



Eastern Europe – Fifty Years Ago

A Press Review by a Hungarian Refugee

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Post Feb. 16, 1969

"But Some . . . Are More Equal Than Others"



Tues Feb. 16, 1969

Leftist Church Group Divided Over Czech Invasion

By TAD SZULC

Special to The New York Times

VIENNA, Feb. 15—The Christian Peace Conference, a worldwide leftist-oriented organization of Protestant and Eastern Orthodox churchmen and theologians, is deeply split over the Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia last August.

The dispute was brought into the open by the publication here this week of a bitter exchange between Dr. Josef L. Hromadka, a renowned Czechoslovak Protestant theologian and chairman of the Christian Peace Conference, and a group of Soviet churchmen led by Metropolitan Nikodim, head of the foreign relations committee of the Moscow patriarchate and a vice chairman of the organization.

Dr. Hromadka, who founded the Conference in 1958, has for decades been an advocate of an East-West understanding and, notably, of friendship and dialogue with the Soviet Union. He actively propounded this in his theological and political activities following his return to Czechoslovakia in 1947 after nine years at the Princeton Theological Seminary.

Protested to Ambassador

But on Aug. 22, a day after the invasion, Dr. Hromadka, an ordained minister of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren, wrote, "In a moment of great excitement and with a feeling of deep bitterness," a letter of protest to Stepan V. Chervonenko, the Soviet Ambassador to Czechoslovakia.

He followed the letter with a 10,000-word memorandum attacking Moscow that he presented to the Conference's joint working committee—made up of Western and Eastern chapters—at its meeting in Paris Oct. 1 to 4.

The reply to Dr. Hromadka's memorandum was signed by Metropolitan Nikodim; Metropolitan Philaret of Kiev; A. S. Bouevsky, a Soviet theologian; the Estonian Lutheran Archbishop Tooming, and Pastor A.



Sovfoto

Metropolitan Nikodim



Dr. Josef L. Hromadka

N. Stoyan of the Russian All-United Council of Evangelical Christian Baptists.

The Soviet churchmen described Dr. Hromadka's comments on the invasion as "inadmissible expressions," charged him with "condescending and insulting" positions toward the Soviet people, and said that he had no right to speak for the Christian Peace Conference.

Published in Weekly

Both documents were published in the current issue of the Vienna intellectual weekly Neues Forum. Its editor, Günther Nenning, and his associates have connections with the International Paulus Association for Marxist-Catholic Dialogues.

The publication said that in theological stature Dr. Hromadka was comparable to Karl Barth, the Protestant theologian of Basel University, who died last year.

No joint sessions of the Conference's groups have been held since the Paris meeting. The group's regional secretaries from the Soviet Union East Germany, Poland, Rumania and Hungary—the five countries whose armies invaded Czechoslovakia—held their own meeting in December, reportedly in Moscow, and Neues Forum said this was "an attempt to take the direction of the Christian Peace Conference, or, at least, its international secretariat, out of the hands of Hromadka."

However, in an interview in Prague with C. T. K., the Czechoslovak press agency, Dr. Hromadka said that he would go to Warsaw next week to preside over a session of the working committee, "which will examine the general situation in the movement."

Conflicts Acknowledged

In the interview, Dr. Hromadka acknowledged that the invasion "had been reflected in a conflicting manner in the churches and regional committees associated in the Christian Peace Conference."

In his memorandum Dr. Hromadka called the occupation of Czechoslovakia "an event of such great historical and international proportions that we cannot keep silence."

The question has now arisen, he said, "whether or not socialism is in the position to de-

velop creatively and to influence the world community, especially the younger generations, by offering convincing ideas, moral openness and political wisdom."

"Are we not standing before the danger that socialism is losing its attractiveness, its weight and its reliability because it has turned from understanding men and nations to political manipulations, emptiness of thought and incompetence?" he asked.

'Dogmatism' Is Assailed

Dr. Hromadka explained at length the reasons for his pro-Soviet sympathies following World War II. But, he went on, "Hollow dogmatism and government pressures led step by step to the failure of our economy, the sinking of political interest and of true enthusiasm for the socialist society and of sympathy for the Soviet people."

"Just as Dostoyevski's Grand inquisitor was afraid of Jesus of Nazareth and sent him away, just so the Communist party mechanism oppressed the flame of inspiration, of joy of work and of responsibility," Dr. Hromadka wrote.

He said that it was absurd to link to outside influences the Czechoslovak party's effort, under Alexander Dubcek, to humanize Communism. "On the basis of my contacts with other socialist countries, I would dare say that among our Czechoslovak people there were fewer antisocialist elements and counterrevolutionary desires than among the peoples of those countries whose armies now occupy us," he asserted.

A former member of the executive committee of the World Council of Churches, the octogenarian theologian is the author of "On the Threshold of the Dialogue," "The Leap Across the Wall," "The Gospel on the Way to Man" and "Gospel for Atheists."

Czechoslovak Writers Meet Hungarians

PRAGUE, Feb. 16 (UPI)—The official Czech news agency CTK reported today that Czechoslovak writers had renewed contacts with Hungarian literary organizations.

In another sign of conciliatory attitudes toward countries whose troops helped the Soviets invade Czechoslovakia last year, the newspaper Rude Pravo commented that Bulgaria's recent welcome of a Czech military delegation showed improved relations.

The Czech writers have met with their Hungarian col-

leagues "in an especially cordial atmosphere," CTK quoted one official as saying.

Czechoslovakia's writers have refused to renew contacts with writers of other countries that participated in the August invasion. Earlier this month they declined to participate in a Polish writer's congress.

Soviets Ruled Out Troop Pullout at Kiev

VIENNA, Feb. 16 (UPI)—Last December, Soviet leaders told Czechoslovak reformers they did not wish a return of Stalinism in Czechoslovakia, but they refused to withdraw Soviet occupation troops, it was reported today.

A purported transcript of Soviet-Czechoslovak summit talks in Kiev Dec. 7-8, brought to Vienna by reliable informants, quoted the Soviets as saying "the departure of Soviet troops from Czechoslovakia is impossible and unacceptable at the present time."

The transcript was said to be based on a report to Communist Party committees by Slovak Party chief Gustav Husak, who was present at the Kiev talks.

The transcript said Czechoslovak party chief Alexander Dubcek at Kiev also demanded discontinuance of the occupation radio station Vltava. The Russians gave in to this request last week.

The transcript said the Soviets at Kiev charged that:

- Demonstrations and strikes prove the existence of antisocialist forces.

- The Czechoslovak government stand toward emigrants is incorrect. [Presumably this is a criticism of the policy of letting persons leave the country.]

- There are serious shortcomings in political work within the army and (progressives) are active in the Prague (political) military academy.

- The party newspaper Rude Pravo and Pravda do not support Party decisions in their articles.

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East European Defiance of Soviet Reviving Despite Czech Invasion

By TAD SZULC

Special to The New York Times

VIENNA, Feb. 19—Six months back into alignment with the after the Soviet-led invasion of Rumanians and the Yugoslavs. Czechoslovakia, the authority of the Soviet Union is once more being challenged in Eastern Europe.

Indications are mounting that the democratizing and nationalistic Communist spirit that arose in Prague early in 1968 has not been checked by the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia on Aug. 20-21.

An examination of the Eastern European situation, as seen from Vienna, a neutral crossroads capital, brings out these key points:

¶Rumania, an increasingly defiant member of the Soviet-directed Warsaw Pact alliance, has joined openly with Yugoslavia to reject Moscow's "limited sovereignty" doctrine, which sought to justify the Czechoslovak invasion on the ground of overriding interests of the "socialist commonwealth."

¶Czechoslovakia's continuing defiance of Soviet pressure for political conformity, despite the military occupation, is encouraging the new challenges elsewhere in the region and gradually bringing the progressive Communist leadership

back into alignment with the Rumanians and the Yugoslavs.

¶Among the Warsaw Pact countries whose armies participated in the invasion, a backlash effect is developing. This has removed Hungary from the "hard core" of the invaders' camp and made the regime politically acceptable to such independent-minded leaderships as that of Yugoslavia and to progressive groups in Czechoslovakia. While Poland, East Germany and Bulgaria officially defend the invasion decision, inner stirrings, new domestic problems and widespread second thoughts are reported from all three countries.

¶Despite steady efforts since last fall, the Soviet Union has been unable to "consolidate" the Eastern European area politically, militarily or economically. Comecon, the Soviet-bloc economic organization, is torn by dissension and Moscow has been forced to continue postponing planned Comecon and Warsaw Pact summit conferences.

The most important develop-

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RUBABOO. Look THAT UP in your Funk & Wagnall's Standard College Dictionary. (Advt.)

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ment is the campaign against Soviet views by Rumania's President Nicolae Ceausescu, and President Tito of Yugoslavia.

While both leaders have been on record since last August as condemning the Czechoslovak invasion, their stand has been transformed in recent months from a passive, or defensive, opposition to an offensive in diplomacy, politics and the press and broadcasting.

The drive, which includes denunciations of the Czechoslovak occupation, goes beyond that specific case and sharply criticizes the "limited sovereignty" doctrine as a threat to socialism. In addition, such expressions as "hegemony," clearly aimed at Moscow, have entered the official Rumanian and Yugoslav lexicons to warn of possible perils ahead.

The two countries equate "limited sovereignty" with the enforced "temporary" stationing of Soviet troops on the territories of what they call independent socialist states. There are no Soviet troops in Yugoslavia or Rumania.

Campaign Coordinated

The coordination of the Rumanian-Yugoslav campaign can be traced to the conference President Ceausescu and President Tito held early this month in the Rumanian border town of Timisoara.

A week later, Mr. Ceausescu delivered in Bucharest a strongly worded speech against the "limited sovereignty" theory and intervention by foreign Communist parties in the internal affairs of others. The Rumanian press, ranging from the Communist party daily Scinteia to the intellectuals' weekly Contemporanul, has picked up the theme, and it is being sounded almost daily.

Rumania and Yugoslavia chose last week's congress of the Italian Communist party in Bologna as a world forum to express their thoughts on Czechoslovakia, "limited sovereignty" and, by indirection, the Soviet Union.

Rumania was represented by Paul Niculescu-Mizil, a member of the ruling eight-man Presidium of the party, and Yugoslavia by Edward Kardelj, a member of the Presidium and a close associate of President Tito.

Moves Linked to Moscow Talks

Their subsequent private meetings with Italian Communist leaders, who are the chief Western Communist spokesmen of the anti-intervention line, and with the Czechoslovak delegation led by Evzen Erban, a progressive, suggested that a broader ideological alliance was being organized three months before a planned Moscow conference of world Communist parties.

This endeavor is expected to be taken a step further when the party congress of the Yugoslav Communists meets in Belgrade March 11.

Two days ago, the Rumanians provided not only another public assertion of their basic stand but also contributed a new definition of what international Communism should be. In a message to the Danish Communist party, they urged the "right of each and every party independently to establish its political line by applying the general truths of Marxism-Leninism to the concrete conditions in the respective country."

The call for the application of "general truths of Marxism-Leninism" appeared to experts here as the most explicit call ever issued for Communist independence in a Warsaw Pact country. It was stated more bluntly than in any preinvasion Czechoslovak party declaration.

Basis of Decision Unclear

The question has arisen why Rumania and Yugoslavia have chosen this time for such open defiance of Moscow.

Opinions among specialists include a view that the Czechoslovaks' continued resistance has created a climate propitious for new challenges in Eastern Europe. A related theory is that offense is the best defense



Paris Match-Pictorial Parade

Alexander Dubcek, left, the Czechoslovak party leader, and President Ludvik Svoboda, center, greeting President Nicolae Ceausescu of Romania during his visit to Prague last August, just before the Soviet-led invasion. Since then, Mr. Ceausescu has grown increasingly defiant towards Moscow.

in the face of the Soviet return to tough-line Communist orthodoxy.

Some experts believe that both President Ceausescu and Marshal Tito feel that the tide of history is turning and that their actions may even affect the internal leadership developments in the Soviet Union in demonstrating that the orthodoxy illustrated by the August invasion is no longer effective.

In any event, the Soviet Union has begun to show signs of growing concern over this situation.

Soviet Envoys Pay Calls

The Soviet Ambassador to Rumania, Aleksandr V. Basov, called on Mr. Ceausescu Monday, and the Soviet Ambassador to Yugoslavia, Ivan A. Benedictov, called yesterday on Miljko Todorovic, chairman of the Executive Committee of the Yugoslav party.

Today, Marshal Ivan I. Yakubovsky, the Warsaw Pact commander, and First Deputy Foreign Minister Vasily Y. Kuznetsov, who coordinated the post-invasion political Soviet activities in Czechoslovakia, arrived in Bucharest for talks.

They are expected to seek to bring pressure on Rumania, which has been opposing Soviet political guidance, resisting Warsaw Pact maneuvers and declining to renew a friendship treaty with the Soviet Union that expired last year.

Rumanian acts of defiance

have included a refusal to break diplomatic relations with Israel after the 1967 Mideast war. This week, Rumania sent a cultural delegation to Tel Aviv, and an exhibition of Israeli modern painting was opened in Bucharest yesterday.

A reflection of Yugoslavia's policies was seen in the official visit to Hungary this month by Premier Mika Spiljak in a move resuming cordial relations between the two countries for the first time since the Czechoslovak invasion.

The Soviet problems six months after the invasion are compounded by Rumanian, Hungarian and East German opposition to integration with Comecon.

The Rumanians openly link integration to "supranational" endeavors under the general approach enforcing "limited sovereignty." The Hungarians who announced this week they were studying the convertibility of the florin, would like creation of a convertible currency in Comecon, to replace the Soviet-directed "trade ruble." The East Germans fear integration would complicate their growing trade with West Germany.

At the six-day mark after the Czechoslovak invasion, a growing consensus in Eastern Europe, as expressed by a Communist official visiting Vienna, is: "The Russians' problems are only beginning."

Times Feb. 23, 1969

Czech Tourism Faces a Big Question

PRAGUE—Tourism officials in Czechoslovakia do not know whether the Government will be more conservative or more liberal in the coming months, or even whether it will rain or shine tomorrow, but they are sure of one thing: Czechoslovakia is here to stay, and her touristic sights can be enjoyed.

Travel to Czechoslovakia rose dramatically last spring and summer. It was then that thousands of Western vacationists flocked here to see and feel Prague Spring, the name given to both the music festival and the sudden political democratization that engulfed this country after Antonin Novotny, the old-line Communist boss, was ousted.

But tourism fell rapidly after Aug. 21, when thousands of Soviet, Polish, Hungarian, East German and Bulgarian troops and hundreds of tanks poured into Czechoslovakia in an attempt to halt the growing liberal tide.

Prime Hope

The Czechoslovaks hope that the withdrawal of most of the foreign troops and the restriction of the remaining Soviet troops to military camps will encourage visitors to enter this country. Everybody here is convinced, and with good reason, that Czechoslovakia has enough tourist attractions — natural and man-made—to keep any vacationist well-entertained no matter how long his stay.

Among the attractions scheduled this spring and summer are a variety of music programs. The International Festival of Student Ensembles, to be held in Prerov from April 26 through 28, will focus on jazz. The annual Prague Music Spring, the country's most important music festival, will be held from May 2 through May 15.

The schedule of conductors and performances for Music Spring has not been made public, but it is expected to maintain the event's usual high standards. This year's

festival will also include an international violoncello competition.

From June 20 to 24, pop music will dominate the Bratislava Lyre, an annual competition held in Bratislava, Slovakia, to determine the best Czechoslovak popular song of the year. Practically all of the country's leading pop singers take part, and the streets of Bratislava, especially in front of the Carlton and Devin Hotels, are wild scenes of Czechoslovak music celebrities trying to evade teen-age autograph hunters.

Folk Performance

And in July, the best folk dancers in Czechoslovakia get together in Straznice, Moravia, to perform.

More than 500 miles long from west to east, Czechoslovakia is divided into three areas: Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia. The first two sections comprise the Czech lands and include the nation's capital, Prague; the leading spas—Karlovy Vary (Karlsbad), Mariánské Lázně (Marienbad) and Františkovy Lázně — and most of the historic towns.

Less-populous Slovakia, with only about half as many people as Bohemia-Moravia, is the land of the mountains, the lakes, the old wooden churches, the farms and the fields.

Healing Waters

Besides its spas, which attract thousands of visitors who drink the various mineral waters spouting up from fountains, Bohemia has two towns that have given their names to world-famous beers. Pilsen, an industrial city in the west, is the home of Pilsener, and Ceske Budejovice, a historic town in the south and known in English as Budweis, is the home of Budweiser beer.

Back-country Bohemia also has Tabor, where Jan Hus fought for changes in the Roman Catholic Church in the 15th century; Cesky Krumlov, a medieval town whose cobbled streets experience

very few cars, and Kutna Hora, a 13th-century silver-mining town, which still has a 14th-century church.

But the pearl of Bohemia, of Czechoslovakia and of Central Europe is Prague.

Situated on both banks of the Vltava River, Prague is a city of spires, of buildings dating from the Middle Ages and of cobblestoned streets, neon signs, elegant restaurants and stand-up cafeterias. One can spend days wandering through the various streets and sections of town.

Each has attractions of its own, and all are especially appealing late at night. That is when few people are walking about and the light from the lampposts shines on the foot-smoothed cobbles.

The left bank has Hradcany Castle, a maze of connected buildings and churches set on a cliff. Constructed over many centuries, it is a mixture of architectural styles. In one part of the castle is Golden Lane, a street of tiny houses where alchemists once tried to provide the king with gold. Now the structures have been transformed into small gift shops with colorful exteriors.

Vocation Signs

Nearby is Mala Strana, the Lesser Town. There, one can find magnificent bourgeois homes with special sculptures over the doors to signify the vocations of the former owners. Also on view are several magnificent palaces whose gardens are used for open-air concerts during the summer.

A half-dozen small restaurants in the vicinity offer guests quiet dining in luxurious surroundings. The food is excellent, the service superior and the cost high. Among the best are U Mecenase, Lubkowitz and To the Living Wood. Reservations are necessary, and hotel concierges will make the required phone call.

Prague's main shopping streets, theaters and leading hotels are on the opposite bank of the Vltava. Scattered

on and about Wenceslas Square, the scene of rioting during the Soviet invasion and the recent self-immolation by Jan Palach, a Czech student, are a half-dozen hotels. The Alcron, the Yalta and the Esplanade are considered the best, followed by the Palace, the Europa and the Zlata Husa (Golden Goose).

Hotel Progress

A mile away, on the river, construction is continuing on the Prague Inter-Continental. When completed late this year or in early 1970, the hotel will have 812 beds, several restaurants, a half-dozen shops and a garage for 300 cars. A few blocks away is the former Jewish ghetto, with its 14th-century synagogue and 13th-century gravestone-strewn cemetery.

A short distance away is Stare Mesto (Old Town). Sights there include the Old Town Hall, the twin-towered 14th-century Tyn Church and the magnificent Old Town Square with a statue of Jan Hus.

Several hundred miles east of Prague is Bratislava, the Slovak capital. The city is only an hour from Vienna by car, and its historic sights include the gothic-style St. Martin's Church, the Primatial Palace and St. Michael's Gate.

Ski Area

To the northeast are the Rockies of Czechoslovakia, the Tatra Mountains. The area is a protected national park, and its development for tourism is being carefully managed. The world ski championships are scheduled to be held in Strbske Pleso next year, and modern skiing facilities and an ice-skating stadium are under construction there.

Motoring around Czechoslovakia is easy, since there are relatively few domestically owned cars. Camping sites are scattered throughout the country, and inexpensive hotels, motels and bungalows are available in most resort areas.—S.P.