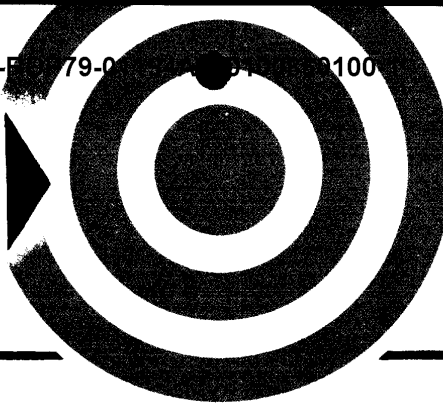# FEATURES ▶
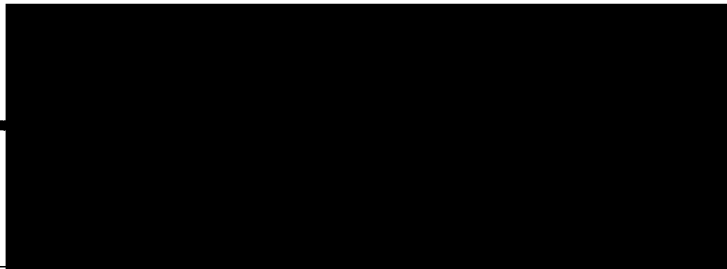
"POLITICAL INTEGRATION IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA: THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE
PRAGUE SPRING AND SOVIET INTERVENTION", Zaninovich and Brown, Journal
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One of the more lasting effects of the movement of Soviet and
Warsaw Pact troops into Czechoslovakia on 20 August 1968 was the
dissipation of good will that the Soviet Union had created as the
liberator of Czechoslovakia from German tyranny in World War II, an
advantage which had been exploited for Soviet diplomatic purposes in
Eastern Europe. A possibly and equally lasting effect is that the
Czechs and Slovaks, so widely separated by cultural and economic
cleavages, for the first time had a new enemy that both could share.

There appears little doubt that antagonisms between the
Czechoslovaks and the Soviet Union will remain a permanent condition.
At the same time it can be argued that the psychological impact of the
experience of being invaded and occupied by the Soviet Union, "the
big Slavic Brother," may well continue to act as a key catalyst
for a more genuine integration of Czech and Slovak national
aspirations.

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CPYRGHT

M. GEORGE ZANINOVICH AND DOUGLAS A. BROWN

Political Integration in Czechoslovakia: The Implications of the Prague Spring and Soviet Intervention

CPYRGHT

Czechoslovakia's experiences during the process of becoming a binational communist-party state are in many ways unique among socialist countries. The Communist coup of 1948 had important effects upon prospects for political integration of the Czechs and Slovaks, especially in the application of nationality policies similar to those of the Soviet Union. Despite their consistency with Soviet practice, these policies were destined to exacerbate the tension between Czechs and Slovaks, rather than initiate the process of harmonious integration that was desired.

Historical Considerations

Up until the end of World War II, the two major sources of difficulty that threatened Czechoslovak political integration were the large· German and Magyar minorities. Assorted factors, including the forced migration of the bulk of the German population, resulted in lessening the importance of these minority issues for the post-World War II era.[1] Consequently, the key political integration issue became the friction between the two major component nationalities in the country—the Czechs and the Slovaks.[2] The fact that the Czechs and Slovaks shared a related ethnic heritage was not sufficient to overcome the cultural and economic cleavages between the two

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   [1] A perceptive history of the postwar expulsion of the Sudeten Germans from Czechoslovakia is found in Radomir Luza's The Transfer of the Sudeten Germans (New York: New York University Press, 1964), particularly pp. 267-300.
   [2] Peter A. Toma, "The Czechoslovak Question Under Communism," East European Quarterly, 3, no. 1 (March 1969), p. 15.

nationalities. These cleavages had their source, initially, in the tenth century Hungarian conquest which led to the separation of Slovakia from the Czech lands for the next thousand years.[3] Even though a longing for reunion between these related Slavic peoples existed through the centuries, the isolation of the Slovaks resulted in a fervent nationalism based upon their unique historical experience and a distinctly separate Slovak language.

During the half-century prior to World War I, the Czechs had been preoccupied with their conflict and competition with the Germans, while the Slovaks were energetically and successfully resisting forced assimilation by the Magyars. Because of their association with the Austrian state during this period, the Czechs in Bohemia and Moravia also experienced a steady industrial growth, while the Slovaks retained their traditional agricultural orientation and remained economically less developed. As a result, there were substantial differences between the two peoples when they joined to create the Republic of Czechoslovakia in 1918. Thus, the more developed and more numerous Czechs had an economic advantage as well as a sense of cultural superiority in relation to the Slovaks.

During the formative years of the Republic, the government in Prague sent large numbers of Czech administrators into Slovakia to establish central government control. A general influx of Czechs into Slovakia continued throughout the 1920s, and by 1930 there were some 120,000 Czechs living in Slovakia. The tendency of these Czechs to displace Slovaks in both industry and commerce quickly led to friction, and Slovaks began to demand clarification of their position in the unified Czechoslovak state.

Even the founder and first president of Czechoslovakia, Thomas Masaryk, appeared to support a constitutionally autonomous Slovakia when, in 1918, he signed the "Pittsburgh Agreement" with Slovak-Americans in the United States. Although Masaryk later refused to be bound by this agreement, which predated the existence of the Czechoslovak state, the Slovaks continually used this agreement as an indication of unfulfilled promises.[4] In the interwar period, Slovak concern over their lack of autonomy, and resentment towards the growing Czech presence in Slovakia, led to the creation of a Slovak nationalist movement. This movement sought to establish an independent Slovakia or, at the very least, a separate national-territorial unit within the framework of a binational Czechoslovak state. This goal was realized briefly (and, one might say, perversely) with the establishment of a German-sponsored independent Slovakia after the 1938 dismemberment and Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia. The fact that a homegrown fascist independence party, the Hlinka, collaborated in this German activity increased the tension and the misunderstanding between the Czechs and Slovaks following World War II.

During World War II, numerous Communist leaders from Czech areas under German occupation went to Moscow to await whatever opportunity an Allied victory might bring. Included in this Moscow group were the more prominent members of the politburo, led by Secretary-General Klement Gottwald. Among them were Rudolph Slansky, Vaclav Kopechy, Bruno Kohler, and Jan Sverma. All, with the exception of Sverma, were later to hold high positions in the Czechoslovak Party and state. After infiltrating back into Slovakia in 1944 to bring dissident Slovak Party elements under control of the Moscow leadership, Sverma died in the partisan retreat from Slovakia

[3] Barbara W. Jancar, Czechoslovakia and the Absolute Monopoly of Power (New York: Praeger, 1971), pp. 165-68.

[4] See Paul E. Zinner, Communist Strategy and Tactics in Czechoslovakia, 1918-48 (New York: Praeger, 1963), pp. 12-3.

following a German offensive in October of that year. By way of contrast, the Slovak Communist leadership, for the most part, remained in Slovakia and participated in the popularly-based resistance movement against the Germans. The isolation of Slovak Communist leaders during this time, as well as the Czech Communists' own embarrassment over their anemic participation in the resistance against German occupation, provided additional substance for later Czech-Slovak animosity within the Party concerning Slovakia's position in a revived Czechoslovak state.[5]

The idea of a unitary and integrated Czechoslovak state had always been favored by the predominant Czech population since they had little to fear from such an arrangement. While a semblance of autonomy had been provided by the post-World War II constitution, Slovak national aspirations suffered a clear setback after the 1948 Communist assumption of power. The Communist party, dominated by Czech elements in Prague, "imposed on the twelve million people of Czechoslovakia a Stalinist unifying political dogma which required commitment to an integrated concept of statehood."[6] There were, in fact, a series of purges, eliminating from the Party those Slovaks who were branded as "bourgeois nationalists" because of their support of Slovak national autonomy during and after World War II.[7] Furthermore, "in keeping with the effort to suppress the Slovaks, the Prague government rewrote history by downplaying the importance of the Slovak contribution to the war effort."[8] Thus, not only was it necessary to eliminate Slovak nationalist elements from the Party, but it was also expedient to redo history and education curricula in order to enforce the "unity" principle, regardless of how artificial the unity thus produced might be. At the same time, a large-scale program of economic equalization between the Czech and the Slovak territories was undertaken as officially sponsored and enforced Party policy.

By the application of these two techniques—cultural assimilation and economic equalization—it was hoped that the differences between Czechs and Slovaks might be reduced enough to allow the "development of a homogeneous, cohesive, and assimilated national community within one generation."[9] But, though theorists of development have proposed the hypothesis that increased modernization within a society will lead to steady political and economic integration, this would not appear to be the case, at least when nationality conflicts are brought into play. This has been amply demonstrated recently in many parts of the world (specifically Ireland, Pakistan, Nigeria, and, more directly relevant to this analysis, Yugoslavia). On the contrary, the impact of modernization, as reflected in socio-economic mobility, exposure to mass media and information, educational opportunity, and a broadening of economic horizons, appears in many instances to have strengthened the narrower, more particularistic linguistic and ethnic identifications of individuals. Even more important, crude attempts at forced assimilation (not unknown to communist regimes) which seek to forge integrated, unitary states seem to increase resistance to the effective integration of minority racial and cultural groups.

That this would appear to be the case in Czechoslovakia is a point that needs little further amplification. The Communist regime's 1948 equalization program, which

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[5] Regarding the isolation of Slovak Communist leaders during the war, see Zinner, Communist Strategy, op. cit., pp. 71-80.

[6] Toma, "The Czechoslovak Question," op. cit., p. 16.

[7] Regarding these purges, see Zdenek Suda, The Czechoslovak Socialist Republic (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1969), pp. 47-9, and Vladimir V. Kusin, The Intellectual Origins of the Prague Spring (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 28-9.

[8] Jancar, Czechoslovakia, op. cit., p. 169.

[9] Toma, "The Czechoslovak Question," op. cit., pp. 18-9.

sought to develop Slovakia economically, was a "success" (i.e., between 1948 and 1965 industrial production in Czech territory improved only about threefold, while in Slovakia it increased almost seven times over);[10] however, the result was that an economically advanced Slovakia emerged as more challenging to the concept of a unified Czechoslovak state than had been the case previously. To counter this development, Communist leaders responded with more vigorous efforts at forced assimilation, including the abolition of Slovak national institutions and a de-emphasis of Slovakia as a distinct geographic entity. By the late 1950s, there were already intimations of a greater centralism with more emphasis upon integration, which would have to come at the expense of the Slovaks. The new constitution enacted in 1960 served in effect to eliminate Slovakia as a distinct administrative entity.[11] In fact, Bratislava, the traditional Slovak cultural and political center, was reduced to a mere regional administrative seat. Slovak territory was also divided into three new regions which were placed under the direct administration of the central government in Prague, as well as being dissociated from any specifically Slovak national institutions. One writer has commented that

> [t]he consequences of the Novotny nation-building strategy and the overt suppression of the long-sought Slovakian rights and aspirations was to kindle Slovak resentment against the Czechoslovak state. The obvious outgrowth of this resentment through the 1960s was the development of a stronger national consciousness and the growth of ethnic particularism within the Slovakian ethnic group.[12]

In short, the impact of political and socio-economic modernization, which unexpectedly served to increase Slovak national particularism, was offset by the effects of the Novotny political integration strategy which threatened the survival of Slovak national existence. The uncertainty and the discontent that emanated from this failure of the Novotny regime to deal effectively with the Slovak national issue contributed much to the pressure for liberalization and reform and to the now tragic events that culminated in the August 1968 Soviet invasion.

Factors Leading to the Prague Spring

Significantly, the January 1968 changes in Czechoslovak leadership, during which Alexander Dubcek replaced Antonin Novotny, were actually the end product of a cumulative process of liberalization. This process was a response to the demands of many segments of the population which began as early as 1963. It was this long period of change resulting in Novotny's ouster which made possible the much more radical reforms of what has become legend as "The Prague Spring." The most important personnel change was the removal of Novotny from the offices of first secretary of the Party and president of Czechoslovakia and his replacement, respectively, by Dubcek and General Ludvik Svoboda. To some degree, the importance of their succession lay in their opening the door for men, even more radical than Dubcek, who had clear ideas concerning a reorganization of the Czechoslovak system.[13]

[10] Jancar, Czechoslovakia, op. cit., p. 169.
[11] See the relevant sections and commentaries in Constitution of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic: A Background Report (Munich: Radio Free Europe, 1960).
[12] Gary K. Bertsch, "Molding the 'New Man' in Communist Societies: The Multi-National Czechoslovak, Soviet, and Yugoslav Cases," mimeographed (University of Georgia, 1972), p. 49. Professor Bertsch's work on changing patterns of political integration in multi-ethnic societies provides a useful methodological approach to studying the effect of modernization on integration, and the role of ethnic marginality which militates against such integration.

[13] A. H. Brown, "Political Change in Czechoslovakia," Government and Opposition, 4, no. 2 (1969), pp. 172-73.

Primary among those reforms leading up to the Prague Spring was that which dealt with the malfunctioning of the command economy. Between 1963 and 1967 reform economists had succeeded in convincing Novotny of the need for a series of changes designed to make planning and management a responsibility of the specific industrial enterprises, to improve worker performance, to attract more qualified people into management by improving wage scales, and to introduce variable prices so as to reflect the actual conditions of production and market needs.[14] According to Ota Sik, noted Czech economist of this reform period: "We wanted to have real entrepreneurs and ... to achieve complete separation of enterprises from state control. We hoped to create a completely unique, new collective ownership of enterprises which would differ fundamentally from the old ... state ownership."[15] The purpose was clearly to introduce certain elements of economy with a distinct Western capitalist flavor and to gear the industrial process to specific incentive and market structures.

The probable effects of a decentralization of economic decision making upon the nationality question were apparent. They meant, first and foremost, that rather than tolerating professionally competent managers of Czech nationality from Prague, Slovaks would come increasingly to occupy such positions of authority. The overall effect would be to create a unified Slovak ethos among workers as well as managers in the enterprises of Slovakia, with understandable antipathy toward Czechs who, since the founding of the Republic, had insisted upon asserting their presence. A similar phenomenon occurred in Yugoslavia in the period following the 1965 economic reforms. In that case, many well-trained and qualified Serb managers found themselves in difficulty with their Croat, Macedonian, or Albanian workers' councils, and usually not for any good economic reasons. These diverse peoples simply wanted to control their own factories, which meant having a managerial cadre with an ethnoculture with which they could identify. Whether Slovak versus Czech, or Serb versus Croat, these situations unavoidably created tensions between nationalities. Furthermore, as the Slovaks (or the Croats) became increasingly aware of being masters over their own economic destiny, an element of regional economic competition, intensified by strong national awareness, would also develop. This involvement of national pride in economic structure and decision making also had its understandable ill-effects upon the operations of the market.

Many Czechs and Slovaks also began to feel that their once highly regarded education system was beginning to deteriorate under the influence of the Soviet model.[16] The low quality of education resulting from this Soviet-style system so disturbed the Novotny regime that by the early 1960s it was prepared to move toward large-scale educational reforms. Changes were made in the curriculum to restore certain areas such as the humanities and aesthetics, and teachers were selected in terms of their demonstrated teaching skills rather than for their Party loyalty. Meanwhile, the regime set aside its prerogative of control over the appointment of rectors at the university level, and formal entrance examinations as well as degree titles of the pre-Communist era were reinstated. The generalized effect of these basic reforms was to revive earlier traditions of education in Czechoslovakia and, specifically, to allow for a renewal of an awareness of Czech and Slovak cultural and political heritage which had been underplayed for nearly a generation.

[14] See Galia Golan, The Czechoslovak Reform Movement (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 59-81.

[15] As quoted in Jancar, Czechoslovakia, op. cit., pp. 82-3.

[16] Golan, Czechoslovak Reform Movement, op. cit., pp. 109-11.

The most vulnerable aspect of the structure of Czechoslovak state power that reformers could attack was the growing centralization of power that followed the adoption of the Stalinist model. A convenient way to remedy this problem was to apply the principle of "the separation of the Party and government." In explicit terms, this problem involved the duplication of administrative personnel across the two structures. As one observer has put it: "It was precisely the fusion of state and Party roles in an enormous accumulation of power that was seen as one of the most negative manifestations of the Stalinist system."[17] During 1967 official Party rules and procedures were in the process of being reconsidered. This resulted in a definition of the Party as the leading political organization charged with specifying the basic aims and purposes of all spheres of endeavor, and with the overriding task of inducing and encouraging the people to give effect to the Party's general policies.[18] On the other hand, in order to avoid unwarranted duplication, the Party would be expected to refrain from superseding or displacing state agencies and organizations. The Party would, in effect, be expected to change its role to suggesting the general outlines of state policy and leaving the more explicit administrative tasks to the appropriate governmental body. The formal Central Committee vote to separate leading state and Party functions was in effect the legal instrument which brought about the collapse of Novotny in January 1968. Given the general concern about undue centralization of political power, and its unavoidable entanglement with the Czech-Slovak nationality issue, the focus upon the need formally to distinguish state governmental from Party political functions became a logical derivative.

As in Yugoslavia, where governmental and Party functions have been separated, the Czechoslovak changes in this regard would also suggest a reinforcing of the authority of the regional Communist parties. Since in the parallel Party-government organizational structure model the centralist apex meant a more or less full integration of Party-government-personality elements, any organizational reform that would remove these elements would unavoidably strengthen regional units of political power. In the case of Yugoslavia and its League of Communists, this process has led directly to the intensified assertion of regional parties, especially the Croatian, and the growth of political leaderships with widespread support among the populace in the various republics. The parties in the various Yugoslav republics have assumed increasingly independent postures vis-a-vis the federal League. In fact, tensions between federal and republic Party organizations reached such a level that it required direct intervention by Tito himself. Any attempt to divorce the two organizational structures—the Party and the government—leads first to an increase in popular support for regional political organizations, and second to a growing tension between regional Party cadres and those at the federal center.[19]

Much of the pressure for general reform, especially as it concerned local political autonomy and decentralization, had its source in the Czech-Slovak nationality question, particularly in the demands of the Slovaks for national recognition and the rehabilitation of Slovak Communists previously condemned as "bourgeois nationalists." These demands, emanating mainly from Slovak intellectuals and the Slovak Party media in the 1963-67 period, set the political stage for many of the reforms that followed. There were two additional reasons why the Slovaks were eventually able to

[17] Jancar, Czechoslovakia, op. cit., p. 71.

[18] This redefinition of the Party is discussed in Golan, Czechoslovak Reform Movement, op. cit, pp. 163-76.

[19] Regarding the transformation of the Party in Yugoslavia, see M. George Zaninovich, "Yugoslav Party Evolution: Moving Beyond Institutionalization," in Samuel P. Huntington and Clement H. Moore, eds., Authoritarian Politics in Modern Society: The Dynamics of Established One-Party Systems (New York: Basic Books, 1970).

achieve some political effect and influence reform in the direction of political and economic decentralization. One writer defines these as follows:

> The first was the very one to which Slovaks assigned a negative value—the constitutional arrangement of Czechoslovakia. The unique feature of Czechoslovak administration was the toleration of a quasi-autonomous national unit within the framework of the centralist state. . . . More important, the system tolerated the added anomaly of the Slovak Party organization, over which Prague had little or no control. Slovak ascendancy at the all-national level was made possible by this unique pattern of participation in the centralist system. The mounting Slovak opposition against the Party and government in Prague from 1963 to 1967 would have been impossible without Slovak management of the policymaking organs in Slovakia. . . .

> The presence of a constitutionally recognized national government and separate Party organization in Slovakia provided the focus for dissent throughout the country prior to Novotny's fall, as they constituted the only organized political vehicle that could consolidate the challenge to his rule. With no solid institutional backing, the various Czech groups quite logically sought support from the Slovak Party, which had all the force of law behind it. However, because of the entrenched Slovak position, the consensus of opposition produced by the asymmetrical coalition was destined to be highly temporary. The events of 1968 proved that the Slovak Party leaders would support Slovak interests above all else.[20]

The effect of this was that the Slovak Party element was able to gain considerable political influence despite the absence of an effective constitutionally defined autonomy for Slovakia within the Czechoslovak system. One segment of the Slovak Communist party, which included Dubcek and his supporters, sought to achieve the fulfillment of Slovak desires for full and equal participation within Czechoslovak politics and the economy through a basic liberalization and democratization of the existing state structure. Another faction in the Party, represented chiefly by Gustav Husak, wanted to support liberalization of the system only insofar as it was useful to guarantee the full political autonomy of Slovakia within the Czechoslovak state.[21] As a result, the interaction of three factors relating to the Czech-Slovak nationality issue contributed to the process that culminated in the Prague Spring: the ineptness of the Czech-dominated Novotny regime, the ability of the Slovak-Dubcek forces to operate effectively within the existing state structure, and the pressure for greater Slovak autonomy demanded by the Husak group.

Proposals for resolving the Slovak question ranged from continued integration and centralism to complete separation for Slovakia. It became clear that what was required was some variant of federalism or confederation. The confederation model involved a delegation of political power to national (i.e., regional) Czech and Slovak councils except for matters pertaining to foreign affairs and national defense. The Slovaks were inclined to favor confederation as a solution to the Czech-Slovak nationality issue, while, by contrast, the Czechs were more inclined to support federation, with the retention of an effective central government (a formula which logically followed from the advantage the Czechs possessed by virtue of their numerical superiority). The individual who was most outspokenly opposed to the Czech solution of federation was Gustav Husak, a Slovak nationalist as well as a Party member in good standing. The rise to power of Dubcek, a Slovak himself, was viewed by the Slovak population as a

[20] Jancar, Czechoslovakia, op. cit., pp. 172-73.
[21] Golan, Czechoslovak Reform Movement, op. cit., pp. 197-98.

sign that some structure of national autonomy might be finally granted. In fact, one of the few durable achievements of the Prague Spring was that a legal framework for a federation was drawn up just prior to the Soviet intervention in August 1968.

Soviet Intervention and Czech-Slovak Unity

The movement of Soviet and Warsaw Pact troops into Czechoslovakia on 20 August 1968 brought an abrupt end to the liberal reforms of the Prague Spring. The consequences of the invasion were, however, more far-reaching than this simple statement indicates. The Soviet move also had the effect of dissipating the fund of good will that the Soviet Union had created as the liberator of Czechoslovakia from German tyranny during World War II, an asset which had been exploited for Soviet diplomatic purposes in Eastern Europe. For the Czechs and Slovaks alike, the country could now perceive a new enemy that both peoples might share.

The Soviet hope was to effect a quick change of government by having both Party and government leaders replaced with more conservative types willing to cooperate with the occupation; however, this proved to be a difficult task since few Czechs or Slovaks were willing to step forward as replacements for the Dubcek regime. Given what appeared to be a more difficult task than Soviet leaders had anticipated, the next move was to apply pressure for the purpose of reorganizing the regime through President Svoboda, with the assistance of conservative Czechoslovak elements.[22] The refusal of President Svoboda to accede to these pressures meant, however, that no constitutional sanction could be given to the attempted compulsory change of the Czechoslovak government. The result was that the Soviet leadership had no choice but to allow Dubcek to remain in power for an indefinitely extended tenure. While the Czech and Slovak reformers were retained in their positions for the moment, it was not possible for even the solid unity of the Czech and Slovak peoples in resisting the new "enemy" to withstand the pressures for change indefinitely. The strength of this unified Czech-Slovak resistance did, however, have the threefold effect of lessening the severity of the conservative regime when it was finally brought to power, possibly saving the lives of a number of reform leaders, and certainly prolonging the process of rolling back those liberal reforms that were achieved.

The Soviet leadership wanted to break the united front of Czech and Slovak resistance to occupation and an apparent weak spot was the Slovak wing of the Party (due to the lingering memories of Novotny's assimilationist policies). Perhaps to exploit this perceived weakness, the Soviet occupation forces had allowed the Dubcek government to go ahead in January 1969 with the establishment of a federal system for Czechoslovakia. This solution called for the creation of separate and distinct Czech and Slovak territories, each with its own national (i.e., regional) organs of government as well as Party authorities. However, these institutions were to be placed under a Czechoslovak federal administrative structure with a joint premier and a centralized Communist party apparatus. The federal assembly of Czechoslovakia was to contain two chambers, one chosen on the basis of population (a one man, one vote Chamber of the People), and the other apportioned equally between the Czech and Slovak areas (a Chamber of Nations). Indeed, this would make it appear that at least one goal of the reformers—that of a federal structure—had been realized.

Determined, more than ever, to demote Dubcek, as well as to make up for their loss of prestige during August 1968 when the popular support for Dubcek had frustrated their attempts to remove him from office, the Soviet leaders sought an excuse. After the Czechoslovak ice hockey victory over the Russians in March 1969, anti-Soviet demonstrations began to spread throughout the country. Conveniently, this provided

[22] Harry Schwartz, Prague's 200 Days (New York: Praeger, 1969), pp. 219-20.

the Soviet Union with a justification to condemn Prague's leaders for their reluctance to impose "normalization" and to question the commitment of Dubcek and his followers to the Communist cause.[23] Finally, Dubcek was forced to resign from his position and in April 1969 he was replaced by Gustav Husak, first secretary of the Slovak wing of the Party. Husak certainly seemed to possess mixed credentials. He had been jailed by Novotny in 1954 and thus could be identified as one who sought to improve, and even liberalize, the Party. Yet the attraction of Husak for the Soviet leadership was his consistently outspoken championing of Slovak national autonomy. In short, the one tactic that might be used to undermine the unity of the Czech-Slovak populace was to manipulate aspiring Czechoslovak national leaders, whether Czech or Slovak, in such a way as to magnify the desire of the Slovaks for separatism.

Having been a long-time advocate of Slovak rights and quite visible in liberal reform activity during the Prague Spring, Husak had become one of the leading "realists" after the Soviet intervention of August 1968. There was also evidence of political opportunism in Husak's behavior (which had its specifically Slovak nationalist flavor). In the early days of the reform movement in January of 1968, Husak had been vocally in favor of liberalization and, shortly after Dubcek's ascension to power, had published a call for genuine democratic reforms within the communist state apparatus.[24] It seems, then, that his own particular collaboration with the Soviet occupation was guided more by his nearly total commitment to Slovak national rights than by any fervent support for a Soviet presence in Czechoslovakia.

The assumption of power by Husak, with Soviet support, cleared the way for further "normalization" of Czechoslovakia and a rollback of the 1968 reformist course. Within the Czechoslovak Party the restoration of pre-1968 normalcy became commonly known as the "consolidation" which required the cleansing of Party ranks of all reformist elements. It has involved, in the main, a thorough-going purge of any and all Party members associated with the reform movement of the Prague Spring. Even though Husak projected the image of a conservative and a friend of Moscow, the specifics of his policies had the apparent effect of easing the process of "restoration" in such a way as to minimize possible ill-effects on the Czechoslovak state. Accordingly, it would be fair to conclude that despite his apparent conservatism, Husak has been rather successful in avoiding the more onerous and severe aspects of a reconstituted totalitarian Party and a Stalinist-style society. Political survival under such circumstances, however, does not come without its costs. In Husak's case they represented a progressive, although perhaps strictly unintended, abandonment of the more moderate positions he had held earlier.

In general, the Party has since moved toward a recentralization of controls in most areas of its activity. Even in the area of Husak's greatest interest and concern, that of Slovak national autonomy, the Party has abandoned the approach to the problem which it earlier had felt to be crucial. As well as failing to reinforce the newly created federal structure, the Party has taken certain new steps to effect more centralized political and administrative institutions. Here we also find that

> [a] December 1970 amendment to the 1968 law on federation restored the control of planning and economic management to the federal government, reintroduced a single Czechoslovak citizenship, and trans-ferred the entire administration of state security to the Federal Ministry of the Interior.[25]

[23] Suda, Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, op. cit., p. 155.

[24] Swartz, Prague's 200 Days, op. cit., pp. 80-1.

[25] Robert W. Dean, "Czechoslovakia: Consolidation and Beyond," Survey, 17, no. 3 (Summer 1971), p. 106.

The nearly total effectiveness of the Soviet strategy to return Czechoslovakia to its pre-1968 situation would seem to be quite apparent. Paradoxically, despite Husak's outspoken interest in Slovak national autonomy, he has been instrumental in initiating a renewed phase of centralized rule and an enforced integration of the Czechoslovak lands.

Future Prospects for Political Integration

What have been the effects of the Prague Spring and the subsequent Soviet intervention on the process of political integration in Czechoslovakia? Czechoslovakia can no longer formally be called a unitary state, since the constitutional implementation of federalism is one of the few enduring effects of Dubcek's liberalization. However, it would appear that the concrete practical situation regarding "centralized power" has in fact changed very little, and that the new federal institutions may simply atrophy, much as they did after the 1948 Communist assumption of power in Czechoslovakia. One major difference in the present situation does nonetheless seem to stand out, namely, that (with Dubcek's leadership after Novotny's downfall and with his successor in the person of Husak) Slovaks have, for the first time in the history of the Czechoslovak state, been supplying the top leaders for the country. This could well have an important effect by reducing the feeling of marginality which Slovaks brought with them into the Czechoslovak Republic in 1918, as well as by moving the general society toward a balanced, yet politically integrated partnership between the two peoples.

Another significant factor which must be mentioned is the common historical experience that Czechs and Slovaks have shared in facing the Soviet "enemy," an event not dramatically at variance with that experienced during World War II and the German occupation. There seems little chance that this significant unifying event will pass out of the consciousness of the Czech and Slovak peoples in the near future. Furthermore, given its undeniable need to control the territories of Central and Eastern Europe, the intentions of the Soviet Union in maintaining and asserting its presence in Czechoslovakia have become eminently clear. There appears to be little doubt that the antagonism between the Czechoslovaks and the Soviet Union will remain an enduring (if not permanent) condition. In general, it can be argued that the psychological impact of the historical experience of being invaded and occupied by the Soviet Union, "the big Slavic brother," may well continue to act as a key catalyst for a more genuine integration of Czech and Slovak national aspirations.

There is, however, the possibility that Soviet leaders may be able to counter this unifying force by manipulating Slovak separatist feeling in such a way as to turn it against solidarity with the Czechs. The structure of federalism in the Czechoslovak system might indeed be viewed as a convenient device through which one national group might be played off against the other, the results accruing fully to the advantage and the convenience of the Soviet Union as the occupying power. To effect such a strategy the ideal situation would be to have the top leaders come from the smaller partner in such a federation, which has been precisely the Soviet ploy in the process of reconstituting the leadership of Czechoslovakia. What has mitigated against full Soviet effectiveness in employing this strategy has been the apparent commitment of both Czech and Slovak leaders to "the framework of Czechoslovak federation" rather than to seeking "a formally independent Slovakia" through the help and intervention of the Soviet regime.[26] There apparently remain, even among Husak and his followers, strong

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[26] Suda, *Czechoslovak Socialist Republic*, op. cit., pp. 169-70.

echoes of experiences stemming from the process by which the federation solution was worked out between Czechs and Slovaks during the months following Novotny's demise.

Another element that should be considered is the impact upon Czech attitudes toward Slovaks of Slovak collaboration with the Soviet Union in exchange for greater Slovak political autonomy, especially if this should involve a government and Party system in Czechoslovakia that would be more or less totally dominated by Slovak elements. Historically, it has been the Slovak population that has felt threatened and intimidated by the dominance of the more numerous Czechs in governmental circles. That a similar type of feeling might emerge among Czechs living in a Slovak-dominated Czechoslovakia supported by Soviet armed might is in no way inconceivable. It is clear that Husak has upon occasion, if it served his own political needs, been inclined to make compromises in principle, which were often also designed to further the cause of Slovak national autonomy. Although this danger appears to be a real possibility, it does not seem that the situation has as yet developed to the point of raising anxieties among the Czechs. However, should Husak take a progressively more opportunistic stance in relation to his intense Slovak national commitment, the viability of a congenial and effective partnership between Czechs and Slovaks would be seriously impaired.

It is difficult at this point to be very optimistic about the future prospects of a Czech-Slovak federal state. While an outright breakup of the Czechoslovak federation seems unlikely (if for no other reason than that the Soviet Union has been able to achieve its goals without such extreme measures), the prospects for a Czechoslovakia that can fully dictate its own destiny seems negligible. That the Czech and Slovak peoples accept this situation seems to be indicated by their extreme sense of apathy. Indeed "[t]he lassitude which has pervaded the public psyche since the invasion and the anticlimax of Husak's accession to power has been manifest to a great extent in insufficient labour discipline—absenteeism, failure to work to capacity, and shirking during working hours."[27] These attitudes of indifference and public apathy represent a condition that the critical state of the Czechoslovak economy can not readlly absorb without great cost. Yet, from the standpoint of Husak, a largely passive and indifferent populace may be the next best thing to genuinely popular support for which a leader in his position might hope.

Still another question concerns the possibility of the Czechoslovak regime generating reforms anew and recapturing the ethos of the Prague Spring. There seems rather little likelihood of such a development taking place in the foreseeable future. While a revival of liberalizing trends under a "conservative" regime did occur after the suppression of the Hungarian revolution, there are few indications at present that the Husak regime in Czechoslovakia might be contemplating such a revival. The Hungarian case does at least, however, suggest that a new cycle of reforms can emanate from a regime that adopts a "conservative" stance and has fully acquiesced to the dictates of Moscow. The hope for such a renewal of reform activity would lie in part with the inexorable demands for modernization and in the basic need to involve the Czechoslovak populace in a constructive and meaningful life-process. The wave of disillusionment and indifference that gradually swept through the country after August 1968 has left an indelible imprint on the Czechoslovak landscape.[28] A revival

[27] Dean, "Czechoslovakia," op. cit., p. 109.

[28] Survey data gathered by Radio Free Europe reveals that, after a great wave of initial enthusiasm and optimism during the Prague Spring, Czechoslovak public confidence dropped precipitously after just two months following the Soviet invasion. A majority of the Czechoslovak populace (62 percent) by December 1968 had accepted the inevitable fact that "reform communism" had little chance of being resumed. For more comprehensive statistical data, see Radio Free Europe, The Crisis of Confidence Among Czechs and Slovaks (Munich, 1968).

of the spirit of the Prague Spring, in the context of the need for both economic progress and federation as solutions to Czech-Slovak differences, must remain at the core of any rejuvenation of the Czechoslovak state.

The impact of the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia has surely been traumatic, although perhaps no more so than the German occupation during World War II. The fact that the Germans were able to manipulate Czech and Slovak separatist feelings, leaving Czechoslovakia more divided at the end of the war than at the start, would suggest that there is no assurance that the Soviet intervention may not also result in increased tensions. Indeed, the Soviet leadership has already shown its penchant for taking strategic advantage of Slovak nationalist sentiment in its attempt to weaken the unity of the Czech and Slovak peoples. The one important and visible factor, however, that has endured from the Prague Spring has been the federalization of Czechoslovakia, although under Husak this has not had the effect that the original proponents of a federal structure had envisioned. Despite the prospect for continued growth in nationalist feeling among the Slovaks (which is likely to be accompanied by a similar upsurge among the Czechs), the events of the past four years do suggest a new basis for cooperation among these two peoples within the framework of a federated Czechoslovak state. The glorious moments of the Prague Spring and the shared misfortune of all Czechoslovak citizens under the heel of Soviet intervention remain without question integral parts of this newly defined sense of historical consciousness.