

Eastern Europe – Fifty Years Ago

A Press Review by a Hungarian Refugee

Czech Party Adopts Democratic Program

1968. January–April

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The Wash Post file. 30 1968

Welcome for Czechoslovak Leader Underlines Soviets' European Bias

By Anatole Shub

Washington Post Foreign Service

MOSCOW, Jan. 29—Czechoslovakia's new Communist Party leader, Alexander Dubcek, arrived today for a brief visit and got a royal welcome.

Dubcek, a 46-year-old Slovak who succeeded veteran conservative Antonin Novotny Jan. 5, was greeted at Vnu-kovo airport by Soviet Communist Party General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev, Chief of State Nikolai Podgorny and Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko.

Dubcek is expected to brief Soviet leaders on the changes that may be expected within Czechoslovakia as well as the new team's approach to the German problem and to the international Communist "consultative meeting" scheduled to open in Budapest Feb. 26.

A sincere effort at harmony is expected from both sides, although Dubcek is more sympathetic to the heretic Yugoslavs and Rumanians, and less responsive to the hardline East Germans, than was Novotny. Thus, Czechoslovakia will attend the Budapest meet-

ing. As apparently will Rumania, but the Dubcek team will doubtless take a more flexible position on intra-Communist issues than the old-guard leadership.

The high-level Soviet attention to Dubcek clearly demonstrated not only Kremlin curiosity about the newest and youngest Communist leader but the continuing "Europe first" orientation of Soviet policy makers.

By way of comparison, none of the top Soviet leaders has said a public word here about the Pueblo incident, and North Korean delegation in Moscow when it broke out was received only at the deputy minister level.

The Soviet Press, while continuing to comment routinely on the Pueblo affair, has given as great or greater attention to the B-52 crash in Greenland. Observers explain this not so much by Soviet reluctance to become involved in Korea as by the high priority in longrange Soviet policy of efforts to persuade Denmark and Norway to withdraw from NATO.

At the same time, neither the Korean crisis nor the earlier diplomatic flurries over apparent North Vietnamese peace overtures have resulted in Soviet editors abandoning, even for a day, the continuous attack on neo-Nazism and alleged "revanchism" in West Germany.

Bonn's unhappy reactions to the American-Soviet draft of a nuclear nonproliferation treaty have been strongly attacked. Nor has Moscow let up its attacks on the military regime in Greece.

Although on the map the U.S.S.R. appears more an Asian than a European power, and despite massive efforts to settle Siberia and central Asia, nearly three quarters of the Soviet population is in Europe, west of the Urals. Soviet foreign policy and culture reflect that fact.

The most burning theme in the Soviet press the last few days has been the prosecution of Dr. Benjamin Spock and his anti-draft associates in Boston. Izvestia tonight devotes half a page, in best "heroic" layout, to Spock and his codefendants. However, any connection with Vietnam is secondary at best.

The main point is to counter the bad impression produced in the West—and among Soviet intellectuals—by the "literary underground" trial in Moscow earlier this month. The hope is to persuade Western-minded Soviet intellectuals, and Western Communists, that the United States treats its dissidents as harshly as this country.

Press Feb. 22
1969

Czech Concedes 'Difficulties'

Brezhnev in Prague Amid Talk of Split

By Stephen S. Rosenfeld
Washington Post Staff Writer

The top Soviet leader flew to Prague yesterday amid signs that Czechoslovakia, under its new leadership, may be headed for a major collision with the Soviet Union.

As Communist Party chief Leonid I. Brezhnev left Moscow, his Czechoslovakian counterpart, Alexander Dubcek, made the startling public admission that "difficulties" have cropped up between their two countries.

Coupled with rumbles of Soviet-Czech tension over trade and a sudden flurry of outspoken statements in the Czech press, these developments suggested to informed observers here the possibility of a Czech break with Moscow in the Yugoslav and Rumanian style.

It was also considered possible that the current liberal-nationalistic outbreak stems not from a deliberate decision but from a political crisis in which the leadership is so divided



ALEXANDER DUBCEK
... a public admission

and distracted it cannot keep outspoken editors leashed.

Dubcek and Premier Josef Lenart are considered the liberals. Antonin Novotny, whom

See BLOC, A14, Col. 1

BLOC—From Page A1

Brezhnev Flies to Czech Capital Amid Rumors Clash Is Imminent

Dubcek displaced as party leader last month, is still President and still a Party Presidium member. He is the leading conservative, defined as such by his habit of obedience to the Soviet Union and his resistance to economic reform, artistic freedom and Slovak separatism at home.

Ostensibly, Brezhnev (and East Europe's other leaders) arrived in Prague yesterday to help the Czech Communists celebrate the 20th anniversary of their seizure of power. Then, it was assumed they all would confer about the big meeting of Communist parties

scheduled to open next Monday in Budapest.

Sources familiar with Brezhnev's previous missions to Prague suspect that his main purpose is simply to find out what is going on, not to attempt to direct a pro-Soviet outcome.

But Brezhnev was coming on the same day that Dubcek, in an anniversary article under his name in the Soviet newspaper Pravda, had announced Soviet-Czech divergences in this backhanded but unmistakable way:

"Despite various difficulties and complicated problems, which logically arise and should not be exaggerated, we are convinced that all-embracing collaboration between the socialist countries will be worked out."

However, last month Czechs were muttering privately, and this month the press has been talking openly, about economic relations with Russia. The basic grievance is that Prague must export too much to Moscow, and at too high prices, to pay for raw-material and food imports; and that this keeps Prague from trading more with the West. The press, for instance, has complained that Czechoslovakia pays more for Soviet oil than Italy does, and has received a poor return for its required investment in Soviet iron ore and oil facilities.

Czechoslovakia's superior interest and performance in economic reform, which carries with it an implied threat to Party control, is also understood to have troubled Moscow.

Moreover, Czechoslovakia has evidently not shown what Moscow regards as proper solicitude for East Germany, which seeks a united hard socialist line on West Germany. Just two weeks ago, Prague and Bonn exchanged trade missions.

Since Dubcek took over the Party, Czechoslovakia has adopted a markedly "Rumanian" line on next week's Budapest conference, denying it the right to condemn or excommunicate anyone and specifically disavowing the old international Communist stand-

need when they stand up to Moscow. In the past few weeks, the appeals on this line in the Czech press have been — in one close reader's word — "unbelievable." This reader was reminded of the ferment which led up to Poland's anti-Soviet revolt of 1956.

Writers suppressed by Novotny, have been in the van and have won permission to reopen their literary magazine, Literarny Listy, that he closed.

On the issue of making the Party apparatus the servant rather than the master of the Party membership, demands have been made for secret Party elections, dispersal of power, assurance for minority expression, and divorce of the Party from control over state administration.

One feature of a proposed "action program" is to give more power to what has been a rubber-stamp National Assembly "and for the government to be fully answerable to the National Assembly."

The Forestry Minister, calling suggestively for a "new unity," wrote:

"We want to and we will assume the responsibility of telling the people the truth

... We must put an end to a situation when policy is cooked up somewhere above, without the participation of the people, and sometimes even against the people

... We must listen to the voice of the people and give them a chance to express their opinions."

That the minister, Josef Smrkovsky, is not a young technocrat or an intellectual but an old Communist who was imprisoned in the 1930s, perhaps conveys an idea of the scope of the movement now sweeping Czechoslovakia, 20 years after the Communists seized power.

The Evening Star III. 16. 1968

Czech Defector Is Reported Telling All

By BERNARD GWERTZMAN
Star Staff Writer

U.S. sources said today Czech Maj. Gen. Jan Sejna has turned out to be "the most valuable defector in 20 years."

Sejna, former head of the political section of the Czech army, is under intensive interrogation at a Washington area hideaway — and has provided detailed information on Warsaw Pact military plans and strategy.

He also is well versed on secret Communist party matters, involving not only Czechoslovakia but other countries as well. "He is singing like a bird," one source said.

Sejna, a political ally of Antonin Novotny, the Czech president who was ousted in January as Communist party boss, defected to the United States on Feb. 28, touching off a political storm in Czechoslovakia.

His defection also led to a hurried visit to Prague by Soviet Gen. Ivan Yakubovsky, commander of the Warsaw Pact forces, presumably to learn how much secret information had been compromised.

Sejna, 40, reportedly was involved in an abortive plot in January to call out certain army units in support of Novotny — thereby seeking to intimidate Communist party leaders who were seeking Novotny's ouster.

Sejna also has been accused by the Czech authorities of having made huge profits in the illegal sale of certain agricultural products.

Articles in the liberalized Czech press claim that he fled Czechoslovakia to escape prosecution of the embezzlement charges.

In fact, a formal request was made Wednesday by the Czech

embassy here for Sejna's extradition to face a trial on the embezzlement charges. The State Department says it is studying the matter.

But officials here believe that the embezzlement charges are not the real reason the general is wanted back. They say the anti-Novotny forces want Sejna to provide details on the attempt to keep Novotny in power.

Since Novotny's ouster in January, the whole Czech society has gone through a rapid liberalization under new First Secretary Alexander Dubcek, becoming overnight the freest Communist society among Warsaw Pact nations.

Yesterday, Deputy Defense Minister Vladimir Janko was reported to have committed suicide while on his way to face a government commission inquiring into how Sejna was able to

flee the country on Feb. 25 when he already was under investigation.

Janko, it is believed, also was involved in the plot to keep Novotny in power.

In light of the latest developments, it is now almost certain that Novotny will lose his remaining job as president.

There are daily articles in the press calling for his resignation or dismissal—an incredible turnabout in a country where not a bad word was permitted to be said about him in the press while he ruled the country.

Sejna apparently left Czechoslovakia by car on Feb. 25 at the Hungarian border accompanied by his 18-year-old son, Jan, and a 22-year-old actress. They went from Hungary to Yugoslavia, and on to Italy. On Feb. 28, he walked into the American Embassy in Rome and identified himself.

He was granted a visa and the three were sent that day to the United States. Sejna has asked for permanent residency here, and the request is under study. No decision will be made until the Czech extradition request is acted upon.

The Czech press identifies the actress as Sejna's mistress, but the State Department says both Sejna and his son say she is the son's fiancée.

If past practice is followed, Sejna presumably will be allowed to stay in this country if he cooperates fully with the intelligence agencies.

The case is an embarrassment of sorts for the State Department, which is very sympathetic to the new Czech leadership and certainly has no liking for Sejna's former political views. But he was regarded as too valuable an intelligence source to be turned away.

The Wash. Post Feb. 25, 1968

Zeal of Reform Stirs Czechs

By Dan Morgan
Washington Post Foreign Service

PRAGUE, Feb. 24—The leaders of the Communist East European world came here this week to commemorate an anniversary, but they found the capital of Czechoslovakia preoccupied with the future and in no mood to dwell on the past.

The internal liberalization process begun a month ago eclipses all else here, even the visit of the big names of communism, the coming meeting of world Communist Parties in Budapest, and even the 20th-anniversary celebrations of the 1948 workers' takeover.

In Hradcany Castle, which seems to float like a fairy-tale picture above the Prague winter mists, the reformers who took power in January are working out a liberalization program that would revolutionize the country's economic, cultural and political life.

But the changes are already noticeable. Unprecedented crowds gather at newspaper kiosks to buy Rude Pravo, which is clarifying the government's "new course" in almost daily articles.

Intellectuals who stayed under cover during the crack-down last fall by conservative Party Chief Antonin Novotny, since deposed, are again meeting and talking openly at the Literary Club.

The speed of the changes, more than their scope, has amazed the intellectuals who had expected to wait several years before the reforms began to take hold.

"What is really happening is unique," said a leading official of the Writers Union. "After all these years of terror, we are trying to wed socialism and freedom."

Next week the Writers Union publication—banned by the Cultural Ministry last fall—will appear in its first edition under the new name of Literarni Listy.

What now excites Prague is that the new Party "dictatorship" seems determined to finish the job started by the intellectuals last year.

The ideological debate is being led not only by the 46-year-old Dubcek but by he writers themselves, plus reformers such as Ota Sic, creator of the new economic course, Central Committee member Osef Smrkovsky and reformed dogmatist Jaroslav Sabata, lecturer at Brno University.

It was Sic who left a sick bed to attend the decisive January Central Committee meeting to denounce Novotny and vote against him. Sic has been an advocate of less Party and government interference in the economic area—interference which many say has delayed the payoff from the initiatives begun in 1965.

Smrkovsky, also a Central Committee member, has been writing articles in Rude Pravo calling for a democratization that would be supported by "real and generally comprehensible guarantees." To bring this about he has called on Czechs and Slovaks to "scout uncharted territory."

Sabata has been criticizing the Party's monopoly in society and expressing the revolutionary view that the Party may rule but cannot be a government.

It is easy to see why the ferment here has caused uneasiness in the more authoritarian countries in Eastern Europe, notably East Germany and Poland. What seems to be contemplated is something resembling the Yugoslavian system, but in some ways more dramatic, with the government a consenting partner rather than an adversary. Centralism, Dubcek holds, is still necessary but its application must be reconsidered.

Party ideologist Jan Hendrych, who was involved in the 1967 attack on the writers, had made a public statement accepting the goals of the reformers, and his supporters are saying it was only the Novotny grip that suppressed his basic liberality.

This is not to say that the conservatives are finished. Novotny remains a potential threat as President, but he is said to be losing support even in Prague and its factory districts where his men still control the Party machinery.

The Stalinist personality cult around him is crumbling.

The reformers, so long on the defensive, are now on the attack. Prof. Edouard Goldstuecker, chairman of the Writers Union, has been visiting factory meetings and making comments that are irritating to the old-line local Party officials who dislike intellectuals meddling in Party affairs.

Novotny supporters in the Party, government and trade unions have been keeping silent publicly. There have been no attacks on Novotny himself, but there are rumors that as many as 60 per cent of the Communist Party's apparatchiks may be sacked when personnel changes start in March.

The Party conservatives seem inept at launching a counterattack, at least for now. Meanwhile, they are being broadly criticized in public statements as the reformers consolidate.

As most of the visiting Soviet and East European leaders looked on Thursday, the new Party leader, Alexander Dubcek, outlined the reforms and borrowed a quote from the late Czech Communist leader Klement Gottwald:

"To lead the masses does not mean to boss them about . . . Unless undemocratic and un-Communist conduct is eliminated, the Party could find itself in a predicament."

Dubcek proclaimed the end of the class struggle in Czechoslovakia and said the regime is ready to open itself up to "all changes called for by the needs of a modern and advanced society . . . Victory has been achieved by those who hold progressive views and do not believe that values can be preserved only by being advocated."

There was little doubt that the target of this attack was Novotny, who was blamed last fall for paying only lip service to the writers' demands for more freedom and a relaxation of Party control in all facets of society.

This would require the Party to loosen its grip on the country's institutions, while getting broad popular support. For this reason, Dubcek is backing rehabilitation for all who suffered in the last few years—non-Communists and Communists alike.

In his Thursday speech he declared that "all wrongdoings must be put right consistently and without reservations."

This could mean the release of such people as Jan Benes, the young writer sentenced to five years in prison last summer on charges of hostile activity, and possibly of victims of the political trials of more than a decade ago.

How the new ideas will be translated into specifics will be revealed in the government's action program to be proposed soon. All Prague is waiting anxiously for the March Central Committee meeting at which it will be outlined.

It is believed that it will include new powers for the National Assembly, voting reforms, easing of travel restrictions, curbs on the security police, removal of governmental intermediaries in carrying out the economic reforms, and more freedom for non-Communist parties to form coalitions and lobby groups.

Censorship will probably be eased, with censors losing their anonymity and procedures available for appeals.

There have also been reports that the government plans to reduce conscription from two years to 18 months as a gesture to the country's youth, which joined last fall in applying pressure to the Novotny regime.

In the economic field, where Sic's ideas dominate, the possibility of making machinery and other aid available to private farmers on an equal basis with the cooperative ones will be studied. All these things—the personnel shifts with hints of more to come. The new mood of free expression—having added to the sense of excitement in Prague.

The Evening Star III. 8 1968

Novotny's Holiday for Month May Be Beginning of End

By SMITH HEMPSTONE
European Correspondent of The Star

PRAGUE — Antonin Novotny, the president of Czechoslovakia whose crumbling political position has been further eroded by the defection of Maj. Gen. Jan Sejna, will go on one month's holiday Monday.

Novotny's vacation was recommended, sources here said, for "political and medical reasons." They did not elaborate. Novotny will go to the Karlovy Vary Carlsbad spa.

There is speculation that Novotny may never return to Prague as president. He is 63.

The 200-member Central Committee replaced Novotny as Communist party leader by 46-year-old Alexander Dubcek, a moderate Slovak, in January. Novotny retained the largely powerless presidency which he has held since 1957.

Officers Ask Resignations

(General staff officers of the Czechoslovak Army publicly demanded today that Novotny resign and thus assume responsibility for the defection of Sejna, the Associated Press reported.

(The officers' call came in the form of an open letter to Dubcek, who returned to Prague today from the Sofia summit meeting of Warsaw Pact countries, at which the Sejna affair was understood to have been a key topic.)

Dubcek's supporters in the army and police apparently foiled an abortive attempt on Novotny's part to stage a coup.

The handiest club his opponents have found recently to beat Novotny with is the defection of Gen. Sejna, one of the President's staunchest supporters and the top Communist at the ministry of defense. Sejna reached the U.S. Feb. 28 and asked for asylum.

The demand grew today for the resignations of the ministers of defense and interior because of the Sejna affair. Prague has formally requested Sejna's extradition and has charged him with involvement in a black market scheme.

Red Euphemism

The political headquarters of the army said yesterday that "those involved in the case should draw the necessary self-critical conclusions." That is the Communist euphemism for "resign."

Before joining the army in 1950, Sejna had been a field hand with a ninth grade education. Commissioned in 1951, his rise was rapid.

By 1954 he was a major with the job of political deputy to the commanding officer of the engineer corps. In another two years he was secretary of the military council of the minister of defense, a post he held until 1964.

From then until his flight on Feb. 25, Sejna was chief secre-

tary of the main committee of the Communist party at the defense ministry.

Promoted Last Year

As such he unquestionably had access to top secret Czech and Warsaw Pact defense plans, although he may not have availed himself of this privilege, since his functions seem to have been largely political rather than technical. He is remembered by those who knew him as "a good guy" and "an operator."

It is reported that he was promoted to major general last year on the recommendation of Miroslav Mamula, chief of the Central Committee's powerful department of state administration, and that of Gen. Bohumir Lomsky, minister of defense, over the objections of the army's political headquarters.

Mamula was removed from office after January's events and Lomsky's retirement is expected momentarily.

Sejna is wanted by Czechs allegedly in connection with a \$20,000 clover seed fraud, for which another more junior officer has been arrested. While the clover seed story may be true, Sejna is really wanted as a Stalinist who stuck to Novotny too long.

Leaves Wife Behind

When the 41-year-old general fled to Italy via Hungary and Yugoslavia, he left his wife behind but took with him his 18-year-old son and 22-year-old actress Evzenie Musilova. Miss Musilova has been described by U.S. officials in Washington as the son's fiancee and in Prague

newspapers as Sejna's girl friend.

Sejna and his entourage found it easy to flee country. On the General's request, his son was issued a diplomatic passport on Feb. 21, according to official reports.

On the same day, the National Assembly received a request from the procurator-general's office that Sejna's parliamentary immunity be lifted so that he could be arrested.

Yet Sejna, also traveling on a diplomatic passport, left the country with no difficulty at a regular border post during daylight hours four days later.

If Novotny stays away for a month, he will miss the March meeting of the Central Committee and the Presidium.

If he does not resign in the meantime, these bodies are likely to rule that, despite the unquestioned therapeutic effect of Karlovy vary's waters, Novotny's political health can no longer withstand the rigors of office.

The Sunday Star, III, 10 1968

INTERPRETIVE REPORT

Prague Relishing Freedom to Criticize

By SMITH HEMPSTONE

European Correspondent of The Star

PRAGUE — Czechoslovakia has been turned upside down to the point where a visitor had to keep pinching himself to make sure it wasn't all a dream.

Items:

- A Group of medical students took to task Lt. Gen. Vaclav Prchlik, the country's top cop, for giving an inadequate answer to the question, Did or did not President Antonin Novotny try to stage a Stalinist coup in January? And Prchlik meekly promised all the facts would be made public.

- A member of the Communist party's ruling Presidium, Josef Boruvka, advocating more democracy for Czechoslovakia, said "the world would not crumble" if the country's rubber-stamp parliament toppled an occasional government.

- The Czechoslovak press agency wrote to party boss Alexander Dubcek requesting that he keep "unqualified party officials" and police out of newsmen's hair.

- The Writers' Union chose to devote much space in the first two issues of its new weekly Literarni Listy to laudatory articles about the late Czech president. Writers praised not communist Klement Gottwald but Democrat Thomas Masaryk, founder of the Republic.

- Columnist Z. Vesely, writing in Lidova Demokracie, said that the Communist party should form a "Creative partnership" with non-Communist Groups, which should not be just "transmission levers" for party policy.

- Col. Josef Cnat, one of the Top Communists in the ministry of defense, humbly begged Czech newsmen to "assure your readers" that they can "rely" on the democratic spirit of the Communists in his ministry.

- Party members, journalists, writers, army officers and a lot of plain guys

named Svoboda vied with each other in calling for the resignation of President Novotny and the rehabilitation of 40,000 Czechs "wrongfully" persecuted under communism.

- To top it all off, Maj. Gen. Jan Sejna, 40, a convinced Stalinist who held the top politico-military post in the ministry of defense, left his wife and defected with what Czechs say was his 22-year-old actress girlfriend to (naturally) the U.S.

By the end of the week it had reached the point where one expected to get up in the morning to find a large banner, bearing the motto "Mary is a fink," flying from the battlements of Hradchany Castle.

How did it all happen, what does it mean, and where is it likely to lead?

Novotny Voted Out

Novotny's overthrow as chairman of the Communist Party in January by a free vote of the Communist party's 200-member Central Committee was the result of several factors.

One was the inflexible stupidity of the president. Novotny came to power after a bloody purge in 1953, the year of Stalin's death, and never was able to adjust to the new Europe emerging on either side of the now dilapidated Iron Curtain.

Novotny is probably the only politician who in a free plebiscite could give East German party chief Walter Ulbricht a fight for the title of polecat of the continent.

The second factor was the bumbling fashion in which incompetent Communist party hacks mismanaged Czechoslovakia's overly centralized economy, producing stagnation in what was once one of the most prosperous small countries in the world.

The man on the spot to ride to power the concentric waves of discontent was 46-year-old Alexander Dubcek (pronounced Doob-Chek).

Acceptable Alternative

Dubcek was by no means the most anti-Novotny man in presidium. But he combined in his

person many factors which made him acceptable to all rebellious factions.

Largely educated in the Soviet Union, to which his father had immigrated after a few years in the U.S., Dubcek is a big (6 foot 4) blond World War II partisan and a convinced Communist whom Russians trusted.

This was important to the liberals, who remembered what happened in Hungary a dozen years ago.

The wild days of euphoria and freedom of speech which Czechoslovakia is now experiencing seem to have four purposes.

Dubcek is wise enough to know that the Czechs, after 15 years of Novotny. Have a real need to blow off steam. Thus these days provided a safety valve for the regime.

Secondly, Dubcek is allowing most of the country's dirty linen to be aired (and the cupboard is stuffed) to build up a case for the removal of stalinists, including Novotny, who retains the largely honorific post as president, from office.

So far as is known, less than half a dozen Novotny men have been fired to date. But special commissions are meeting, partly regional conferences were being held this weekend and a widespread purge of the party, the government, and the military is likely within the next few months.

Support Needed

Thirdly, Dubcek needs the support of non-Communists to institute his "action program" of politico-economic reforms designed to modernize Czechoslovakia.

Finally, the new freedom may have a more sinister motive of making it possible for the regime to identify real "wild men" (anti-Communists) for future surveillance.

For it seems likely that, once intellectuals have had their say and the Novotny men are effectively neutralized, Dubcek will begin to apply the brakes gently and selectively. There can be no return to Stalinist principles and practices, but there are limits to freedom which even liberal Com-

munist (and Dubcek is only a moderate) can tolerate.

Despite wild talk from one or two intellectuals about a policy of "active neutrality" for Czechoslovakia, drastic changes in foreign policy should not be expected.

Dubcek is going to have his hands full restoring some sort of order to his domestic political and economic house. Czechoslovakia is not going to follow Yugoslavia's example and leave the Warsaw Pack and Comecon (Council of Mutual Economic Assistance) Dubcek is a loyal (if modern) Communist who feels that Czechoslovakia needs the Russian alliance to protect itself from the German threat.

Better West Ties

There should be, however, a gradual improvement in Czech relations with the West in general and with West Germany in particular, resulting ultimately (perhaps next year) in an exchange of ambassadors between Bonn and Prague.

In other fields as well as foreign relations, Czech policy almost certainly will become more pragmatic and less slavishly obedient to Moscow.

What has really happened, then, is less a dramatic shift in ideology than a change in the generations of Czechoslovakia's ruling Communist party. Modernists and technocrats are taking over and the brass-knuckle boys are on their way out.

The Evening Herald W. 16 1968

Novotny Fires Two in Sejna Case

PRAGUE (AP) — President Antonin Novotny, himself fighting off reformist pressure to resign, tonight fired two high government officials who backed his orthodox Communist position. Both were involved in a scandal over the defection of a Czech general to the United States.

Novotny ordered the resignation of Interior Minister Jan Kudrna, director of the secret police, and State Atty. Gen. Jan Bartusek. The president's action appeared to be a humiliating concession to the nation's new liberal leadership.

National Assembly Chairman Bohumir Lastovicka called earlier today for their dismissal.

Kudrna and Bartusek have been implicated in the flight of Maj. Gen. Jan Sejna to the United States. Deputy Defense Minister Vladimir Janko, also linked to the case, committed suicide yesterday, 24 hours after an ungent cabinet discussion of his conduct.

The Prague newspaper Mlada Fronta reported Janko shot himself in the heart and head while in his chauffeur-driven car.

Janko's boss, Defense Minister Bohumir Lomsky, was coming under sharp criticism. The Communist party organization of teachers at the Klement Gotwald military-political academy demanded he resign today, charging: "In our opinion you were subordinating yourself



GEN. VLADIMIR JANKO



ANTONIN NOVOTNY

in full to the will of Antonin Novotny and his apparatus."

All the officials under fire have been mentioned in connection with an abortive pro-Novotny army plot in January to block Novotny's ouster as party chief.

Earlier yesterday another Novotny supporter, Michal Chudik, a leading conservative member of the party hierarchy, resigned as head of the Slovak National Council. Chudik, 53, had apparently abandoned hope that Novotny would be able to ward off liberal pressures and keep the figurehead presidency.

The Slovaks, who make up

about one third of Czechoslovakia's 15 million population, have been pressing hard for liberalization and for greater ethnic autonomy.

The new liberal leaders under Alexander Dubcek, who supplanted Novotny as party chief in January, say Sejna was involved in an abortive attempt to mobilize armored troops to keep Novotny in the party leadership.

Sejna is now somewhere in the United States under U.S. government protection. Czechoslovakia's ambassador in Washington asked the State Department Wednesday for his extradition, and the department asked for

documentary evidence against him.

Ambassador Karel Duda said Sejna is accused of embezzlement, obtaining money by false pretenses and fraud.

The man mentioned as the likely successor to Novotny is a easy-going, crew-cut Josef Smrkovsky, 56, the most prominent survivor of the bloody Stalinist purges in Czechoslovakia in the 1940s.

Smrkovsky's popularity increased this year after he delivered a passionate speech before the party's Central Committee denouncing the Old Guard regime.

(Smrkovsky told today how Soviet Communist leader Leonid I. Brezhnev has failed in an attempt to intervene in Czech affairs, the United International reported.)

("We were disturbed when Brezhnev came to Prague last December. But when he realized that we were decided to stick to our plans, he said, 'Well, comrades, it's your affair' and left again.

("Then, we were happy," Smrkovsky, now minister of forestry, said in a speech to a youth meeting broadcast by Prague radio.

(The mass meeting burst into thunderous cheers as Smrkovsky referred to the bygone era of Stalinism in Czechoslovakia and said, "Those times are gone." UPI reported.)

The Wash. Post III, 18 1968

Czechs Draft Private Business Plan

By Anatole Shub

Washington Post Foreign Service

PRAGUE, March 17 — Czechoslovak progressives hope to revive private enterprise and seek a massive World Bank loan to insure the success of their economic reform, it was learned today.

The draft "action program" being prepared for Central Committee approval within a fortnight contains a proposal for new legislation to permit small-scale private business, along the lines which have proved successful in Yugoslavia.

Yugoslav laws originally permitted a private entrepreneur to employ a maximum of three persons in addition to members of his own family, but the maximum is being raised sharply as a result of the successes in the services and tourist trades since 1966.

Eugene Loebel, one of Czechoslovakia's most incisive reformers, declared this week that the economy needed some 200,000 to 300,000 private enterprises to stimulate commerce and consumer goods turnover while absorbing the manpower "squeeze-out" from unprofitable, overstaffed state industries. Loebel, now director of the State Bank of Bratislava, was Minister of Foreign Trade after World War II before being jailed in a Stalinist trial.

Changes Seen

If the Central Committee endorses private enterprise on the scale urged by Loebel, as much as one-fifth of the Czech work force might eventually be employed in the private sector. Heavy industry, banks, utilities and other key sectors

would continue to be publicly controlled. It is not yet known whether agriculture figures in the program for limited private enterprise.

A key aim of the economic "action program" is to achieve full convertibility of the Czech crown. In Central Committee discussions it has been calculated that this would take five to seven years without international aid. The reformers believe that full convertibility could be achieved in three years with some \$400 million support from the World Bank.

To qualify for World Bank and other Western aid, Czechoslovakia is preparing to resume full membership in the International Monetary Fund. Its membership was suspended during the Stalin era because of Prague's refusal to furnish the accurate statistics required by the IMF. These considerations no longer apply.

Broader Trade With West

The "action program" also contains proposals for broader industrial cooperation with Western firms and wider use of Western licenses in re-equipping much of Czechoslovakia's outmoded industrial plant.

Much of the Czech reform program is based on the Yugoslav experience, which has been studied closely for several years by key associates of Dr. Ota Sik at the influential Economic Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences.

The reformers consider it unlikely that Russia would object to their program. There is a precedent for Western aid and fiscal support in Poland after 1956. Moscow is itself re-equipping key Soviet factories

in the West, and is in no position to fulfill Czech requirements. Moreover, several important Soviet leaders are said to believe that a successful reform in Czechoslovakia might prove a model for more thoroughgoing changes in Russia.

However, should Czech economic and political reforms lead to a deterioration of relations with Russia, Poland and East Germany, economists here believe they can surmount the difficulties of transition. Rumania and Yugoslavia, as well as various West European and third world countries, would be prepared to help.

Reuters reported the following from Vienna:

Czechoslovakia tonight did something no other Communist Party in Eastern Europe is believed ever to have done — it announced results of top-secret voting of its policy-making Presidium for the Communist Party leadership.

The vote announced was that of Party leaders in January when Alexander Dubcek ousted President Antonin Novotny for the leadership in a reaction to old-style Communist methods.

The announced vote was 5-5, a draw, but Dubcek won in a later meeting attended by the 110-man Central Committee of the Communist Party.

Figures for the Central Committee voting were not published.

(The Czech news agency Ceteka reported that district party organizations have decided to elect officials by secret ballot in future — a move almost certain to result in wholesale changes in local Party leadership on a national scale.)

(Observers said secret balloting would be a break with 20 years of Communist practice in which men chosen by the Central Party apparatus were selected for office.)

Czechs Seen Easing Stand Toward Bonn

By Dan Morgan

Washington Post Foreign Service

BONN, March 17—Hints of new Czech flexibility on the "German question" were published in Prague this weekend just as the East German Communist regime was trying to prevent any softening of the

new Czech government toward Bonn.

On Saturday, the Party organ Rude Pravo printed an article calling attention to "wise forces" in West Germany which are trying to promote international cooperation.

The article coincided with the first anniversary of the East German-Czech friendship treaty which was inspired by Communist leader Walter Ulbricht's effort to block Bonn's overtures toward East Europe.

Concerned But Interested

It noted with concern "the steady appearance of revanchists and neo-Nazis" in West Germany. But it added:

"On the other hand we follow with interest the efforts of wise forces in that country which try to set forth in the policies of West Germany the spirit of international cooperation on the basis of the present state of things in Europe, as well as respect for existing postwar realities."

This was clearly a reference to a growing move in West Germany for some form of recognition for East Germany.

Relations between East Germany and Czechoslovakia since the ouster of Antonin Novotny as First Secretary in January have been cool, but correct.

But the wave of change sweeping Czechoslovakia has caused worry in the East German Party hierarchy, which fears not only the "infection" of its own population, but also closer relations between Bonn and Prague ultimately.

Exchange Missions

The two countries exchanged trade missions a month ago. However, the West German Foreign Office has emphatically denied reports published in Paris that Bonn and Prague were engaged in secret talks aimed at establishing full diplomatic relations.

Sources here are hopeful that the new Czech government will be more flexible in its policies toward the West.

For the most part, Czech leaders have been careful to emphasize that what was happening was a Czech phenomenon, so as not to alarm the East Germans and others.

The Wash. Post, III. 22 1968

Czech Assemblymen Call for Novotny Ouster

From News Dispatches

PRAGUE, March 21—A committee of the Czechoslovak National Assembly called on President Antonin Novotny today to resign voluntarily or face certain ouster by the Assembly.

The old Stalinist has been under heavy government, Communist Party and student pressures since he was ousted as party chairman in January and replaced by liberal Slovakian leader Alexander Dubcek, Novotny had been Party leader since 1953. He retains the lesser job of president.

The construction committee of the Assembly unanimously recommended that Novotny resign immediately. It urged an emergency special session of the Assembly if he did not

quit voluntarily, the Czech news agency CTK reported.

The committee normally handles building trade problems. More importantly, the Presidium of the Assembly yesterday called for a special session. Observers said the Assembly would vote nonconfidence in Novotny and force him out.

Novotny was quoted by the newspaper Vercerni Praha as saying he would accept any party decision that he should resign. "I have no ambitions," he was said to have told industrial representatives who visited him Wednesday.

Novotny has remained in seclusion in the presidential castle.

Other evidence of Prague's new open debate:

• The Central Council of



United Press International

ANTONIN NOVOTNY
... protests grow

Czech Trade Unions met for a "critical analysis of the work of the Secretariat." The ruling committee has been headed by trade union President Miroslav

lav Pastyrik. He submitted his resignation last week, but it was rejected.

Karel Polacek, deputy trade union president, claimed that Pastyrik's decisions were "subjective" and that "grave aberrations occurred under his leadership. He said Pastyrik introduced methods "alien to trade union democracy" and should be thrown out rather than allowed to resign.

• Jan Prochazka, vice president of the Writers Union, wrote an open letter calling on authorities to launch a new investigation into the mysterious death of Foreign Minister Jan Masaryk 20 years ago.

Masaryk, son of the country's first president, Tomas Masaryk, died in a plunge from a second-floor window of the Prague Foreign Ministry on March 10, 1948, about a fortnight after the Communist takeover.

The official version, was that Masaryk committed sui-

cide, but Prochazka's letter in Literarnj Listy said:

"Nothing that happened 20 years ago is surrounded with so much speculation and doubt . . . Testimony, which has been presented to us as conclusive, unfortunately is not convincing. Other cases have shown with what methods the secret police worked at that time."

Czech Writer Seen Questioning Red Pacts

Washington Post Foreign Service

UNITED NATIONS, N.Y., March 21—A broadcast by a liberal Czechoslovakian journalist suggesting that North Korea behaved as an irresponsible ally in the Pueblo case has aroused new interest in light of the peaceful revolution taking place in Prague.

The commentary over Radio Prague was delivered on Feb. 12 by Milan Weiner, a member of the editorial board of the

Journal of the Writers Union.

Instead of condemning the United States for the spy ship affair, Weiner compared its capture by North Korea to Pearl Harbor and by implication praised the United States for not escalating the incident into a clash with the Soviet Union.

His remarks were interpreted here as questioning the Communist alliances. As such it recalls Hungary in 1956 when short-lived Premier Imre Nagy proposed that Hungary pull out of the Warsaw Pact. Within hours, Soviet tanks were rumbling through Budapest.

Czech Reform Reaction Spurs Communist Talks

By SMITH HEMPSTONE
European Correspondent of The Star

LONDON—Repercussions of the reform movement in Czechoslovakia brought leaders of the Communist nations of Europe hurriedly together for a meeting in East Germany yesterday.

A communique distributed today by the East German news agency ADN said the nations affirmed their determination to strengthen the Warsaw Pact which binds them together.

ADN, said, according to the Associated Press, that Soviet Premier Alexei N. Kosygin and Communist party chief Leonid I. Brezhnev met in Dresden with party and government leaders from Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria and East Germany. Romania apparently was not represented.

A Czech announcement of the meeting said Alexander Dubcek, the reformist who replaced Antonin Novotny as Communist party first secretary in January, was accompanied to the meeting by Premier Josef Lenart and Deputy Premier Oldrich Cernik.

ADN said other participants included Poland's party chief Wladyslaw Gomulka and Premier Jozef Cyrankiewicz, Hungarian party leader Janos Kadar and Premier Jenoe Fosc, party chief Walter Ulbricht of East Germany and Bulgarian Deputy Premier Zhivki Zhivkov.

The meeting came a day after the resignation under pressure of Novotny as president of Czechoslovakia was announced.

First indications were that the meeting was prompted by Poland and East Germany in an attempt to shut off some of the sweeping freedom that has become prevalent in Czechoslovakia.

Ulbricht and Gomulka are considered orthodox Communists along the lines of Novotny and both have been facing troubles with their own nations.

The Czechoslovakian press, in its new-found freedom of recent weeks, has printed criticism of the regimes in East Germany and Poland and Czech newspapers have been confiscated in both countries. Czech reporters have been expelled from Poland.

(AP said there were reports the meeting lasted more than 12 hours.

(ADN's report of the communique said that at the meeting, "the conviction was expressed that the workers' class and all workers in Czechoslovakia under the leadership of the Communist party of Czechoslovakia will secure the further development of

the Socialist construction in the country."

(It also said the delegates "had an exchange of opinions on extraordinarily important problems of political and economic development and cooperation" and re-emphasized the "unanimity of opinion" achieved at a Warsaw Pact meeting in Bulgaria a few weeks ago.)

The liberal trend in Eastern Europe was underscored by a statement yesterday from Romania. Party chief Nicolae Ceausescu said every Romanian "should be able to freely express his views on policies of the Communist party."

Ceausescu, who is also Romania's president, stressed the party would not mind if "diverse and even wrong views appear."

There is some evidence to suggest that Prague may be seriously worried that the domestic situation could get out of hand as Czechoslovakia enters a new and perhaps the trickiest period since Dubcek took power nearly three months ago.

It appears probable that there will be some retreat from democratic radicalism which both toppled Novotny and saw new flowering after his fall.

In a statement Friday, the Presidium of the Central Committee warned that there are limits to the degree of liberty it will permit.

In Prague, meanwhile, more dismissals of Novotny's supporters are expected after Thursday's meeting of the central committee.

Party and government figures whose jobs are thought to be in jeopardy include Presidium members Jiri Hendrych (deprived earlier this month of his powerful post as chairman of the Central committee's ideological commission) and Deputy Premier Otakar Simunek, Defense Minister Bohumir Lomsky and Foreign Minister Vaclav David.

Novotny's successor as president probably will be elected early in April. It's likely to be either Gen. Ludvik Svoboda or Josef Smrkovsky.

Svoboda commanded Czech forces in Russia during World War II and was defense minister until the early 1950s.

Smrkovsky is a radical Slovak imprisoned for years by Novotny. But he may be too liberal for the politburo (and for the Kremlin, which would prefer Svoboda). Smrkovsky now holds the relatively minor post of forestry minister.

The Sunday Star
March 29, 1968

The Sunday Star III. 29. 1960

FEAR STRONGARM TACTICS

Russia's Attitude Is Worry to Prague

By EDMUND STEVENS
Special to The Star

PRAGUE — Czechs were wondering with some uneasiness yesterday, about the purpose of the hastily convened meeting in Dresden of "some Communist parties to consider some political questions."

Among the participants of the meeting, according to a report from the East German news agency, were Communist party chiefs Walter Ulbricht of East Germany and Wladyslaw Gomulka of Poland, two neighboring countries that strongly deplore and fear the current liberalizing of the Czechoslovakian regime under new party secretary Alexander Dubcek.

There were fears here that Gomulka, Ulbricht and Russian party chief Leonid I. Brezhnev would gang up on Dubcek and try twisting his arm.

People are frankly worried about the Soviet attitude and anyone who comes here after being in Moscow is buttonholed with questions of the Soviet reaction to what's been happening in Czechoslovakia.

Up to now, the almost total silence of the Soviet press has spoken louder than any words.

Until yesterday morning, when newspapers carried Gomulka's speech and the statement of Antonin Novotny's announcing his resignation as Czech president, Russians learned of the turmoil in Eastern Europe only from Western broadcasts.

The new leadership in this country has been handling Soviet relations with kid gloves. Anything that might cause Moscow to take umbrage has been scrupulously avoided.

On every occasion friendship with Soviet Russia and support for its foreign policies has been reaffirmed.

Yet with unrestricted freedom of the press, jarring notes were sure to be sounded, such as the suggestion in yesterday's Svobodnoe Slovo that the time has come to establish equal relations with both Germanies and various intimations of neutrality.

The memories of Budapest in 1956 are still fresh and while nobody really expects Soviet tanks to rumble into Prague, there are other ways pressure can be applied.

Novotny's departure was bound to cause repercussions in Moscow. Regardless of his standing at home, the long-time Red boss of Czechoslovakia was the personification of a nation the Russians considered their closest and most loyal ally.

To the official Soviet mind this consideration transcends all others. The National Assembly here has voted to reopen dossiers of postwar purge trials which were more ruthless and more numerous here than anywhere else.

If instead of being left to posture unmolested, Novotny should be called to answer for his complicity in those trials, this would place a serious strain on Soviet-Czech relations.

But given the prevailing mood here, this is unlikely to be a deterrent.

For their attitude and role during those now discredited trials is a key factor in determining the status of practically every figure in Czechoslovak public life.

I first learned of Novotny's resignation from a taxidriver on the way to town from the airport Friday afternoon. Breaking

into German without preliminaries (Czechs still assume all foreigners speak German) he said: "Wir aben jetzt keine president;" and he grinned broadly, almost triumphantly, as though being without a head of state was the nicest thing that had happened to Czechoslovakia in a long time.

He wasn't the only one to smile. Never had I seen so many happy, friendly, outgoing faces in this ancient capital. Everyone seemed to be enjoying and exercising their new freedom.

Trade unions, for example, which were mere rubber stamp organizations, have been revitalized. A membership meeting in Prague 9-district, where heavy industry is concentrated, lasted tumultuously until 3 a.m. yesterday. Speaker after speaker castigated the central council for selecting a new secretary without consulting them. The workers threatened to go on strike or boycott dues payments unless the appointment was cancelled.

Czech democracy has been roused from a deep slumber, or from a deep freeze, after 20 years to flex its muscles and vocal chords.

As though by a miracle, the spirit of what was once famed as the most advanced democracy in Eastern Europe managed to survive under a totalitarian ice-cap.

This distinguishes Czechoslovakia from nearby Poland and Hungary where no such strong traditions existed. In the long run this may prove the most effective factor in the entire picture—if only things don't get out of hand and people don't try to go too far too fast.

Then the entire Czech dream could turn into a nightmare.

The New York Times III. 25 - 1968

Dubcek's Challenge

Reforms by Czech Chief Could Shake The Bastions of Communist Orthodoxy

By DAVID BINDER

Special to The New York Times

BONN, March 24—Alexander Dubcek—Communist hero or Communist heretic?

Judging from reactions to the liberalization process conducted in Czechoslovakia by Mr. Dubcek, the ruling party chief, this is the top-priority question facing Communist leaderships all over Eastern Europe. Late last night the Czechoslovak leader returned to Prague from an extraordinary conference in Dresden with the Communist chieftains of East Germany, Poland, the Soviet Union, Hungary and Bulgaria.

There is no parallel in the history of the Communist movement for this confrontation, because at no time before were the parties in power in Europe able to act more or less as equals. Until recently they were subservient to Moscow.

The issue considered at the Dresden meeting, as the final "notification" published by various Communist press agencies showed, was the three-month-old Czechoslovak party reform. Done in the name of "democratization," this reform reached a climax last Friday with the resignation of President Antonin Novotny, along with more than 50 of his followers.

A close historic parallel to Mr. Dubcek's party regeneration is the reform of the Roman Catholic Church begun in 1401 in Prague by the Czech preacher Jan Hus.

Like Hus, Mr. Dubcek is a believer. He is determined to rid Communism's theocratic establishment of totalitarianism and corruption. He and his followers have made this repeatedly clear since January, when he took over the party secretaryship from Mr. Novotny. In his last public speech, on March 16 in Brno, he declared, "Our society is free for Socialist democracy."

Czech Communist newsmen pointed out today that the Prague press had published extensive articles about Hus in the last two weeks, commem-

orating his deeds and their significance for the nation.

Mr. Dubcek's challenge, with its practical implications—a free press, a responsible Parliament, secret and contested elections, legitimate expression of opposition views—is shaking Communist Europe's foundations, just as the challenge of Hus shook the 15th-century church and its secular arm, the Holy Roman Empire.

The remaining defenders of Communist orthodoxy, Wladyslaw Gomulka of Poland and Walter Ulbricht of East Germany, answered with characteristic acrimony. For a time, Neues Deutschland in East Berlin backed President Novotny. The East German press suppressed news of the Czechoslovak reforms, and a Prague radio commentary complained of "distortion."

In a speech last Tuesday, Mr. Ulbricht even put words in Mr. Dubcek's mouth, saying that he had sworn "to uphold strictly" a friendship treaty signed a year before between East Germany and Czechoslovakia. Mr. Dubcek had not said this.

Neutral Soviet Stand

The Soviet Union, whose party chief Leonid I. Brezhnev, also attended the Dresden meeting, has taken a largely neutral line in public toward the events in Prague. Similarly, the press in Bulgaria has avoided taking sides.

In Hungary, Rumania and Yugoslavia, where Communist orthodoxy has been under fire for years, the view of the Czechoslovak reform is quite positive.

Last Thursday, Janos Gasztonye, editor of the Budapest party paper, Nepszabadsag, wrote after a visit to Prague that no one would hail a "true democratization process" in Czechoslovakia more than the Hungarian Communists. But he warned of the tragic consequences of a similar liberalization that got out of hand in Budapest in 1956 and ended with Soviet tanks crushing a full-fledged rebellion.

Yesterday, Nicolae Ceausescu,



Associated Press

HERO OR HERETIC? Alexander Dubcek, new Czech Communist party chairman.

the Rumanian party chief who has pushed his country further toward national independence, openly approved of the Czechoslovak reform. For the first time since he took office three years ago, he stressed the importance of "public debates."

The Yugoslav party press has greeted the Czechoslovak developments as a move down the same path that President Tito has chosen in the cause of "socialist democracy."

This division in the European Communist community has apparently given Mr. Dubcek some leeway.

The last passage of the Dresden notification says, "Confidence was expressed that the proletariat and all working people of Czechoslovakia, under the leadership of the Communist party of Czechoslovakia, would insure further progress of Socialist construction in the country."

Since it was not signed, one may presume that the orthodox Marxist-Leninists like Mr. Ulbricht and Mr. Gomulka still view Mr. Dubcek as a heretic. Nevertheless, the statement represents a conditional seal of Communist approval.

The conditional aspect is made clear by the stress in the Dresden message on the danger of the "aggressive aspirations and subversive actions of the imperialist forces," the need for measures to strengthen the Warsaw Treaty, the bloc's military alliance, and a dire warn-

The Wash Post
Apr 6 1968

Czech Party Adopts Democratic Program

CZECH, From B1

negotiations to normalize relations with the Roman Catholic Church and realistic dialogue toward a modus vivendi with West Germany.

• The promised reforms, spurred by the revolutionary developments of the past four weeks, are believed to constitute the most dramatic and important change in Eastern Europe in two decades. They are fully comparable with the

internal evolution of Yugoslavia since 1948, which has greatly influenced this country's new leaders.

Effects on other Eastern European countries, and on the Soviet Union, are expected to be considerable. Neighboring Hungary is watching the Czechoslovak experiment with intense attention. Developments in East Germany, Poland and the Soviet Union have been moving toward greater conservatism, if anything.

The fate of Czechoslovakia's advance toward democratization is likely to be decided by the ability of the new leaders to revive the economy, the attitude taken by the Soviet Union, and the responsiveness of Western and neutral countries.

The Central Committee today also pledged a "full and just rehabilitation of all persons" unjustly persecuted between 1949 and 1954, including "moral, personal and social satisfaction and financial compensation." It vowed that "persons who took an active and immediate part" in the Stalinist persecutions "must not hold any important posts in the social and political life of our society."

Local elections, originally scheduled May 19, were postponed until "next autumn at the earliest" to permit adoption of a new election law. The next Party congress, originally due to meet in the fall of 1970, probably will meet in 1969.

Would Democratize Communism

Czechs Adopt Reform Plan

By Anatole Shub

Washington Post Foreign Service

PRAGUE, April 5—The Communist Party Central Committee today completed a historic week of discussions by adopting a new action program aimed at making Czechoslovakia a pioneer in the democratization of communism.

A resolution accompanying the action program said its purpose was to rid communism of "former aberrations" and "build socialism in this country in a way corresponding to our conditions and traditions."

"We are seeking," the resolution concluded, "our Czechoslovak way of building and developing socialism. This is our

internal affair which will be decided by the supreme will of our people and their honest work."

The action program, a 60-page document to which some 3000 suggested amendments were offered in debate, will be published on the weekend. However, its main features are known to include proposals for:

- New guarantees of freedom of speech, press, assembly and religious observance.
- Electoral laws to provide a broader choice of candidates. Greater independence for the four non-Communist parties grouped with the Communists in the National Front.
- More powers for parlia-

ment and government departments with regard to the Party apparatus.

• Sweeping economic reforms designed to give enterprises greater independence, achieve currency convertibility, revive a limited amount of private enterprise and increase trade with the West.

• An independent judiciary.

• A federal status of national equality for Slovakia in a new constitution to be drafted and adopted by the end of next year.

Implied in the program are an end to economic dependence on the Soviet Union; ne

See CZECH, B5, Col. 3