, extra bread and double normal wages for the day. As for the peasants, they found in the Germans a ready market for their produce, at high prices; and after food shortages developed they made good profits by supplying the black market.

Workers and peasants turned to resistance after the middle of 1943, when the German economic system began to fall apart and the Germans ran into real trouble in Russia and the Allies began scoring victories in Africa and bombing Germany with growing violence. At this time, too, the Germans introduced the "REFA" system of time and motion study into Czechoslovak factories. The exhausting work, combined with hard times, stimulated thousands of workers to active resistance, and partisan groups were formed in the Moravian hills and in Slovakia, from the spring of 1944 onward.

One vital difference between the circumstances of resistance to the Nazis and resistance to the Communists must be noted. The Nazis appeared in Czechoslovakia as hated foreigners with a despicable ideology, but they

disposed of economic means with which to buy off their enemies. The circumstances faced by the Communists after their coup were nearly opposite. They and their ideology were popular among a great many workers, even if rejected by the rest of the people. But they were in no position to buy off anyone. They obtained certain advantages for the workers at the expense of other classes, but even those did not last. After the desperate shortages that followed the drought of 1947 they effected some improvements in the supplies of food and consumers' goods in 1949 and the first half of 1950. Thereafter, however, Soviet demands put the Czechoslovak economy on the skids again. To keep up with Soviet requirements, the Communists have had to introduce working methods much like the hated REFA.

As a consequence of these developments most of the workers who, in February 1948, supported the Communists are now disillusioned. The peasants who had seen the Communists as the champions of land reform have meanwhile learned that land reform was merely a step towards collectivization.

As for the middle classes, the Communists' theories of class warfare made it inevitable that they should be the first to feel the Communist tyranny. And so it came to pass that they were also the first to resist, and many of the same people who had been first to oppose the Nazis met again in underground resistance organizations. I am thinking of such valiant men as General Kutlvasr and the other leaders of the Prague rising whom the Communists have now imprisoned on various charges of anti-state activity; of such men as Jaromir Nechansky, a former paratrooper, and Veleslav Wahl, a law student who brilliantly operated an information network for the British during the war, both of whom the Communists sentenced to long prison terms on the charge that they were spies for the American Embassy; and a great many others whom I will not mention as they are still free. Among them there have been numerous Catholic priests. Resistance by the Catholic Church has continued in a variety of ways even though the clergy have been obliged to co-operate with the Communist authorities in public.

The first job that fell to the anti-Communist resistance was gathering information and assisting escapes. The two are often connected. Gathering information for distribution to anti-Communists inside Czechoslovakia or for transmission abroad for use by *émigré* organizations and anti-Communist radio stations is an undramatic business, until the arrests come.

A man who did this kind of work for several years and who is now in the United States gave me this description of his activities:

> Members of our group who worked in national enterprises or state offices would sometimes borrow the files for a night, hoping that nobody would come back on overtime. Then someone would have to work half the night copying what was needed and the man would take the files back. Our people were tired and hungry, housework was neglected, money was spent for railway fares, and for those producing leaflets on second-hand typewriters and occasional duplicating machines and stencils. They were very hard to obtain. Sometimes we used machines and stencils in official offices at night with the passive acquiescence of the watchman.
>
> Sometimes there would be dramatic moments when a person failed to turn up at a rendezvous. Should the others be warned, or was it just some unavoidable delay that night? In any case, it meant loss of time. One had to come back another time, prearranged, and see if the partner turned up, or contact somebody else to inquire. All that was complicated by the difficulties of normal living conditions — rationing, extra work requirements, political meetings one had to attend, and often lack of money — and the need for strict secrecy. Sometimes the greatest care did not help. One of our group was arrested while innocently visiting an acquaintance he had not seen since before the war.

Organizing escapes was considerably more dangerous. About this the former resistance worker recalled the following story:

> I remember spending one evening on the Petrin hill with a woman whose flat was watched and who was to leave that night in a car with false number plates. She couldn't go home and did not want to compromise any friends in Prague by taking refuge with someone for the evening. We sat under the flowering fruit trees for a time and watched Prague beneath us. It was a very beautiful evening and she was weeping at the idea that she would probably never see Prague again. She had made two abortive attempts to escape and was worried about whether the car would really come and the people really meet it to guide her over the frontier. Her nerve was breaking fast and I was afraid she would not be in any state to face possible routine checks on the road to the frontier. We sat for a time in a church nearby, not to be conspicuous. I sent her to eat in a restaurant which served good food at very high prices and met her again later for the long walk to the place where the car would meet

us. We couldn't go by tram or taxi, of course. Finally we reached the place and the car arrived — ten minutes late. She was shaking with fear when she got in, so the driver gave her a good drink of brandy and they left. Four weeks later I received a post card from Switzerland with the agreed message, showing that she had reached Germany. During the four weeks I occasionally wondered what had happened to her, but no news came through friends of her arrest or of any arrest on that part of the frontier, so I guessed it was all right. I did not know the name of the man or the route they would take and I did not want to know even the make of the car or its false number. She did not know my name nor where she had to meet the car until the very last moment when we arrived there.

The agents who have the task of actually guiding refugees across the frontier do not live long. They risk being shot, or blown up by mines attached to trip wires, or being brought down by dogs. For about eighteen miles along the Czechoslovak frontier, a band of territory has been cleared of everyone except identifiable permanent residents. No Czech may enter this area without a special pass. If someone is picked up in it without a pass, he is summarily convicted of illegal frontier crossing. Near the frontier a smaller band of cleared land has been fenced with barbed wire. Large searchlights sweep all roads and the cleared areas at the frontier. Patrols with dogs pass frequently. Month by month the Communist authorities add new devices along the frontiers, all designed not to keep foreign enemies out, but to keep the Czechs in.

Since February 1948, some 50,000 Czechs have crossed the frontier. During the years 1951 and 1952, however, escapes from Czechoslovakia have become far more dangerous. Refugee leaders told me that only one out of three attempts now succeeds. A series of road blocks have been built on the roads approaching the frontier and tank traps erected in the surrounding terrain.

In some cases where villages are divided in half by the border, in order to give the frontier guard an unobstructed view the Czechs have evacuated the population and torn down buildings. At all except two points, roads across the border to Germany and Austria have been closed. Usually there is a system of four or five interlocking tank traps and concrete road blocks, and behind this a ditch six feet deep and nine feet wide. This is backed, often, by a parapet of dirt ten or twelve feet high. And on the road beyond, spaced out at increasing intervals, are concrete road blocks. At points where escapes have been particularly numerous, the Czechs,

in 1951, installed barbed-wire fences equipped with trip wires that set off flares and automatic rifles. At some points the Czechs have plowed up fields along the border, and anyone who walks onto the plowed strip may be shot at. There is a plan of long standing to enclose the entire border with barbed wire, as the Russians have done on much of their border, and the Hungarians on the Austrian border, but as yet this has apparently seemed too extravagant for the Czechs.

Behind the frontier there is a ten-kilometer-wide military zone. Within this zone the Security Police have been replaced by specially trained guards. Residence and movement here require a special military permit. Special precautions are enforced to a point about sixty kilometers from the border. New arrivals, and anyone with whom the police is not acquainted, are likely to be questioned closely as to where they came from, and where they are going. The only points open to international traffic are at Rozvadov on the Bavarian border, and near Znojmo on the Austrian border.

Most people who escape from Czechoslovakia do so on foot or, in wintertime, on skis. But some Czechs have devised more sensational methods.

Early in 1950 for instance, a group of twenty or thirty Czechs reinforced the front end of a truck with iron girders and drove to the top of a hill near Rozvadov on the Czech-Bavarian frontier. Then, with all aboard, they tore down the hill and crashed through the wooden barriers and out into Germany before the border guards knew what had happened. After that the Czech authorities put up steel and concrete road blocks at all frontier points.

As a result a similar group of ten Czechs, including two women and four children, had more trouble when they tried to crash their way to freedom on October 17, 1951. This group used a three-ton truck armored with heavy steel plates, but they could not get beyond the steel and concrete road blocks 500 yards from the border. The refugees jumped out of their truck and made a dash for the border. Some twenty border guards opened fire to stop them but the men in the party, armed with a German submachine gun, four rifles and two pistols, fired back and fought their way through to the border and safety. None of the refugees was hurt, which suggests to me that the border guards didn't try very hard.

Another group of Czechs managed to get out of their country by air on March 24, 1950, as I have mentioned previously. The pilots or members of the crew of the Czech airplanes flying from Bratislava, Ostrava

and Brno that morning determined to take their planes to Munich instead of landing in Prague. The pilot and the whole crew of the plane flying from Bratislava were in on the plot while the plotters overpowered recalcitrant crew members aboard the planes flying from Ostrava and Brno.

Altogether there were eighty-four persons aboard the three planes, twenty-six of whom eventually elected to remain in Germany.

The most sensational escape of all was that organized by locomotive engineer Jaroslav Konvalinka and Karel Truska, the railroad stationmaster of Cheb who, on September 11, 1951, crashed through the Iron Curtain with a locomotive, baggage car and three coaches filled with 107 passengers and trainmen. Thirty-three of these were in on the plot or elected to stay on the Western side of the Iron Curtain.

Konvalinka and Truska had planned their escape for months. At first they thought of taking only a locomotive and their own families, but soon they realized that there were many relatives and friends who wanted to come, too.

Truska, who had spent five months in a labor camp in 1949 after the police found two men hiding in his house, was willing to take chances to beat the Communists. On September 10, twenty-four hours before their D day, Truska rode a motorcycle to the Asch freightyards and surreptitiously threw a switch so that any train that came over that particular track would be diverted onto a spur leading to the Czech border that had not been used since before the Communist *coup d'état*. Then he went to Pilsen to wait for the next morning's Prague-Asch express which he knew would be piloted by Konvalinka.

At Cheb, Truska's wife got aboard and at other stations, Konvalinka's wife and children, and relations and friends of both climbed on with all the baggage they could handle.

During the stop at Franzensbad shortly before Asch, Konvalinka quietly climbed down between the cars and shut off the air-brake line so that the train could not be stopped by anyone pulling the emergency brake. At the same time, Truska, armed with a pistol, climbed into the locomotive cab, and, as the train started, he whipped out his pistol and ordered the fireman, whom he knew to be a Communist, to lie face down on the floor.

As the train approached Asch, it did not slow down. Instead, Konvalinka pushed the throttle all the way forward and the train roared past the station platform, clattered through the freightyards and into the unused spur whose switch Truska had set the day before. Railway officials

were too astonished to do more than duck the flying cinders as the train zoomed through.

Inside the train, the Communist conductor, August Beb, jumped for the emergency brake and pulled it. Of course nothing happened. He reached for the hand brakes but several passengers stood guard over them. The train sped on over rusty rails and across the border to the little German town of Wildenau, and there it stopped.

"A stone fell from my heart. . . . It was the happiest moment of my life when we crossed the border," Konvalinka said later.

German police took charge of the train and the resident American Military Government officer came down to investigate. He passed out cigarettes and candy, free, and set up a chow line and listened to the furious protests of good Communist August Beb. Beb seemed to be worried, particularly about two baskets of fruit which he had undertaken to deliver to Asch. Unless he was allowed to return immediately to Asch, he declared, the fruit would spoil. The American officer agreed that that would indeed be a pity, and ordered that the fruit be distributed among the passengers.

Next day, September 12, 1950, all 107 passengers and trainmen were moved to a DP camp at Graffenwahr where they were interrogated, given a hot meal and beds with clean sheets. August Beb was still fuming and refused to accept the bed. He elected to sleep on the floor beside the bed. He was apparently one of those whom, as the Prague radio angrily declared, the Americans "could not bribe with cigarettes and candy" nor, it would seem, with clean sheets.

There have been some who have got across the border by blind luck. Such was the case of a girl who worked as secretary for one of the foreign correspondents in Prague, who had been repeatedly interrogated and terrified by the police, and who decided that she must get out of the country. She arranged to meet a guide in a frontier town, but when she got there, could not find him. She waited three days and he did not appear. Her presence in the town was beginning to attract attention. In desperation she set out on foot into the hills, in the direction of the border, and, walking and climbing most of one night, somehow got over into Germany.

One young man managed to escape from a forced-labor camp at the uranium mines in Jachymov near the German border. As he approached the border on a mountain path he was still wearing his prison uniform. Suddenly he saw a frontier guard standing between him and the border. Taking a long chance, he kept on walking. When he reached the police-

man, the policeman grinned and turned away and the young man walked out of Czechoslovakia into Germany.

The people who gather information and organize escapes, as well as others, have in some cases become the nucleus of groups with a definite political purpose. The police charge all opposition groups they may uncover with plotting to overthrow the government. That is sometimes a rather crude way of formulating their aims.

For instance, Dr. Oldrich Pecl, an industrialist, and Zavis Kalandra, a publicist and former Trotskyite, were sentenced to death on the usual charge in the political trial that began on May 31, 1950. But the testimony showed that what they really wanted to do was to persuade the United States to bring pressure upon the United Nations which was in turn expected to bring pressure upon the Czechoslovak government to hold free elections. To this end, in early 1949, they and their friends organized a campaign of letter writing. The letters were addressed to the American Embassy from all over Czechoslovakia and all contained the following formula: "We protest against the Communist dictatorship in Czechoslovakia and urge the American government to propose in the United Nations that a U.N. committee be set up to supervise free elections in Czechoslovakia." Some letters explained that the campaign would rise to a climax on May 28, Benes's birthday. In any event, between the first week of April and the end of May, the embassy received more than 8000 letters of this kind. Towards the end of the period the flow of letters flagged because the postal authorities began to confiscate them. The embassy found out that the letters were being confiscated by addressing some samples to itself.

Most of the letters came individually, but some were chain letters. Several batches were mimeographed in the form of a four-page newsletter with crossed Czech and American flags on the front page and news notes and quotations from Masaryk on the other pages. Several scores of letters were left at the U.S. Information Service library in a candy box. An American businessman had several thrust into his pockets at a race track.

Some of the letters were even signed and included return addresses. One contained nearly fifty signatures. And, one, believe it or not, came from members of a district headquarters of the Communist Party.

Every aspect of the campaign seemed to me utterly tragic. That thousands of people should have endangered themselves by attaching their names to such a quixotic gesture! That intelligent men and women, such as Pecl, Kalandra and their friends, should have been so unrealistic as to

imagine that anything could come of their protest! Their lack of realism was so great that they kept files which they buried in bottles in Pecl's garden.

Of course there have been and are other groups with more violent programs. Towards the end of May 1949 the Czech police suddenly took extraordinary security precautions. Policemen were stationed at the entrances to post offices and all public buildings and on bridges, while the Workers' Militia patrolled the streets in pairs at night. The police made systematic checks of the identities of people in hotels and restaurants, and in one case I know of they turned out all the occupants of a bus to check them. Obviously the regime was worried about something. There were rumors that an unsuccessful rising involving thousands of members of the police force and the army had been staged and that an attempt had been made to liberate political prisoners from Litomerice Prison.

Three months later on the twentieth of August, the government confirmed the rumors by announcing that six leaders of a plot to overthrow the government had been sentenced to death and that ten, including three women, had been sentenced to life imprisonment.

The official news agency said that one of the convicted men and his wife had forced their way into Litomerice Prison on May 12, in an effort to liberate one of the prisoners. (From other sources I learned that, in fact, a whole truckload of men forced their way through the prison gates, that in the ensuing gun battle with the prison guards most of the men were killed or captured, and that the attack was a failure.)

The official announcement said that the underground resistance group that staged the attack on Litomerice Prison had collected arms and vehicles and had enlisted supporters in preparation for a "D day" when they would seize strategic points in the cities and liquidate leading government figures. They would then proclaim martial law, dissolve parliament, disband the security police and national committees, and return nationalized factories to their former owners. The plotters were divided into groups under various covers, the announcement said. Thus former army officers headed a Sokol group, while others pretended to be Boy Scout leaders. One entire Boy Scout troop was taken into custody.

The precautions the Communists took in Prague suggest that this plot really existed. According to one story I heard at the time, the police had infiltrated the group and learned the signal which was to launch the rising. By giving the signal, the police thus arrested the plotters as they went to secret meeting places in various parts of the country.

An act of sabotage which may have been part of this plot took place late in May 1949. I heard about the affair but dared not report it until it was officially announced on June 4 that explosives had been placed under the railway tracks a few miles to the southwest of Prague. The announcement said that the explosives had been discovered and removed before any damage had been done. But I learned, from a person whose train had been delayed, that the rails had been blown up.

In October 1949 some of my colleagues received reports that bombs had been exploded in half a dozen district headquarters of the Communist Party in Bohemia, but we were unable to get any confirmation thereof.

Partisan groups have operated spasmodically in the hills of Moravia and in Slovakia ever since the Communists took over. As a rule these groups are formed spontaneously by townsmen, more rarely by peasants, who have in some way tangled with the authorities. Occasionally they manage to survive for a few months, but they are always hunted down by the police, the Workers' Militia, or the army. In times of peace, when there is no real prospect of getting help, partisan activity in the hills and mountains is quite hopeless, especially in such a small country.

One of the longest-lived partisan groups operated in the Moravian hills in 1949 and early 1950 under the name of "Svetlana." In three trials at Gottwaldov, Brno and Olomouc, which followed the final destruction of the group, the prosecutors alleged that it had been organized by a man named Josef Vavra-Starik, a former schoolteacher who became a partisan leader in Slovakia during the war. The prosecutor claimed that while pretending to lead the partisans, Vavra-Starik was actually in the service of the Germans. It was said that after the Communists came into power, he took to the hills and, in American service, organized escapes, espionage and raids on the homes of Communists.

Three members of the group were sentenced to death and some thirty others to prison.

There have been times when peasants and workers were stirred to spontaneous violent resistance. At the height of the struggle between the Catholic Church and the Communist regime, at the end of June 1949, when the Catholic bishops had issued two defiant pastoral letters on successive Sundays, and the Communist police had begun arresting the priests who read the letters, the devout peasants of Moravia and Slovakia were stirred to action. They organized guards to protect their parish priests, and on the week end of June 25–26 serious riots broke out in the Zilina district of Slovakia, and in other parts where the police tried to arrest priests.

Peasants armed with clubs, scythes and pitchforks defied the police who arrived in these villages to arrest the priests. In some cases the police were beaten up, the tires of their automobiles were slashed, and they had to withdraw. Two policemen were beaten to death by a crowd near Rusonborok and a third was pushed over a bridge near Zvolen and drowned in the Hron River.

To quell the worst riots, the Workers' Militia and regular troops moved into four villages near Zilina and imposed martial law for sixty hours.

A few days later another incident, reported by the newspaper *Pravda* of Bratislava, took place in the village of Levoca. Trouble began when the local Action Committee sent an official to get the dean of the parish, ostensibly because he had not responded to repeated summonses of the committee.

According to *Pravda,* "agitators" gave the alarm in Levoca and surrounding villages that the dean, Frantisek Votjes, was to be arrested. A crowd gathered in front of his house. When the official and the dean came out, the crowd attacked the official and persuaded the dean to go back in the house. Meanwhile the crowd grew. When Stefan Stanko, Chairman of the District Action Committee of the National Front appeared, they attacked him, kicked and beat him until he was rescued by the police.

The police arrested some of the rioters, whereupon the crowd surged along to the offices of the District National Committee and demanded their release. More rioters were meanwhile summoned from nearby villages by students who raised the cry that priests were being arrested.

Failing to gain the release of the arrested rioters, the mob finally broke into the homes of the chairman of the District National Committee and of the local Action Committee, smashed their windows and damaged their furniture.

A somewhat similar affair was reported from the Slovak village of Strecno by the newspaper *Svet Prace* on August 10, 1949. There, a group allegedly led by peasant women who wished to prevent the parish priest from being arrested, beat up the chairman of the local National Committee and appointed a "council" of their own. The newspaper said that the police called in the Workers' Militia to quell the peasants and cut off the village's power supply for several weeks.

Acts of sabotage by workers come to light from time to time in reports of mysterious accidents and explosions in Czechoslovak factories and mines. In June 1951, spontaneous strikes at the Skoda Works in Pilsen

and in the Kladno mines were reported by refugees to have led to violent clashes with the police. In November 1951, there was a spontaneous public demonstration in Brno against abolition of the usual Christmas bonus. Violent, open resistance nonetheless remains exceptional. The typical, the more intelligent, and the more effective form of resistance is developing inside the Communist Party and the trade unions, as I will show in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 32 The Workers Turn Against the Party

AFTER a long and difficult courtship, before and during and after the last war, the Communist Party won the Czechoslovak workers in February 1948. The land and its resources, the factories and the mines were the dowry brought by the workers.

But the honeymoon was brief. The Communist Party proved to be a poor provider. As explained in previous chapters, the standard of living of even the most favored workers began to deteriorate late in 1950. The workers were gravely disappointed.

But it was the Communist-organized sweatshop system, becoming more rigorous and more obnoxious in proportion to the increase of economic difficulties, that brought about a complete alienation of the workers' affection for the Party. The Communist sweatshop system with its "shock work," socialist competition, overtime, night work, and "voluntary" brigades developed into a graduated system of forced labor. At the same time the workers found their pay envelopes thinner, their cupboards barer. It became apparent that all the extra effort demanded by the Party was not in the interests of the workers but in the interests of the Soviet Union. From there it was only a short jump to the realization that the Communist Party had won the workers on false pretenses, that it was interested not in their welfare but in the greater power and glory of the Soviet Union.

Perhaps the most disillusioning thing of all for the workers was the fact that this hateful system was implemented by the very organization that had been created by an earlier generation to protect and promote their interests — the trade unions. This was the tragic contradiction that brought home to the workers most forcefully what they had sacrificed to the Communist Party. Many had been unable to appreciate what they had forfeited when the Party took control of the government and, in

effect, suppressed other political parties and all other potential opposition. The issues had been too abstract, the rationalizations about the workers' triumph too easy. But now the Czechoslovak worker began to realize that he had sacrificed his freedom, and to appreciate what this meant. Specifically, he had lost the right to quit his job and take another, the right to complain when and against whom he pleased, the right to elect his own representatives, the privilege of spending his leisure as he pleased; and finally, he had lost labor's supreme weapon, the right to strike.

Let us examine the Communist sweatshop more closely and see how it has developed, and how the workers have resisted with growing effectiveness at every stage.

In June 1950 the government ordered the trade unions to revise and "harden" the norms. Costs were seriously outstripping productivity and the first signs of economic deterioration were observable. The government and the Party leaders were worried.

The trade union organization obediently launched a great campaign to meet and surpass production quotas during the second half of the year. The campaign was centered upon the mines and "Miners' Day" on September 12, when miners whose mines had fulfilled production goals were to get a "loyalty bonus."

Trade union officials in the mines were called upon to use every resource at their command to make the miners produce. In some places, such as the Pokrop mine at Ostrava, trade union officials and Party functionaries took to going down into the mine shafts to spur the workers on. But "shock work" and socialist competitions were not enough. The miners were asked to work overtime and on Sunday, and extra shifts were introduced at night. Some were asked to give up their vacations, and others to cut their vacations short.

When September 12 came it was found that the goals had been reached. But at what cost? Premier Zapotocky had to admit in his speech that "We made it, thanks to exceptional measures." And the president of the central committee of the trade unions, Frantisek Zupka, pointed out that although some success had been achieved "the output per worker has increased to a negligible extent. The cost of production shows a considerable increase."

After Miners' Day came the letdown. Resentful of the extraordinary pressures to which they had been subjected, the miners slowed down. Only four days after the miners had received their bonuses the news-

papers noted an alarming drop in production in the mines. On October 12 the trade union organ *Prace* reported that absenteeism had reached 15 to 17 per cent in the Sokolov mines and 22 per cent in the Hlubina mines. This meant that at Hlubina each miner was absent at the rate of sixty days per year, not counting Sundays and annual vacations (by comparison, in France and Britain an absenteeism of 8 to 12 per cent is considered normal). And on November 13, 1950, according to *Rude Pravo,* the coal output in the Kladno area dropped to 85.5 per cent of the plan, in spite of the fact that November 13 was the first day of a special "shock-workers' week" in honor of the second congress in Warsaw of the "Fighters for Peace." This was, beyond a doubt, a slowdown strike. Unorganized and spontaneous perhaps, but a strike for all that.

For two months after Miners' Day the Communist leaders hesitated, seemingly perplexed by this evidence of resistance. Then on November 17 the central committee of the trade unions pulled itself together and devised a new series of measures to implement the directives it had received from the government in June. The committee decreed that every mine must catch up again to the planned production, and it accordingly set percentages of increase that had to be achieved. The Gottwald mine must produce 23 per cent more than originally prescribed during December; the Benes mine, 33 per cent more; the Zapotocky mine, 52 per cent; and so on.

There was nothing very original about the committees' idea of how this should be accomplished — "shock work" and socialist competition of course, and more overtime, more night work, more Sunday work. Most revealing of the desperate straits into which the country's Communist leadership had fallen — the committee authorized the miners to concentrate for the time being only on the richest veins. How great must have been the Soviet pressure to induce them to advocate exactly the type of uneconomic and destructive production of which the Nazis had been guilty!

In addition, the trade union committee delegated special "secretaries" to study production problems in each mining center and to give orders for overcoming the difficulties. With the secretaries went police agents assigned to ferret out the leaders of workers' resistance, and propagandists who were to stir the miners' productive enthusiasm, if possible.

At the same time "voluntary brigades" of workers were sent out from Prague and other cities to supplement the labor force and act, in effect,

as strike breakers in the mines. But the slowdown strike was not broken. Production remained at a low level.

Meanwhile workers' resistance showed itself in other directions too. The Communist Party began to disintegrate at its lowest levels late in 1950 because it was losing the interest and support of the workers. To illustrate how badly some Party organizations were working, the Party functionaries' monthly, *Funkcionar,* published an irritated account of a meeting on November 13, 1950, of the local organization of the Party in Brno:

> The man who was supposed to be chairman of this meeting did not turn up. The decorations in the hall in which the meeting took place were limited to portraits of Stalin and Gottwald. The mottoes and slogans with which it should have been decorated were entirely lacking. In general, everything that should have indicated the gladness of the occasion was lacking. The tables were bare. Some members sat in their overcoats although the room was warm enough. Only 44 out of 90 members were present, and during the whole period they sat as though impatient for the end of the meeting. Their expressions were not happy. The report of the secretary was short and dull. There was no criticism or self-criticism. The session was an utter failure.

There were many similar items in the press. The Communist daily *Rude Pravo* reported, with evident dismay, in its issues of December 10 and 30 that in some mining regions the local Party organizations were falling apart. It said that at the Ludvik mines at Moravska Ostrava the Communist Party cells no longer held any meetings at all, while only about 12 per cent of the Party members among the miners attended general Party meetings. The newspaper added that at the Koniev mines in the district of Chomutov the Party cells had for several months shown no signs of life. The cell organizations existed only on paper.

Rude Pravo in its issue of December 2, 1950, found it necessary to report also that the lowest echelon of the trade union organizations, the shop committees, had broken down almost everywhere, and especially seriously in the coal fields. In the Benes mine of the Kladno field, it said, only one out of six shop committees was actually working, while in the Gottwald mine the three committees composed of subsurface workers were not operating at all.

The shop committees to which the newspaper referred had been cre-

ated by the Second National Trade Union Congress at the end of 1949. Composed of two or three workmen in each subdivision of a factory or mine, they are subordinate to the factory or works committees and are supposed to bring the trade union organization close to the workers. The Second Trade Union Congress created special liaison officers to be elected for each group of thirty workers. They were to maintain liaison between the workers and the factory and shop committees. But on October 25, 1950, the trade union daily *Prace* reported that scarcely any of these liaison officers had actually been elected.

The internal rot in the trade unions was not confined to the lowest echelons. It extended to district committees many of which, according to a statement by the president of the Federation of Mine Workers in October 1950, had almost ceased to function. The indications were that the trade union officials were hesitating more and more to carry out the new functions which the Communist regime had assigned to them. After all, most of them were workers who had spent long years fighting for the workers' interests and who found their new functions humiliating. Some quit their posts for this reason, and this may explain why Premier Antonin Zapotocky and Minister of Labor Evzan Erban resigned their respective functions as president and secretary-general of the National Trade Union Organization in mid-1950.

Some trade union officials remained in secret alliance with the workers. Much to the embarrassment of the government they conspired with the workers to keep the level of wages moving upwards by a variety of means. They reclassified tens of thousands of workers in higher wage categories; they approved supplementary wages for work under unfavorable conditions; they made up for absenteeism by arranging for overtime and Sunday work at higher wage rates; and they approved issuance of "shock-worker" booklets on a vast scale. The number of these booklets, entitling the holders to buy free market goods at rationed prices, quadrupled during 1950. In one district of Prague it multiplied twenty-two times in nine months, according to *Prace* of November 7, 1950.

The consequence of all this was that costs, in particular wages, kept rising faster than productivity. At the Skoda Works, according to *Prace* of March 9, 1951, 33.5 per cent of all wages paid could be classified as "black," that is, wages to which the workers were not entitled.

Control of wages was among the most important problems that confronted the meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party

on February 21–24, 1951. It decided two important measures. First, no more "shock-worker" booklets were to be issued unless approved by trade union headquarters. Secondly, every factory would have a "wage budget." It would not be allowed to pay out more in salaries than was provided for in the budget unless the factory succeeded in raising productivity per worker. This measure went into effect April 1.

On June 26–27, the Central Committee of the Party met again in an unprecedented special session to deal with acute and alarming economic difficulties caused by the combination of relentless Soviet Russian demands and workers' resistance.

Now the Central Committee was confronted with unfulfilled production targets and a rising tide of inflation, and it came to this general conclusion: targets might yet be reached if ways could be devised to overcome the resistance to intensified work of the miners, the industrial workers and the railroad workers. (Czechoslovak railroad trains, always punctual in the past, were running late, and there had been a wave of accidents.) If the workers could be forced to accept a reduction of wages equal to the reduction in the supply of consumers' goods that had resulted from expansion of heavy industry and deliveries to Russia, then inflation might yet be kept under control. Therefore, there must be a further revision of norms, similar to the one undertaken a year earlier, but much more severe. Implementation of this kind of measure had hitherto been entrusted to the trade unions. But the Central Committee of the Party had lost faith in them. They had lamentably failed in their assigned task of "hardening the norms" in 1950, and had shown themselves incapable of cracking down on the workers.

The Central Committee's solution was as follows: It removed responsibility for raising productivity and revising norms from the trade unions and authorized the management of national enterprises to impose production figures and pay rates arbitrarily. Henceforth percentage increases in productivity and revised norms would be set by executive order in each sector of industry. All pretense of bargaining was eliminated. It would be up to factory directors, section chiefs, and, in the final analysis, foremen, to see to it that the workers complied. The role of the trade unions would be merely to act as propagandists in support of the decisions made by management, or, in the words of the economic review *Hospodar* of October 11, to "create a political atmosphere that will assist the director."

As the trade unions' traditional functions were suppressed, the government assigned them new ones. A law of December 19 made them responsible for the administration of health insurance (as in the Soviet Union).

Meanwhile, although no official figures were published, various public statements indicated that paid overtime increased from about three quarters of an hour per worker per day in 1950 to about one hour in 1951. In addition the ceaseless succession of "voluntary brigades," after normal working hours and on Sundays, probably added another hour to the average work day so that by the end of 1951 the average worker was putting in ten hours per day and sixty hours weekly. Those most burdened were undoubtedly the workers on the new giant projects and those making equipment for these projects. *Rude Pravo* wrote on December 28, 1951:

> In spite of the bad weather the battle to start the first blast furnace on time at Ostrava goes on. Every minute is precious during these last days of the third year of the Five-Year Plan. While thousands of workers were spending a happy Christmas with their families the welders, the mechanics, the carpenters and masons at the Klement Gottwald foundry at Vitkovice paid no attention to the time or to their own sacrifice. The welders worked day and night, sometimes remaining at work for 36 hours at a stretch. One group of carpenters headed by Comrade Vyskocil did not leave their work from the 23rd to the 25th of December, even during the night. The members of the military brigade . . . decided to work without interruption on December 31 and on New Year's Day.

The miners' special privilege of working only forty-six hours per week was abolished. As Sunday work became the rule, rather than the exception, in mines and foundries special rates of pay for Sunday work were abolished. A number of holidays were suppressed and the total per year was limited to seven. At the same time the spread in wages between unskilled and skilled workers was increased. Material advantages promised "shock workers" increased. The most distinguished were promoted to managerial positions or awarded one of a new series of decorations.

Step by step the regime intensified the exploitation of the worker and limited his freedom to dispose of his own labor. More and more pressure was brought to bear upon workers to volunteer for "brigades," varying in duration from an afternoon or evening to several months, in branches

of industry where labor was most needed—coal mines, foundries, steel mills. Permanent transfers of labor increased, especially from light industry, food processing and commerce to heavy industry. Most spectacular was the shift of 77,500 white-collar workers to heavy industry; but there were many thousands of other shifts, of peasants from Slovak farms to new factories in Slovakia and Bohemia, of skilled Bohemian workers to new factories in Slovakia, of all kinds of workers from nonessential industries to the giant projects.

Although the government already exercised extensive and arbitrary power over the workers, the supply of labor never quite caught up to the official demand. The press continued to complain about absenteeism and fluctuation, especially among young workers. On December 19, 1951, therefore, the National Assembly passed a Law on Manpower Reserves. Under this law young people who take jobs in industry are automatically incorporated into the State Manpower Reserve, which imposes upon them the following obligations: They must attend a "professional training institute" for two or three years to become skilled workers, or else they must attend a short course at a "factory training school" to qualify as specialized workers in mass production operations. Thereafter—and this is the crux of the matter—for a period varying from three to five years they will be at the disposal of the Minister of Manpower who may employ them according to their skills wherever he deems best. During this period the young people may not take a job on their own; the Ministry of Manpower assignment is compulsory. The law went into effect immediately for young miners and foundry workers and will be applied gradually in other spheres as fast as suitable training institutes and schools are established.

From the foregoing it may be seen that many young workers will henceforth be in the service of the state for a period up to eight years. After or during that period, of course, comes two years' military service through which the recruit is also likely to be used for some kind of labor.

The purpose of the State Manpower Reserve was set forth with more clarity than was perhaps intended by the newspaper *Lidove Noviny* on January 5, 1952: "The capitalists also had a manpower reserve. It was the army of the unemployed who would seize any chance to work, however unpleasant the conditions. We, however, on the threshold of the fourth year of the Five-Year Plan are forming an army of young workers, builders of socialism." The startling implication, of course, was that the new

reserve was to perform the functions allegedly performed by the unemployed in a capitalist system.

This was part of the government's scheme for preventing and breaking workers' resistance. It was a policy of divide and rule. The labor force — which in most factories had formerly been a more or less homogeneous group of men who lived in the same area, came from the same background and belonged to the same organizations — was now transformed into a mosaic of social elements. Three general factors contributed hereto: The transfers of labor to new places of work, the introduction of women into the labor force, and the expansion of various kinds of forced labor. Thus, according to the Czechoslovak press, in January 1952 about half the men employed in the mines at Kladno were soldiers (military brigades) and volunteers for temporary work in the mines (civilian brigades), inmates of forced-labor camps and other prisoners.

In spite of all these measures the regime was not able to get from the Czechoslovak workers the kind of performance it wanted. This was amply demonstrated by developments on two enterprises which may well be described as the economic pillars of Soviet strategic planning in the Czech lands — the new, giant steel plant at Moravska Ostrava and the related coal mines of Ostrava-Karvina.

Throughout the year 1951, the country's entire economic activity was centered on the Moravska Ostrava project: "At any price the first blast furnace must be in operation by January 1, 1952." *Hospodar* wrote on October 4, 1951: "Beginning with the new year the new foundry will begin to deliver its output to industry. If that should not be accomplished and the first pouring should be delayed several days or even weeks, the factories would have much difficulty in fulfilling the plan. . . ."

But the blast furnace was *not* finished on time. Not until February 28, 1952, was the first steel actually poured.

Meanwhile, in the Ostrava-Karvina coal mines which furnish most of Czechoslovakia's hard coal, performance also lagged. The 1951 plan called for an output of 16,000,000 tons, but the plan was fulfilled by only 90.6 per cent. The newspaper *Prace* disclosed on February 14, 1952, that the number of shafts in these mines employing *stakhanovite* methods declined during the year from 88 in May, to 54 in November, and 44 in December.

In an effort to do something about this poor performance, the Central Committee of the Party on October 15, 1951, adopted a resolution in

accordance with which the government on the following day issued a decree imposing upon the works of Ostrava Karvina a set of compulsory *stakhanovite* methods. The effect of this decree was eloquently set forth in a report by Oldrich Cernik, regional secretary of the Party at Ostrava, published in *Nova Svoboda* on February 21, 1952. "Increases in output have been achieved thanks to the addition of 5000 laborers," he said, "but not as a result of any increase in output per head. . . . We have made a step backwards. In January the plan for individual output was fulfilled by only 86 per cent. This result is inferior to that of December and November, and even to results prior to the government's and the Party's decisions. Individual output continues on the downgrade."

Cernik complained that many Party members showed no interest in political life, upset Party discipline and introduced opportunistic tendencies into Party organizations. This was responsible for "the extreme passivity of a large part of our organizations which do not fulfill their functions."

He illustrated his point with the following story: "The principal organization committee of the Party in the Ostrava-Karvina mines examined the Party and government resolutions and took decisions to put them into practice. The decisions were passed on to the principal committees of the different mine shafts and the organization committees. They were also examined by the Works Councils, and by the committees of the Union of Czechoslovak Youth. . . . All that remained was to find someone to put the decisions into practice. Three weeks later we went to check up on the execution of the decisions. *We discovered that the overwhelming majority of the members of the Party were even unaware of their existence!*"

How was this possible, considering the intensive government publicity campaign by press and radio, the hundreds of meetings and speeches — not to mention the number of persons arrested for absenteeism and obstruction of the government's and the Party's decisions?

Cernik continued: "The first stage in the annual party meetings was supposed to take place January 27. However, five out of ten organizations had to postpone the date either because of the complete absence or the insufficient presence of members. Three organizations held their meetings on the date scheduled; at one meeting only 17 per cent of members took part, while at the other two participation was 45 and 50 per cent."

The conclusion to be drawn from Cernik's report was either that the Party organization was falling apart or that Cernik had run into a case

of deliberate boycott. Either or both explanations were plausible. This was workers' resistance in a form admirably suited to the inclinations and possibilities of the Czech people.

This was also the situation that led to a purge that was more than an ordinary Communist Party purge, and which I have called a counter-reformation. The purge was intended to renew the faith and interest of the workers in the Communist Party and reinvigorate the Party.

Much of the internal weakness of the Party derived from the basic elements of its composition.

There were the Party veterans, the old hands who joined in the twenties and took leading parts in underground resistance during the war. A few of them had risen to the top ranks in Party and government, but most had lagged behind in the ranks and were, with reason, regarded by the regime as dangerous elements. They were revolutionaries or at least nonconformists by temperament and tradition.

There were the veteran trade unionists who were embittered by the unworthy role assigned them in the new regime.

There were, among the vast number of persons who joined the Party after the Second World War, a number of vigorous young idealists who were disillusioned by the tyrannical practices of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

Among the postwar members were many who joined for reasons of pure expediency and who constituted a dead weight within the organization; there were also those who joined as a safety precaution to hide their hostility to the regime. Many in this latter category might be called remnants of the bourgeoisie.

Out of these elements — veteran Communists and trade unionists who have been thrust aside, disillusioned young idealists, and a varied assortment of remnants of the bourgeoisie — a resistance leadership is growing up. It combines anti-Stalinist Communists with Catholics and peasants. Perhaps the most significant element in this leadership are these disillusioned young idealists. The information I have received from Czechoslovakia in late 1951 and 1952 indicates that they represent a large number of young people who were started on the road to resistance by resentment of the severe restrictions imposed on them by the regime. In many cases, I am told, it was the law on the State Labor Reserve that opened the young people's eyes. The prevailing notion that the regime has the full support of the young people can now be discarded; the youngsters who

shouted most enthusiastically for Gottwald in 1948 are likely to be the Titoist leaders of the fifties.

Thus far the resistance and its leadership are almost without organization. Yet, working spontaneously, one might say instinctively, this resistance has shown its strength in a number of ways. It has brought about the neglect of the lower echelons of the Communist Party, which in turn has led to the neglect of the lower and intermediate echelons of the trade unions. It has brought about the failure of the elaborate program for intensifying the exploitation of labor, and has made it impossible for the regime to fulfill its five-year plan targets or meet the Russian demands for ever-increasing deliveries of heavy industrial goods. And the regime, as its popular support has evaporated even within its own ranks, has had to resort to direct autocratic methods enforced by the police.

In Czechoslovakia, for the first time, Stalin's Communists have run up against a real trade union tradition, a tradition with democratic political content, with roots in generations of workers. What has happened has been a demonstration of what would happen in any other democratic industrialized Western country conquered by the Communists. It has demonstrated also that the decisive struggle in countries of this kind is likely to take place in the factories and the mines.

With considerations of this kind in mind, the International Federation of Free Trade Unions, from its headquarters in Brussels, addressed to the workers of Czechoslovakia a message of comradeship and encouragement early in October 1951. The occasion for the message was an election of trade union shop committees and liaison officers which, much to the surprise of the workers, was to be held by secret ballot. The workers were even to have the right to cross off official candidates and write in their own. This departure from the usual methods of election by acclamation may have been part of the "counterreformation." In any case, the International Federation saw an opportunity for the Czech workers to throw out the official candidates, the "shock workers," and the Stalinist stooges. And there are indications that something like that did happen. According to official announcements, 60 per cent of the men elected were "entirely new."

The message, broadcast by the "Voice of Free Europe," the "Voice of America" and the principal Western radio stations, made a just estimate of the workers' resistance in Czechoslovakia:

"Under the circumstances," it said, "your struggle cannot go beyond the limits of passive resistance, that is, your struggle is limited by your

strength." In these terms the Trade Union Federation recognized that at present there is no prospect in Czechoslovakia of staging a rising that could overthrow the regime. It would be folly at this stage to try to establish an elaborately organized underground. That would merely invite annihilation of the country's resistance leadership.

Nonetheless, the time will come for more active resistance and, with this in mind, the International Federation concluded its message as follows: "Sooner or later the passive resistance of the workers must develop into a counterattack. Sooner or later they must begin to reconquer all the rights they have lost and perhaps, later on, even those they did not enjoy in the past. Sooner or later they must throw out the Stalinists and take direction of their affairs into their own hands. To these ends they must begin, to some extent at least, to carry on the struggle in an organized manner."

This is the struggle in which the Good Soldier Schweik is engaged. We have seen how he is carrying on the struggle in the mines and factories of Czechoslovakia. Most of the time he will have to fight alone. But let us consider whether there are not some things that we, in the West, can do to help him.

We can help with words and with acts.

Our words reach behind the Iron Curtain by radio. In preparing radio broadcasts, it should be remembered that listening to the radio in an Iron Curtain country is not like listening in the United States. People do not turn their dial to the "Voice of America" and then hear it with half an ear while they are doing something else; listening to Western radio stations is a serious business. It is, in itself, an act of resistance. Opponents of the present regimes behind the Iron Curtain therefore want solid fare. They are not concerned with entertainment value. They do not care much for humorous material, soap operas, or descriptions of life in the United States. They do not want "March of Time" dramatics. They want to know, in very serious terms, what is going on in the world. They are interested in political discussions such as provided by Bruce Lockhart over the BBC. His broadcasts are of inestimable value in maintaining the morale of anti-Communists or anti-Stalinists, and that is the most important function the radio can perform at this stage.

Beyond the news, these people want something even more solid. Iron Curtain refugees have suggested to me that Western radio stations could play an important role in preserving Western culture in the satellite

countries. They might, during the night, broadcast extracts from books and magazines at dictation speed. Groups of the opponents of the regime could then arrange for one of their members to take down the broadcasts and type or mimeograph them and distribute them to their friends. By this means cultural material, to which 99 per cent of the people behind the Curtain would otherwise have no access, would gain wide circulation.

The realization that propaganda was not our only weapon, that there were acts we could undertake to help the resistance in Czechoslovakia and other Curtain countries, was awakened among many leading Americans when they began looking for ways of obtaining the release of William Oatis. The steps that have now been taken against Czechoslovakia on the economic front had, however, been urged for several years by a few tough-minded men in the U. S. State Department and the British Foreign Office. These men pointed out that Czechoslovakia, as the main industrial country among the satellites and the main purveyor of industrial equipment to other satellites, was the point at which economic pressure could be brought to bear most effectively.

The pity is that we had to wait for the Oatis case to begin doing so. It is now very late. If we had cracked down on trade with Czechoslovakia soon after the Communists took over in 1948, before they had integrated the country's economy with Soviet Russia, we would have exerted more influence than is possible now.

We can also strengthen the resistance by helping the refugees from Czechoslovakia and other tyrannical regimes behind the Curtain. Here our acts have until recently lagged far behind our words.

Some 50,000 people have fled from Czechoslovakia since the Communists took power in February 1948. They risked their lives to escape the Communist tyranny, in the conviction that the Western democratic powers would receive them with open arms. But thousands have been heartbreakingly disappointed. I have even heard of cases of men who, after long and bitter months, could no longer bear the alternating indifference and suspicion, the inactivity and the squalor of the displaced persons camps in Germany, and who returned illegally to Czechoslovakia and threw themselves upon the mercy of the Communist authorities. This may sound incredible to most people, but it is not so incredible to those who knew the conditions that prevailed among the Czechoslovak refugees in a camp called Valka, near Nuremberg. Here they were housed in wooden huts, most with broken windowpanes and no roofs,

and were cared for, not by the occupying power, but by their former enemies, the Germans. When questioned about the camp in October 1951, a member of the Nuremberg city police contended that "Conditions there are all the fault of the filthy swine we have there. During and after the war, the place was in splendid condition. But now there is nothing we can do to force the people there to take care of the place. If we try to punish them for anything, they go crying to the Americans. The Americans are too soft with these swine."

The explanation for the policeman's intemperate language was in part that the Germans had assigned Sudeten Germans to more than half the administrative and police posts in the camp. And this circumstance, while it might have helped to overcome the language problem, made friction inevitable.

During 1951 conditions at Valka and in other camps improved, but American occupation authorities bear a heavy responsibility for ever having allowed them. As of October 1951, there were 8000 Czechoslovaks left in camps in Western Germany and Austria. Another 10,000 were living on their own in Germany and Austria. The rest had scattered to the four corners of the globe. Australia had proved a most generous host, accepting about 5000. The United Kingdom had taken about 3500, the United States about 2500, Canada and France about 2000 each.

Late last year and in 1952, several laudable projects to help refugees, and at the same time make use of their talents in the East-West struggle, have been launched by the National Committee for Free Europe, an organization supported by private donations in the United States.

It has sponsored "Radio Free Europe" whose first broadcasting station in Munich, Germany, is entirely staffed by refugees from Czechoslovakia. Its round-the-clock programs now dominate the airwaves in Czechoslovakia. Additional stations devoted to other satellite nations are being organized.

At Strasbourg, France, the National Committee for Free Europe is sponsoring a "University in Exile," associated with Strasbourg University, for young refugees from the satellite countries. The Strasbourg unit, which began work in the autumn of 1951 with one hundred students studying in their own languages, under refugee instructors, is to be the first of a network. Other units may be attached to various universities in western Europe and one may be established for refugees from Bulgaria in connection with Roberts College, an American institution at Istanbul, Turkey.

Refugee leaders, with whom I have spoken about the university project, hope that it will not become a kind of institute for advanced studies peopled by middle-aged and elderly professors, but that it will concentrate on young men in their twenties. They point out that on the Communist side of the Curtain there are opportunities for young people to get schooling of many kinds without any charge, albeit from the Communist point of view, but that when young refugees get across to the Western side their opportunities to study are few and far between.

For men of very advanced qualifications—former ministers, high government officials and the like, the National Committee has for several years maintained a Middle European Studies Center in New York City. This center has made use of the knowledge of a number of outstanding refugees in studies that will prove useful when the time for liberation comes. There are, to be sure, any number of other organizations in Europe and the United States dealing with refugees from the Communist world. But it is beyond doubt that the leaders among the refugees feel that in the West insufficient attention is given to the intellectual and cultural aspects of the refugees' needs and of the struggle against Communism.

Entirely new and splendid vistas have been opened up by the Mutual Security Act of October 10, 1951, which appropriated $100,000,000 to help selected persons, who have escaped or who are still behind the Iron Curtain, "to form . . . into elements of the military force supporting the North Atlantic Treaty Organization or for other purposes."

To direct the spending of this money an interdepartmental committee of Defense Department and State Department officials was formed, headed since January 1, 1952, by Raymond B. Allen of the University of Washington. James Reston in an article in the *New York Times* on December 8, 1951, called this the Department of Dirty Tricks whose purpose was "to counter the subversive warfare activities of the Communists in the Western world and to create behind the Iron Curtain all mischief short of war."

This department was "to co-ordinate propaganda and cloak-and-dagger operations of all government departments, to encourage anti-Communist resistance movements. It was to fight the 'cold war' at all levels: at the trade union level, with funds equal to those used by the Communists in their attempts to paralyze Western industry; at the political-action level, with newsprint and presses and transportation; at the cloak-and-dagger level with spies and counterspies; and, if it isn't subversive to mention

ideas, at the intellectual level, with ideas that will appeal to men and women in and on the fringes of the Soviet world."

In this connection it should also be mentioned that Congress last year authorized the U.S. Army to enlist up to 12,500 selected aliens. This should have permitted the formation of a splendid anti-Communist legion from among the displaced persons, and perhaps it will still be possible to do so from the more recent refugees from behind the Curtain. Unfortunately, the legislation has come very late; the most able young displaced persons have by now found means of livelihood in Europe or have emigrated overseas, leaving behind a hard core of the elderly and unfit. And the army has thus far apparently muffed its opportunity; of 5000 applicants, only 220 had been accepted up to April 1952. However, the opportunities offered by the Mutual Security Act's $100,000,000 appropriation — and other appropriations which must logically follow — look unlimited. With this money the most effective acts yet performed in the struggle against Communism become possible. Quite naturally, little is known yet about how the money is being spent. I hope only that not too much is being devoted to operations of a pseudomilitary nature. By this I mean trying to organize violent resistance. There is and will continue to be some violent resistance in Czechoslovakia, as I have explained in the chapter called "Resistance." But this is the crudest, most wasteful, and one of the most ineffective ways of fighting Communism. The young men in the hills and forests haven't a chance. If war between the West and the Soviet Union had begun or were an immediate prospect, it would be different. But under the circumstances, the partisans will be hunted down by the Communist police and killed long, long before we in the West can help them. Then, when the opportunity for effective action on the internal front offers itself, or when we need them in time of war, the best young resistance leaders will have been wiped out.

Our operations behind the Curtain should be guided by the word "infiltration." All that we have learned about Communist methods of infiltration, in political parties, cultural organizations, trade unions, should be applied in reverse. Subtlety, political understanding and ideas are needed more than guns at this stage of operations behind the Curtain. If armed men, weapons and radio transmitters and the like are sent behind the Curtain let secrecy be absolute; there have been too many unnecessary casualties already.

Eventually, of course, we must help the Czechoslovak people and all the other peoples behind the Iron Curtain to regain their freedom. This

is one of the great responsibilities that command us — the United States and the whole Western community — to cultivate our military strength. If we are very strong there is an outside chance that these countries might yet be liberated by our political pressure combined with the operations of the resistance groups on the internal front — something like a reverse of the operation by which the Communists took power. On the other hand, we may eventually liberate them in war, in which case, as demonstrated during the last war, the resistance in all its varied forms can be a valuable ally.

CHAPTER 33 The Communist Counterreformation

Three men met in a cell of Pankrac prison and began to question each other about why they had been imprisoned.
The first man explained: "I spoke against Slansky."
The second man explained: "I spoke for Slansky."
Then the two turned to the third man, who said: "I'm Slansky."

EVER since the Communists seized power in Czechoslovakia, in February 1948, they have been purging their party. As Pierre Victurnien Vergniaud, the Girondist deputy, said shortly before he was executed by his fellow French revolutionaries in 1793: "The revolution, like Saturn, successively devours all its children."

The Communist purge is, however, a more sinister thing than Vergniaud conceived; it is a continuing process to which fall victim not only the children of the revolution, but the children's children, and so on without end. As the Communists see it, as soon as or even before the external enemies of the Party have been destroyed, the struggle must turn inwards in the form of a purge. The purge is the Communists' method of internal renewal. They have no other.

Yet the later stages of this Czechoslovak purge do not fit into the usual pattern. With the arrest of Rudolf Slansky, secretary-general of the Party, and his associates, it has risen to a strange climax. To be sure, the Czechoslovak purge has been accompanied by all the familiar denunciations and invective previously heaped upon Gomulka in Poland for espousing a national, Polish way to socialism; upon Traicho Kostov in Bulgaria for putting his country's national economic interests ahead of those of the

Soviet Union; upon Laszlo Rajk in Hungary for attempting — or so the prosecution said — to install a national Communist, that is, a Titoist regime.

These charges — nationalist deviationism in various forms — are being supplemented in the preparatory propaganda with the charge of "cosmopolitanism." This curious crime, briefly defined, consists of indulgence in "bourgeois" internationalism as distinguished from "working-class" internationalism. Yet these charges are intentionally misleading. For Rudolf Slansky is no Gomulka, no Kostov, no Rajk. No one at all acquainted with his background, character and record would suspect him of any form of nationalism. On the contrary, he is as true a Muscovite as ever sacrificed his country's interests on the altar of "the socialist fatherland." He was the number one Kremlin agent in Czechoslovakia. And, as I will demonstrate, the men purged with him were of the same ilk.

No, the nationalists in the Czechoslovak Communist party are assuredly not Slansky and Company. The nationalists are Gottwald and Company. President Klement Gottwald has gathered around himself the most nationally-minded Communists in Czechoslovakia. Thus, in contrast to what has happened in all the other satellite countries, here in Czechoslovakia the nationalists led by Gottwald are purging the Muscovites headed by Slansky.

How is this possible? Is Gottwald defying the Kremlin? Or is he acting by arrangement with the Kremlin? And if so, why has the Kremlin agreed to sacrifice its best agents in Czechoslovakia?

After careful examination of the character and background of the victims of the purge, I have come to the conclusion that what we are witnessing in Czechoslovakia is a Communist "counterreformation." That is, just as the Catholic Church once sought to combat the Protestant reformation with its own counterreformation, so the Kremlin, faced with alarming growth of an anti-Russian nationalism, with workers' resistance and declining production in the vital area of Czechoslovakia, has resorted to a domesticated variety of national Communism, a controlled, housebroken form of Titoism.

To understand how this came about we must know something about the special characteristics of the Czechoslovak Communist Party and its leaders and how they got that way, as well as about the economic problems the regime has faced since late in 1950.

The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia had a reputation before the last war of harboring an unusually large proportion of Trotskyites and

other deviationists. The Party stuck to the "popular front" idea and never really accepted the switch in Party line according to which Social Democrats were "as bad" as the Nazis; they lived too close to the Nazis to go along with that; in the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia elections from lower to higher echelons took place; there was some inner party democracy; outside of Party meetings, Communist functionaries often pressed personal views openly.

Efforts by higher Party headquarters to have local Party organizations expel certain functionaries accused of deviationism sometimes did not work. The local organizations would not do it, and the cases had to be taken to the Central Committee or even to the Party congress.

This was the Party of which Klement Gottwald was the secretary general from 1929 until early 1946. It was not a Party with which Moscow could be very happy. Nor was Gottwald the sort of man in whom the Kremlin could entirely place confidence. It may be useful therefore to deviate at some length here to review Gottwald's career, for except during the interlude when he was challenged by Slansky, he was and is the dominant figure in Czech Communism.

Gottwald was born on November 23, 1896, in the village of Dedice in Moravia on the day of Saint Klement, after whom he was named by his Catholic parents. His parents were peasants. When Klement was twelve years old, his widowed mother sent him to relatives in Vienna to learn the carpenter's trade. There he remained during the formative years from twelve to eighteen. In these years Gottwald did a lot of reading. According to his official biographers he was not allowed to use the electric light in the house where he lived and often read under the street light in front of the house, or by candlelight in his room. His taste in literature, we are told, was considerably above that of other carpenter's apprentices. He read the socialist literature of the day, Goethe and Shakespeare and the Czech author Havlicek.

In Vienna, Gottwald became increasingly conscious of being a Czech. It is said that in his first years, when he was still learning German, he won with his fists the respect of other boys who jeered at his Bohemian accent. At the school he attended, when not in the carpentry shop, he is said to have received bad marks for conduct because he refused to speak at all to a teacher who reprimanded him for his poor German.

In July 1914 Gottwald returned to Czechoslovakia and went to work as a carpenter, first at Lipik and later at Hranice. By this time he spoke

perfect German and, with his Germanic name, could pass as an "honest Austrian." But this he would not do. Conscripted in April 1915 and assigned to the 42nd artillery at Steyr, he made himself the leader of the thirty Czechs in the regiment. He represented them as spokesman when complaints were to be made and at night led them in singing Czech songs. He made himself so unpopular with his superiors that he was transferred to a searchlight unit composed of political "unreliables" in Vienna.

Later he was sent to the Western front, was wounded, served again for a time in Vienna and finally, towards the end of the war, was moved to the Italian front. From there he was sent home on leave. He stayed home, as a "deserter."

On October 30, 1918, after the proclamation of the Czechoslovak Republic, Gottwald joined the new Czechoslovak Army as a member of the 6th artillery regiment in Brno. But his military career was brief, and in the following year he went to work in a furniture factory called Tusculum at Rousinov. His career as a leader began almost simultaneously, for he was first elected shop steward, then secretary of the local organization of the Social Democratic left wing and finally chairman of the twentieth district of the Workers' Gymnastic Union.

In 1921 he joined the newly formed Communist Party and very quickly assumed responsible posts. His first was as editor of the Communist Slovak newspaper *Hlas Ludo* — Voice of the People. In 1924 he became editor in chief of the Slovak language daily *Pravda* published at Moravska Ostrava in Moravia. In these capacities he developed a clear, straightforward and forceful expository style.

In 1925 Gottwald was elected to the Central Committee of the Party and in 1926 was appointed head of the Central Committee's agitation and propaganda (Agitprop) department. He was deemed an ardent member of the left wing of the Party.

At the fourth congress of the Communist International (Comintern) in Moscow in 1928, Gottwald was elected to the executive committee. In the following year, after the Communist right wing headed by Jilek had been purged, he was elected secretary-general of the Czech Communist Party. From that day to this he has been head of the Party, one of the few top-flight Communists who have survived so long.

Gottwald advocated a "popular front" of all anti-Nazis, and at the seventh congress of the Comintern in Moscow in 1935 he took a prominent part in drafting the general "popular front" policy. After Moscow dropped this policy and began to combat the Social Democrats as fiercely

as the Nazis, Gottwald nonetheless stuck to his previous line, which he insisted was the only one possible in a country so directly threatened as Czechoslovakia. In the late thirties he also busied himself with recruiting Czech volunteers for the Spanish Civil War. One of the batteries defending Madrid was named after him.

In fighting against capitulation to Hitler, Gottwald was able to combine his role as a Communist with his natural inclination to nationalism. At every opportunity he inveighed against the "shame" of surrender and called upon the "nation of the Hussites" to stand and fight the Nazis. At the height of the crisis great crowds gathered in front of parliament, which was then located on the banks of the Vltava River, and Gottwald appeared on the balcony to address them not as a Communist but as a national leader. In the heat of the moment he welcomed at his side on the balcony a man named Gajda, leader of the Czech fascists, because Gajda was also eager to fight the Germans. (Gajda, a son-in-law of the White Russian Admiral Koltchak, was later expelled from Prague by the Nazis and died in the country.)

Gottwald and Gajda addressed the crowd, which responded with cries of "Give us arms and we will fight them." Gottwald and Gajda shook hands before the cheering crowd. The incident is not mentioned in the official histories, but Party veterans remember it, for it reveals an important facet of Gottwald's character.

At the end of November 1938 the Central Committee decided to send Gottwald, Slansky, Kopecky and some others who were not considered "expendable" to Moscow. In Moscow Gottwald lay low during the period of the Nazi-Soviet pact. But after the Germans invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941, he began to write long military and political commentaries for Czech and Slovak language broadcasts. He told his people that passive resistance was not enough, that they must engage in mass sabotage, wrecking and partisan activity.

On April 4, 1945, a new Czechoslovak government, formed in Moscow, returned to Czechoslovak territory, at Kosice. For the first time Communists were in the government and Gottwald became deputy prime minister.

A year later, in March 1946, Gottwald was elected to the new post of president of the Party. As such he would preside over the meetings of the Party Congress every four years, of the Central Committee about once yearly, and of the presidium of the Central Committee every few months. Slansky took over Gottwald's former job as secretary-general. This change

was decided upon by the Central Committee ostensibly so that Gottwald would be freer to carry on his governmental duties. And after the elections in May, which established the Communist Party as the largest in the land, Gottwald was in fact elevated to the post of prime minister.

Adolf Hoffmeister, the former Czechoslovak Ambassador to France, in the November 1948 issue of *Czechoslovak Life* provided a little picture of Gottwald at this time, just after his election to the post of chairman of the Party. "Late the same night," Hoffmeister wrote, "we met over a glass of slivovice at the home of Vaclav Nosek. At last Klement Gottwald, the long day at an end, sat back and relaxed. From the depths of an armchair he regaled us with song. As it happened his theme was still about honest toil. He sang about blacksmiths, men whose brows are wet with honest sweat but who know how to enjoy life and to take it easy when the day's work is done and smoke a pipe of peace."

The pipe-smoking, jovial Gottwald was obviously not deeply disturbed about the changes in the Party. This well-upholstered, comfortable extrovert never doubted himself or his future. Hard-hitting and ruthless as he was in politics, he went right on relaxing at night — more and more frequently as time slipped by, and usually with a bottle of wine. This was something he had learned from the Viennese. He also took to reading detective stories — a very un-Marxist habit. His fat, beaming wife, the butt of scores of jokes, went right on buying hats by the dozen, patronizing fashionable dressmakers, and otherwise enjoying her husband's prominence in a most bourgeois manner.

But from the point of view of internal Communist Party politics Gottwald's shift from the post of secretary-general to that of chairman was no promotion. On the contrary it signified that the Kremlin did not entirely trust Klement Gottwald. No other Communist Party in this part of the world had both a chairman and a secretary-general. This split in the topmost authority of the Party had been imposed by the Kremlin so that Slansky would take control of the day-to-day affairs of the Party and act as a check on Gottwald. Slansky was to keep Gottwald in his place by making him realize that he was not irreplaceable. Slansky was to be something more than number two man in Czechoslovakia. He was to be number one and a half — the man whose role it was constantly to threaten Gottwald's position as number one.

Who was this man the Kremlin selected for so delicate and important a role?

* * *

Rudolf Slansky was born of an old, Jewish, south Bohemian family of small traders in the year 1901. Although almost everyone says his family name was originally Salzman, this is not the case. Slansky is an old Bohemian Jewish name. He had two brothers, one of whom died in a Nazi concentration camp. The other, named Richard, clung to Rudolf's shirttails, managed to get appointments as Chargé d'Affaires in Teheran, Minister in Warsaw and as a press officer in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and has now been purged and presumably arrested with his brother Rudolf.

Along with Gottwald, Rudolf Slansky was one of the early leaders of the Czech Communist Party. When Gottwald was editing a Slovak-language newspaper in Moravska Ostrava, Slansky was district secretary of the Party in the same town. For a time Slansky, too, functioned as an editor of the Party's main daily, *Rude Pravo*. He and Gottwald belonged to the group of left-wing Communists known as the "Karlin boys," and outwardly they were always pals. But within the group they were rivals. The rivalry between the two men has continued ever since, with far-reaching effects on the life of the Communist Party and the state of Czechoslovakia. But Gottwald usually maintained the upper hand. At the last Party congress before the war Gottwald made Slansky eat humble pie by apologizing publicly for ideological errors. Slansky undoubtedly ached for revenge.

In wartime exile in Moscow, Slansky concerned himself mainly with directing partisan activity. At the same time he was busy building his political fences and gaining the confidence of high officials in the Kremlin. Although he had few personal friends he was a pleasant and youthful-looking man who knew how to be agreeable when he wished, and how to inspire the confidence of the right people. He affected no nationalist airs. Certainly he must have seemed to the Kremlin officials an easier fellow to handle, and a more reliable one than the earthy, outspoken, self-indulgent Gottwald who often seemed to be a Czech first and a Communist second.

At the top of the Party, over which Gottwald and Slansky presided in 1946, stood the Central Committee with 97 members and the Central Committee's presidium with 22 members. The committee's secretariat of seven, headed by Rudolf Slansky, combined the functions which in other Communist Parties are normally divided between a Politburo and an Orgburo. That is, it was both the policy-making body and the body that controlled the Party, and it constituted an extraordinary concentration of power. Obviously Gottwald, as chairman of the unwieldy presidium and Central

Committee, was at a disadvantage vis-à-vis Slansky. In fact, Gottwald no longer exerted real authority inside the Party apparatus. His authority derived from his position at the head of the government, as prime minister, and was now largely restricted to the governmental apparatus.

From the secretariat of the Central Committee the lines of authority extended downwards through the Party machine, and from the Party machine across to the governmental pyramid whose structure paralleled that of the Party. This meant that usually the cabinet took its cue from the secretariat of the Central Committee; the 19 regional National Committees from an equal number of the regional committees of the Party; the 270 district National Committees from an equal number of district committees of the Party; and the 16,000 local National Committees from an equal number of local Party committees.

The governmental bodies at each level were normally composed of representatives of all political parties, among whom the Communists were dominant. The government headed by Gottwald, and the Communist Party headed by Slansky might be visualized as two pyramids of authority whose structures were parallel, except that the Party pyramid was somewhat superior at each level to its governmental counterpart. Gottwald's authority extended down through the governmental apparatus. Slansky's authority extended not only down through the apparatus of the Party itself but also across to the Communist elements at each level of the governmental pyramid.

The Party, and therefore Slansky, also controlled appointments within the governmental apparatus. Someday, according to Czechoslovak law, the National Committees are supposed to be elected, but for the time being they were, and still are, appointed by the Ministry of the Interior on the recommendation of the Action Committees of the National Front. The Action Committees, about which much has been said in connection with the coup, ostensibly represent all political parties but are actually firmly in Communist control. In deciding appointments the Party relied on an organization called the cadres commission, which was headed by Bruno Koehler until the purge of September 1951. In an article on the functions of the commission in *Funkcionar* on March 30, 1951, Koehler wrote: "Regarding every member of the Party and every comrade exercising any leading function, we must have an accurately filled out questionnaire, a biography, the results of the Party checkups of 1948 and 1950, as well as the opinions given by the organizations of the Party at his place of work, past and present. These are basic materials which must be

constantly brought up to date by new information about the comrade concerned." He said this information must be consulted when the Party decided whether an individual might become a permanent member, or whether he might be appointed to any important function in the Party or the state, or the economy, or whether he should be allowed to take over a new post or attend a Party school. He added that whenever any shortcomings were found in a comrade the Party must be informed. "We must never relax our watchfulness," Koehler concluded.

In addition to its control over appointments, and governmental affairs, the Party's sway was extended from the lowest governmental level, that of the local National Committees, into the life of individual citizens by a system of block wardens (literally translated, "confidence men"). Government Ordinance number 14, of February 28, 1950, which established the system, stated that the warden's duties were to interpret to the local National Committees the wishes, proposals and complaints of the people and to convey to the people the decisions of the National Committee. The wardens were assigned to neighborhoods, streets, blocks of apartments or houses. In most communities there was one warden for every 2000 inhabitants, but in Prague there was one for every 600. In theory the wardens served to bring government closer to the people; in practice they were links in the chain of police espionage with which the Communist Party shackled the Czechoslovak people. In one way or another the Party's tentacles reached into every form of organized life in the country.

After the war, in addition to installing Slansky as watchdog threatening Gottwald, the Kremlin introduced into Czechoslovakia an improved cell system designed to keep every single member under control. While not unknown before the war, the cell system had previously not been highly developed in Czechoslovakia.

As described to me by a man who was formerly closely associated with the Communist Party, but who thought better of it and is now a refugee in Germany, the cell system applied in Czechoslovakia works as follows:

> Every ten members of the Party are placed under the surveillance of a particularly reliable member called a cell leader who keeps records about the members under his care. Cell leaders were advised by the Party weekly *Funkcionar* to use notebooks with one page for each member under their surveillance, with one column each for attendance at meetings, demonstrations, voluntary working brigades, political schooling etc.
>
> The cell leaders note the reasons why members do not attend

Party functions, what they say and do on these occasions, whether they show tendencies towards political reliability or not, how much they contribute to the Party in money and in the form of voluntary work, whether they buy and read the ten books or so that are required reading, and subscribe to the magazines and newspapers recommended, and whether they give the right (not necessarily the most intelligent) answers to questions about their reading.

The cell leaders also keep watch over the private lives of their ten patients. It would be no good for a Party member to protest that he had no time for private life, for a good Communist is expected to lead a balanced life even if he spends every night at meetings or doing voluntary work. If he has a wife it is well for her to be a reliable Party member and attend the meetings, too. The activities of members' children, too, are noted in the cell leader's notebook. Are they good students and collecting their quota of scrap materials? Do they belong to the youth organization and Sokol?

Decisions made by the Party's Central Committee are handed down through channels until they reach the cell leaders who organize discussions of them at cell meetings. "Discussions" consist of an explanation of why the decisions were made, usually accompanied by a new slogan. Disagreement is unthinkable. Members who disagree at cell meetings may be noted down in the cell leader's book as stupid, or politically unconscious, the first time or so. But if such stupidities are repeated the member is likely to find himself placed on probation and eventually expelled from the Party. Eventually he may be arrested as an enemy of the state.

It is true that there are some real discussions in the lower Party echelons. They concern such matters as whether the sports field which is to be built by a working brigade should have lawns or sand, or why Comrade X or Y did not sell as many papers or win as many new subscribers for the Party press as Comrade Z, or why the member S did not come to the last evening of Party schooling (So his wife is sick? What is our excellent public health system for?).

This, then, was the great political machine of which Gottwald was nominally chairman, but which Slansky completely controlled from March 1946 on. Slansky set about making himself independent of Gottwald. He built up a personal apparatus of men loyal to himself, personally, among the party secretaries, among the new managers of industry and among the newly appointed army officers. He championed extremist measures, while Gottwald, having acquired governmental responsibilities, first as

vice-premier, later as premier, favored more moderate measures acceptable to the varied elements of which the government was still composed.

Slansky's career approached its peak in September 1947 when he, and not Gottwald, was summoned to Warsaw to take part in the establishment of the Cominform (Communist Information Bureau). The Communist *coup d'état* of February 1948 further strengthened Slansky's hand by eliminating the non-Communist political parties from any real voice in the government; by the same token it diminished the importance of the premier who headed the coalition of parties composing the government. Finally, on June 14, 1948, Gottwald was "kicked upstairs" to the post of the President of the Republic which was then considered mainly a decorative one. Slansky's triumph seemed to be complete.

Yet a turn in Slansky's fortunes appears to have taken place in the winter of 1948–1949. Just what brought this about is not certain, but it coincided with the visit to Prague of a Communist theoretician named Professor Arnost Kolman, a Soviet citizen of Czech origin, who read a report criticizing the lack of inner party democracy in the Czechoslovak Communist Party. For this state of affairs he blamed particularly Rudolf Slansky and his assistant Maria Svermova.

Kolman returned to the Soviet Union and nothing more was heard about his report, but from then on Slansky was on the defensive. Someone had pulled the rug from under him politically. He no longer seemed self-confident, let alone aggressive. In his speeches he seemed to try to flatter his rival Gottwald.

Slansky made his last report on the general political line to the Communist Party Congress in May 1949. Thereafter, at the meetings of the Central Committee, it was Gottwald who made the general reports while Slansky confined himself to reports on agriculture. Finally, beginning in the autumn of 1950, Slansky did not exercise his functions for six months, officially "for reasons of ill health."

According to information brought out of Czechoslovakia by refugees, after Slansky's removal as secretary-general, his last act in his struggle with Gottwald was to bring about the arrest of Vladimir Clementis, the Foreign Minister. Clementis, according to this information, had been warned by friends in New York, where he represented Czechoslovakia at the United Nations during the winter of 1949–1950, that he would be arrested if he returned to Czechoslovakia. In spite of the warning, however, he returned. My informants say he had received assurances from

President Gottwald, towards whom he felt a strong personal loyalty, that he had nothing to fear.

But Gottwald was not able to protect Clementis. On March 14, 1950, the resignation of Clementis "at his own request," and the appointment of Viliam Siroky to replace him, was officially announced. Thereafter Clementis disappeared from public life. The rumors were that sooner or later he would be arrested.

The next official indication of Clementis's fate came on May 28, 1950, when his successor Siroky announced at the Slovak Communist Party Congress that Clementis had submitted a self-criticism of his "bourgeois nationalist deviationism," but that the Party could not accept it as sufficient. His deviationism, it appeared, went back to 1939 when he had outspokenly criticized the Soviet Union for concluding a pact with Nazi Germany.

Siroky explained that Clementis had admitted that he had failed politically "when Anglo-American capitalism tried to divert the aggressiveness of fascist Germany against the Soviet Union. . . . But to fail in 1939 when the nonaggression pact between the Soviet Union and Germany was concluded meant a loss of faith in the Soviet Union. It meant that Comrade Clementis lost his faith in Stalin. But a Communist must have an unconditional faith in the Soviet Union and in great Stalin in every situation and under all circumstances."

The Slovak Party Congress referred Clementis's case to the headquarters of the Czechoslovak Communist Party in Prague, and on July 21, 1950, he was given a high post in the Czechoslovak State Bank. To some it looked as though Clementis had escaped, as though President Gottwald had managed after all to find him a safe berth. They were wrong.

On February 27, 1951, Clementis's arrest was announced. My informants assure me that he was not arrested by the Czech police but by Soviet Russian secret police, who intervene directly in Czech affairs only in the most important cases.

Under the circumstances Gottwald, who had been trying to protect his friend, had no alternative but to go along with the propaganda line prescribed by Slansky in connivance with the Soviet secret police. He issued an announcement that the Communist Party had found within its ranks a five-year-old plot engineered by Clementis with a view to bringing Czechoslovakia into the Western bloc of nations. Official propaganda organs added that the "espionage activities" of Clementis were related to "fractional hostile activities" by a "bourgeois nationalist group"

in the Communist Party of Slovakia. This was an effort to link Clementis with Gustav Husak, formerly chairman of the Slovak board of commissioners, and Laco Novomesky, a well-known poet, formerly commissioner for education, and a number of other Slovaks who had been dismissed from their posts and who were subsequently arrested.

As I understand the matter, the charges brought against Clementis were an enormous smoke screen intended to conceal the real reason why he had been arrested. Obviously the Party had known for a long time about his criticism of the Soviet Union in 1939. It was a little absurd suddenly to tax him with those statements in 1950. Nor did the alleged link between Clementis and the Slovak nationalists stand up very well. For they, while ardently pro-Soviet, were anti-Czech, whereas Clementis never had any use for the anti-Czech sentiments of his fellow Slovaks.

Clementis's real crime was that he was the one Communist statesman who might be trusted by Western statesmen. They were inclined to like him. He had spent the war years in London where he broadcast over the BBC under the pseudonym of Petr Hren, and, although a convinced Communist, he thoroughly understood the West and its ways. He had inherited money and had made more as a successful lawyer. His wife was also well-to-do. Altogether Clementis was considered by the Kremlin an undesirable bourgeois character who had served the Communist cause but whose usefulness was now at an end. Communists who made a good impression on Western statesmen were no longer needed or wanted. Most important, the Kremlin regarded Clementis as entirely too apt a tool in the Nationalist hands of President Gottwald, too convenient a contact man with the West.

Behind the scenes, Gottwald continued to try to protect his loyal friend. For forcing him to abandon his friend under pressure from the Soviet secret police Gottwald could not forgive Slansky. Some kind of showdown must have ensued, for thereafter no more of Gottwald's particular friends were arrested, and the friends and associates of Slansky began to disappear with growing rapidity.

I have gone into so much detail about the Clementis case because it plays such an important part in the struggle between Gottwald and Slansky. The case was one of the main incidents that led up to the purge series of which the Communist counterreformation was composed, but it did not belong to the series. Before that series got under way, a great many other men were purged for more usual Communist deviations and derelictions. Among the first were Novy, editor of *Rude Pravo;* Evzan

Klinger, head of the Foreign Office Press Section; Dr. Oscar Kosta, head of the Ministry of Information's Foreign Press Section; and Dr. Evzan Loebl, Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade. There is some reason to believe that all these cases were connected with the disappearance of Noel Field in May 1949, which I have discussed in the section about life in the police state.

While the Clementis affair was simmering and working towards its climax, Czechoslovakia's economic situation began to deteriorate, especially from November 1950 onwards. As I have said, in November 1950 some local organizations of the Party dared to pass resolutions of protest against price increases and to send them direct to the Central Committee of the Party. A year later, in November 1951, there were street demonstrations in the town of Brno protesting abolition of the traditional Christmas bonus known as "the thirteenth month." In between, the workers showed rising resistance to "hardening of the norms," growing contempt for "socialist competitions," and resentment of all the special burdens — longer hours and smaller rations — that had been made necessary by trade commitments to the Soviet Union. The Party itself, especially the lower and intermediate echelons, which were supposed to function as "dynamos" stimulating the workers to ever-greater efforts, showed signs of disintegration.

By Communist standards this was obviously a situation that called for a purge. Having won an exclusive position in the formulation of policy, the Party now had to bear exclusive responsibility for the consequences in the eyes of the public and, more important for the Party, in the eyes of the Kremlin.

A great purge of the basic Party membership did in fact begin, in the most orthodox manner, in the autumn of 1950. From there, as economic conditions got worse, the purge crept upwards like a fever, echelon by echelon, through the whole Party structure until, on the highest levels, the purge became a desperate search for scapegoats. It was not enough to blame "imperialist agents" and "the remnants of capitalism"; big names in the Party would have to pay. And the man who in the final analysis decided who was to pay, and what price, was President Gottwald, ably assisted by his son-in-law Alexei Cepicka. The scapegoats they selected were outstanding Soviet agents, associates of Rudolf Slansky and, finally, Rudolf Slansky himself. Under their guidance the purge became a Communist counterreformation.

* * *

The background of the first part of the purge of Party members was the vastly inflated membership that had resulted from sheer opportunism — a complex of fears and self-interest which I have dealt with in the historical section of this book.

In March 1946, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia had 1,159,164 members, including 151,330 in Slovakia. Immediately after the Communist coup of February 1948, membership soared to a peak of 2,418,193. This made the Czechoslovak Party the largest in the world in proportion to population. The majority of the new members were, if possible, even more opportunistic than the earlier band-wagon jumpers.

After a preliminary purge of members in 1946 when provisional membership cards were replaced by new, regular cards, a second far more thorough purge, which went by the name of "proverka," the Russian word for "checkup," inevitably began in the autumn of 1948. Every member of the Party was supposed to appear before an examining committee, composed of an authorized political instructor and other particularly qualified Communists, who plied him with questions about his work for the Party, his reading, his knowledge of Marxist theory, and his personal life. As a result 107,133 members were expelled from the Party, leaving a total membership of 2,311,060. Of these, 522,685 or 22 per cent were reduced to the status of candidates.

At the ninth Party Congress, which followed the checkup at the end of May 1949, Rudolf Slansky announced that henceforth the waiting period for nonworker candidates would be two years, and no more applications would be taken from nonworkers. The waiting period for worker candidates would be one year, and only those who had been "shock workers" for at least three months would be allowed to graduate to full membership.

Slansky complained on this occasion that the composition of the Party had deteriorated because the percentage of workers had decreased in favor of nonworkers. The percentage of industrial workers among Party members was 57 per cent before February 1948, but had dropped to 45 per cent since then. At the same time the percentage of white-collar employees had increased from 8 to 15.5 per cent. Among candidates for full membership, only 25 per cent were industrial workers. Women constituted 33 per cent of total membership. Of all members, 14.5 per cent were under twenty-five years of age.

Furthermore, Slansky declared: "In our ranks we are constantly discovering foreign and hostile elements sent to us by order of foreign

espionage organizations who try to use the Party membership card to hide, so that they can better indulge in their activities. Among subversive elements arrested there are often people who possess Party membership cards. . . ."

Similar allegations that Western and Titoist spies were infiltrating the Czechoslovak Communist Party were made by the Minister of Security, Ladislav Kopriva, and by the Secretary-General of the Slovak branch of the Communist Party, Stefan Bastovansky, at the end of May 1950. (By then the Communist party of Slovakia had 169,297 members.)

In order to improve the composition of the Party, the ninth Congress decided to make the "checkup" more or less permanent. Any member might be expelled "if, for three months, in spite of warnings, he neglects his basic membership duties." The Congress also raised the minimum age for membership from sixteen to eighteen.

Maria Svermova, as organizational secretary of the Central Committee of the Party, offered the Congress this definition of the ideal Communist Party member: "A Communist should be an example to his fellows, a shock worker, an educated man, direct and honest, with a deep feeling of responsibility. He should be honest with himself and with the people; his private and public morals should be irreproachable; he should be modest and always mindful of his responsibility to the Party; he should remember President Gottwald's words that he can never do enough for the Party; he should always be just and firm in the struggle for truth against the class enemy, against all that is out of date and hindering our progress towards socialism."

Another, more intensive, formal purge of Communist Party members began in September 1950. Reporting to the Central Committee on February 22, 1951, on the results of this checkup, Deputy Secretary-General Josef Frank said that whereas the 1948 checkup had been intended to enable the Party to get thoroughly acquainted with its own members and to induce them to fulfill their duties, the checkup of 1950 was intended to examine and judge members and candidates "in the light of what they had done for their Party." Yet the purge had been "too moderate, benevolent and conciliatory" to permit the Party to judge the activity of each member correctly. This meant that the purging of the Party on the lowest mass level was not yet done, although membership in the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia had been reduced from 2,311,060 members at the beginning of 1949 to 1,677,443 at the beginning of 1951. Frank accounted for the reduction in membership as follows:

169,544	expelled members
51,979	dead or sick
69,530	found to be duplicate names or nonexistent
4,386	did not appear for the checkup
52,466	cases remained incomplete
347,905	

The difference between the 1949 and 1951 figures was 633,617, whereas Frank accounted for only 347,905. The 285,712 unaccounted for had been eliminated by the continuing checkup during the intervening period.

Foreign observers did not fail to note the disorder in Party records revealed by the fact that Frank had admitted to 69,530 Party members who were more or less nonexistent and 51,979 of whom most were dead — thus 121,509 persons had dropped out of sight without the Party or the police being aware of it. Such are the loopholes, the vast, unsuspected inefficiencies of the all-embracing totalitarian state!

After the 1950–1951 checkup the Communist Party resumed active recruiting of members. The word went out from headquarters that the Party needed "new blood." But the continuing checkup remained a part of Party life.

Before the purge of members was over, the Party had already begun a remarkable purge of its own functionaries. Very quietly, without publicity, the Party leadership was completely renewed during the first six months of 1951. The process was extraordinary in the annals even of Communist Parties.

During the first two months of the year, local and factory committees were replaced. No sooner were the new committees established than the renewal of the next echelon began. During April, district conferences of the Party were ordered to subject the records of Party functionaries to implacable criticism, and were advised to elect new men to the district committees. Tens of thousands of Party functionaries on these two lowest levels, in district and local committees, were in this way dismissed and replaced.

On the third level of the hierarchy, the level of regional committees, the purge struck during the regional conferences in the month of May, 1951. After these conferences, in the nineteen regions only three of the old chairmen and two of the secretaries of the regional committees remained in their posts.

Hence it could be said that all this purge had resulted in was the creation of very nearly a new Communist Party, from mass membership

on up to regional level. But the purge was by no means over yet. Clearly, if the country's economic difficulties had been the original cause of the purge there was no reason why it should stop now. On the contrary, the situation called for even more drastic measures. As Frank told the regional conference of the Party at Moravska Ostrava, the economic situation of the country was critical. Instead of getting better it was getting worse, and it looked as though the objectives of the five-year plan could not be reached. At a special meeting of the Party's Central Committee on June 26–27, called to deal with economic problems, President Gottwald let coming events cast their shadow before the committee by stating that although the Party apparatus had been sufficient for its task at the beginning of the five-year plan, it was now insufficient and must be reorganized. A more supple, more effective and more mobile leadership must be created in all sectors of the economy.

The purge had already begun to pick off Communists in the Party's highest echelon, the Central Committee, and it was obviously far from finished. Josef Smrkovsky, the director of state farms who was dismissed in April 1951, was the fourteenth member of the Central Committee to be purged. In other spheres the heads of the mighty were also falling with growing rapidity. And as the number of high-ranking victims multiplied, a curious similarity among the main victims became discernible. Many had previously been known as particularly ardent Muscovites; many were closely associated with Rudolf Slansky, secretary-general of the Party. Surely, something more than the usual Communist purge was developing. Here are some of the cases that progressively established a pattern unprecedented in the history of Communist purges:

On November 11, 1950, Otto Sling, thirty-eight-year-old regional secretary of the Communist Party at Brno was arrested. Son of a prosperous Bohemian Jewish family of textile manufacturers, he had joined radical groups as a medical student, had fought in the Spanish Civil War, was interned in France. He wound up in England at the beginning of 1939, and managed to be sent from there to Moscow during the war. At the end of the war, Sling, obviously a man trusted by the Kremlin, was a member of the delegation selected to fly from Moscow to Kosice in Slovakia. While fighting was still going on he was allowed to enter the Red Army zone and to establish political headquarters at Brno. There, until his arrest, he reigned as something of a dictator. It was said that he was not above lining his pockets when the opportunity offered itself. He was feared and disliked by subordinates, sycophantic in the presence

of superiors. One of the latter was Maria Svermova, assistant secretary-general of the Party, widow of Jan Sverma who had frozen to death in the Tatra mountains while trying to reach the Red Army lines at the tail end of the abortive Slovak rising against the Nazis in 1944.

Sling established connections with Svermova in Kosice and they saw much of each other thereafter. In the month of February, after Sling's arrest, she was arrested and the world was informed that the two had been plotting to overthrow the government and set up a new regime in which they would play leading roles.

A curious aspect of the case was that at first the charge against them was that they wanted to murder Slansky. This was curious because Svermova had been on the best of terms with Slansky; through her Sling had had ready access to the secretary-general. Later — perhaps because the improbability of the original charge was so widely noted — the story was changed, and it was said that Sling and Svermova planned to murder Gottwald.

About Mrs. Svermova, Minister of Information Vaclav Kopecky had this to say after her arrest: "It has now been established that Maria Svermova made distinctions between the regional secretaries and divided them into two categories. She devoted all kinds of care to those who belonged to the group of Sling or sympathized with him. She protected them, praised them as representatives of a new spirit, a new mentality, the objects of great hope and so on. On the other hand, she discriminated against the rest of the regional secretaries who remained unshakeably faithful to President Gottwald's leadership. Of these she spoke injuriously and with disdain, calling them representatives of a time that had passed, second-raters, etc. While attempting to get rid of these secretaries, who were really, honestly Bolshevik, Svermova recommended as their successors the friends of Sling, or her own disciples, whom she easily dominated."

Was it not odd, asked foreign observers who read Kopecky's words, that the charges which Mrs. Svermova allegedly brought against a certain group of Communist Party secretaries, were the very ones that had been brought against the veteran Communists, products of prewar workers' movements, in all the other satellite countries? Was Mrs. Svermova not in fact carrying out the Kremlin's will and was it possible to believe that the Kremlin had approved her arrest?

Early in 1951 the Deputy Minister of Defense, General Bedrich Reicin, who performed the functions of chief of army intelligence, and Lieutenant

Colonel Kopold, chief of the cadres section of the ministry, were arrested in connection with Sling and Svermova's alleged plot. Kopold was a son-in-law of Mrs. Svermova and was said to have acted as liaison between her and Sling on the one hand and their accomplices in the army on the other. Yet Kopold had until then been considered more than usually devoted to Moscow; he and Reicin were held to be the principal agents of the Kremlin in the Czechoslovak armed forces. Reicin, the son of a poor Jewish cantor in Pilsen, had made a spectacular career in Moscow during the war. Without going through the usual courses of instruction he had been promoted from post to post in the Czech units attached to the Red Army. Always he dealt with counterespionage which, in the Soviet military system, means that it was his job to control the officers' corps from a political point of view and to look after troops' morale. One of the things that undoubtedly weighed heavily against him was that he had since boyhood been a friend of Otto Sling.

Other men arrested at this time included General Pavel, supreme commander of the police, and Jindrich Vesely, chief of the secret police section of the Ministry of National Security. The latter was the man who had deprived Gottwald's friend Vaclav Nosek of influence over the political police long before the whole police force was entrusted to a new ministry.

Artur London, known among Kremlin agents under the pseudonym of Girard, was also arrested. He had won a reputation as a Communist director of espionage in France and Switzerland, and, as chief of the cadres section of the foreign ministry from 1949 on, directed the purge of diplomatic personnel. In addition he was an old friend of Bedrich Geminder, mysterious "*éminence grise*" of the regime. London, one might think, was as secure as anyone in this Communist regime. But he too was purged. According to the grapevine of diplomatic gossip he, like quite a few others in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ran afoul of President Gottwald's daughter, Mrs. Cepicka, who has a job in the Foreign Ministry and likes to play the private detective for her husband and her father.

Early in 1951 Bedrich Geminder also disappeared from the public scene, although his arrest did not take place until December. The name of Geminder was removed in March from the Cominform journal in which he had previously been listed as editor of the Czech edition.

Geminder was a Sudeten German Jew who had worked in the pre-war Communist Party as a youth leader. He was in Germany in the early thirties and was associated with Dimitrov as a secretary for a time; later he went to Moscow where he worked for the Comintern intermittently from

1935 on. He spent the war in Moscow and won a reputation as a specialist in espionage and intelligence work. He rose rapidly in the Communist bureaucracy and is said to have won the attention of Stalin personally.

After the war Geminder became the *éminence grise* of the Czechoslovak party. He was a small and colorless-looking man who, although he had an attractive French wife, liked to play at the role of Don Juan. Under other circumstances he might have been an object of ridicule. But Geminder, although he did not officially hold any office in the Party, was the Party's delegate to the Cominform and was the real master of Czechoslovakia's foreign policy. Nonetheless he was almost never mentioned in the public prints and rarely seen — perhaps because he spent more time in Moscow than in Prague, perhaps because he was self-conscious about his bad Czech, his mother tongue being German. In any event he succeeded very well in making himself a man of mystery, if that was his intention. No one knew quite how powerful he might be.

Geminder occupied a key position in more ways than one. He had long been associated with Otto Sling, now branded "spy number one," and he was a close friend of Rudolf Slansky — if Slansky could be said to have had close friends. At any rate, Geminder maintained a private suite in Slansky's house in Prague.

This strange purge of the friends of the Kremlin reached its climax on September 6, 1951, when the Central Committee announced that Rudolf Slansky had been relieved of his duties as secretary-general of the Party, that the post itself had been abolished and that President Gottwald had taken over Slansky's duties. During the ensuing week a complete reorganization of the Party, of the government and of the national economy was announced. And on September 20, Slansky was appointed vice-premier in charge of an office of economic co-ordination attached to the premier's office.

No one acquainted with Communist methods, who had watched Slansky's associates being picked off one by one, was misled by this appointment. The Communists had used this method in many a lesser case, gradually closing in on their intended victim while treating him publicly as though nothing were wrong. Thus Kostov had been appointed state librarian, Gomulka had been shifted from post to post, and Rajk had been appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs, after their fates had been sealed but before the police stepped in and arrested them.

On May 30, Slansky's fiftieth birthday had been celebrated with excep-

tional éclat, and on July 31 Minister of Information Kopecky had written in *Rude Pravo:* "If one were to name the man who, apart from Comrade Gottwald, has contributed most to the bolshevisation of our Party it would unquestionably be Comrade Slansky." But this had not helped Slansky in September. On September 8, the same Vaclav Kopecky who had so fulsomely praised Slansky produced the Party's official explanation of Slansky's dismissal and the abolition of his job. Here is part of the text published in *Rude Pravo:*

> In examining the present situation of the Party as concerns the cadres and organizations, the Central Committee has taken note of the alarming experience involving the traitors Sling, Svermova, Clementis and Co. It was the consequence of *an irresponsible and systematically wrong method* which prevailed in questions of cadres and organizations that these traitors were able to gain such a dangerous foothold in the heart of our Party . . . and the Central Committee has realized the *serious mistakes* which make it difficult for the cadres and the organizations of the Party to develop Party activity fully at the present time when they must cope with ever-greater tasks in the building of socialism.
>
> The Central Committee has drawn all the necessary conclusions from what it has learned. It has done so in a whole series of measures whose importance constitutes a turning point in the policy practiced by the Party in the domain of cadres and organizations.
>
> The Central Committee is convinced that the structure of the secretariat of the Central Committee and the whole system of its activity as carried on hitherto no longer correspond to the situation and that their continued existence would have objectionable effects, in particular that they would *strengthen the tendency to schism in the directing organs of the Party.*
>
> Therefore the Central Committee has decided to abolish the post of the secretary-general of the Party and to transfer its duties to the President of the Party, to Comrade Gottwald, so that he can *concentrate entirely in his hands* the political direction of the Party and the direction of its organization, as was formerly the case. [Gottwald was secretary-general of the Party from 1929 until 1946 and there was no president of the Party.] The abolition of the post of secretary-general also means the abolition of the posts of his assistants. The Central Committee will henceforth have secretaries who will be responsible for specified sectors in the work of the Central Committee.
>
> The Central Committee has furthermore carried out far-reaching

changes in the structure of the top-level organizations of the Party and their composition. It has added new eminent members to its presidium. And it has decided to create a political secretariat [Politburo] of the Central Committee of the Party which, with Comrade Gottwald at its head, will be in charge of the daily political direction of the Party. The secretaries of the Central Committee of Czechoslovakia will constitute the organizational secretariat of the Central Committee [Orgburo] which, under the direction of Comrade Gottwald, and on the basis of the resolutions and directives of the Presidium of the Central Committee, will administer the Party from an organizational point of view. *The previous secretariat of the Central Committee has often failed in its mission, notably by creating an incorrect relationship between the Communists working on the one hand in the apparatus of the Party and on the other hand in governmental bodies. . . .*

Grave charges indeed. . . . Yet in mid-November, again as though nothing were wrong, two volumes of Slansky's works were published and lavishly praised in all the reviews. Then, on November 27, Slansky was arrested. In a statement to the cabinet, President Gottwald accused him of engaging in espionage for undesignated Western powers. Ten days later Gottwald amplified the charges. He said Slansky had been arrested just as he was about to flee to the West. He called Slansky an agent of American imperialism who had sought to reintroduce capitalism. In September, when Slansky was removed from his Party post, Gottwald explained, it had been thought that he was guilty only of "incorrect organizational policy," and he had therefore been given another public office. Since then, however, Slansky had attempted to use his new post to build up a position of independent power, and new facts had come to light proving that he had played an important part in the plot for which Otto Sling had been arrested.

A further contribution to the complicated web of charges against Slansky was made by Premier Antonin Zapotocky on December 19. He said that Slansky's treachery was related to the expulsion, a week earlier, of two employees of the British Embassy in Prague who were alleged to have been caught paying money for a secret state document.

The most remarkable passage in Zapotocky's speech was this: "We shall not tolerate any foreign influence in our affairs, whether from Washington or London or Rome or Jerusalem. When negotiations were being carried on before February 1948 for nationalization of capital enter-

prises, those who are emigrants today wanted to give back the nationalized concern to the Jewish and other capitalists under the camouflage of restitution." This indicated that Slansky was also to be charged with favoring Zionism.

Since then, in speeches and newspaper articles, Slansky has been accused of all known forms of Communist political dereliction. He has been called a nationalist deviationist, an imperialist capitalist agent, a cosmopolitan, a Zionist, a Titoist, a Trotskyite. The regime seems to be casting about for the right formula with which to tax so ardent and faithful a Communist. Whatever the charges on which the prosecution finally settles, they are more likely to obscure than to clarify the real meaning of Slansky's fall.

Perhaps the best pointer towards the real meaning is the fact that one week before Slansky's arrest a new Soviet Ambassador, Anatoly I. Lavrantiev, arrived in Prague. Lavrantiev, now a Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, had been ambassador in Belgrade at the time when Tito was expelled from the Cominform. That of course had been a great fiasco from the Soviet point of view, for Tito, instead of apologizing and attempting to crawl back into the Cominform fold, had successfully defied the Cominform and the Soviet Union. Who then could be better qualified to see to it that the mistakes made in Belgrade in 1948 were not repeated in Prague in 1951 or 1952? Although there is no direct evidence, diplomats now in Prague believe that Lavrantiev has supervised the "counterreformation," much as Zorin supervised the coup in 1948. When a purge very much like Czechoslovakia's counterreformation started in Rumania in the summer of 1952, Lavrantiev was transferred to Bucharest. His successor was Alexander Bogornoloff.

The immediate effects of Slansky's fall in the Party, the government and the national economy were largely organizational.

To appreciate the changes in the Party structure one must recall certain peculiarities of the Party in Czechoslovakia. The functions of political chief of the Party and of its apparatus, which are normally united in a single person, had since March 1946 been divided between Klement Gottwald as chairman and Slansky as secretary-general. And the political and organizational direction of the Party, which are normally divided between a Politburo and an Orgburo, had been united in a single secretariat of the Central Committee. The secretariat was composed of the chairman of the Party, the secretary-general and his five assistants. Thus, apart from the chairman, the supreme organ of the Party was composed

entirely of members of the Party's apparatus. The heads of the Party's apparatus were able to wield their power unchecked and, through the machinery already described in this chapter, to dominate the government, the national economy and every other aspect of life in the country. There were ample grounds for the charge, made in the official commentary on the reorganization, that the secretary had created "an incorrect relationship between the Communists working on the one hand in the Party apparatus and on the other hand in governmental bodies."

By the reorganization of September 6, the privileged position of the Party apparatus was upset; all the powers it formerly exercised were concentrated in President Gottwald's hands as chairman of both the new Politburo and the new Orgburo. The new supreme organization of the Party, the Politburo, was composed as follows on September 7, 1951:

President of the Republic, Klement Gottwald
Prime Minister, Antonin Zapotocky
Vice-Premier in charge of Foreign Affairs, Viliam Siroky
Vice-Premier without Portfolio, Rudolf Slansky
President of the State Planning Office, Jaromir Dolansky
Minister of State Control, Karol Bacilek
Minister of National Defense, Alexei Cepicka

On December 6, after Slansky had been arrested, he was replaced on the Politburo by Minister of Information Vaclav Kopecky; and Antonin Novotny, formerly district secretary of the Party in Prague, was elected as the eighth member of the Politburo.

Since then the composition of the Politburo has remained unchanged so far as names are concerned, but there has been some shifting of jobs and titles.

On December 22, Dolansky received the rank of vice-premier in charge of general economic co-ordination — the job Slansky was to have had! (The former Minister of Chemical Industries, Josef Pucik, was appointed head of the State Planning Office, while Dolansky assumed over-all direction of economic affairs.)

And at the end of January 1952 Bacilek was shifted to the Ministry of National Security. (Jan Harus, formerly district secretary of the Party in Liberec, who had been made head of the Party Control Commission in September, replaced Bacilek in the Ministry of State Control.)

The most significant characteristic of the new Politburo was that it was composed entirely of men who held government positions, whereas

previously the Party had been in the hands of professional Party leaders. Not only was a greater identity of Party and government thereby achieved but the governmental leaders who had previously been subordinate became the dominant element in both Party and governmental affairs.

None of Slansky's principal lieutenants, who had been his assistants in the old Party secretariat, were admitted to the policy-making Politburo; all were transferred to the new Orgburo and each was given well-defined functions. Their names were: Josef Frank; Ladislav Kopriva; Gustav Bares; and Stefan Bastovansky. To this number were added: Antonin Novotny; Vaclav David; and Jiri Hendrych.

Of this list of men only one could feel secure. He was Novotny, who had been promoted to the presidium of the Central Committee after Slansky's fall and who was presently promoted to the Politburo. The fate of all the others is obscure. In February 1952, four new members of the Orgburo were named. They were: Jindrich Uher; Frantisek Pexa; Josef Tesla; and Pavel David.

One of these four obscure district secretaries of the Party was obviously replacing Novotny. The other three might be replacing either Frank, Kopriva, Bares or Bastovansky, for all four had dropped out of the political picture. There was no official explanation. In the February 7, 1952, edition of the Party weekly *Tvorba,* Bares's name as editor was omitted, and with the following issue on February 14, the weekly ceased publication altogether. No new job has been given Kopriva since he was dropped as Minister of National Security or to Bastovansky since he lost his position as head of the Communist Party in Slovakia. Frank has simply ceased appearing in public and it is possible that he has been arrested.

In the new cabinet the ministers who were also members of the Politburo constituted an elite whose power exceeded that of other ministers. Only one of Slansky's lieutenants, Minister of Security Kopriva, turned up in the new cabinet, and he only until January 23, when Bacilek took over. The veteran Minister of Agriculture, Duris, disappeared from the cabinet and was made chairman of the Slovak board of commissioners. And Evzan Erban, the old Minister of Labor, was dropped and given no new post.

More important than these changes of personnel, however, was the creation of an entirely new Ministry of State Control with all the attributes of a complete economic police. The official gazette set forth the functions of this new ministry as follows:

a. To control the administration of financial resources and property of state enterprises, of national enterprises, of co-operative and other enterprises. . . .

b. To see to it that the laws and decisions of the government concerning economic and financial questions are respected.

c. To take the measures necessary to remedy shortcomings and punish those responsible for the shortcomings.

Article 2 of the decree stated that the representatives of the ministry might at any time require any person to present documents and to supply all information and explanations needed for the exercise of control.

This powerful ministry was furthermore endowed with a remarkable "complaints department," to which the public was invited to report cases of economic mismanagement, waste, violation of economic regulations and the like. The ministry also undertook to receive suggestions for economic improvements. It announced that both complaints and suggestions would receive immediate attention, that the authors would be informed of the results and would be protected from all harm.

The creation of this ministry markedly restricted the powers of the Minister of National Security and constituted an innovation in the usual Communist police state pattern. In the future not the police spy but the accountant would have preponderant influence in economic affairs. The importance of the change is illustrated by the fact that at the beginning of the summer of 1951 several of Dolansky's immediate subordinates had been suddenly and arbitrarily arrested. The Ministry of State Control would act as a buffer between arbitrary police action and the various parts of the national economy. The first Minister of State Control, Karol Bacilek, emphasized the discretion with which officials of his ministry would operate: "The duty of the inspectors is only to establish the facts and not to become involved in local quarrels or non-essentials," he said.

The economic changes made in September, and subsequently, were designed to meet the very serious economic difficulties which were at the bottom of the regime's troubles. The remedy consisted of a sharp intensification of trends begun in 1949: bureaucratic middlemen were crowded out of the way (in so far as that is ever possible in a nationalized economy!) and producers were given a freer hand, more authority and more responsibility.

Jaromir Dolansky, then the president of the State Planning Office, stated the principle as follows in an article in *Rude Pravo* on September 9:

> The object is to establish the responsibility of a single person at every level. This means that every production unit is directed by a chief who assumes entire responsibility for his sector, who enjoys unlimited power therein and who is subordinated directly to his chief above him. The directors of factories must have greater responsibilities and greater powers. In future the government organizations are to limit themselves to approving plans, to helping in the execution of the plans, to appointing top officials and to prescribing the principles according to which production capacity, raw materials and electric power are to be used.

In pursuance of these aims the Ministry of Heavy Industry was split up into five new ministries; a new Ministry of Forests and Woodworking Industries was created, taking over part of the Ministry of Agriculture's functions; and the old Ministry of Labor and Social Security was replaced by a Ministry of Manpower, the former ministry's functions being divided up among other ministries. Twenty-four general directorates, plus eleven regional directorates in Slovakia hitherto in charge of the various branches of industry, were abolished and their functions transferred to central boards in the ministries. Especially important enterprises, such as the Skoda Works in Pilsen and the Ostrava-Karvina coal fields, would operate under the direct authority of the minister concerned, without the intervening authority of a central board. At the same time it was announced that the ministries dealing with economic affairs, now numbering eighteen, would have to reduce personnel by 39 per cent. This meant they would either have to work a great deal more efficiently or, as was more likely, give up part of their activities.

In the appointments to the new economic ministries, former factory directors were favored over men whose experience had been exclusively political. Thus the post of Minister of Fuel and Energy went to Vaclav Pokorny, director-general of minerals and oil wells; Jan Bilek, a director of a foundry, was appointed Minister of Foundries and Ore Mining; Alois Malek, director-general of textile enterprises, became Minister of Light Industry; and the Ministry of Forests and Woodworking was given to Marek Smida, director-general of state forest enterprises.

It is worth noting in passing that in this reorganization the trade unions lost the last trace of their influence. No one thought of appointing Frantisek Zupka, who had succeeded Zapotocky as president of the trade union organization, to the Central Committee of the Party, let alone to the Politburo. One might say that the "managers" of industry came out of

the general reorganization as the grand victors: over the police, over the government bureaucracy and over the trade unions. Since the autumn of 1951 they have been trying to bring some common sense into the frenzied "political" solutions of economic problems. New machinery was, for instance, ordered installed in the Ostrava mines "even at the price of extraordinary measures," according to *Rude Pravo* on October 17, 1951. This was in contrast to the former doctrine, according to which all investments must be reserved for the new giant projects and exports to the East, and increases in output obtained by socialist competition, etc.

The economic dictator of the country since the reorganization is unquestionably Jaromir Dolansky, both by virtue of his rank as vice-premier and the splitting up of the other economic ministries. Dolansky, aged fifty-six, spent the war in a concentration camp, became a district secretary of the Party in 1945, Minister of Finance in 1946 and chairman of the State Planning Office in 1949.

The following is a list of the economic ministers as they emerged from the reorganization:

Vice-Premier, Jaromir Dolansky, has over-all economic control
State Control, Jan Harus (new ministry)
State Planning Office, Josef Pucik
Fuel and Power, Vaclav Pokorny
Foundries and Ore Mining, Jan Bilek
Chemical Industry, Otto Zimuner
Heavy Engineering, Augustin Kliment *
General Engineering, Josef Jonas
} formerly the Ministry of Heavy Industry
Light Industry, Alois Malik
Food Industry, Ludmila Jankovcova
Building, Dr. Emanuel Slechta
Forests and Woodworking, Marek Smida (new ministry)
Agriculture, Josef Nepomucky
Transport, Antonin Pospisil
Posts, Alois Neuman
Railways, Josef Pospisil
Manpower, Jaroslav Havelka (formerly the Ministry of Labor and National Security)
Internal Trade, Frantisek Krajcir
Foreign Trade, Antonin Gregor
Finance, Jaroslav Kabes

* In August 1952, Kliment was appointed Chairman of the Czechoslovak Trade Unions, and Julius Maurer became Minister of Heavy Engineering.

Since Slansky's arrest the purge of "Slansky bandits" has spread through all levels of Party and government and national economy, into coal mining, agriculture and state farms, and into the army, into every phase of the country's life. The number of Communist victims runs into the thousands, rejected by the Party, despised by most Czechoslovaks.

Now the shape of the counterreformation has become quite clear. This is the way it looks to me. The Kremlin has made a considerable concession to Czechoslovak nationalism, more particularly to Czechoslovak workers' nationalism, which has expressed itself in growing resistance to Russian economic demands and progressively declining productivity. Czechoslovak production is of great importance to Soviet Russia. This is the industrial heart of the satellite area and, workers' resistance notwithstanding, this is one of the most important corners of the Communist empire from the point of view of production.

The Kremlin has therefore made a deal with Gottwald as a nationalist Communist. Or, put another way, Gottwald and his friends have sold the Kremlin on the following analysis of the situation in Czechoslovakia: The Communist Party is growing more and more unpopular among the Czechoslovak workers; yet they do not want a return to capitalism. They are being forced inevitably towards the most obvious alternative — Titoism. The numerous known Muscovite agents, headed by Slansky, are the most unpopular personalities in the regime; their presence constitutes a constant provocation to Titoism, the Kremlin agreed. Gottwald was authorized to clean out Slansky and Company. The Czechoslovak people were to be given the illusion that they were being ruled by their own people — not by Muscovite agents.

Does it seem strange that the Kremlin should sacrifice its most trusted agents in this manner? The answer is that no one can count on being "Moscow's man" in the sense that he can always depend on protection. In the Stalinist system everyone is expendable.

To Gottwald this program of counterreformation brought personal satisfaction, for Slansky happened to be his personal enemy. Thus ended the long struggle between these two men.

It also happened that a large proportion of Slansky and Company, the leading Muscovite Kremlin agents, were Jews. Now it should be remembered that, unlike the Poles, the Czechs have no strong antisemitic tradition. But, except in the small Bohemian towns, the Jews of Czechoslovakia were German-speaking up to the time of the Second World War, and

this did not contribute to their popularity. Nor did it add to their popularity among the workers that a large proportion of big businesses in Bohemia were owned by Jews before the Second World War.

Since the Communists came to power the Jews have suffered as a group because most of them are middle class. Of the 360,000 Jews who lived in Czechoslovakia before the war only 55,000 survived in 1948. By 1952, all but 10,000 of these had emigrated, most of them to Israel, and most of those remaining were eager to follow. The majority of Jews in Czechoslovakia and the other Iron Curtain countries hate the Communists. Unfortunately, that is not what the average Czech notices. He notices the high percentage of Jews among the Communist bosses of the present regime because the Communist bosses directly affect his life. As a result, small minds tend to identify anti-Communism with antisemitism, and the latent anti-Jewish tendencies among the Czechoslovak people and among other peoples behind the Iron Curtain have been stimulated.

The Communists have eagerly sought to take advantage of this situation, in the hope of reviving their popularity among the Czechoslovak workers. They have turned upon the Jews as welcome scapegoats.

The stock epithet used against the Jews in Communist jargon is "cosmopolitan." We have it on President Gottwald's authority, as quoted in *Rude Pravo* on December 20, 1951, that "the overwhelming majority of Communists who have been discovered as traitors do not have their roots in our country and in our Party, but are cosmopolitans." A day earlier Zapotocky had made his astonishing declaration that Czechoslovakia would tolerate no foreign interference from "Jerusalem," among other capitals. And on January 23, 1952, the Bratislava newspaper *Pravda* wrote:

> Attention must be drawn to one weapon of American imperialism in particular — Zionism. This is the ideology of the Jewish, bourgeois state, by means of which the Jewish nationalistic bourgeoisie, which is in the pay of American imperialism, endeavors to influence our citizens of Jewish descent. It is in the service of the class enemy that the Zionists have wormed their way into the Communist party to disrupt and undermine it from within. Certain members of our Party, too, have come under the influence of Zionism. They have succumbed to the ideology of cosmopolitanism and Jewish bourgeois nationalism and do not judge events from the viewpoint of the working-class struggle for socialism.

That explains the growing number of Jews on the list of those purged in Czechoslovakia. This list included Slansky, Geminder, Sling, Reicin, Koehler, Bares, Frank, London and scores of others I have not had occasion to mention in this chapter: Vavro Hajdu, the Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs; Fuchs and Lomsky, regional secretaries of the Party; Jarmila Taussigova, chief of the Party Control Commission; Goldstuecker, former minister to Israel; Kamil Winter, editorial writer for *Rude Pravo;* Arnost Tauber, former minister to Switzerland and delegate to the United Nations Economic Conference; Rudolf Margolius, deputy to the Minister of Foreign Trade; Ludvik Frejka, economic adviser to the government. Two Jewish physicians who had long attended Gottwald were arrested in June 1952.

Czechoslovakia is the first of the Communist satellites to indulge in this brand of Communist antisemitism. The others will undoubtedly follow if the Czechoslovak counterreformation has the desired results from the Kremlin's point of view. The proportion of Jews in the top echelons of the Communist Parties of Poland, Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria is greater than in Czechoslovakia. Now the counterreformation has spread to Rumania, and Ana Pauker, long presumed to be one of Stalin's confidants, is in deep trouble, along with thousands of other Communist Jews. Matyas Rakosi in Hungary and Hilary Minc in Poland must be sleeping very uneasily.

What a strange assembly of Communist ghosts out of the past are waiting for trial in Czechoslovakia's prisons! — Clementis, the gentleman Communist; Loebl the affable negotiator; Noel Field and perhaps his brother Hermann, the mysterious Americans, who may have been turned over to Moscow; and finally Slansky, the Party boss and his scores of associates, a good half of the Communist leadership of the country, all behind bars.

In attempting this counterreformation in Czechoslovakia the Kremlin has taken a long chance. There are today more Soviet agents in Czechoslovakia than ever before, according to Western diplomats there. But they have to keep much more in the background than in the past. Gottwald has kicked out the most prominent Muscovites and is more powerful than ever before. This is offset somewhat by information that he has been ailing since early 1952 — a nervous disorder brought about by heavy drinking. On the highest levels Gottwald's nationalists are, nonetheless, now much more "among themselves." They have scored an altogether astonishing victory for themselves in prevailing upon the Kremlin to adopt

the policy of counterreformation. Their victory is also a victory for the Czechoslovak workers whose resistance, in fact, made it possible. And it is a victory for the West, for it reflects the shift in the balance of power that has taken place in Europe since the days when the Communists were able to seize power without opposition. Now American power, and in general the power of the West, is again a factor in Europe. The anti-Communists and also the anti-Stalinists are beginning to feel that they can afford to be bold, even in such a vulnerable territory as Czechoslovakia.

Western strength will continue to grow in the next few years, and the Czechoslovaks, always sensitive to international forces, will continue to reflect the shift in the balance of power. Today the nationalist Communists are able to bring about the demise of the Kremlin's oldest and most reliable agents. What will they be able to do tomorrow? I believe that certain of them are going along with the counterreformation because they do not yet dare to make it a reformation; that they are waiting for an opportunity to transform the counterreformation into a Titoist revolt. They still have a chance.

Milestones in the Story of Czechoslovakia

863	Cyril and Methodius, invited from Constantinople to Christianize the Great Moravians, ancestors of the Czechoslovaks.
895	Destruction of the Great Moravian Empire by the Magyars.
1316–1378	Reign of Emperor Charles IV, who made Prague the capital of the Holy Roman Empire.
1373–1415	Life of Jan Hus, Czech religious and social reformer, who anticipated the Reformation by a century.
1620, November 8	Battle of White Mountain in which the Hussites were decisively defeated by the Hapsburgs.
1781	Edict of Tolerance issued by Emperor Joseph II. It made possible Czech National revival.
1798–1876	Life of Frantisek Palacky, greatest of the "National Awakeners."
1850, March 7 to 1937, September 14	Life of Tomas Garrigue Masaryk, Father of the Republic and its first president.
1918, October 28	Proclamation of the Czechoslovak Republic.
1938, September 30	Munich four-power agreement forcing Czechoslovakia to cede Sudetenland to Nazi Germany.
1939, March 15	Germans march into Czechoslovakia.
1943, November 26—December 2	Secret Teheran agreement between Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin assigns Czechoslovakia into Soviet sphere.

1945, May 5–9	Prague rises against the Germans. Liberation by the Red Army.
1945, October 24	Sixty per cent of Czech industry nationalized in first nationalization decree.
1946, May 28	Communists win 38 per cent of popular vote in parliamentary elections.
1947, July 9	Czechoslovakia forced by Stalin to reject invitation to first Marshall Plan Conference.
1948, February 25	Communist *coup d'état.*
1948, March 10	Death of Jan Masaryk.
1948, September 3	Death of President Benes.
1949, October 3	First mass arrests begin in Prague.
1951, February 26	Announcement of the arrest of Dr. Vladimir Clementis.
1951, March 10	Archbishop Josef Beran banished from Prague.
1951, July 4	William Oatis, head of Associated Press bureau in Prague, sentenced to ten years in prison for espionage.
1951, September 6–9	Communist Party shake-up and reorganization of the economy.
1952, April 30	Ambassador Briggs allowed to see William Oatis in prison.
1952, July	"Voluntary" work brigades officially declared compulsory.

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