



Eastern Europe – Fifty Years Ago

A Press Review by a Hungarian Refugee

After Dubcek

1968.04.16-31.

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The Evening Star Apr 17 1969

Hundreds Arrested By Czech Police

PRAGUE (UPI)—Prague Radio reported tonight that Czechoslovak police had carried out a "large scale action" against criminal and anti-social elements. The announcement coincided with signs of a policy shift from liberal reform to Soviet-style Communism.

While the Central Committee of the Communist party opened a crucial session that will decide the future course of Czechoslovakia, Prague Radio said police struck last night and again early today.

The radio said 840 persons were held for questioning in the Czech-speaking lands of Bohemia and Moravia and of that number 103 were "criminals." It said more than 2,000 persons were detained in Slovakia and 135 of them put under arrest.

Pro-Russians' Comeback

Only a handful of people were at the gates of Prague's Hradcany Castle to watch the Central Committee members arrive for the crisis session.

During the 1968 reform period hundreds of Czechoslovaks, many with flowers and banners, had stood outside the Central Committee sessions to applaud their leaders. Today the handful of spectators watched silently.

"Conservatives" who favor a return to Kremlin-style Communism were reported seeking to trim the 21-man Presidium of the Czechoslovak Communist party to 11 men, ousting the liberals and giving the pro-Soviet forces a majority. It is the Presidium that actually rules the country.

Less than 24 hours before the meeting, the executive committee of the party restored to good standing 10 of the ultra-conservative party members who had been accused of collaborating with the Russians during

the invasion of Warsaw Pact forces in August.

The executive committee's announcement said the group was not guilty of "collaboration and treachery."

Promotion Hinted

Political observers suggested the rehabilitation of the conservatives, including Vasil Bilak, who was ousted as Slovak party leader after the invasion, meant some were going to be elevated to higher posts.

Sources close to party leadership said the conservative faction has planned a campaign to oust liberals from the Central Committee.

The sources said Josef Smrkovsky, one of the architects of the reform movement, may have saved himself from ouster from the Central Committee by joining in an attack on "liberal extremists." Smrkovsky was re-

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moved several months ago as parliamentary president.

"There have been unjustified accusations against some members of the party leadership," a communique of the eight-member executive committee said.

"The news media helped to create an aversion among the public to these people," the statement said. The executive committee "has at its disposal no proof that these people could be accused of collaboration," the statement said.

The Central Committee has been under pressure to act to halt the recurring political crisis such as the anti-Soviet disorders that broke out March 20 and again March 28.

The demonstrations broke out in both cases following Czechoslovak victories over Soviet hockey teams in the world championship tournament in Stockholm.

He said the food industry prob-

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Dubcek Ousted As Head of Party; Husak Named

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ALEXANDER DUBCEK
... ousted Party chief



GUSTAV HUSAK
... new number one

Retention Of Reforms Is Pledged

By Kenneth Ames
Special to The Washington Post

PRAGUE, April 17—Alexander Dubcek, Czechoslovakia's national political hero since January, 1968, was today forced to resign as First Secretary of the Communist Party.

Dubcek, 47, was removed from the key Party post "at his own request" in the course of a plenum meeting of the Party Central Committee in today was forced to resign Prague today. Elected in his place was another Slovak, Dr. Gustav Hausak, 56, until now leader of the Slovakian Party.

Dubcek was forced into a position where he virtually had to resign after growing pressure from the Soviets and the conservative wing of the Party since the anti-Soviet demonstrations of March 28.

The announcement of changes was made tonight in a television appearance by President Ludvik Svoboda and Dr. Husak at the end of the first day's meeting of the 190-member Central Committee.

President Svoboda told a television audience: "We have been through many crises and experienced many difficulties. Provocative actions in recent weeks have hindered our efforts of many months and damaged the efforts of the Party, particularly in our relations with the Soviet Union."

Svoboda added: "The Central Committee is seeking ways out of the complicated situation. Comrade Dubcek has asked to be relieved of his post. The name of Dubcek will remain in our history. During the period of his work he has earned the trust of the people."

"Our present situation requires," President Svoboda continued, "an energetic First Secretary and Dr. Gustav Husak has been chosen. I know that Husak is an honest worker and ask for the trust of the people."

[AP reported the white-haired, bespectacled Husak told the television audience: "I beg you to keep calm and support the new leadership. We are not going to give up anything of the great ideas which in the past year have come into our public life."

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Dubcek Ousted; Husak Named New Party Chief

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[But, he added, "it will be necessary to determine how, when and in what order we can implement those ideas." He also warned that "some people imagine liberty is something without limits, but rules must be observed."]

Soviet Pressure

The appointment of Husak to the top Party slot represents a concession to pressures which have been increasing from the Soviets and from the orthodox, left-wing elements of the Party.

It is significant that only a few hours earlier a statement was issued which virtually whitewashed 10 of these conservative members who had been under suspicion of collaborating with the Russians.

Husak, until now leader of the Slovak Party in Bratislava, has recently earned the reputation for being a Slovak nationalist and Chauvinist. The newest joke in Prague tonight is that Husak will now change from being a Slovak nationalist to being a Czechoslovak nationalist.

It is generally conceded among Czechoslovaks that Dubcek was showing definite signs of falling down on the job. He has from the beginning been an extremely popular man but has never been mistaken for a strong or wily politician.

Security Precautions

As some Czechs say, "He is too nice a guy for that. In fact he is just too nice period."

Husak has shown definite indications of knowing how to handle negotiations with the Russians.

There were strong security

precautions today as the Central Committee met. Roads surrounding the Hradcany Castle above Prague were cordoned off and traffic diverted.

Police patrolled the surroundings and army trucks were kept in reserve to be used as road blocks against possible demonstrations. But a mere handful of 40 or 50 persons stood outside the palace gates as members of the Committee drove in.

Earlier it was announced that security forces had rounded up several thousand people in the country, the first action of this kind to be announced in many years, and had arrested persons suspected of being "anti-social and criminal" elements.

On television, Husak, a quiet, able speaker talking off the cuff, explained: "We believe it essential to request you not to cause a panic. For almost a year we have been trying to get out of a difficult situation and to produce the atmosphere for a calm life."

He added that one of the Central Committee resolutions was the election of a new Party Chairman and First Secretary.

Smaller Presidium

At the same time, in response to Soviet pressure, the Party presidium has been reduced from 21 to 11 members, with the exclusion of the leading reformist Josef Smrkovsky and a number of other liberals. Apart from Smrkovsky, the original quartet of reformers remains intact. Oldrich Cernik, head of the Czechoslovak government, Svoboda and Dubcek stay as members of the smaller party presidium.

[A report carried by the Bulgarian news agency BTA,

which could not be confirmed, said the new presidium's members would be: Husak, Cernik, Dubcek, Svoboda, union leader Karel Polacek, National Front chairman Evzen Erban, Slovak Premier Stefan Sadvovsky, conservative Czech Party Bureau head Lubomir Strougal, conservative leader Vasil Bilak, former Interior Minister Jan Pillar and Federal Assembly chairman Peter Colotka.]

Today's announced changes made this a turning point in the recent political history of Czechoslovakia. It was the moment which many Czechs have been awaiting since the August invasion, to see if the two leading figures of the 1968 progressive policy would be quietly dropped or shoved into the sidelines.

The immediate Party problem is now to make the new set-up palatable to the trade unions, the intellectuals and the students—all of whom have recently been united in a front against erosion of reformist policy.

Husak told the nation tonight in his first television appearance as party leader, "Our main task is to lead the country out of the crisis situation and return to a normal life, solving our problems with the Soviet Union."

[Reuters reported that Prague was tense but outwardly calm tonight after the announcement. City police, reinforced by blue-uniformed provincial police and troops, appeared on the streets in increasing numbers.]

A communique issued after the Central Committee meeting stated that Dubcek would be moving into "a high state function." It was assumed by officials that this meant chair-

manship of the Federal Assembly.

Referring to the appointment of Husak to succeed Dubcek, the communique said, "We are convinced that in his new function he will do all possible to avoid repeating the practices and injustices of the 50's."

In a separate appeal to workers, the Party committee asked for maintenance of law

and order and referred to "opposition elements which abused freedom."

There has been "serious danger from rightist forces which would bring us into a power conflict. The developments of the past weeks have made the situation unbearable," it said in a clear reference to the rift which had developed in the Party leadership on the Soviet occupation.

Husak Warns Liberals

Sees No Real Alternative to Moscow Line

Reuters

PRAGUE, April 18 — Czechoslovakia's new Communist Party leader Gustav Husak warned that civil war or Soviet military action were the alternatives to a get-tough policy with anti-Kremlin elements, the Czechoslovakia news agency CTK reported tonight.

He gave the warning in a hard-hitting speech to the Party Central Committee yesterday soon after he was elected to succeed Alexander Dubcek. Observers said it heralded a sweeping crackdown on liberals.

CTK reported tonight part of his policy speech, which attacked the press and student protests, and had hard words for Communist labor union functionaries.

Husak also threw some thinly disguised barbs at his predecessor, Dubcek, and made veiled criticism of prominent reformists Josef Smrkovsky and Frantisek Kriegel.

He said that if possible a new meeting of the Party Central Committee would be held in May to discuss economic questions.

Husak said the anti-Soviet outbursts last month had had a marked counter-revolutionary character. "I am not afraid to use this expression," he said.

Husak accused the Writers' Union weekly newspaper Listy and the cultural newspaper Zitrek of carrying out "systematic anti-Soviet propaganda."

Referring to anti-Soviet incidents in March in which many Soviet installations were damaged, Husak added, "Is this not a conscientiously organized matter? Can these really be just a couple of rowdies?"

He singled out members of ultra-progressive groups who he said had terrorized some Communists.

"Where does this all lead to if our Central Committee and the central bodies do not take action. — to civil war?" He asked. "Or will we have to wait until someone provokes the Soviet troops stationed here until they have to take action to protect themselves?"

Husak said the principles of democratic centralism had been violated.

"We have not called into account politically a member of the Central Committee who entirely turned around Party policy. And neither have we taken to task a member of the Central Committee who voted against the treaty [on stationing Soviet troops in Czechoslovakia]."

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Czech Boss Vows Tougher Measures

CZECH, From A1

These were apparent references to Smrkovsky, who yesterday lost his seat on the presidium and was recently criticized for speeches at variance with the Party line, and Kriegel.

Kriegel, a former presidium member reported to have refused to sign the Moscow agreement, which set out the Kremlin's demands, was among the parliamentary deputies who did not back the treaty on the stationing of troops in Czechoslovakia.

"We must call Communists to account who are against Party policy in this way," Husak said. "We must discipline the Party and we must know whether a member is working for or against the Party."

But later in his speech he said everyone would be given a chance to support the Party and no one would simply be thrown out.

"I know that people will say, 'Here comes another Novotny era,'" Husak said in a reference to the hard-line rule of Antonin Novotny, Dubcek's predecessor.

In a vague reference to Dubcek's popular, affable style, Husak said "people judge our work according to a popular policy and being nice to people and not doing them any harm. But this just does not work."

He had tough words for labor unions. He said a large number of the unionists were Party members and "many work in the unions honorably and with self-sacrifice. But with others one asks the question do they feel anything at all for the Party?"

He said holding student-worker meetings to discuss protest action was playing games with the authorities. "Everything has its limits, including our tolerance," he warned.

He said personnel changes were necessary in the press.

"Some people speak of limitations on the press," he said.

"But a group of people control a large part of the press which in editions of millions influences the public? Just who are these people responsible to?"

Students and workers held meetings in Prague to discuss possible protests, but early indications were that large-scale protest action—at least from the workers—was unlikely immediately. The metal workers union cautioned its 900,000 members Friday to avoid protest and remain calm.

People in the streets took the news of the changes more in sorrow than in anger—with many doubting that Dubcek voluntarily resigned, but instead was forced to quit.

Kenneth Ames, in a special dispatch to The Washington Post from Prague, reported the following:

A smaller and more conservative Party presidium was announced today, following the removal of Dubcek.

The new presidium of 11

men, pared down from 21, consists largely of centrists and conservatives but still includes Dubcek and President Ludvik Svoboda. Although details of the new presidium were widely known yesterday, official announcement was not made until today.

The presidium still includes arch-conservative Vasil Bilak, once accused of treason and of being a puppet of the Russians, but officially rehabilitated only one day before this week's plenum meeting.

According to well-informed sources this "rehabilitation" considerably annoyed the Soviets. Ten men had been cleared of charges of treason since no evidence could be found against them. This implied that if there had been any evidence they would have been charged as traitors since they worked for the Soviet cause.

From authoritative sources in Prague it was learned that the Party reshuffle in which Gustav Husak was elected to the chairmanship by 177 votes to 5, was negotiated on Wednesday morning when the Slovak leader came to Prague from Bratislava.

Husak had agreed to take over from Dubcek and guaranteed there would be no move to prove the existence of "counterrevolutionaries" prior to the August invasion in return for full support from the Central Committee.

The demise of Alexander Dubcek, after 16 months as national hero, has been swift and for most Czechs unexpected. There had always been a feeling that Dubcek was a man who could find a compromise solution to any problem, even though some people are now saying they had always considered him weak.

This week, given the excuse of the wild demonstration and sacking of Prague's Aeroflot building after Czechoslovakia's ice-hockey win over the Soviet Union, and coupled with decreasing public political enthusiasm for Dubcek, the Russians were able to force Dubcek's resignation.

The reaction was as extraordinary as it was negative. There were no demonstrations in support of Dubcek. No protests, either, from intellectuals or workers who had claimed to support him right down the line.

The new Party presidium, in addition to Dubcek, Husak, Bilak and Svoboda, consists of: Oldrich Cernik, liberal former federal prime minister; Lubomir Strougal, conservative former interior minister; Evzen Erban, chairman of the National Front who follows the Soviet line; Karel Polacek, chairman of the labor union central council whose inclusion was seen as an attempt to cushion worker resentment; Jan Piller, a Party leader who was one of the 10 just cleared of treasonable association with the Soviets; Stefan Sadovsky, prime minister of Slovakia who is regarded as a Husak man and Peter Colotka, a Slovak progressive but with ties to Husak.

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After Dubcek

B 20

Alexander Dubcek's achievement was huge: to reclaim the spirit of his people from two decades of fear and foreign rule, and to stir a spiritual renewal of the Czechoslovak nation, and to start toward a political renewal as well. "Socialism with a human face," the Czechs called it, and it was no less honest and legitimate a vision for the fact that the Russians were frightened of it. The invasion of its ally Czechoslovakia which the Kremlin led last August was a cruel blow. But Dubcek, buoyed by a nationwide popular following, struggled to save the essentials of his reform. For his pains, he has now been ousted at Moscow's demand.

Gustav Husak's role is thankless. He had pronounced the invasion "completely justified" and had detected among Czechs who opposed it "anti-social forces . . . negative elements . . . an entirely illegal network . . . substantially anti-Socialist goals." He comes to power not with a popular mandate but, inevitably, in the image of collaborator—the current euphemism is "realist." Optimists ask if his respect for Soviet desires may not make it

easier for Moscow, trusting him, to withdraw its occupation forces. This overlooks, however, the pressures which his country's terrible economic condition put on Husak, and the new social fact of a populace, particularly youth, awakened from its Stalinist torpor. It overlooks, too, the great power now enjoyed in the Kremlin by the Soviet military, whose chief, Marshal Grechko, engineered the latest squeeze.

Mr. Nixon explicitly condemned this squeeze. But obviously with an eye on arms-control talks and Soviet-American political cooperation, he indicated that he would not otherwise react to it unless there were some "future action" in Czechoslovakia by the Russians. If, for instance, blood were to run in the streets of Prague, American public opinion and the American Government's own caution would seriously inhibit the President's dealings with Moscow. Such a "future action" would also pose the most disturbing questions about Moscow's own interest in Soviet-American relations. That is the result of the "second" Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia.

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Nixon Names 'Hard Liner' As Ambassador to Prague

Malcolm Toon, an expert in Communist affairs who was accused in 1965 of spying in the Soviet Union, was named by President Nixon yesterday as U.S. ambassador to Czechoslovakia.

The Soviets took no action against Toon and he completed his tour as counselor of the U.S. embassy. He and a second secretary, Alan Logan, were accused by the weekly newspaper Nyedyelya Weekly of working for the Central Intelligence Agency. Nyedyelya is the weekly magazine section of the government newspaper Izvestia.

The embassy called the charge against Toon and Logan a fabrication, and the Soviet government remained silent.

Toon's appointment, subject to Senate confirmation, came a day after Mr. Nixon expressed at a press conference his condemnation of the Soviet Union "for what it did" in bringing about the downfall of Czechoslovakia's liberal Communist leader, Alexander Dubcek.

Appointments of ambassadors are automatically cleared with the foreign country involved before announcement so the Czechs presumably

raised no objection to Toon, who has a reputation as a hard liner.

Mr. Nixon's announced intention to name Toon to the post served as further evidence that the President does not intend to let the heavy Soviet hand in Eastern Europe interrupt diplomatic relations with the Communist world.

At State 23 years

The 52-year-old Toon, of Sayre, Pa., has been in the State Department for 23 years, serving in Warsaw, Budapest, Moscow, Rome, Berlin and London. He currently is an acting deputy assistant secretary for European affairs and before that was country director for Soviet affairs.

Toon's appointment marks the promotion to an ambassadorship of yet another senior foreign service officer. Toon succeeds career diplomat Jacob Beam who was named as Ambassador to the Soviet Union.

The announcement was made shortly before the President, Mrs. Nixon and their daughter Tricia left by helicopter for a weekend at Camp David. Accompanying them were Attorney General John Mitchell and Mrs. Mitchell, John Ehrlichman of the White House staff and Mrs. Ehrlichman of the White House staff and foreign policy adviser Henry Kissinger and the President's personal friend, C. G. Rebozo.

Crime on Agenda.

Press Secretary Ron Ziegler said Mitchell would discuss with the President forthcoming messages on law enforcement and crime and that Kissinger would keep Mr. Nixon up to date on developments in the wake of North Korea's shooting down of an American reconnaissance plane.

Siegler told newsmen that an appointment would be announced at 9:30 a.m. Monday but he gave no clue as to the post involved. He also said the President's tax message will be made public when it goes to Congress at noon Monday.

Yesterday the President met

briefly with Portuguese Foreign Minister Alberto Franco Nogueira to discuss American-Portuguese relations, long strained by United States refusal to back Portugal in holding on to its two big African colonies.

The President also met with Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands in what was described as a courtesy call.

Mr. Nixon formally declared a major disaster for Nevada following flooding that affected the East-Central sections of that state last month. Mr. Nixon allocated \$150,000 for disaster assistance. The action was at the request of Gov. Paul Laxalt.

Strike Deadline Of May 1 Voted By Carpenters

Some 1500 union carpenters voted yesterday to strike metropolitan-area construction sites May 1 if a "satisfactory" wage package isn't approved by April 30, the date their present contract expires.

The strike vote, 1448 to 88, came at a meeting of the Carpenters' District Council at Council headquarters, 1006 10th st. nw. The Council represents 6500 carpenters, members of the 13 locals in the metropolitan area.

Lewis K. Pugh, Council secretary-treasurer, said the carpenters were seeking \$9.56 an hour over three years, a dues checkoff system and better working conditions. Carpenters are presently paid \$5.20 per hour, he said. The carpenters have been negotiating since March 12 with the Construction Contractors Council

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New Czech Leader Is Going to Moscow

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Without a sizable credit in convertible currency, economic disaster looms and Prague would be unable to meet deliveries of manufactured goods and machinery as main supplier to the Soviet Union.

The second and less important matter which experts feel Husak can negotiate with Moscow is cessation of the illegal newspaper Zpravy (Truth) which has been distributed regularly by Soviet occupation authorities since the invasion. Despite frequent protests from Dubcek the newspaper, printed and published in East Germany, continues to irritate the Czechoslovaks.

One of several assurances the new Party leader gave last week as he lobbied for Central Committee votes (he was elected by 177 to 5) was that he would immediately initiate negotiations for a gradual withdrawal of Soviet occupation forces. He has a reputa-

tion as a tough bargainer, an astute tactician with a highly developed sense of power politics and, as a Slovak nationalist, not particularly well disposed towards Soviet intervention and domination.

As Slovak Party leader, Husak has recently had his own peculiar problems: increasing unrest among the 80,000 Ukrainian minority in eastern Slovakia, which has been stirred up and exacerbated by infiltration of agents from across the border in Soviet Ukraine.

This, Czech experts believe, explains why Ukrainian leader Piotr Shelest has shown an uncommonly intense interest in Czechoslovak developments during the past year. Many Slovaks fear a Ukrainian campaign to annex the area of Slovakia peopled by the Ukrainian minority.

Husak's first official confrontation with the Kremlin leaders is expected to provide some clue as to just how much the Czechoslovaks can hope to rescue of their "independent communism."

Meanwhile, Prague University students had not completely surrendered. Throughout the weekend the students' parliament of Charles University convened to discuss plans for a teach-in and a protest strike.

The teaching in all faculties of the University was scheduled for Monday but is dependent on the appearance of Central Committee members who were billed to address student gatherings, explaining the new Party line.

The sit-in strike on Tuesday may be called off in the face of Husak's threat, backed by a statement from the Ministry of Education, of harsh disciplinary countermeasures. The students, without a firm platform of their own and not knowing what precisely they are demanding, are torn by fear, disillusionment and indecision.

Rep. Edwards Sees Red-Bloc Fishing Drive

Associated Press

Rep. Jack Edwards (R-Ala.), said yesterday a Russian "fishing offensive" is taking place on a worldwide basis.

In a letter to constituents, Edwards said many Communist-bloc ships are taking a great volume of fish from waters off both U.S. coasts outside the 12-mile fishing limit.

He said the Russians are outfishing the United States in those waters. He said the United States has slipped from second to twelfth place in fishing in the past 12 years.

On a recent Coast Guard flight over waters off Norfolk Va., Edwards said, he saw about 100 Russian fishing

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Associated Press

PRAGUE DELEGATES WELCOMED IN MOSCOW: Group led by Gustav Husak, the new leader of Czechoslovakia's Communist party, with Soviet leaders. From left: Oldrich Cernik, Czech Premier; Leonid I. Brezhnev, Soviet Communist leader; Mr. Husak and the Soviet Premier, Aleksei N. Kosygin. Conference on mutual economic aid will open today.

Soviet Official Hails Shifts in Prague

By HENRY KAMM

MOSCOW, April 22 — The Soviet communist party's leadership expressed its satisfaction today with the present situation in Czechoslovakia, while Dr. Gustav Husak, new leader of the Czechoslovak party, applauded.

The Soviet party stated its position in a speech delivered on behalf of the leadership by Ivan V. Kapitonov, a secretary of the Central Committee. Mr. Kapitonov spoke at a Kremlin celebration marking Lenin's 99th birthday.

While Dr. Husak, who last Friday replaced the Alexander Dubcek as First Secretary of the party, applauded, President Nicolae Ceaucescu of Rumania stared stonily into the auditorium, his hands firmly locked around his arms. Rumania opposed the Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia and its consequences.

Mr. Ceaucescu was the odd man out once more when Mr. Kapitonov accused Communist China of fomenting enmity of the Soviet Union in the communist world.

Party Chiefs Applaud

Rumania has maintained a neutral position in the Soviet-Chinese dispute and has not accepted Moscow's charge that Peking provoked last month's battle on the Ussuri River, which marks the border between the Soviet Union and China in the Far East.

While President Ceaucescu displayed neutrality, the principal leaders of the Communist parties of the Soviet bloc vied with each other in enthusiasm for Mr. Kapitonov's restatement of familiar Soviet posi-

tions in the principal areas of foreign policy.

Clapping vigorously were Wladyslaw Gomulka of Poland, Walter Ulbricht of East Germany, Janos Kadar of Hungary, Todor Zhivkov of Bulgaria and Yumzhagin Tsendenbal of Mongolia. They were seconded on the stage of the Kremlin's Palace of Congresses by their Premiers and watched over by their hosts, Leonid I. Brezhnev, general secretary of the Soviet party, and Premier Aleksei N. Kosygin.

Economic Talks Due

The leaders are here for a meeting of the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance, the Soviet bloc's economic alliance. The meeting opens tomorrow.

Mr. Kapitonov spoke of the situation in Czechoslovakia as though the danger from the Soviet point of view was past. The replacement of Mr. Dubcek by Dr. Husak is regarded as a major triumph for the Soviet Union.

Mr. Kapitonov, whose specialty in the Soviet party administration is the party machinery and appointments, spoke of the alleged threat to socialism in Czechoslovakia as though it were over. He said:

"History and life have shown that the cause of socialism is invincible, that any attempts of reaction to turn Czechoslovakia from the socialist road are doomed to failure."

While the leaders on stage applauded and the crowd of 5,000 applauded, Dr. Husak seemed to hesitate briefly, then he joined in the clapping. Mr. Ceaucescu

grasped his forearm, crossed before him, more firmly. Premier Oldrich Cernik of Czechoslovakia applauded without hesitation.

Mr. Kapitonov hearkened back to a speech by Mr. Brezhnev in November, 1967, in which the Soviet leader proclaimed the readiness of "our glorious armed forces" to repel aggression from any point of the compass.

The remark provided another occasion for President Ceaucescu to indicate neutrality while the other leaders displayed enthusiasm. Rumania regards the Soviet armed forces as the strongest potential threat to her independence.

Party Warns Its Units

By ALVIN SHUSTER

Special to The New York Times

PRAGUE, April 22 — The Czechoslovak Communist party moved today to head off any possible new demonstrations and embarrassment at the celebration of May Day next

The ruling Presidium instructed party groups to decide for themselves whether to march May 1 in the "traditional form" or to hold outdoor gatherings and public meetings.

Authorities are reported concerned that the tribute to the working class in the traditional manner in some places would provide the opportunity for new anti-Soviet violence. The Presidium said the type of celebration should be determined by "local conditions."