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Book Reviews

The Beginnings of the Czechoslovak and Yugoslav Exile Governments in London during the Second World War
Expectations, Possibilities, and Reality

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Mutual contacts in exile during the Second World War were just one episode of relations between Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia in the 20th century. It was a very specific episode, as it was taking place far away from the homes of its participants, at a time when both countries were either partly occupied by or ruled by governments loyal to Germany.

During the interwar period, there were many things that Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia had in common (cooperation with Romania in the political-economic alliance of the Little Entente, various economic contacts, significant cultural relations). On the other hand, there were quite a few differences in the governance system, domestic developments, and – in particular since the mid-1930s – foreign policy orientation. It was, as a matter of fact, the complex international situation at the end of the 1930s, which leading Czechoslovak and Yugoslav politicians were hardly able to influence, that left its mark on the termination of Czechoslovak-Yugoslav interwar relations. Contacts between the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (until its occupation) were practically limited to

economic ones and, moreover, they were fully under German control,[1] and rela-
tions between the new Slovak State and Yugoslavia were a long way from friendly
and cordial.[2] In addition, early contacts were being slowly established between
Czechoslovak exile bodies and Belgrade, following on the heritage of the countries'
pre-war cooperation. Although Yugoslavia was a free country at the beginning of
the Second World War, its international situation was very complicated. Step by
step, it was besieged by the Italian sphere of interest (starting with the occupation
of Albania in April 1939); interests of the Third Reich were obvious thanks to the
presence of Germans on the Yugoslav border (initially after the Anschluss of Austria
in March 1938, and later after the expansion of the Tripartite Pact by additional
members, Hungary and Romania in November 1940 and Bulgaria in March 1941).
Owing to its difficult position, Yugoslavia could not and would not maintain any
official contacts with Czechoslovak exile representatives.[3] Closer relations became
reality only when leading Yugoslav representatives left for exile and after the Ger-
man occupation of the country in April 1941.[4]

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1   See SOVILJ, Milan: *Československo-jugoslávské vztahy v letech 1939–1941: Od zániku
     Československé republiky do okupace Království Jugoslávie* [Czechoslovak-Yugoslav relations
     in 1939–1941: From the dissolution of Czechoslovakia to the occupation of the Kingdom of
     Yugoslavia]. Praha, Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Karlovy 2016, pp. 49–120.
2   See *Ibid.*, pp. 121–156; IDEM: Yugoslav-Slovak Relations 1939–1941, with Particular Em-
     phasis on Croatia. In: HOLJEVAC, Željko – HOMZA, Martin – VAŠŠ, Martin (ed.): *Croatia
     and Slovakia: Historical Parallels and Connections (from 1780 to the Present Day)*. Zagreb –
     Bratislava, FF press 2017, pp. 134–142; NĚMEČEK, Jan: K slovensko-jugoslávským vztahům
     1939–1941 [On Slovak-Yugoslav relations 1939–1941]. In: ŠESTÁK, Miroslav – VORÁČEK,
     Emil (ed.): *Evropa mezi Německem a Ruskem: Sborník prací k sedmdesátinám Jaroslava
     Valenty* [Europe between Germany and Russia: A collection of works on the occasion of
     the 70th birthday of Jaroslav Valenta]. Praha, Historický ústav AV ČR 2000, pp. 385–398;
     TKÁČ, Ján: Slovensko-juhoslovanské a slovensko-chorvátske vzťahy v rokoch 1939–1941
     [Slovak-Yugoslav and Slovak-Croatian relations between 1939 and 1941]. In: *Historický
     zborník*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (2009), pp. 154–168; JARINKOVIČ, Martin: *Slovensko a Juhoslávia
     v rokoch II. svetovej vojny* [Slovakia and Yugoslavia in the years of the Second World War].
     Banská Bystrica, Klub priateľov Múzea SNP 2012, pp. 8–63; ŠKORVANKOVÁ, Eva: Sloven-
     sko-juhoslovanské vzťahy v rokoch 1939–1941 [Slovak-Yugoslav relations between 1939
     and 1941]. In: ŠTĚPÁNEK, Václav – MITÁČEK, Jiří (ed.): *Studia Balkanica Bohemo-Slovaca*,
     No. 7: *Příspěvky přednesené na VII. mezinárodním balkanistickém sympoziu v Brně ve dnech
     28.–29. listopadu 2016* [Contributions delivered at the 7th International Symposium on Bal-
     kan Studies in Brno, 28–29 November 2016]. Brno, Moravské zemské muzeum – Ústav
     slavistiky Filozofické fakulty Masarykovy univerzity 2017, pp. 415–427.
3   See SOVILJ, Milan: Osudové okamžiky Království Jugoslávie na jaře roku 1941 očima
     představitelů československého exilu [Pivotal moments for the Kingdom of Yugoslavia
     in the spring 1941 as viewed by Czechoslovak exile representatives]. In: *Moderní dějiny*,
     Vol. 25, No. 2 (2017), pp. 129–133.
4   Relations between the Czechoslovak and the Yugoslav exile governments during the Sec-
     ond World War have hitherto been paid scant attention by Czech (or previously Czechoslo-
     vak) and Yugoslav (and later Serbian) historiographers. There are several more important
     works which, however, do not cover the whole period of the Second World War, such as the
     book by German historian Detlef Brandes on the stay and activities of the Czechoslovak,
     Polish and Yugoslav exile governments in London, which has also been published in Czech

(BRANDES, Detlef: *Großbritannien und seine osteuropäischen Alliierten 1939–1943: Die Regierungen Polens, der Tschechoslowakei und Jugoslawiens im Londoner Exil vom Kriegsausbruch bis zur Konferenz von Teheran*. München, Oldenbourg 1988; in Czech: *Exil v Londýně 1939–1943: Velká Británie a její spojenci Československo, Polsko a Jugoslávie mezi Mnichovem a Teheránem* [The exile in London 1939–1943: Great Britain and its allies Czechoslovakia, Poland and Yugoslavia between Munich and Tehran]. Praha, Univerzita Karlova – Karolinum 2003). The same author published yet another text on a similar topic 30 years later, but he in fact only summarized his earlier findings in it (IDEM: Limited Influence: The British and the Governments-in-Exile of Poland, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. In: SMETANA, Vít – GEANEY, Kathleen (ed.): *Exile in London: The Experience of Czechoslovakia and the Other Occupied Nations, 1939–1945*. Praha, Univerzita Karlova – Karolinum Press 2017, pp. 12–19). Historian Branko Petranović left an important text in former Yugoslavia's historiography, which mainly dealt with the attitude of the Yugoslav government to its Czechoslovak exile counterpart (PETRANOVIĆ, Branko: Odnosi jugoslovenske i čehoslovačke vlade u emigraciji 1941–1945 godine [Relations between Yugoslav and Czechoslovak exile governments in 1941–1945]. In: *Vojnoistorijski glasnik*, Vol. 40, No. 3 (1990), pp. 49–71). More than 20 years had elapsed before the topic was picked up by Serbian historian Mira Radojevič, who, using Yugoslav documents, examined political attitudes (RADOJEVIĆ, Mira: Srpsko-češka saradnja tokom Drugog svetskog rata: Prilog proučavanju [Serbian-Czech cooperation during the Second World War: A contribution to the study]. In: KOPRIVICA, Verica – KORDA-PETROVIĆ, Aleksandra – ŠTĚPÁNEK, Václav (ed.): *Od Morave do Morave*, Vol. 2: *Iz istorije češko-srpskih odnosa / Od Moravy k Moravě*, Vol. 2: *Z historie česko-srbských vztahů* [From Morava to Morava Vol. 2: From the history of Serbian-Czech relations]. Novi Sad – Brno, Matica srpska – Matice moravská 2011, pp. 141–159). The same authoress also wrote an extensive biography of Milan Grol, a prominent representative of the Yugoslav exile government (until 1943), in which she also mentions his contacts with Czechoslovak politicians in London (RADOJEVIĆ, Mira: *Milan Grol*. Beograd, Filip Višnjić 2014). One of the first historians to touch upon this topic in Czechoslovakia was Miroslav Tejchman in 1984 (TEJCHMAN, Miroslav: Československo-jugoslávské vztahy v letech druhé světové války [Czechoslovak-Yugoslav relations during the Second World War]. In: *Slovanské historické studie*, Vol. 14. Praha, Historický ústav ČSAV 1984, pp. 84–120). Later, Jiří Plachý examined different forms of military cooperation between Czechoslovak and Yugoslav exile representatives (PLACHÝ, Jiří: Československý podíl na spojenecké pomoci při výstavbě jugoslávských jednotek v letech 1944–1945: Příspěvek k československo-jugoslávským vztahům [The Czechoslovak share in the assistance of the Allies in the building of Yugoslav units in 1944 and 1945: A contribution to Czechoslovak-Yugoslav relations]. In: *Slovanský přehled*, Vol. 96, No. 1–2 (2010), pp. 161–167). A part of Jonáš Pospíchal's very good M.A. thesis defended at the Faculty of Arts of Masaryk University in Brno in 2015 was published as an extensive study in *Slovanský přehled* (POSPÍCHAL, Jonáš: Odtažitost a vyčkávání: Vztahy exilových vlád Československa a Jugoslávie v letech 1941–1943 [Wariness and waiting: Relations of the exile governments of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia between 1941 and 1943]. In: *Ibid.*, Vol. 102, No. 3 (2016), pp. 451–502). Some of the author's statements concerning the Yugoslav exile representation may be too simplified or questionable, but the quality of his study consists mainly in the fact that someone from the Czech environment examined, after a long time, not only Czechoslovak, but also different Yugoslav sources on Czechoslovak-Yugoslav political relations during the war exile. I also refer to some of my own works on the topic: SOVILJ, M.: *Československo-jugoslávské vztahy v letech 1939–1941* [Czechoslovak-Yugoslav relations in 1939–1941]; IDEM: Dvě téměř zapomenuté osobnosti zpravodajské a odbojové činnosti v československo-jugoslávských kontaktech za druhé světové války: František Hieke a Aleksandar Gjurić [Two Almost

The examination of mutual relations of the Czechoslovak and Yugoslav exile governments at the beginning of the Second World War is also a study of historical animosities of these two very different political representations. As Czechoslovak exile politicians were unable to initiate direct contacts with their Yugoslav counterparts until the summer of 1941, first steps of both exile representations can be seen rather from a parallel analysis and a comparison of their similarities and differences.

From Prague and Belgrade to London: Similarities and Differences

The beginning of the Second World War and the step-by-step occupation of the European continent by the German army also resulted in the establishment of exile bodies of various occupied states, particularly in Great Britain.[5] However, Czechoslovak exile had started forming up as early as after the Munich events and the German occupation of the Sudetenland in October 1938. Another Czechoslovak emigration wave was the consequence of the German occupation of Bohemia and Moravia and the declaration of the Protectorate in mid-March 1939.

Until the summer of 1940, one of the principal destinations of émigrés from the Protectorate and from the Slovak State was France. However, the voyage of Czechoslovak emigrants to French territory was not easy, especially when Germany invaded Poland and started the Second World War. In spite of these difficulties and disagreements among leading Czechoslovak exile politicians – particularly between ex-President Edvard Beneš and Štefan Osuský, former Czechoslovak Ambassador to Paris, later also between Beneš and ex-Prime Minister Milan Hodža – the Czechoslovak exile managed to politically organize itself in France. Beneš's centralistic attitudes and Hodža's federalist views stood against each other, being reflected in different opinions on the exile's form and structure, and mainly in visions of the

Forgotten Figures in Intelligence and Resistance Activities in Czechoslovak-Yugoslav Relations during the Second World War: František Hieke and Aleksandar Gjurić]. In: ŠTĚPÁNEK, V. – MITÁČEK, J. (ed.): *Studia Balkanica Bohemo-Slovaca*, No. 7, pp. 455–471; IDEM: Pogled ka drugome: Jugoslovenska izbeglička vlada očima čehoslovačkih političara i diplomata u emigraciji u toku Drugog svetskog rata [The look to another side: Attitude of the Czechoslovak politicians and diplomats to the Yugoslav government in exile during the Second World War]. In: *Vojnoistorijski glasnik*, Vol. 68, No. 2 (2018), pp. 110–141.

5   See PRAZMOWSKA, Anita J.: *Britain and Poland 1939–1943: The Betrayed Ally*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1995; ATKIN, Nicholas: France in Exile: The French Community in Britain, 1940–1944. In: CONWAY, Martin – GOTOVITCH, José (ed.): *Europe in Exile: European Exile Communities in Britain 1940–1945*. New York, Berghahn Books 2001, pp. 213–228; BARNOUW, N. David J.: Dutch Exiles in London. In: *Ibid.*, pp. 229–246; JAKUBEC, Pavol: London 1940–1945, a Europe in Miniature? The Case of Norwegian, Polish and Czechoslovak Exiles. In: *Debater a Europa*, No. 13 (2015), pp. 91–106; KESTELOOT, Chantal: Belgium in Exile: The Experience of the Second World War. In: SMETANA, Vít – GEANEY, Kathleen (ed.): *Exile in London: The Experience of Czechoslovakia and the Other Occupied Nations, 1939–1945*, pp. 20–31; KERSTEN, Albert E.: A Cold Shower in International Reality: Redefining the Dutch International Position 1940–1945. In: *Ibid.,* pp. 32–49.

future common state of Czechs and Slovaks, where different concepts of the potential postwar form of government/constitutional order in Czechoslovakia were clashing.[6] All of the above had an adverse effect on Czechoslovak emigration acting as one. However, the Czechoslovak exile could draw some experience from its activities in France until the summer of 1940, the experience which, for example, the Yugoslav exile government lacked later upon its arrival to London. Although the establishment of the Czechoslovak National Committee in Paris in October 1939 as a representative of the Czechoslovak resistance movement abroad did not mean its recognition as an exile government by France and Great Britain,[7] its actions provided prerequisites for continuing activities of the Czechoslovak exile in Great Britain.

After the defeat of France in June 1940, Czechoslovak exile representation moved from Paris to London, where it was recognized as the Czechoslovak provisional government by Great Britain on 21 July 1940.[8] British recognition, although emphasizing the temporary character of the government, was tremendously important

6   See KUKLÍK, Jan – NĚMEČEK, Jan: *Hodža versus Beneš: Milan Hodža a slovenská otázka v zahraničním odboji za druhé světové války* [Hodža versus Beneš: Milan Hodža and the Slovak question in the foreign resistance movement during the Second World War]. Praha, Karolinum 1999, pp. 67–69.

7   See *Ibid.*, pp. 54–56; KUKLÍK, Jan: *Londýnský exil a obnova československého státu 1938–1945: Právní a politické aspekty obnovy Československa z hlediska prozatímního státního zřízení ČSR v emigraci* [The London exile and the renewal of the Czechoslovak state 1938–1945: Legal and political aspects of the renewal of Czechoslovakia in terms of the provisional constitutional order of Czechoslovakia in emigration]. Praha, Karolinum 1998, pp. 48–49; BRANDES, D.: *Exil v Londýně 1939–1943*, pp. 36 and 40; DEJMEK, Jindřich: Československá zahraniční politika 1939–1945 (cíle a výsledky) [Czechoslovak foreign policy 1939–1945 (goals and results)]. In: ZUDOVÁ-LEŠKOVÁ, Zlatica – HOFMAN, Petr (ed.): *Československá vojenská zahraniční služba v letech 1939–1945: Sborník studií. Příspěvky účastníků z mezinárodní konference uskutečněné dne 5. prosince 2006 v Praze* [Czechoslovak military service abroad between 1939 and 1945: A collection of studies. Contributions of participants at the international conference which took place in Prague on 5 December 2006]. Praha, Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR – Historický ústav AV ČR 2008, p. 136.

8   Great Britain recognized the Czechoslovak provisional government after an exchange of letters between Edvard Beneš and British Foreign Minister Lord Halifax (Edward Frederick Lindley Wood) in July 1940. (See BENEŠ, Edvard: *Šest let exilu a druhé světové války: Řeči, projevy a dokumenty z r. 1938–45* [Six years of exile and of the Second World War: Talks, speeches and documents from the years 1938–45]. Praha, Orbis 1946, p. 438–443 (4th edition); NĚMEČEK, Jan – KUKLÍK, Jan – NOVÁČKOVÁ, Helena – ŠŤOVÍČEK, Ivan (ed.): *Od uznání československé prozatímní vlády do vyhlášení válečného stavu Německu 1940–1941* [From the recognition of the Czechoslovak provisional government to the declaration of war on Germany], Vol. 1: *16 June 1940 – 20 April 1941*. Praha, Ústav mezinárodních vztahů – Historický ústav AV ČR 2006, pp. 70–73, Document 16 – Letter of the Chairman of the Czechoslovak National Committee E. Beneš to British Foreign Minister Lord Halifax on the establishment of the Czechoslovak provisional government and its recognition by the British government, London, 7 July 1940; *Ibid.*, pp. 73–74, Document 17 – Letter of British Foreign Minister Lord Halifax to Chairman of the Czechoslovak National Committee E. Beneš concerning the establishment of the Czechoslovak provisional government and its recognition by the British government, London, 18 July 1940; *Ibid.*, pp. 79–80, Document 22 – Letter of British Foreign Minister Lord Halifax to Chairman of the Czechoslovak

for Czechoslovak exile circles around Beneš. Its legal interpretation confirmed the continuity of the constitutional order of the Czechoslovak Republic since before September 1938.[9] From the British point of view, however, it was only a recognition of the provisional government representing the Czech and Slovak nations rather than the Czechoslovak state.[10] Edvard Beneš, who had resigned from his presidential office after the conference in Munich and the loss of the Sudetenland in October 1938 and had lived in Great Britain and the United States practically as a private person without having any specific assignment in the exile community until the formation of the Czechoslovak National Committee,[11] could thus begin to gradually strengthen his position. The new British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, who assumed his office in May 1940, as well as his close collaborator, Minister of War Anthony Eden (from the end of 1940 Foreign Minister), could also view the recognition of the Czechoslovak provisional government positively.[12] Such changes indicated, *inter alia,* a departure from the policy of former Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain (1937–1940), whose signature under the Munich Agreement had detrimental consequences for the Czechoslovak representation, which survived well into the exile. The annulment of the Munich Agreement continued to remain a topical and unsolved problem for the Czechoslovak exile in Great Britain. In this respect, the recognition of the Czechoslovak provisional government by the Brits was at least a partial success. An even more important step followed one year later, on 18 July 1941, when Great Britain recognized the Czechoslovak government of Jan Šrámek (1940–1945) as a proper government in exile.[13]

Contrary to the Czechoslovak exile and its leading personalities, the Yugoslav exile representation started forming up two to two and a half years later. From

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National Committee E. Beneš containing information about the recognition of the Czechoslovak provisional government by the British government, London, 21 July 1940.)

9　See BRANDES, D.: *Exil v Londýně 1939–1943*, pp. 68–69.

10　See SMETANA, Vít: *In the Shadow of Munich: British Policy towards Czechoslovakia from the Endorsement to the Renunciation of the Munich Agreement (1938–1942)*. Praha, Univerzita Karlova – Karolinum Press 2008, p. 194.

11　See HAUNER, Milan: Beginnings of the Czech Exile Government 1939–1941. In: BRINSON, Charmian – MALET, Marian (ed.): *Exile in and from Czechoslovakia during the 1930s and 1940s*. Amsterdam – New York, Rodopi 2009, pp. 104–105.

12　See BRANDES, D.: *Exil v Londýně 1939–1943*, p. 74.

13　See NĚMEČEK, Jan – ŠŤOVÍČEK, Ivan – NOVÁČKOVÁ, Helena – KUKLÍK, Jan (ed.): *Zápisy ze schůzí československé vlády v Londýně* [Minutes of meetings of the Czechoslovak government in London], Vol. 1: *1940–1941*. Praha, Historický ústav AV ČR – Masarykův ústav a Archiv Akademie věd ČR 2008, pp. 559–560, Document 30 – Minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 1941, including annexes. On the same day that Great Britain recognized the Czechoslovak provisional government as a proper government in exile, Czechoslovak Foreign Minister Jan Masaryk sent his Yugoslav counterpart Momčilo Ninčić a letter with information about the British recognition (*Arhiv Jugoslavije* [Archives of Yugoslavia], Belgrade (hereinafter *AJ*), Fund (f.) Exile Government of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (fund number 103), Volume (Vol.) 55, Archival Unit (AU) 263, letter of the Foreign Minister of the Czechoslovak government in exile Jan Masaryk to Foreign Minister of the Yugoslav government in exile Momčilo Ninčić, London, 18 July 1941).

a political point of view, it was totally unprepared for operating in exile, although the international position of Yugoslavia at the time of the government of Dragiša Cvetković (1939–1941) did indicate that Yugoslavia's neutrality and balancing between Germany and Great Britain could not be maintained much longer. And, indeed, the Yugoslav attitude to the ongoing war and its participants took a dramatic turn in March 1941.[14] Following the Belgrade cabinet's decision dated 20 March, an agreement on the accession of Yugoslavia to the Tripartite Pact was signed by representatives of Yugoslavia, Germany, Italy and Japan in Vienna on 25 March. The clear shift towards the policy of Germany and its allies prompted a wave of resolute resistance in Belgrade. Only two days later, on 27 March 1941, a military *coup d'état* took place in Yugoslavia, enthroning underage King Petar II Karađorđević (until that time, the country had been ruled by the regency headed by Prince Regent Pavle Karađorđević). The meaning of the coup was clear, although the new Prime Minister (until 1942) and one of its participants, General Dušan Simović, attempted to present it as an internal matter of the Yugoslav state, which would not fundamentally change its foreign policy. However, Hitler reacted with lightning speed, attacking Yugoslavia during the night from 5 to 6 April. The short war with the much stronger German army marked the end of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia as an independent state, forcing most Yugoslav political leaders into exile.[15]

However, the coup was tremendously important for leading Yugoslav politicians, as it greatly improved their position in exile. It also favourably influenced opinions of Churchill's government. Although the coup and demonstrations of people

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14 See SOVILJ, M.: Osudové okamžiky Království Jugoslávie na jaře roku 1941 očima představitelů československého exilu, p. 131.

15 The events related to political changes in Yugoslavia on 25 and 27 March 1941, and at the beginning of the war between Yugoslavia and Germany, which was referred to as the "April War" (6 April to 17 April 1941) in older Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav historiographies, were described mainly in the 1980s, less so in the 1990s (compare TERZIĆ, Velimir: *Slom Kraljevine Jugoslavije 1941: Uzroci i posledice poraza* [Collapse of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1941: Causes and consequences of defeat], Vol. 1–2. Ljubljana – Beograd – Titograd, Partizanska knjiga – Narodna knjiga – Pobjeda 1984; MILETIĆ, Antun (ed.): *Aprilski rat 1941: Zbornik dokumenata* [April War 1941: A collection of documents], Vol. 2. Beograd, Vojnoistorijski institut 1987; PETRANOVIĆ, Branko – ŽUTIĆ, Nikola (ed.): *27. mart 1941: Tematska zbirka dokumenata* [27 March 1941: Thematic collection of documents]. Beograd, NICOM 1990; PETRANOVIĆ, Branko: *Srbija u Drugom svetskom ratu 1939–1945* [Serbia in the Second World War, 1939–1945]. Beograd, Vojnoizdavački i novinski centar 1992). Recently, some historians in Serbia have been interested in this matter (compare *Zbornik radova okruglog stola – 27. mart 1941: Knez Pavle u vihorima evropske politike* [Proceedings of the round table – 27 March 1941: Prince Pavle in the whirlwinds of European politics]. Beograd, Zlatna knjiga 2003; NIKOLIĆ, Kosta – DIMITRIJEVIĆ, Bojan B. (ed.): *Danilo Gregorić i 25. mart 1941: Građa za studiju o martovskim događajima 1941 u Jugoslaviji* [Danilo Gregorić and 25 March 1941: Materials for the study of the March events 1941 in Yugoslavia]. Beograd, Institut za savremenu istoriju 2007; PAVLOVIĆ, Momčilo – PANTELIĆ, Ivana (ed.): *27. mart 1941: Sedamdeset godina kasnije: Zbornik radova sa međunarodne naučne konferencije* [27 March 1941: Seventy years later: A collection of studies at the international scientific conference]. Beograd, Institut za savremenu istoriju – Fond Kraljevski dvor 2012).

in Belgrade could not have any significant effect on the overall war situation or prevent further German advance in the Balkans, they were important in that at least someone, albeit for a short time, stood up against German war plans. While the occupation of Bohemia and Moravia took place with the Western powers just passively looking on and at the time when the Second World War had not yet begun, Yugoslavia was attacked and later occupied after repeated British attempts to change its neutral attitude to the war. Looking back, it is now clear that Great Britain was trying to persuade Yugoslavia's political representation not to join the Tripartite Pact since the turn of 1940 and 1941. When Yugoslavia did so, the Brits attempted to initiate resistance among some military and political circles that did not agree with the strategic about-face of Dragiša Cvetković's government.[16] However, to what extent could the personnel of the new British organization (*Special Operations Executive* – SOE), which had been established in 1940 for the purpose of initiating and supporting resistance in occupied European countries, influence the situation in Yugoslavia at that time is another question.[17] However, the government of Dušan Simović earned a lot of credit in the eyes of British political circles after 27 March 1941. Immediately after the coup in Belgrade, Winston Churchill stated that "early this morning the Yugoslav nation found its soul"[18] by *de facto* joining the Allies' side.

The practically negligible resistance of the Yugoslav army against advancing German and Italian troops (later also joined by Hungarian units) soon confirmed that the government of Dušan Simović and King Petar II would have to leave Yugoslavia's territory and flee into exile. They travelled to London, where exile representations of other occupied European nations had already been active, via Greece and

16 See HOPTNER, Jakob: *Jugoslavija u krizi 1934–1941* [Yugoslavia in crisis, 1934–1941]. New York – London, Columbia University Press 1964, p. 325; BARKER, Elisabeth: *British Policy in South-East Europe in the Second World War*. London – New York, Macmillan – Barnes & Noble Books 1976, pp. 86–87 and 91–92; PETRANOVIĆ, Branko: *Istorija Jugoslavije 1918–1988*, Vol. 1: *Kraljevina Jugoslavija 1914–1941* [History of Yugoslavia in 1918–1988, Vol. 1: The Kingdom of Yugoslavia, 1914–1941]. Beograd, Nolit 1988, pp. 368 and 372; TEJCHMAN, Miroslav: *Balkán ve válce a v revoluci 1939–1945* [The Balkans at war and in the revolution 1939–1945]. Praha Karolinum 2008, pp. 215–216 and 253–254; BJELAJAC, Mile: 25. i 27. mart i Aprilski rat 1941: Gde su koreni podeljenih pogleda [25 and 27 March, and the April War 1941: Where are the roots of divided views]? In: PAVLOVIĆ, M. – PANTELIĆ, I. (ed.): *27. mart 1941,* pp. 160–161.

17 On SOE's activities in Yugoslavia see AUTY, Phyllis – CLOGG, Richard (ed.): *British Policy Towards Wartime Resistance in Yugoslavia and Greece*. London – New York, Macmillan – Barnes & Noble Books 1975; STAFFORD, David: *Britain and European Resistance 1940–1945: A Survey of the Special Operations Executive, with Documents*. London – Toronto, Macmillan 1980; WHEELER, Mark C.: *Britain and the War for Yugoslavia 1940–1943*. Boulder (Colorado), East European Monographs 1980; FOOT, M. R. D.: *SOE: An outline History of the Special Operations Executive 1940–46*. London, British Broadcasting Corporation 1984 (translated into Czech as: *Stručná historie Útvaru zvláštních operací 1940–1946*. Brno, Bonus A 1997).

18 CHURCHILL, Winston S.: *The Second World War. The Grand Alliance*. Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company 1951, p. 168.

the Middle East. The first meeting of the Yugoslav exile government took place in Athens on 17 April 1941.[19] On the same day, an armistice with Germany was signed in Belgrade,[20] which practically meant the capitulation of Yugoslavia and a division of a part of its territory among Germany, Italy, Hungary, and Bulgaria. The Independent State of Croatia (*Nezavisna država Hrvatska* – NDH) was formed on the territory of Croatia, Bosnia, and a part of Vojvodina.

Just like the Czechoslovak exile representation in France, the Yugoslav exile government had also been struggling with numerous, mainly internal problems even before it arrived to London. Contrary to their Czechoslovak counterparts, whose mutual relations were burdened mainly by the relationship between Czechoslovakia's two state-forming nations and problems arising from different concept of Czechoslovakia's constitutional order,[21] Yugoslav politicians who represented a more numerous and ethnically more diverse population had to deal not only with Serbo-Croatian relations, but also with the status of Slovenians and other nations which Yugoslav society was composed of. All ethnic issues, which basically revolved and clashed around requirements for the expansion and enlargement of ethnic rights, were related to the continuing existence and functioning of the Yugoslav state.

Soon thereafter, the Yugoslav exile government experienced additional problems related to the existence of the Independent State of Croatia. Its regime, headed by Ante Pavelić, was extremely brutal towards Serbs, Jews and Romanies, as well as to members of other armed formations regardless of their ethnicity.[22] Reports about crimes of the Ustashe had a detrimental effect on mutual relations of Yugoslav exile ministers, in particular between Serbs and Croats.[23]

From the second half of 1941, there was yet another escalating problem related to the split between the Chetnik movement of Dragoljub Mihailović and the partisan movement of Josip Broz Tito, which was developing into an open conflict. The Chetniks of Colonel (later General) Mihailović consisted mainly of ethnic Serbian fighters loyal to Yugoslav King Petar II, while the partisan movement headed by Tito, the leader of Yugoslav communists, was basically communist, but also proclaimed the Yugoslav character of the national liberation of Yugoslavia. In contrast to the partisans, whose internal organization was subordinated to Tito and his close collaborators, the Chetnik movement was fragmented and some units of local commanders were operating on their own. Ties of the Yugoslav exile government

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19 See KRIZMAN, Bogdan (ed.): *Jugoslavenske vlade u izbjeglištvu 1941–1943: Dokumenti* [Yugoslav governments in exile, 1941–1943: Documents]. Zagreb – Beograd, Globus – Arhiv Jugoslavije 1981, p. 12; POPOVIĆ, Nebojša A.: *Slobodan Jovanović i jugoslovenska država* [Slobodan Jovanović and the Yugoslav state]. Beograd, Institut za savremenu istoriju 2003, p. 242.
20 See TERZIĆ, V.: *Slom Kraljevine Jugoslavije 1941*, Vol. 2, pp. 463–464.
21 See KUKLÍK, J. – NĚMEČEK, J.: *Hodža versus Beneš*, pp. 67–69.
22 KRIZMAN, Bogdan: *NDH između Hitlera i Mussolinija* [The Independent State of Croatia between Hitler and Mussolini]. Zagreb, Globus 1986, pp. 117–137.
23 POPOVIĆ, N. A.: *Slobodan Jovanović i jugoslovenska država*, pp. 250–252.

to the Chetnik movement, which was repeatedly accused of too passive resistance against armies occupying the Yugoslav territory, or even collaboration, were creating additional difficulties, particularly in relations with Great Britain.[24]

The first disagreements among the Yugoslav exiles started popping up as early as during their short stay in Greece. Prime Minister Dušan Simović made no effort to hide his displeasure over the swift defeat of the Yugoslav army, for which he blamed especially the Croats.[25] His plan and compromise attempts to put together a functional government consisting of representatives of practically all nations and relevant political parties (except for left-wing ones) proved difficult to implement soon after the *coup d'état*. Simović's cabinet inherited many internal problems, not just from the government of Dragiša Cvetković, but also from the latter's predecessors. And, in contrast to Czechoslovak exile politicians in London most of whom had ultimately united behind Beneš's centralistic position (although many questions concerning, for example, the postwar international orientation of Czechoslovakia emerged later), the discord among ministers of the Yugoslav exile government grew even deeper after their arrival to Great Britain. In the last decade of June 1941, the first Yugoslav representatives to arrive to London were young King Petar II, Prime Minister Dušan Simović, and some other ministers, including Deputy Premier

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24   The issue of potential collaboration of the Chetnik movement with occupying armies of Germany and Italy continues to be disputable even now, especially in today's Serbian historiography, which is split on it. Compared to titles published in socialist Yugoslavia, which almost as one labelled the Chetnik movement as a collaborationist one (this of course does not apply to the Yugoslav exile at that time), many publications of a diverse nature (and also quality) have been published after the disintegration of the federation, which, on the other hand, describe the Chetniks as an allied and anti-Fascist movement. However, this is a very difficult question with no simple answer, as the conflict which broke out between Tito's partisans and Mihailović's Chetniks was sometimes fiercer than their fight against the German and Italian armies, particularly on the part of the Chetniks. It was not only a civil war, taking place at the same time as the liberation war, but an ideological conflict whose outcome indicated, particularly towards the end of the war, who would play the chief role in postwar Yugoslavia. It was a difficult matter even for Great Britain, as, being the host country of the Yugoslav exile government, it was also providing help to the Chetnik movement. There is an extensive collection of documents illustrating the attitude of Great Britain to the Chetnik movement and the partisans, which is stored in the National Archives in London. See, for example, *The National Archives*, London (hereinafter *TNA*), f. Foreign Office (FO) 371/44290, FO 371/44291, FO 371/44292, FO 536/6, FO 954/33B/369, FO 954/34A/7; *Ibid.*, f. Prime Minister's Office (PREM) 3/510/9, PREM 3/510/10, PREM 3/512/5; *Ibid.*, f. Special Operations Executive (HS) 5/966, HS 5/967; *Ibid.*, f. War Office, Armed Forces, Judge Advocate General and related bodies (WO) 106/3278, WO 202/138. See also British memoir literature on this topic: MACLEAN, Fitzroy: *Eastern Approaches*. London, Jonathan Cape 1949; IDEM: Statement by Brigadier Sir Fitzroy Maclean. In: AUTY, P. – CLOGG, R. (ed.): *British Policy Towards Wartime Resistance in Yugoslavia and Greece*, pp. 221–228; BAILEY, S. W.: British Policy Towards General Draža Mihailović. In: *Ibid.*, pp. 59–92; DEAKIN, F. W. D.: *The Embattled Mountain*. Oxford, Oxford University Press 1970.

25   See POPOVIĆ, N. A.: *Slobodan Jovanović i jugoslovenska država*, p. 243.

Slobodan Jovanović and Foreign Minister Momčilo Ninčić.[26] The other members of Simović's cabinet followed during the summer.[27]

Compared to the Czechoslovak exile representation, however, Yugoslav politicians were enjoying very different treatment in London. Since the very beginning, they were warmly welcomed by the Brits and recognized as legitimate representatives of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia[28] – the state already occupied by Germany or divided among its allies – without any problems. The reasons behind the different British attitudes to the Czechoslovak and Yugoslav exile representations can be sought in the then prevailing situation and also in British interests shortly before the demise of Czechoslovakia. The new government of Churchill demonstrated its departure from Neville Chamberlain's policy towards Czechoslovakia in 1938 by, *inter alia*, recognizing Beneš's provisional exile government. For multiple reasons, however, it refused to completely annul consequences of the Munich Agreement. First and foremost, there was no interest in a decision implicitly admitting that the British strategy in 1938 had been wrong. In Czechoslovakia's case, there was also no continuity of governments after Munich, Beneš's resignation and, as a matter of fact, after the occupation and establishment of the Protectorate in mid-March 1939. The lack of interest of Churchill's cabinet in problems of exile governments, including the Czechoslovak one, on the British soil in 1940 might have been caused by the fact that it had been struggling with many serious problems arising from the imminent German threat and the necessity to defend British territory. One year later, when the Yugoslav exile government arrived to London, the situation was slightly better than in the summer of 1940 and the danger of a German invasion had been staved off.

What mattered most to the Brits was the fact that a new member was added to the anti-Nazi coalition in the Balkans as a result of the *coup d'état* in Yugoslavia and the new course of Simović's government (which forced it into exile soon thereafter).[29] In addition (and unlike its Czechoslovak counterparts), the Yugoslav government arrived to London as the legitimate representation of its country. Minor changes of Simović's government forced by circumstances had no effect whatsoever on its legitimacy.[30] And there was yet another – albeit not decisive – factor playing into the hand of the Yugoslav exile politicians. Arriving to London together with the

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26 *Ibid.*, p. 247; WHEELER, M. C.: *Britain and the War for Yugoslavia 1940–1943*, p. 121; BRANDES, D.: *Exil v Londýně 1939–1943*, p. 131.

27 See KRIZMAN, B. (ed.): *Jugoslavenske vlade u izbjeglištvu 1941–1943*, pp. 15–16.

28 *AJ*, f. Diplomatic mission of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in Great Britain – London (341), Vol. 8, AU 28, Yugoslavia in the war 1941, London, 23 April 1941.

29 See some British memoirs mentioning events around the Yugoslav *coup d'état* on 27 March 1941: CHURCHILL, W. S.: *The Second World War. The Grand Alliance*, pp. 168–169; The EARL of AVON: *The Eden Memoirs: The Reckoning*. London, Cassell 1965, pp. 228–229; DIXON, Piers: *Double Diploma: The Life of Sir Pierson Dixon, Don and Diplomat*. London, Hutchinson 1968, pp. 78–86.

30 Two of its ministers lost their lives at the beginning and at the end of the April War, a few other cabinet members decided to stay on Yugoslav territory, the forthcoming occupation notwithstanding; this was the case, *inter alia,* of Deputy Prime Minister Vladko Maček,

government was the new Yugoslav ruler, Petar II, whose dynasty had already had very close relations with Great Britain in the past, as Yugoslavia's Queen Mother Marija Karađorđević was related to the British royal family.[31]

The manner in which leading personalities of British political life welcomed Yugoslav exile politicians suggested that the latter might enjoy a privileged position on the British Isles. Petar II was greeted as a new young ruler of the state whose nation and army had resisted the Third Reich and enjoyed a lot of respect in Great Britain, although he had made practically no important decision in Yugoslavia shortly before the *coup d'état* or immediately thereafter.[32] Dušan Simović received a similar recognition as a participant in the *coup d'état* and, first and foremost, as the man who had stood in the head of the new government at the moment critical for the future of Yugoslavia.[33] The celebration of Petar's coming of age in London on 16 September 1941, was attended by practically all important political personalities: the British King and his family, the cabinet headed by Winston Churchill, and an almost full complement of exile representatives of other countries, including Edvard Beneš.[34] It was a ceremonial event, something quite common on occasions like this. However, it could produce an impression that the Yugoslav exile representation maintained excellent relations with other exile governments, and especially with the British cabinet, as emphasized a year later in a different context by Foreign Minister Momčilo Ninčić.[35]

At that time, the government might have produced an impression of a strong and united national coalition,[36] although it consisted of ministers of different nationalities and, in particular, different political opinions, who had brought with them to

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a leading representative of the most important Croatian party – Croatian Peasant Party (see POPOVIĆ, N. A.: *Slobodan Jovanović i jugoslovenska država*, p. 242).

31 See KARAĐORĐEVIĆ, Petar II.: *Moj život: Memoari / A King's Heritage: The Memoirs*. Ed. Dušan Babac. Beograd, Evro-Đunti 2013, p. 118.

32 See *Ibid.*, pp. 88 and 92–95.

33 See PAVLOWITCH, Stevan K.: *Yugoslavia*. London, Ernest Benn Ltd. 1971, p. 123; WHEELER, M. C.: *Britain and the War for Yugoslavia 1940–1943*, p. 121.

34 See GROL, Milan: *Londonski dnevnik 1941–1945* [The London Diary, 1941–1945]. Beograd, Filip Višnjić 1990, p. 23; RADOJEVIĆ, M.: *Milan Grol*, p. 264.

35 See JONČIĆ, Dušan – PIJEVAC, Komnen (ed.): *Zapisnici sa sednica Ministarskog saveta Kraljevine Jugoslavije 1941–1945* [Minutes of meetings of the government of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1941–1945]. Beograd, Arhiv Srbije i Crne Gore – Javno preduzeće Službeni list SCG 2004, p. 212, Document 94.

36 See *Vojni arhiv* [Military Archives], Belgrade (hereinafter *VA*), f. Exile Government of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1941–1945, Cardboard (CB) 348, Vol. 1, Document (d.) 4, The Government of Dušan Simović; POPOVIĆ, N. A.: *Slobodan Jovanović i jugoslovenska država*, pp. 234–235 and 242; KRIZMAN, B. (ed.): *Jugoslavenske vlade u izbjeglištvu 1941–1943*, p. 20. The composition of Simović's government after its departure to exile is also available in a digital reproduction of the newspaper *Službene novine Kraljevine Jugoslavije*: Composition of the new government. In: *Službene novine Kraljevine Jugoslavije* [online], War edition, No. 1 (19.8.1941), p. 1. [Cit. 2019-11-12.] Available at: *http://digitalizovanaizdanja.sluzbenenovine.rs/DigitalizovanaIzdanja/viewdoc?uuid=610ac70c-e643-4eca-8bdc-18c1ad6bf260*; Administrative section. In: *Ibid.* [online], War edition, No. 2 (6.9.1941),

London a lot of outstanding political and ethnic problems. The question whether they would have been able to accomplish more in exile without this burden, with even greater difficulties lying in wait for them as a result of war developments on Yugoslav territory and in relations with other countries.

Across the Burden of the Past towards New Cooperation

The existence of the exile governments of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia in Great Britain was not only politically significant in the struggle of the Allies against Germany and other Axis member states; it also meant continuity of both occupied states. The very idea of maintaining their existence could be supported by developing diplomatic contacts in exile.

Czechoslovak exile politicians established first direct contacts with the Yugoslav government shortly after the latter's departure to exile. Although most of them were unofficial, they were quite important for both sides and allowed each of them to get an idea of how their counterparts think. Reports of members of the Czechoslovak army abroad and of the exile Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent to exile bodies in London in the spring of 1941 describe the situation in Yugoslavia and reasons of the country's quick defeat in the war with Germany,[37] the difficult position of the Yugoslav exile government, and considerable disputes popping up every now and then among leading Yugoslav exile politicians.[38] Czechoslovak exile bodies did not quite understand how the Yugoslav government would operate in exile; as of the end of April 1941, its members were scattered in different places in Europe, North Africa and the Middle East (in Greece, Egypt, and Palestine; some of them had also stayed on occupied Yugoslav territory).[39] Similarly, it was not quite clear how the remnants of the Yugoslav army in exile and its members who had fled from Yugoslavia to escape the capitulation would be organized.[40]

An important role in arranging contacts with the Yugoslav side was played by Josef Miloslav Kadlec, at that time the Czechoslovak Consul General in Jerusalem, who had maintained contacts in the Yugoslav environment in the past, working

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p. 2. [Cit. 2019-11-12.] Available at: *http://digitalizovanaizdanja.sluzbenenovine.rs/ DigitalizovanaIzdanja/viewdoc?uuid=b39ab861-701f-4468-a85b-3e25c6f731d4*.

37   *Archiv Ústavu T. G. Masaryka* [Archives of the T. G. Masaryk Institute], Prague (hereinafter *AÚTGM*), f. Edvard Beneš, Section II (EB II), CB 113, Signature (Sign.) V 86/4, Yugoslavia, Reports of the Ministry of National Defence (MNO) 1940–1944, Year 1941, Report dated 27 April 1941.

38   *Ibid.*, Report dated 15 May 1941.

39   *Ibid.*, CB 454, Inventory Number (Inv. No.) 3813, Sign. XVIII, Yugoslavia, Confidential Record No. 57, London, 24 April 1941.

40   *Ibid.,* CB 113, Sign. V 86/4, Yugoslavia, Reports of the Ministry of National Defence 1940–1944, Year 1941, Report dated 15 May 1941; *Ibid.,* CB 454, Inv. No. 3813, Sign. XVIII, Yugoslavia, Confidential Record No. 64, London, 16 May 1941.

at the Czechoslovak diplomatic mission in Belgrade already in 1919 and 1920.[41] He met (more or less informally) Prime Minister Dušan Simović and Foreign Minister Momčilo Ninčić in Jerusalem on 24 April 1941,[42] and subsequently notified Czechoslovak exile Foreign Minister Jan Masaryk of the meeting.[43] Although Kadlec unofficially told Simović and Ninčić that the Yugoslav side should recognize the provisional government of Czechoslovakia (as he mentioned in his letter to the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs in London), Masaryk did not share his opinion. He advised the Czechoslovak Consul General in Jerusalem to be careful and not hold any official negotiations with the Yugoslav government about this matter. At the same time, however, he did not rule out private talks.[44] Masaryk's attitude was based on Czechoslovakia's experience with Yugoslavia at the time of the Munich Agreement, something that Edvard Beneš was pointing out quite frequently while in exile.

The cautious attitude of the Czechoslovak side notwithstanding, Kadlec and Ninčić exchanged letters in May 1941 – the Czechoslovak Consul General first informed the Yugoslav Foreign Minister about the composition of the Czechoslovak provisional government (8 May), whereupon Ninčić did the same and sent the Czechoslovak side a list of ministers of the Yugoslav government (19 May).[45] According to Czechoslovak sources, Ninčić also communicated to Kadlec the position of the Yugoslav government, namely that the latter considered the relations between the two countries restored.[46] From the Yugoslav perspective, it was basically

41 *Ibid.*, CB 454, Inv. No. 3814, Sign. XVIII, Yugoslavia, Yugoslav government – restoration of contacts, Jerusalem, 30 May 1941.

42 *Ibid.,* see also NĚMEČEK, J. – KUKLÍK, J. – NOVÁČKOVÁ, H. – ŠŤOVÍČEK, I. (ed.): *Od uznání československé prozatímní vlády do vyhlášení válečného stavu Německu 1940–1941*, Vol. 1, p. 420, Document 188 – A wire of Czechoslovakia's Consul General in Jerusalem J. M. Kadlec to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czechoslovak Republic on the arrival of the Yugoslav government and on negotiations concerning the recognition of the Czechoslovak provisional government by the Yugoslav government, Jerusalem, 25 April 1941.

43 *AÚTGM*, f. EB II, CB 454, Inv. No. 3814, Sign. XVIII, Yugoslavia, Yugoslav government – Restoration of contacts, Jerusalem, 30 May 1941. See POSPÍCHAL, J.: Odtažitost a vyčkávání, p. 467.

44 NĚMEČEK, J. – KUKLÍK, J. – NOVÁČKOVÁ, H. – ŠŤOVÍČEK, I. (ed.): *Od uznání československé prozatímní vlády do vyhlášení válečného stavu Německu 1940–1941*, Vol. 1, p. 420, Document 188.

45 *AJ*, f. 103, Vol. 55, AU 263, Letter of Czechoslovak Consul General Josef M. Kadlec to Yugoslav Foreign Minister Momčilo Ninčić dated 8 May 1941, and letter of Momčilo Ninčić to Josef M. Kadlec dated 19 May 1941. See *AÚTGM*, f. EB II, CB 454, Inv. No. 3814, Sign. XVIII, Yugoslavia, Yugoslav government – Restoration of contacts, Jerusalem, 30 May 1941.

46 *AÚTGM*, f. EB II, k. 454, Inv. No. 3814, sign. XVIII, Yugoslavia, Yugoslav government – Restoration of contacts, Jerusalem, 30 May 1941; NĚMEČEK, Jan – KUKLÍK, Jan – NOVÁČKOVÁ, Helena – ŠŤOVÍČEK, Ivan (ed.): *Od uznání československé prozatímní vlády do vyhlášení válečného stavu Německu 1940–1941* [From the recognition of the Czechoslovak provisional government to the declaration of war on Germany 1940–1941], Vol. 2: *1. květen 1941 – 31. prosinec 1941* [1 May 1941 – 31 December 1941]. Praha, Ústav mezinárodních vztahů – Historický ústav AV ČR 2009, pp. 12–13, Document 197 – A wire of Czechoslovakia's Consul General in Jerusalem J. M. Kadlec to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of

a restoration of Yugoslav-Czechoslovak relations severed by the German occupation of Bohemia and Moravia. It is true that Yugoslavia continued to maintain its diplomatic mission on the territory of the Protectorate for more than two years (an embassy until May 1939, later – until early April 1941 – a consulate general), but it did not and could not have regular diplomatic relations with the Protectorate.[47]

Unlike the Yugoslav government, which took the restoration of mutual relations for granted,[48] but was also unable, because of its uncertain situation, to pay more time and attention to the matter, the Czechoslovak side viewed the restoration as something not entirely free of problems. As a matter of fact, Edvard Beneš's opinions on Yugoslavia had been negatively affected by the latter's policy during the Munich crisis, when Milan Stojadinović, then Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs (1935–1939), in an effort to avoid any conflict with Germany, had adopted a cautious stance on the Sudetenland issue. Within the Little Entente, Yugoslavia (just like Romania) had been obliged to help Czechoslovakia in case of a Hungarian attack, but these obligations did not apply to German aggression.[49] In the second half of the 1930s, Beneš had been displeased to see a step-by-step change of Yugoslav foreign policy increasingly leaning towards Germany and Italy.[50] He had perceived the wary attitude of the Yugoslav government in the autumn of 1938 as a behavior unbecoming of a Little Entente ally, which, in his opinion, significantly contributed to the deterioration of Czechoslovakia's international position at that time. And his predominantly negative opinions of the Yugoslav policy had survived until the spring of 1941, when the restoration of Czechoslovak-Yugoslav relations became a topical issue.

Although, contrary to Stojadinović's and Cvetković's governments, the Czechoslovak exile circles could have expected much more from new Simović's government, both with respect to the involvement in the war with Germany and in terms of future mutual cooperation,[51] Beneš, according to preserved reports, continued to perceive Yugoslavia as an untrustworthy partner which had not helped Czechoslovakia in need and as one of the parties responsible for the loss of the Sudetenland.[52] Immediately after the

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the Czechoslovak Republic concerning the establishment of diplomatic relations with the Yugoslav government, Jerusalem, 23 May 1941.

47 See SOVILJ, M.: *Československo-jugoslávské vztahy v letech 1939–1941*, pp. 61 and 241–242.
48 *AÚTGM*, f. EB II, CB 454, Inv. No. 3814, Sign. XVIII, Yugoslavia, Yugoslav government – Restoration of contacts, Jerusalem, 30 May 1941.
49 See SOVILJ, M.: *Československo-jugoslávské vztahy v letech 1939–1941*, pp. 33–35.
50 See BENEŠ, Edvard: *Paměti* [Memoirs], Vol. 1: *Mnichovské dny* [The Days of Munich]. Ed. Milan Hauner. Praha, Academia 2007, pp. 135–137.
51 See FEIERABEND, Ladislav Karel: *Politické vzpomínky* [Political memoirs], Vol. 2. Brno, Atlantis 1994, p. 131; ČECHUROVÁ, Jana – KUKLÍK, Jan – ČECHURA, Jaroslav – NĚMEČEK, Jan (ed.): *Válečné deníky Jana Opočenského* [War diaries of Jan Opočenský]. Praha, Karolinum 2001, p. 104.
52 See OTÁHALOVÁ, Libuše – ČERVINKOVÁ, Milada (ed.): *Dokumenty z historie československé politiky 1939–1943: Acta Occupationis Bohemiae et Moraviae* [Documents from the history of Czecho-Slovak politics 1939–1943], Vol. 1: *Vztahy mezinárodní diplomacie k politice československé emigrace na západě* [Relations of international diplomacy to the politics of

coup d'état in Belgrade, he even refused to send a congratulatory telegram to new Yugoslav King Petar II unless the Yugoslav government recognized the Czechoslovak provisional government.[53] However, in early April 1941, a few days before the German attack on Yugoslavia, Beneš correctly presumed that the Yugoslav government would recognize the Czechoslovak provisional government once it found itself also in exile – i.e. "when they will be where we are now, somewhere on Crete."[54]

However, the prevalently wary attitude of Yugoslavia towards Czechoslovakia and the Sudetenland question before Munich can also be viewed from an angle different from that of Edvard Beneš. According to Milan Stojadinović, whom Yugoslav authorities extradited to Britain in mid-March 1941, i.e. just a few weeks before the German invasion, and who was subsequently interned in Mauritius, Czechoslovak politicians had behaved in a similar way to Yugoslavia as early as in 1926. At that time, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes had asked Prague to expand the obligations under the Little Entente to a military alliance, as Yugoslavia had found itself in a bitter clash with Italy. As Stojadinović claimed in his memoirs posthumously published in Buenos Aires in 1963, Czechoslovakia had rejected the request, as its territory had not been facing any threat at that time.[55] Yugoslav politicians

Czechoslovak emigration in the West]. Praha, Academia 1966, p. 194, Document 145 – Instructions of E. Beneš for radio speeches of Foreign Minister of the Czechoslovak provisional government J. Masaryk and State Secretary H. Ripka on events in Yugoslavia, London, 28 March 1941.

53   *Ibid.*, p. 196, Document 148 – E. Beneš refused to send King Petar a congratulatory telegram on the *coup d'état* in Yugoslavia unless the Yugoslav government recognized the Czechoslovak provisional government, London, 2 April 1941; see POSPÍCHAL, J.: Odtažitost a vyčkávání, p. 462. Beneš sent a telegram to Petar II on 7 April 1941, i.e. only after the German attack on Yugoslavia, but instead of a congratulation to the new Yugoslav ruler he expressed support to nations of Yugoslavia and the new king in hard times in it. (The text of the telegram is kept in multiple Czech archives, namely: *Národní archiv* [National Archives], Prague (hereinafter *NA*), f. Presidium of the Council of Ministers – London, CB 69, A telegram to the Yugoslav King, London, 18 April 1941; *Archiv Ministerstva zahraničních věcí* [Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs], Prague (hereinafter *AMZV*), f. London archives – ordinary 1939–1945, CB 182, Telegram to the Yugoslav King, London, 18 April 1941; *Ibid.*, CB 444, A telegram to the Yugoslav King and a letter to Queen Mother, London, 30 April 1941; *Vojenský ústřední archiv – Vojenský historický archiv* [Central Military Archives – Military Historical Archives] Prague, f. Czechoslovak military mission for the Balkans, Near and Middle East 1939–1945, 103/1/30, Incoming telegrams, Year 1941, No. 2735-170-7 to 2746-250-7, London–Yugoslavia, 14 April 1941. In the Archives of the T. G. Masaryk Institute, there is a handwritten text in Czech signed in the name of the Czechoslovak president: *AÚTGM*, f. EB II, CB 113, Sign. V 86/1, Yugoslavia, Correspondence of E. Beneš with King Petar II, 1941–1942, H. M. King Peter II. Yugoslavia.)

54   OTÁHALOVÁ, L. – ČERVINKOVÁ, M. (ed.): *Dokumenty z historie československé politiky 1939–1943*, Vol. 1, p. 196, Document 148; see also POSPÍCHAL, J.: Odtažitost a vyčkávání, p. 462.

55   STOJADINOVIĆ, Milan M.: *Ni rat ni pakt: Jugoslavija između dva rata* [Neither war, nor pact: Yugoslavia between the two wars]. Rijeka, Otokar Keršovani 1970, p. 434; see also CHROBÁK, Tomáš: Jugoslávská opozice a Československo 1935–1938 [Yugoslav opposition and Czechoslovakia 1935–1938]. In: *Slovanský přehled*, Vol. 85, No. 3, (1999), p. 291.

around King Aleksandar Karađorđević (1921–1934) might have harboured a similar opinion on Czechoslovakia after the declaration of the King's dictatorship and banishment of all political parties in 1929. Although it was no longer an external threat to Yugoslav territory as it had been a few years earlier, the attempt of the Yugoslav government to win Czechoslovak President Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk's support was unsuccessful.[56]

Beneš's opinions outlined above might have influenced the perception of the Yugoslav side by the Czechoslovak exiles to some extent, the main reason being that leading Czechoslovak exile politicians (and their Yugoslav counterparts as well) had been politically active and in power since the 1920s (including Beneš, but also Ninčić, who led Yugoslav diplomacy from 1922 to 1926, with a four-month break in 1924).[57] However, time showed that the Czechoslovak side, or rather Edvard Beneš himself, had a greater trauma arising from Yugoslavia's failure to provide support and help in the past. In contacts with Yugoslav politicians after the move of their government from Jerusalem to London, he often emphasized Yugoslavia's passive position shortly before Munich. During one of his first meetings with Dušan Simović in London on 4 July 1941 (the lunch was also attended by Momčilo Ninčić, who had known Beneš for a long time, as he had cooperated with him already in the early 1920s, at the time of the formation of the Little Entente),[58] the Czechoslovak President, as emphasized in a report on the meeting, reacted to Simović's negative comments about Stojadinović and Prince Regent Pavle with the following words: "He clearly and openly explained his entire policy and the treason of Pavle and Stojadinović."[59]

Similarly, President Beneš made use of every suitable opportunity to offer a negative comment on the "Yugoslav breakup of the Little Entente" or "Stojadinović's treason" even later. This was the case, for example, of the audience of a new (practically the first exile) Yugoslav ambassador to the Czechoslovak exile government in London, Večeslav Vilder, on 27 October 1941.[60] In the next few days, Beneš probably had meetings with other Yugoslav politicians as well, including Minister of Social

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56 See STOJKOV, Todor: O nastojanju jugoslovenskih vladajućih krugova da obezbede režimu monarhodiktature podršku čehoslovačke vlade (1929–1931) [About the efforts of the Yugoslav ruling circles to provide support of the Czechoslovak government to the regime of monarchical dictatorship, 1929–1931]. In: HROZIENČIK, Jozef (ed.): *Československo a Juhoslávia: Z dejín československo-juhoslovanských vzťahov* [Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia: From the history of Czechoslovak-Yugoslav relations]. Bratislava, Slovenská akadémia vied 1968, p. 269–284.

57 See PAVLOWITCH, Stevan K.: Momčilo Ninčić and the European Policy of the Yugoslav Government-in-Exile 1941–1943, Part 1. In: *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 63, No. 3 (July 1984), p. 401.

58 *Ibid.*

59 *AÚTGM*, f. EB II, CB 113, Sign. 86/2, Yugoslavia, Minutes of talks of President Edvard Beneš and Hubert Ripka, 1941–1944, Lunch with Gen(eral) Simović and Min(ister) Ninčić, Claridges Hotel, London, 4 July 1941.

60 *Ibid.*, Meetings with Vilder (21 October 1941) and Andjelinović (30 October 1941). See also Vilder's report on the audience at Beneš (*AJ*, f. 103, Vol. 55, AU 263, London, 10 November 1941).

Care and National Health Srđan Budisavljević. The minutes of the meeting mention that all Yugoslav politicians were interested in how future relations between the Czechoslovak and Yugoslav exile governments were going to evolve. Beneš's words during the talks about the future indicated how much Yugoslav policy dating back to the time around Munich was troubling him: "This is none of our business. We did not change the policy. Yugoslavia stepped out of the line in the hardest moment of our life. We are and will remain reserved and we will wait."[61]

The year 1942 also saw Beneš reminding his Yugoslav colleagues of the Yugoslav passive policy before the Munich Conference when meeting them in London, no matter what the topic of the talks was.[62] The meeting with Miha Krek and Juraj Krnjević, Deputy Prime Ministers of the Yugoslav exile government of Slobodan Jovanović (1942–1943),[63] in mid-May 1942 focused mainly on an idea of a territorial corridor between Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, which was promoted by Minister of Justice (and ex-Ambassador to Moscow) Milan Gavrilović, referring to a similar concept dating back to the time of the Great War.[64] Although Gavrilović's early 1942 proposal to create a corridor did not materialize (it was not accepted

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61 *AÚTGM*, f. EB II, CB 113, Sign. V 86/2, Yugoslavia, Records of talks of President Edvard Beneš and State Secretary Hubert Ripka 1941–1944, Meetings with Vilder (21 October 1941) and Andjelinović (30 October 1941).

62 See POSPÍCHAL, J.: Odtažitost a vyčkávání, p. 482–483.

63 Slobodan Jovanović became the Prime Minister of the second Yugoslav exile government after the crisis of the government of Dušan Simović, who lost confidence of King Petar II and practically all his ministers. Simović's position was untenable already in early 1942, resulting in a collective resignation of all ministers. On 11 January 1942, King Petar II subsequently appointed Jovanović, until then Deputy Prime Minister and without any political affiliation, in Simović's place. There was also no place in the new government for Minister of Defence Bogoljub Ilić, who was replaced by Dragoljub Mihailović, the leader of the Chetnik movement in Yugoslavia. The membership of Mihailović in the Yugoslav exile government – regardless of the fact that he could not be physically present at its meetings – had a substantial impact on the political course of Jovanović's government, but also on all subsequent governments in which Mihailović held the post of Minister of Army, Navy and Aviation. (See KRIZMAN, B. (ed.): *Jugoslavenske vlade u izbjegličtvu 1941–1943, dokumenti*, p. 36–37; NIKOLIĆ, Kosta: *Vlade Kraljevine Jugoslavije u Drugom svetskom ratu 1941–1945* [Governments of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in the Second World War, 1941–1945]. Beograd, Institut za savremenu istoriju 2008, p. 106–107; Administrative section: Official documents on the change of the royal government. In: *Službene novine Kraljevine Jugoslavije* [online], wartime edition, No. 4 (16.1.1942), p. 2. [Cit. 2019-11-12.] Available at: *http://digitalizovanaizdanja.sluzbenenovine.rs/DigitalizovanaIzdanja/viewdoc?uuid=6e8b6c3c-f035-401d-b79d-e4910dc8c8f8*.)

64 The issue of a potential territorial corridor between nations of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, whose friendship was confirmed by the Little Étente, was also mentioned by T. G. Masaryk in his *World Revolution*. According to Masaryk, the relations of these nations placed Czechs and Slovaks in the east and south, close to the sea. Austria was therefore important for both states as a transit country. (MASARYK, Tomáš Garrigue: *Světová revoluce: Za války a ve válce 1914–1918. Vzpomíná a uvažuje T. G. Masaryk* [World revolution: During the war and in the war 1914–1918. T. G. Masaryk's recollections and deliberations]. Praha, Masarykův ústav AV ČR – Ústav T. G. Masaryka 2005, p. 342.)

positively by both Yugoslav and Czechoslovak exile politicians, including Beneš),[65] having not much in common with Yugoslav policy during the events in Munich, Beneš did not forget to emphasize to Krnjević that the Czechoslovak side remained cautious and wary – "after everything that has happened since Munich."[66]

However, Beneš's frequent hints at circumstances and consequences of the Munich Agreement were not heard only in his talks with Yugoslav politicians. In his memoirs, Ladislav Karel Feierabend, who was a State Minister (minister without a portfolio) of the Czechoslovak exile government until October 1941 and later held the post of its Minister of Finance, emphasized that he realized, after a conversation with Beneš that had taken place as early as in September 1940, that Munich was a nightmare for Beneš, which "squeezes his heart and poisons his soul."[67] In early 1941, Feierabend was sure that Beneš had been haunted by one question in connection with Munich – whether it would not have been better to fight against the German army in the autumn of 1938.[68] In Feierabend's opinion, Beneš started blaming Brits for everything, including "things they were not really responsible for."[69] The situation somewhat changed after 5 August 1942, when Great Britain annulled the consequences of the Munich Agreement,[70] although such an attitude adopted during the war had a somewhat different impact than if it would have been taken at the end of September 1938.

The British decision, however, was a direct impulse to overcome the "Munich problem" in official Czechoslovak-Yugoslav relations. At that time, the person responsible for maintaining direct contacts between Beneš's government and their Yugoslav counterparts in Great Britain was Jaroslav Lípa, the last Czechoslovak Ambassador to Belgrade (until mid-March 1939). His recognition by Momčilo Ninčić as the new, or rather last, official ambassador to the Yugoslav exile government was important, as it was a continuation of his original accreditation,[71] but also

65 *AÚTGM*, f. EB II, CB 113, Sign. V 86/2, Yugoslavia, Records of talks of President Edvard Beneš and State Secretary Hubert Ripka 1941–1944, 15 January 1942, and 19 January 1942; *Ibid.*, Conversation with Krek and Krnjević on Wednesday, 13 May, and Friday, 15 May 1942.

66 *Ibid.*, Conversation with Krek and Krnjević on Wednesday, 13 May, and Friday, 15 May 1942.

67 FEIERABEND, L. K.: *Politické vzpomínky*, Vol. 2, p. 97.

68 *Ibid.*, p. 100.

69 *Ibid.*, p. 101.

70 See NĚMEČEK, Jan – KUKLÍK, Jan – JEDLIČKOVÁ, Blanka – NĚMEČKOVÁ, Daniela (ed.): *Československá zahraniční politika v roce 1942*, Vol. 2: *1. srpen – 31. prosinec 1942* [Czechoslovak foreign policy in 1942, Vol. 2: 1 August – 31 December 1942]. Praha, Historický ústav AV ČR – p. 10–12, Document 219 – Letter of Foreign Minister of Great Britain A. Eden to Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czechoslovak Republic J. Masaryk on the policy of the British government towards Czechoslovakia, London, 5 August 1942; *Ibid.*, pp. 12–14, Document 220 – Letter of Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czechoslovak Republic J. Masaryk to Foreign Minister of Great Britain A. Eden, confirming the acceptance of the British note on the policy of the British government towards Czechoslovakia, London, 5 August 1942.

71 *NA*, f. Presidium of the Ministerial Council – London, CB 56, Diplomatic representation at the Royal Government of Yugoslavia, London, 3 September 1941; *AÚTGM*, f. EB II, CB 454,

a preservation of the continuity of diplomatic relations between the two countries regardless of the current situation. As recorded by Yugoslav Deputy Foreign Minister in London Vladimir Milanović after Lípa's visit on 16 December 1942, he was told that the Czechoslovak side had expected a friendly comment on the annulment of the Munich Agreement from the Yugoslav government. When nothing like that happened, Lípa asked Milanović to at least confirm that the Yugoslav side had been notified of the act.[72] It was only on 11 January 1943, that the Yugoslav exile government issued a statement to the effect that it did not recognize the Munich Agreement. *Čechoslovák,* the weekly of the Czechoslovak exile government in London, subsequently brought information about the act.[73]

The Czechoslovak Exile Government as an Ally and as a Measure

Opinions of the Yugoslav exile representation on their Czechoslovak counterparts were also influenced by the situation at that time. Nevertheless, neither Yugoslav diplomatic messages in those days nor the memoirs of ex-Prime Minister Milan Stojadinović, who, however, had not ranked among leading Yugoslav politicians after February 1939, contain as many negative comments about Czechoslovakia compared to Beneš's texts and speeches about Yugoslavia. As a rule, Yugoslav exile politicians were deriving their opinion on Czechoslovakia, or rather on the Czechoslovak exile during the Second World War, from a comparison of the Czechoslovak and the Yugoslav position in Great Britain. They did so almost every time when they wanted to emphasize the change of their position in exile, particularly with respect to the British relation to Yugoslavia. Even before the Yugoslav exile government arrived to London, Yugoslav representatives viewed Britain's attitude to their government as better than to the Czechoslovak or Polish exile representations. At a meeting of the Yugoslav exile government in Jerusalem on 29 April 1941, Foreign Minister Momčilo Ninčić spoke about the British (and also American) attitude to Yugoslavia at the time of the recent German attack. He stressed that, insofar as the future restoration of Yugoslavia was concerned, they could not expect more than what was contained in a statement of British Foreign Minister Anthony Eden, namely that the legal continuity of the Yugoslav state continues in activities of the Yugoslav exile government.[74] While the basically verbal British support could not prevent German annexation of Yugoslav territory, Ninčić interpreted the British

Inv. No. 3813, Sign. XVIII, Yugoslavia, Diplomatic representation at the Royal Government of Yugoslavia, London, 3 September 1941.

72   *AJ*, f. 103, Vol. 55, AU 263, Minutes of conversation between Deputy Foreign Minister Mr. Milanović and the Czechoslovak Ambassador Mr. Lípa, London, 16 December 1942.

73   *AMZV*, f. London archives – confidential, CB 137, Yugoslavia – de-recognition of Munich, London, 27 February 1943; Jugoslávie zamítla Mnichov [Yugoslavia repealed Munich]. In: *Čechoslovák*, Vol. 5, No. 9 (26 February 1943), p. 8. See also POSPÍCHAL, J.: Odtažitost a vyčkávání, pp. 489–490.

74   See KRIZMAN, B. (ed.): *Jugoslavenske vlade u izbjeglištvu 1941–1943*, p. 112, Document 12.

attitude to the effect that the Yugoslav exile government enjoyed a better status in the British eyes than its Czechoslovak or Polish counterparts.[75]

For Yugoslav exile diplomacy, a positive attitude to Czechoslovakia was something that was taken for granted, as indicated not only by the abovementioned position paper of Simović's government on the restoration of Czechoslovak-Yugoslav diplomatic relations dated 19 May 1941, but also by occasional statements of Yugoslav exile politicians. In his letter to Momčilo Ninčić in early August 1941, Milan Gavrilović (at that time minister without a portfolio), already mentioned above, emphasized the mutuality and solidarity between Slavs (when referring to Yugoslav-Soviet relations which had been established only in the summer of 1940)[76] and also the restoration of Czechoslovak-Yugoslav relations which, in the author's opinion, could have been threatened only by mutual mental wariness. We can only guess whether Gavrilović was hinting at the abovementioned problems in relations between Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia in the interwar period and in critical moments; in any case, he did not think the mutual wariness was much of a problem.[77]

In early October 1942, Czechoslovakia was an ally in Central European matters for Deputy Prime Minister Miha Krek; as to the Balkans politics, the ally's role belonged to Greece.[78] Roughly at the same time (first half of October 1942), members of the Yugoslav exile government were debating the country's foreign policy in which Czechoslovakia was used as a measure of some steps of Yugoslav exile diplomacy. Ministers disagreeing with Ninčić's way of conducting diplomacy often gave Czechoslovakia as an example of a good decisions in the international arena. Just like Miha Krek, Jovan Banjanin, at that time the Minister of Forestry and Mining Industries in the first government of Jovanović, regarded relations between Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and Poland as very important.[79] Another Deputy Prime Minister, Juraj Krnjević, was also emphasizing the positive example of the Czechoslovak exile as a team led by Edvard Beneš, who had first succeeded to win recognition of the provisional government and later also the status of an ally, and finally achieved the annulment of the Munich Agreement. Krnjević made his sympathies to the success of Czechoslovak politicians, who "created a lot from practically nothing," plain, while he was utterly dissatisfied with steps and actions of his fellow ministers (and perhaps also his own), as confirmed by his words to the effect that they failed to retain even the precious little that they had brought with them to Britain.[80]

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75 *Ibid.*
76 See CVETKOVIĆ, Slavoljub: *Jugoslavija 1939–1941: Sovjetska prisutnost u jugoslovenskom političkom životu na početku Drugog svetskog rata* [Yugoslavia in 1939–1941: The Soviet presence in the Yugoslav political life at the beginning of the Second World War]. Beograd, Institut za savremenu istoriju 1999, p. 148.
77 See KRIZMAN, B. (ed.): *Jugoslavenske vlade u izbjeglištvu 1941–1943*, p. 174, Document 58.
78 *Ibid.*, p. 406, Document 215.
79 *Ibid.*, pp. 412–413, Document 217.
80 *Ibid.*, p. 415, Document 218; JONČIĆ, D. – PIJEVAC, K. (ed.): *Zapisnici sa sednica Ministarskog saveta Kraljevine Jugoslavije 1941–1945*, p. 169, Document 87; PETRANOVIĆ, B.:

There might have been ethnic disputes and animosity behind the conflicts between different government ministers (to be specific, Ninčić was a Serb, Krnjević was a Croat, and Krek was a Slovenian), but disputes might also have arisen from bad interpersonal relations between ministers of the same ethnic descent (e.g. Ninčić and Banjanin, Gavrilović and Milan Grol,[81] but also other cabinet ministers). Foreign Minister Ninčić naturally was not happy with the criticism and tried to counter his colleagues in a similar way by using the position of the Czechoslovak exile as an argument in his defence early in November 1942. According to Ninčić, the Czechoslovak exile representation at the beginning of its operation in London had had a position as privileged as the Yugoslav one,[82] and thus, in his opinion, any comparison of the positions of the two exile governments (and hence probably also references to positions of Czechoslovak exile politicians in critical remarks addressed to the Yugoslav Foreign Minister) was pointless. It is true that disputes within the Yugoslav exile government about its international policy were by no means over, but it is remarkable that its members were using the Czechoslovak example to achieve their own political goals.

Reflected in mutual contacts of leading Czechoslovak and Yugoslav politicians were also their opinions on future war developments, positions of the Czechoslovak and Yugoslav exiles, and relations of the restored countries of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia to allied powers. Both exile representations were striving for support and assistance of Great Britain, but they adopted different attitudes to cooperation with the Soviet Union. Edvard Beneš was prepared to negotiate with Stalin, and finally signed a treaty of alliance with him in December 1943,[83] while Yugoslav exile politicians were a very long way from tangible cooperation with the Soviet Union, their mutual diplomatic contacts notwithstanding. The reasons included not only the negative attitude of the Yugoslav government to communism, but also the negative stance of Moscow towards activities of the Chetnik movement on Yugoslav territory, as its leader Dragoljub Mihailović, who was the Minister of Army, Navy and Aviation in the government of Slobodan Jovanović (and later also in subsequent governments until June 1944) was commanding his followers in the fight against Yugoslav communists and Tito's guerillas.

Odnosi jugoslovenske i čehoslovačke vlade u emigraciji 1941–1945 godine, p. 51.

81   See KRIZMAN, B. (ed.): *Jugoslavenske vlade u izbjegliŠtvu 1941–1943*, p. 470, Document 232; JOVANOVIĆ, Slobodan: *Zapisi o problemima i ljudima 1941–1944* [Records about problems and people, 1941–1944]. London, Udruženje srpskih pisaca i umetnika u inostranstvu 1976, p. 78.

82   See KRIZMAN, B. (ed.): *Jugoslavenske vlade u izbjegliŠtvu 1941–1943*, p. 458, Document 231.

83   See NĚMEČEK, Jan: Československá vláda, prezident a československo-sovětská smlouva z r. 1943 [Czechoslovak government, president and Czechoslovak-Soviet Treaty 1943]. In: IDEM (ed.): *Československo-sovětská smlouva 1943* [Czechoslovak-Soviet Treaty 1943]. Praha, Historický ústav 2014, p. 34.

Conclusion

Both exile governments undoubtedly wished an early end of the war and a return to their homelands and, to a lesser or greater extent, also to the political arrangement that they had been forced to leave behind. During one of his meetings with young King Petar II, which the Yugoslav ruler did not attach any date to in his diary, but which probably took place in the autumn of 1941,[84] the Czechoslovak president looked very optimistic. He was even sure that the Yugoslav king would be back in Belgrade in a few months' time.[85] Later, in April 1942, when Petar II met with Beneš again during a visit to the Czechoslovak Brigade in Leamington and reminded him of his optimistic words, he was given a similar answer: "Well, if not this year, then the next one."[86]

The difficult situation in the early stage of the Second World War had a great impact on activities of the exile representations of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. Even subsequent war developments, particularly in Yugoslavia, were not contributing to an improvement of Czechoslovak-Yugoslav exile relations and did not motivate any of the parties to cooperate more closely. The later move of the Yugoslav government (at that time under Prime Minister Božidar Purić) from London to Cairo in September 1943, which was expected to ensure a higher level of independence of the Yugoslav exile representation on Great Britain (especially since Tito's guerillas started dominating Yugoslav territory and replaced the Chetniks as the most important partner of the Allies), did not help much. While Beneš in early April 1941 correctly assumed that Yugoslav and Czechoslovak policies would draw closer to each other when the Yugoslav government would be "somewhere in Crete" (i.e. in exile), his very optimistic "prophecy" about the early return of King Petar II to Yugoslavia remained unfulfilled. The end of the war brought very different fates for Czechoslovak and Yugoslav politicians. Only Beneš's government returned home from London as a successful exile representation (although, as February 1948 showed, the success was only temporary). For most Yugoslav politicians – except for a few individuals (including Dušan Simović) who came from Great Britain to a new, socialist Yugoslavia where they kept away from political life after 1945 – the exile became their home forever.

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84   Petar II mentioned in his memoirs that his meeting with Beneš had taken place on a weekend of the first semester of his studies at Cambridge University (see KARAĐORĐEVIĆ, P.: *Moj život / A King's Heritage*, p. 128).

85   *Ibid.*, p. 134.

86   *Ibid.*

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Translated by Jiří Mareš

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Abstract

In his partly comparative study, the author focuses on a specific chapter in Czechoslovak-Yugoslav relations in the 20th century, namely contacts of the exile governments of both countries after their occupation by the German army in March 1939 (remnants of Czechoslovakia) and April 1941 (Yugoslavia). Supported by document from Prague's and Belgrade's archives, he recalls circumstances of the German occupation of Yugoslavia and compares the formation of the Czechoslovak and Yugoslav political representations in exile, the different ways they took to London, the problems they encountered during early years in exile, and their positions in London's exile community. The study shows how the restoration of mutual relations between the two representations was burdened by historical animosities, although Belgrade and Prague had been allies since 1919, both being members of the Little Entente; President Edvard Beneš (1884–1948), in particular, was long reproaching Yugoslav politicians for abandoning Czechoslovakia at the time of the Munich crisis in the autumn of 1938. However, some Yugoslav representatives, on the other hand, disliked the fact that the Czechoslovak government had not supported them in the conflict with Italy in 1926 and during the establishment of the king's dictatorship three years later. Mutual relations of leading Czechoslovak and Yugoslav politicians in exile were also reflecting their respective opinions on further war developments and on relations of restored Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia to allied powers. Both exile governments were striving for help and support of Great Britain; however, they assumed, for a variety of reasons, different attitudes to cooperation with the Soviet Union. Although the relations were gradually improving, especially since 1943, when the Yugoslav government declared that it did not acknowledge the Munich Agreement, their courses drifted apart while both were still in exile, and only Czechoslovak exile representatives returned home as winners, while their Yugoslav counterparts in London had to "beat a retreat", yielding to Tito's Communists, and most of them stayed in exile.

Keywords
Czechoslovakia; Yugoslavia; World War II; exile

Possibilities of Research into the Catholic Church in the Czech Lands in the Early Stage of the Communist Dictatorship

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Research into the Roman Catholic Church during the period of communist dictatorship in the Czech Lands has come a long way since 1989, and it already includes a considerable amount of works. However, what is problematic about this research is its closed nature. Works on Catholicism are mostly adopted by the Catholics themselves, not by the broader historical community. Yet, in my view, more intensive communication between researchers focused on the Roman Catholic Church and those focused on postwar history in general would be beneficial to both sides.

   In the following text, I briefly chart the current situation of Czech research into Catholicism from the point of view of conceptualization. Following this, I try to propose a possible way of broadening the examined phenomenon in the early stage of the communist dictatorship (1948–1956). I focus on the preceding period of the so-called Third Czechoslovak Republic (1945–1948) and use it as an inspiration for the concepts of legitimacy and hegemony.

State of Research

A considerable number on partial studies on the Roman Catholic Church during the communist dictatorship exists today. However, there are essentially three

contemporary authors who sought to approach the topic in a more synthetic way and contributed fundamentally to the conceptualization of the Roman Catholic Church history in the period 1945–1956, namely Václav Vaško, Jiří Hanuš and Zdeněk Demel.[1]

The works of the three authors share several similarities, both in terms of methodology and interpretation.[2] These are principally monolithic conceptions of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSČ) and the Roman Catholic Church, as well as an inspiration by or similarity with the concept of totalitarianism and the perception of the (Catholic) Church as an adversary of the Communist Party. This may raise questions as to the sources and literature the authors used. And this is where a certain distinctiveness of the studies focused on the Roman Catholic Church is most evident. We may observe a certain hermetic nature of the bibliographic references, perhaps stemming from the fact that some authors see church history as an independent field of study, at the crossroads of theology and history, and distinguish between "secular" and "ecclesiastical" historians.[3] The consequence of this is, among other things, that despite some efforts, the themes related to the Catholic Church are not reflected by the broader historical community, and the other way round, other works on the communist dictatorship are not reflected to a greater extent in the publications on the Catholic Church. There is one important exception, and this is the texts of historian Karel Kaplan.

Karel Kaplan is one of the most prolific Czech historians dealing with communism and one of the founders of the study of Czech contemporary history in general.[4] In his bibliography amounting to dozens of works,[5] he also focused on the Roman

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1   I am referring principally to the following texts: VAŠKO, Václav: *Dům na skále*, Vol. 1: Církev zkoušená [House on a rock, Vol. 1: The church tested]. Kostelní Vydří, Karmelitánské nakladatelství 2004; BALÍK, Stanislav – HANUŠ, Jiří: *Katolická církev v Československu 1945–1989* [The Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia 1945–1989]. Brno, Centrum pro studium demokracie a kultury 2013; DEMEL, Zdeněk: *Pod dohledem církevních tajemníků* [Under the supervision of church secretaries]. Brno, Centrum pro studium demokracie a kultury 2008. This selection does lay claims to be complete, but even if it did, it would not be much longer. Among the synthetizing works, only Jaroslav Cuhra's study "KSČ, stát a římskokatolická církev (1948–1989)" [The KSČ, the state and the Roman Catholic Church (1948–1989)], published some years ago in *Soudobé dějiny* (Vol. 8, Nos. 2–3 (2001), pp. 267–293), would be added to the list.
2   I develop a more detailed argumentation on this in my thesis *Komunisté, katolíci a výuka náboženství* [Communists, Catholics and religion teaching], defended at the Institute of Czech History of the Faculty of Arts, Charles University in 2018, pp. 13–19.
3   See HANUŠ, Jiří: Úvodem [Introduction]. In: IDEM (ed.): *Eseje o povaze církevní historiografie* [Essays on the nature of church historiography]. Brno, Centrum pro studium demokracie a kultury 2012, p. 7.
4   TŮMA, Oldřich: Doyen of Czech Contemporary History, Karel Kaplan. In: *Czech Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. VII. (2019), pp. 162–165.
5   ŠTĚPÁNKOVÁ, Eva: Bibliografie Karla Kaplana [Karel Kaplan's bibliography]. In: *Soudobé dějiny*, Vol. 25., Nos. 3–4 (2018), pp. 615–655.

Catholic Church.[6] This author is still widely read by the broader historical community and is of vital importance for the previously mentioned researchers into the Catholic Church.

Although Václav Vaško does not explicitly draw on Kaplan's work, for example, in the first part of his trilogy *Dům na skále* [House on a rock], which deals with the post-1948 events, the work of Karel Kaplan makes up 68 percent of the bibliographic references.[7] We do not find as many references to Kaplan in Hanuš's and Balík's book on the Catholic Church in postwar and communist Czechoslovakia, but these authors explicitly subscribe to him and name his publication *Stát a církev v Československu v letech 1948–1953* [The state and church in Czechoslovakia 1948–1953] as a key thematic work.[8] Zdeněk Demel also refers to Kaplan in his analysis of the sources used,[9] and this influence is clearly noticeable in his description of the "ecclesiastic and political situation."[10] I therefore consider it worthwhile to focus on Kaplan's study *Stát a církev v Československu v letech 1948–1953* in the following part of the text, both in terms of its content and its methodology. I also aim to map out the role it plays in historical research of the Roman Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia during the communist period.

Karel Kaplan's Role in Church Historiography

Kaplan's work mentioned above is the first comprehensive analysis on this issue in Czech historiography published after 1989. As the title indicates, it documents the relationship between the Catholic Church and the KSČ principally in the sphere of political history. The author structures the analyzed period into three parts reflecting his interpretation of the Communist Party's approach towards the Catholic Church: 1945–1948, 1948–1953 and 1953–1956.

Kaplan describes the years 1945–1948 as a period of mutual respect between both actors and points to the predominantly favourable conditions for church activities. The Church emerged with moral capital from the Second World War, but it had to cope with several problems. These included mainly its complicated position in Slovakia, disputes over church schools,[11] church property and the loss of its of-

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6   See, for example: KAPLAN, Karel: *Stát a církev v Československu v letech 1948–1953* [The state and church in Czechoslovakia in 1948–1953]. Brno, Doplněk 1993; IDEM: Church and State in Czechoslovakia from 1948 to 1956. In: *Religion in Communist Lands*. Vol. 14–16, Nos. 1–3, pp. 59–72, 180–193, 273–282; IDEM: *Staat und Kirche in der Tschechoslowakei: Die kommunistische Kirchenpolitik in den Jahren 1948–1952*. München, Oldenbourg, 1990.
7   This concerns pages 85–191 (134 references to Kaplan).
8   BALÍK, S. – HANUŠ, J.: *Katolická církev v Československu 1945–1989*, p. 6.
9   DEMEL, Z.: *Pod dohledem církevních tajemníků*, p. 7.
10 On pages 15–91, dealing with the period 1945–1956, there are 71 references to Kaplan's texts, principally to the book *Stát a církev v Československu v letech 1948–1953* (that is almost 29 percent of all bibliographic references).
11 See CIGÁNEK, Radim: *Politický zápas o jednotnou státní školu* [A political struggle over a unified state school system]. Praha, Karolinum 2009.

ficial political representation.[12] According to Kaplan, the Communist Party did its best to maintain good relationships with the Catholic Church in political practice and to avoid problems, mainly because of a pragmatic need to broaden its own electoral base.[13]

The period of 1948–1953, which forms the core of the book, was characterized, according to Kaplan, by a "power-political struggle" between the Communist Party and the Catholic Church. The author points to the efforts of the Communist Party to fully subdue the Church (as one of the last autonomous bodies in the country) and to neutralize Vatican's influence over it. This struggle left the Church, which had no chance of succeeding in it, "mutilated" and "paralyzed."[14] The author defined the last period of 1953–1956 as "a struggle over believers." He puts emphasis on the speech of the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the KSČ, Antonín Novotný, delivered in December 1953, which reflected a shift in the attitude of the Communist Party leadership from the concentrated struggle against the "Vatican" to an overall anti-religious strategy.[15] Kaplan concluded his exposition with the claim that while the hardline policy of the KSČ in 1948–1950 led to severe restrictions of the Catholic Church, it also unintentionally provided the Church with moral-political authority, which helped it to maintain its influence in the subsequent period.[16]

Kaplan's expositions always draw on some particular source material, which, with the aim of learning about the history as objectively as possible, barely needs any interpretation and speaks volumes itself. His style of work could thus be summarized in one sentence: "how it really was."[17] The author sees the Communist Party, with some exceptions,[18] as a homogenous institution. When writing about the KSČ, he almost always means only the highest leadership and the Communist Party's apparatus. The author's perception of the Catholic Church is equally undifferentiated – he only takes into account its hierarchy. Kaplan probably proceeds in this manner because he draws mainly on the sources from the KSČ power centre. The interpretation is thus essentially bipolar, close to the totalitarian perspective. However, this is implied in Kaplan's work rather than stated clearly, and the author does not explicitly subscribe to it.[19]

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12   See KAPLAN, K.: *Stát a církev v Československu v letech 1948–1953,* pp. 11–14.

13   *Ibid.*, p. 19.

14   *Ibid.*, p. 182.

15   *Ibid.*, p. 172.

16   *Ibid.*, p. 184.

17   On Kaplan's approach, see SOMMER, Vítězslav: Kronikář komunistického Československa: Karel Kaplan a studium soudobých dějin [A chronicler of communist Czechoslovakia: Karel Kaplan and the study of contemporary history]. In: *Soudobé dějiny*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (2008), pp. 341–356.

18   See, for example, KAPLAN, K.: *Stát a církev v Československu v letech 1948–1953*, p. 19.

19   On this, see PULLMANN, Michal: Diktatura, konsenzus a společenská změna: K výkladu komunistické diktatury v českých akademických diskuzích po roce 1989 [Dictatorship, consensus and social change: On the interpretation of the communist dictatorship in the Czech academic circles after 1989]. In: STORCHOVÁ, Lucie – HORSKÝ, Jan et al.: *Paralely, průsečíky, mimoběžky: Teorie, koncepty a pojmy v české a světové historiografii 20. století*

It is evident that the publication *Stát a církev v Československu v letech 1948–1953* serves as a noticeable inspiration to all the authors mentioned above to a greater extent than contemporary historical production. Although they do not adopt all the theses of the book (especially Kaplan's interpretation of the period 1945–1948 is quite peculiar), they agree with it in terms of its conceptual aspects, in particular the totalitarian manner of narration, where two competing subjects stand against each other, the different periods of this conflict and a limited conception of the Communist Party. Yet, the mentioned authors do not subject Kaplan's influence to criticism, even though many of his assumptions and conclusions have been, to say the least, under discussion in the last two decades.[20]

This inevitably leads to a situation when different methodological impulses or conceptualizations of the communist dictatorship, which open up new questions, enter the field of Roman Catholic Church history in the analyzed period only slowly and rather incidentally. As a result, the abovementioned works have principally two thematic directions: the first maps the restrictions of the Catholic Church on the political level, the second focuses on the analysis of repressions. This is legitimate, of course, but excessive thematic and conceptual reliance on Karel Kaplan is rather limiting for the research.

Therefore I would consider it beneficial for further research to verify some of Kaplan's established interpretational models, which are often automatically adopted with regard to this issue. Moreover, it would be useful to expand on the discrepancies between Kaplan's interpretation and current research, which the previously mentioned authors only hinted at in their work.

At this point I would like to mention one example of Kaplan's rather extreme interpretation. In one of his central theses, he claims that the Catholic Church was the biggest power-political adversary of the KSČ in the struggle to control society.[21] The state, or rather the KSČ, is seen as being in binary opposition to the Church. However, from my perspective, a problem arises of how to classify people in the grey area between communism and Catholicism. Vaško, Hanuš and Demel simply call the clergy representatives who cooperated with the KSČ "collaborators." They pay

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[Parallels, intersections, skew lines: Theories, concepts and terms in Czech and world historiography of the 20th century]. Ústí nad Labem, Albis international 2009, pp. 231–246.

20   General discussions on totalitarianism or more specifically on Kaplan's milestone year 1953 in the church policy of the state were challenged by Ondřej Matějka (see MATĚJKA, Ondřej: "Správný komunista má také býti správným křesťanem, jako byli křesťané první": Vztah československých evangelíků ke Komunistické straně Československa 1921–1970 ["A true communist should also be a true Christian, as was the case of the first Christians": The relation of Czechoslovak evangelicals to the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia 1921–1970]. In: KALOUS, Jan – KOCIAN, Jiří (ed.): Český a slovenský komunismus (1921–2011) [Czech and Slovak communism (1921–2011)]. Praha, Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR – Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů 2012, pp. 284–296, here p. 284).

21   Compare MATĚJKA, Ondřej: "Jsou to berani, ale můžeme je využít": Čeští evangelíci a komunistický režim 1948–1956 ["They are as obstinate as mules, but we can use them": Czech evangelicals and the communist regime 1948–1956]. In: *Soudobé dějiny*, Vol. 14, Nos. 2–3 (2007), pp. 305–340, here p. 305.

no attention to other believers, which is, to a great extent, a simplification. Kaplan adopted his thesis from the sources of the power centre, which testify to how the given issue was interpreted at the highest level, but not necessarily in everyday practice. Even if we admit that society saw the communist interpretations as real, and this had the effect of them becoming real, it does not explain why almost two-thirds (63.9 percent) of KSČ members claimed to be Roman Catholics in 1953.[22]

Whether the methodologies and ways of conceptualization are reflected or not, they lead to a certain pre-understanding which subsequently determines the choice of themes, the way the questions are asked and the selection of sources. This does not mean that the conclusions of the mentioned works on the Roman Catholic Church would be predetermined. However, a lack of reflection on this process may result in the conducted historical research having less relevance.[23] In the synthetic works mentioned above, this problem translates into a certain repetitiveness of approaches and interpretational models, based on the nearly unshakeable position of Kaplan's texts.

Unlike Kaplan, Václav Vaško, Jiří Hanuš with Stanislav Balík, and Zdeněk Demel all agree on the importance of the period of the so-called Third Republic for the situation of the Roman Catholic Church during the communist dictatorship. Vaško characterizes this period as a "maturing of communist totality,"[24] Hanuš with Balík as "pre-totality"[25] and Demel also observes tendencies towards a totalitarian regime in this period.[26] Without necessarily adopting the specific interpretations of these authors, I find their conviction of the importance of this period inspiring. In order to explain the situation of the Catholic Church in the early stage of the communist dictatorship, it is in my view necessary to enquire as to the nature of the power of the KSČ and its incapacity or reluctance to destroy this institution. One of the possible ways is to examine the legitimacy of the KSČ at the time, the basis of which had been laid precisely in the period 1945–1948.

In the following part of the text, I propose an alternative conceptualization, which could, in my opinion, broaden the scope of the studied phenomena and open up space for a more pluralist interpretation. It should be realized that the approach chosen in the texts mentioned above (like any other approach) uncovers part of

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22 See MATĚJKA, O.: "Správný komunista má také býti správným křesťanem, jako byli křesťané první," p. 284.

23 On the need of an explicit theory in historiography, see HORSKÝ, Jan: *Dějepisectví mezi vědou a vyprávěním* [Historiography between science and narration]. Praha, Argo 2009.

24 VAŠKO, V.: *Dům na skále*, Vol. 1, p. 12.

25 BALÍK, Stanislav: Tři roky svobody? Pretotalitní režim v Československu v letech 1945–1948 [Three years of freedom? The pre-totalitarian regime in Czechoslovakia in 1945–1948]. In: *Rexter*, No. 0 (2002), pp. 1–20; IDEM: Totalitní a autoritativní režimy [Totalitarian and authoritarian regimes]. In: *Sborník prací Filozofické fakulty brněnské university: Řada historická* [Collection of works of the Faculty of Arts, Brno University: Historical series], No. 54. Brno, Masarykova univerzita v Brně 2008, pp. 41–52.

26 DEMEL, Z.: *Pod dohledem církevních tajemníků*, p. 15.

the researched past, but also conceals part of it.[27] For example, it does not give any satisfactory answer to the question of how the Roman Catholic Church could have existed and operated in a "totalitarian regime," in which the KSČ had absolute power and viewed religion in its ideological essence as an anachronism and merely an instrument to dominate the masses. Since I perceive this issue, despite its banality, as fundamental, the proposed conceptualization aims to abandon the established interpretational model of repression, without seeking to play down its legitimacy.

Following Zdeněk Demel's research of sources and the discrepancy between official church policy and local practice, as the author indicates between the lines,[28] I have chosen as a theoretical inspiration the concepts of *hegemony*, drawing on Antonio Gramsci, and *legitimacy*, drawing on the work of Max Weber, which I think are more suitable to capture this dynamic situation. Naturally, even this will not make it possible to capture the studied phenomena entirely – this will never be possible. I hope, however, this will help to point to connections that may contribute to research into the early stage of the communist dictatorship in Czechoslovakia. This approach therefore has no intention of covering all aspects of the interaction between the Roman Catholic Church and the KSČ in Czechoslovakia during the researched period. It is merely another proposal of how to capture, at least partially, the past and the irretrievably lost reality.

Possibilities of a New Conceptualization

I start from the assumption that Czechoslovakia after 1948 was "a participatory dictatorship" that worked, among other things, thanks to the mass participation of its population.[29] This means that the communist rule, just like any other rule, could not rely in the long run only on the fear of violence, but had a certain legitimacy (if we accept Max Weber's non-normative definition of the concept).[30] This legitimacy is not based on assessment, it is a recognition of legal authority and it determines the willingness of individuals to respect rules and participate in the life of a certain system. Even though the sources of legitimacy of the communist rules were diverse and transformed, there are at least two of them that can be highlighted in relation

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27 See, for example, FAPŠO, Marek: Číst Pekaře: Čtyři interpretační cesty k jednomu textu [Reading Pekař: Four ways of interpreting one text]. An MA thesis defended at the Institute of Czech History of the Faculty of Arts, Charles University in 2013.

28 In part of his work, the author focuses on the ways in which church secretaries limited the lives of Catholics (baptisms, confirmations, processions, etc.).

29 See SABROW, Martin: Socialismus jako myšlenkový svět: Komunistická diktatura v kulturně-historické perspektivě [Socialism as a Sinnwelt: Communist dictatorship from the perspective of cultural history]. In: *Soudobé dějiny*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (2012), pp. 196–208.

30 See WEBER, Max: *Metodologie, sociologie a politika* [Methodology, sociology and politics]. Ed. Miloš Havelka. Praha, OIKOYMENH 2009, pp. 161–168.

to the Catholic Church in postwar Czechoslovakia. These are the projects of the national state and the vision of social justice.[31]

The postwar era in Czechoslovakia – if we follow the terminology of Antonio Gramsci[32] – can be seen as a time of building *hegemony*. Gramsci departed from the purely materialistic conception of the superstructure as a reflection of the economic base and defended a thesis according to which an ideological superstructure is an effective reality, because only in it do people become aware of their status and goals. Therefore, a stable rule is not based only on a monopoly of violence, but also requires an ideological[33] conviction by the ruled (and the rulers), created through communication in the sphere of culture by means of symbols and various practices.[34] In his concept of hegemony, Gramsci substantially modified the previous use of this term in Marxist theory; for example, Lenin pointed to the leading role of the working class in a "democratic revolution" against absolutism. Gramsci broadened the concept of hegemony, as compared to its previous use, to a mechanism of the ruling of the bourgeoisie over the working class in a stabilized capitalist society.[35] This means that in order to seize power, it is not enough for the working class to suffer bad material conditions, but it must also achieve cultural hegemony over other classes. Culture, in this sense, means not just encyclopaedic knowledge of facts without context, but rather an instrument of self-discipline, a coming to terms with oneself and the realization of one's own historical value, rights and obligations.[36] The point therefore is to transform the ideological world of the actors so that they are willing to accept voluntarily their subordinate position and thereby confirm the ruling power. This may be done through physical repression, but also through cultural outputs which promote particular class or political ideas as universal. So in this context, culture is not something value-neutral, but a power-political issue.[37]

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31 This paragraph was inspired by Matěj Spurný's book *Most do budoucnosti* [Making the Most of tomorrow] (Praha, Univerzita Karlova – Karolinum 2016, pp. 49–57).

32 See MOUFFE, Chantal: *Hegemony and Ideology in Gramsci*. In: IDEM (ed.): *Gramsci and Marxist Theory*. London, Boston & Henley – Routledge & Kegan Paul 1979, pp. 168–204.

33 Ideology in this study does not mean an unchanging doctrine, but rather a new way of thinking rooted by means of texts, but acquiring diverse forms in practice (see SPURNÝ, M.: *Most do budoucnosti*, p. 54).

34 Compare BARŠA, Pavel – CÍSAŘ, Ondřej: *Levice v postrevoluční době* [The left in a post-revolutionary age]. Brno, Centrum pro studium demokracie a kultury 2004, pp. 26–30.

35 See ANDERSON, Perry: The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci. In: *New Left Review*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (1976), pp. 5–78, here pp. 15–20.

36 See GRAMSCI, Antonio: *Socialism and Culture*. In: FORGACS, David (ed.): *The Antonio Gramsci Reader*. New York, New York University Press 2000, pp. 56–59.

37 See RANDÁK, Jan: *V záři rudého kalicha: Politika dějin a husitská tradice v Československu 1948–1956* [In the glow of the red chalice: Politics of history and the Hussite tradition in Czechoslovakia 1948–1956]. Praha, Nakladatelství Lidové noviny – Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Karlovy 2015, p. 308.

Mainly the period 1945–1948 can be termed, from the perspective of the KSČ, an *expansive hegemony*.[38] The class that wants to become hegemonic must actively forge a direct consensus, which also means adopting and representing the interests of other groups of the population. According to Gramsci, hegemony involves the creation of a certain synthesis where the governing class is able to articulate the interests of the majority as a collective or national will. It is therefore a transformation of a previous ideological space and the creation of a new vision of the world, which will subsequently serve to link the entire society. This does not mean abandoning completely the previous vision, but its foundations are simplified and in the end rearticulated into a new system. In other words, hegemony is successful when the ruling class appears to represent the universal interests of society.[39]

The broad popular support for the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in the elections of 1948 did not appear suddenly, but was already built up successfully during the war and after 1945. An important starting point was that its organizational network did not cease to exist during the occupation and that Communist Party members participated widely in the resistance movement. According to a later reconstruction, as of 5 May 1945, the KSČ had 247,325 members in the Czech Lands, of which only 28,000 were members of the Communist Party before the war. By the end of October of the same year, the number had already increased to 784,000. At the time of the first postwar elections – at the end of May 1946 – 19.8 percent of the Communist Party voters in the Czech Lands were its members (numbering 1,158,193) and the Communist Party obtained 40.3 percent of all votes there. This led its representatives to believe that they could win an absolute majority in the subsequent elections, and by the end of February 1948 the Communist Party already counted 1,400,000 members. Mass recruitment was stopped only at the end of 1948 with a total number of 2,332,084 members.[40] In order to understand the position of the Catholic Church in the researched period, we need to focus on this unprecedented growth of the KSČ. I also believe that approaching the postwar period and the relationship between the Communist Party and the Catholic Church in a different way than a struggle between democracy and totality can be valuable for further research.

If we now try to capture the period after 1945 more precisely, using the conceptualization proposed above, we can say that the KSČ presented itself successfully as a representative and guarantor of the interests of the entire society. Yet, if we follow the line of research of German historian Christiane Brenner, the Communist

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38 For more on the term "expansive hegemony," see MOUFFE, Ch.: Hegemony and Ideology in Gramsci, p. 182.

39 *Ibid.*, pp. 181–194.

40 I am drawing here on data from an article written by Jiří Maňák "Proměna dělnické strany v organizaci moci" [Transformation of a workers' party into an organization of power] (in the collection: KÁRNÍK, Zdeněk – KOPEČEK, Michal (ed.): *Bolševismus, komunismus a radikální socialismus v Československu* [Bolshevism, communism and radical socialism in Czechoslovakia], Vol. 1. Praha, Ústav soudobých dějin AV ČR – Dokořán 2003, pp. 157–199).

Party did not have any all-encompassing project for the future after 1945, leading necessarily to dictatorship. Its concepts developed gradually and were flexible in response to the circumstances.[41] In our context, this means that the KSČ did not have any single strategy for its approach to the Roman Catholic Church, and likewise, that the Roman Catholic Church was not unified on the issue of communism. Since society as a whole was generally presented as homogenous and closed by its spokesmen at that time,[42] at least on a discourse level it was of secondary concern whether a person was a Catholic, a communist or both at the same time. The Catholic Church, as an integral part of the then society, significantly helped to create this environment, influenced by the primary emphasis on unity, and participated in it. This can also be inferred from the very similar type of rhetoric used by both Catholic and communist press.

Already in the "Manifest katolického duchovenstva" [Manifesto of the Catholic clergy], composed by priests who returned from concentration camps, and published in the daily *Lidová demokracie*[43] on 2 June 1945, we can observe similar motives dominating the public discourse of the time.[44] It shows an emphasis on the nation and the state, on social reform and the building of a new community, not with reference to the First Republic, but in cooperation with "the brotherly east." The clarion call for unity, heard also from Catholic circles, often invoked the argument that the Catholic clergy were always patriotic and served the people,[45] or its historical role: "Just like a hundred and fifty years ago, during the national revival, the priest selflessly and heroically gave everything to what he was called to do by the voice of the same blood and of his vocation, so he also offers his greatest strengths and abilities to his nation today."[46]

The KSČ and the Catholic Church also overlapped in the project of a national state free of ethnic minorities. Despite some warnings from Catholic circles against violent excesses during the expulsion of the German population,[47] the idea itself was not questioned: "Thanks to local revolutionary workers and the Red Army, the Czechoslovak Republic was restored as an independent state of Czechs and Slovaks,

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41   BRENNER, Christiane: *Mezi Východem a Západem: České politické diskurzy 1945–1948* [Between the East and the West: Czech political discourses 1945–1948]. Praha, Argo 2015, p. 347.

42   *Ibid.*, p. 341.

43   This periodical was a daily of the Czechoslovak People's Party.

44   BENEŠ, Josef; BERAN, Josef; CAJS, Jan: Manifest katolického duchovenstva [Manifesto of the Catholic clergy]. In: *Lidová demokracie*, (2 June 1945), p. 3.

45   See LUDVÍK, František: České katolické kněžstvo s národem a lidem v boji, utrpení a práci pro lepší zítřek [Czech Catholic clergy with the nation and people in the struggle, suffering and work for a better tomorrow]. Praha, Arcidiecésní pastorační ústředí 1946, p. 5.

46   BENEŠ, Josef; BERAN, Josef; CAJS, Jan: Manifest katolického duchovenstva, p. 3.

47   Compare, for example, Společný pastýřský list episkopátu republiky o současných nejnaléhavějších otázkách československých katolíků – listopad 1945 [A joint pastoral letter of the republic's episcopacy on the most pressing issues of Czechoslovak Catholics]. In: *Pastýřské listy 1945–2000*. Kostelní Vydří, Karmelitánské nakladatelství 2003, pp. 13–17, here p. 15.

with no space for members of other nationalities, in particular members of the German nation, from whose ranks there was always a threat to the Czech nation."[48]

Similarly, one can focus on communist speeches aimed at the Roman Catholic Church representatives. On 15 November 1945, the communist Minister of Education and Public Awareness, Zdeněk Nejedlý, visited a big meeting of priests from Bohemia and Moravia, as (in his own words) the first relevant departmental minister since 1918.[49] In a speech delivered in front of more than 380 representatives of the Catholic clergy, he acknowledged the positive role of the clergy in national life and expressed admiration for the behaviour of the priests under the occupation. However, like the Catholic representatives, he put most emphasis on the need for unity: "We are building our state in a different way today. We are building a popular national state. We communists stand by this! This is also how I view the issue of the clergy. All of us – even though we may hold different points of view – must be linked together by the unity of the nation."[50]

We may still observe continued efforts to reach consensus, mainly on the part of the KSČ, during the May 1948 elections. That can, at least, be assumed from the electoral campaign aimed at the Catholics. A brief campaign booklet entitled "Why do Catholic believers vote for the National Front?" emphasized that, apart from the often repeated merits of the Catholic clergy during the Nazi occupation, "the road towards socialism" was completely in line with their teachings: "What implications does this have for Czech Catholics? Nothing less than the fact that our path towards socialism is acceptable for Catholics, even that by following the path of socialism, they follow in the steps of their Divine Master."[51]

A pre-electoral poster of the Communist Party of the time aimed at the Catholics gives the same impression. It read: "Reactionaries are left with the last weapon – malicious defamation! In order to confuse our religious people and divert them from the path they are led on by the Communist Party, they spread Hitler's old lie that communists are the arch-enemies of religion and the church." The communists subscribe here to the principle of freedom of conscience and religion, which they say they consider a private issue, and give the assurance that the ideals of Christian togetherness and love for one's neighbour are not in contradiction with their programme. However, the strongest theme is again national unity: believers "know that without the heroic struggle of the Soviet Union and without the sacrifice

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48 *Život církevní u nás za války a po převratu* [Church life in our country during the war and after the coup]. In: Časopis katolického duchovenstva, Vol. 85, No. 4 (1945), pp. 187–192, here p. 190.

49 In allusion to the complicated relationship between the leaders of the Catholic Church and the leaders of the interwar Czechoslovak state (1918–1938).

50 Cited from the transcription of Zdeněk Nejedlý's speech, delivered at the extraordinary working meeting of the Catholic clergy of Bohemia and Moravia, 15 November 1945. In: LUDVÍK, F.: České katolické kněžstvo s národem a lidem v boji, utrpení a práci pro lepší zítřek, pp. 50–54, here p. 51.

51 *Proč volí věřící katolík Národní frontu?* [Why do Catholic believers vote for the National Front?]. Praha, Ústřední akční výbor Národní fronty 1948, p. 5.

communists made on the altar of the nation, Czech language would no longer be heard in churches."[52]

These efforts to reach consensus and avoid major conflicts continued throughout the period of 1945–1948. This was also apparent from certain conflict situations between the Catholic Church and the Communist Party. One such was the controversy related to the law on the modification of the right to official holidays (No. 248/1946 Col.), under which people could be called to work for economic reasons on any holiday, with the exception of Christmas, the New Year and All Saints.[53] Both sides to the dispute based their arguments not on the freedom of religion or existing laws, but on the unity of the nation and work performance. In simple terms, the communists claimed that work on Sundays was occasionally necessary, or else it would be prejudicial to the nation. From the Catholic point of view, people had go to mass on Sundays, otherwise it would have a negative effect on national unity.[54] According to Archbishop Josef Beran, it was through faith that work performance could be improved: "Do not force people to work if in their conscience they feel obliged to respect Sundays and holidays. Where God blesses, there is prosperity. […] Work, yes work, and again work, purposeful and relentless work, let that be our programme."[55]

Press polemics between the communists and the Catholics in the "Third Czechoslovak Republic" (1945–1948) did not really result in any major escalation. For example, on the one hand, the Jesuit and chief editor of the Catholic magazine *Katolík*, Adolf Kajpr,[56] responded disapprovingly to the words of Catholic priest Černocký, published in the communist daily newspaper *Rudé právo*,[57] that communists would build the kingdom of God on earth. On the other hand, he also agreed with them with regard to certain issues: "We are sincerely in favour of nationalizing big enterprises, because this acknowledges the human dignity of employees, as well as

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52 Cited from: KOURA, Petr et al.: *Diktatura versus naděje: Pronásledování římskokatolické církve v Československu v letech 1948–1989* [Dictatorship vs. hope: Persecution of the Roman Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia in 1948–1989]. Ed. Vladimíra Vaníčková. Praha, Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů 2014, p. 17.

53 See VAŠKO, Václav: *Neumlčená: Kronika katolické církve v Československu po druhé světové válce* [Unsilenced: Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia after the Second World War], Vol. 1. Praha, Zvon 1990, p. 120.

54 Václav Urban wrote this in the article "Národní směna a dobré sousedství v národě" [National shift and good neighbourliness in the nation] in the weekly *Katolík*, 26 October 1947 (see VAŠKO, V.: *Neumlčená*, Vol. 1, p. 121).

55 BERAN, Josef: První pastýřský list J. Ex. nejdůstojnějšího pána Th. Dr. Josefa Berana, arcibiskupa pražského a primase českého – prosinec 1946 [First pastoral letter of his most reverend excellency, Th. Dr. Josef Beran, the Archbishop of Prague and Czech primate]. In: *Pastýřské listy 1945–2000*, pp. 27–33, here p. 29.

56 On Kajpr see NOVOTNÝ, Vojtěch: *Maximální křesťanství: Adolf Kajpr SJ a list Katolík* [Ultimate Christianism: Adolf Kajpr SJ and the Catholic journal]. Praha, Karolinum 2012.

57 KAJPR, Adolf: Komunismus a království Boží [Communism and the Kingdom of God]. In: IDEM: *Svědectví doby* [Testimony of the period]. Praha, Česká křesťanská akademie 1993, p. 39.

the directives of our papal encyclicals."[58] Even Kajpr thought that everybody was "in the same boat."[59] Similarly, Zdeněk Nejedlý also did not perceive religion as an *a priori* enemy: "Even our Communist Party, in its programme adopted at the Communist Party congress in 1946, does not in principle reject those who base their communism on Christian faith, because that does not threaten us in any way," he wrote in 1949.[60] He was also willing to recognize the positive role the principles of early Christianity, which was according to him based principally on undermining unjust class hierarchy, played in history. At the same time, he tried to convince his readers that the Christian idea (which he interpreted principally socially, and not metaphysically) has found its more perfect expression in Marxism.[61]

Kajpr accorded to communism, as did Nejedlý to religion, a certain *ad hoc* positive role. But this did not mean reconciliation for the future. Nejedlý believed that religion would perish, because it would no longer be needed in society. According to Kajpr, communism could truly cooperate with Christianity only if it forced itself and adopted faith in Christ, thereby, however, ceasing to be communism.

After the Second World War, the Communist Party tried to represent the entire society by placing itself successfully in a position of a guarantor of generally accepted opinions and values. As I have already noted, there were disputes between representatives of the Catholic Church and the Communist Party in this period. But on the level of discourse that helps to shape everyday practice, these disagreements did not seem insuperable.

However, after 1948 the situation changed. With reference to Richard Madsen, we can state that Communist Parties in Eastern Europe, along the lines of the Soviet Union, formed an apparatus which, in parallel with social transformation, would gradually create conditions under which religion would completely lose its significance.[62] Yet nobody assumed that it would happen overnight. Therefore, the ruling parties in the new communist countries sought to limit the influence of the Church primarily by dominating its organizational structures. The Soviet model of this practice, which ideally consisted of six points, was adopted, in some way, by all countries of the Socialist Bloc. It aimed to: 1) proclaim freedom of religion in the constitution, 2) nationalize church property, 3) remove church leaders, 4) create pro-state clergy and use smaller religious organizations to eliminate the dominant organization, 5) appoint new leadership of the dominant church, and 6) control smaller religious organizations.[63]

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58 IDEM: Já pán ty pán [We are all lords here]. In: *Ibid.*, p. 78.
59 IDEM: Budování socialismu [The building of socialism]. In: *Ibid.*, p. 77.
60 NEJEDLÝ, Zdeněk: *Slovo o náboženství* [A word about religion]. Praha, Melantrich 1949, p. 24.
61 *Ibid.*, p. 16.
62 MADSEN, Richard: Religion under Communism. In: SMITH, Stephen Anthony (ed.): *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Communism*. Oxford – New York, Oxford University Press 2014, pp. 585–601, here p. 585.
63 *Ibid.,* p. 587.

In the case of Czechoslovakia, this model was also applied, but it needs to be seen in a local context. After the so-called "Victorious February," communist leadership gradually redefined the "postwar," generally accepted consensus and formulated its own Marxist ideology more sharply (while continuing to use proven national argumentation when needed). In other words, on the one hand, the KSČ kept relying on the broad legitimacy and consensus of the period 1945–1948, which it could not simply abandon if it wanted to maintain its domination. On the other hand, it pushed through its own ideology within the communist doctrine, which was then to become a universal force holding society together. In my opinion, precisely these processes are fundamental to understanding the early stage of communist dictatorship.

In this "dialectic way," we can also view the vast majority of the disputes and processes of the Communist Party with the Catholics after 1948 and understand the duality of the discourse shaped by the official structures. While, according to the communist doctrine, religion was considered an anachronism, there were also attempts to use the Catholic Church structures, and not only with the intention of destroying it. One should also realize that the official attitude to the churches was not invariable in the analyzed period and that the vast majority of public attacks against the Catholic Church after 1948 were – at least on the level of discourse – led from nationalist ideological positions, and not from Marxist positions. In this regard, one can also point to the limits of the practice of restricting the Catholic Church, as was, for example, the case of the so-called Catholic Action,[64] when communist leadership sought to establish a national church independent of the Vatican. Only in 1952, and just very sporadically, texts criticizing religion based on a "scientific position"[65] started to appear as part of the media discourse, for example in the *Rudé právo* newspaper. However, after 1953 "the issue of religion" disappeared from the public space altogether, only to reappear temporarily in 1958–1959.[66]

Conclusion

In this text, I tried to point out the pitfalls of an excessive adoption of Karel Kaplan's interpretation models, which inevitably leads to a focus on a limited range of issues, such as the repressions by the communist regime. However, this approach, albeit legitimate, conceals many other questions that a historian may raise. If we draw only on the assumption that the KSČ adopted Marx's thesis on religion as an ideology giving people a false sense of equality[67] and Lenin's aim to make society

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64 See, for example, VAŠKO, V.: *Dům na skále*, Vol. 1, pp. 152–155.
65 See NEŠPOR, Zdeněk R.: Ideologické nástroje ateizace české společnosti v letech 1948–1989 [Ideological instruments of Czech society's atheization in 1948–1989]. In: *Církevní dějiny*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (2008), pp. 36–63, p. 47.
66 *Ibid.*, p. 42.
67 See PETRUSEK, Milan et al.: *Dějiny sociologie* [The history of sociology]. Praha, Grada 2011, p. 37.

completely atheistic,[68] we have to conclude that the communists wanted to destroy the Church. Nevertheless, it is clear that these ideals and claims to power, even if the Communist Party did embrace them, could not be transferred in their entirety to the state apparatus and organizational system.[69]

In the period 1945–1948, a certain consensus existed between the Roman Catholic Church and the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. Both sides sought to negotiate mutual compromises, and this did not end abruptly in February 1948. However, it is still open to question what claims the KSČ representatives had against the Catholic Church and how these claims evolved. I believe that looking at these efforts of the Communist Party through a prism of the hegemony concept and a constant struggle for its own legitimacy would give us a better understanding of the dynamic situation which arose between the Catholics and the communists. This conceptual framework, as has been indicated here, opens up a whole sphere of new issues and themes which may allow us a better understanding of both the situation of the Roman Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia at the time and the early stage of the emerging dictatorship – and ultimately integrate "writing on Catholicism" as a theme into a broader community of historians.

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<div align="right">Translated by Blanka Medková</div>

Abstract
In the author´s opinion, research projects dealing with the Catholic Church in the Czech Lands since the instalment of the Communist regime in 1948 are somewhat closed in that there is very little communication between "ecclesiastic" and "non-ecclesiastic" historians. The article aims to describe causes of the situation and propose a way in which research into the history of the Catholic Church in the period referred to above could be included in broader discussions about the nature of the Communist dictatorship. The author opines that one of the reasons of the introversion is an intensive overreliance on works of the historian Karel Kaplan, which turns the attention of researchers away from topics not directly related to the repression of the Catholic Church

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68   See LENIN, Vladimir Iljič: *O náboženství* [On religion]. Praha, Státní nakladatelství politické literatury 1954, p. 15.
69   Compare HEUMOS, Peter: *"Vyhrňme si rukávy, než se kola zastaví!"* Dělníci a státní socialismus v Československu, 1945–1968 ["Let us roll up our sleeves before the wheels stop turning!" Workers and state socialism in Czechoslovakia]. Praha, Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR 2006, p. 20.

and its representatives. In addition, the author questions the stereotypical presentation of the Communist Party and the Catholic Church in post-war Czechoslovakia as two irreconcilable opponents, mentioning their overall consensus and important contact points during the so-called Third Republic (1945–1948), using the example of the Communist historian and politician Zdeněk Nejedlý (1878–1962) and the Catholic author Adolf Kajpr (1902–1959), and also certain intersections of the Communist and the Catholic identities since 1948. The study outlines a possibility to capture the issue using a prism of concepts of legitimacy and hegemony based on the situation prevailing during the existence of the Third Republic, and thus open the research to new questions.

Street Politics

Student Demonstrations in Prague in the 1960s
and the Disintegration of the ČSM University Structures

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On the last evening of October 1967, a spontaneous student demonstration in re-action to poor conditions at the Strahov hall of residence in Prague was violently dispersed. This incident, later referred to as the "Strahov events," caused a massive outcry, not only among Prague students. It is often regarded as the herald of the Prague Spring.[1] By the end of the same year, the students were already massively opposed to the Czechoslovak Union of Youth (*Československý svaz mládeže*, ČSM) and demanded the establishment of independent student structures. This essay aims to provide a response to the question: Why did a seemingly insignificant event, like the electricity blackout at the student hall of residence, lead to the disintegration of the ČSM university structures?

In order to understand the events that followed the police intervention, it is important to trace the grammar of the social conflict that evolved over several years and culminated after the Strahov events. This essay analyzes this social conflict on two levels. Firstly, it is an analysis of *the origin and formation of the social movement*,

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1   The Strahov events are also reconstructed in the works of Jaroslav Pažout. See PAŽOUT, Ja-roslav: "Chceme světlo, chceme studovat!" Demonstrace studentů z vysokoškolských kolejí v Praze na Strahově 31. října 1967 ["We want light, we want to study!" Demonstrations of students from the Strahov hall of residence in Prague on 31 October 1967]. In: *Paměť a dějiny*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (2008), pp. 4–13.

inspired by those social scientists who work with the experience of *disrespect*. With this in mind, the following analysis focuses on how the idea of establishing an independent student organization, which was to resolve long-term feelings of injustice towards and disrespect of students as a specific social class, gradually gained ground among Czechoslovak students. Secondly, it is an analysis of the so-called *street politics*, i.e. an analysis of street interactions in which students participated in the 1960s. This is crucial, because it was only after a powerful experience like the violent street interaction with police during the Strahov events that a minority of students succeeded in convincing others of the need to establish an independent student organization.

Social movement is followed in this analysis through the lens of French sociologist Alain Touraine. Touraine did not interpret social movement as groups struggling for power, but rather as cultural currents. These currents compete for control over "historicity" and therefore advance their own cultural models into social practice.[2] One of the most important aspects of social movement is the mobilization of as many people as possible to engage in a collective action to achieve the established goal.

In his iconic work on the making of the English working class, British historian Edward P. Thompson examined the process of shaping a new moral codex in the workers' environment.[3] Thompson pointed out that what the actors (workers) perceived as exploitation and oppression often occurred in the pre-political sphere. This was often caused by an invalidation of the existing customs, through which the actors showed each other sufficient respect, and this represented a potential source of protest actions.[4] Thompson's theory was further developed by American sociologist Barrington Moore, who introduced the concept of an implicit social contract. Based on his research into the issue of workers in 1848–1920, Moore showed that the development of (workers') activism resulted from the capacity of the actors (workers) to identify suffering as a socially relevant reality that can be uprooted.[5] The breach of moral rules or disruption of social relations aroused moral indignation, which, under favourable circumstances, could lead to the articulation of criticism or protest.[6] An implicit social contract therefore represents a certain

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2   Compare ŠLOUF, Jakub: *Spřízněni měnou: Genealogie plzeňské revolty 1. června 1953* [Bound by currency: A genealogy of the Pilsen revolt of 1 June 1953]. Praha, Univerzita Karlova v Praze, Filozofická fakulta 2016, p. 27; ZNEBEJÁNEK, František: *Sociální hnutí* [Social movement]. Praha, Sociologické nakladatelství 1997, pp. 41–56; TOURAINE, Alain: *The Voice and the Eye: An Analysis of Social Movements*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1981.

3   THOMPSON, Edward P.: *The Making of the English Working Class*. New York, Victor Gollancz Ltd. 1963.

4   See PULLMANN, Michal: Historický rozměr uznání [The historical dimension of recognition]. In: HRUBEC, Marek a kol.: *Etika sociálních konfliktů: Axel Honneth a kritická teorie uznání* [The ethics of social conflicts: Axel Honneth and the critical theory of recognition]. Praha, Filosofia 2012, p. 28.

5   See MOORE, Barrington: *Ungerechtigkeit: Die sozialen Ursachen von Unterordnung und Widerstand*. Frankfurt/M., Suhrkamp 1982.

6   See PULLMANN, M.: Historický rozměr uznání, p. 33.

value consensus, which determines the conditions for mutual recognition. These freely organized rules are in a process of constant negotiation. In their everyday practice, the actors thus test the limits of possible actions and discover the limits of acceptable behaviour. The moment one of the parts breaks the rules of the contract, the other part is entitled to refuse to honour its obligations.[7] However, Moore also pointed out that the radical workers often embraced was not an automatic response to oppression, but one which drew on a construct of intellectuals. This construct becomes attractive when the idea of justice is in conflict with the lived reality.[8] On the other hand, moral indignation can be attenuated or redirected and does not necessarily lead to protest action.

German philosopher Axel Honneth seeks to capture the moral grammar of social conflicts through historical analysis of recognition patterns. In his key work, entitled *The Struggle for Recognition*, he developed Jürgen Habermas's concept of communicative action, which is possible only if all the parties involved in the communication mutually recognize the subjects' identities.[9] When this recognition is challenged, people may behave subversively. According to Honneth's moral grammar of social conflicts, the origin of social movement is thus closely related to the experience of disrespect.[10]

The intervention of the security forces during the Strahov events was a key moment in the completion of the student social movement, because the participants of the protest perceived it, for several reasons, as a breach of an unwritten contract. In order to understand why this happened in relation to the Strahov protest, and not, for example, in reaction to the so-called "Petřín events," the "street politics" in the 1960s also need to be examined.

The concept of *Strassenpolitik* of German historian Thomas Lindenberger partially draws on the "foucauldian" concept of disciplining society through institutions, which set the boundaries of social norms through discourse. Street is understood here as one of these institutions, where interaction between the actors (protesters) and the riot police leads to creating norms, that is, awareness of how one can behave on the street in a certain period of time. Through individual interactions, the protesters are, on the one hand, being disciplined, and on the other, learn how to behave in public space so that their voice can be heard.[11] Lindenberger's

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7 See IDEM: Sociální hnutí jako problém soudobé historické vědy v kontextu sociálních věd: Příspěvek k interdisciplinárnímu přístupu [Social movement as a problem of contemporary history in the context of social sciences: A contribution to the interdisciplinary approach]. In: KÁRNÍK, Zdeněk – KOPEČEK, Michal (ed.): *Bolševismus, komunismus a radikální socialismus v* Československu, Vol. 1 [Bolshevism, communism and radical socialism in Czechoslovakia]. Praha, Dokořán 2003, p. 277.

8 See PULLMANN, M.: Historický rozměr uznání, p. 28.

9 HONNETH, Axel: *Kampf um Anerkennung*. Frankfurt/M., Suhrkamp 1998.

10 See PULLMANN, M.: Sociální hnutí jako problém soudobé historické vědy v kontextu sociálních věd, p. 277.

11 See LINDENBERGER, Thomas: *Strassenpolitik: Zur Sozialgeschichte der öffentlichen Ordnung in Berlin 1900 bis 1914*. Bonn, J. J. W. Dietz Nachfolger 1995.

observations regarding the riot police are also thought-provoking. In all types of states, they are assigned one specific task: to maintain peace and order on the streets of the towns and to supervise their "correct" use. Although this "correct" use develops in the interaction between actors on the street, some of its features are always preserved, such as the need for smooth traffic flow, supplies and order.[12] It shows that riot police, essentially a political subject, often pursue non-political, or pre-political interests.

Lindenberger's approach thus does not focus only on how each party approaches "the public space" and what functions it expects of it, but it also allows the analysis of the process of social learning by the various actors and groups entering into street interaction. Every street interaction produces a certain experience in the participants that may in the future determine (both consciously and unconsciously) the strategies, behaviour and symbolism with which individual actors enter into any future protest.

The process of social learning also inevitably affects the power and security forces. But direct repression does not have to be the only strategy they adopt; it may also be a prevention of potential street conflicts.[13]

This essay analyzes the sources of student discontent in Czechoslovakia in the 1960s, as well as expectations regarding their role in society. It also describes the development of the social movement (originally very weak), which projected the redress of felt injustice onto an intellectual construct of *independent student structures*. Apart from the development of the social movement, this work also focuses on "street politics": on how individual street events formed the idea of the correct use of public space and how the fragile *unwritten contract* between the students, security forces and functionaries of the Czechoslovak Union of Youth and the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia fell apart at the end of 1967.

"Policy of Trust" Towards Students

In 1960, one phase of building socialism symbolically came to its end. From the perspective of the governing ideology, after having eliminated private farmers, society was formed only of classes whose interests were not antagonistic.[14] Class struggle, which was typical of the late 1940s and 1950s, was to be replaced by a united and cooperative society. The first article of the first chapter of the newly adopted constitution was to attest to this situation: "The Czechoslovak Socialist Republic is a socialist state based on a firm alliance of workers, peasants and the intelligentsia, headed by the working class."[15] Rapid development of socialism required the participation of large sections of workers, who were expected to engage in broad

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12   *Ibid.*, p. 14.
13   On the issue of prevention see, for example, *Ibid.*, p. 393; ŠLOUF, J.: *Spřízněni měnou*.
14   Compare JIČÍNSKÝ, Zdeněk: *Právní myšlení v šedesátých letech a za normalizace* [Legal thought in the 1960s and during the "normalization" period]. Praha, Prospektrum 1992, p. 15.
15   *Ústava Československé socialistické republiky* [Constitution of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic]. Praha, Mladá fronta 1960, p. 19.

political and social activity. This activity was to be supported by establishing new institutional forms of workers' participation in the administration of the state.[16]

The constitution itself was also meant to symbolically announce a certain distance from the reprisals of the past decade. It was also to guarantee, to some extent, that the citizens could – under certain circumstances and provided they did not stray from the socialist social-political system – resort to criticism and invoke constitutional provisions as a legal base.[17] The text of the constitution also focused on social rights,[18] corresponding thus with the overall political orientation in the 1960s, which aimed to increase the Czechoslovak population's standard of living.[19] This trend also became evident in the higher education policy, which placed a new emphasis on, among other things, improving material conditions of students.

In the 1960s, faith in scientific progress was becoming increasingly dominant, accompanying the tendency to employ expert knowledge in both the administration of the state and the production process. Greater emphasis on science was also a specific reaction to the traumatic experience of the Stalinist era, which caused, in the socialist countries of Central Europe, among other things, a collapse of the existing autonomous systems of research and higher education.[20] Already at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Nikita Khrushchev not only denounced the so-called cult of personality, but also announced the advent of an optimistic mythology of technological progress.[21] This process, at that time referred to as a scientific and technological revolution, was theoretically developed, probably in the greatest detail, by an expert team led by Radovan Richta in a publication entitled *Civilizace na rozcestí* [Civilization at the crossroads]. In Richta's work, science became a separate productive force: "This specific civilizational, cognitive function makes science a real, independent productive force of human life, a producer of human development. In the current production revolution – together with the advancing collectivization of production – science penetrates the entire production process, grows along with it and gradually turns into the most revolutionary and universal productive force of society."[22]

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16 See KALINOVÁ, Lenka: *Společenské proměny v* čase *socialistického experimentu: K sociálním dějinám v letech 1945–1969* [Social changes in the time of the socialist experiment: Social history in the years 1945–1969]. Praha, Academia 2007, p. 245.

17 See JIČÍNSKÝ, Z.: *Právní myšlení v* šedesátých *letech a za normalizace*, p. 32.

18 *Ibid.*, p. 18.

19 KALINOVÁ, L.: *Společenské proměny v čase socialistického experimentu*, p. 245.

20 See KOLÁŘ, Pavel: Pražské jaro jako průsečík evropských duchovních dějin aneb Budoucnost mezi Richtou a Grausem [Prague Spring as an intersection of European intellectual history or Future between Richta and Graus]. In: KOLÁŘ, Pavel – PULLMANN, Michal: *Co byla normalizace? Studie o pozdním socialismu* [What was normalization? Essays on late socialism]. Praha, Nakladatelství Lidové noviny – Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů 2017, p. 147.

21 *Ibid.*, p. 148.

22 RICHTA, Radovan et al.: *Civilizace na rozcestí: Společenské a lidské souvislosti vědeckotechnické revoluce* [Civilization at the crossroads: Social and human implications of the scientific and technological revolution]. Praha, Svoboda 1966, p. 125.

Together with this trend, there was a greater need for qualitative and quantitative involvement of the intelligentsia in the productive process, which was in line with demographic changes. As a result of the postwar boom, the youth formed a high proportion of the economically active population in the early 1960s.[23] In 1961, people aged 15–39 made up 34.6 percent of the population; in 1970 the figure had already reached 36.5 percent.[24] While fewer than 62,000 people had university education in 1950, the number increased to more than 156,000 by 1961.[25] However, out of the economically active population, only 2.6 percent had university education in 1960.[26] Because of the increasing need for active intelligentsia to participate in the administration of the state, the Ministry of Education and Culture, together with the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, anticipated an increase in the number of students at universities in the 1960s, and the development corresponded to this. In the academic year 1960/1961, 79,332 people studied at 50 universities in Czechoslovakia; in the academic year 1968/1969, there were already 137,654 students studying at 35 universities.[27] In the proposal of the long-term plan for the development of higher education of September 1962, the Ministry of Education and Culture envisaged some 300,000 to 330,000 students studying at universities in 1980.[28]

This transformed the leadership's overall approach towards the students in the 1960s. The first change was a decreasing emphasis on class origin during the universities' admission procedure. This shift was later enshrined in the new law on higher education of 1966: "The applicants are accepted to full-time study at universities with regard to their individual capabilities, natural abilities and interests, and in line with the needs of society."[29] In general, the increase in the number and significance of students led the Communist Party and governmental authorities to fully revise their approach to this social group. In the early 1960s, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and the Ministry of Education and Culture thus faced two problems: firstly, how to politically activate students, who became less and less interested in ČSM membership, and secondly, how to prevent losing the ideological influence over the growing mass of students. The result was the so-called *policy of trust*, characterized by an effort to increase

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23 See KALINOVÁ, L.: *Společenské proměny v* čase *socialistického experimentu*, p. 285.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 286.

25 *Ibid.*, p. 229.

26 *Ibid.*, pp. 229 and 285.

27 See PAŽOUT, Jaroslav: *Mocným navzdory: Studentské hnutí v šedesátých letech v Československu* [Despite the powerful: The student movement in Czechoslovakia in the 1960s]. Praha, Prostor 2008, p. 80.

28 *Národní archiv* [The National Archive of the Czech Republic], Praha (hereinafter *NA*), fond [fund – f.] 994/0/4 (Ministerstvo školství a kultury 1945–1967) [Ministry of Education and Culture 1945–1967], číslo kolegia [number of collegium] 34, Proposal of a long-term plan for higher education, 13 September 1962.

29 Zákony pro lidi.cz [online]. AION CS s.r.o. 2010–2019. [Collection of laws of the Czech Republic (Year 1966), Act No. 19/1966 Sb. on Higher Education, section 9, subsection 9]. [Quoted 2019-06-12.] Available at: https://www.zakonyprolidi.cz/cs/1966-19.

students' participation in the life of universities and grant them a higher degree of autonomy, together with a higher degree of responsibility. This was intended to reverse the decreasing popularity of ČSM as well as increase students' involvement in the problems of both the faculties and society. ČSM was supposed to be a guarantee of maintaining ideological influence.[30] The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia also decided to support this political strategy institutionally, by founding University Committees of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (*Vysokoškolské výbory KSČ*) in Prague, Brno and Bratislava, and later by establishing University District Committees of ČSM (*Vysokoškolské obvodní výbory ČSM*, VOV ČSM) in individual university towns.[31]

At the founding conference of the University Committees of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on 3 November 1963, the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, Jiří Hendrych, provided a telling characterization of the "policy of trust": "We also have to take into account, to a greater extent than hitherto, the needs of the working-class youth at universities. I believe, it must be evident that the major point of the newly established university committees is that we turn our attention to students. That is the primary goal of university committees today – a deliberate effort to ensure that students are better, more timely and more consistently informed about the internal and international problems faced by the Communist Party, that they become increasingly involved in solving the problems of universities, and that they become more closely tied to the life of the Communist Party and the people, especially to production and public activity."[32]

Newly built university structures of ČSM were to become a platform where students could champion their own interests. In general, the ČSM university organizations were to have three major functions:

1. to promote, through their activities and by using suitable means and methods, the interests of the Communist Party and society towards its membership and all students;
2. to develop leisure activities for students in line with the interests of society;
3. to defend the legitimate interests of students vis-à-vis society.[33]

Improving students' material conditions was a central part of the higher education policy. Universities faced a host of problems. These included insufficient school capacities and outdated technical school equipment, as well as a lack of textbooks

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30 *Archiv hlavního města Prahy* [Archives of the Capital City of Prague] (hereinafter *AMP*), f. Komunistická strana Československa – Vysokoškolský výbor Praha (KSČ – VV Praha) [Communist Party of Czechoslovakia – University Committee Prague], signatura [Ref. No.] 1499, inventární číslo [Inv. No.] 1034, Documents of the founding conference of the University Committees, 3 November 1963.

31 See PAŽOUT, J.: *Mocným navzdory*, p. 81.

32 *AMP*, f. KSČ – VV Praha [Communist Party of Czechoslovakia – University Committee Prague], Ref. No. 1499, Inv. No. 1034, Minutes of the founding conference of the University Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in Prague, held on 3 November 1963.

33 *Ibid.*

and their poor quality.[34] Some of the biggest problems were the lack of places in the student halls of residence and their unsatisfactory facilities. School managements and Communist Party functionaries often declared that it was desirable to improve study conditions and appealed to students to point out the deficiencies and become involved in remedying them. These possibilities were to be mediated to students by the ČSM members, as was mentioned in the declaration of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in December 1965: "The basic organization of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (ZO KSČ) needs to pay more attention in its work to the problems of student life and ČSM organization. It must start from the principle that the problems of students need to be resolved not for them and without them, but together with them. Create conditions so that students can participate in the different areas of the work and life of the school."[35]

The efforts to improve students' material conditions in the 1960s also included the construction of various university buildings in Prague, in particular campuses for the Czech University of Life Sciences, for the Czech Technical University, and for the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics at Charles University, the building for the Faculty of Paediatrics at Charles University, and finally also the Strahov and Větrník student halls of residence.[36]

The Birth of the Idea of Student Independence

A generational factor played an important role in the thoughts and attitudes of students and the youth in Czechoslovakia in the 1960s. The generation coming of age did not suffer from the economic crisis of the 1930s nor the Munich trauma.[37] Many of them had not experienced the Second World War and had not been involved in the early phase of building socialism. State socialism was the only political system this generation knew from their own experience. This determined two aspects of university students, among other things. The young generation was to a great extent critical, and university students were explicitly expected to be critical. However, students nearly always made their criticism from socialist positions. The ČSM faculty committees at the individual universities were to be the

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34 *NA*, f. 1261/1/8 (Ideologická komise ÚV KSČ 1958–1968) [Ideological Commission of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia 1958–1968], archivní jednotka (archival unit – AU) 39, bod 3 (item), Brief evaluation of the founding conferences of university districts in Prague, Brno and Bratislava, 20 November 1963.

35 *Ibid*, f. 1261/0/43 (Komunistická strana Československa – Ústřední výbor, Kancelář 1. tajemníka ÚV KSČ Antonína Novotného 1951–1967 – 1. část) [Communist Party of Czechoslovakia – Central Committee, Office of the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, Antonín Novotný, 1951–1967 – part 1], AU 280, Draft resolution on the situation at universities, 8 December 1965.

36 See ŠEVČÍK, Oldřich: *Architektura 60. let: "Zlatá šedesátá léta" v české architektuře 20. století* [Architecture of the 1960s: "The golden 1960s" in Czech architecture of the 20th century]. Praha, Grada 2009, p. 76.

37 See KALINOVÁ, L.: *Společenské proměny v* čase *socialistického experimentu*, p. 285.

main platforms for the articulation of critical opinions. We may distinguish three areas of student criticism:

1. *Material:* Students most often criticized the lack of capacity of the lecture rooms and student halls of residence, as well as the low wages of graduates, insufficient possibilities of employment, etc.[38]

2. *Leisure and cultural activities*: Apart from a high demand for foreign culture (literature, films, etc.), students complained about the lack of domestic leisure time platforms, the establishment of which was complicated by bureaucratic regulations. These were, for example, student clubs or interest groups under the umbrella of ČSM (literary, film, photographic, touristic). Students were also sensitive about various rigid university rules – such as halls of residence rules, which banned visits between girls and boys.[39]

3. *Institutional-political*: Only a minority of students resorted to a systemic criticism of university structures; however, they were also the most politically active ones. These students pointed to the existing gap between the ČSM and the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia leadership on the one hand, and the real life of students on the other, and also they criticized the centralized management of student organizations. They blamed the above-mentioned problems regarding material conditions and the lack of cultural activities on the ČSM leadership and structures, claiming that it did not provide opportunities to students to advance their interests. They saw a solution in the federalization of the ČSM and in the establishment of independent student structures not organized from above. The poor position of students in society was another subject of criticism. This trend was summarized, for example, in a document issued by the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in October 1965: "All the evidence to date shows that many students phrase their demands with regard to society as a whole and criticize bureaucracy, remnants of the cult of personality, especially in the area of thought and methods of work, the contradiction between words and deeds, the limiting of activity and initiative, and existing shortcomings in the management of national economy. When assessing the position of intelligentsia in our society, they often criticize cadre policy. It should be emphasized that despite some incorrect generalizations, this criticism has real grounds and in many cases is driven by a desire to avoid the repetition of past mistakes in the interest of the society."[40]

It was these smaller groups of students, referred to as Prague radicals, which were labelled from above as the opposition movement in the 1960s (and sometimes

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38 *NA*, f. 1261/0/43, AU 52, Inappropriate speeches delivered at meetings of some universities, 1965.

39 *Ibid.*, f. 1261/0/4 (Předsednictvo ÚV KSČ 1962–1966) [Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia 1962–1966], AU 124, item 5, Organization of the national conference of university students, 1 October 1965.

40 *Ibid.*

even referred to themselves in this way), even though they were the ones most often actively engaged in the ČSM structures, aiming at transforming and not necessarily destroying them.[41]

Among the most active propagators of an independent student movement was a student group organized around the magazine *Buchar* and led by Jiří Müller. In 1964, it dominated the ČSM Faculty Committee at the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, Czech Technical University, renaming it the Student Academic Council (*Studentská akademická rada* – STAR), with the main aim of achieving greater independence for students. However, over time, the idea about how problems should be solved gradually changed. Roughly between the years of 1964 and 1966, these students sought independence through a change in the ČSM structures. Their goals included transforming the union into a federation "organized according to social status, age groups, group interests, etc."[42] Later they abandoned the plan for federalization and began to seek full independence of student university organizations from ČSM.

Their strategy was based on entering structures of university organizations, through which they sought a greater influence for advancing their own interests. They wanted to bring different political issues into public space through so-called *ruchy*, that is, stirring events with a large audience.[43]

One of these "stirs" was planned by the representatives of the group for the first national conference of university students in Prague in December 1965, at which Jiří Müller called for broader political participation of students: "The ČSM is a political organization, but without any possibility of acting as such. The political nature of the union does not have to mean only subscribing to socialism and therefore to the political goals of the Communist Party. It must also be a platform truly reflecting as well as expressing the views of young people regarding the paths chosen by the Communist Party to reach these goals. If necessary, it must even act as an opponent of Communist Party politics. I suppose I need not emphasize that the word opponent is used here in the sympathetic and academic meaning."[44] Although the establishment of an independent student organization was not acceptable for Communist Party functionaries at the time, Müller did manage to attract attention, but not only among students and professors. His name also appeared on the State Security (*Státní bezpečnost* – StB) watch list.

What became a crucial moment in the push for student independence was the Strahov demonstration of October 1967 and its aftermath, but this will be discussed

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41   Compare PAŽOUT, J.: *Mocným navzdory*.

42   *Archiv bezpečnostních složek* [Security Services Archive, Prague], Praha (hereinafter *ABS*), f. A 34 (Správa kontrarozvědky) [Intelligence Department], Inv. No. 2504, Activities and aims of the Jiří Müller's group and its influence on the student movement in years 1964–1969, 6 February 1969.

43   *Ibid.*, f. A 7 (Sekretariát náměstka ministra vnitra plk. Jaroslava Klímy) [Secretariat of the Deputy Minister of Interior Col. Jaroslav Klíma], Inv. No. 582, Müller's "opposition group" among the university students in Prague, 30 May 1967.

44   Quoted from: PAŽOUT, J.: *Mocným navzdory*, p. 88.

below. The Strahov demonstration was not the first youth demonstration of this type in socialist Czechoslovakia. It was shaped by the lessons learnt by students in the 1960s, primarily during two recurring events – the Petřín events (1962–1967) and the *Majáles* parades (traditional student May celebrations) (1965 and 1966). Both these events gave the actors opportunities to learn how to behave in public space and which content to bring into it without repressions. However, the process of social learning involved not only students, but also the repressive police. With each street interaction, the police also developed its own strategy, learning how to intervene or when not to intervene.

The Petřín Events of 1962–1964

From the perspective of the then political authorities, the "Petřín events" epitomized so-called rowdiness in its collective form. According to the tenets of Marxism-Leninism, rowdiness (just like criminality in general) was rooted in the capitalist social-economic order and was therefore not to exist in socialist society any longer.[45] This optimism was also evident in the analyses of the StB, which had combatted the problem of rowdiness and hooliganism for years. In 1959, the analyses stated that "at present, there is no hooliganism in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic."[46] Nevertheless, not only the Petřín events showed that this was wishful thinking. So-called rowdy behaviour had not disappeared, and it threatened, to a great extent, the declared social peace of the 1960s.

The Petřín events followed the tradition of May Day youth gatherings at the statue of Czech poet Karel Hynek Mácha.[47] The disturbances of 1962 broke out in the morning hours of 1 May, when a crowd of young people, including students, in good spirits set out for a march from the Red Army Soldiers square (*náměstí Krásnoarmějců*, today Jan Palach square) to Petřín Gardens. On the way there, some of the participants stepped in the path of oncoming traffic, disconnected tram cars and removed plates with the tram numbers. The summoned units of the Public Security (*Veřejná bezpečnost*, VB) ordered the crowd to clear the road; they

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45   See KOTALÍK, Matěj: *Pojem chuligána a reflexe fenoménu chuligánství v* Československu *(1948–1969): Právo, policie a publicistika* [The concept of hooligan and the reflection on the hooliganism phenomenon in Czechoslovakia (1948–1969): Law, police and journalism]. Thesis defended at the Institute of Czech History of the Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague in 2010, p. 102.

46   *ABS*, f. H 1-4 (Vnitřní odbor Hlavní správy VB) [Internal Affairs Department of the Main *Public Security* Service Directorate], HS VB Praha, Inv. No. 407, Experience with dealing with the problem of hooliganism in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, 1959.

47   The Petřín events are reconstructed, for example, in the work of historian Petr Blažek (BLAŽEK, Petr: Akce "Mácha": Historická rekonstrukce petřínských událostí 1. května 1962 [Historical reconstruction of the Petřín events of 1 May 1962]. In: PETRÁŠ, Jiří – SVOBODA, Libor (ed.): *Československo v letech 1954–1962* [Czechoslovakia in the years 1954–1962]. České Budějovice – Praha, Jihočeské muzeum – Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů 2015, pp. 193–202).

reassembled again in Petřín Gardens. Great festivities started there, with several thousand people attending, playing musical instruments and drinking alcohol. During the day, more and more critical speeches and chanting of slogans could be heard from the crowd. These were focusing primarily on material assistance to Third World communist countries in contrast to poor material conditions in Czechoslovakia, such as: "Meat for Cuba, empty plates for us"; "We are stuck at Petřín, and the meat in China"; "No meat, no cumin, thank God we have Gagarin."[48]

The crowd was supervized by VB officers and the atmosphere between them and the young people gradually got tense. Soon, the first confrontations took place, culminating in a bigger police intervention against the youth with the aim of dispersing the crowd. Arrests were made following the intervention; this included the use of batons. Some of those present set off on a march towards the US embassy, but it was also violently dispersed by VB officers. In total, 109 people were arrested, among them 36 students from 15 universities.[49]

The Petřín events triggered a disciplinary campaign against rowdiness. Due to the presence of university students, it also affected universities. Twenty-seven students were expelled from university for their participation in the Petřín gathering, 10 of them were suspended for one or two years. The remaining participants were given reprimands or admonitions.[50]

The materials of the StB, the Communits Party and the university authorities, as well as the speeches of the students, clearly show how a special category of "rowdies" or "hooligans" gradually formed. But this category was incompatible with the category of students. It was implicitly expressed in the following report on criminality among the youth by StB members in 1963: "In the past two years, the pranks of Prague students by the K. H. Mácha statue at Petřín on the occasion of May Day celebrations attracted attention. In the light of the prank of 1962, even though it had been primarily stirred up by hooligans, numerous preventive educational measures were adopted in 1963, based on indications in April 1963 that some students were preparing its repetition."[51] Students organized under ČSM also tried to prevent students from being related to hooliganism. During the first two weeks of May, they loudly dissociated themselves from all the displays of rowdiness and approved the punishments for those who had participated in them.[52]

However, despite all the preventive measures, a similar scenario repeated itself in the subsequent years. In 1963, around 1,500 people gathered at Petřín. This

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48   *Ibid.*, p. 194.

49   *Ibid.*

50   *Ibid.*, p. 197.

51   *ABS*, f. A7, Inv. No. 89, Reports on the review of the work of State and Public Security in the field of criminal activity of youth (defective), 1963.

52   See, for example, *Libri prohibiti* (Praha), f. Československé studentské hnutí v šedesátých letech dvacátého století (sbírka Ivana Dejmala) [Czechoslovak student movement in the 1960s (collection of Ivan Dejmal)], Inv. No. 10, Report on the disciplinary proceedings at the University of Agriculture (VŠZ) in Prague, 12 May 1962.

time, action was taken against them not only by VB officers, but also by the *VB Auxiliary Guard*, as well as by ČSM functionaries. In all, 35 people were arrested.[53]

A year later, there were again more disturbances, and clashes between the young people and VB officers took place in the wider surroundings of Petřín Gardens. In the evening hours, a crowd of several hundred young people met at Újezd, planning to march in protest towards Prague Castle. At the end, it changed its course towards the National Theatre, from where it continued in the direction of Spálená street. On the way there, there was another VB intervention against the crowd. However, after 10 p.m. the crowd gathered again at Wenceslas Square, where more disturbances took place. During this time, the young people whistled, "threatened the public order" and verbally attacked VB officers. Brawls were ended only after the last police intervention at Wenceslas Square. In total, 85 people were arrested during the evening of 1 May 1964. Some of them were sentenced in July, and some even received prison sentences.[54]

Blanket police interventions against rioters proved to have little effect. Violent clashes with the police only encouraged further conflicts, and this applied to both sides. Even in the long-term, the efforts to prevent a recurrence of the incidents at Petřín Gardens proved unsuccessful. Communist Party authorities tried preventing them by organizing official 1 May programmes for young people in the Julius Fučík Park of Culture and Leisure (celebrated as early as 1963). The accompanying programme featured concerts of big beat bands.[55] In 1965, similar clashes were to be neutralized by organizing *Majáles* parades.

Majáles Festivities

In 1965, *Majáles* was celebrated in a number of Czechoslovak towns (Prague, Brno, Bratislava, Pardubice, České Budějovice, Hradec Králové and others). The permission to hold this festivity confirmed the established course of the "trust policy." It reflected the efforts to further activate students and increase their autonomy and responsibility, as was clearly stated in the proposal for celebrating *Majáles*, adopted by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in February 1965: "[…] we will have to underline that the Communist Party trusts students, capitalize on the big revolutionary traditions of our students as well as emphasize their great responsibility for not allowing hooligans or other elements to take advantage of their celebrations."[56]

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53 See BLAŽEK, P.: Akce "Mácha," p. 198.

54 *Ibid.*, p. 199.

55 *Ibid.*

56 *NA*, f. 1261/0/44 (Komunistická strana Československa – Ústřední výbor, Kancelář 1. tajemníka ÚV KSČ Antonína Novotného 1951–1967 – 2. část) [Communist Party of Czechoslovakia – Central Committee, Office of the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, Antonín Novotný 1951–1967 – part 2], AU 280, Proposal to organize student "*Majáles* 1965" in the capital city of Prague, 25 February 1965.

Nonetheless, the *Majáles* celebrations in Prague were meant to fulfil yet another role – to prevent clashes between young people and security forces at Petřín. This justification for retaking *Majáles* – celebrated for the last time in the streets of Prague in 1956 – was used not only by the functionaries, but also by students, who often dissociated themselves from the Petřín events and the efforts of being linked to them. This was also recognized by the Communist Party leadership: "Lately, the idea of celebrating *Majáles* has been widely discussed among Prague university students. Especially after the Petřín events in 1962 and the recurring disturbances of 1963–1964, students began to call for a bigger, positive event which would show the wider public that they had nothing to do with the earlier hooliganism, and that they knew how to enjoy themselves in a cheerful, witty and decent manner."[57] *Majáles* was to be a new legitimate form of a collective student manifestation, one that would make people forget the illegitimate Petřín disturbances. It was to culminate with an organized evening programme in the Julius Fučík Park of Culture and Leisure.

The Prague *Majáles* was preceded by extensive preparations by the security forces of the Ministry of Interior, which had been, to a great extent, influenced by the experience of the Petřín disturbances. Nevertheless, the attitude of the security forces towards the *Majáles* parade and the evening programme clearly reflected a change in their strategy and a gradual shift from extensive repressions and consequently violence. During the *Majáles* preparations, the organizers also showed concern about possible police interventions.[58] At the joint meetings of student organizers and the VB City Administration in Prague, it was agreed that the peaceful course of the parade would be ensured by the so-called student police, with a minimum number of uniformed police officers addressing only potential security risks.[59] The main strategy of the security forces was to make their visibility as low-key as possible, which meant replacing the majority of uniformed police officers with plain-clothes officers. In the case of any objectionable banners or slogans, the security forces were given orders not to intervene. If any action was to take on a "subversive" character, the plain-clothes officers were instructed to monitor who the instigators were and intervene against them later without the presence of many onlookers. A similar strategy was set up for the evening programme. VB officers were to resolve all problems primarily with the student organizers and intervene only in case of an emergency. As a precaution, plain-clothes officers were

57   *Ibid.*
58   *Libri prohibiti*, f. Československé studentské hnutí šedesátých let dvacátého století (sbírka Ivana Dejmala), Inv. No. 56, Position of the VOV ČSM in Prague on the course and organization of *Majáles* 65, June 1965.
59   *ABS*, f. A/9 (Sekretariát 1. náměstka ministra vnitra plk. Jana Záruby) [Secretariat of the First Deputy Minister of Interior, Col. Jan Záruba], Inv. No. 243, KS [krajská správa] MV [District Administration of the Ministry of Interior], Preliminary report on May Day celebrations and *Majáles*, 4 May 1965.

to monitor Petřín Gardens all day, record any potential hooligans and make any necessary arrests later, without drawing much attention.[60]

About 6,000 students took part in the Prague parade in May 1965 and more than 150,000 spectators watched the festivities. As was announced in advance, the parade was supervised by only 15 pairs of uniformed police officers, but also by approximately 150 plain-clothes officers. Order was controlled mainly by the "student police" from the ranks of the organizers, who were armed only with batons made of salami.[61] Even before the start of the parade, the student organizers ordered a group of approximately 50 people to leave, assessing them as hooligans, probably because they had been chanting anti-communist slogans.[62] Another conflict occurred later during the evening cultural programme. First, the big beat concert had to be moved to a bigger hall due to the great interest, and then, after another problem with the sound, there was a brawl between *Majáles* organizers and the young audience. The programme was thus terminated earlier, and guests were asked to leave with the assistance of the "student police." The fact that no further incidents occurred in these critical moments was later appreciated by the Presidium of the ČSM VOV in Prague: "We give credit mainly to the student police which managed, with extraordinary tact, but firmness, to resolve many difficult situations, winning respect and popularity among visitors."[63] Not even in this situation did the VB officers intervene. They merely supervised outside the hall, trying to prevent crowd crushes.

The carnival form of the *Majáles* parade not only tested how students may behave in public space. During *Majáles*, it also became clearer what can be said in public space. A certain amount of criticism was not only allowed during the festivity, but the participants were in fact encouraged to offer criticism. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia expected that students would comment slightly satirically on different phenomena. Although student criticism was to be primarily targeted at their own ranks or foreign affairs (mainly the war in Vietnam), they were also allowed "to criticize shortcomings, mainly at the universities, while underlining the pluses of our society."[64]

Despite some critical voices during the evaluation of *Majáles*, which deemed some of the student slogans politically incorrect, there was a general agreement that most of them were not objectionable at all.[65] Student criticism was thus, to

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60   *Ibid.*, Inv. No. 255, Plan of the VB City Administration and KS MV and the main principles of safety measures for the May Day celebrations in 1965, 16 April 1965.

61   See KUDRNA, Ladislav: Nepřizpůsobiví: Studenti, máničky a další pohledem československých mocenských orgánů [Maladjusted: Students, longhairs and others from the perspective of Czechoslovak power authorities]. In: *Paměť a dějiny*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (2011), pp. 3–16.

62   *ABS*, A/9, Inv. No. 243, Preliminary report on May Day celebrations and *Majáles*, 4 May 1965.

63   *NA*, f. 1261/0/44, AU 280, Proposal to organize student "*Majáles* 1965" in the capital city of Prague, 25 February 1965.

64   *Ibid.*

65   *ABS*, A/9, inv.no. 243, Preliminary report on May Day celebrations and *Majáles*, 4 May 1965.

a certain extent, legitimized from then on. There were positive reactions to the allegorical representations of individual study fields, such as ripped ropes symbolizing the shattered nerves of both future and present pedagogues.[66]

Slogans that criticized the poor conditions of student life were regarded as acceptable, such as: "If you wish to retire soon, then eat at the university dining hall." Slogans alluding to the security forces were received with less sympathy: "We say hello to the security, both the public and the secret one!"[67] School functionaries, the VB and the Communist Party leadership considered as unacceptable slogans regarding the Soviet Union, humanitarian assistance to non-European communist countries or the then official policy. However, not many of them were heard during the *Majáles* parade.[68]

In general, *Majáles* of 1965 was considered a success. The event confirmed that the trend of the "policy of trust" was viable and desirable. Students, school managements and even the security forces declared that the organization of *Majáles* improved relations between all actors. *Majáles* thus became a good illustrative example of student activation, which was to result in increasing ČSM's popularity. The security strategy of "invisible participation," passive approach and cooperation with student organizers were also considered a success.[69] The security officers themselves evaluated the event as a positive turn in relations with students.

The differentiation between "rowdies" on the one hand and "socialistically conscious" students on the other therefore became clearer during *Majáles*. What helped this was not only the absence of any conflict at Petřín, but also the dissociation of student organizers from minor excesses that occurred during the festivity. Even the conflict at the big beat concert was denounced by them as an incident provoked by young rowdies, and not students.

The new strategy of the security forces, employed during *Majáles* of 1965, also proved effective in the long-term, and gradually became the new norm. In fact, it led not only to a reduction in friction between young people and the security apparatus, but also reduced the students' social experience of extensive or blanket repression.

For organizational reasons, *Majáles* of 1966 was spread over two weeks and the parade itself was scheduled as late as 15 May to avoid clashes with the organization of the official May Day parade. Still, the organizers did not manage to avoid problems. Whereas the previous *Majáles* was, except for minor details, evaluated positively, this was not the case for *Majáles* in 1966. The Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia stated that, apart from certain positive effects, the organizers failed to "influence *Majáles* ideologically enough to prevent some anti-Communist-Party, anti-socialist and anti-Soviet displays by individual groups of students being brought to the fore [...] in this respect, *Majáles*

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66   Studentský *majáles* [Student *Majáles*]. In: *Rudé právo* (2 May 1965), p. 2.
67   *ABS*, A/9, Inv. No. 243, Preliminary report on May Day celebrations and *Majáles*, 4 May 1965.
68   *Ibid.*
69   *Ibid.*

of 1966 exceeded the character of a student festivity." Students, encouraged by the fact that their prankish criticism of the previous *Majáles* had not provoked repressive reaction, came up with some stronger slogans: "Apart from the vulgarity and tactlessness of politically incorrect and hostile slogans, especially chanted ones, the opinions ignored, ironized and undervalued the revolutionary history of the Communist Party, the workers' movement and the successes of the building of communism in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic." These negative displays culminated with anti-Soviet slogans.[70]

The content of slogans was evaluated primarily by the ideological committee of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. Just as during *Majáles* of 1965, the slogans that commented on the everyday problems of students or partly criticized their material resources and facilities were considered appropriate. However, according to the authorities, the students did not differentiate in their criticism between politically correct principles and their possible practical distortion (see slogan "New system of management – Old Czech Legends"). There was a negative reaction to slogans which alluded to StB activity at universities ("Read quickly, they are after us"). The slogans that were criticized the most were mainly "anti-Soviet," "anti-Communist-Party" or "maliciously cynical," such as ironical allusions to the failures of the fifth five-year plan ("Motto of the fourth five-year plan not even a potato to be wasted, motto of the fifth five-year plan not even a potato. Bye") or to the 13th Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia ("We say hello to the 13th Carnival").[71]

Despite some critical moments during the *Majáles* parade and festivity in 1966, the security forces did not intervene and left the supervision more or less to the "student police." Repression of "undesirable displays" came only in the subsequent days and was primarily taken up by the individual authorities of the faculties. Because the basis of the "policy of trust" (as all documents on the higher education of the period stated) was the higher responsibility of active individuals, the blame was laid primarily on the event organizers. That is why, for example, eight of the students of the Faculty of Arts received an official reprimand for mismanaged organization. The individual wrongdoers did not escape punishment either and received reprimands and admonitions. Several of them were even expelled from their studies.[72]

Both years of *Majáles* celebrations allowed students to experience a specific social interaction – a collective march under their own direction. Although mainly in the second year students crossed the tolerated line of criticism in public space, it became customary that no visible interventions were led against student events. Open police repression was replaced with academic sanctions imposed by universities.

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70   *NA*, f. 1261/0/16 (Sekretariát ÚV KSČ 1966–1971) [Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia 1966–1971], AU 2, Evaluation of *Majáles* 1966, 6 July 1966.

71   *Ibid.*

72   *Ibid.*

Experience with explicit violence by the security forces thus continued fading away from everyday student life. And in the end, even for the security forces, *Majáles* represented an important moment of social learning. The most important lesson learnt was that if student parades and gatherings were not to escalate into violent clashes, it was better not to intervene in them.

Petřín Events 1966–1967

In 1965, after three years, *Majáles* had helped to prevent clashes between the youth and the VB, but a year later, when the *Majáles* parade was rescheduled for 15 May, they broke out again. At around 9 p.m., a crowd of some 300 young people gathered at the statue of Karel Hynek Mácha. An hour later, the crowd began marching in the direction of the National Theatre, towards Wenceslas Square and then to Charles Bridge, chanting slogans against the Soviet Union ("Long live the Soviet Union, but of its own money!") or against the VB ("Policemen are not after us, we will find them ourselves!," "Gestapo!"). Despite the fact that during the march some individuals were involved in rowdiness, tearing down Soviet flags, even setting one on fire, holding up traffic and pulling down trams' trolley poles, VB officers stepped in only once to assist traffic flow on the bridge of 1 May (today's Bridge of Legions). The police intervention came only when the crowd reached Charles Bridge. The VB blocked the bridge and in a matter of minutes arrested 147 people.[73]

The experience of *Majáles* also influenced police strategy during the Petřín events. Whereas in the previous years, the VB had favoured the tactics of blanket intervention, after much debate it opted not to escalate the conflict in this case. The Petřín march was supervised by a large number of plain-clothes and uniformed officers, who were standing by in the adjacent streets. "After the experience of previous years, the VB opted for tactics of identifying the most active participants and preventing intervention against uninvolved people," stated the report on the investigation of those who had been arrested. VB officers therefore did not intervene at the National Theatre or on Wenceslas Square, "where rowdies began to chant slogans and attracted a considerable number of curious onlookers around them. Instead, through continuous monitoring, they identified the instigators."[74] The riot police were given orders to intervene only when the crowd arrived on Charles Bridge – that is, in a closed space, from where the protesters could not escape and where the intervention would not be witnessed by many people.

73　*ABS*, f. A/9, Inv. No. 355, Report on the state of investigation of the march of hooligans on 1 and 2 May 1966 in Prague, 9 May 1966.

74　*Ibid.*

May Day at Petřín in 1967 was much calmer. The attempt to march through the streets in the evening was prevented at the very beginning, and there were only a few verbal attacks against the Soviet Union, the communist regime and the VB.[75]

The Strahov Demonstration

Majáles of 1966 undermined the authorities' positively evolving relationship with the students. With the growing self-confidence of the politically active section of students, the demands for the establishment of an independent student organization also increased. It was not only the security forces that focused on the activity of the group around Jiří Müller, the most active group in promoting student self-governance. Jiří Müller had been re-elected to the VOV ČSM in Prague in November of the same year, and together with several friends in the so-called Committee 11, he prepared a draft proposal for the federalization of the ČSM. The proposal was swept aside by the ČSM Central Committee,[76] and a month later Jiří Müller was expelled from the ČSM for his activity (the official reason given was his visit to the Chinese embassy). The very next day he was also expelled from university, allegedly for failing to comply with his study obligations. A week later he was drafted into the army.[77] His friend and colleague Jiří Holeček, who took over his position and continued advocating the federalization of the ČSM, suffered the same fate in June 1967.[78]

Even though the ČSM leadership declared its trust in students and their activity, it also made it clear that criticism of democratic centralism principles was inadmissible. The idea of the ČSM federalization and independent student structures continued to spread among the students, but it remained mainly confined to the circle of "Prague radicals." This changed only after the Strahov demonstration.

Long-standing material problems at the Strahov hall of residence were the primary reason for the demonstration. Although newly constructed in 1964 and 1965, the student hall suffered numerous sanitary and technical problems from the very beginning. Disease spread in the student hall, often there was no hot water and due to repeated electricity blackouts there was no heat and light. This made studying in the evening hours impossible. In the first 20 days of October 1967, there were as many as 11 electricity blackouts in the evening hours.[79]

The protest was also stirred up by feelings of disrespect, repeated but unfulfilled promises to improve material facilities at the student hall and appeals to students to participate in the solution of the problems. In 1966 alone, student representatives

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75 *Ibid.*, Inv. No. 406, Information about the case of disturbances of 1 May 1967 in Prague 1, Petřín Gardens, 4 May 1965.

76 See PAŽOUT, J.: *Mocným navzdory*, p. 89.

77 *AMP*, f. KSČ – VV Praha, Ref. No. 1499, Inv. No. 517, Recent developments in the Prague student movement, 8 November 1967.

78 See PAŽOUT, J.: *Mocným navzdory*, p. 97.

79 *AMP*, f. KSČ – VV Praha, Ref. No. 1499, Inv. No. 517, Position of the Council of the Strahov Hall of Residence on the report of the Press Secretary of the government, December 1967.

wrote dozens of letters to responsible functionaries and held numerous meetings with them. However, there was no systematic resolution to their problems.[80]

The situation escalated on 31 October 1967, by coincidence the celebrations of the Great October Revolution were being held at Prague Castle at the same time. When there was another blackout in the evening hours, the representatives of the Strahov Student Hall Council, who would have probably have kept the passions under control, were at yet another meeting about the poor conditions at the student hall. However, dozens of outraged students, who gathered outside the hall with candles in their hands, did not suppress their moral emotions and incited other residents to march in protest.[81] Around 1,500 students then began marching towards the Seat of the Government in Lesser Town, chanting slogans like "We want light!," "We want to study!" The theme of this part of the protest was a focus on the demands to solve the problem of the material conditions, and there were no riots during it. At this stage, the participants acted within the framework of the adopted collective act of a protest march, avoiding any behaviour that could (in their experience) provoke police repression. The situation changed when the crowd reached Nerudova street and encountered a cordon of VB officers who had been ordered to prevent students from marching towards the city centre.[82]

At first, VB officers tried to resolve the situation verbally, offering to drive the protesters' representatives to the persons authorized to solve the situation. However, in the absence of megaphones, only the first rows of protesters heard the proposal. Other protesters continued to demand that they be allowed to resume the march. After the students either failed to hear or failed to obey the order to disperse the demonstration, the commanding officer gave the order to intervene against the march.[83]

The police intervention was extremely violent. The police used batons and tear gas to disperse the crowd, and they drove police cars into the first rows of protesters. Many students lying on the ground were also kicked and beaten with batons. Violence continued all the way as the crowd receded back to the Strahov hall of residence. The violence used by the VB escalated the tensions and shifted the thematic content of the demonstration. Demands to resolve the blackout problems were replaced with a conflict between the protesters and the security forces. Slogans such as "We want light!" were substituted with insults of the VB officers. Students

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80 *Ibid.*, Inv. No. 516, Report on the aktiv of the ČSM university organization in Prague on 13 January 1968.

81 For more on the role of moral emotions in protests and social movements see ŠLOUF, J.: *Spřízněni měnou*.

82 *ABS*, f. A2/3 (Sekretariát ministra vnitra, III. díl) [Secretariat of the Ministry of Interior, Part III.], Inv. No. 2133, Legal expert analysis prepared by the commission of the Faculty of Law of Charles University, 16 November 1967.

83 *Ibid.*, Position of the Prosecutor-General's Office on the issue of the origin and course of the university student demonstration, 7 December 1967.

compared them to the fascist police ("Gestapo!"), shouted vulgar words ("You bastards!") or shamed them ("Shame on them!").[84]

After the demonstrators had been driven back to the student hall, the intensity of the protest decreased for a while. Emotions flared up again after three arrested students were seen in police cars. The rest of students refused to return to the buildings, and the crowd occupied the area of the Strahov complex again, demanding the release of the arrested students. As more police reinforcements arrived, the students sat down in the road forming a sit-in blockade. The commanding officer released two of the arrested students to calm the situation. However, information that the third student was still being held by the police spread among the crowd,[85] and the atmosphere grew tense again. The crowd moved towards the police cars, and the first cobble stones were thrown at the police units. During the negotiations to release the third arrested student, one of the officers was spat on,[86] following which the commanding officer again gave the order to intervene. But this time things got out of control, and the police officers acted on their own. Using batons and tear gas, they tried to push students inside the buildings. The students responded by throwing cobble stones and other objects at them. In some cases, students were kicked and beaten by the officers as they lay on the ground, many of them suffering minor or more severe injuries. Even after being forced back inside the buildings, students threw different objects at the officers from their rooms. VB officers then entered the buildings, dragged students out of their rooms and beat them up in the corridors. Not even students returning from the city centre, oblivious of the demonstration, escaped the VB violence. Peace was restored at the hall of residence only at 1 a.m.[87]

Dispute over the Interpretation of the Conflict

Police intervention provoked great indignation and a subsequent mobilization of students, who perceived their march as legitimate for several reasons. Firstly, the demonstrators were demanding the resolution of material problems, as they had often been encouraged to do by the authorities. And secondly, the protest march followed the practices of the previous years, which had not led to police intervention. During the first part of the march, until being confronted by the police, the protesters did not engage in any riots and had not chanted any anti-socialist or anti-Communist-Party slogans.

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84 See PAŽOUT, J.: "Chceme světlo, chceme studovat!"

85 *ABS*, f. A 2/3, Inv. No. 2133, Position of the Prosecutor-General's Office on the issue of the origin and development of the university students' demonstration, 7 December 1967.

86 *Ibid.*, Conclusions of the inspection of the Chief of the Main *Public Security* Service Directorate as to the complaints of interventions of VB officers against demonstrating students of the Czech Technical University from the Strahov hall of residence on 31 October 1967.

87 See PAŽOUT, J.: "Chceme světlo! Chceme studovat!," p. 7.

Public Security departed from its practice of the past two years. The march was considered illegitimate, because it had not been announced in advance and because the VB assumed that (given the date) it was an anti-communist provocation. This argument was supported by the fact that following the police intervention the students started chanting slogans against VB officers, comparing them to the Gestapo. Important to both sides was the moment of confrontation when the police officers tried to calm the crowd verbally, but the majority of demonstrators could not hear this due to the absence of megaphones.

The fact that in the following days the most blatant problems with electricity at the student hall were removed by technicians only added fuel to the flames. The day after the dramatic events, Rector of the Czech Technical University (ČVUT) Josef Kožoušek met with the representatives of the Strahov Student Hall Council. While he supported the students cautiously, acknowledging their indignation as legitimate, he described the demonstration as an inappropriate means for solving problems.[88] This line of argument was followed by most functionaries in commenting on the Strahov events. It provoked another wave of indignation, summarized in one of the student resolutions: "We reject the claims that not all legal remedies were used. The whole issue has been the subject of negotiations of various commissions and bodies for more than a year, with no apparent results. A pledge to solve the situation was given only after a demonstration of two and a half hours. This important fact must not be ignored."[89] The students interpreted the VB intervention and the following reactions as disrespect towards them as a social group of intelligentsia. The shift in the meaning of the original conflict regarding poor material conditions was gradually adopted by the broader student public and this facilitated the mobilization of students.

Soon the conflict between the VB and the students became a broadly discussed problem. Negotiations on behalf of the students were led mainly by the representatives of VOV ČSM in Prague and the Strahov Student Hall Council. However, the conflict was also soon being discussed by the rectors and deans of the particular universities, at the ČSM Central Committee, the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Education and Culture, as well as by the Communist Party functionaries as a third party to help to solve the problem impartially. One week after the events, two commissions, inter-ministerial and governmental, were set up to investigate what had happened.[90]

There were three main areas of dispute: legitimacy of the police intervention, the right to demonstrate, and disrespect towards the role of students.

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88   *AMP*, f. KSČ – VV Praha [Communist Party of Czechoslovakia – University Committee Prague], Ref. No. 1499, Inv. No. 516, Report on the meeting of the Minister of Education, comrade professor Hájek with the ČVUT's rector, comrade professor Kožoušek, with the participation of the Deputy Minister, comrade docent Sedláček, director of the department, comrade professor Haňka and ČVUT's vice-rector, comrade docent Kamarád, held on 1 November 1967.

89   *ABS*, f. A 2/3, Inv. No. 2133, From the resolutions of the ČSM faculty organizations, Resolution of the students of the University of 17 November, 24 November 1967.

90   *AMP*, f. KSČ – VV Praha [Communist Party of Czechoslovakia – University Committee Prague], Ref. No. 1499, Inv. No. 517, Government commission on the investigation into the Strahov events 1967–1968.

Student criticism centred on the "brutal" intervention of the VB officers against the students of the Strahov hall of residence.[91] In the first resolution, adopted at the student meeting at the Faculty of Arts of Charles University on 8 November, students demanded that the Ministry of Interior announce the names of the individual VB officers responsible for the intervention, guarantee their punishment and provide a written apology. They also demanded that VB officers must wear visible identification numbers and that the use of any chemical agents against people in Czechoslovakia must be banned.[92] These demands were to be fulfilled by 20 November 1967, when another meeting was planned. Although in the first days the official authorities did not dispute the legitimacy of the intervention, following a large number of complaints from students, demands were made to investigate whether VB officers had exceeded their powers.[93] To that end, dozens of students as well as VB officers and bystanders were interrogated by the police.[94]

Two legal expert analyses were carried out to resolve to what extent the behaviour of both sides was legitimate and in line with existing legislation. The first analysis was commissioned by the Ministry of Interior, which, with reference to its results, took the side of the VB. According to this analysis, the VB intervention was necessary, because the protest had not been announced in advance, the demonstrators had blocked the traffic flow, had ignored police calls to disperse and had engaged in violence against public officials in front of the Strahov hall.[95]

The second analysis was carried out by professors of the Faculty of Law of Charles University. They, in contrast, backed the students. They questioned the need for the protest to be announced, given its development, and stated that the VB should have rather ensured the safety of the demonstrating students from traffic. They described the police intervention as disproportionate to the situation and more appropriate for a confrontation with "hooligans and not students." Violence employed by students was relativized as a reaction to the disproportionate VB intervention.[96]

Last but not least, the students had fought for recognition of their right to demonstrate. The constantly repeated argument of protest being an unsuitable form of advancing one's own interests was in contradiction with several aspects of the period. Firstly, it was the very tradition of workers and the communist movement, which from its very origin opted for the strategy of public events – be it workers' strikes or May Day marches against the war or for bread.

Secondly, there was also a contradiction in the way Czechoslovak media reported on student and left-wing protests in Western Europe and the United States, focusing

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91 *Ibid.*, Inv. No. 516, Resolution of the students of the Faculty of Arts of 8 November 1967.

92 *Ibid.*

93 *Ibid.*, Report of the special commission of the rector of ČVUT in Prague, 7 November 1967.

94 *ABS*, f. 2/3, Inv. No. 2133, Extracts from the statements of certain persons on the events during the demonstration of students in Prague on 31 October 1967.

95 *Ibid.*, f. A/9, Inv. No. 458, Legal opinion of the Ministry of Interior on the conduct of students and VB officers, November 1967.

96 *Ibid.*, f. 2/3, Inv. No. 2133, Legal expert's report prepared by the commission of the Faculty of Law, Charles University, 16 November 1967.

on the repressive measures adopted by the capitalist police. "The press […] reacted with indignation to the repressions against students in West Berlin in June of this year, but in reports on the Strahov events it ignored the fact that the lives of students had been threatened with police cars being quickly driven into them, that they had been kicked and beaten with batons, attacked with tear gas, and that police officers had acted indiscriminately against women," stated a student resolution adopted at the University of 17 November.[97]

Therefore, one of the demands of the students was clear recognition of their right to demonstrate as a means of advancing their own interests.

The Results of the Investigation and the ČSM Disintegration

In mid-December, the governmental commission completed its investigation of the Strahov events and a press release was issued by the press secretary of the government. The fact that none of the students or VB officers were punished more severely only indicated how sensitive this issue was.[98] The blame was put primarily on technical staff and ČVUT's officials. Among those dismissed was the director of Armabeton, the national enterprise in charge of the construction of the student hall of residence, and the director of the enterprise of associated construction production. Six other workers were given reprimands and financial penalties. In the field of education, the director of ČVUT's service facilities administration, the head of operations of the university halls of residence and dining halls and the head of the Strahov hall of residence were dismissed. A number of ČVUT's employees received official reprimands.[99]

Even though students were not punished, the report followed the line of reasoning that while their indignation was legitimate, the means of resolution was inappropriate. This led to the conclusion that the VB intervention was necessary and legal. The report also pointed out the verbal and physical attacks of the protesters against VB officers, as well as the individual cases of excessive harshness towards the students, which was, however, caused by the chaotic situation at Strahov.[100]

On the whole, only a few students received the text of the report positively. Representatives of the student organizations rejected the results of the investigation with indignation. While the report did not denounce the students in a harsh manner, it ignored most of the demands raised in the student resolutions. Their persistent objections could be thus summarized as follows:

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97 *Ibid.*, From the resolutions of the ČSM faculty organizations, Resolution of the students of the University of 17 November, 24 November 1967.

98 Seven of the VB officers received official reprimands for a disproportionate intervention. However, the public learnt about it only in March 1968 (Vyjádření Ministerstva vnitra ke strahovským událostem [Statement of the Ministry of Interior on the Strahov events]. In: *Rudé právo* (12 March 1968), p. 3).

99 *Ibid.*, Inv. No. 2189, Report of the Ministry of Interior on the Strahov events, 13 May 1968.

100 *Ibid.*

1. Eventually, the government report gave priority to the legal expertise of the Ministry of Interior over the text prepared by professors of the Faculty of Law of Charles University, *de facto* taking the side of the VB and ignoring the "voice of the intelligentsia."
2. The report did not endorse the requirement to ban the use of tear gas against participants of protests nor did it guarantee inviolability of academic premises.
3. VB officers who intervened were not disciplined, despite the fact that the report confirmed their partial guilt. Whereas for students a minor deviation from legitimate behaviour, such as participation in an unannounced march, resulted in being violently dispersed by the VB, systematic problems in the VB activity were justified. By this the students meant in particular the absence of number identification badges for the VB officers and megaphones.
4. Violent intervention was legitimized as necessary and legal, and therefore the use of violence was also perceived as a legitimate reaction to a minor violation of the law.
5. Although the report prepared by the Faculty of Law experts confirmed that the right to demonstrate was enshrined in the laws pursuant to the Constitution, the students' demand that demonstrations should be recognized as a legitimate means for seeking to remedy the shortcomings of socialism was not met. "We note that the public is not duly informed of the fact that citizens can defend their rights and justified demands even through means of a public demonstration," claimed the statement of the VOV ČSM in Prague.[101]

The prevailing opinion among students, and especially among representatives of the VOV ČSM in Prague, was that although they had acted calmly and in a very matter-of-fact way during the investigation of the events, cooling down students' tempers, none of their demands were met. In general, the students stressed that the government report effectively legitimized VB officers' immunity.[102]

The report thus instilled an even stronger feeling of disrespect among students. Whereas at the beginning of the conflict the Public Security was perceived as the main culprit, after the report was published, the student representatives attributed responsibility for the failure to the ČSM Central Committee. The representatives of the VOV ČSM in Prague were dominated by "Prague radicals," who advocated ČSM's federalization and independent student structures. During the investigation of the Strahov events, the VOV ČSM representatives concentrated on this affair, putting aside the issue of federalization. However, after the publication of the government report, they reconsidered their requirements. The VOV ČSM representatives based their high legitimacy among the students on the claim that even though most students did not believe it would really have any positive results, they nevertheless entrusted the VOV ČSM representatives with the responsibility of patiently negotiating their legitimate requirements. However, the VOV ČSM representatives believed that their

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101 *AMP*, f. KSČ – VV Praha, Ref. No. 1499, Inv. No. 517, Position of the VOV ČSM on the resolution and results of the Strahov events, 19 December 1967.
102 *Ibid.*

declared patient efforts to secure an objective investigation into the events were be-
ing hampered by a "network of interference from political circles as well as from the
state's power sphere."[103] Their criticism was not aimed primarily at the government
or the Communist Party leadership, but at the ČSM leadership. One of the members
of the Presidium of the VOV ČSM in Prague explicitly stated that "the approach of
the Communist Party bodies [was] more progressive and flexible than the position
of the ČSM Central Committee."[104]

The meeting of the VOV ČSM in Prague convened in reaction to the published
report resulted in consensual harsh criticism of the ČSM, which was expressed in
a seven-point statement. The last point of the statement called for a referendum on
whether the existence of the ČSM at universities made any sense at all and proposed
the establishment of an independent student organization as an alternative to the
existing union.[105] And even though this most radical point of the statement was not
adopted by the committee – it failed to reach an absolute majority by only a narrow
margin – gradually more and more students supported its wording. "The Strahov
events clearly showed that students cannot regard the ČSM as their organization.
The ČSM leadership took a wait-and-see approach and hindered the activity of the
lower levels of VOV and FV [faculty committees]. [...] Our chosen approach failed,
on the one hand on account of the general situation in this state, and on the other
on account of the absurd position of students in the ČSM organization," said the
unapproved point of the university committee's statement.[106]

The final moment of disintegration of the ČSM university organization came at the
meeting of the all-Prague student aktiv [active members], which was organized by
the VOV ČSM in Prague on 13 January 1968 in the hall of Charles University rector's
office. The meeting was attended by representatives of the Faculty Committees of
Prague universities, members of the ČSM and the Communist Party Central Com-
mittees, representatives of the Ministry of Interior and ordinary students.[107]

During the discussion, representatives of the students took the floor and gradually
made a stand against the Czechoslovak Youth Union. One of the most radical speeches
was given by Karel Kovanda: "Lenin said that the authority of leading bodies does
not come from the fact that they are leading bodies, but from having the trust of the
masses. I do not know about the situation in the Communist Party, but within the
union the ČSM Central Committee enjoys no confidence. The Central Committee is
the most conservative power and we cannot support it. I am leaving the VOV ČSM
and hereby call for open opposition to the Central Committee. The only possibility
is an independent student organization. I do not know yet what form it should take.
What I know is that it should not be governed by democratic centralism."[108] Another

103 *Ibid.*
104 *Ibid.*
105 *Ibid.*
106 *Ibid.*
107 See PAŽOUT, J.: *Mocným navzdory*, p. 107.
108 *AMP*, f. KSČ – VV Praha, Ref. No. 1499, Inv. No. 516, Report on the aktiv of the ČSM univer-
      sity organization in Prague on 13 January 1968.

advocate of student independence, Zdeněk Pinc, expressed similar views: "The ČSM is a rotten organization, the most fossilized in the republic. Eighty-six urgent requests accomplished nothing, one demonstration everything. I resign."[109]

In mid-January 1968, the formation of the student social movement was complete. In the course of the 1960s, students were able to identify poor material conditions, which had not improved despite all the declarations, as injustice. There was no relation between the violent intervention at Strahov and students' dissatisfaction with the way the ČSM operated, but it became a catalyst of change. This event violated an implicit social contract of how the individual actors should or could behave in public space. Mass mobilization of students followed, opening up the way for a search for a systemic solution to a shared feeling of injustice. It was in consequence of the police intervention and the resulting frustration that the broader masses embraced the Prague radicals' intellectual construct of student independence. The idea behind it was that systemic cure was only possible if the student organizations were independent of the ČSM and the Communist Party leadership. "Prague radicals" were able to generalize the experience of disrespect (the disregard for the requirements to improve material conditions) that the students lived and propose a political change that would remedy these feelings of oppression. Student autonomy was to become a cure for feelings of disrespect of students as a specific social class. On the eve of the Prague Spring, the students were thus the most vocal social group – a fully formed social movement – demanding a new form of organization from official institutions. It was no longer to follow the rules of so-called democratic centralism, based on a vertical distribution of power, but rather horizontal rules identified with the idea of democratic socialism.

With the advent of the year 1968, their goal started to reach fulfilment. The union of youth organizations began to disintegrate almost instantly, and within a few months a new network of university organizations, which was independent of both the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and ČSM leadership, emerged in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. In Prague, as early as April, the newly established Academic Council of Students voted to dissolve the Czechoslovak Youth Union at Prague universities. In Brno, nine faculties were represented by the Brno Student Centre. At the end of April, the Union of University Students of Bohemia and Moravia was established in Olomouc with the aim of coordinating the activity of Czech student parliaments. The representatives of 36 Slovak faculties formed the Union of University Students on 24 May 1968. Both unions were to be coordinated by the Czechoslovak Headquarters of University Students. All these structures disappeared in 1969, when student organization was again brought under the control of higher authorities, at first through the Union of University Students of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, and later through the newly formed Socialist Union of Youth.[110]

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109 *Ibid.*
110 See PAŽOUT, J.: *Mocným navzdory*, pp. 113–117.

Abstract

In the end of October 1967, a spontaneous demonstrations of students protesting against poor living conditions in Prague´s Strahov Dormitory, was quashed with force. The author asks a question why something seemingly as trivial as a power blackout in a student dormitory resulted, at the end of the day, in the disintegration of structures of the Czechoslovak Union of Youth at universities. In doing so, he follows the grammar of the social conflict through a prism of social movement formation and of the so-called politics of the street.

The author describes a shift in the attitude of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia toward students in the 1960s, as the latter started assigning greater importance to intelligentsia than before, embarking upon the so-called policy of trust toward students, its aim being to make them more involved in solutions of university and social problems. The author also notes a step-by-step emancipation of students and the emergence of an idea of self-governing students´ bodies, independent on official structures which were criticized as non-functional. In this respect, the author analyses conflicts with security forces during youth and students´ festivities in Prague (such as May Day gatherings in the Petřín Park and later during Majáles (“Coming of May festivities”) processions, ultimately ending in punishments of students labelled as “rioters”. He states that the confrontations taught students to adopt strategies helping them avoid repressions (such as avoiding any “disorderly conduct”, not criticizing the ruling party and the Soviet Union directly, having their own stewards to maintain order); on the other hand, the security machine learnt to respect the students´ authority and to behave with restraint. The result was a consensus on how to manage the social conflict and keep it non-violent.

The tacit agreement of university students, police, and leaders of the Czechoslovak Union of Youth collapsed when policemen intervened with force against an unplanned and peaceful demonstration of students from the Strahov Dormitory, who had long been trying in vain to resolve their accommodation problems. After two months of investigations, none of the protesters or the intervening policemen were punished; however, requirements of students, such as the right to similar protests or inviolability of the academic soil, were not granted as well. Students blamed the leadership of the Czechoslovak Union of Youth for the unsatisfactory outcome, and started to leave its structures en masse. In 1968, they founded their own self-governing organization, independent on both the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and the Czechoslovak Union of Youth.

Keywords
Czech students; social movements; street politics; Czechoslovak Union of Youth

The Ukrainian Factor of the Prague Spring?

Petro Shelest and the Czechoslovak Year 1968 in the Light of Documents of the Ukrainian Security Service

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On 29 July 1968, Pyotr Grigorevich Grigorenko (Petro Hryhorevych Hryhorenko),[1] Major General of the Red Army of Ukrainian descent, a veteran of battles with Japan in Manchuria and of the Second World War, and one of the first Soviet dissidents, who was to become one of the co-founders of the Moscow Helsinki Group and the Ukrainian Helsinki Group, handed over a letter at the Czechoslovak Embassy in Moscow, which could be regarded – just like the better-known letter of Russian writer and political prisoner Anatoly Tichonovich Marchenko[2] – as a warning against an intervention of the Soviet army, albeit rather indirect. According to Grigorenko's own recollections, his letter, which probably did not make it to the

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[1] Names of publicly known personalities of Ukrainian descent are first presented in Russian transcription followed by the Ukrainian form (in brackets). The only exception is the main character of the article, Shelest, whose first name – because of the manifestly Ukrainian self-identification of its bearer – is transcribed as Petro (instead of the Russian form Pyotr). As to other Ukrainians mentioned in Soviet documents quoted herein, in respect of whom no detailed information is available, we have retained the original form of their names.

[2] An open letter of Anatoly Marchenko to the world press in support of the Prague Spring. In: MARCHENKO, Anatoly: *Žij jako všichni* [Live like everybody]. Praha, Revolver Revue 1990, pp. 110–116. Also available online on the website of the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes: *https://www.ustrcr.cz/data/pdf/projekty/pamet-a-dejiny/rok68/dopis.pdf*.

Czechoslovak leadership at that time, read as follows: "I do not think true communists will interfere with your noble efforts, and I do not believe even more in a possible Soviet intervention. Brezhnev is a communist and, moreover, a soldier. He understands Czechoslovakia can thwart a Soviet invasion easily. All it takes is holding main roads from the German Democratic Republic, Poland and the USSR and defending airports. Hungary can be easily stopped by a threat of retaliatory measures. Brezhnev understands that all of this would mean a war which, given the circumstances, would be no less dangerous for the Soviet Union than it would be for Czechoslovakia."[3] Before visiting the Czechoslovak Embassy in Moscow, he allegedly told Alexei Evgrafovich Kosterin, a dissident and advocate of the Chechens, Ingush, and Crimean Tatars: "Brezhnev, although he is a blockhead, will not risk a war. All his hopes rely only on a moment of surprise. A war would be a lunatic act for him, in particular because the Czechoslovak army is the most capable armed force in Eastern Europe and Czechoslovak people, as we could see, unanimously support their government. Under the circumstances, such a military adventure may cost Brezhnev and his government their heads. Czechoslovakia's resistance may spark off anti-imperialist spin-off forces in the German Democratic Republic, Poland, and even the Soviet Union."[4]

The Ukrainian Factor

The General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Leonid Iliych Brezhnev did not belong to those Soviet leaders who were in favour of the invasion, and the question why and on what grounds he finally decided for it remains a discussed topic even now, one of the open questions being what information he or Yuri Vladimirovich Andropov, the then Chairman of the Committee for State Security (*Komitet gosudarstvennoy bezopasnosti* – KGB) of the Soviet Union, had at their disposal. However, it is possible to describe the information available to the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) and member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Petro Yuchymovych Shelest. Together with his predecessor in the seat of the leader of the Ukrainian Communist Party and Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union, Nikolai Viktorovich Podgorny (Mykola Viktorovych Pidhorny), he belonged to the strongest supporters of an armed intervention in Czechoslovakia. Shelest took part in all top-level Soviet meetings discussing the situation in Czechoslovakia in 1968, and he himself was personally very involved. Moreover, the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union tasked him with

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3   The letter could not be found in Czech archives. I am quoting from my own translation of: GRIGORENKO, P. G.: *V podpole mozhno vstretit tol'ko krys…* New York, Detinec 1981. Also available online at: *http://militera.lib.ru/memo/russian/grigorenko/index.html*.

4   *Ibid.*

maintaining contacts with the so-called "healthy forces" in the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, and it was Shelest whom Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia Vasil Biľak handed over the infamous letter of invitation in public toilettes in Bratislava on 3 August in the presence of a KGB officer.[5]

Shelest, the native (born in 1908) of the village of Andriyivka, off Kharkov, both parents of whom spoke Ukrainian, started working for a railway company at the age of 14. At 20, he was co-opted in the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) and made his way up to the position of the First Secretary of the Communist Party in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, which he held between 1963 and 1972. After his dismissal, he spent a short spell as Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers (the Soviet government); in 1973, he was forced to resign to all positions he held. He then worked in the aviation industry outside Ukrainian territory and died in Moscow in 1997. A satisfactory biography dealing with Shelest's life has not yet been written, probably due to his political downfall although we know the diaries he was writing for two decades at the peak of his career.[6]

The purpose of the presented article is to examine the role of Petro Shelest in the formulation of the Soviet attitude towards Czechoslovakia using both his diary entries and documents of the Committee for State Security (KGB) of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, which he was receiving while holding the position of the First Secretary of the Communist Party in Ukraine. Was the first man of Soviet Ukraine a supporter of an armed intervention against the Prague Spring from the very beginning, or did his opinion evolve? Was he influenced in any way by Secret Service reports? And how important was the situation in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic itself for the formation of the attitude of Shelest and the whole Soviet leadership?

In 2009, US Cold War historian Mark Kramer, who had already pointed out the role of the KGB, the Ukrainian factor, and the role of Petro Shelest himself earlier, claimed that members of the Politburo had been convinced of a threat to vital Soviet

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5   See KRAMER, Mark (ed.): Ukraine and the Soviet-Czechoslovak Crisis of 1968, Part 1: New Evidence from the Diary of Petro Shelest. In: *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, No. 10. – Washington, D. C., Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars 1998. Also available online at: *https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/ CWIHPBulletin10_p6.pdf*. For the text of the letter of invitation in the Czech original and translated into Russian, see, for example: Zvací dopis v češtině: Text, který odstartoval krvavé události v srpnu 1968 [The letter of invitation in Czech: The text which sparked off the bloody events in August 1968]. In: *100+1 zahraničních zajímavostí* [online], 21 August 2018 [cit. 2019.11.01]. Available: *https://www.stoplusjednicka.cz/ zvaci-dopis-v-cestine-text-ktery-odstartoval-krvave-udalosti-v-srpnu-1968*.

6   After falling out of favour, Shelest buried the unique diaries he had been maintaining from 1953 in the garden of his weekend cottage and processed the information contained therein with the assistance of historians only after Brezhnev's death. They were published only after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. SHELEST, Pyotr Efimovich: … *da ne sudimy budete: Dnevnikovye zapisi, vospominanija chlena Politbiro KPSS*. Moskva, Edition 1995, p. 580.

interests by a combination of political, ideological and military concerns.[7] He also supplemented conclusions drawn by Grey Hodnett and Petro Potichny,[8] namely that there was an important link between the situation in Ukraine and events in Czechoslovakia, by stating that Soviet leaders had believed in it. In his opinion, Soviet power elites interpreted domestic political changes in Czechoslovakia as a major threat to the cohesion of the Eastern Bloc, and they were even more concerned with positive reflections of the Prague Spring among students in different regions of the Soviet Union. Insofar as relations with Czechoslovakia were concerned, the Politburo and the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union were, according to Kramer, not very dependent on lower-level Communist Party bodies and state organization, and information generally flowed from the top to the bottom.[9] What information, then, did the Politburo members use to make their decisions? As the supreme Ukrainian representative, Petro Shelest was in a unique position, if for nothing else, then for a common border between Ukraine and Czechoslovakia, intensive cross-border contacts between the two republics, and the Ukrainian minority living in eastern Slovakia.

So far, there have been only a few editions of documents from Russian archives that have briefly touched upon details of the Soviet decision-making process. However, they did not contain any key documents of the Committee for State Security. On the other hand, reports of officers of the KGB and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Soviet Union, which only repeated Soviet stereotypes about the Prague Spring being an attempted counterrevolution supported by Western secret services, were published in a separate volume without any detailed analysis.[10] As Russian

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7   KRAMER, Mark: The Prague Spring and the Soviet Invasion of Czechoslovakia: New Interpretations. In: *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, No. 3. – Washington D.C., Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars 1993, p. 11. Also available online at: *https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/CWIHPBulletin3.pdf.* For operations of the KGB during the occupation, see ŽÁČEK, Pavel: KGB a srpen 1968: Role sovětských "poradců" při okupaci Československa [The KGB and August 1968: The role of Soviet "advisors" during the occupation of Czechoslovakia]. In: SVOBODA, Libor (ed.): *Solitér: Pocta historikovi Václavu Veberovi* [The solitaire: A tribute to historian Václav Veber]. Praha, Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů 2012, pp. 307–337.

8   KRAMER, Mark: The Kremlin, the Prague Spring, and the Brezhnev Doctrine, p. 37. In: archive.org [online], 01.09.2009 [cit. 2019.11.01]. Available at: *https://archive.org/stream/ TheKremlinThePragueSpringandtheBrezhnevDoctrinebyMarkKramer2009-09-01.* Compare HODNETT, Grey – POTICHNY, Petro: *The Ukraine and the Czechoslovak Crisis.* (Occasional Paper, No. 6.) Canberra, Department of Political Science, Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University 1970.

9   *Ibid.*, pp. 20, 34.

10   ZDANOVICH, A. A. – LASHKUL, V. F. – MORUKOV, Yu. N. – TOTROV, Yu. Ch. (ed.): *Chekhoslovatskiye sobytiya 1968 goda glazami KGB i MVD SSSR: Sbornik dokumentov.* Moskva, Obyedinyonnaja redaktsiya Ministerstva vnutrennikh del Rossii 2010. See also KARNER, Stefan – TOMILINA, Natalja – TSCHUBARYAN, Alexander – BISCHOF, Günter – ISHCHENKO, Viktor – PROZUMENSHCHIKOV, Mikhail – RUGGENTHALER, Peter – TŮMA, Oldřich – WILKU, Manfred (ed.): *Prager Frühling: Das internationale Krisenjahr / Prazhskaya vesna: Mezhdunarodnyi krizis 1968 goda*, Vol. 2: *Dokumente /*

historian Vladimir Voronov wrote, there is no free access to documents pertaining to the year 1968 and Czechoslovakia and "the published documents do not cast any light on mechanisms of the formulation and approval of the decision to intervene; or on how information on which the approval of the decision to intervene by military force was based had been collected, analyzed and passed on to higher instances" (contrary to, for example, the suppression of the Hungarian uprising in 1956).[11]

KGB Documents on Shelest's Desk

The archives of today's Ukrainian counterintelligence service (*Sluzhba bezpeky Ukrainy* – SBU) contain several dozens of available documents pertaining to the Prague Spring and early weeks of the occupation. These are reports sent to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic by the Ukrainian Committee for State Security (KGB), most of them signed by the chairman of the latter institution or exceptionally also by his deputy. Most of them also contain a note indicating that the information was read by the First Secretary of the Communist Party, and many of them were also submitted as a courtesy copy to the all-union headquarters of the Committee for State Security in Moscow. There are no records of tasking by the Communist Party and government; the instructions were probably given orally. Some of these documents, now available in the fund KGB Secretariat at the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (Fund 16), were published by Mark Kramer in the *Cold War International History Project Bulletin* on the basis of his research in the Central State Archives of Public Organizations of Ukraine (*Centralnyi derzhavnyi arkhiv gromadskych objednan' Ukrainy*), where documents of the Communist Party of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic are stored. Other documents were published in 2010 on the website of the Czech Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes (ÚSTR). Most of the published documents pertain to the post-invasion period, reflecting reactions of the Ukrainian people and sanctions imposed upon those who painted slogans, wrote leaflets, or merely expressed their disagreement with the sending of troops to Czechoslovakia orally.[12] However, the pre-occupation documents, which have not

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Dokumenty. Köln/R. – Weimar – Wien, Böhlau 2008. The first volume contains contributions by an international team of authors. For a Russian excerpt from the volume, which consists 115 documents, see CHUBARYAN, Alexandr – KARNER, Stefan – TOMILINA, Natalia (ed.): *"Prazhskaya vesna" i mezhdunarodnyi krizis 1968 goda: Dokumenty*. Moskva, Mezhdunarodnyi fond "Demokratiya" 2010.

11 VORONOV, Vladimir: Cherez polveka posle vtorzheniya. In: *Russkiy vopros* [online], 2018, No. 2 [cit. 2019.11.01]. Available at: *http://russkiivopros.com/?pag=one&id=759&kat=5&csl=85*.

12 KRAMER, Mark (ed.): Ukraine and the Soviet-Czechoslovak Crisis of 1968, Part 2: New Evidence from the Ukrainian Archives. In: *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, Nos. 14–15. Washington D. C., Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars 2003–2004, pp. 273–368. Also available

yet been used, are much more interesting from the viewpoint of the evaluation of the situation in Czechoslovakia and processes leading to a decision to resolve it by force. There are more than 70 of them in the Ukrainian archive and they provide both an insight into the KGB's thinking and give an idea of how the organization's members were operating. Although it is necessary to consider limitations arising from the nature of the documents produced by the secret service, and also from the fact that the KGB Headquarters in Moscow was undoubtedly paying greater attention to Czechoslovakia and that no operative files of the Ukrainian Committee for State Security are available, there is still a set of documents which can be used to reconstruct information which the secret service had on the situation in Czechoslovakia, how it evaluated developments in Czechoslovakia, and what Petro Shelest could learn from the documents.

Petro Shelest in the Decision-Making Process of the Soviet Politburo

As early as in the 1970s, Grey Hodnett and Petro Potichny noted the exceptional role of the First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic Petro Shelest, who, apart from Brezhnev, was the only Politburo member who had participated in all negotiations about the situation in Czechoslovakia with the latter country's representatives.[13] He behaved sharply and sometimes aggressively towards protagonists of the Prague Spring; during negotiations in Čierna nad Tisou on 30 July 1968, he even contemptuously called František Kriegel "a Galician Jew." However, Yuri Shapoval, a well-known Ukrainian historian, still claims that "there is no doubt that Shelest was never 'lobbying' for the aggressive act."[14] He nevertheless admits that Shelest had his share in the suppression of the Prague Spring.[15] Together with other Ukrainian historians, Shapoval emphasizes Shelest's effort for a greater cultural and economic autonomy of Ukraine demonstrated in his book *Ukraïno nasha Radians'ka* [Ukraine, Our Soviet Land] published in 1970. It

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online at: *https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/CWIHPBulletin14-15_p3_1.pdf*. Publication of summary reports of the Ukrainian KGB on Czechoslovakia (1968–1969). In: Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů [online]. © ÚSTR 2008–2019 [cit. 2019.11.01]. Available at: *https://www.ustrcr.cz/uvod/srpen-1968/dokumenty-kgb/*. See related articles: FAYZULIN, Jaroslav: Bagato ukrainciv vystupaly proty vvedennya radyanskih vijsk u Chekhoslovachchynu 1968 roku. In: *Zhurnal "Krajina,"* No. 434 (14 August 2018). Also available online at: *https://gazeta.ua/articles/history-journal/_bagato-ukrayinciv-vistupali-proti-vvedennya-radyanskih-vijsk-u-cehoslovachchinu-1968-roku/853535*; DMYTRUK, V. I.: Nezgodni: Podiy 1968 r. v Chekhoslovachchyni kriz pryzmu archivno-slidchykh sprav KDB URSR. In: TRON'KO, P. T. (ed.): *Istoria Ukrainy: Malovidomi imena, podiy, fakty*. Kyiv, Instytut istorii Ukrainy NAN Ukrajiny 2008, pp. 298–312. Also available online at: *http://politics.ellib.org.ua/pages-6282.html*.

13   HODNETT, G. – POTICHNYJ, P.: The Ukraine and the Czechoslovak Crisis, p. 81.

14   SHAPOVAL, Yuri: Petro Shelest: 100th anniversary of the birth of one of Ukraine's most spectacular political figures. In: *Den'/Day.Kyiv.ua* [online], 19 February 2008 [cit. 2019.11.01]. Available at: *https://day.kyiv.ua/en/article/culture/petro-shelest*.

15   See SHAPOVAL, Yuri: *Petro Shelest*. Kharkiv, Folio 2013, p. 64.

was actually this book which the Soviet leadership later used to criticize Shelest for his alleged ideological errors and idealization of Ukrainian history. Another reservation allegedly contributing to Shelest's downfall was his leniency towards the Ukrainian dissent[16]. Shelest nevertheless indicated a different reason in his memoirs, bitterly and repeatedly stating that "Brezhnev used the first opportunity to get rid of an undesirable witness and active participant in all Czechoslovak matters."[17]

However, Khrushchev's détente in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic was indeed marked by an increased interest in Ukrainian culture, language, pre-Soviet history and Stalin's repressions, and Shelest, although criticized by many, initially supported these efforts. Samizdat and other dissident activities in Ukraine were also growing, as the security machine received instructions to intervene against the national movement only after Leonid Brezhnev had come to power. In the meantime, the nationalism-driven unrest, strengthened by a living memory of fights with the anti-communist and nationalist Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA), had also affected members of the Communist Party. In 1965, first Ukrainian dissidents were arrested and sentenced to many years in prison, but informal cultural and dissident activities continued to grow stronger. In his March 1968 diary entry describing his meeting with Ukrainian poet and translator Dmytro Pavlychko,[18] Shelest noted: "I had a lengthy and serious conversation with him. I told him openly that he was wasting his talent and heading in the wrong direction, reprimanding him for doing so, and that he might be sorry for it, but it might be too late. He agreed with all my arguments and opinions. The conversation with D. Pavlychko indicated that I should meet and have a serious talk with the Secretary of the Union of Writers of Ukraine."[19]

While Shelest's concerns about the situation in Ukraine were growing, he also began to be heavily involved in analyses of events and developments in Czechoslovakia. In his eyes, the situation was obvious. The diary entry describing his stay in Prague between 21 and 25 February 1968, reads as follows: "The counterrevolution in Czechoslovakia is picking up strength. Celebrations of the 20th anniversary of the Czechoslovak revolution […] were peaceful, and even pro-active, at first sight. During the ceremonial meeting, A. Dubček delivered a fairly optimistic to pompous speech. […] The naivety of A. Dubček consisted in the fact that he had not been

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16 However, when Shelest was holding his post, there were, on the other hand, repressions against the so-called 1960-ers. See KASYANOV, Georgi: *Nezgodni: Ukrainska inteligentsia v rusi oporu 1960–1980-ch rokiv.* Kyiv, Klio 2019.

17 SHELEST, P. Ye.: … *da ne sudimy budete*, p. 385.

18 Dmytro Vasylovych Pavlychko (born in 1929) came from western Ukraine, was imprisoned in 1945 and 1946 for suspected membership in the Ukrainian Insurgent Army. After his release, he studied philology at the University of Lvov, and, having graduated, he was employed in the Ukrainian language magazine *Zhovten'*, and later in the Kiev Centre of Ukrainian Writers. In 1954, he joined the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. At the end of the 1980s, he was one of the co-founders of the People's Movement for Reconstruction (*Narodnyi Rukh Ukrainy – Rukh*) and was later appointed the ambassador of independent Ukraine to Poland and Slovakia.

19 *Ibid.*, p. 297.

orienting himself too well and had not understood all political complexities and consequences. No one was openly opposing law and order yet. But the 'creeping counterrevolution' operating in secrecy was sparing no effort. Covert forces that had taken control of all mass media, various clubs, and associations were busy as well. There was a great attack against the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, security authorities, and the country's economic policy going on. It could be felt that the entire 'sequence of events' was controlled by the experienced hand of the CIA and secret services of the Federal Republic of Germany. Unfortunately, our intelligence services were not established there too well."[20]

The chapter dedicated to the year 1968 in Shelest's diaries is called *It was possible to do without the intervention of Czechoslovakia*. According to it, Shelest himself was prepared to use the Soviet army in Czechoslovakia upon request of Czechoslovak leaders, but Leonid Brezhnev's "confused actions brought the whole matter to the entry of Warsaw Treaty troops into Czechoslovakia without its government's knowledge, which meant, at the end of the day, serious international political losses for our country and the Communist Party."[21]

State Security Officers as a Major Source of Information

It is not clear whether Petro Shelest was criticizing the work of the all-union intelligence service, or the performance of the First Directorate of the Committee for State Security of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, whose information on Czechoslovakia was indeed meagre, in spite of the use of substantial intelligence assets.

The Ukrainian secret Police was tailing Czechoslovak citizens on the territory of Ukraine, checking mail to and from Czechoslovakia, and gleaning information from Ukrainian citizens travelling to Czechoslovakia, but the primary source of information sent to Petro Shelest and other Communist Party representatives were officers of the Czechoslovak State Security (StB), whom their Soviet counterparts trusted blindly. They disagreed with, and most of them were also afraid of, the Prague Spring. Reports sent to Ukrainian political leaders generally state that they were meeting KGB officers on their own initiative. Most of them contain diatribes against Minister of Interior Josef Pavel and against Czechoslovak media, information on attacks against members of the security apparatus, and warnings against a growing influence of "right-wing elements," Zionism, or "anti-Soviet propaganda." The writers' motivation was practically never considered by their Soviet colleagues, although by that time a discussion on malevolent acts of security forces during the 1950s had already started in Czechoslovakia, and the effort of their members to avoid potential sanctions or punishments should have been taken into account. During a meeting which took place in the border railway station of Čierna nad Tisou on 2 May 1968, unspecified representatives of "Czechoslovak State Security authorities" even asked the Soviet Union

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20   *Ibid.*, p. 294.
21   *Ibid.*, p. 301.

to provide a refuge for them on its territory should "extremely grave circumstances" arise.[22] Similar information was also coming to the Soviet Union from the embassy in Prague. It was on the basis of this information that the Soviet Politburo ordered the ministries of defence and civil aviation, as late as on 24 August, to arrange immediate transportation of family members of State Security leaders from Czechoslovakia to the Soviet Union to ensure their safety, as they were regarded threatened.[23] Instead of an asylum for their next of kin, however, most of them earned a career advance after the occupation of Czechoslovakia (short biographies of the most important of them are attached as footnotes).

On the other hand, the attention of the Ukrainian KGB probably did not much good to Czechoslovak Consul General in Kiev Josef Horák, who, according to a report of Ryabov and Muravkin,[24] train attendants on the Moscow – Prague train on 18 March 1968, got drunk and allegedly disparaged the victory of the Soviet ice hockey team at the Winter Olympics in Grenoble, threatening that the Czechs would beat the Soviets next year.[25] As early as on 22 March, the Ukrainian secret

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22 Extraordinary report for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic No. 341/n dated 3 May 1968 (Amendment to report No. 337/n dated 1 May 1968): Meeting of officers of the Czechoslovak State Security and the KGB of the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. In: Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů [online]. [Cit. 2019.11.01.] Available at: *https://www.ustrcr.cz/data/ pdf/projekty/srpen1968/zpravy-kgb/0016.pdf*. All translations of quotations from these documents used herein were done by the author.

23 VONDROVÁ Jitka – NAVRÁTIL, Jaromír: *Mezinárodní souvislosti československé krize 1967–1970: Dokumenty ÚV KSSS 1966–1969* [The international context of the Czechoslovak crisis 1967–1970: Documents of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union 1966–1969]. (Prameny k dějinám československé krize 1967–1970 [Sources on the history of the Czechoslovak Crisis 1967–1970], Vol. IV/4.) Praha – Brno, Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR – Doplněk 2011, p. 235, Document 83 – Resolution of the 97th meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on agenda item 50: On satisfying the request of the Soviet ambassador in Czechoslovakia, Moscow, 24 August 1968.

24 Information report for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic No.162/n dated 18 March 1968: Behaviour of the Czechoslovak consul general on the train. In: Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů [online]. [Cit. 2019.11.01.] Available at: *https://www.ustrcr.cz/data/pdf/projekty/srpen1968/zpravy-kgb/0011.pdf*.

25 At the March 1969 Ice Hockey World Championship in Stockholm, the Czechoslovak team indeed beat their Soviet opponents, and even twice for that matter, although the Soviet Union ultimately won gold medals and Czechoslovakia finished third.

Josef Horák (born in 1923) attended a 10-year secondary school in Moscow; from September 1941, he worked in an electrical workshop in Prague-Vršovice. He was imprisoned during the war, then attended and graduated from the Communist Party school, and subsequently worked at the Regional Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in Pardubice. From 1 April 1960, he was the Head of the Secretariat of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and from July 1964 to the end of October 1968 the Consul General in Kiev. As of 28 February 1970, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs terminated his employment contract by an agreement in which, however, the standard clause expressing thanks for his work was omitted. (According to Josef Horák's personal file in the Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic.)

police reported two personal meetings with Czechoslovak citizens to Petro Shelest. Rather uncharacteristically, it introduced them in a broader context as acting "[…] upon orders from Prague, the purpose of the meeting being to pass, via our channels, information of a calming nature to relevant authorities." The first person to contact KGB representatives on his own was Ján Majer, the State Security Chief in the East Slovakia region.[26] During the friendly meeting on the border on 20 March, he "repeatedly emphasized that leaders of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia had intentionally resolved to start a broad discussion on existing problems in order to identify and do away with them." In his opinion, the opposition against President Antonín Novotný had been growing after the January meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, and the departure of General Bohumír Lomský from the position of the minister of defence had been unavoidable. Changes in the security apparatus, abolition of censorship, and the federalization of the country were being prepared; however, Majer also repeatedly emphasized that Alexander Dubček, the new First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, was a great friend of the Soviet Union supporting an expansion of mutual cooperation in all areas.[27]

The other Czechoslovak informer of the Ukrainians was Martin Magdal, a representative of an unnamed forwarding enterprise. During two meetings with KGB representatives in Izmail and Odessa, he confirmed that Antonín Novotný would be removed from the president's office and that there would also be changes at the Ministry of Interior and the Office of the Attorney General; in his opinion, however, relations between the two countries and their Communist Parties were not to be

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26 Ján Majer (born in 1923), a worker, participated in the Slovak National Uprising and later fought in the ranks of the 1st Czechoslovak Army Corps. He became a member of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in August 1946, held various positions in the National Security Corps and border guards. Between 1951 and 1953, he was the Chief of the Regional Public Security Directorate in Banská Bystrica. In 1954–1955, he studied in the Soviet Union, and then, until 1963, he held the post of the Deputy Chief (Operations) of the Main Public Security Directorate in Prague; until May 1967, he was the Chief of the National Security Corps Regional Directorate in Košice. In March 1968, he attended a seminar for NSC scientific research workers, and was appointed Deputy Minister of Interior of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic on 21 June 1968. He advanced to the position of First Deputy Minister of Interior in September 1968 and was the State Secretary of the Ministry of Interior from January 1969. In May 1970, he was expelled from the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia on the grounds of "serious political mistakes in August 1968" and released from duty. He unsuccessfully applied for out-of-court rehabilitation after 1989. (According to the personal file of Ján Majer deposited in the Security Services Archive.)

27 Report for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic No. 211/n dated 22 March 1968: Meeting of officers of the [Košice] Directorate of the Ministry of Interior of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the KGB Directorate of the Trans-Carpathian Region. In: Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů [online]. [Cit. 2019.11.01.] Available at: *https://www.ustrcr.cz/data/pdf/projekty/srpen1968/zpravy-kgb/0002.pdf.*

disturbed or adversely affected, and the same applied to Czechoslovakia's loyalty to socialism.[28]

　　Other information on developments in Czechoslovakia in Petro Shelest's fund is generally random and fragmentary. This is rather surprising, especially as regards the Ukrainian minority in the eastern part of Slovakia. On 9 April, the Committee for State Security informed Petro Shelest that an extended meeting of the Central Committee of the Cultural Union of Ukrainian Workers (*Kulturna spilka ukrainskikh trudyashchikh Chekhoslovakii*) had taken place in Prešov on 11 March, whose appeal addressing the Ukrainians-Rusyns living in Czechoslovakia was published in the Ukrainian-language newspaper *Nove Zhytya* (New life) and supported autonomy within Czechoslovakia for the Ukrainian minority.[29] Another report on the situation in the region of East Slovakia, dated 30 May, devoted just one page to the status of the Ukrainian minority, claiming that "it has worsened due to the so-called democratization" and that its members felt threatened by Slovak nationalism; to avoid discrimination, they claimed allegiance to the Slovak nation and opposed the introduction of the Ukrainian language in schools. At the same time, activities of the Cultural Union of Ukrainian Workers were struggling with many obstacles. This situation was, according to the KGB report, being made use of "Ukrainian nationalist elements to activate their operations."[30]

"Maintaining Socialism Is Possible Only with the Help of Soviet People"

Allegedly acting on his own initiative, Mr. Majer met representatives of the Ukrainian KGB again, on 17 April and 13 May 1968. During the first meeting, to which he was accompanied by Colonel Koval, he still claimed that developments following the most recent meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia had been positive and that "the number of uncontrolled radio, TV or press presentations is decreasing and there has been a substantial reduction of the number of demagogical speeches," with the "ongoing events being under the control of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia."[31]

28　*Ibid.*
29　Information report for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic No. 263/n dated 9 April 1968: Discussion of the Ukrainian minority concerning the status of Ukrainians in Czechoslovakia. In: Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů [online]. [Cit. 2019.11.01.] Available at: *https://www.ustrcr.cz/data/pdf/projekty/srpen1968/zpravy-kgb/0006.pdf*.
30　Information report for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic No. 480/n dated 30 May 1968: General information on the political situation in the region of East Slovakia. In: Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů [online]. [Cit. 2019.11.01.] Available at: *https://www.ustrcr.cz/data/pdf/projekty/srpen1968/zpravy-kgb/0036.pdf*.
31　Information report for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic No. 320/n dated 24 April 1968: Meeting of officers of the [Košice] Directorate of the Ministry of Interior of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the KGB

During the May meeting, he already spoke about "the activation of anti-socialist forces, demagogical and anarchistic elements," right-wing intelligentsia and Zionist elements controlling the media.[32]

Shelest was receiving warning reports from multiple East Slovak sources from mid-May 1968. Some of them were produced by Captain Široký, Commanding Officer of the State Security (StB) station in Čierna nad Tisou, who on 13 May allegedly stated, *inter alia*, that "the Czechoslovak people are sure that if the rule of socialism [...] in the country was threatened, the Soviet people and their army would provide appropriate armed assistance to them."[33] It is true that he was pleased, early in June, that "the situation in the State Security forces has been visibly improving. Their structures are dissociating themselves from the MV [Ministry of Interior] system and organizing a committee under the government. The committee is headed by a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, Comrade Shelkovich (*sic*), of Slovak nationality, participant in the Second World War, a wartime partisan[34] known for his objective and principled attitudes"; however, he also noted that "there has been a visible activation of Sudetenland Germans" who often visited Czechoslovak border regions. He also claimed there was an increased presence of members of US armed forces in western parts of the country.[35]

Captain Široký's opinion that "maintaining socialism in the current situation is possible only with the help of Soviet people" was supported by Ivan Haščák,[36]

Directorate of the Trans-Carpathian Region. In: Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů [online]. [Cit. 2019.11.01.] Available at: *https://www.ustrcr.cz/data/pdf/projekty/srpen1968/zpravy-kgb/0013.pdf*.

32 Information report for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic No. 402/n dated 16 May 1968: Meeting of officers of the [Košice] Directorate of the Ministry of Interior of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the KGB Directorate of the Trans-Carpathian Region. In: Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů [online]. [Cit. 2019.11.01.] Available at: *https://www.ustrcr.cz/data/pdf/projekty/srpen1968/zpravy-kgb/0025.pdf*.

33 *Ibid.*

34 Probably Viliam Šalgovič, who was at that time a member of the Central Control and Auditing Commission of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, maintaining close contacts with Soviet security forces, but he had never been a partisan.

35 Information report for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic No. 522/n dated 12 June 1968: Meeting of officers of the [Košice] Directorate of the Ministry of Interior of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the KGB Directorate of the Trans-Carpathian Region. In: Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů [online]. [Cit. 2019.11.01.] Available at: *https://www.ustrcr.cz/data/pdf/projekty/srpen1968/zpravy-kgb/0046.pdf*.

36 Ján Haščák (born in 1923, of Ukrainian nationality and Orthodox religion); he joined the State Security in 1949, attended a one-year course for operatives in the Soviet Union in 1956, then was Deputy Chief of the Regional Directorate of the Ministry of Interior in Košice, in 1963 he was dismissed for health reasons. Until 1970 he was Deputy Chief of the Fourth Department of the State Security Regional Directorate in Košice, in 1973 he advanced to the position of Chief of the Fourth Department. In his biography written for the State Security in 1972, he mentioned that he had been concerned by anti-Soviet speeches

head of the Fourth Department of the State Security Regional Directorate of East Slovakia, in a letter dated 21 May and addressed to Deputy Chairman of the Ukrainian KGB Troyak.[37] At the same time, even more alarming reports were delivered to Kiev. The first one was written by Jozef Černický,[38] Senior Lieutenant serving at the State Security station in Čierna nad Tisou. It claimed that a 18 May rally in Prague had demanded "the end of friendship with the Soviet Union, toppling of the government of Dubček, Svoboda and Černík, and the departure from the Warsaw Treaty."[39] The second letter arrived to Shelest's desk directly from Prague. Addressed to Sergei Khlopkov, ex-advisor of Czechoslovak security forces, the chief of an unspecified department of the local State Security Headquarters Jindřich Beneš[40] was describing the situation in Czechoslovakia as "being even worse than before February 1948."[41]

According to available documents, the highest-placed informers of the Ukrainian KGB were Ondrej Dovina, State Security Chief in the East Slovak Region, and Ján Hanuliak, Dovina's deputy.[42] In a "special report" dated 4 April Petro Shelest was

and appearances during the Prague Spring and that he had maintained written contacts with his Ukrainian counterparts. (According to the personal file of Ján Haščák deposited in the Security Services Archive.)

37 Information report for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic No.175 dated 28 May 1968: Information provided by the State Security of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic for Deputy Chairman of the KGB of the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. In: Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů [online]. [Cit. 2019.11.01.] Available at: *https://www.ustrcr.cz/data/pdf/projekty/ srpen1968/zpravy-kgb/0038.pdf*.

38 Jozef Černický (born in 1933) joined the State Security in 1956 and worked in various positions in the Department of Railway Transportation of the Ministry of Interior. In 1970, he was promoted to Deputy Chief of the State Security Department in Spišská Nová Ves, and he retired for health reasons in August 1979. (According to the personal file of Jozef Černický deposited in the Security Services Archive.)

39 Information report for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic No. 434/n dated 21 May 1968: Information concerning events in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. In: Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů [online]. [Cit. 2019.11.01.] Available at: *https://www.ustrcr.cz/data/pdf/projekty/srpen1968/zpravy-kgb/0031.pdf*.

40 Jindřich Beneš (born in 1926), a wartime partisan in the region of Třebíč, then a member of the National Security Corps. In August 1968, he was the Chief of the Sixth Department of the National Security Corps Regional Directorate in Prague, and he worked in the Secretariat of the Deputy Minister of Interior after the occupation. In 1984, he retired on his own request. (According to the personal file of Jindřich Beneš deposited in the Security Services Archive. In the Soviet document, he is referred to as Beneš Jindra.)

41 Information report for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic No. 474/n dated 31 May 1968: Information about the situation in Czechoslovakia. In: Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů [online]. [Cit. 2019.11.01.] Available at: *https://www.ustrcr.cz/data/pdf/projekty/srpen1968/zpravy-kgb/0040.pdf*.

42 For unclear reasons, the Ukrainian KGB referred to Dovina as Deputy Chief and to Hanuliak as Department Head.

notified that they had met with leaders of the KGB Directorate of the Trans-Carpathi-
an Region upon their own request three days earlier, when Dovina had returned
from a business trip to Prague.[43] According to the six-page document, Dovina was
dividing participants in events in Czechoslovakia into three groups: the largest
one, consisting of people "defending the socialist orientation in domestic policy,
friendship and cooperation with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries."
Just like other KGB informers from mid-May, Dovina characterized the second
group as one comprising right-wing elements oriented to the West and striving for
"a restoration of the bourgeois order." Remaining participants in the Prague Spring
were, in Dovina's opinion, "demagogues, declassed and similar irresponsible ele-
ments with no clear political opinions." According to both Dovina and Hanuliak,
the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia was struggling for the socialist orientation
of the country with right-wingers. "All propaganda tools (newspapers, radio, TV)
have come into uncontrolled use by their editors-in-chief. This is why even the *Rudé
právo* daily, the newspaper of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of
Czechoslovakia, has been publishing articles the content of which contradicts the
line of the Central Committee," they complained. Both State Security officers also
criticized Polish and Hungarian media, accusing them of non-objective coverage
of events in Czechoslovakia, and shared their other impressions and guesses, such
as that Jozef Lenárt would no longer be the Prime Minister of the Czechoslovak

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Ondrej Dovina (born in 1925) joined the National Security Corps in September 1948;
in 1957, he attended a training course in operative work in Moscow, and then was appointed
Deputy Chief i/c operations of the State Security Regional Directorate in Košice. Between
May 1966 and January 1969, he was Chief of the State Security Regional Directorate in
Košice, between February 1969 and April 1974 he was Chief of the Main State Security Di-
rectorate of the Slovak Socialist Republic. From July 1974 to April 1984 he was First Deputy
Chief of the Main Directorate (Intelligence) of the Federal Ministry of Interior, then Senior
Officer-Specialist of the First Department of the Organization and Operations Section of the
National Security Corps Directorate of the capital city of Bratislava and the West Slovak
Region. He retired in late July 1987 in the rank of colonel. (According to the personal file of
Ondrej Dovina deposited in the Security Services Archive.)

Ján Hanuliak (1923–2000), joined the National Security Corps in 1946. He was moni-
toring the so-called eastern emigration (Ukrainian and Russian) in Košice in the 1950s. He
served as Deputy Chief (1966–1969) and then until 1970 Chief of the State Security Regional
Directorate in Košice. From 1970 he was Chief of the Fourth Directorate (Monitoring) of the
Federal Ministry of Interior, from February 1971 he was Deputy, and between 1973 and 1979
he was First Deputy of the Federal Minister of Interior. Then until 1980, he worked as a per-
sonal consultant of the Federal Minister of Interior and until July 1982 as the representative
of the Federal Ministry of Interior in the Soviet Union. (According to the personal file of Ján
Hanuliak deposited in the Security Services Archive.)

43 Extraordinary report for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukrainian
Soviet Socialist Republic No. 244/k dated 4 April 1968: A meeting of officers of the Czecho-
slovak State Security and the KGB Directorate of the Trans-Carpathian Region. In: Ústav
pro studium totalitních režimů [online]. [Cit. 2019.11.01.] Available at: *https://www.us-
trcr.cz/data/pdf/projekty/srpen1968/zpravy-kgb/0003.pdf*. (Instead of using the proper
version of the first names of the two officers, the report uses their incorrect initials – A.
Dovina and I. Hanuliak.)

government, that the situation among students had been calmed down by speeches of Speaker of the National Assembly Josef Smrkovský, or that US troops had been massing along the border of the Federal Republic of Germany, with their Ukrainian colleagues. They also spoke about ethnic problems in Czechoslovakia, pointing out that the position of Slovaks was not always equal to that of the Czechs.

Accompanied by his subordinate, Captain Sijka, Lieutenant Colonel Hanuliak met with representatives of the Ukrainian KGB once again on 17 May.[44] Having discussed current issues of joint operations, Hanuliak informed his counterparts about improvements of the domestic political situation after the Communist Party had tightened its control over propaganda tools. He explained that the so-called democratization process had indeed garnered widespread support and that the new Minister of Interior Josef Pavel was suffering from sclerosis and thus was unable to work, but that Dubček's leadership had already realized, in his opinion, that events had been proceeding in an undesirable direction. Hanuliak praised the State Security, whose officers had supported appeals of their leaders to the government; however, he claimed that Public Security (police) officers were not strong enough and that some of them had resigned to their membership in the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and joined the Czechoslovak Socialist Party. Hanuliak also notified his Ukrainian colleagues of a warning of the Polish Security Service (*Służba Bezpieczeństwa*) against a Jewish threat. According to the report, Jews, such as František Kriegel (mistakenly referred to as Kreper), Chairman of the Central Committee of the National Front, were trying to get hold of leading positions in Czechoslovakia. Hanuliak himself opined that it had been Jews rather than State Security officers and Soviet advisors accused by the press, who had been leading the country at that time and initiated the political trial of the ex-Secretary General of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia Rudolf Slánský. Hanuliak found just one positive effect of the ongoing events; the unveiling of all enemies of socialism and the Soviet Union.

In the summer months, the situation got even worse in the eyes of the East Slovak State Security Directorate. Dovina warned that "if the existing situation among leaders of the Communist Party continues, the political situation may indeed deteriorate (the Communist Party Congress will take place in September), and it will not be possible to deal with enemy forces without direct help of the Soviet Union." He even demanded an immediate meeting to hand over the translation of the "Two Thousand Words" manifesto to the Ukrainian KGB just one day after its publication. He himself regarded the text anti-socialistic, anti-state, and counter-revolutionary. However, he also gave the KGB an evaluation of the manifesto by

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44 Information report for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukrainian So-
    viet Socialist Republic No. 419/n dated 19 May 1968: Meeting of officers of the East Slovak
    Directorate of the Ministry of Interior of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the KGB
    Directorate of the Trans-Carpathian Region. In: Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů [on-
    line]. [Cit. 2019.11.01.] Available at: *https://www.ustrcr.cz/data/pdf/projekty/srpen1968/
    zpravy-kgb/0029.pdf*.

Alois Indra, Secretary of the Central Committee, which the latter had addressed to the First Secretary of the East Slovak Regional Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia. Dovina himself added that "assurances of Communist Party leaders that they control principal political *processes in the country do not match reality*."[45] On 1 July, the reports of the East Slovak State Security Directorate were delivered to Moscow and also made available to Petro Shelest.[46]

In August, Ján Hanuliak handed over additional documents to his Ukrainian KGB counterparts – an excerpt from an order of the Czechoslovak Minister of Interior the title of which was "Some measures to implement the first phase of the Action Programme of the Czechoslovak counterintelligence service." According to notes on the document, even that was passed on to the KGB Headquarters in Moscow.[47]

What Soviet Citizens Heard in Czechoslovakia

Compared to the information on Czechoslovakia provided by the State Security, which the Ukrainian KGB was passing on to Petro Shelest continuously and uncritically, it was making use of Soviet citizens to meet information needs of the Central Committee of Ukrainian Communist Party rather intermittently and more cautiously. Four reports produced by Soviet citizens in May 1968 only increased Petro Shelest's concerns. In early June, he noted in his diary that "a certain segment of young people, in particular students, and journalists are not orienting themselves too well in the complicated situation in Czechoslovakia and consequently, there are some unhealthy interpretations, such as that society needs 'unlimited democracy.' And very few people know what the 'unlimited democracy' is – that it can bring us to full-fledged anarchy."[48]

For example, Vassily Lyubchenko, a doctoral candidate of Kiev State University, who had been studying in Brno from 1967, evaluated the situation in Czechoslovakia

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45   Highlighted in the original when the text was processed at Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic.

46   Information report for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic No. 603/n dated 1 July 1968: Meeting of officers of the East Slovak Directorate of the Ministry of Interior of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the KGB Directorate of the Trans-Carpathian Region. In: Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů [online]. [Cit. 2019.11.01.] Available at: *https://www.ustrcr.cz/data/pdf/projekty/srpen1968/ zpravy-kgb/0106.pdf*.

47   Information report for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic No. 737/n dated 15 August 1968: Excerpt from the order of the Minister of Interior of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic "Some measures to implement the first phase of the Action Programme of the Czechoslovak counterintelligence service." In: Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů [online]. [Cit. 2019.11.01.] Available at: *https:// www.ustrcr.cz/data/pdf/projekty/srpen1968/zpravy-kgb/0182.pdf*.

48   SHELEST, P. Ye: … *da ne sudimy budete*, p. 316.

as unstable while visiting Kiev for a short time.[49] The so-called free discussion was, in his opinion, overflowing into hostile and abusive attacks against the Soviet Union and the Communist Party, and intellectuals were calling for an independent domestic and foreign policy. According to Lyubchenko, students expected that free discussion and democratic reforms would slowly find their way also among Soviet students. And, moreover, nationalists from Prešov had allegedly begun a campaign demanding the return of Carpathian Ruthenia to Czechoslovakia.

In a summary report dated 16 May, officers of the Ukrainian KGB stated that "Soviet citizens now in Czechoslovakia on business trips, as members of organized tourist groups, or on private visits are vividly commenting on events taking place in the country."[50] In doing so, they often quoted unspecified persons without providing any context or details. They claimed people in Czechoslovakia were talking about the publication of works of Soviet dissidents Yuli Markovich Daniel and Andrei Donatovich Sinyavsky, appeals to rehabilitate Jozef Tiso and Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk were spreading, while, on the other hand, Soviet flags were disappearing from houses, and restaurant workers were less and less willing to speak Russian. In another report, the hodgepodge was supplemented by a piece of information on a decomposition of the Czechoslovak People's Army allegedly caused by democratization provided to a holidaying Soviet citizen by Ladislav Prais, a retired major of the Czechoslovak air force and business director of the company Aero. The inconsistent document also reproduced statements of other Soviet citizens; they described, for example, a demonstration of students carrying "Away with the Russians!" banners in Pilsen; an alleged penetration of bourgeois representative to the government and trade unions; or a flood of West German tourists in Prague, who were expected to spread propaganda news about an occupation of Sudetenland by US troops.[51]

A somewhat more compact report dated 3 June described a meeting of a member of the State Dancing Troupe of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and Ladislav Pata, a former teacher and Communist Party official and at that time manager of a tourist camp off Chomutov, who had allegedly doubted the ability

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49 Information report for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic No. 401/n dated 15 May 1968: A story of Kiev State University student who left to study in Czechoslovakia in 1967. In: Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů [online]. [Cit. 2019.11.01.] Available at: *https://www.ustrcr.cz/data/pdf/projekty/srpen1968/zpravy-kgb/0024.pdf*.

50 Information report for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic No. 403/n dated 16 May 1968: Discussion of Soviet citizens who have visited Czechoslovakia on events taking place in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. In: Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů [online]. [Cit. 2019.11.01.] Available at: *https://www.ustrcr.cz/data/pdf/projekty/srpen1968/zpravy-kgb/0018.pdf*.

51 Information report for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic No. 413/n dated 16 May 1968: Reactions of Soviet citizens who visited Czechoslovakia to events taking place in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. In: Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů [online]. [Cit. 2019.11.01.] Available at: *https://www.ustrcr.cz/data/pdf/projekty/srpen1968/zpravy-kgb/0027.pdf*.

of the government and Communist Party representatives to stabilize the situation in the country.[52] Members of the Ukrainian Secret Service also informed Communist Party leaders in Kiev that they had dispatched one of their operatives as "counterintelligence protection" of a group of tourists from Donetsk visiting the Days of Ukraine in Czechoslovakia in June 1968. No report on this trip is available. However, Petro Shelest had access to the information concerning the Ukrainian festival, and provably used it in his confrontative speech during negotiations with the Czechoslovak Communist Party delegation in Čierna nad Tisou at the end of July, "critically pointing at certain provocations of hostile nationalist and chauvinist elements." He also complained that "Ukrainian artists were not given an opportunity of direct contacts with Czechoslovak workers."[53]

What Czechoslovak Citizens Were Writing to Ukraine

The Ukrainian KGB was monitoring correspondence from Czechoslovakia from the beginning of April 1968. Both Petro Shelest and the KGB Headquarters in Moscow were acquainted with contents of several (unfortunately undated) letters. L. Kuliková from Bratislava wrote to her acquaintance in Kiev about the abolition of censorship, rehabilitations, and planned federalization of the country. Yuri (probably Juraj) Chára from Prague confessed to an unnamed secondary school student from Odessa that everyone wanted a free and socialist Czechoslovakia and asked her to tell all her fellow students that "if your troops come to Czechoslovakia, many students, and me first, will fight as guerillas against all who want to destroy our freedom."[54]

Quotations from another five letters contained a conspicuously high frequency of words such as "revolution" or "*coup d'état*." For example, an unidentified woman wrote to her relative in Donetsk: "At the moment, there is a political coup going on in our country. There has been a no-confidence motion against several ministers and the president. Meetings take place everywhere, sometimes until 2 am or

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52 Information report for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic No. 482/n dated 3 June 1968: Information about events in Czechoslovakia. In: Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů [online]. [Cit. 2019.11.01.] Available at: *https://www.ustrcr.cz/data/pdf/projekty/srpen1968/zpravy-kgb/0037.pdf*.

53 VONDROVÁ Jitka – NAVRÁTIL, Jaromír: *Mezinárodní souvislosti československé krize 1967–1970: Červenec–srpen 1968* [The international context of the Czechoslovak crisis 1967–1970: July – August 1968]. (Prameny k dějinám československé krize 1967–1970 [Sources on the history of the Czechoslovak crisis 1967–1970], Vol. IV/2.) Praha – Brno, Ústav soudobých dějin AV ČR – Doplněk 1996, p. 130, Document 121.14 – Minutes of the speech of P. Shelest during the fourth session, Čierna nad Tisou, 30 July 1968, Note b.

54 Extraordinary report for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic No. 261/n dated 9 April 1968: Findings on how Czechoslovak citizens perceive and comment on the ongoing events. In: Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů [online]. [Cit. 2019.11.01.] Available at: *https://www.ustrcr.cz/data/pdf/projekty/srpen1968/zpravy-kgb/0004.pdf*.

longer. We are leaning towards the West, i.e. the United States, England, France, the Federal Republic of Germany and others, much more than towards the Soviet Union. For the time being, it is not the government, but students, the intelligentsia and many workers. Elections to municipal and regional councils and to the parliament will soon take place.[55] I think the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia will lose."[56] Only two days later, officers of the Ukrainian Secret Police reported another five letters from Czechoslovakia which allegedly repeated the motifs of *coup d'état*, revolution, and abolition of censorship; moreover, they also mentioned support to the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel.[57]

On 1 May, officers of the Ukrainian KGB passed texts of two letters from Czechoslovakia to addressees living in Carpathian Ruthenia to political leaders in Kiev. The first of them (written in the Ukrainian language) warned against risks of the abolition of censorship, "unclear" situation after the publication of the "Action Programme of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia," activation of the Greek Catholic Church, and rehabilitations which were allegedly supposed to include people who "were actively helping the fascists."[58] The second letter appreciated that Leonid Brezhnev had not supported the former supreme representative of the Communist Party and the state, Antonín Novotný, and that freedom and basic principles of democracy had been restored.[59] In his letter sent from Prešov to Volhynia, however, the author, A. Šlepecký, complained that "progress and democracy often turn into adventurism and anarchy. […] We must never forget that we were liberated by the heroic Soviet army and hundreds of thousands of its sons rest in eternal sleep in our country. […] If the orientation indeed changes, then there will be a genuine civil war. We will have no other option but to cross the Carpathian Mountains."[60]

The next report about letters from Czechoslovakia was submitted as late as at the end of July. First, on 24 July 1968, officers of the Ukrainian State Security sent their political leaders the full text of an intercepted letter written in Russian

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55　The elections to lower representative bodies (national committees at all levels) were planned for May 1968, those to the National Assembly and the Slovak National Assembly were to take place in November 1968. As a result of ongoing political events, the latter were postponed until November 1971.

56　*Ibid.*

57　Information report for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic No. 278/n dated 11 April 1968: Reactions of citizens of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic to ongoing events in the country. In: Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů [online]. [Cit. 2019.11.01.] Available at: *https://www.ustrcr.cz/data/pdf/projekty/ srpen1968/zpravy-kgb/0007.pdf*.

58　Information report for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic No. 338/n dated 1 May 1968: Letters of Czechoslovak citizens to Ukraine. In: Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů [online]. [Cit. 2019.11.01.] Available at: *https://www.ustrcr.cz/data/pdf/projekty/srpen1968/zpravy-kgb/0019.pdf*.

59　*Ibid.*

60　*Arhiv Sluzhby bezpeky Ukrainy*, Kiev (*ASBU*), fund (f.) 16, *opis* (signature – sign.) 1, sprava (file – sl.) 972, document (doc.) 15, Extraordinary report for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic No. 371/n dated 10 May 1968.

by 98 employees of the Design and Engineering Bureau of Vítkovice Steel Works in Ostrava to their counterparts working in Azovstal, Zhdanov (now Mariupol). It rebutted disinformation of the Soviet press about the situation in Czechoslovakia and assured the recipients of the dedication to socialism and friendship with the Soviet Union.[61] One day later, a letter written by Jan Král from Valašské Meziříčí and addressed to A. Shilin, a resident of Kiev, followed the same route. Its author criticized Czech journalists and signatories of the "Two Thousand Words" manifesto, and expressed his concerns that "reactionary forces might do the same what they did in Hungary" in 1956.[62] On 26 July, there was another letter written by Václav Mikulka, a secondary school student from Jarošov, district Uherské Hradiště, sent to Ella Gras from Ivano-Frankovsk, who confessed that reading articles in the Soviet newspapers *Pravda*, *Literaturnaya gazeta* and *Izvestia* "almost made me weep when I saw how they are deceiving people."[63]

What Ukrainian Citizens Were Thinking about Czechoslovakia

During the Prague Spring, most KGB reports from the territory of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic were monitoring sentiments and opinions of its own population. The reports generally have an identical structure, starting with a statement that most citizens view the events in line with the Communist Party, but that there are also some negative exceptions. The latter are subsequently described, including the names and professions of the people involved. The selection of quotations showing the "people's opinion" and subsequently presented to Ukrainian political leaders, as well as the impression they gave, suggest expediency or even attempted manipulations. The reports contain neither any analyses of events and presented information, nor any conclusions or predictions of further developments.

On 18 April, for example, Petro Shelest received KGB information on positive reactions of Ukrainian citizens to the resolution of the April plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union titled "On current problems of the international situation and the struggle of the CPSU for the unity of the global communist movement." Allegedly, "unhealthy" opinions

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61   Information report for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic dated 24 July 1968: An open letter of Czechoslovak workers addressed to the 'Azovstal' plant. In: Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů [online]. [Cit. 2019.11.01.] Available at: *https://www.ustrcr.cz/data/pdf/projekty/srpen1968/zpravy-kgb/0172.pdf*.

62   *ASBU*, f. 16, sign. 1, sl. 974, doc. 234, Extraordinary report for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic No. 669/n dated 25 July 1968.

63   Information report for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic No. 680/n dated 26 July 1968: A copy of a confiscated letter from the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. In: Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů [online]. [Cit. 2019.11.01.] Available at: *https://www.ustrcr.cz/data/pdf/projekty/srpen1968/zpravy-kgb/0174.pdf*.

about the work of the Central Committee's plenary meeting were voiced only by a "Jewish nationalist from Cherkassy," a housewife from the same city, an associate professor of the Civil Engineering Institute in Poltava (a member of the Communist Party), a lab worker of the Luhansk Mechanical Engineering Institute, and a group of firefighters of a furniture factory in Cherkassy. In their opinion, the meeting of the Central Committee was convened because of "anti-Soviet manifestations in Czechoslovakia and Poland. Some of them claimed the socialist camp was a mess and the plenary meeting was unlikely to be able to do something about it." The lab worker mentioned above, Oleg Kurash, allegedly told his colleagues that "Cuba and Yugoslavia have left the socialist camp because not everything is all right in the Soviet Union. This is why they are trying to build their own socialism, a national one […]. The events in Czechoslovakia and Poland could be expected, because none of them likes us and [they] can see how things look like in our country and they do not want their countries to look the same."[64] A few days later, officers of the Ukrainian Secret Service submitted yet another report on reactions to the April plenary meeting, in which they confirmed a prevalently positive reaction to Petro Shelest's speech – including his criticism of the development in Czechoslovakia, behind which he saw, *inter alia,* Zionists and Jewish nationalists. The report noted only six cases of disagreement.[65]

The level of attention which the Ukrainian secret police was giving to opinions of Ukrainian society at that time is illustrated by comments, often peculiar, which its members reported to their superiors. In the opinion of one secret police officer, for example, the main character of a play staged by the Kiev theatre for children *Devil's Mill* symbolized Ukraine; another thought that the dialogue of Beelzebub and his aide depicted a conversation between Antonín Novotný and Alexander Dubček – the aide suggested to Beelzebub that rank-and-file devils should have their horns and tails cut off because they get in the way of work and that the hell should be renamed.[66]

In mid-April, the Ukrainian KGB focused on Carpathian Ruthenia: "Most people in Carpathian Ruthenia view the situation in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic correctly and hope it will normalize as soon as possible." Out of eight opinions quoted, three criticized the appearance of Alexander Dubček at the latest meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. Events in Czechoslovakia were interpreted as a manifestation of antagonism between Czechs and Slovaks. According to Mr. Golovatyuk, an employee of a machinery plant in Uzhhorod, "people in Czechoslovakia are doing the right thing to drive out their former rulers. Ours should be ousted as well, and new ones should be

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64 *ASBU*, f. 16, sign. 1, sl. 971, doc. 177, Extraordinary report for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic No. 295/n dated 18 April 1968.

65 *Ibid.*, doc. 266, Information report for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic No. 314/n dated 27 April 1968.

66 *Ibid.*, doc. 176, Extraordinary report for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic No. 293/n dated 18 April 1968.

appointed." Other quoted reactions, for example, compared the direction followed by Czechoslovakia to the Hungarian events in 1956, or speculated about changes of Ukraine's western border. A driver of a forestry enterprise in Mukachevo thus allegedly stated that "many members of the Czechoslovak parliament and other officials are occupying themselves with the question how Transcarpathia could be returned to Czechoslovakia. The new government will consolidate its power and then the issue of Transcarpathia will emerge […]."[67]

Another six reports were composed along similar lines; four of them were written in May 1968 and concerned the conscription into the army and the departure of selected Soviet units to maneuvers in Poland and Czechoslovakia. Again, they contain many alleged quotations which lack any analytical assessment, but are sometimes provided with generalizing comments, such as: "Uniates and anti-Soviet elements approve events that are taking place in Czechoslovakia."[68] They also reiterate stereotypical statements about the West German threat and a potential military intervention to prevent the disintegration of the socialist camp. A certain Mr. Fedorov, a worker of the television factory in Lvov, thus allegedly stated that "the conscription into the army is necessary, as we must continuously strengthen defence capabilities of our country. The more so with the situation in Czechoslovakia being as unclear as it is. However, it borders on the Federal Republic of Germany and may easily fall prey to it. The conscription does have its reasons, both military and those related to the strengthening of the international position of the Soviet Union."[69] The same report writes that a certain Palashchuk, earlier tried and sentenced for nationalism, was heard to say among his acquaintances that "the Czechs are great guys," that they have won true freedom, and that Moscow would not be able to control them as before. Assuming that "the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and Cuba have parted company with Russia for good," he predicted a future "domino effect." "This is excellent – socialist countries will be the first to go and the Ukrainian nation will someday follow the Czech example and say: the time has come for Ukraine to be independent. This will surely happen."[70]

Taking into account a report similar to those described above, but also his own experience, Petro Shelest informed, in mid-June, Leonid Brezhnev about "his impressions, about the mood of people in western regions" of Ukraine, which he was visiting at that time. "People here perceive the disturbing events in Czechoslovakia

67 *Ibid.*, doc. 153, Extraordinary report for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic No. 286/n dated 16 April 1968.
68 Extraordinary report for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic No. 378/n dated 11 May 1968: Information about reactions of people to ongoing exercises of troops and international events. In: Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů [online]. [Cit. 2019.11.01.] Available at: *https://www.ustrcr.cz/data/pdf/projekty/srpen1968/zpravy-kgb/0034.pdf*.
69 *ASBU*, f. 16, sign. 1, sl. 972, doc. 16, Extraordinary report for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic No. 286/n dated 10 May 1968.
70 *Ibid.*

more sharply, they have been getting more information through their direct contacts with inhabitants of border regions. This is why they harbour a more realistic and truer view of all events that have been taking place in Czechoslovakia," he wrote in his diary.[71]

Another report of the Ukrainian secret police from late July contains one of just a few attempts to derive some more general conclusions from information learned "in the field." It claims that "an analysis of documents about reactions of people living in the republic to events in Czechoslovakia shows that an overwhelming majority of our people approve and fully support the policy of the Communist Party and the Soviet government. In their speeches and evaluations of the situation existing in Czechoslovakia, representatives of workers, farmers, the working intelligentsia emphasize that the absence of a strict Communist Party line, cosmopolitism, fawning over the bourgeois way of life, and "a too short memory – they have forgotten about the war" have resulted in a threat to the rule of socialism in Czechoslovakia. Compared to the previous months, in particular those preceding the plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia,[72] the interest in events taking place in Czechoslovakia has somewhat decreased. […] It is emphasized that everything has been inspired and been taking place under the control of the United States and the Federal Republic of Germany."[73] The same document contained customary information to the effect that a Czechoslovak citizen, named Moshkovich, a lawyer by profession, stated, in an unspecified conversation with a Soviet citizen, that "the influence of Western countries is being felt, for which free access to Czechoslovakia across the western border is very important," or that employees of a paper mill in Rožňava stated during their June visit to Ukraine that "they have been dreaming that Soviet troops will remain in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic."[74]

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71 SHELEST, P. Ye.: … *da ne sudimy budete*, p. 319.

72 It is difficult to determine which plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia the report refers to. Probably the most important meeting was the one which took place at the turn of March and April and which adopted the "Action Programme of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia" and made some personal changes in the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. The meeting at the turn of May and June decided, *inter alia,* that the 14th extraordinary congress of the Communist Party would take place in September. The last meeting of the Central Committee prior to the report's date took place on 8 July and reacted to the critical letter of leaders of Communist Parties of the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Hungary, the German Democratic Republic and Poland addressed to the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.

73 Information report for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic No. 649/n dated 17 July 1968: Reactions of people of the republic to events in Czechoslovakia. In: Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů [online]. [Cit. 2019.11.01.] Available at: *https://www.ustrcr.cz/data/pdf/projekty/srpen1968/zpravy-kgb/0170.pdf*.

74 *Ibid.*

Before the meeting in Čierna nad Tisou, Petro Shelest received a summary report of the Ukrainian KGB dated 26 July, which notified him that an anonymous postcard addressed to the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and to Alexander Dubček had been confiscated at a post office in Dnepropetrovsk. It read as follows: "Dear Comrade Dubček, workers and the intelligentsia of the Soviet Union support you and the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia on the day the criminal statement of Kremlin scoundrels,[75] who had sold the cause of socialism decades ago, is published. These rogues, such as Suslov and Brezhnev, are only afraid that their privileges might be taken away from them by a healthy hand of workers' criticism. You know it well yourself. I wish you every success, comrades. Petrov, a miner."[76]

Fear of Rehabilitations

The manner in which the Ukrainian KGB was informing Petro Shelest about events in Czechoslovakia prior to August 1968 reflect both animosity towards the Prague Spring and its representatives and a random choice of topics. It shows a more systematic interest only in rehabilitations of former political prisoners in Czechoslovakia.

Jan Minařík, the Chief of Border Guards of Bratislava Airport, told a KGB operative in late May that "some of them have taken hold of top positions in the government and the Communist Party. Commissions examining cases of violations of laws by various officials have been established all over the country." The rather confused report also contains information about a request of Pilsen workers to restore and renovate the statue of former President Masaryk and an assessment of Czechoslovak events as a counterrevolution by a Max Lenderle, a member of the Communist Party of Austria and owner of a shop in Vienna.[77]

The report prepared by the Ukrainian secret police in late July was specifically dedicated to Club 231, which had been established in the spring of 1968, as well as its "objectives and hostile activities." According to information it contained,

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75 It was probably the so-called Warsaw letter dated 14 July 1968, addressed to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, in which the supreme Communist Party representatives of five Warsaw Treaty countries (the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Hungary, the German Democratic Republic and Poland) criticized Czechoslovak leaders for the loss of control over the situation and essentially presented an ultimatum demanding a rectification and suppression of "right-wing forces."

76 *ASBU*, f. 16, sign. 1, sl. 9724, doc. 278, Information report for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic No. 677/n dated 26 July 1968.

77 Information report for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic No. 437/n dated 21 May 1968: Information about events in Czechoslovakia and rehabilitations of political prisoners. In: Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů [online]. [Cit. 2019.11.01.] Available at: *https://www.ustrcr.cz/data/pdf/projekty/srpen1968/zpravy-kgb/0032.pdf*.

some former political prisoners had spoken out in favour of a violent overthrow of the existing political system and a restoration of "Masarykian democracy." Moreover, Club 231 was to enjoy support of the Minister of Interior himself, and the atmosphere of resistance against the policy of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia was supposed to be fueled by press, radio, and TV.[78] The last report dedicated to Club 231 was a translation of a 16-page document provided by members of the Czechoslovak Ministry of Interior, which claimed that leaders of Club 231 consisted mostly of former agents of the US intelligence service.[79] It was sent on 19 August and records show that Petro Shelest read it on 20 August, by which time the occupation of Czechoslovakia had already begun.

"To Advance from Endless Talks to Concrete Actions"

We do not know the extent of the influence of the Ukrainian KGB on conclusions drawn by the First Secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party in the summer of 1968. Even before mid-June, Petro Shelest made the following entry in his diary: "Based on submitted documents, information, letters, messages from abroad and my own analyses, I am coming to the conclusion that an unavoidable political catastrophe is unfolding in Czechoslovakia."[80] His contacts with the Ukrainian secret service were very intensive and also supported his connection with the "healthy forces" in Czechoslovakia. As early as in late March, its commander Vitaly Fedotovych Nikitchenko[81] and Chief Secretary of the Communist Party in the region of Transcarpathia Yuri Vasilevich Ilnitski (Yuri Vasylovych Ilnytsky) passed him a message of Vasil Biľak, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, and Chief Secretary of the East Slovak Regional Committee of the

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78 Information report for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic No. 688/n dated 29 July 1968: On hostile activities of members of the so-called "Club 231" (K-231) in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. In: Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů [online]. [Cit. 2019.11.01.] Available at: *https://www.ustrcr.cz/ data/pdf/projekty/srpen1968/zpravy-kgb/0181.pdf*.

79 Report for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic No. 741/n dated 19 August 1968: Hostile activities of the so-called "Club 231" (K-231) in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. In: Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů [online]. [Cit. 2019.11.01.] Available at: *https://www.ustrcr.cz/data/pdf/projekty/sr- pen1968/zpravy-kgb/0082.pdf*.

80 SHELEST, P. Ye.: … *da ne sudimy budete*, p. 318.

81 Colonel General Vitaly Fedotovich Nikitchenko (1908–1992) was the Chairman of the Committee for State Security of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic between 1954 and 1970 and then the Commander of the University of the Committee for State Security of the Soviet Union in Moscow until 1974; he continued to lecture there until his retirement in 1978. (See LYSYUK, Yuri – CHYSNIKOV, Volodymyr: Kerivnyky orhaniv derzhavnoi bezpeky radzhanskoi Ukrainy (1953–1991). In: Sluzhba bezpeky Ukrainy [online]. [Cit. 2019.11.01.] Available at: *https://web.archive.org/web/20071212210416/http://www.sbu.gov.ua/sbu/ doccatalog/document?id=39284*.)

Communist Party of Slovakia Ján Koscelanský[82] asking for a meeting in Uzhhorod, which, as Shelest recalls in his memoirs, Brezhnev did not approve.[83] The meeting took place only on 24 and 25 May, and Biľak (himself a Rusyn) outlined to Shelest Dubček's incapability and unwillingness to deal with "right-wing elements" in the Communist Party and state structures, whose threats had allegedly driven many Communist Party officials and State Security officers to suicide.[84]

With the KGB's assistance Petro Shelest met with Vasil Biľak again on the night of 20 and 21 July at the Balaton Lake, Hungary. He also noted Biľak's words about "shock, fear, and even panic after the publication of the letter of five Warsaw Treaty countries,"[85] whereupon he urged him: "We need a letter from you, which would outline your request for assistance. We guarantee that neither the letter nor its authors will be published." The future top protagonist of the normalization allegedly answered: "If we are not strong enough, we will contact you with a request for help."[86]

From his position of the first man of the Ukrainian Communist Party, Shelest participated in organizational preparations of the Soviet delegation's trip to the meeting in Čierna nad Tisou on 29 July to 1 August 1968, including the accommodation of its members in railway carriages on the Soviet side of the border, to which they retired for the night and during breaks in the negotiations. According to his memoirs, he discussed specific measures, including "sanitary support, protection and catering" on the phone with the Chairman of the All-Union Committee for State Security Yuri Andropov on 25 July, with whom he also shared his opinion, namely that it was necessary to "advance from endless talks to concrete actions."[87] Even before the negotiations started, he, having studied the "mail," had made an entry to the effect that "the situation in Czechoslovakia is increasingly

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82   At the time of the Prague Spring, Ján Koscelanský (1926– 2010) was the Chief Secretary of the East Slovak Regional Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia, from 1966 he was a member of the Central Committees of the Communist Party of Slovakia and the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, between 1966 and 1968 he was a deputy of the National Assembly and then a deputy of the House of the People of the Federal Assembly. In 1971, however, he found himself on the "List of persons recommended for inclusion in the central register of representatives and exponents of right-wing elements" approved by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. (See Funkcionári KSČ a KSS [Officials of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and the Communist Party of Slovakia]. In: Ústa*v* pamäti národa [online]. [Cit. 2019.11.01.] Available at: *https://www.upn. gov.sk/projekty/funkcionari-ksc-kss/vysledky-vyhladavania/?priezvisko=Koscelansk%C3% BD*; Seznam osob doporučených k zařazení do jednotné centrální evidence představitelů a exponentů pravice **ústředním** výborem KSČ [List of persons recommended for inclusion in the central register of representatives and exponents of right-wing elements]. In: Totalita.cz [online]. [Cit. 2019.11.01.] Available at: *http://www.totalita.cz/seznamy/exp_prav_ smernice_seznam_01.pdf.*)
83   SHELEST, P. Ye.: … *da ne sudimy budete*, p. 307.
84   *Ibid.*, pp. 310–313.
85   They refer again to the so-called Warsaw letter.
86   *Ibid.*, pp. 348–350.
87   *Ibid.*, p. 355.

more complex and dangerous, it is necessary to take more decisive measures, otherwise it will be too late, a lot of blood may be shed, and we will be the first to bear tremendous costs, including political ones."[88]

In his sharp speech in Čierna nad Tisou on 30 July, which provoked Alexander Dubček into leaving the room and subsequently protesting against its tone and content, Shelest complained about negative effects of Czechoslovak media on Ukrainian society: "Your TV shows, your radio programmes, your newspapers and magazines distributed into our regions closest to your borders make our people ask questions which are full of embarrassment."[89] He specifically mentioned "thousands, tens of thousands" copies of the "Two Thousand Words" proclamation sent to Ukraine, and he also stated that the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia did not have matters under control, allowing Czechoslovak citizens to sign a petition against the "Warsaw letter" of the five member countries of the Warsaw Treaty. He was also concerned about alleged requirements for a revision of borders and return of Carpathian Ruthenia.[90]

For Petro Shelest, the main event of the subsequent meeting of supreme representatives of the Communist Parties of the six Soviet Bloc countries in Bratislava on 3 August was a secret meeting with Vasil Biľak, which he had been eagerly waiting for. It involved the hand-over of the notorious "letter of invitation" and Shelest's diary entry confirms the well-known course of the meeting: "In the evening, I finally met Biľak and we agreed that he would visit public toilets at 8 pm, that I would appear there at the same time, and he would then hand over the letter to me through our KGB officer Savchenko. And this was how it happened. We met 'by accident' in the toilets and Savchenko furtively passed me an envelope containing the long-awaited letter."[91]

The diary entry dated 16 August, when preparations for the invasion had already been in full swing, offers Shelest's justification of the fatal decision: "Czechoslovak leaders did not have any control over the situation in the country and in the Communist Party. The Bratislava declaration of the five parties is not being implemented, right-wing elements and social democrats have been using it to foment nationalism and anti-Sovietism. Everything is as tense as it could get. If we do not take extraordinary and the harshest possible measures now, a civil war may break out in Czechoslovakia and we will lose it as a socialist state, there will be an extraordinary situation in Europe which will pose a threat of major armed conflicts and perhaps even a war. The decision to take the extraordinary measures was not easy, but we had wasted everything and there is now no other solution

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88 *Ibid.*
89 VONDROVÁ J. – NAVRÁTIL, J.: *Mezinárodní souvislosti československé krize 1967–1970*, Vol. 2, p. 126, Document 121.14 – Minutes of the speech of P. Shelest during the fourth session, Čierna nad Tisou, 30 July 1968.
90 *Ibid., p*. 128. Also see SHELEST, P.: … *da ne sudimy budete*, pp. 376–379.
91 SHELEST, P.: … *da ne sudimy budete*, p. 384.

or way out. We all understand that this step may bring a threat of political and military complications."[92]

Conclusion

The First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic was obviously a supporter of a hardline approach towards the Prague Spring, and he was acting accordingly. Just like in cases of Władysław Gomułka or Walter Ulbricht, his primary motivation was fear of a "contagion" of the society in his own country. The abolition of censorship in Czechoslovakia was echoing extensively in the Soviet Union, and not just among the generation of so-called "Sixtiers" – writers and artists whose activities and influence were a great challenge for Communist Party leaders anyway, one of the reasons being that many of them were also communists. This was also one of the reasons why Petro Shelest was devoting much attention to mass media in Czechoslovakia, frequently stressing that the Communist Party did not control them.

The information provided to Shelest and other Ukrainian leaders, but also to the KGB Headquarters in Moscow, by the Ukrainian Committee for State Security during the months preceding the August occupation gave a substantially distorted picture of the situation. While it is true that the nature of operations of secret services is characterized by efforts to warn against potential risks and threats, Ukrainian KGB's reports contain various clichés, ideological rhetoric, inaccuracies, and downright nonsenses rather than relevant information and analyses of events unfolding in Czechoslovakia. Under the circumstances, the uncritical use of State Security officers, who were often acting out of fear and on their own account (and were probably violating laws in effect at that time and also their oath of enlistment) as one of principal sources of information might seem logical, but only contributed to distorted pictures of the situation which the chief of the Ukrainian Communist Party and other Soviet leaders were harbouring. They were thus getting an impression that "right-wing elements" were indeed winning in Czechoslovakia, that anti-Soviet propaganda was prevailing, that Czechoslovakia was making preparations to leave the Warsaw Treaty, that Western intelligence services were being strengthened, and that there was a threat of a repetition of Hungarian events in 1956 and a civil war. The assessment of Petr Grigorenko, mentioned at the beginning of the article, was much more accurate, its author being able to perceive, even without the mighty security machine, almost universal support the Prague Spring reform movement and its representatives were enjoying among the public.

It is still impossible to give an unequivocal answer to the question whether the Ukrainian factor played a specific role in the dramatic climax of the "Czechoslovak crisis" in the summer of 1968. However, based on the current state of knowledge,

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92   *Ibid.*, p. 390.

it seems obvious that Petro Shelest as one of the prime movers was pushing the course of events towards a violent solution and that he had specific reasons for doing so, namely an intensive feeling of threatened stability of the regime in the part of the Soviet state which bordered Czechoslovakia.

This is an updated version of the article entitled Ukrajinský faktor pražského jara? Petro Šelest a československý rok 1968 ve světle dokumentů ukrajinské tajné bezpečnosti *that was published in* Soudobé dějiny, *Vol. 26, No. 4 (2019), pp. 558–584.*

Abstract
*Petro Shelest (1908–1997), the First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and a member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, was one of the strongest advocates of an armed invasion of Czechoslovakia among Soviet leaders in 1968. The Soviet leadership tasked him to maintain contacts with the so-called healthy forces in the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia; in the beginning of August, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia Vasil Biľak (1917–2014) secretly handed over to him the notorious "letter of invitation" in public lavatories in Bratislava. The author asks a fundamental question whether it is possible to identify a specific Ukrainian factor which stepped into the Prague Spring process and contributed to its tragic end. He attempts to capture Shelest's position in the decision-making process and describe information that Shelest was working with. To this end, he has made use of reports of the Committee for State Security (*Komitet gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti – KGB*) of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic on developments in Czechoslovakia and reactions thereto among Ukrainian citizens produced in the spring and summer of 1968, which were being sent to Shelest and other Ukrainian leaders. These documents have lately been made available in Ukrainian archives and partly published on the website of the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes. Their analysis brings the author to a conclusion that they were offering a considerably distorted picture of the situation. Instead of relevant information and analyses, they only present various clichés, ideological rhetoric, inaccuracies, or downright nonsenses. Their source were often members of the Czechoslovak State Security who were often motivated by worries about their own careers and existence and were acting on their own. The uncritical acceptance of the documents contributed to a situation in which in the leader of the Ukrainian Communists and other Soviet representatives were creating unrealistic pictures of the events taking place in Czechoslovakia, believing that anti-socialist forces were winning, anti-Soviet propaganda was prevailing, and Western intelligence agencies were strengthening their position in Czechoslovakia, and that there was a threat that*

the events that had taken place in Hungary in 1956 would repeat themselves again. As indicated by his published diary entries and other documents, Petro Shelest was using these allegations both in discussions inside his own party and during negotiations with Czechoslovak politicians. Just like in the case of the leaders of Polish and East German Communists, Władysław Gomułka and Walter Ulbricht, respectively, the principal reason why Shelest was promoting a solution of the Czechoslovak crisis by force was, in the author's opinion, his fear of "contagion" of his own society by events taking place in Czechoslovakia which the Ukraine shared a border with.

"It Is Necessary to Draw a Lesson"

The Development of Political Structures of the Warsaw Treaty Organization between 1985 and 1989

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In May 1985, the Warsaw Treaty Organization completed the first three decades of its existence. The military and political alliance of the Eastern Bloc countries had undergone substantial changes during this period. In the era of the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Nikita Khrushchev, the organization's functioning was reflecting the overall style of his not too consistent foreign policy, which was basically composed of a motley collection of poorly harmonized campaigns not thought out in depth. Meetings of the alliance were thus very irregular and generally convened for the sole purpose of proclaiming support to current Soviet initiatives. After Khrushchev's fall, the new Soviet leadership headed by Leonid Brezhnev attempted to stabilize the Eastern Bloc. These efforts also included the implementation of more systematic cooperation within the hitherto inconsistently functioning Warsaw Pact.[1] The Soviet dominance in the alliance was not to be affected, but the other members were to be given a feeling of a greater respect on the part of Moscow, which was supposed to strengthen their loyalty towards the organization. The changes implemented during Brezhnev's era did not make the Warsaw Treaty the prime mover of events

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1   See BÍLÝ, Matěj: Počátky pokusu o reformu Varšavské smlouvy v 60. letech 20. století [Beginnings of the attempt to reform the Warsaw Treaty Organization in the 1960s]. In: *The Twentieth Century / Dvacáté století*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (2011), pp. 159–161.

in the Soviet sphere of interest in Europe. The alliance's structures were not too active in this respect, and the agenda of meetings therefore was, as a rule, decided in Moscow. Political activities of the Warsaw Treaty were not determining developments in the Eastern Bloc – on the contrary, they were reflecting the general situation in the region, changing strategies of Kremlin, and the evolution of the relationship between the Soviet Union and its European satellites. Symptomatically, the organization's political activities were culminating at the time of the biggest foreign policy offensive of Brezhnev's leadership – the efforts aimed at *détente* since the end of the 1960s until the mid-1970s. With the onset of the subsequent period of Brezhnev's regime, the Warsaw Pact somewhat fell into passivity as well. At that time, the Soviet Union unsurprisingly did not act as a *de facto* hegemon in the organization most of the time, although there were some exceptions to it. The fact that the Soviet Union was treating, from the 1970s, other members of the Warsaw Pact more tactfully and with at least some measure of respect, no matter how illusory that respect might have been, was not enough for the Warsaw Treaty to shed its image of a tool of the Soviet political and military oppression. Half-baked attempts to modify its mechanisms during the short spells of Soviet leaders Yuri Andropov and Konstantin Chernenko reflected the finding that the existing foreign policy of the Soviet Union was untenable and needed changes. Still, the Warsaw Pact remained fully tied to Cold War reality characterized mainly the geopolitical division into the Eastern and Western Bloc.

Research into the history of the Warsaw Treaty Organization has advanced a lot in the last decade. First monographs based on archival documents and mapping selected segments of the organization's history, and not just through the prism of individual member states,[2] started appearing. However, the period after 1985, i.e. after Mikhail Gorbachev became the leader of Soviet communists, has hitherto been covered only

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2   Basic summaries of the history of the Warsaw Treaty Organization based on archival documents appear in prefaces or introductory chapters of editions of documents, namely: MASTNÝ, Vojtěch – BYRNE, Malcolm (ed.): *A Cardboard Castle? An Inside History of the Warsaw Pact*. New York, Central European University Press 2005, pp. 1–74; LUŇÁK, Petr (ed.): *Plánování nemyslitelného* [Planning the unthinkable]. Praha, Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR – Dokořán 2007, pp. 1–81. More detailed analyses of selected periods are presented in the following monographs: CRUMP, Laurien: *The Warsaw Pact Reconsidered: International Relations in Eastern Europe, 1955–69*. London – New York, Routledge 2015; BÍLÝ, Matěj: *Varšavská smlouva 1969–1985: Vrchol a cesta k zániku* [The Warsaw Pact 1969–1985: The pinnacle and path to dissolution]. Praha, Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů 2016. The Polish and Romanian views on selected periods are dealt with in the following monographs: JARZĄBEK, Wanda: *PRL w politycznych strukturach Układu Warszawskiego w latach 1955–1980*. Warszawa, Polska Akademia Nauk 2008; DUMITRU, Laurenţiu Cristian: *Romania and the Warsaw Pact, 1955–1968: From Obedience to Defiance*. B. m., Italian Academic Publishing 2014. Studies on specific issues can be found, in particular, in the following collections: HEISS, Marry Ann – PAPACOSMA, Victor S. (ed.): *NATO and the Warsaw Pact: Intrabloc Conflicts*. Kent, Kent State University 2008; DIEDRICH, Torsten – HEINEMANN, Winfried – OSTERMANN, Christian (ed.): *Der Warschauer Pakt: Von der Gründung bis zum Zusammenbruch 1955 bis 1991*. Berlin, Christoph Links 2009.

in a very basic manner.[3] A deeper analysis of how the alliance was operating at that time and how important it was is absent. The presented study attempts to fill in the "white spot." Using results of archival research in Czech, German and Polish archives and published sources, it analyzes substantial changes in the functioning of political structures of the Warsaw Treaty Organization in practice, which occurred between 1985 and 1989, i.e. between the advent of Mikhail Gorbachev and the fall of state socialist dictatorships in Eastern Europe. The understanding of the shifts can significantly facilitate further research of the Warsaw Pact in Gorbachev's era, in particular its agenda and its role in the power system of the Soviet sphere of interest in Eastern Europe in the final phase of the Cold War. It can also provide an initial framework for an analysis of the dynamic change of policies of each member state, which was taking place at that time. The study covers the period till the end of 1989. As a matter of fact, the dramatic events of those days substantially influenced the future functioning of the Warsaw Pact, a proper evaluation of which would require both more space and further research.

The study focuses on political bodies of the Warsaw Treaty Organization and does not reflect developments in its military structures. This approach is, in my opinion, justified, the main reason being that the Warsaw Pact's political and military structures were, to a substantial degree, operating separately. Although armed forces of the Eastern Bloc countries were always subordinated to political power, the alliance's military bodies did acquire some degree of autonomy in the 1970s. Leading state and Communist Party representatives of member countries were notified of the agenda of forthcoming military negotiations, but they were only expressing their formal consent with them and were not interfering with their course at all. Romania and particularly the Soviet Union were exceptions to the above rule. The Soviet political leadership was regularly checking the agenda proposed by the alliance'sCommand of Unified ForcesUnified Command and, if necessary,

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3   MASTNÝ, V. – BYRNE, M. (ed.): *A Cardboard Castle?*, pp. 57–72; MASTNÝ, V.: *Learning from the Enemy: NATO as a Model for the Warsaw Pact*. Zürich, Forschungsstelle für Sicherheitspolitik und Konfliktanalysen der ETH 2001, pp. 37–44; IDEM: The Warsaw Pact: An Alliance in Search of a Purpose: In: HEISS, M. A. – PAPACOSMA, S. V. (ed.): *NATO and the Warsaw Pact*, p. 154; LUŇÁK, P. (ed.): *Plánování nemyslitelného*, pp. 69–80; BAEV, Jordan: The End of the Warsaw Pact, 1985–1991: Viewed from the Bulgarian Archives [2000]. In: Parallel History Project on Cooperative Security (PHP) [online]. © 2000–2010 Center for Security Studies, Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich. [Cit. 2018-12-06.] Available at: *http://www.php.isn.ethz.ch/lory1.ethz.ch/collections/coll_bulgaria/introduction01f8.html?navinfo=15341*; BÉKÉS, Csaba: Hungary in the Warsaw Pact, 1954–1989: Documents on the Impact of a Small State within the Eastern Bloc [2003]. In: *Ibid.* [online, cit. 2018-12-06]. Available at: *http://www.php.isn.ethz.ch/lory1.ethz.ch/collections/coll_hun/intro07f3.html?navinfo=15711*; LOCHER, Anna: Shaping the Policies of the Alliance: The Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Warsaw Pact, 1976–1990 [2001]. In: *Ibid.* [online, cit. 2018-12-06]. Available at: *http://www.php.isn.ethz.ch/lory1.ethz.ch/collections/coll_cmfa/cmfa_intro7e2f.html?navinfo=15699*.

made corrections to it.[4] A preliminary analysis of military sources from the period dealt with in this study confirms what former Polish diplomat Jerzy Nowak said, namely that the situation had prevailed even during Gorbachev's era, some minor changes notwithstanding.[5] Moreover, we have just a rudimentary idea of complex workings of the alliance's military structures after 1985. A meaningful examination of the relationship between military bodies of the Warsaw Pact and political leaderships of member countries, particularly the Soviet Union, requires a more detailed analysis. At the same time, one must bear in mind that the Warsaw Treaty Organization was not fulfilling only a military role, but had always retained a significant political dimension, deep-rooted opinions notwithstanding. As a matter of fact, its summits were dealing, first and foremost, with foreign policy matters, not dwelling too deeply on military issues. As shown below, this feature was strengthened in Gorbachev's era, and the Soviet leadership was increasingly treating the Warsaw Pact as a political grouping.[6] The purpose of the study is to clarify and evaluate, using primary sources, appreciable changes in the operation and form of political structures of the alliance after 1985, to assess them in the context of previous developments, and to outline their significance for the fate of the Warsaw Treaty Organization after 1989.

New Visions

The first trip abroad of Mikhail Gorbachev after his advancement to the post of the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union led to the Polish capital,[7] where a summit of member countries of the Warsaw Pact took place on 26 April 1985. Its purpose was to sign a protocol prolonging the existence of the alliance by another 20 years, with a possibility of a subsequent extension by another decade.[8] It was the first direct encounter of the new Soviet leader with the organization as such; Gorbachev had never attended its meeting before. The meeting, which was somewhat ceremonial and partly substituted the

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4   GRIBKOV, Anatoliy: *Suďba Varshavskogo dogovora: Vospominanija, dokumenty, fakty.* Moskva, Russkaya kniga 1998, p. 24; SHAKHNAZAROV, Georgiy: *Cena svobody: Reformacija Gorbačeva glazami jego pomoščnika.* Moskva, Zevs 1993, p. 84.

5   This confirms, for example, former Polish diplomat Jerzy Nowak, who attended the meetings of the Warsaw Pact. NOWAK, Jerzy: *Od hegemonii do agonii: Upadek Układu Warszawskiego – polska perspektywa*. Warszawa, Bellona 2011, pp. 55 and 146.

6   See TAUBMAN, William: *Gorbachev: His Life and Times*. London, Simon & Schuster 2017, pp. 467 and 499.

7   *Archiwum Akt Nowych*, Warsaw (hereinafter *AAN*), Fund (f.) Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, Komitet Centralny (PZPR KC), Signature (Sign.) V/264, Minutes of a meeting of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party on 29 April 1985, Notatka informacyjna o Spotkaniu przywódców partii i państw-stron Układu Warszawskiego w Warszawie (26 April 1985).

8   On negotiations on the prolongation of the Warsaw Pact's existence, see BÍLÝ, M.: *Varšavská smlouva 1969–1985*, p. 406.

absence of a major celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Warsaw Treaty,[9] gave the new Kremlin master an opportunity to present his views on how the alliance had fared so far and how its future should look like. Gorbachev naturally appreciated the existence of the Warsaw Pact. Apart from standard statements to the effect that the position of socialism had been reinforced, or on the sovereignty and mutual friendship of member countries, he also stressed objective facts, e.g. the organization's role in guaranteeing borders in Europe or in achieving military parity with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). He emphasized that the efficiency of political and military mechanisms of the alliance had improved during the previous three decades, and also mentioned that he intended to continue in this trend.[10]

Gorbachev's words may have reminded communist party leaders from the Eastern Bloc countries of well-worn phrases they had heard many times, given their vast experience with practices hitherto prevailing within the Warsaw Pact. It should be noted that appeals calling for stronger cooperation within the alliance had been voiced very often during the previous two decades. Nevertheless, they had been losing their concrete content ever since the 1970s, tending to be just mechanically repeated.[11] Unlike his predecessors, the new Soviet energetic General Secretary presented his views and ideas in a clearer light. He partly intended to stick to age-old recipes: the focal point of political activities of the Warsaw Treaty Organization was to remain in Europe and the alliance was supposed to act in a coordinated manner, within well-established limits of the common foreign policy line. On the other hand, he showed willingness to look for new forms of cooperation as well. First and foremost, he stated he would welcome an initiative of any member state which would make the West to take a more "realistic" attitude towards the prevailing tension between the Cold War blocs. He also mentioned the need of informal meetings of communist party leaders of the Warsaw Pact countries, which would discuss topical issues in a flexible manner. However, these meetings, which were to be attended, in Gorbachev's opinion, by representatives of other socialist countries, if necessary, were definitely not supposed to eclipse meetings of the Political Consultative Committee, which was the supreme body of the alliance.[12]

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9 *Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv*, Berlin (hereinafter *SAPMO-Barch*), f. Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands, Protokolle der Sitzungen des Politbüros (DY 30/J IV 2/2), DY 30/J IV 2/2/2107, Minutes of the meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of SED, 16 April 1985, Annex No. 14b to Minutes No. 15.

10 *National Archives*, Prague (hereinafter *NA*), f. Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia 1981–1986 (1261/0/8), Volume (Vol.) P132/85, Minutes of the 132nd meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, 12 May 1985, Item 12, Report on the meeting of top-level state and Communist Party officials of members countries of the Warsaw Pact.

11 See BÍLÝ, M.: *Varšavská smlouva 1969–1985*, p. 64.

12 *NA*, f. 1261/0/8, Vol. P132/85, Minutes of the 132nd meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, 12 May 1985, Item 12, Report on the meeting of top-level state and Communist Party officials of members countries of the Warsaw Pact.

Reactions of leading representatives of the alliance's member nations were initially lukewarm. After all, Gorbachev himself, when referring to the Warsaw meeting in his memoirs, says he had an impression that his partners from the other member states were not taking the act of prolonging the existence of the Warsaw Treaty Organization too seriously.[13] General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia Gustáv Husák and First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Bulgaria Todor Zhivkov gave their ritual appreciation to the mention of improved consultation mechanisms. General Wojciech Jaruzelski, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party, voiced his hope that the issue would be dealt with at the next meeting of the Political Consultative Committee, while General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, Erich Honecker, traditionally emphasized coordination of the Warsaw Treaty Organization's foreign policy.[14] Of some greater significance was thus only the address of General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Romania, Nicolae Ceauşescu.[15] As a matter of fact, it presaged the departure from the obstructive attitude which Romania had basically assumed towards cooperation within the Warsaw Pact after 1964, albeit with some ups and downs. Acting rather unexpectedly, the Romanian leader admitted that the organization had proved useful during its existence and played a great role both in strengthening military capabilities of its members and in global events. He promised that Bucharest's future policy would be closely coordinated with the allies, and also presented his own visions according to which the Warsaw Pact should focus on political issues, diplomacy and proposals of international initiatives rather than on military aspects. To this end, he advocated an early convention of the Political Consultative Committee. From then on, the agenda of the Political Consultative Committee was also to include socio-economic development of the Warsaw Pact member states and the body was supposed to be convened as often as necessary, but at least once a year. Ceauşescu also proposed the formation of expert teams and commissions of the alliance to deal with a broad spectrum of topical issues.[16] It should be noted that the establishment of such teams (whose activities will be mentioned later) within the Warsaw Treaty Organization had been considered as early as in the first half of the 1970s. The measure was expected to

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13   GORBACHEV, Mikhail: *Memoirs*. New York, Doubleday 1996, p. 465.

14   *NA*, f. 1261/0/8, Vol. P132/85, Minutes of the 132nd meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, 12 May 1985, Item 12, Report on the meeting of top-level state and Communist Party officials of members countries of the Warsaw Pact.

15   *Ibid.*, Address of the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Romania and President of the Socialist Republic of Romania, Comrade Nicolae Ceauşescu, 26 April 1985.

16   Ceauşescu proposed the formation of a consultation commission that would meet once a week or once in every 10 days and hold regular discussions with the Soviet delegation at the disarmament talks in Geneva. NATO used a similar mechanism. In addition, commissions assessing possibilities of ending the conflicts in the Middle East (e.g. the Iraq-Iran war) or economic issues, such as debts of developing countries, were to be formed as well.

strengthen multilateral cooperation among member states, but the mechanism had been activated only during the short rule of Yuri Andropov, who attempted to impart a fresh impetus to the stagnating alliance.[17]

Not all Romanian proposals received support from other members of the Warsaw Treaty Organization – the so-called "Six."[18] Still, they represented a dramatic shift. The Czechoslovak delegation, for example, correctly noticed that Bucharest, although previously strictly rejecting the establishment of a permanent secretariat of the alliance, was now supporting the formation of commissions with similar powers; that it was supporting discussions on social developments in member states of the organization, although it had previously strictly opposed any intervention of the Warsaw Pact into internal affairs of its members; and that it was willing to accept the alliance as a platform of discussions on other than European issues, although previously promoting a limitation of the organization's agenda to the old continent.[19] A preliminary analysis of sources confirms that Romania did not give up its specific approach to the Warsaw Treaty Organization in Gorbachev's era, but its attitude was less confrontational and more conciliatory, at least in the alliance's political structures. Romania's obstructions therefore posed a much smaller problem for the "Six" in the second half of the 1980s. To some degree, one of the principal aspects that had been complicating the workings of the Warsaw Pact in Brezhnev's times and during the short spells of his two successors was disappearing. The reasons an analysis of which would merit at least a separate study should be sought in an increasingly difficult situation and political isolation which Ceaușescu's regime found itself bogged in. The fact that Moscow under Gorbachev's leadership was willing – as we will also show later – to treat members of the Warsaw Pact much more as partners and was giving them more room for pursuing their own foreign policy interests also played a role.

The Soviet attitude was predominantly a result of developments of the Cold War. Since the turn of the 1970s and 1980s, the East found itself on an increasing diplomatic and military defensive, which Kremlin intended to counter by a change of the existing course after Brezhnev's demise. Most Soviet leaders did not want to continue the uncontrolled confrontation with the West and believed in a possible return to *détente*. Moreover, leaders of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Committee for State Security (*Komitet gosudarstvennoy bezopasnosti* – KGB), General Staff and military-industrial complex were increasingly aware that Soviet behaviour had obviously contributed to the failure of *détente*. Tendencies to restart interrupted talks with the United States and NATO had thus been appearing even before Chernenko's death. After becoming the General Secretary, Gorbachev was visibly deepening

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17 See BÍLÝ, M.: *Varšavská smlouva 1969–1985*, pp. 53 and 392.
18 In the early 1970s, the "Six" had gradually become known as "the closely cooperating member states" of the Warsaw Treaty Organization.
19 *NA*, f. 1261/0/8, Vol. P132/85, Minutes of the 132nd meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, 12 May 1985, Item 12, Report on the meeting of top-level state and Communist Party officials of members countries of the Warsaw Pact.

them, intending to quickly achieve significant foreign policy successes. He was motivated by multiple reasons; speaking retroactively, he mentioned, in particular, the fact that the desperately needed internal reform of the Soviet system would have been impossible without a favourable international climate.[20]

Available sources nevertheless do not suggest that Gorbachev had a consistent concept of the future of the Warsaw Treaty Organization after becoming the leader of the Soviet Union. At least until mid-1986, he was probably just deepening trends which had been implemented in the alliance by his former mentor Andropov. The latter realized that a broader review of Soviet foreign policy would also have to involve changes of cooperation between Moscow and the Eastern Bloc countries, including a strengthening of political cooperation within the Warsaw Pact and more room for independent activities of its members. In addition, formal and informal meetings of the alliance at all levels were to be intensified.[21] It is obvious that the Soviet leadership counted on the long-term existence of the Warsaw Treaty Organization even under Gorbachev. However, the core of its activities was to be political rather than military. As a matter of fact, other member countries were also supporting a higher level of politization of the alliance, seeing in it a chance to increase their influence on Soviet decisions.[22] It is true that the *communiqué* of the Warsaw meeting reiterated the oft-repeated offer of a simultaneous dissolution of NATO and the Warsaw Pact, or, more accurately, of their military structures in the first phase.[23] However, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, János Kádár, correctly reminded his colleagues that NATO had been consistently rejecting to consider this idea for a long time.[24] An opening analysis of documentation of the Eastern Bloc countries shows that the Warsaw Treaty Organization, some of its public declarations[25] and a rapidly changing international situation notwithstanding, did not count on the parallel dissolution of both alliances until 1990. Even when the end of the Cold War was

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20 See ZUBOK, Vladislav: *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev*. Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press 2007, p. 280

21 See BÍLÝ, M.: *Varšavská smlouva 1969–1985*, pp. 390–393.

22 LUŇÁK, P. (ed.): *Plánování nemyslitelného*, p. 76.

23 *NA*, f. 1261/0/8, Vol. P132/85, Minutes of the 132nd meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, 12 May 1985, Item 12, Report on the meeting of top-level state and Communist Party officials of members countries of the Warsaw Pact.

24 *Ibid.*, Report on the meeting of top-level state and Communist Party officials of members countries of the Warsaw Pact.

25 *Ibid.,* f. Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia 1986–1989 (1261/0/9), Vol. P11/86, Minutes of the 11th meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, 11 June 1986, Item 1a, *Communiqué*; *Ibid.*, Vol. P115/89, Minutes of the meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on 3 May 1989, Info 6, Information on the draft proposal of member countries of the Warsaw Treaty to member countries of NATO.

imminent, the East continued to view NATO and the Warsaw Pact as the two basic pillars of a potential new European security system.[26]

The Political Consultative Committee and Summit Meetings

In Gorbachev's era, the Political Consultative Committee continued to be the supreme body of the Warsaw Treaty Organization. It was still dealing with a broad range of international policy and military issues; compared to Brezhnev's times, however, its meetings were gradually taking on a different form. The first meeting of the supreme organ attended by the new Soviet General Secretary took place in Sofia on 22 and 23 October 1985. Even its preparations indicated that the young Soviet politician intended to make significant changes of the meeting format of the alliance's supreme body, which had not been convened for almost three years.[27] He kept assuring his opposite numbers from the Warsaw Pact member states in writing that they could raise any questions at the meetings. He also declared that he wanted to know their stance on current international issues as, in the opinion of the Soviet leadership, the difficult situation demanded truly collective consultations. However, the basically ceremonial Warsaw meeting, convened to extend the existence of the alliance, did not offer such an opportunity.[28]

A substantial part of the agenda of the Political Consultative Committee's meeting in Sofia dealt with an improvement of operating mechanisms of the alliance. Gorbachev officially promised a "modernization" to the allies. To this end, a permanent political body and what was called the Multilateral Group for Current Mutual Information (whose workings will be analyzed later) of the Warsaw Treaty Organization were to be established. A resolution to hold regular meetings of the Political Consultative Committee was also adopted.[29] Contrary to previous frequent attempts, the body was indeed successfully convened in approximately one-year intervals. Unlike in Brezhnev's times, when *clichés* about the strengthening of political cooperation within the alliance tended to be vague and almost ritualized,

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26 See LÉVESQUE, Jacques: Soviet Approaches to Eastern Europe at the Beginning of 1989. In: *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, Issue 12–13. Washington, Woodrow Wilson Center 2001, p. 51.

27 The meeting was to take place in January 1985, but ultimately did not because of the rapidly deteriorating health of Gorbachev's predecessor Konstantin Chernenko (see BAEV, J.: The End of the Warsaw Pact, 1985–1991 [online]).

28 *AAN*, f. PZPR KC, Sign. XIA/1406, Letters of General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, to First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party, Wojciech Jaruzelski, dated 28 August 1985, and 12 September 1985; *Ibid.*, Sign. V/281, Minutes of the meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party held on 14 October 1985, Notatka informacyjna dot[ycząca] narady Doradczego Komitetu Politycznego państw-stron Układu Warszawskiego w Sofii (22–23 października br.).

29 See BÉKÉS, C.: Hungary in the Warsaw Pact, 1954–1989 [online]; BAEV, J.: The End of the Warsaw Pact, 1985–1991 [online].

Gorbachev's proposals looked concrete. Leaders of the other member countries of the Warsaw Pact reacted positively to this change, but only in the routine and deep-rooted manner of what they had been saying for years at meetings of the alliance. The support of the Soviet proposals voiced by Honecker, Jaruzelski, or Husák thus reflected not only their agreement, but also their loyalty towards Moscow. For example, the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, echoing Gorbachev's opinion, quickly admitted that coordination of the alliance's foreign policy did have some gaps and needed an improvement, although the Czechoslovak "normalization" regime had been praising the workings of the Warsaw Treaty Organization until then. Ceaușescu followed on from his breakthrough Warsaw speech in Sofia, reiterating that it was necessary to strengthen the role of the Political Consultative Committee and welcoming the intention to convene it regularly at last.[30] The reopening of the issue of a reform of political structures of the Warsaw Pact was important, in particular, for the Polish leadership, who saw the alliance as one of the means to overcome and break the international isolation they had found themselves in after the brutal suppression of domestic opposition in December 1981. In fact, the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party immediately tasked the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs to start working on its own concepts.[31] In doing so, they followed on from the policy of the leadership of Edward Gierek, which was one of the most active advocates of changing working mechanisms of the Warsaw Treaty Organization.[32]

The meeting in Sofia brought some new elements into the workings of the Political Consultative Committee. The role of the Joint Secretariat of the Warsaw Treaty Organization was specified and modified. It is true the secretariat had worked from 1977, but it had lacked any political influence and its activities had been limited to organizational work. Its core consisted of a group of Soviet clerks, security officers and interpreters, which was dispatched to meetings of the alliance's bodies. Powers of representatives of the other member countries in the Joint Secretariat were expanded at last, albeit slightly. The annual rotation in the position of its

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30   *NA*, f. 1261/0/8, Vol. P141/85, Minutes of the 141st meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, 29 October 1985, Item 1, Results of the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of member countries of the Warsaw Pact in Sofia; *SAPMO-BArch*, f. Tagungen des Politischen Beratenden Ausschusses der Teilnehmerstaaten des Warschauer Vertrages (DY 30/2352), Rede des Generalsekretärs des ZK der SED und Vorsitzenden des Staatsrates der DDR, Erich Honecker, auf der Tagung des Politisches Beratenden Ausschusses der Staaten des Warschauer Vertrages in Sofia, 23 October 1985.

31   *AAN*, f. PZPR KC, Sign. V/281, Minutes of the meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party, 24 October 1985, Notatka informacyjna dot[ycząca] narady Doradczego Komitetu Politycznego państw-stron Układu Warszawskiego w Sofii (22–23 października br.).

32   See JARZĄBEK, W.: *PRL w politycznych strukturach Układu Warszawskiego w latach 1955–1980*, pp. 35–43; BÍLÝ, Matěj: *Gierekovo vedení a prosazování polských zájmů v organizaci Varšavské smlouvy* [Gierek's leadership and the promotion of Polish interests in the Warsaw Treaty Organization]. In: *Historie a vojenství*, Vol. 63, No. 3 (2014), pp. 4–16.

supreme representative – Secretary General of the alliance – was also confirmed.[33] It was supposed to be held by a representative of the member country hosting the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee in that year according to an alphabetic rotation system. The previously mentioned practice started in January 1983, following the illness and subsequent demise of Soviet diplomat Nikolay Firyubin, who had held the basically clerical post for years. Nevertheless, the role of the alliance's Secretary General remained purely administrative.[34] Documents issued by the Political Consultative Committee were to be kept from then on in the archives of the Polish People's Republic, whose depositories had already held the founding deed of the Warsaw Pact dating back to 1955. There was also a joint press team which was supposed to help the host nations with preparations of press conferences after the meetings.[35] These were unquestionably minor technical matters, but they did reflect Kremlin's tendency to change cooperation within the Warsaw Treaty Organization and adjust it to current requirements.

Gorbachev's willingness to share essential information with the allies more openly, which was gradually, but constantly deepening in the political structure of the Warsaw Pact in the second half of the 1980s, was much more important.[36] The proclaimed objective of the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee in Sofia was – traditionally – the setting of a common course of member states on the international scene. Unlike Brezhnev, Gorbachev was serious about the

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33 *AAN*, f. PZPR KC, Sign. V/281, Minutes of the meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party, 24 October 1985, Notatka informacyjna dot[ycząca] narady Doradczego Komitetu Politycznego państw-stron Układu Warszawskiego w Sofii (22–23 października br.).

34 Memoirs of Firyubin's first successor, Czechoslovak diplomat Dušan Spáčil, indicate that his work consisted mainly of sending documents and written information and dealing with administrative matters for the whole year he held the post. Moreover, Spáčil recalls that he, as the Secretary General of the alliance, was receiving substantial assistance from Soviet employees of the Secretariat when preparing and organizing political meetings. He was also assisted by Soviet diplomat Lev Mendelevich. (SPÁČIL, Dušan: *My z Černína: Paměti československého diplomata* [We from the Czernin Palace: Memoirs of a Czechoslovak diplomat]. Praha, Periskop 1995, p. 246.)

35 *AAN*, f. PZPR KC, Sign. V/281, Sign. V/281, Minutes of the meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party, 24 October 1985, Notatka informacyjna dot[ycząca] narady Doradczego Komitetu Politycznego państw-stron Układu Warszawskiego w Sofii (22–23 października br.).

36 Initially, this approach had its clear limits, as shown by the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant accident in April 1986, which Moscow informed its allies about incompletely and late. On the other hand, the change of Moscow's policy was reflected in the fact that the Communist Party and state leadership of the Soviet Union convened all Soviet ambassadors on 23 May to inform them about the events in Chernobyl. It was the first such meeting in the history of Soviet diplomacy. Gorbachev criticized the "inertia and old thinking" prevailing in the Soviet diplomatic corps which, in his opinion, did not keep pace with dynamic global developments. (*NA*, f. 1261/0/9, Vol. P11/86, Minutes of the 11th meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, 17 June 1986, Item 1b, Report on the meeting of General and First Secretaries of Central Committees of Communist and Workers' Parties of the Warsaw Pact Member States).

above *cliché*, giving representatives of the alliance's member countries a detailed account on, for example, the development of the recently restored disarmament talks in Geneva, his meeting with French President François Mitterrand, and, in particular, the pending Soviet-US summit, the first one after 1979. He assured them that he would conduct talks with US President Ronald Reagan in the name and on behalf of the "whole socialist community." He also indicated that the Warsaw Treaty Organization could subsequently comment on the meeting in a joint declaration and that the "most effective weapon" of socialist countries was unity. It was a return of sorts to practices prevailing in the first half of the 1970s, when the alliance had been successfully influencing talks about the preparation for the Helsinki Conference in a similar way.[37] This approach was also reflected in the character of the Declaration of the Political Consultative Committee, which was a *de facto* statement of the alliance on the forthcoming Soviet-US negotiations.[38] It unquestionably mirrored Moscow's efforts to negotiate about an alleviation of the Cold War confrontation between the two blocs represented by their leading superpowers. European allies of the Soviets at that time accepted the concept without any objections; as a matter of fact, it received a lot of support from Prague and Warsaw. Moreover, the Declaration announced, for the first time in the Warsaw Pact's history, that the member states intended to coordinate their future efforts in the field of socio-economic development,[39] although this area fell exclusively into the purview of the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA). It was the first indication that Soviet leaders were looking for new fields of operation for the Warsaw Treaty Organization.

Immediately after the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee in Sofia, there was, for the first time, another unofficial working meeting of leading representatives of the alliance's member states. This shows that the supreme body of the Warsaw Pact at the beginning of Gorbachev's era was not a sufficient and adequate communication platform – its official protocol was still somewhat formalistic and the principal change occurred only in the preparation of final documents, with member states being given more room to voice their comments. At the closed meeting with his opposite numbers, Gorbachev stressed the necessity of holding regular consultations of communist party leaders. He intended to add

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37 *Ibid.*, f. 1261/0/8, Vol. P141/85, Minutes of the 141st meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, 29 October 1985, Item 1, Results of the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of member countries of the Warsaw Pact in Sofia.

38 *Ibid.*, Declaration of the Political Consultative Committee of the member states of the Warsaw Pact for the elimination of the nuclear threat and for a positive turn of the situation in Europe and in the world, 23 October 1985.

39 *Ibid.*, Results of the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of member countries of the Warsaw Pact in Sofia, 29 October 1985; *AAN*, f. PZPR KC, Sign. V/281, Minutes of the meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party held on 24 October 1985, Notatka informacyjna dot[ycząca] narady Doradczego Komitetu Politycznego państw-stron Układu Warszawskiego w Sofii (22–23 października br.).

them to other unofficial meetings of communist party and state representatives of the Eastern Bloc countries, which had long been taking place on other occasions, e.g. during annual celebrations of the October Revolution in Moscow or during party congresses. He also abandoned his previous ideas of a possibility of inviting representatives of countries outside the alliance to them. The only issue left open was whether consultations should be directly tied to sessions of the Political Consultative Committee, or independently on official meetings of the Warsaw Treaty Organization, i.e. at the beginning of every year. In Gorbachev's opinion, the informal character of the meetings was to give the supreme representatives an opportunity to evaluate current problems in peace and to exchange opinions on the strategy of the Eastern Bloc countries. It was yet another signal to the allies that the new General Secretary of Soviet communists intended to strengthen multilateral cooperation. All the Warsaw Pact members supported the consultations. Gorbachev also emphasized that he was not after *pro forma* meetings, but after an open discussion which would not evade pressing issues concerning individual countries and their mutual relations. He also cautiously admitted that one of the key problems of the past was Moscow's failure to respect specific developments in different socialist countries – in other words, Kremlin's pressure and meddling in their internal affairs.[40]

It is possible that it was exactly this reason why Gorbachev preferred to hold discussions on some topics outside the official agenda of the Warsaw Pact meetings – a possibility of potential disagreements over sensitive issues of the workings of the Eastern Bloc paralyzing the whole alliance could not be ruled out, and the latter would thus have been unable to influence the development of relations between the East and the West. Needless to say, the new Soviet leadership intended to further deepen this function of the Warsaw Treaty, the roots of which dated back to Brezhnev's era. It was also reflected by the fact that, from 1986, final documents of the Political Consultative Committee were much more intensively promoted at the official level, being sent not only to the United Nations and the Disarmament Conference in Geneva, but also to the Secretary General of NATO, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the EEC, representatives of signatories of the New Delhi Declaration,[41] Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement, the League of Arab States, or the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN).[42] The number of organizations which the documents were sent to was increasing throughout the second half

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40 *NA*, f. 1261/0/8, Vol. P141/85, Minutes of the 141st meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, 29 October 1985, Item 2, Information on the working meeting of General and First Secretaries of fraternal parties of socialist countries in Sofia on 23 October 1985, 28 October 1985.

41 In 1985, Argentina, India, Mexico, Greece, Sweden and Tanzania issued a joint declaration in which they proclaimed their non-nuclear status and invited nuclear powers to stop tests, manufacture and deployment of nuclear weapons. The next step was to be negotiations about a substantial reduction of their numbers.

42 *AAN*, f. PZPR KC, Sign. V/309, Minutes of the meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party held on 17 June 1986, Notatka informacyjna

of the 1980s.[43] The distribution was always the responsibility of the host country of the Political Consultative Committee's meeting.[44]

The visions outlined by the Soviet General Secretary in Sofia were given a warm reception by the allies, in particular Romania. "It is necessary to draw a lesson," was how Nicolae Ceauşescu, who not only supported more frequent meetings of supreme Communist Party representatives, but even proposed – and, looking back at Romania's attitudes until then, quite unexpectedly – their institutionalization, commented on Gorbachev's ideas. In his opinion, they did not have to be necessarily tied to meetings of the Political Consultative Committee but be more flexible. Erich Honecker assumed a similarly initiative attitude. He stated that it was necessary to hold discussions, including on day-to-day issues, also outside the framework of the Warsaw Treaty Organization. He therefore recommended regular meetings of ambassadors of "fraternal countries" in Moscow, which would produce information reports for leaders of each of the states. This proposal essentially defined activities of the Multilateral Group for Current Mutual Information, which was established later. János Kádár, on the other hand, stressed the fact that the informal meetings of communist party tops would permit a more open debate and a presentation of ideas without having to adopt final resolutions and declarations.[45]

The first meeting of the Political Consultative Committee in Gorbachev's era and the ensuing informal discussion was thus evaluated by the participants, from the viewpoint of "strengthening the unity and closeness," as extraordinary.[46] While these formulations might be remindful of the language of the past, they in fact reflected a much more flexible and less tied nature of the debates and a visibly more partner-like attitude of Soviet representatives. The trend to approach politi-

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o naradzie Doradczego Komitetu Politycznego państw-stron Uk*ładu* Warszawskiego w Budapeszcie (10 i 11 czerwca br.).

43   In April 1989, the declaration of the alliance's Committee of Foreign Ministers was sent to the United Nations, Disarmament Conference in Geneva and its participating states, Secretary General of the United Nations, countries of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, Secretary General of NATO, North Atlantic Council, European Economic Community, European Parliament, Presidium of the Non-Aligned Movement, Organization of American States, Organization of African Unity, League of Arab States, ASEAN, Chairman of the Socialist International, and leaders of the six non-nuclear countries (*SAPMO-BArch*, f. DY 30/J IV 2/2/2324, Minutes of the meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of SED, 18 April 1989, Annex No. 5 to Minutes No. 16).

44   *Ibid.*, f. DY 30/J IV 2/2/2222, Minutes of the meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of SED, 2 June 1987, Annex No. 2 to Minutes No. 22; *NA*, f. 1261/0/9, Vol. P74/88, Minutes of the 74th meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, 14 June 1988, Item 2, Sending of the Czechoslovak delegation to the regular meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Pact member states.

45   *NA*, f. 1261/0/8, Vol. P141/85, Minutes of the 141st meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, 29 October 1985, Item 2, Information on the working meeting of General and First Secretaries of fraternal parties of socialist countries in Sofia on 23 October 1985, 28 October 1985.

46   *Ibid.*, Item 1, Results of the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of member countries of the Warsaw Pact in Sofia.

cal cooperation within the alliance from a new, more effective angle better suited for a rapid exchange of information – even outside the official framework – was soon confirmed by a short summit of Communist Party leaders, which Gorbachev convened in Prague on 21 November 1985. He gave his allies a briefing on his talks with US President Ronald Reagan in Geneva.[47] Similar meetings later took place, for example, in East Berlin on 1 December 1987,[48] or in Moscow on 4 December 1989,[49] and they became one of the new flexible forms of cooperation within the Warsaw Treaty Organization during Gorbachev's era.

After Gorbachev's advent, preparations of meetings of the Political Consultative Committee were much more systematic than in the 1970s.[50] First and foremost, there were obvious efforts to avoid, unlike in the past, any "surprises" adversely affecting the meetings' efficiency. The host nation, responsible for the organization of the meeting, was thus dispatching special envoys to partner states to resolve unclear issues much more frequently than before.[51] After the Budapest meeting of the Political Consultative Committee on 10 and 11 June 1986, the Secretary General of the alliance, acting upon Hungary's proposal, started submitting reports on the fulfilment of set tasks as well. Although Romania, faithful to its specific approach to the alliance, attempted to block this practice, the "Six" introduced it, Bucharest's opinion notwithstanding.[52] In the years that followed, the General Secretary was handing over to each delegation a list of all the activities that had taken place in

47 *NA*, f. 1261/0/9, Vol. P10/86, Minutes of the 10th meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, 2 June 1986, Report of the General Secretary of the Political Consultative Committee of member countries of the Warsaw Pact, Deputy Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of Hungary Comrade Miklós (*sic*) Barita on the fulfilment of tasks set at the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee in Sofia and concerning political cooperation within the Warsaw Pact (draft).

48 *Ibid.,* Vol. P53/87, Minutes of the 53rd meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, 14 December 1987, Item 1, Information on the working meeting of General and First Secretaries of fraternal parties of member countries of the Warsaw Pact in Berlin on 11 December 1987.

49 See DUDEK, Antoni (ed.): *Zmierzch dyktatury: Polska lat 1986–1989 v* świetle *dokumentów*, Vol. 2. Warszawa, Instytut Pamięci Narodowej 2013, p. 478, Document 172 – Informacja na temat spotkania przywódców państw stron Układu Warszawskiego w Moskwie, 4 December 1989.

50 See Letter from the KGB Representative in Sofia (V. Fedorov) to the Bulgarian Minister of Interior (Dimitar Stoyanov), 29 October 1985. In: BAEV, Jordan – LOCHER, Anna (ed.): *The Irresistible Collapse of the Warsaw Pact* [online]. Parallel History Project on NATO and the Warsaw Pact (PHP), November 2000 [cit. 2018-12-06]. Available at: *http://www. php.isn.ethz.ch/kms2.isn.ethz.ch/serviceengine/Files/PHP/15842/ipublicationdocument_ singledocument/1cd4bced-6305-4534-b74c-d2015025b442/en/851029_letter_eng.pdf*.

51 *Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic,* Prague (hereinafter *AMZV*), f. Documentation of Territorial Departments (DTD) 1953–1989, Inventory Number (Inv. No.) 23, Registration Number (Reg. No.) 1, Protocol of a meeting between Hungarian diplomat P. Benyo and Czechoslovak diplomat V. Poláček on 7 May 1986, 8 May 1986.

52 Romania presented a formal argument to the effect that there was no legal framework to support the practice (*Ibid.*, Protocol of a meeting between Hungarian and Czechoslovak diplomats, 21 May 1986).

political structures of the Warsaw Pact since the last meeting.[53] The practice of informal discussions of communist party tops after official meetings of the Political Consultative Committee continued; after 1986, they were supplemented by similar meetings of foreign ministers.[54] These, together with ministers of defence, selected top-level party officials, and crowds of international policy experts,[55] were a part of numerous delegations which member states were sending to summits of the alliance. From 1986, a more detailed timetable of meetings of political bodies of the Warsaw Treaty Organization was also being adopted to improve the operation of its mechanisms.[56]

Looking back, former Polish diplomat Jerzy Nowak, who attended many meetings of the alliance, believed the optimism spread by the new Soviet leadership, in particular the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union himself, was a significant factor of the change of atmosphere in political organs of the Warsaw Treaty Organization.[57] At the abovementioned meeting of the Political Consultative Committee in Budapest in June 1986, Gorbachev stated that political cooperation within the Warsaw Pact was advancing to a brand new level, emphasizing that the changes were by no means over. For the first time ever, he made a comparison of sorts between developments in the organization and his domestic reform programme known as the *perestroika*. He also appreciated recent more independent activities of some member states in the international arena, e.g. in the matter of establishing zones free of nuclear and chemical weapons or the convention of a scientific and technological forum.[58] At an informal meeting with the party leaders, he commended both the new forms of cooperation and the meeting as such. He thought fit to repeat that not all initiatives must come from Moscow, urging the allies to submit and present their own;

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53   *NA*, f. 1261/0/9, Vol. P37/87, Minutes of the 37th meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, 1 June 1987, Item 1, Report on the course and results of the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of member countries of the Warsaw Pact in Berlin.

54   *Ibid.*, Vol. P11/86, Minutes of the 11th meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, 17 June 1986, Item 1a, Results of the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of member countries of the Warsaw Pact in Budapest.

55   In 1985, the delegation of the German Democratic Republic included nine of them (*SAP-MO-BArch*, f. DY 30/J IV 2/2/2107, Minutes of the meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of SED, 16 April 1985, Annex No. 14b to Minutes No. 15.

56   Information on the meeting of the Committee of Foreign Ministers of member countries of the Warsaw Treaty in Bucharest on 14 and 15 October 1986, 18 October 1986. In: Parallel History Project on Cooperative Security (PHP) [online]. [cit. 2018-12-06]. Available at: *http://www.php.isn.ethz.ch/kms2.isn.ethz.ch/serviceengine/Files/PHP/20516/ipublicationdocument_singledocument/ce4eea02-39a9-4ec8-ac8d-51d4d4830fa4/cs/141086_InformationReport.pdf*.

57   NOWAK, J.: *Od hegemonii do agonii*, p. 106.

58   *NA*, f. 1261/0/9, Vol. P11/86, Minutes of the 11th meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, 17 June 1986, Item 1a, Speech of General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union M. S. Gorbachev, 10 June 1986.

only the subsequent process was to be coordinated.[59] The message was a *de facto* continuation of the supreme Soviet representative's address to the 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in February 1986, in which Gorbachev spoke about the unity of the Warsaw Pact, but also emphasized that unity did not mean conformity. He thus granted member states the right to participate in the formation of the alliance's future.[60] The fact that declarations of the Warsaw Treaty Organization at that time started using the term *allied states* thus had its reason.[61]

The abovementioned tendencies to look for new agendas for the Warsaw Treaty Organization resulted in a very significant shift. Economic rather than military cooperation within the alliance was accentuated even at the Budapest meeting of the Political Consultative Committee. In this respect, Ceauşescu's opinion to the effect that issues of economic cooperation and the "road to communism" should be discussed particularly at informal meetings of Communist Party leaders was symptomatic.[62] During the informal meeting, Gorbachev invited his opposite numbers to Moscow, where they were expected to present, in the second half of 1986, their own opinions on future integration of economic and scientific-technical cooperation and a potential reform of the CMEA. It is important to note that the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union preferred such matters to be discussed only with the Warsaw Pact allies (although not necessarily in connection with meetings of the Political Consultative Committee) rather than within the broader scope of CMEA members. Motivations and intentions of Moscow and its allies in this respect need a more detailed examination in the future. In the second half of the 1980s, however, there were obvious efforts to bring some of the economic agenda that should have normally fallen into the purview of the CMEA to meetings of the Warsaw Treaty Organization. As a matter of fact, Gorbachev informed the allies also about preparations and goals of the forthcoming plenary session of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party on the next five-year plan in Budapest; he intended to address the session with a keynote speech on the *perestroika*.[63] The fact that a Soviet General Secretary spoke about planned domestic measures at an official Warsaw Pact meeting was unprecedented in the organization's history.

In mid-1986, Gorbachev's attitude towards cooperation within the Warsaw Treaty Organization started taking up concrete contours, which practically did not change much until 1989. The Soviet statesman was undoubtedly attaching a lot of

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59 *Ibid.*, Item 1b, Report on the meeting of General and First Secretaries of Central Committees of Communist and Workers' Parties of the Warsaw Pact Member States.

60 MASTNÝ, V. – BYRNE, M. (ed.): *A Cardboard Castle?*, p. 60.

61 *NA*, f. 1261/0/9, Vol. P11/86, Minutes of the 11th meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, 17 June 1986, Item 1a, Appeal the Warsaw Pact Member States to NATO member states and all European countries, 11 June 1986.

62 *Ibid.*, Results of the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Pact Member States in Budapest.

63 *Ibid.*, Item 1b, Report on the meeting of General and First Secretaries of Central Committees of Communist and Workers' Parties of the Warsaw Pact Member States.

importance to relations between Moscow and other socialist countries and he felt, in the light of challenges voiced at the 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), it was necessary to define their parameters in greater detail. He did so by a memorandum which he submitted to the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in June 1986, shortly after the Budapest meeting of the Political Consultative Committee. The meeting in Hungary's capital confirmed his opinion that a broad discussion had to be initiated among the alliance's members. In his memorandum, Gorbachev appreciated that socialist countries had created organizations such as the Warsaw Pact or the CMEA in the past, as they had strengthened their international position by doing so. At the same time, he pointed out that the development in member states had slowed down, although the increasingly faster scientific and technological progress should have stimulated it. As a result of the above, the Soviet General Secretary was afraid that the influence of socialism in the international arena would significantly drop. He saw the cause in a discrepancy between real needs of the time and the nature of relations among socialist countries, which had been formed after the end of the Second World War. He believed the extensive material assistance which the Soviet Union had been providing to countries of the nascent Eastern Bloc after 1945 had been justified, as the Soviet Union had had the greatest experience with the building of a socialist system. As each of the countries had been growing stronger, the approach outlined above – "spoon-feeding" in Gorbachev's words – was making less and less sense. The Soviet representative stated that mutual relations among socialist countries had not been built on principles of frankness, openness and trust in the past, a fact that should have been known to many of his politburo colleagues; many multilateral meetings were just demonstrative and formalistic. In Gorbachev's opinion, the prevailing international situation necessitated profoundly different forms of cooperation, ones that would also take into account ongoing personal changes in some socialist countries. The Soviet General Secretary criticized the fact that Moscow was perceived as a conservative, domineering and anti-reform force and, as a result, its allies were afraid to bring any changes into the established functioning of the socialist system. He attached particular importance to the removal of all obstacles hampering cooperation of socialist countries, as he viewed improved mutual collaboration as an opportunity for strengthening socialism on a global scale. In his memorandum, Gorbachev reminded that the author and initiator of all international initiatives which socialist countries had hitherto presented as collective efforts was in fact Moscow; the allies were only providing support to them. In Gorbachev's opinion, the situation ultimately prompted some Eastern Bloc states to take separate steps to fulfil their national ambitions. The potential for implementing a coordinated foreign policy thus remained unexploited. The Soviet General Secretary did not explicitly mention the Warsaw Treaty Organization, but the context indicates that he was referring to or hinting at its functioning. In his view, the content of meetings of the alliance was to be much more concrete. In his memorandum, Gorbachev stated that a general reassessment of relations among socialist countries was a priority of Soviet policy and referred to hitherto

very positive reactions of the Warsaw Pact member states to initial steps in that direction.[64] The above conclusions were also explicitly supported by Soviet Prime Minister Nikolay Ryzhkov, who declared at the party politburo meeting that Moscow had to completely change the style and forms of collaboration with its allies.[65]

Gorbachev assured the Politburo that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union naturally did not waive its responsibility for the global fate of socialism by doing so. For objective reasons, the Soviet Union expected to retain its leading role in the socialist movement and the position of the guarantor of security of its allies. However, it was expected to use incentives and appeals rather than directives in the future, and to create prerequisites for real collaboration. The primary objective of the *perestroika* in relation to socialist countries was to be a consolidation of their unity. Centrifugal tendencies were to be prevented by more efficient economic, scientific and technological cooperation. Naturally, this goal also required extensive changes in the workings of the CMEA, which was expected to follow a direction similar to that pursued by the EEC. Nevertheless, the Soviet Union was also to learn from experience of its allies in this process. The *collective experience*, which was a term coined by Gorbachev for a higher level of respect towards socialist countries, was expected to ultimately increase the authority of Moscow. Soviet stimulation of foreign policy cooperation of member states of the Warsaw Pact was supposed to strictly abide by principles of equality and voluntariness. Kremlin was to take into account opinions and interests of its partners and to give them more leeway (and not just formally) for their own foreign policy activities. In doing so, Gorbachev took care so that principles of the memorandum, which basically summarized and further elaborated his approach to the Warsaw Treaty Organization until then, did not remain only on paper. Urged by the appeal of the General Secretary, the Soviet Politburo was thus supposed to task relevant departments of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the KGB to prepare specific documents for the implementation of the *perestroika* principles in relations with socialist countries.[66]

In spite of the tendencies outlined above, the Soviet Union was still keeping its key position in political structures of the Warsaw Treaty Organization. It stemmed

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64 Memorandum from Mikhail Gorbachev to the CC CPSU Politburo on topical questions regarding collaboration with socialist countries, 26 June 1986. In: National Security Archive [online]. [Cit. 2017-12-06.] Available at: *http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB504/ docs/1986.06.26%20Memorandum%20from%20Mikhail%20Gorbachev%20to%20 the%20CC%20CPSU%20Politburo%20on%20Topical%20Questions%20regarding%20Collaboration%20with%20Socialist%20Countries.pdf*.

65 *Library of Congres*, Collection (c.) Dmitrii Antonovich Volkogonov Papers, reel 17, Zasedannie politbyuro CK KPSS 26 ijunya 1986 goda.

66 Memorandum from Mikhail Gorbachev to the CC CPSU Politburo on topical questions regarding collaboration with socialist countries, 26 June 1986. In: National Security Archive [online]. [Cit. 2017-12-06.] Available at: *http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB504/ docs/1986.06.26%20Memorandum%20from%20Mikhail%20Gorbachev%20to%20 the%20CC%20CPSU%20Politburo%20on%20Topical%20Questions%20regarding%20Collaboration%20with%20Socialist%20Countries.pdf*.

from its superpower status due to which a truly equal partnership in every respect was hardly thinkable. For example, East German documents indicate that Moscow was still setting the exact date of meetings of the Political Consultative Committee.[67] Due to the busy schedule of the Soviet General Secretary, it was an understandable approach; however, unlike in the previous era, the Soviets did not abuse it to stifle cooperation within the alliance. Although Gorbachev kept promoting the loosest possible agenda, with as few preset items as possible, for meetings of the supreme body of the Warsaw Pact even after 1986, the agenda was still approved by Kremlin and the host nation's leadership only acknowledged Kremlin's proposals.[68] Still, meetings of the Political Consultative Committee under Gorbachev were fulfilling a more practical and less ceremonial role than before 1985. The perception of East European countries by Moscow was changing as well – they could hardly be referred to as mere satellites in the second half of the 1980s. Mutual relations were increasingly taking on a partnership form, which was also reflected in day-to-day workings of the Warsaw Treaty Organization. Although certain tendencies to this effect had been appearing even soon after Brezhnev's demise, it is possible to concur, together with historian Vojtech Mastny, that this Soviet attitude developed in full only during Gorbachev's era.[69]

During the Warsaw meeting of the Political Consultative Committee on 15 and 16 July 1988, Gorbachev declared that meetings of the alliance's supreme body were indeed characterized by a "true comradely openness," a democratic exchange of opinions, and improved coordination in every respect.[70] The Kremlin ruler was basically right, but the pace of changes in the work of political structures of the Warsaw Pact started lagging behind enormously dynamic international developments towards the end of the Cold War. The truth is that Soviet leaders were aware of it. As a matter of fact, conclusions of the 19th Programme Conference of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union held in June 1988 planned a profound transformation of links between the Soviet Union and other socialist countries within the alliance. The Political Consultative Committee was to become a purely

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67 *SAPMO-BArch*, f. Informationen des Sekretärs für internationale Verbindungen des ZK der SED, Hermann Axen, an Erich Honecker, 1986–1989 (DY 30/2346), Report of Hermann Axen, member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of SED for First Secretary of the Central Committee of SED Erich Honecker about a forthcoming meeting of leading representatives of Warsaw Pact member states in Moscow, dated 27 October 1986.

68 *Ibid.*, f. DY 30/J IV 2/2/2212, Minutes of the 13th meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of SED held on 31 March 1987; Memorandum of meeting between the First Secretary of the BCP (Todor Zhivkov) and the General Secretary of the CPSU (Mikhail Gorbachev), 11. May 1987. In: BAEV, J. – LOCHER, A. (ed.): *The Irresistible Collapse of the Warsaw Pact* [online]. [cit. 2018-12-06]. Available at: *http://www.php.isn.ethz.ch/kms2.isn. ethz.ch/serviceengine/Files/PHP/15867/ipublicationdocument_singledocument/7c5ea017-261e-47a4-b35d-2c28da4f66c5/en/870511_memo_zhiv_gorb_eng.pdf*.

69 MASTNÝ, V.: The Warsaw Pact, p. 154.

70 *NA*, f. 1261/0/9, Vol. 79/88, Minutes of the 79th meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, 20 July 1988, Item 1, Information about the meeting of heads of delegations of Warsaw Pact member states on 16 July 1988.

consultative body and be separated from reformed military structures of the Warsaw Pact.[71] Gorbachev officially presented these visions to the allies at the meeting of the supreme body of the alliance held in Bucharest on 7 and 8 July 1989. He passed on an opinion of the Soviet Politburo to the effect that the Warsaw Treaty Organization, reacting to international changes, should undergo a general reform and complete its transformation from a military-political alliance to a political-military one. The Soviet General Secretary praised the benefits which the Warsaw Pact had brought so far and expressed his belief that it would serve its members well also in the new international situation.[72] However, this fundamental political transformation of the alliance was encountering a lot of problems, the biggest one being the starting fragmentation of the "Six" which was losing its former unity due to international policy changes, domestic changes in the Eastern Bloc countries, and looser control of Moscow. It was not just Romania, but also increasingly reform-oriented Poland and Hungary, which pursued, first and foremost, their own interests within the alliance.

The Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs

The Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs continued to play a very important role in political structures of the Warsaw Pact even after 1985. However, it was different from that it had played during Brezhnev's era, when it had been the only truly functioning high-level political body of the alliance, as the Political Consultative Committee had not been meeting at that time. In Gorbachev's era, the Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs was convened twice a year, every spring and autumn; after 1989, there were joint meetings of the Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and the Committee of Defense Ministers held on the eve of the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee, which reflected the efforts aimed at a higher politicization of the Warsaw Treaty Organization at the expense of the alliance's military dimension.[73]

Nevertheless, the first meeting of the Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs under Gorbachev took place only after the fundamental change of the leader of the Soviet diplomacy. On 28 July 1985, long-standing Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko was replaced by Eduard Shevardnadze nominated by Gorbachev. It was a surprising move. In terms of character traits, the new minister was the exact opposite of his predecessor. Moreover, he lacked any international political experience, having

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71   See SKRZYPEK, Andrzej: *Dyplomatyczne dzieje PRL w latach 1956–1989*. Warszawa, Pułtusk 2010, p. 391.

72   MASTNÝ, V. – BYRNE, M. (ed.): *A Cardboard Castle?*, pp. 644–654, Document 146 – Records of the Political Consultative Committee Meeting in Bucharest, 7–8 July 1989.

73   *NA*, f. 1261/0/9, Vol. P124/89, Minutes of the meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on 12 July 1989, Item 1, Report on the course and results of the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Pact member states.

spent his entire previous career in Georgia. However, no one among the Soviet leaders dared oppose Gorbachev's intentions, a situation that was typical at that time. Gorbachev's decision indicated that the General Secretary intended to make dramatic changes in Soviet foreign policy and that he himself would take the reins. He chose Shevardnadze chiefly because of a strong trust which he had had in him since the 1970s. Due to the new minister's inexperience, Gromyko continued to set an important tone in Soviet foreign policy, but this ended in early 1986, when the duo of Gorbachev and Shevardnadze, assisted by loyal collaborators, took hold of the monopoly to formulate the Soviet foreign policy.[74]

These developments were also reflected in the Warsaw Treaty Organization. The first meeting of the Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs which Shevardnadze attended took place in Warsaw on 19 and 20 March 1986. Compared to the previous meetings, its atmosphere was radically changed. Proof positive of that was the inclusion of the previously tabooized topic of the Soviet situation in Afghanistan in the meeting's agenda. Shevardnadze delivered a speech criticizing the work of the Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, but he identified himself with Gorbachev's opinion that political cooperation of the alliance's member states had advanced to a much better and flexible level in the previous year. He expected future meetings to be less formalistic and with "more direct comradely contacts."

The Soviet minister anticipated that the increase of the political role of the Warsaw Treaty Organization, which had been going on since Yuri Andropov's coming to power, would grow even stronger in the coming years. In his concept, the alliance was to continue generating major peace initiatives, but also was to become an important information exchange platform at multiple levels. Although the Soviet Union understandably did not share all details with its allies, Shevardnadze (just like Gorbachev) started informing them at length on principal objectives and problems of the Soviet Union's foreign and security policy. There were not to be any future "surprises," such as the deployment of Soviet missiles in Cuba or military intervention in Afghanistan, for the allies. Shevardnadze was also calling for and stimulating a more open debate and a true exchange of opinions on issues that the committee was to deal with. To this end, foreign ministers started a practice of closed-door meetings within the Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs. Between 1986 and 1989, their consultations usually took place both before and after the principal meeting attended by full delegations.[75]

The changes in the procedures of the Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, which were supported by Soviet allies, were related to a shift of the political function of the Warsaw Pact which Kremlin intended to implement. Before 1985, the organization had been used predominantly as a tool of formulating collective

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74   See VOLKOGONOV, Dmitry: *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Empire*. London, HarperCollins Publishers 1999, p. 491; ZUBOK, V.: *A Failed Empire*, p. 280; McGIFFERT EKEDAHL, Carolyn – GOODMAN, Melvin: *The Wars of Eduard Shevardnadze*. Pennsylvania, The Pennsylvania State University Press 1997, p. 36.

75   See LOCHER, A.: Shaping the Policies of the Alliance [online].

foreign policy of the Eastern Bloc countries and of issuing collective declarations on international developments, both of which represented mainly Moscow's attitudes, minor concessions to smaller states notwithstanding. From then on, views of Soviet allies were to be taken more into account. The concept necessarily required a better sharing of information needed to consider further steps carefully. Acting along these lines, Shevardnadze informed the allies even about a highly internal matter, namely an intended restructuring of the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs (which was to include a new Directorate for Military-Political Issues, a significant step also important for the Warsaw Treaty), during the abovementioned meeting in Warsaw. Shevardnadze invited each of the states represented at the meeting to specify the type of information they were primarily interested in so that they could receive it from the Soviets at first hand, e.g. through their embassies in Moscow. As a matter of fact, ambassadors were supposed to play an important role in future better political cooperation of the alliance's members.[76]

It does not mean that Moscow was using the Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs only to share information with its allies from 1986. The committee continued to be a platform through which the Warsaw Pact member states proclaimed their support to the Soviet line in talks between the two superpowers. It was no accident that its November 1987 meeting had been convened right before Eduard Shevardnadze travelled to Washington for important disarmament talks.[77] The East German leadership admitted that the main purpose of the meeting was to proclaim support to the Soviet minister.[78]

The Warsaw meeting of the Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in March 1986 also brought an important discussion on how documents issued in the name of the alliance should look like. There was a basic consensus that they would not have to be too extensive. They were to focus on topical and new international policy phenomena, not just to keep repeating general or well-known positions of the East. Only Romania opposed the intention. However, its approach was not purely obstructive – it was motivated rather by efforts aimed at continuing resonations of hitherto unheeded Romanian initiatives.[79] The approach of the "Six," which,

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76 *NA*, f. 1261/0/9, Vol. P3/86, Minutes of the 3rd meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on 10 April 1986, Item 3, Information about the meeting of the Committee of Foreign Ministers of the Warsaw Pact member states in Warsaw, 19 and 20 March 1986.

77 *Ibid.*, Vol. P49/87, Minutes of the 49th meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on 11 November 1987, Information about the meeting of the Committee of Foreign Ministers of the Warsaw Pact member states in Prague, 28 and 29 October 1987.

78 *SAPMO-BArch*, f. DY 30/J IV 2/2/2246, Minutes of the meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of SED, 3 November 1987, Annex No. 3 to Minutes No. 44.

79 *NA*, f. 1261/0/9, Vol. P3/86, Minutes of the 3rd meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on 10 April 1986, Item 3, Information about the meeting of the Committee of Foreign Ministers of the Warsaw Pact member states in Warsaw, 19 March 1986.

apart from Moscow, was promoted mainly by Budapest, ultimately prevailed.[80] As a matter of fact, the regular and significantly higher frequency of meetings of the alliance in Gorbachev's era made continuous repeating of words already said meaningless. The change in meetings of the Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs is also indicated by the fact that the declaration of the Warsaw meeting was finalized only after presentations of all delegations, which showed an unusually high initiative. Moscow appreciated their approach through Shevardnadze's mouth, and was also pleased with the improving coordination of foreign policy activities of allied countries acting through foreign ministries and diplomatic missions, which was manifested, for example, in the presentation of the Czechoslovak-East German initiative aimed at the Federal Republic of Germany and proposing a zone without chemical warfare weapons.[81] Member states concurred that the gist of the expanded consultations should not be limited only to regular periodical meetings of Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, but also be complemented by informal and flexible *ad hoc* talks.[82]

The fact that Moscow assigned so much importance, just like in the case of the Political Consultative Committee, to making meetings of the Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs less formalistic and less rigid, tells a lot about the nature of political cooperation within the Warsaw Pact until then. A mere reinforcing of multilateral elements through a more collective drafting of document or establishing various commissions and working groups simply was not enough. Gorbachev's leadership thus had to change the very character and purpose of meetings of the alliance. In Warsaw, Eduard Shevardnadze therefore spoke against the existing practice of putting some problems on a backburner or intentionally hushing them

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80   *Ibid.*, Vol. P49/87, Minutes of the 49th meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on 11 November 1987, Information about the meeting of the Committee of Foreign Ministers of the Warsaw Pact member states in Prague, 28 and 29 October 1987; *Ibid.*, Vol. P91/88, Minutes of the 91st meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on 2 November 1988, Information about the meeting of the Committee of Foreign Ministers of the Warsaw Pact member states in Budapest, 28 and 29 October 1988.

81   The initiative initially stemmed from talks between the East German SED and the West German Social Democratic Party (SPD). It also significantly reflected encouragements of Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme. After consultations with the Soviet party, the proposal was ultimately submitted jointly by the governments of the German Democratic Republic and Czechoslovakia. The Warsaw Treaty Organization, however, formally supported their initiative. (*SAPMO-BArch*, f. DY 30/J IV 2/2/2124, Minutes of the meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of SED, 6 August 1985, Annex No. 3 to Minutes No. 31; *NA*, f. 1261/0/8, Vol. P141/85, Minutes of the 141st meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on 29 October 1985, Item 1, Results of the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of member countries of the Warsaw Pact in Sofia.)

82   *NA*, f. 1261/0/9, Vol. P3/86, Minutes of the 3rd meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on 10 April 1986, Item 3, Information about the meeting of the Committee of Foreign Ministers of the Warsaw Pact member states in Warsaw, 19 and 20 March 1986.

up. The fact that political mechanisms of the Warsaw Treaty Organization had hitherto worked not just irregularly, but largely also in a formalistic manner, was also admitted by Czechoslovak Foreign Minister Bohuslav Chňoupek during the unofficial part of the talks in the Polish capital.[83] According to the abovementioned testimony of Polish diplomatic Jerzy Nowak, the change of atmosphere in the political structure of the alliance was also initiated by Shevardnadze's instructions to Soviet diplomats, which ordered them to apply a partnership approach to representatives of the other member states.[84]

The changes in the operation of the Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Gorbachev's era were reflected in its flexibility. In October 1986, for example, the committee met in Bucharest two days before its scheduled date, because the Soviet leadership wanted to inform its allies about the forthcoming talks between Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev in Reykjavik as fast as possible.[85] Shevardnadze characteristically notified his counterparts of the talks at a meeting of a narrow circle of foreign ministers rather than at the plenary session of whole delegations.[86] Changes in the latter body were also urged directly by the Soviet General Secretary. When receiving participants of the Moscow meeting of the Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in March 1987, for example, he unprecedentedly asked the foreign ministers to share with him, one by one, their opinions on activities of this organ of the alliance. The later generally appreciated the new, more democratic atmosphere and openness in presenting issues and looking for ways to resolve them. At a later meeting of the Soviet Politburo, Gorbachev acknowledged with pleasure that practically all the ministers had communicated their own opinions and attempted to participate in formulating a joint line of the alliance. He believed that such a situation would permit early discussions of pressing problems and also enable focusing on the mechanism of consultations.[87]

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83 *Ibid.*

84 See NOWAK, J.: *Od hegemonii do agonii*, p. 63.

85 Gorbachev initially intended to inform Communist Party representatives of the Eastern Bloc countries of his meeting with Reagan at a November meeting in Moscow, which was to be dedicated to economic issues. However, the Soviet leadership ultimately decided to notify its allies at the meeting of the Committee of Foreign Ministers, while the Communist Party leaders were supposed to discuss the matter later and in greater depth. It was an indication of Kremlin's willingness to discuss the same issues with its allies repeatedly, more frequently, and at different levels.

86 Information on the meeting of the Committee of Foreign Ministers of member countries of the Warsaw Pact in Bucharest on 14 and 15 October 1986, 18 October 1986. In: Parallel History Project on Cooperative Security (PHP) [online]. [cit. 2018-12-06.] Available at: *http://www.php.isn.ethz.ch/kms2.isn.ethz.ch/serviceengine/Files/PHP/20516/ipublicationdocument_singledocument/ce4eea02-39a9-4ec8-ac8d-51d4d4830fa4/cs/141086_InformationReport.pdf*.

87 *National Security Archive* (dále *NSA*), c. Russian and Eastern Europaean Archive Documents Database (REEADD), box 27, R2945, Iz vystupleniy na zasedanii politbyuro CK KPSS, 2 April 1987.

Some long-established reflexes, however, were taking a long time to disappear. One must bear in mind that political meetings of the Warsaw Pact were still attended by officials whose attitudes had been formed during Brezhnev's era. The substance of the changes initiated by Gorbachev and Shevardnadze was largely escaping them. During official meetings of the committee, some foreign ministers, namely those of Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and Poland, felt a need to return to recent plenary sessions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in their speeches and to pathetically adulate their influence on foreign policy, or to make assurances of support of their respective countries.[88] In this respect, the words of Bohuslav Chňoupek are characteristic: "*Perestroika* and *glasnost* have become a part of the global lexicon, along with terms like peace, *razryadka* (détente) or *sputnik*."[89] Let us add that some speeches of Gorbachev's counterparts during informal meetings of the Political Consultative Committee in Gorbachev's era were also characterized by a demonstrative agreement and repetition of statements previously voiced in the official part of the meeting.[90] Still, in mid-1987 the Soviet General Secretary could justly speak about an appreciable improvement of the work of the Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs.[91]

Following the example of supreme Communist Party representatives, foreign ministers of member states of the Warsaw Treaty Organization also started a practice of extraordinary meetings. It was a direct consequence of Gorbachev's efforts to inform Soviet allies about talks of representatives of the superpowers in a detailed and open manner. The first such meeting took place on 23 February 1988, in Prague. The speed it was convened with illustrated a significant improvement of the ability to act on the part of political structures of the Warsaw Pact, which were becoming a truly important information forum in the second half of the 1980s. Member states were inspired by functional mechanisms of NATO in this respect. The main item on the agenda was Eduard Shevardnadze's briefing on the February visit of US Foreign Secretary George Schultz in Moscow. The Soviet minister gave a detailed account of US opinions concerning the international situation to his counterparts. At the same time, there was also a meeting of the North Atlantic

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88 *NA*, f. 1261/0/9, Vol. P32/87, Minutes of the 32nd meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on 30 March 1987, Item 1, Information about the meeting of the Committee of Foreign Ministers of the Warsaw Pact member states in Moscow, 24 and 25 March 1987.

89 *Ibid.*, Speech of Foreign Minister of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic Comrade B. Chňoupek, 24 March 1987.

90 *Ibid.*, Vol. P11/86, Minutes of the 11th meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on 17 June 1986, Item 1b, Report on the meeting of General and First Secretaries of Central Committees of Communist and Workers' Parties of the Warsaw Pact member states.

91 *Ibid.*, Vol. P37/87, Minutes of the *37*[th] meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on 1 June 1987, Item 1, Report on the course and results of the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of member countries of the Warsaw Pact in Berlin.

Council where Schultz informed US allies about the Soviet position.[92] The format proved unquestionably successful for the Warsaw Pact, as corroborated by the fact that the Soviets convened a similar meeting in Berlin only two months later. The agenda included not only an immediate analysis of another meeting between Shevardnadze and Schultz in Geneva; Mikhail Gorbachev believed it was important to have consultations within the Warsaw Treaty Organization also before his talks with Ronald Reagan in Moscow. A characteristic feature of the meeting was openness with which the leader of Soviet diplomacy answered questions of his partners.[93]

The approach described above matched the vision of future cooperation of the Warsaw Pact foreign ministers outlined by Shevardnadze at the March 1988 regular meeting of the Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Sofia. At that time, the Soviets believed the committee had succeeded in eradicating remnants of the often mentioned formalism and in transforming itself into an effective tool for formulating a truly collective policy of the alliance.[94] A similar conviction prevailed among Soviet allies as well; it was voiced, for example, by East German Foreign Minister Oskar Fischer.[95] The Soviet leaders therefore decided to modify the agenda of the committee; its future meetings were not to deal with routine matters which could be handled by numerous expert groups then operating within the Warsaw Treaty Organization, but instead focus on discussing truly important issues, in particular about the progress of the *perestroika* and its versions in each member state. It was yet another attempt to change the scope of authority of the Warsaw Pact – in Brezhnev's era, particularly from 1968, Moscow had not wanted to discuss internal affairs of member states at official meetings of the alliance at all. Shevardnadze realized that Eastern Bloc diplomats generally did not discuss urgent domestic problems on official occasions. This was why he called again for a strengthening of informal contacts of foreign ministers, which he hoped would facilitate discussions on socio-economic reforms in individual member states.[96] It was perhaps a reflec-

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92 *Ibid.*, Vol. P61/88, Minutes of the *61*[st] meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on 25 February 1988, Item 7, Information about the meeting of foreign ministers of the Warsaw Pact member states in Prague, 23 February 1988.

93 *Ibid.,* P71/88, Minutes of the *71*[st] meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on 17 May 1988, Item 3, Information about the meeting of foreign ministers of the Warsaw Pact member states in Berlin.

94 *Ibid.,* Vol. P65/88, Minutes of the *65*[th] meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on 31 March 1988, Item 4, Information about the meeting of the Committee of Foreign Ministers in Sofia.

95 *SAPMO-BArch*, f. Tagungen der Außenminister der Teilnehmerstaaten der Warschauer Vertrages in Berlin, Sofia 1988–1989 (DY 30/2356), Rede des Ministers für Auswärtige Angelegenheiten der DDR, Genossen Oskar Fischer, auf der Tagung des Komitees der Au-*ßenminister der Teilnehmerstaaten des Warschauer Vertrages am 29. und 30.* März 1988 in Sofia, undated.

96 *NA*, f. 1261/0/9, Vol. P65/88, Minutes of the *65*[th] meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on 31 March 1988, Item 4, Information about the meeting of the Committee of Foreign Ministers in Sofia.

tion of his conviction that there was a lot of sympathy and understanding among members of the Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs.[97]

Moscow was thus interested in maintaining a free multilateral discussion about the *perestroika* with the Eastern Bloc countries and it intended, to this end, to make use of the changed mechanisms of the Warsaw Treaty Organization, which allowed less rigid and formal meetings in the second half of the 1980s. Acting along these lines, Shevardnadze also invited his opposite numbers, at the October 1988 meeting of the Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Budapest, to come to the Soviet Union at the turn of spring and summer next year, where they were supposed to informally discuss perspectives of international developments and cooperation within the Warsaw Pact for a few days.[98]

Shevardnadze was drawing inspiration in the West, more specifically from meetings of foreign ministers of the EEC. At the Bucharest meeting of the Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in July 1989, he reminded his partners that their EEC counterparts were meeting almost every week and that they were not discussing only political or military matters, but also economic ones. The Warsaw Treaty Organization was to draw an appropriate conclusion from it. On the eve of the collapse of communist power in Eastern Europe, however, Soviet plans were encountering the abovementioned fragmentation of opinions of the alliance's members, which reflected mainly their different attitudes to the reform of the state socialistic system and pursued international objectives. Moscow's efforts to discuss economic issues on the platform of the Warsaw Pact were supported, for example, by Romania's Foreign Minister Ioan Totu, who argued that foreign ministers of NATO member states also discussed similar matters. However, his Hungarian colleague Gyula Horn opposed him. The reform-oriented Hungarian leadership, which had already started a visible weakening of the country's links to the Warsaw Treaty Organization, demanded that the Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs should deal only with economic issues directly related to foreign policy and not interfere with the authority of the CMEA. The change in Budapest's attitude was well illustrated by a requirement not to adopt collective *communiqués* – from then on, member states were to have possibility to express their own views, which might be different from those of the alliance.[99] A previously unthinkable situation thus occurred: Hungary, for a long

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97 *NSA*, c. REEADD, box 28, R13121, Records of A. Chernyaev from the meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union held on 31 March 1988.

98 *NA*, f. 1261/0/9, Vol. P91/88, Minutes of the 91st meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on 2 November 1988, Item 6, Address of Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics E. A. Shevardnadze at the meeting of the Committee of Foreign Ministers in Budapest, 28 and 29 October 1988.

99 *Ibid.,* Vol. P124/89, Minutes of the 124th meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on 12 July 1989, Item 1, Report on the course and results of the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Pact member states.

time one of the most loyal members of the alliance, opposed Soviet plans, while Romania, a long-time rebel, supported them.

Moscow did not want to give up its plans, but it was not pushing them through as assertively as before 1985. At the November 1989 meeting of the Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Warsaw, Shevardnadze decided to set an example, delivering an extensive briefing on the progress of the *perestroika* in the Soviet Union.[100] The obvious effort of the Soviet Union and some other countries, such as Czechoslovakia and Romania, to discuss mutual economic cooperation on the platform of the Warsaw Treaty was illustrated by the fact that, for the first time in the alliance's history, ministers of foreign trade were also invited to the meeting.[101]

In Gorbachev's era, the Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs also became one of the key forums for debates concerning a potential deeper institutional reform of political structures of the Warsaw Pact. The discussions generally took place in a narrow informal circle of foreign ministers, not during meetings of complete delegations.[102] The improvement of mechanisms of cooperation within the Warsaw Treaty Organization remained, in fact, a continuous item in agendas of the committee's meetings until the disintegration of the alliance. It is possible to agree with historian Anna Locher that one of the reasons why this debate was not moving forward very much was that leaderships of member states were not issuing any constructive instructions – at least until April 1989.[103]

Meetings of Deputy Foreign Ministers and Expert Groups

Political cooperation within the Warsaw Treaty Organization was also taking place at lower levels even after 1985. It was actually this platform where important compromises were often achieved and supporting documents for summits of the alliance prepared.[104] The intention to hold meetings of deputy foreign ministers

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100 *Ibid.,* Vol. P137/89, Minutes of the 137th meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on 2 November 1989, Item 6, Report on the course and results of the meeting of the Committee of Foreign Ministers of the Warsaw Pact member states in Warsaw.

101 *Ibid.,* Vol. P135/89, Minutes of the 135th meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on 19 October 1989, Item 15, Notification of a meeting of the Committee of Foreign Ministers of the Warsaw Pact member states.

102 *Ibid.,* Vol. P32/87, Minutes of the 32nd meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on 30 March 1987, Item 1, Information about the meeting of the Committee of Foreign Ministers of the Warsaw Pact member states held in Moscow on 24 and 25 March 1987; *Ibid.,* Vol. P108/89, Minutes of the 108th meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on 16 March 1989, Item 13, Notification of a meeting of the Committee of Foreign Ministers of the Warsaw Pact member states.

103 LOCHER, A.: Shaping the Policies of the Alliance [online].

104 Drafts of statements of the alliance were generally – but no longer exclusively – prepared by the Soviets who submitted them to other states for comments and evaluation. The next

and expert groups was confirmed as early as at the October 1985 meeting of the Political Consultative Committee.[105] Let us remind ourselves that meetings of deputy foreign ministers had already played an important role in the alliance's mechanisms before; in the 1970s, they even substituted the non-existent permanent secretariat.[106] The exact number of meetings of deputy foreign ministers in Gorbachev's era is difficult to determine. Unlike higher level meetings, such as those of the Political Consultative Committee and the Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, they were not automatically publicized. At the same time, we cannot be sure that minutes or records of all such meetings have been preserved. According to historian Csába Békés, however, the frequency of the meetings of deputy foreign ministers culminated in 1986 – there were eight of them.[107] The publication of such information in the media probably depended on the agenda of a given meeting, or on its propagandistic potential.[108] The meetings of deputy foreign ministers continued to take place *ad hoc*; appeals calling for holding them regularly, on precisely set dates, remained unheeded, just like in the past, the meetings' allegedly high benefits notwithstanding.[109] The meetings were not initiated only by Moscow; other countries were also submitting proposals to this effect. As a rule, the meeting took place in the capital of the state which had convened it.[110]

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stage consisted in a collective discussion of the documents by expert groups or at the level of deputy foreign ministers. The procedure was typically used for Warsaw Pact statements addressed to the North Atlantic Council. (*NA*, f. 1261/0/9, Vol. P115/89, Minutes of the 115th meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on 3 May 1989, Item 6, Information on an appeal of the Warsaw Pact members states to NATO member states.)

105 *AAN*, f. PZPR KC, Sign. V/281, Minutes of the meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party held on 24 October 1985, Notatka informacyjna dot[ycząca] narady Doradczego Komitetu Politycznego państw-stron Układu Warszawskiego w Sofii (22–23 października br.).

106 BÍLÝ, M.: *Varšavská smlouva 1969–1985*, p. 42.

107 BÉKÉS, Csaba – LOCHER, Anna – NEUNLIST, Christian (ed.): *Records of the Meetings of the Warsaw Pact Deputy Foreign Ministers* [online]. Washington, D.C. – Zürich, Parallel History Project on NATO and the Warsaw Pact, September 2005. [Cit. 2018-12-06.] Available at: *https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/108639/11_WP_Dep_Foreign_Ministers.pdf*.

108 *SAPMO-BArch*, DY 30/J IV 2/2/2147, Minutes of the meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of SED, 17 December 1985, Annex No. 6 to Minutes No. 52.

109 *Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMZV)*, F. Meetings of the Collegium (PK 1953–1989), Ministerial Collegium No. 258, Meeting of Deputy Foreign Ministers of the Warsaw Pact members states on issues of the Non-Aligned Movement and other matters concerning Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Oceania, 10 February 1986.

110 In 1986, for example, the German Democratic Republic initiated a meeting to discuss the current approach of the Warsaw Pact to the Non-Aligned Movement and non-European matters, Poland proposed consultations before the Vienna meeting of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, while the Soviet Union convened a meeting on the continuation of the Geneva Disarmament Conference in 1987 (*Ibid.*; *SAPMO-BArch*, DY 30/J IV 2/2/2159, Minutes of the meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of SED, 25 March 1986, Annex No. 8 to Minutes No. 12; *Ibid.*, DY 30 J IV 2/2/2189, Minutes

The thematically narrowly focused consultations of deputy foreign ministers were, in a way, a parallel to meetings of an ever-increasing number of expert groups.[111] In October 1986, Eduard Shevardnadze emphasized the necessity of closer cooperation along both of the abovementioned lines and of expanding the agenda of such meetings. Next year, deputy foreign ministers were to discuss, for example, the Vienna meeting of the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Middle East, the Geneva Disarmament Conference, policy towards the Non-Aligned Movement, human rights and humanitarian matters, the Vienna disarmament talks, or developments in the Pacific.[112] Deputy foreign ministers met again to assess the progress of efforts aimed at reducing levels of forces and conventional weapons in Europe, creating a collective international security system, and formulating a policy of the Warsaw Pact towards Nordic countries.[113] As the organization's agenda was expanding, its members agreed that the approach to independent and developing countries should also be coordinated at the level of deputy foreign ministers.[114] In contrast to late Brezhnev's era, however, Kremlin was not attempting to discuss non-European issues under the aegis of the Warsaw Treaty Organization and in the presence of representatives of Soviet non-European allies; Soviet diplomats were analyzing the situation with them separately.[115] In the second half of the 1980s diplomats from these countries were invited to the Warsaw Pact's meetings of deputy

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of the meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of SED, 21 October 1986, Annex No. 2 to Minutes No. 27).

111 *NA*, f. 1261/0/9, Vol. P3/86, Minutes of the 3rd meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on 10 April 1986, Item 3, Information about the meeting of the Committee of Foreign Ministers of the Warsaw Pact member states in Warsaw, 19 and 20 March 1986.

112 Information on the meeting of the Committee of Foreign Ministers of member countries of the Warsaw Treaty in Bucharest on 14 and 15 October 1986, 18 October 1986 [online]. [cit. 2018-12-06].

113 *NA*, f. 1261/0/9, Vol. P32/87, Minutes of the 32nd meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on 30 March 1987, Item 1, Information about the meeting of the Committee of Foreign Ministers of the Warsaw Pact member states in Moscow, 24 and 25 March 1987.

114 *SAPMO-BArch*, DY 30/J IV 2/2/2147, Minutes of the meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of SED, 17 December 1985, Annex No. 6 to Minutes No. 52; *NA*, f. 1261/0/9, Vol. P10/86, Minutes of the 10th meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on 2 June 1986, Report of General Secretary of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Pact member states, Deputy Foreign Minister of the Hungarian People's Republic, Comrade Mikloš (*sic*) Barita, on the fulfilment of tasks set at the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee in Sofia, on political cooperation within the Warsaw Pact (draft).

115 On 8 and 9 January 1987, for example, Moscow hosted a meeting of deputy foreign ministers of Vietnam, North Korea, Laos, Cambodia, Mongolia and the Soviet Union, which analyzed the situation in Asia. It was more or less coincidental with a similar meeting of the Warsaw Treaty Organization, which took place at the end of the month. (*AMZV*, f. PK 1953–1989, Ministerial Collegium No. 267, Consultations of deputy foreign ministers of the Warsaw Pact member states on issues concerning the strengthening of peace and security in the Asia-Pacific region, 17 February 1987.)

foreign ministers only rarely, i.e. when the agenda to be discussed directly concerned them.[116] Moscow was attempting to shift negotiations involving a broader circle of socialist countries to a different level, e.g. that of intensified meetings of secretaries of central committees of ruling parties responsible for specific areas, in particular ideology and international matters. These were expected to complement the general strengthening of political contacts within the Warsaw Treaty Organization, which definitely was not the only information channel of the Eastern Bloc countries.[117]

Compared to the 1970s, however, the importance of the meetings of deputy foreign ministers was diminishing in Gorbachev's era. The reasons included an overall improvement of high-level political cooperation within the Warsaw Treaty and also operation of newly established expert groups and commissions the principal missions of which were very similar – a collective preparation of documents and statements which the Warsaw Treaty subsequently presented as collective works.[118] In contrast to deputy foreign ministers, the expert groups had periodical meetings. The decision to create these new expert groups was adopted already during the first meeting of the Political Consultative Committee under Gorbachev, in October 1985. Let us add that the Soviets started respecting proposals of its allies even in this respect. After all, expert groups were generally meeting in the capital of the country that had proposed their formation.[119] Romania in particular was very active in this respect, intending to discuss most of its initiatives in the Warsaw Treaty exactly in this format.[120] The establishment of each expert group had to be approved

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116 *Ibid.*, Ministerial Collegium No. 9/1989, Consultations of deputy foreign ministers of the Warsaw Pact member states on issues concerning developments in Latin America, 13 March 1989.

117 *NA*, f. 1261/0/9, Vol. P26/87, Minutes of the 26th meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on 30 January 1987, Item 7, Course and results of the meeting of secretaries of central committees of fraternal parties of socialist countries responsible for international and ideological matters in Warsaw; *Ibid.*, Vol. P132/89, Minutes of the 132nd meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on 27 September 1989, Item 6, Information about the meeting of ideological secretaries of central committees of Communist and Workers' Parties of socialist countries in Berlin, 21 and 22 September 1989.

118 *SAPMO-BArch*, f. Büro Hermann Axen (DY 30 IV 2/2.035), DY 30 IV 2/2.035/30, Report of Foreign Minister of the German Democratic Republic Oskar Fischer for Secretary of the Central Committee of SED Hermann Axen dated 5 March 1986.

119 *AAN*, f. PZPR KC, Sign. V/281, Minutes of the meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party, 24 October 1985, Notatka informacyjna dot[ycząca] narady Doradczego Komitetu Politycznego państw-stron Układu Warszawskiego w Sofii (22–23 października br.).

120 At the October 1985 meeting of the Political Consultative Committee, the Romanians proposed to create expert groups for matters concerning the freezing and reduction of military expenditures and armed forces of Warsaw Pact member states and possibilities of overcoming the backwardness of developing countries, respectively. These proposals were subsequently assessed by the Committee of Foreign Ministers. (*NA*, f. 1261/0/8, Vol. P141/85, Minutes of the 141st meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on 29 October 1985, Item 1, Results of the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Pact member states in Sofia.

not only by the Political Consultative Committee, but also by the Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs.[121]

Meetings of the expert groups were conducted in a confidential mode, and initially no public information about them was released. Their existence was revealed as late as on 1 May 1987, by Hungarian Foreign Minister Péter Várkonyi in an interview for the *Népszabadság* daily. He also made a general statement to the effect that, compared to the past, political bodies of the Warsaw Treaty Organization were meeting more frequently and that there was a higher level of openness and information exchange in the alliance, which he attributed to an improving quality of the Warsaw Pact's initiatives in which all member states had participated.[122] It is not surprising that it was the reform-oriented Hungarian leadership that subsequently suggested that meetings of experts groups should be publicized at least by short press releases. However, these efforts were thwarted by Romania, which was refusing *glasnost* and demanded that only meetings at levels from deputy foreign ministers upward be publicized.[123]

In the early stage of Gorbachev's rule, the Warsaw Pact member states were probably overrating the importance of the expert groups. Their formation was unquestionably aided by a kind of euphoria stemming from the fact that the alliance had started, for the first time in its history, to deal with many issues on a truly multilateral basis. As early as in December 1985, however, it became obvious that it was not necessary to send numerous delegations to the meetings – on the contrary, a decision was made that each member state would have just two members in each expert group rather than three, as initially planned.[124] In 1987, the form of cooperation outlined above clearly proved as not very efficient. At the March meeting of the Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Moscow, Eduard Shevardnadze warned that the activation of political mechanisms of the alliance should be qualitative rather than quantitative. Although he officially commended the last meetings of expert groups and deputy foreign ministers,[125] his words indicated that the number of the meetings was unnecessarily high, and their agenda

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121 *SAPMO-BArch*, DY 30/J IV 2/2/2212, Minutes of the meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of SED, 31 March 1987, Annex No. 2 to Minutes No. 13.

122 *AMZV*, f. DTO 1953–1989, Inv. No. 23, Reg. No. 10, Interview with Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Hungarian People's Republic on the global situation and Hungary's foreign policy, undated (1987).

123 *Ibid.*, f. PK 1953–1989, Ministerial Collegium No. 22/1988, Information about the 6th meeting of the working group of the Warsaw Pact member states on reductions of armed forces and conventional arms levels in Europe (Budapest, 17 and 18 December 1987), 1 January 1988.

124 *Ibid.*, Ministerial Collegium No. 257, Information about the meeting of the working group of the Warsaw Pact member states on the draft appeal calling for nuclear-free zones in Europe, 11 December 1985.

125 *NA*, f. 1261/0/9, Vol. P32/87, Minutes of the 32nd meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on 30 March 1987, Item 1, Information about the meeting of the Committee of Foreign Ministers of the Warsaw Pact member states in Moscow, 24 and 25 March 1987.

and course were thus somewhat diluted. After the formation of the key Multilateral Group for Current Mutual Information, the excessive number of expert groups was also criticized by Polish Deputy Foreign Minister Henryk Jaroszek, then General Secretary of the alliance, who recommended that most of their agendas be taken over by the newly established group.[126] However, there was no willingness to disband existing expert groups[127] even in a situation when no suitable agenda was available for them. In such cases, the expert groups were allowed to go on, but their meetings were supposed to be *ad hoc*, or as needed, rather than regular.[128] It is thus understandable that the Hungarian memorandum of March 1989, which the reform-oriented leadership of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party used as a document supporting a review of Hungary's attitude towards the Warsaw Treaty Organization, harshly criticized, *inter alia*, the work of the expert groups. It stated that the expert groups were not preparing any information in support of decisions of leaders of the Warsaw Pact member states, were detached from political

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126 *AMZV*, f. PK 1953–1989, Ministerial Collegium No. 270, Information about the first meeting of the Multilateral Group for Current Mutual Information of the Warsaw Pact member states, 21 July 1987.

127 In Gorbachev's era, the Warsaw Treaty Organization structure included the following expert groups: for freezing and reduction of military expenditures and levels of armed forces (1986, Bucharest), for the preparation of an appeal to overcome the low level of development and to create a new international economic order (1986, Bucharest), for monitoring the reaction of NATO member states and neutral countries to the appeal of the Budapest meeting of the Political Consultative Committee (1986, Budapest), for the formation of the Multilateral Group for Current Mutual Information (1986, Prague), for the elaboration of proposals to strengthen international cooperation in the eradication of international terrorism (1986, Moscow), for the promotion of the proposal to create a comprehensive system of international peace and security (1986, Moscow), for the strengthening of an offensive approach in matters of human rights (1987, Sofia), for the assessment of the situation in the Mediterranean (1987, Sofia), for nuclear disarmament and the creation of nuclear-free zones (1987, Moscow, with subsequent rotations), for environmental security (1988, Prague), and for Nordic matters (1988, Moscow). (*NA*, f. 1261/0/9, Vol. P32/87, Minutes of the 32nd meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on 30 March 1987, Item 1, Information about the meeting of the Committee of Foreign Ministers of the Warsaw Pact member states in Moscow, 24 and 25 March 1987; *Ibid.,* Vol. P49/87, Minutes of the 49th meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on 11 November 1987, Information about the meeting of the Committee of Foreign Ministers of the Warsaw Pact member states in Prague, 28 and 29 October 1987; *Ibid.,* Vol. P65/88, Minutes of the 65th meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on 31 March 1988, Item 4, Information about the meeting of the Committee of Foreign Ministers in Sofia.)

128 *Ibid.,* Vol. P49/87, Minutes of the 49th meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on 11 November 1987, Information about the meeting of the Committee of Foreign Ministers of the Warsaw Pact member states in Prague, 28 and 29 October 1987.

decision-making, which they were rarely able to influence, and their increasingly intensive activities usually lacked a proper mandate.[129]

From 1988, Romania kept pointing at the unacceptably high number of expert groups as well.[130] Nevertheless, Bucharest's attitude to this form of political cooperation started to change substantially, as the agenda of the meetings was more and more focused on domestic developments in individual member states. The most noticeable manifestation of the trend was the formation of an expert group which was assigned a task to analyze a potential approach of the alliance's member states to the increasingly topical issue of human rights. Apart from concessions to the Western concept of human rights, the group was also examining the "deepening of socialist democracy." Ceauşescu's repressive regime kept refusing to participate in the debate.[131]

The Multilateral Group for Current Mutual Information

The outcome of long years of efforts to improve foreign policy cooperation within the Warsaw Treaty was the formation of the Multilateral Group for Current Mutual Information, which started working in 1987. As early as at the first meeting of the Political Consultative Committee that he attended, i.e in October 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev mentioned a resolution of the Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs adopted two years ago, which had recommended the formation of such a group, and initiated its implementation.[132] The plan won unanimous support and was to be discussed in detail at the March 1986 meeting of the Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs. It was anticipated that the new body would meet periodically in Moscow. It was awaited with great expectations, and an independent expert group was created to substantiate activities of the multilateral group.[133]

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129 Joint Memorandum of the Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of National Defence on the Future of the Warsaw Pact, 6 March 1989. In: BÉKÉS, Csaba – LOCHER, Anna (ed.): *Hungary and the Warsaw Pact, 1954–1989* [online]. Parallel History Project on NATO and the Warsaw Pact, November 2003. [Cit. 2018-12-06.] Available at *http://www.php.isn.ethz.ch/kms2.isn. ethz.ch/serviceengine/Files/PHP/16970/ipublicationdocument_singledocument/2af3f79d- b24f-471a-a95a-9ca16a4ebd18/en/890306_joint_memo.pdf*.

130 *NA*, f. 1261/0/9, Vol. P65/88, Minutes of the 65th meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on 31 March 1988, Item 4, Information about the meeting of the Committee of Foreign Ministers in Sofia.

131 *AMZV*, f. PK 1953–1989, Ministerial Collegium No. 22/88, Information about the meeting of the working group of experts of the Warsaw Pact member states responsible for preparing proposals aimed at fostering cooperation in the interest of increasing the offensive nature of political work in the field of human rights, 21 January 1988.

132 BAEV, J.: The End of the Warsaw Pact, 1985–1991 [online].

133 *NA*, f. 1261/0/8, Vol. P141/85, Minutes of the 141st meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on 29 October 1985, Item 1, Results of the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Pact member states in Sofia; *Ibid.*, f. 1261/0/9, Vol. P3/86, Minutes of the 3rd meeting of the Presidium of

The support of the formation of the Multilateral Group for Current Mutual In-
formation soon developed cracks. In late autumn 1986, the plan was opposed by
Romania,[134] soon joined by Hungary. Hungarian Communist Party leaders, who had
by then started reviewing their previously absolutely loyal attitude to the Warsaw
Treaty Organization, demanded a limited scope of authority for the new body.[135]
In the loosening atmosphere, with the Soviets giving other member states more
room, a heated debate as to where the group would operate from, broke out. Eduard
Shevardnadze first made a seemingly accommodating gesture, accepting a rotation
of the group's meetings around capitals of the alliance's member states.[136] During
the February 1987 meeting, however, the Soviets, helped by their most loyal al-
lies – the Bulgarians, Czechoslovaks, East Germans and Poles, again attempted
to locate the new group to Moscow. Hungary was leaning towards the rotation
concept, and Romania was even categorically demanding it. When the Soviet
leadership found out that the above technicality might block the formation of the
group, they finally gave in. As a matter of fact, all member states except Hungary
and Romania wished the group to be launched as soon as possible. This was why
they wanted the formation of the group endorsed by next month's meeting of the
Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs. On the other hand, Bucharest insisted
that the matter be ultimately resolved by the Political Consultative Committee the
meeting of which was to take place in several months' time. However, it withdrew
its requirement later, as the inclusion of issues of the "building of socialism," i.e. of
internal developments in socialist countries, in the agenda of the new group was,
in its opinion, much more important. As a matter of fact, Nicolae Ceauşescu saw
closer cooperation with the Eastern Bloc states as a way to reverse the catastrophic
situation of Romania's economy in the second half of the 1980s, and was willing
to make concession to achieve this goal. Bucharest thus did not hesitate to join
other in order to isolate Hungary, which, on the contrary, intended to resolve its
economic problems by closer cooperation with the West. It was one of the reasons
why Budapest kept refusing the inclusion of "hostile activities of Western countries

the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on 10 April 1986,
Item 3, Information about the meeting of the Committee of Foreign Ministers of the War-
saw Pact member states in Warsaw, 19 and 20 March 1986.

134 Romania ultimately revised its position in exchange for a prolonged existence of the expert
group for the reduction of military expenditures.

135 *AMZV*, f. PK 1953–1989, Ministerial Collegium No. 263, Information about the meeting of
the expert group for the analysis of a potential freezing and reduction of military expendi-
tures and armed forces, 16 October 1986.

136 Anlage 4: Rede des Genossen E. A. Schewardnadse auf der Tagung des Außenminister-
komitees in Bukarest am 14. October 1986. In: Parallel History Project on Cooperative
Security (PHP) [online]. [cit. 2017-12-06]. Available at: *http://www.php.isn.ethz.ch/
kms2.isn.ethz.ch/serviceengine/Files/PHP/20515/ipublicationdocument _singledocument/
a72c6940-5698-4d03-b7bb-689bd6b42b63/de/Speech_Shevardnadze_1986_10_De.pdf*.

against the Warsaw Pact member states" in the agenda of the Multilateral Group for Current Mutual Information in addition to the "socialist upbuilding" issues.[137]

At the end of the day, the issue was not resolved in an explicit manner. After all, the group, whose members were department heads of foreign ministries of member states, did not have any decision-making powers. It only assumed an exchange of information on "important topics" which, however, were not specified in detail, and its operative analyses. The group was expected to meet once a month, or *ad hoc,* upon a request/proposal of a member state. Its meetings were chaired by a representative of the country which had hosted the last meeting of the Political Consultative Committee; the chairman held his office for one year.[138] The relation of the Multilateral Group for Current Mutual Information to existing political bodies of the Warsaw Treaty Organization was not defined in any way. After all, member states (except Romania) viewed its establishment as an intermediate step which was supposed to lay the groundwork for a permanent political body of the alliance.[139] This was also admitted by Gorbachev during the March 1987 meeting of the Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Moscow. At the same time, Bucharest continued to vociferously reject the establishment of a secretariat or political staff in any form.[140] The abovementioned intention of the "Six" was somewhat ignored in the analysis of historian Andrzej Skrzypek, who views the formation of the Multilateral Group for Current Mutual Information as a not very logical duplication of meetings of deputy foreign ministers of the alliance's member states.[141]

The first meeting of the new group took place upon request of the Polish side in Warsaw on 23 and 24 June 1987. It was publicized in the press, although regular press releases about the group's meetings were published only from mid-1988. Unlike other political bodies of the Warsaw Treaty Organization, its activities were

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137 Minutes of Meeting of a Warsaw Pact Working Group on the Exchange of Information in Prague, 18–19 February 1987, 20 February 1987. In: BÉKÉS, C. – LOCHER, A. (ed.): *Hungary and the Warsaw Pact, 1954–1989* [online]. [cit. 2018-12-06]. Available at: *http://www. php.isn.ethz.ch/kms2.isn.ethz.ch/serviceengine/Files/PHP/16974/ipublicationdocument_ singledocument/6b2d9e15-acd2-4e59-adeb-bb81bbf0118a/en/870220_minutes.pdf*; *AMZV*, f. PK 1953–1989, Ministerial Collegium No. 267, Information about the final meeting of the expert group for the elaboration of issues related to the work of the Multilateral Group for Current Mutual Information, 27 February 1987.

138 *AMZV*, f. PK 1953–1989, Ministerial Collegium No. 267, On the work of the Multilateral Group for Current Mutual Information, 19 February 1987.

139 *Ibid.*, Information about the final meeting of the expert group for the elaboration of issues related to the work of the Multilateral Group for Current Mutual Information, 27 February 1987. According to memoirs of Polish diplomat Jerzy Nowak, the Soviets wanted the Multilateral Group for Current Mutual Information to be a permanent political body of the alliance at the ambassadorial level, something like the North Atlantic Council (NOWAK, J.: *Od hegemonii do agonii*, p. 142).

140 *NA*, f. 1261/0/9, Vol. P32/87, Minutes of the 32nd meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on 30 March 1987, Item 1, Information about the meeting of the Committee of Foreign Ministers of the Warsaw Pact member states in Moscow, 24 and 25 March 1987.

141 SKRZYPEK, A.: *Dyplomatyczne dzieje PRL w latach 1956–1899*, p. 383.

not organized and funded by the host party. Intervals between its meetings grew quickly shorter, from initial three months to less than a month. It was because of a Soviet initiative which, however, soon won general support of all. Initially, member states mainly gave reports on their planned foreign policy activities at the meetings, but the format started changing around November 1987, when first indications of the alliance's coordinated approach to international matters began to replace mere exchange of information of top-level visits or intended initiatives.[142]

The abovementioned Polish diplomat Jerzy Nowak is rather critical about activities of the Multilateral Group for Current Mutual Information in his memoirs. Soviet diplomats were allegedly trying to change the consultative character of its meetings into another platform to converge positions of member states before sessions of higher-level bodies of the alliance. Moreover, it allegedly proved very soon that Moscow had hierarchized initiatives presented by its allies according to its own needs, Shevardnadze's statements about the "democratization" of relations with the allies notwithstanding. This produced aversion of reform-oriented member states to any closer cooperation within the alliance. On the other hand, Nowak admits that the Soviets took care to have a truly open discussion at the meetings. It was particularly Soviet diplomat Lev Mendelevich who was active in this respect, having become an ardent supporter of the *perestroika* towards the end of his career and attempting to change the Warsaw Treaty Organization into a "natural alliance" and a place of "free and creative debates." Still, Nowak claims the Multilateral Group for Mutual Exchange of Current InformationMultilateral Group for Current Mutual Information never became a platform for a *free* exchange of information and remained a place where only *official* information was exchanged. Efforts to coordinate foreign policy were allegedly met with an intentionally passive attitude of dissatisfied member states and sometimes also with their (not precisely specified) resistance.[143]

However, both primary sources and existing professional publications cast some doubt on Nowak's conclusions. It is true that the Multilateral Group for Current Mutual Information discussed some topics – e.g. analyses of global developments by Soviet strategists or activities of NATO – repeatedly. However, it is not possible

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142 *AMZV*, f. PK 1953–1989, Ministerial Collegium No. 270, Information about the first meeting of the Multilateral Group for Current Mutual Information of the Warsaw Pact member states, 21 July 1987; *Ibid.,* Ministerial Collegium No. 272, Information about the second meeting of the Multilateral Group for Current Mutual Information of the Warsaw Pact member states (MSAVI), 17 September 1987; *Ibid.*, Information about the third meeting of the Multilateral Group for Current Mutual Information of the Warsaw Pact member states (MSAVI), 1 November 1987; *Ibid.*, Information about the fourth meeting of the Multilateral Group for Current Mutual Information of the Warsaw Pact member states (MSAVI), 10 December 1987; *Ibid.*, Ministerial Collegium No. 22/1988, Information about the fifth meeting of the Multilateral Group for Current Mutual Information of the Warsaw Pact member states (MSAVI), 6 January 1988; *Ibid.*, Ministerial Collegium No. 12/88, Information about the ninth meeting of the Multilateral Group for Current Mutual Information of the Warsaw Pact member states held on 7 and 8 June 1988, 1 July 1988.

143 NOWAK, J.: *Od hegemonii do agonii*, pp. 142 and 148.

to agree with Nowak's claim to the effect that Moscow was abusing its exclusive position as the agenda setter to prevent discussions concerning controversial issues, i.e. socio-political crises in member states or the situation in Afghanistan.[144] Soviet representatives were actually informing their allies even about pressing international policy matters, including Afghanistan,[145] at the group's meetings, as confirmed, *inter alia,* by historian Jordan Baev on the basis of Bulgarian sources. He also points out that practically all member states welcomed this form of foreign policy cooperation. From mid-1989, the meetings became a platform for justifying different positions and analyses of events by individual member states.[146]

In mid-1988, the Warsaw Pact member states were viewing the work of the Multilateral Group for Current Mutual Information very positively. They agreed that it had helped to expand the discussed agenda and to improve coordination of the alliance's foreign policy line, as well as the synchronization of diplomatic activities of individual member states. Still, the group's working mechanisms still showed substantial deficiencies. There was basically no real system in convening its meetings – in early 1988, their frequency dropped to once in every two months – and the agenda was often overlapping with issues discussed in some of the many expert groups or at meetings of deputy foreign ministers.[147] It was one of the reasons why, for example, the chief of East German diplomacy Oskar Fischer appealed to his colleagues in March 1988 to give meetings of the Multilateral Group for Current Mutual Information a clear thematic plan and to invite other experts to them as necessary. In this respect, he emphasized that the success of the consultations did not consist in a "mass of paper," but in a true exchange of opinions.[148] In particular, setting the meetings' dates and agenda well in advance was struggling with difficulties. Consequently, a decision was made at the end of 1988 that member states would propose issues to be discussed through their embassies and the group's chairman would include them in the agenda depending on whether they were topical or not.[149] The above measure reflected Romania's dissatisfaction with Moscow's tendencies

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144 *Ibid.,* p. 142.
145 *AMZV*, f. PK 1953–1989, Ministerial Collegium No. 9/1988, Information about the sixth meeting of the Multilateral Group for Current Mutual Information of the Warsaw Pact member states (MSAVI), 29 February 1988.
146 BAEV, J.: The End of the Warsaw Pact, 1985–1991 [online].
147 *AMZV*, f. PK 1953–1989, Ministerial Collegium No. 12/88, Information about the eighth meeting of the Multilateral Group for Current Mutual Information of the Warsaw Pact member states (MSAVI), 5 May 1988; *Ibid.,* Information about the ninth meeting of the Multilateral Group for Current Mutual Information of the Warsaw Pact member states held on 7 and 8 June 1988, 1 July 1988.
148 *SAPMO-BArch*, f. DY 30/2356, Rede des Ministers für Auswärtige Angelegenheiten der DDR, Genossen Oskar Fischer, auf der Tagung des Komitees der Au*ß*enminister der *Teilnehmerstaaten des Warschauer Vertrages am 29. und 30.* März 1988 in Sofia, undated.
149 *AMZV*, f. PK 1953–1989, Ministerial Collegium No. 11/1989, Information about the 11th meeting of the Multilateral Group for Current Mutual Information of the Warsaw Pact member states (MSAVI), 22 December 1988.

to play the leading role in setting the agenda of the group.[150] The abovementioned deficiencies notwithstanding, the Multilateral Group for Current Mutual Information, which had had altogether 26 meetings by September 1990,[151] was a considerable qualitative improvement if compared to the situation prevailing in political structures of the Warsaw Treaty Organization before 1985.

Parliamentary Cooperation in the Warsaw Treaty Organization

Another reflection of the deepening politicization of the Warsaw Treaty Organization during Gorbachev's era was the effort to strengthen cooperation among legislative bodies of the Warsaw Pact member states under the aegis of the alliance. Let us remind ourselves that representatives of the parliaments had been meeting in this format from 1975. In Brezhnev's times, the meetings tended to be very fettered, just like other meetings in political structures of the organization. It was basically just another forum providing multilateral support to Moscow's current foreign policy course. This, after all, stemmed from the specific, and not very important, role of legislative bodies in political systems of the Eastern Bloc countries.[152]

The first meeting of representatives of parliamentary bodies of the alliance in Gorbachev's era took place between 1 and 3 July 1987, in Poland's capital. It differed from the previous ones both in its form and in its content. First, it was attended by the parliaments' speakers, not just representatives, the purpose being to emphasize the new and higher level of the meeting. Unlike the previous meetings, its outputs were not limited to a collective statement commenting on the situation in the world. There were also extensive discussions concerning the activization of parliamentary cooperation among the Warsaw Pact member states in the international arena, but, first and foremost, the "improvement of socialist democracy" or the changing role of the legislative bodies in the current stage of the "building of socialism." It was another, although cautious attempt to discuss internal developments on the platform of official structures of the alliance. The *communiqué* announced that meetings of speakers of parliaments would take place every year and rotate among capitals of the Warsaw Pact member states. It should be mentioned that interparliamentary meetings had until then been held very irregularly; one of the reasons was, *inter alia*, Romania's frequently manifested and ostentatious distaste to them. However, Nicolae Giosan, Chairman of Romania's Great National Assembly, now proclaimed

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150 Memorandum of the meeting of the Bulgarian and Romanian Deputy Foreign Ministers regarding the CMFA Meeting in Sofia, 27 March 1988. In: BAEV, J. – LOCHER, A. (ed.): *The Irresistible Collapse of the Warsaw Pact* [online]. [cit. 2018-12-06]. Available at: *http://www.php.isn.ethz.ch/kms2.isn.ethz.ch/serviceengine/Files/PHP/15934/ipublicationdocument_singledocument/1f3f5240-71d5-4566-b0d1-7414a868db9b/en/880327_memo_bulg_rom_eng.pdf*.

151 See BAEV, J.: The End of the Warsaw Pact, 1985–1991.

152 See BÍLÝ, M.: *Varšavská smlouva 1969–1985*, p. 68.

unequivocal support to the proposed cooperation format as a result of Bucharest's changed attitude to political cooperation within the Warsaw Treaty Organization.[153]

The member states thus basically agreed to a substantial expansion of the agenda of future meetings. However, each of them had its own vision regarding the specific form of the innovated interparliamentary cooperation within the Warsaw Treaty Organization, and all the visions reflected the absence of a concept and attempts to improvise in an unknown political situation. Poland and Bulgaria were proposing a union of parliaments of the Warsaw Pact member states, modelled after the European Parliament. The German Democratic Republic was recommending the formation of an unspecified parliamentary cooperation body within the Political Consultative Committee. On the other hand, the Soviet Union announced that the parliamentary meetings did not have to be held only within the Warsaw Treaty Organization, but could be expanded to the CMEA as well.[154] From 1988, however, Moscow was rather leaning towards the formation of a joint parliamentary body on the platform of the Warsaw Pact, something like the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. The fact that contacts between parliaments of member states of both alliances had been growing at an unprecedented rate at that time had definitely something to do with the Soviet stance.[155] Eduard Shevardnadze urged the formation of such a body at the March 1988 meeting of the Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Sofia. Poland was very active in this respect. During the unofficial part of the meeting, it announced, through its Foreign Minister Marian Orzechowski, that it would present its own proposal for a joint interparliamentary organization of the Warsaw Pact member states before the next meeting of the Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs. The Poles argued that such a step might strengthen the alliance's position on the international scene.[156] However, the lack of clarity of the concept was illustrated by the final Polish proposal, which recommended establishing a European Parliamentary Council open for all states of the old continent. Its permanent secretariat was to be located in Warsaw.[157] The loudest representative of concepts of interparliamentary cooperation purely within the Warsaw Treaty Organization was the May 1988 initiative of East Germany. It assumed the formation of a Committee of Parliaments of Member States, an equivalent of the Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in the structure of the alliance's bodies. It was expected, first and

153 *NA*, f. 1261/0/9, Vol. P41/87, Minutes of the 41st meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on 8 July 1987, Item 7, Report on the meeting of chaimen of parliaments of the Warsaw Pact member states held on 1 to 3 July 1987; *SAPMO-BArch*, DY 30/J IV 2/2/2224, Minutes of the meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of SED, 6 June 1987, Annex No. 9 to Minutes No. 23.

154 *Ibid.*

155 MASTNÝ, V. – BYRNE, M. (ed.): *A Cardboard Castle?*, p. 62.

156 *NA*, f. 1261/0/9, Vol. P65/88, Minutes of the 65th meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on 31 March 1988, Item 4, Information about the meeting of the Committee of Foreign Ministers in Sofia.

157 *Ibid., Vol.* P77/88, Minutes of the 77th meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on 29 June 1988, Item 8, Invitation to the meeting of chairmen/speakers of Parliaments of the Warsaw Pact member states in Berlin.

foremost, to promote and interpret conclusions of the Political Consultative Committee at the level of parliaments, send joint delegations to international forums, such as the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe or disarmament talks in Geneva and Vienna, and present positions of the member states' parliaments there. The committee was also to have a small secretariat.[158]

The East German concept was very close to what actually transpired during the next meeting of parliament speakers, which took place on 14 to 16 September 1988, in East Berlin. It discussed the coordination of activities of parliamentary bodies of the Warsaw Pact member states in the implementation of resolutions of the Political Consultative Committee, promotion of the alliance's latest peace initiatives, and the best ways to exert influence upon parliaments of other countries, the European Parliament, the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, or the Nordic Council. At the same time, it discussed the course of the *perestroika* and its variants in each Warsaw Pact member state.[159] It was assumed that the speakers/chairmen of the parliaments would, from then on, always meet early in autumn, i.e. between the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee and that of the Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs. The agenda was to include topical issues, such as developments of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe process, disarmament talks, and the development of trade between the East and the West.[160]

The formation of the interparliamentary body within the Warsaw Treaty was ultimately rejected by Romania. At that time, Nicolae Ceaușescu presented his own proposal of a profound reform of the alliance, in which there was no place for such an institution. At the Berlin meeting of the speakers and chairmen of parliaments, Nicolae Giosan thus stated, on the one hand, that he did not have a mandate to discuss the establishment of a collective body or a joint declaration, but, on the other hand, supported continuing interparliamentary meetings – after all, the next one was to be hosted, according to the principle of rotation, by Romania's capital in 1989. Giosan also emphasized Bucharest's willingness to cooperate with parliaments of the Warsaw Pact member states both bilaterally and in broader international structures, such as the Interparliamentary Union. The purely utilitarian position of Ceaușescu's regime was underlined by Giosan's statement to the effect that Romania did not rule out a possibility to join the Warsaw Pact's interparliamentary body in the future. Other member states decided to avoid confrontation

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158 Each country was supposed to have one representative in the secretariat, whose activities were to be purely technical and predominantly consist in planning the agenda of the Committee of Parliaments and in submitting proposals for contacts with other parliamentary institutions. (*SAPMO-BArch*, DY 30/J IV 2/2/2269, Minutes of the meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of SED, 19 April 1988, Annex No. 12 to Minutes No. 16.)

159 *Ibid.*; *NA*, f. 1261/0/9, Vol. P77/88, Minutes of the 77th meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on 29 June 1988, Item 8, Invitation to the meeting of chairmen/speakers of Parliaments of the Warsaw Pact member states in Berlin.

160 *SAPMO-BArch*, DY 30/J IV 2/2/2285, Minutes of the meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of SED, 19 July 1988, Annex No. 2 to Minutes No. 28.

and instead attempted to cooperate with Romania in a constructive manner. East Germany therefore proposed to enhance cooperation of legislative bodies under the aegis of the Warsaw Treaty Organization even in the absence of an appropriate institution.[161] The Berlin meeting resolved that the possibility of establishing an association of parliaments of *socialist states*, rather than the Warsaw Treaty Organization, was to be discussed by a working ground under the leadership of Ryszard Wojna, Chairman of the Foreign Committee of the Polish Sejm.[162]

East Berlin continued to be active in this respect. Honecker's leadership decided to present, during the meeting of parliament speakers of European countries, the US and Canada scheduled to take place in Warsaw on 26 to 28 November 1988, a proposal to establish a Council for Parliamentary Cooperation of the Warsaw Pact Member States, albeit without Romania. They justified their move by ongoing improvements of the international situation, the strengthening of economic, environmental, scientific, technical, cultural and humanitarian cooperation and the need to establish contact with other regional parliamentary institutions. With a view to Romania, the statutes of the Council[163] explicitly stipulated that other countries could join it as well.[164] The overall helplessness and vagueness of concepts of further cooperation of legislative bodies within the Warsaw Treaty Organization was appropriately illustrated by parallel comtemplations of Moscow. These were returning to a broader model of an interparliamentary association of "socialist and progressively oriented countries," which could be joined, for example, by Yugoslavia.[165] After all, the relatively minor importance and benefits of the existing interparliamentary cooperation under the auspices of the alliance were also mentioned in a memorandum for leaders of the Hungarian Socialist Workers'

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161 *Ibid.*

162 *Ibid.*, DY 30/J IV 2/2/2295, Minutes of the meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of SED, 20 September 1988, Annex No. 8 to Minutes No. 38.

163 The document declared, *inter alia,* that the Council for Parliamentary Cooperation was to assist the formation of a general international security system. In addition, it was supposed to discuss economic integration of member states, thus becoming a tool for the development of new economic relations among Eastern Block countries. Due to the changing international atmosphere, the Council was also anticipated to deal with cultural and humanitarian issues, and even guarantee compliance with individual rights and liberties. It was perhaps East Germany's libation to Moscow, Budapest and Warsaw, which had already been actively involving themselves in the issues mentioned above by 1988. There were to be three types of bodies operating within the Council – an assembly consisting of 10 representatives of each country, a presidium comprising one representative from each member state, and commissions established by the presidium. There was also a plan to open a secretariat in Warsaw. The Council was expected to meet once a year, under the principle of rotation, and to be chaired by a representative of the host nation. The working language was to be Russian. (*Ibid.*, DY 30J IV 2/2/2300, Statut des Rates für parlamentarische Zusammenarbeit, undated, 1988.)

164 *Ibid.*, Minutes of the meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of SED, 25 October 1988, Annex No. 7 to Minutes No. 43.

165 *Ibid.*, DY 30J IV 2/2/2292, Minutes of the meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of SED, 6 September 1988, Annex No. 6 to Minutes No. 35.

Party of March 1989, which analyzed potential future approaches of Hungary to the Warsaw Treaty Organization. It, however, welcomed the intention to establish an interparliamentary body within the alliance.[166]

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The future of interparliamentary cooperation within the Warsaw Pact became a part of broader negotiations concerning an overall profound reform of the organization. Unlike in the second half of the 1960s and partly also in the first half of the 1970s, discussions about the reform during Gorbachev's era were not a key factor influencing practical functioning of the alliance's political structures, at least until the summer of 1988. It is true that representatives of member states, in particular the Soviet Union and the Polish People's Republic, had often spoken at relevant meetings about the necessity to support ongoing changes in cooperation within the alliance by establishing a permanent secretariat or by expanding the powers of the alliance's Secretary General,[167] but the real debate about the reform of the Warsaw Treaty Organization was prompted only by abovementioned Ceaușescu's proposal of July 1988. It assumed fundamental institutional changes, such as the dissolution of the Political Consultative Committee and a possibility of the position of the Supreme Commander of the Unified Armed Forces being rotated among representatives of all member states rather than being assigned exclusively to Soviet marshals.[168] Let us add that the rotation idea went beyond the common practice in NATO, where the comparable position was always assigned to US generals

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166 Joint Memorandum of the Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of National Defence on the Future of the Warsaw Pact, 6 March 1989. In: BÉKÉS, C. – LOCHER, A. (ed.): *Hungary and the Warsaw Pact, 1954–1989* [online]. [cit. 2018-12-06].

167 *NA*, f. 1261/0/9, Vol. P3/86, Minutes of the 3rd meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on 10 April 1986, Item 3, Information about the meeting of the Committee of Foreign Ministers of the Warsaw Pact member states in Warsaw, 19 and 20 March 1986; *Ibid.,* Vol. P32/87, Minutes of the 32nd meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on 30 March 1987, Item 1, Information about the meeting of the Committee of Foreign Ministers of the Warsaw Pact member states in Moscow, 24 and 25 March 1987; *Ibid.,* Vol. P49/87, Minutes of the 49th meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on 11 November 1987, Information about the meeting of the Committee of Foreign Ministers of the Warsaw Pact member states in Prague, 28 and 29 October 1987; *Ibid., Vol.* P65/88, Minutes of the *65*th meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on 31 March 1988, Item 4, Information about the meeting of the Committee of Foreign Ministers in Sofia; *Ibid.,* Vol. 79/88, Minutes of the 79th meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, 20 July 1988, Item 1, Information about the meeting of heads of delegations of Warsaw Pact member states on 16 July 1988; *AAN*, f. PZPR KC, sign. V/352, Minutes of the meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party, 30 May 1987, Notatka informacyjna o naradzie Doradczego Komitetu Politycznego państw-stron *Układu* Warszawskiego w Berlinie (28 i 29 maja 1987 r.).

168 BÉKÉS, C.: Hungary in the Warsaw Pact, 1954–1989 [online].

commanding US troops in Europe (SACEUR). The fact that Moscow surprisingly did not reject the idea straightaway is a proof of profound changes of relations among Eastern Bloc countries going on at that time.[169] The debate on the reform of the Warsaw Treaty Organization, which was going on in 1988 and 1989, reflected not only shifts in the workings of the alliance after Gorbachev's coming to power, but, first and foremost, rapid changes of the international situation and domestic developments in each member state, which started to affect their foreign policy as well. The end of 1989 and the fall of state socialism dictatorships in Eastern Europe brought contemplations about the future form of the alliance to a rapid end.

Historian Vladislav Zubok notes that Gorbachev liked using phrases such as "unpredictability," "let the process unfold," or "matter of course."[170] They characterized well his attitude to the Warsaw Pact. He often initiated fairly significant changes in the organization, but he rarely promoted their implementation in an assertive manner. Still, his greater openness and urgings aimed at the allies scored at least a temporary success. Occasional criticism and increasing difficulties which the Eastern Bloc was facing in the second half of the 1980s notwithstanding, political structures of the Warsaw Pact started operating, for the first time in their history, in a stabilized manner after 1985. They became a place for a flexible exchange and sharing of information and presentations of common foreign policy positions or initiatives. The West was also taking the Warsaw Treaty Organization seriously. Problems that are usually pointed to did not stem so much from poorly set mechanisms of the alliance, but rather reflected the dead end which the Eastern Bloc as a whole and the system of mutual relations among its members, which had been built for previous four decades, found themselves in. In this respect, the conclusion of historian Vojtěch Mastný holds true, namely that the Warsaw Treaty Organization was never the prime mover or catalyst of changes in the Soviet sphere of interest. On the contrary – its internal developments reflected, and possibly facilitated, such changes, reacting to a broader political dynamism in the Eastern Bloc.[171]

Some advocates of Gorbachev argue that no one had any clue how to reform a "totalitarian country" such as the Soviet Union in the second half of the 1980s, which was why there was no other way but trials and errors.[172] There is again a parallel with the Warsaw Pact: was there any guaranteed recipe how to reform a specific international organization that had been under directive management for such a long time? One of the reasons why the reform of political structures of the Warsaw Treaty Organization was not in the focus of interest might be that their activities had somehow been consolidated during early years of Gorbachev's rule, and it therefore was not quite clear what was the desired purpose of the changes. Available documents show that the functioning of the alliance in the second half of the 1980s was not a frequent topic of bilateral talks of diplomats and politicians of

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169 LUŇÁK, P. (ed.): *Plánování nemyslitelného [Planning the unthinkable]*, p. 77.
170 ZUBOK, V.: *A Failed Empire*, p. 313.
171 MASTNÝ, V. – BYRNE, M. (ed.): *A Cardboard Castle?*, p. 58.
172 ZUBOK, V.: *A Failed Empire*, p. 314.

the member states, which continued to be an important form of cooperation and communication in the Eastern Bloc. During such meetings, the Warsaw Pact tended to be mentioned or referred to just marginally and in general terms (if at all),[173] which was in contrast with the situation that had prevailed in the 1960s and 1970s. It was an indication of the organization's stability, the functioning of which was not regarded as a pressing issue. Still, attempts to strengthen the Warsaw Treaty Organization from inside and to add new cementing elements to its structure failed, as its relatively quick and trouble-free demise later showed.

The Czech version of this article, entitled „Je třeba se poučit.“ Vývoj politických struktur organizace Varšavské smlouvy v letech 1985–1989, *was originally published in* Soudobé dějiny, *Vol. 26, No. 1 (2019), pp. 32–74.*

Translated by Jiří Mareš

Abstract

The study analyzes the functioning of political structures of the Warsaw Treaty organization between the advent of Secretary General of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Mikhail Gorbachev and the collapse of the state socialist dictatorships in Central and Eastern Europe in the end of the 1989, which has hitherto been examined only superficially. Using results of research in Czech, German,

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173 *AMZV*, f. DTO 1953–1989, Inv. No. 31, Reg. No. 64, Information on the visit of Foreign Minister of the Polish People's Republic in the German Democratic Republic, 3 February 1986; *Ibid.*, Information on the visit of E. Shevardnadze (*sic*) in the Polish People's Republic, 7 April 1986; *Ibid.*, A comprehensive programme of the development of relations between the Polish People's Republic and the Hungarian People's Republic, 8 July 1986; *Ibid.*, Visit of Z. Messner in the German Democratic Republic, 27 October 1986; *Ibid.*, Working visit of T. Zhivkov in the Polish People's Republic, 16 April 1987; *Ibid.*, Information on the working and friendly visit of General Secretary of the Communist Party of Romania and President of the Socialist Republic of Romania N. Ceauşescu in the Polish People's Republic, 20 July 1987; *Ibid.*, Information on the visit of W. Jaruzelski in the German Democratic Republic, 28 September 1987; *Ibid.*, Information on the official and friendly visit of Prime Minister of the Hungarian People's Republic K. Grosz in the Polish People's Republic, 10 November 1987; *Ibid.*, Reg. No. 66, Visit of Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of Bulgaria P. Mladenov in the Polish People's Republic, 11 May 1988; *Ibid.*, Working and friendly visit of W. Jaruzelski, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party in the People's Republic of Bulgaria, 30 September 1988; *Ibid.*, Information on the visit of Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Polish People's Republic M. Rakowski in the German Democratic Republic, 19 October 1988; *Ibid.*, Inv. No. 23, Reg No. 18, Official visit of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the German Democratic Republic in the Hungarian People's Republic – Political Information Memo No. 23, 13 April 1988; *Ibid.*, Visit of Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic Nikolay I. Ryzhkov in the Hungarian People's Republic, 25 April 1988.

and Polish archives and drawing from studies of published documents, it describes in detail the substantial changes in the day-to-day operation of political structures of the organization, which took place at that time. It attempts to clarify and evaluate the essence of these shifts, to assess them in the context of previous developments, and to outline their significance for the fate of the Warsaw Treaty after 1989. It shows that Gorbachev initiated fairly significant changes in the organization, but he rarely promoted their implementation in an assertive enough manner. However, the greater openness toward and incentives presented to the allies, which characterized the approach of the Soviet Secretary General, were only partly successful. On the one hand, the political structures of the Warsaw Treaty started working in a routine manner for the first time in the history of the organization since 1985, becoming a venue where information was shared and foreign policy viewpoints and initiatives of member states were presented, the deepening crisis of the Eastern Bloc notwithstanding. On the other hand, however, day-to-day problems in the operation of the political structures of the Warsaw Treaty persisted, reflecting the impasse the Eastern Bloc as a whole and the system of relations between its member states, built in the previous four decades, found itself in. Before 1989, the Warsaw Treaty organization was unable to strengthen itself sufficiently enough, and the collapse of the then existing political regimes in Central and Eastern Europe doomed it to an early demise.

Prague Chronicle

Prague Conference on the Memory of Communism

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Looking back one year later, everything seems to be miraculously simple; to meet and discuss how we remember communism for two days. However, there was nothing simple about it. It was necessary to convince the institute's leadership that a conference like this would make sense, to garner support and cooperation of many other organizations, to raise funds, to invite a broad range of speakers, to put together a meaningful programme, to arrange logistic support etc., etc. All of the above had to be done to make the *"How We Remember: The Memory of Communism. Its Forms, Manifestations, Meanings"* conference, which took place in Prague on 17 and 18 September 2019,[1] happen. A lot of work and problems we involved, but in today's perspective, when real meetings are – and no one knows how long they will continue to be – replaced by their on-line substitutes, it was indeed a miracle of sorts.

The idea of the conference was prompted by a reflection that the 30th anniversary of the events of 1989 was a good opportunity not just for studying and discussing the developments which had resulted in the fall of Central and Eastern European

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[1] The conference's stream is available at: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLQaeX5 nOALPtNkk1T8U5g_2Xpqtx5Lz36

communist regimes in the late 1980s, but also for focusing attention on how the memory of communism has developed and changed in the last three decades and how reflections of the communist past have influenced developments after 1989. Thus, the aim of the *How We Remember* conference was to have a broad transnational debate on forms, manifestations and meanings of the memory of communist regimes in various settings and environments. We managed to put together a truly impressive programme with 40 active participants from 14 countries: Belgium, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Ukraine.

In addition to the Institute for Contemporary History of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, the conference was organizationally and financially supported by a number of important international and foreign institutions: the European Network Remembrance and Solidarity, Bundesstiftung zur Aufarbeitung der SED-Diktatur, Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung office in Prague, Deutsches historisches Institut Warschau, and, last, but not least, the host of the conference's proceedings, the Goethe-Institut Prag. The media partner was Český rozhlas Plus radio.

The conference was a convincing reminder of diverse forms of the memory of communism, but also of the transnational nature of memory and of the repetition of various topics and focal points of debates in different national environments. It is a pity that the domestic professional and lay public did not attend the event in greater numbers; debates transpiring at the conference showed that Czech discussions about communism were nothing uncommon. The conference reminded us that we often laboriously formulated questions which had not only been asked long ago, but for which answers existed, the knowledge (or at least awareness) of which could cultivate our debate, sometimes desperately uninformed and running in circles.

Some contributions (Attila Pók, Florin Abraham) analyzed the role of historiography; although using Hungarian and Romanian examples, respectively, they seemed to reflect our own local debates. Should historiography primarily be a de-communization tool and provide a moral compensation to victims of communism, or is it an academic discipline the role of which is to seek an explanation and understanding of events of the past? Could such a historicizing anti-communism be, *per se,* a strong base of new social identities? Does not the disproportionate attention devoted to secret services, repressive bodies, agents etc. distort the image of the past? Does striving for a universal truth about the past, as exemplified by the establishment and the very name of the Hungarian government-supported institution (Institut Veritas) tasked with research of the communist past, which has been gradually swallowing up other research institutions, make any sense at all?

Did – or does – there exist just one and only communist regime, geographically or chronologically undifferentiated? Polish historian Kamila Zyto chose an unconventional approach to challenge the above notion, namely an analysis showing how different periods of the Polish communist regime have been reflected in various ways (drama, satire, comedy) by the Polish cinema art of the last few decades. At the same time, emotions are still present in the memory of communism. In addition to often mentioned nostalgia, however, there is also trauma, as forcefully illustrated by

Hungarian historian Réka Sarkozy on an excerpt from a documentary movie named "Piroska," which captured a meeting of former female prisoners with their female guard. What might initially be a high school reunion of sorts for the former member of the prison guards was perceived quite differently by former prisoners, although their behaviour was restrained. Both the lecture and the movie graphically illustrated the diversity of parallel memories and the inability of individual perpetrators to reflect their own role ("it was the regime").

Other contributions – perhaps unwillingly, but remarkably – commented on our current debates about reminders of communism in public space, also reflecting the fact that it is a past which has not disappeared, but survives, and which we sometimes – for a variety of reasons – call back. One possible approach was dealt with in the presentation on *Leninopad* (mass demolition of Lenin's statues and monuments in Ukraine in 2013 and 2014) and parallel erection of monuments of Stepan Bandera, which was delivered by Ukrainian historian Valeriya Korablyova. A different approach, and substantially more sophisticated and cultured one at that, was described by German researcher Jürgen Danyel, using the fate of Ernst Thälmann in Berlin as an example.

Sabine Stach reminded the audience of yet another form of the memory of communism: a commercialized one, which makes reminders of communism an attraction for tourists. It should be noted that there is an intersection of sorts between the commercialized form and an engaged (i.e. with an anti-communist accent) one: the attractive (and hence profit-making) aspects of the communist past are those which concern crimes, victims, secret services, etc.

In many respects, the presentations delivered during the conference were a source of inspiration and prompting further questions. For example, the opinion shared by Attila Pók and Jan Rubeš, namely that the most convincing analysis and the unmasking of communism can be found in the memories of those who used to be communists themselves, would definitely merit further research.

If the situation were normal, it would be possible to conclude by saying that many topics have remained open for future similar conferences. Under the circumstances mentioned above, however, future conferences are very uncertain.

Translated by Jiří Mareš

Abstract
This report assesses the conference "How We Remember: The Memory of Communism. Its Forms, Manifestations, Meanings" *that took place in Prague on 17 and 18 September 2019. Its major aim was to have a broad transnational debate on forms, manifestations and meanings of the memory of communist regimes in various settings and environments.*

Prague Chronicle

Trajectories of Romani Migrations and Mobilities in Europe and Beyond (1945–present)

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The conference *Trajectories of Romani Migrations and Mobilities in Europe and Beyond (1945–present)* was held in Villa Lanna in Prague on 16–18 September 2019. It was organized by the Prague Forum for Romani Histories at the Institute of Contemporary History, Czech Academy of Sciences (http://www.romanihistories. usd.cas.cz/) in cooperation with the Seminar on Romani Studies (Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague), Faculty of Social Sciences and Economics (University of Valle, Colombia), and the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies (The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum).

  The conference brought together scholars from across a variety of disciplines, who presented empirically grounded accounts of multiple dimensions of Romani mobilities since 1945 and analyzed connections between forms of past mobilities and migrations and the most recent movements of various Romani groupings. Besides responding to a lack of reflection in the emerging field of Romani migration and mobilities studies on historical continuities and social trajectories, the organizers Helena Sadílková and Jan Grill identified the conference rationale in

going beyond the trope of "nomadism" still dominant in research concerning Roma, and in bridging the rupture caused by studies either ending or beginning with the Second World War. Panels have initiated discussion by mixing more historically and more contemporarily focused papers.

In the first panel *Displacement, Survival, and Migration in the Aftermath of the Second World War and the Holocaust: Romani Trajectories in the Arolsen Archives*, Elizabeth Anthony (Washington D.C.) presented the records of the International Tracing Service (ITS) Digital Archive and their use for scholarly research on Romani victims of the Holocaust. The ITS that holds over 200 million digital images related to a majority of non-Jewish victims has been opened to researchers since 2007 and is accessible in eight different locations. Ari Joskowicz (Nashville, Tennessee) talked about how to research Romani mobilities in the ITS archives that unites three bureaucracies: documents dealing with prisoners during National Socialism, the paperwork of international organizations dealing with postwar claimants, and finally the paperwork of an international NGO that certifies claims and aids victims' relatives based on the former two collections. The ensuing discussion led by Kateřina Čapková (Prague) and with the participation of Jo-Ellyn Decker (Washington D.C.) focused on methodological and ethical problems and concerns raised by an open access to the archives, namely, that the use of derogatory terminology, such as "Zigeuner" or "Asoziale" that appear in the sources reproduce prejudices, that the classification and categorization used in the archives need to be questioned, and that victim interviews cannot be read without taking into account the process of negotiation. Finally, the issue of privacy was a central concern that affects especially Romani victims and relatives, since, as Joskowicz has pointed out, unlike most of the surviving Jewish population, Roma have remained after the Second World War in the region where they had been persecuted.

Panel 2, *Manipulation of "Gypsy Nomadism" in Postwar Europe*, looked at state-defined constructions of "nomadism" in post-1945 Eastern and Western Europe. Huub van Baar (Amsterdam) analyzed the ambiguity in Western European histories of protecting nomadic cultures that materialized in irregularizing the citizenship of Roma. Going beyond the dilemma of how to protect nomadic lifestyles while encouraging sedentarization, van Baar pointed to practices of governance (in the Foucauldian sense) through mobility and via politics as ways that have prevented settlement by encouraging nomadization. Stefánia Toma and László Fosztó (Cluj-Napoca) showed how constructions of the mobilities of Roma in state socialist and post-socialist Romania served as a resource as well as an obstacle for their social integration. Categories moved from "nomadism" to "social parasitism" between the 1950s and the 1970s. In the 1990s, depictions entailed ethnicized conflicts between Roma and non-Roma, and finally, after the global economic crisis, Roma were pictured as migrants invading the country. Through two case studies from the 1990s Czech Republic, Filip Pospíšil (New York City) discussed how policies applied by local level actors in interaction with larger structural changes leading to the impoverishment of certain parts of the Romani population caused and governed the intrastate mobility of Roma. These have led to different mechanisms of

segregation, including among others surveillance, discipline, omission, containment, and displacement. As Ari Joskowicz pointed out, the panel highlighted the role of regulation (regulating mobility and through mobility), shifting expectations of the desirability and undesirability of movement, and processes that created the intrastate mobility of sedentary populations.

Panel 3, *Negotiating Intrastate Policies during Socialism*, comprised three historically and analytically rich papers on how governmentalities in the state socialist period affected Roma and how Roma have reacted. In her case study from a Southern Romanian city's Romani community, Ana Chiritoiu (Budapest) deconstructed the term "nomadism" based on the responses of her interlocutors to this label. She showed that "circulation" was a more accurate term to describe Romani mobilities than the ideologically-loaded notion of "nomadism," and that Roma celebrated their navigation of adverse circumstances throughout different political regimes, including those that defined them to be "nomads," as a proof of their "capability." Markéta Hajská (Prague) discussed how local Vlach Romani families from Žatec and Louny, who were forced to settle by law in 1958, viewed the assimilation policies of 1950s Czechoslovakia. She highlighted that in contrast to official reports families and descendants remembered the implementation of the law as violent and non-peaceful. Jan Ort (Prague), focusing on the controlled dispersal and transfer of Roma in mid-1960s Czechoslovakia through a case study of the Humenné district, argued for a complex interpretation of state efforts towards the "solution to the Gypsy question" from the perspective of local developments in which there is place for narratives that perceived socialist policies as a chance for the social mobility of and a better housing for Roma. Implementation and eventual failure of the policy depended on the practices and interests as well as the relationship between actors at different state levels and locals, including Roma. One of the central questions that emerged in this panel, as László Foszló pointed out in his comments, was what analytical structures there were to account for resistance without giving too much weight either to narratives of suffering or to narratives about "outsmarting" the state.

Panel 4, *Challenging Borders and Closed Concepts*, continued this discussion with three papers addressing activism and organized action on behalf of communities and physical mobility as forms of resistance, opposition, negotiation and agency. Licia Porcedda (Paris) presented the case of two Croatian Romani women forced to live in confinement because of racialized anti-Gypsy regulations under fascist Italian rule, who petitioned authorities and escaped from arrest. Sabrina Steindl-Kopf and Sandra Üllen (Vienna) talked about the interconnectedness of activism and migratory experience among migrant Romani women in Vienna. They described the specific situation of women who have used activism as a way towards their personal empowerment too. Dušan Slačka (Brno) reflected on the work of the Czech and Slovak Union of Gypsies/Roma and the territorial movement of community members in the Moravian-Slovak borderlands in the districts of Hodonín and Senica as negotiating the changing political and administrative contexts and limitations of movement imposed on Roma in 1970s Czechoslovakia. Eszter Varsa (Regensburg)

in her comments to the panel emphasized the connection of gendered forms of discrimination and exclusion with both the othering and racial discrimination of "Gypsies" and the (re)negotiations of (stigmatized) "Gypsyness."

The closing event of the second conference day was a forum inviting conference participants to critically interrogate analytical categories in terms of both pitfalls and promising tendencies in the emerging field of migration and mobility studies, and to reflect on the multi-layered concept of "trajectories" with regard to the necessity of historicizing migration and mobilities. Four introductory remarks opened the discussion. Martin Fotta (Frankfurt am Main) argued for the inclusion of the Atlantic space in talking about Romani migration. Not only because Roma were present in Central America before they had reached certain parts of Europe but because this location would enable a comparative perspective on Roma in relation to other racialized groups. Yasar Abu Ghosh (Prague) raised much controversy with his suggestion to search for a modern nomadological concept to describe what based on his anthropological research he saw as the readiness of Roma to move. Helena Sadílková engaged with Abu Ghosh's analytical framework by warning about the danger of reproducing the trope of nomadism and moving as related to Roma only. She pointed out that strong feelings of belonging to communities and places as well as the leaning on and use of established structures and institutions also characterized the experiences of Roma. Jan Grill argued for the necessity of a historical, transnational and intersectional perspective in combination with thinking through borders to analyze ruptures and connections in both geographical and social mobility. He drew attention to "migrating racialization," a concept he uses to describe the circulation and reproduction of knowledge, and the continuing trajectories and adjustments of classificatory matrixes concerning Roma in transnational fields and states. The lively and engaged discussion among participants highlighted among others the need for local case studies with historical depth and more comparative research in order to be able to test concepts and de-exoticize Romani mobility.

The last conference panel, *Beyond the Binary of Nomadism and Settlement*, dealt with contemporary migration and mobilities. In their case study of Romani migrants from Poland to the UK that examines how Romani migrants perceived mobility discourses and constraints, and how they adapted their migration strategies to this situation, Kamila Fiałkowska, Michał P. Garapich and Elżbieta Mirga-Wójtowicz (Warsaw) argued that migrating as an extended family group is mutually produced by mobility regimes and strong moral obligations stemming from kinship ties. Interestingly, Roma perceive political changes such as the collapse of the Berlin Wall or the EU enlargement as links in the long chain of the persecution and problematization of their mobility. Judit Durst (London) and Zsanna Nyírő (Budapest) discussed the entanglement of geographic and social mobility in their paper on the role of kinship in migration among (trans)nationally mobile Roma factory workers from rural Hungary. They found that the use of family kinship as a resource in migration facilitating transnational movement distinguished the migration of local Roma from the migration pattern of non-Roma, and referred to "recurring mobility"

to describe the intermittent movement of Roma that always entailed periods of stasis. With continued focus on the alarming economic and social inequalities in EU countries, Daniel Škobla (Bratislava), in a paper produced together with Mario Rodriguéz Polo (Olomouc), presented the cyclical migration of impoverished Roma from Southern Slovakia to Austria as a way to retain control over their economic situation and resist oppression and discrimination. Huub van Baar, in discussing the papers, pointed out that the presentations showed how Roma circumvented, challenged and contested unequal power relationships through mobility as well as the price they paid for it, such as hiding their Romani identity, or the creation of new ethnic boundaries.

The conference provided an important step towards and pointed to the need for more comparative, intersectional and historically rooted research in order to avoid both the exoticization and the marginalization of Romani migration and mobilities.

This report was published also at *H-Soz-Kult*.

Abstract
The conference Trajectories of Romani Migrations and Mobilities in Europe and Beyond (1945–present) *was held in Villa Lanna in Prague on 16–18 September 2019. It examined multiple dimensions of Romani mobilities since 1945 and analyzed connections between forms of past mobilities and migrations and the most recent movements of various Romani groupings. It was intended as a response to a lack of reflection in the emerging field of Romani migration and mobilities studies on historical continuities and social trajectories. The conference pointed to the need for more comparative, intersectional and historically rooted research.*

The Equivocal Legacy of 1989 and the Crisis of Liberal Democracy in Central Europe

Report on the "Democratic Revolution 1989: Thirty Years After" Conference

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On 6–8 November 2019, an international conference entitled "Democratic Revolution 1989: Thirty Years After" took place on the premises of the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic. Its co-organizers included the Institute for Contemporary History of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, and the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic. The generously conceived international event stretched over three days and comprised six extensive panels mapping a broad spectrum of research perspectives related to 1989.

The conference was opened by a panel debate titled "From the crisis of communist dictatorship to the crisis of liberal democracy (1989–2019)." The name was a fitting reflection of the atmosphere in which the whole conference took place and which most of the event's participants voiced in one way or another: 30 years after the fall of communism, the Czech, and indeed Central European, post-communist liberal democracy finds itself in a crisis, and a historical understanding of social and political

processes leading to it is necessary. This was also what the opening addresses of Hungarian sociologist Agnes Gagyi and Slovak political scientist Dagmar Kusá contained. Both speakers pointed at an increasing socio-economic polarization of post-November society; in addition, Kusá emphasized that the frustration was felt not only by the most fragile social segments, which tend towards various types of political populism, but also by citizens in a better economic position, who are disappointed with increasing economic inequalities as well as with the human rights situation and defective functioning of democratic institutions which they believe have failed in making the November 1989 promise come true.

Another significant aspect of the opening discussion was the global perception of the year 1989, predominantly as a symbol of sorts and an "export article" to other parts of the world. British historian James Mark called the phenomenon a process of the formation of a global identity of the year 1989, which was reflected in political rhetoric of subsequent social protests in Europe and elsewhere and was framed, in particular, by the policy of compliance with human rights. In this respect, Mark's topic was picked up and elaborated by political scientist Pavel Barša. His short reflection was exceptional in that he perceived the year 1989 and its emphasis on liberal freedoms as a consequence of a long-term process of extinction of the modern idea of social liberation, which perceives the state and its institutions as key players in the emancipation process. Barša reminded that the tradition was one of the democratic legacies of the French Revolution represented by the Jacobinian concept of democracy. However, he pointed out that the trust in the state as the guarantor of human freedom had been dramatically disappearing from emancipation movements in the 1970s. The empty space has been filled in by, *inter alia,* the "last universalistic ideology" of human rights, which, however, perceives the state as a generally repressive and restrictive entity. Barša thus showed that the roots of the value frame of the year 1989 should be looked for in the less visible social revolution and a "neo-liberal" turn which social scientists refer to as "the long seventies."

This is a proposition which is now discussed in connection with critical reading of the global movement for human rights. Simon Moyn, one of the most prominent historians in this field, who was also quoted by Barša, draws attention to this "social deficit" of the notion of human rights, and the potential crisis of social systems arising therefrom. While human rights became a central notion of the (neo)liberal global order in the 1990s (owing, *inter alia,* also to events of the so-called *annus mirabilis* in Central Europe, they have never become an effective tool in the field of negotiations of egalitarian policies, which is why Moyn (and Barša as well) claim their legacy is not an effective political solution of today's increasing material and economic inequality and requirements for economic justice and redistribution.

The critical reading of the year 1989, which was started by the opening debate, was also present in a substantial part of presentations delivered in the next two days. They covered a broad spectrum of new research topics and innovative methodological approaches: traditional historical and memory reflections, but also sociological, political science, economic and psychological perspectives. Thanks to foreign researchers attending the conference, the event provided a combination of local and global readings

of the year 1989, and thus succeeded in reaching beyond the traditional perception of the so-called Velvet Revolution in a purely national (Czech and Slovak) perspective. The audience certainly did not return home with an authoritative interpretation of the events of 1989, but instead had a chance to listen to a broad range of critical interpretations and topics hitherto not much discussed (e.g. in the field of research of political institutions, social state, psychology of remembrance, or management and corporate culture).

The abovementioned plurality of scientific opinions notwithstanding, it is possible to say that the conference held on the occasion of the 30th anniversary has revealed substantial shifts in the field of historical conceptualization of contemporary history, particularly in two areas. First, it has clearly shown the departure of social sciences from the "triumphalistic" reading of the year 1989 and their attempt to reinterpret the legacy of the Velvet Revolution in the light of today's social crisis. The other significant feature of today's research is an emphasis on a continuity with the pre-November regime and a challenging of the year 1989 as the *tabula rasa* of the new democracy. This line was followed in several presentations dealing with the transformation of legal, political and economic institutions rather than focusing just on traditional players of the transformation. It was perhaps Adéla Gjuričová who identified the issue in the clearest way, showing how central political institutions of the "old regime" had adapted to the new system, and thus had been determining subsequent institutional transformations. She noted that the 1989 revolution had not been an anti-institutional revolution; it had needed the state and its bodies, because it had honoured the legality of the whole process. Opposition leaders, who recognized the formal procedure as a mighty weapon of the revolution, were thus ignoring central institutions much less than it has seemed until now or that they themselves are willing to admit. The issue of the revolution's legality and constitutional character was also described in detail by legal theoretician Jan Winter.

The contribution of Tomáš Vilímek, which was based on his long-time research of management culture, followed a similar research trend focusing on "longer duration" issues. He described the difficult transition from the socialist "leading worker" to the post-November company manager. He noted that the process of transformation of enterprises towards decentralization and the implementation of "Western type" measures had started already during the *perestroika* and had been associated with changes which the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia intended to implement in the late 1980s to make the economy more effective. Managers of socialist enterprises no longer wanted to be mere "political administrators," but wished a more active decision-making role. In this respect, Vilímek pointed at a significant issue: the "emancipation" process in the corporate sphere was connected more with efforts to convert one's social capital into future economic capital rather than with the need to join the discourse on human rights, which were of marginal interest for the class of managers. Results of the research conceived in the manner outlined above thus make a significant contribution to understanding the key players of the year 1989 and their value orientations.

The issues of the crisis, continuity and interpretations of the year 1989 from the viewpoint of a longer historical perspective, as well as of a more detailed understand-

ing of the increasing nostalgia for the "old regime," were dealt with in several other presentations. A symbolical synthesis of all the topics listed above was the lecture of sociologist Daniel Prokop, which was standing out due to its focus on contemporary social problems of citizens of the Czech Republic. Using results of his detailed qualitative research, Prokop presented a new social stratification typology, which reflects, *inter alia,* different perceptions of the post-November regime and of issues related to the functioning of democracy. The exceptionality of his research consists mainly in his effort to grasp the social reality in a new manner; for historians, however, the notional capture of the entire research project must certainly be interesting as well. As a matter of fact, Prokop, 30 years after the fall of communism, publicly refers to the Czech society as a *class-divided society* at conferences or in the media, thus returns the analytical notion of class, which has long been "forbidden," back to serious public debates. However, he does not lean on the traditional Marxist concept of two conflicting classes, but on a more complex and comprehensive concept of classes and capital of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, which was elaborated, for purposes of today's social analyses, by British sociologist Michael Savage. Prokop's team has thus identified five classes which today's Czech society can be divided into. Based on experience of economically threatened classes, Prokop has arrived, *inter alia,* at a conclusion that attitudes which have long been interpreted purely as value notions, such as the attitude to November 1989 or to liberal democracy in general, have their roots in the social position or status and, within that position, they also depend on whether the individual in question has experienced the hardest difficulties (distraint, loss of housing) the Czech Republic's social system may bring, or not. Thirty years from the revolution, he drew a not very optimistic picture of Czech society. However, he also noted that many of the problems arose from general characteristics of global capitalism, thus agreeing with the importance of the "global reading" of the year 1989, as reminded by Barša in the initial debate: "There are tendencies to relate the current situation to what happened 30 years ago, but the relation might be just marginal. It is far more likely that what matters most is the fact that we have joined the global system which is presently experiencing a crisis."

It is true that the conference revealed some historical scepticism found in historical, legal and political science reflections of the year 1989 in relation to today's social situation; still, I believe that its overall outcome is a reason to be optimistic – at least insofar as research of the most modern history is concerned. The very fact that the conference, sometimes heavily socially critical, took place without any problems on the premises of one of the highest political institutions, the Senate of the Czech Republic, although one of the presentations even openly criticized Jaroslav Kubera, at that time the Senate's speaker, is certainly a good omen. The same applies to the quality and erudition of the conference's participants and its emphasis on the necessity to seek interpretations that are not simplifying, do not present explicit value judgments, and are not afraid to open often unpleasant social issues.

Translated by Jiří Mareš

Abstract

On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Velvet Revolution in November 2019, the international conference "The Democratic Revolution 1989: Thirty Years After" took place in the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic. Its co-organizers included the Institute for Contemporary History of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes, the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic and the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic. The conference presented the most recent research into the history of late communism, 1989 and the 1990s. Thirty years after the end of communism historians offered critical perspectives on the period of the so-called democratic transformation. They questioned the prevalent reading of 1989 and discussed topics of continuity with the communist regime or the global impact of 1989 and its legacy for today's democratic activism. Moreover, many of the discussants mentioned an ongoing crisis of liberal democracy and the existence of deep social inequalities in recent Czech (and Central European) society.

Review

Political Echoes of Buchenwald

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MOULIS, Miloslav: *Z mých vzpomínek* [From my memories]. Prepared and edited for publication by Lenka Kločková, Maria Chaloupková and Roman Štér. Praha, Národní archiv 2016, 279 pages, ISBN 978-80-7469-052-5.

In 2016, the National Archives of the Czech Republic published memoirs of Miloslav Moulis (1921–2010), a well-known Czechoslovak journalist, publicist and historian. The book *Z mých vzpomínek* is a critical edition of the author's unfinished manuscript dating back to 2005 and 2006. Moulis builds on his previously published memoirs describing the pre-war period and the Nazi occupation.[1] At that time, he was a significant protagonist of the left-wing resistance organization National Movement of Working Youth. He was imprisoned twice for his anti-Nazi activities between 1940 and 1945, and spent the longest time in the concentration camp in Buchenwald.

Moulis opens the second part of his memoirs by a description of his repatriation from the concentration camp in May 1945. Thanks to his status of an ex-political prisoner and close relations with many top-ranking functionaries of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, he held top positions in regional offices of the

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1   MOULIS, Miloslav: *Vlaky do neznáma* [Trains heading into the unknown]. Třebíč, Akcent 2001.

Ministry of Information in Pilsen, Prague and Ústí nad Labem between 1945 and 1948. Later he became the press officer of the secretariat of the Central Council of Cooperatives where he worked until the summer of 1952. At that time, the quest for alleged hidden enemies within the Communist Party and state structures, which also affected some of Moulis's friends and protectors among former fellow inmates, was culminating. Some were sentenced in fabricated political trials (e.g. Josef Frank, Deputy Secretary General of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia), others were removed from their positions (e.g. Jiří Žák, editor-in-chief of the communist *Haló noviny* periodical). Moulis himself was interrogated for not preventing, as the editor-in-chief of *Družstevní noviny,* the publication of a photograph by mistake on which President Gottwald resembled Rudolf Slánský, the former General Secretary of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, at that time already prosecuted as the alleged head of the anti-state conspiracy. Because of his relations with some of the alleged "traitors," Moulis had to resign from his position and started working as a member of the editorial staff of the *Československý horník* magazine. However, between 1959 and 1963 he was promoted again and advanced to the position of a political officer of the Press Department of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. Later he worked as a historian at the Military History Institute in Prague, where he was involved in some historiographic projects close to the reform movement.

One of the aspects in which Moulis's memoirs can contribute to general historical knowledge is the depiction of Moulis's political attitudes in the 1950s and 1960s. Moulis was a member of the young generation of Czechoslovak communist activists who joined public life after the Second World War without much political experience and took hold of top positions thanks to their resistance credit. Their activities made a considerable contribution to the establishment of the dictatorship of the Communist Party, which they deliberately and knowingly supported. Their trust in Communist Party leadership was generally weakened only by their direct personal experience with the machine of political trials, which also focused on the Communist Party itself between 1949 and 1952. Even after the official revelation of the so-called personality cult deformations in 1956, these communists continued to believe in benefits of the state socialist regime and a possibility of eliminating its deficiencies. In the second half of the 1960s, they were becoming protagonists of the reform faction. In this respect, Moulis's memoirs may be an important complement to memoirs of some leading communist politicians (e.g. Marie Švermová, Čestmír Císař or Zdeněk Mlynář),[2] as, contrary to them, Moulis held low- to mid-level positions, and thus captured the opinion on the reform process from a different, less prominent perspective.

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2   ŠVERMOVÁ, Marie: *Vzpomínky* [Memories]. Praha, Futura 2008; CÍSAŘ, Čestmír: *Paměti: Nejen o zákulisí Pražského jara* [Memoirs: Not only on the backstage of the Prague Spring]. Praha, SinCon 2005; MLYNÁŘ, Zdeněk: *Mráz přichází z Kremlu* [Nightfrost in Prague]. Praha, Mladá fronta 1990.

Unfortunately, Moulis's testimony is not quite candid, as the author intentionally withholds political aspect of his activities. He tries to create the impression that all he was interested in between 1945 and 1968 was non-political journalism and the promotion of anti-Nazi resistance. To this end, he reduces his biography only to some selected topics. It is obvious, for example, from the fact that he describes the work of the head of the regional office of the Ministry of Information or the press officer of the Central Council of Cooperatives as a non-political editorial job. Without offering any comment, he also omits the 1956–1963 period during which he was, *inter alia,* a political officer of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. The book thus clearly shows the limits of the author's self-reflection.

Another area in which Moulis's memoirs may be an important source is the formation of postwar networks of personal ties within the Communist Party. The author's career was significantly influenced by the fact that he had spent the last phase of the Second World War in Buchenwald. The local inmate self-governance system was controlled to a considerable degree by German communists (and their Czech colleagues). It should be noted that they were deciding crucial issues of life and death, such as work assignments of inmates. An extensive organization thus had grown inside the camp, whose members were very active in the Communist Party after the war. Loyalties and relationships established during the period spent together in the concentration camp often survived for decades. In the postwar Communist Party, there was a network of former Buchenwald inmates whose members knew of and supported each other. Their influence reached to the uppermost levels of politics and was also based on positions in security and regional power structures. The former members of the Buchenwald self-governance system included, for example, Deputy Secretary General of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia Josef Frank, Commander of the Land Security Department in Prague Emil Hršel, State Security Commander Jindřich Veselý, member of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia Josef Tesla, or editor-in-chief of *Haló noviny* Jiří Žák.[3] Among the former fellow inmates of Moulis were also Minister of Defence Alexej Čepička, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia Vratislav Krutina, Chairman of the Factory Organization of ČKD Praha Bedřich Kozelka, Mayor of Pilsen Josef Ullrich, and many others.[4] Former fellow inmates of Moulis repeatedly influenced the latter's life in 1945, 1948, and 1952, when he was looking for a job or seeking their assistance. On the other hand, it was Moulis who assumed the role of a helper-cum-intercessor between 1969 and 1972.

The third level, in which Moulis's memoirs provide an important testimony beyond the mere subjective optics of the author, is the interplay between the

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3   See ŽÁK, Jiří: *Deset posledních dnů – Buchenwald* [The last 10 days – Buchenwald]. Plzeň, Volnost 1945.

4   See KOZELKA, Bedřich: *Vzpomínky* [Memories]. Praha, Práce 1968; ULLRICH, Josef: *Šest let za ostnatým drátem* [Six years behind barbed wire]. Plzeň, Volnost 1945.

reform policies of the second half of the 1960s and the historiographic writing of the time. Moulis had been with the Military Historical Institute from 1963, and he was involved in two important scientific and publishing projects. First of all, he was a member of the Czechoslovak Committee on the History of Anti-Fascist Resistance, which operated at the Communist Party Institute of History, which brought together experts preparing a new synthesis on anti-Nazi resistance. In many ways, their interpretation of the past legitimized the advent of Communist Party reform policies.[5] Together with two colleagues, Moulis also assisted the impending President of the Republic, Ludvík Svoboda, in compiling his memoirs between 1966 and 1972. During the politically highly turbulent era of the Prague Spring and the incipient "normalization," he cooperated with the head of state almost daily and was therefore able to directly follow the evolution of Svoboda's positions. He also tried to use his exceptional status to benefit some friends affected by political vetting. But in 1972, Ludvík Svoboda's opponents attacked the president through the manuscript of his memoirs, and the team had to be disbanded under pressure from Communist Party leadership. Moulis's memoirs offer a number of interesting observations from this period on the sentiments of Ludvík Svoboda as well as on the operation of historiography in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

The book is written in an engaging style of an experienced journalist. National Archives staff Lenka Kločková, Maria Chaloupková and Roman Štér completed the text with critical technical remarks.

The Czech version of this review, entitled Politické ozvěny Buchenwaldu, *was originally published in* Soudobé dějiny, *Vol. 26, No. 1 (2019), pp. 155–158.*

Translated by Jiří Mareš

Abstract
The book From my Memories *of the Czech historian, journalist, and publicist Miloslav Moulis (1921–2010) are a sequel of his previous book of memoirs,* Vlaky do neznáma (Trains Heading for the Unknown) (Třebíč, Akcent 2011), *which depicts the era of the first Czechoslovak Republic and the Nazi occupation during which the author, a member of the resistance movement, was imprisoned. The loose sequel starts with his return from the Buchenwald concentration camp and describes his life in post-war Czechoslovakia. As a Communist activist, he first held various administrative jobs and started studying history in the 1960s. In the reviewer s opinion, Moulis's memoirs may be beneficial for three aspects of historical studies: the evolution of political attitudes*

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5   See SOMMER, Vítězslav: *Angažované dějepisectví: Stranická historiografie mezi stalinismem a reformním komunismem (1950–1970)* [Engaged history: Party historiography between Stalinism and reform communism (1950–1970)]. Praha, Nakladatelství Lidové noviny 2012.

of low- and middle-level Communist officials in the 1950s and 1960s, the creation of post-war networks of personal relations within the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, in which alliances established during the Nazi internment were playing an important role, and the mutual union of reformist politicians and historiographers in the 1960s.

Review

Reflections from Elsewhere
Latinos on the Czechoslovakia of the 1940s and 1950s

Hana Bortlová-Vondráková

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ZOUREK, Michal (ed.): *Československo očima latinskoamerických intelektuálů 1947–1959* [Czechoslovakia through the eyes of Latin American intellectuals 1947–1959]. Praha, Runa 2018, 303 pp, ISBN 978-80-87792-25-4.

This book by a Latin America specialist, Michal Zourek (1985),[1] provides a fresh perspective on Czechoslovakia in 1947–1959 through testimonies of Latin American

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1   Michal Zourek's long-term research interest has been not only contacts between Czechoslovakia and the Ibero-American world, but also modern history of this continent in general. He is the author of several books and of a number of studies. In 2014, he published his doctoral dissertation in Spanish entitled *Checoslovaquia y el Cono Sur 1945–1989: Relaciones políticas, económicas y culturales durante la Guerra fría*. Drawing on his long-term research in Czech and Latin American archives, he focused on political, economic and cultural relations between Czechoslovakia and the Southern Cone countries (Argentina, Chile and Uruguay) during the Cold War. He is also the co-author of a fundamental monograph published by the Centre of Ibero-American Studies at the Faculty of Arts of Charles University entitled *Las relaciones entre Checoslovaquia y América Latina 1945–1989 en los archivos checos* (Praha, Karolinum 2015). This work provides a more general overview of the Cold War relations between Czechoslovakia and Latin America in the light of the documents from

intellectuals who travelled to this Central European country during the period under review.

For selecting the texts, the author set a period framed by the onset of the Cold War and by the Cuban Revolution. According to Zourek, it was in this period that the biggest wave of sympathy arose among Latin American intellectuals towards the Soviet Union, fuelled by the lingering effects of the Second World War and the civil war in culturally close Spain, as well as by feelings of threat from American "fascist imperialism." The year 1956 marks an important milestone in the period set by the author. After the revelation of Stalinist crimes in the Soviet Union and the bloody events in Hungary, many Latin American intellectuals turned away from the communist movement, sobered up or became completely disillusioned.

In the introduction to this clearly arranged anthology, the author informs the reader on the core issues of his research and outlines the context of the period (the Cold War, cultural policy and communist propaganda, political tourism) from the perspective of both Latin America and the countries on the eastern side of the Iron Curtain. The text is not overwhelming for the reader and is highly readable, but it still allows the author to work effectively with relevant (mostly Anglo-Saxon and Latin American) monographs, review studies and theoretical works.

The core of the book consists of testimonies by a total of 14 visitors, whose life and work are briefly described at the beginning of each chapter. Although mainly writers, there are also journalists, teachers and representatives of the medical profession. The testimonies are journalistic reflections, which were mostly published in Spanish-speaking countries at that time. They were often forgotten and had no artistic ambition. However, what they have in common is that they offer a novel view "from the outside" of the then political, social and cultural reality in Eastern Europe. In the final chapter entitled *Loss of illusions, catharsis and a new beginning* (pp. 267–284), Zourek analyzes the later – that is after the year 1956 – more or less radical shift in opinion of some of the authors.

Renowned names such as Gabriel García Márquez, Pablo Neruda and Jorge Amado will undoubtedly attract greatest attention. Nevertheless, Zourek's anthology also gives voice to lesser known (and possibly more interesting) Latin American intellectuals, whose comments on their stay in Czechoslovakia will be a novelty even for the more informed reader.

Quite naturally, the main destination of their journeys was the Soviet Union. However, apart from Moscow, the visitors from "the burning continent" (as it used to be referred to in later Soviet propaganda) also visited other countries of the socialist bloc for shorter periods of time. Czechoslovakia, which according to Zourek was their second most common destination after the Soviet Union, held a special position among them. Given its geographical position and cultural development, it represented an imaginary bridge between Western Europe and the Soviet Union. In this regard, of particular importance in Czechoslovakia was the chateau of Dobříš,

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Czech archives. In 2016, Zourek also contributed with a title *Uruguay* to the Libri publishing house's book series "A brief history of states."

the seat of the Union of Czechoslovak Writers and the location of a long-term stay by many Latin American writers, as well as of numerous meetings, even on the international level.

As far as the testimonies themselves are concerned, *Latinos* frequently told their hosts that they wished to learn about the life of an average (Czechoslovak, Russian) family from different perspectives. They wanted to know how local people lived, worked, spent their free time, etc. However, this wish was only rarely fulfilled – the journeys of Western (as well as of Latin American) intellectuals and artists mostly followed a typical, institutionally controlled itinerary. It was planned under the supervision of the All-Union Society for Cultural Contacts with Foreign Countries (*Vsesoiuznoe Obshchestvo Kul'turnoi Sviazi s Zagranitsei* – VOKS), which was created for this purpose in the Soviet Union as early as the 1920s and had branch offices in the satellite states after the war. The itinerary would typically include a visit to Lenin's Mausoleum (in Moscow), museums, theatres or ballet theatres, libraries and other cultural institutions or exemplary industrial enterprises and cooperatives, with the aim of suggesting to the visitors a predominantly positive image of the country. Thus, the only "common" Russian or Czechoslovak the Latin American intellectuals would meet was their assigned guide: "We had Novgorod for a typical Russian for his looks. […] In fact, we could not know 'what he was like.' […] What we know about Novgorod is that he is punctual and complies with his obligations," Uruguayan pedagogue and school reformer Jesualdo Sosa wrote for example.[2] His experience of Czechoslovakia was similar: "Actually, we have no information whatsoever about life in Czechoslovakia. At first sight it is obvious that the currency is set low. […] Gottwald's report, which he recently read out in parliament, provides information on the social tendency in Czechoslovakia […]."[3] By contrast, the visitors from the distant continent had plenty of opportunities to participate in guided tours of Prague's historical sights, Czech castles and chateaus. The itinerary also often included a one-day trip to the Terezín concentration camp and to the Lidice memorial, usually with a stop at the writers' chateau of Dobříš.

Also due to having only a limited knowledge of the life of Czechoslovak society, the travellers often focused on the region's economic and cultural development in their texts, which, in their eyes, strongly contrasted with that of Latin America. They praised the working conditions of the intelligentsia and workers, free education and health system in Czechoslovakia, literacy and the level of education of people in general, which was perceived by them as a precondition for free human life.

Almost all the selected Latin American authors claimed allegiance to Marxism and travelling to Eastern Europe was thus a form of political engagement for them.[4] Still,

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2   Michal Zourek quotes from Jesualdo Sosa's book entitled *Mi viaje a la URSS* (Montevideo, Ediciones Pueblos Unidos 1952) in the part entitled *Jesualdo Sosa: A school reformer*, p. 110.

3   SOSA, Jesualdo: V Praze, čtvrtek a pátek, překvapení a okouzlení [In Prague, Thursday and Friday, surprised and captivated], p. 112.

4   Chilean diplomat, scientist and writer Ricardo Latcham, who visited Czechoslovakia as early as 1947, was an exception. He was invited by the Department of Romance Studies of Charles University to give a lecture to Czech Hispanic studies students. He was also

they wrote about their experiences and observations in quite a different way. The selected testimonies range from rather uncritical eulogies to more objective reports or fact-based travelogues. Márquez's texts are rather atypical for the anthology,[5] both due to the use of irony and exaggeration, and the circumstances of their origin. Unlike the other authors included in the anthology, the Colombian writer travelled throughout Eastern Europe more on his own, without any intermediaries. This probably gave him the best opportunity to get a glimpse of the "ordinary" life.

The scope of the sources from which Michal Zourek selected the texts is indeed impressive. In order to collect them, he must have embarked on an arduous journey to Latin American libraries and archives. Zourek worked with texts printed on the pages of Chilean or Mexican press (Latcham's reports, Huerta's poems), testimonies published for example by the Uruguayan-Soviet Cultural Institute in Montevideo (Jesualdo Sosa), and marginally also with personal correspondence (this is the case for Cuban poet Nicolás Guillén and for Pablo Neruda; the book also contains several extracts from correspondence between Mr and Mrs Amado). Out of the 14 testimonies, 12 are being published here in Czech for the first time (including the poems of Efraín Huerta y Raúl Tuñón, translated by Jan Machej). Márquez's writings are represented by two chapters from his book of reports from Eastern Europe, which was also published in Czech only recently.[6] An original perspective through "the eyes of outsiders" brings the reader a range of information, some of which does not correspond with the general notion of early postwar (later "socialist") Czechoslovak society. However, it gives us a sense of how Latin American intellectuals perceived Czechoslovakia during their stay and how they conveyed this idea to their fellowmen upon their return home: whether it was the harsh effects of postwar hunger in West European countries, but less so in Czechoslovakia (two years after the war, Chilean diplomat and journalist Ricardo Latcham described Prague as "a city of sausages"),[7] or the absence of erotic elements in clothing, behaviour and in general manners in a socialist society and, along with it, the corresponding absence of "lechers" (this was Jesualdo Sosa's impression). The contemporary reader may be surprised by numerous comments on "the zeal of the Czechoslovak nation for all intellectual streams" (Ricardo Latcham) and

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received by the then President, Edvard Beneš, who also responded to his "indiscreet" questions regarding Soviet influence and the role of communist ministers in the government. (LATCHAM, Ricardo: Most mezi Východem a Západem [A bridge between the East and the West], pp. 68–71; IDEM: Rozhovor s prezidentem Benešem [An interview with President Beneš], pp. 72–76.)

5 GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ, Gabriel: Pro Češku jsou nylonové punčochy klenotem [For a Czech woman nylon stockings are a gem], pp. 229–233; IDEM: Lidé reagují v Praze jako v jakékoliv kapitalistické zemi [People in Prague behave as in any other capitalist country], pp. 234–238.

6 IDEM: *De viaje por los países socialistas: 90 días en la "Cortina de Hierro."* Bogotá, Oveja Negra 1982 (more recently published under the title *De viaje por Europa del Este.* Buenos Aires, Sudamericana 2015). In Czech translation: *Devadesát dnů za železnou oponou.* Praha, Odeon 2018.

7 LATCHAM, R.: Most mezi Východem a Západem, p. 71.

for reading in its broadest sense (this idea was shared by a number of authors). Interesting to note are the feelings of discomfort on the part of the Latin Americans with regard to women in police uniforms (Gabriel García Márquez, Luis Suárez).

Michal Zourek's anthology is a valuable source for research into not only cultural and political relations between postwar Czechoslovakia and Latin American countries, but also into relations between "the socialist world" behind the Iron Curtain and the South American continent in general. The work is inspirational and a mine of information, and in the future it will be indispensable for anyone interested in this issue. Individual testimonies could have been better marked as regards their dates of origin and publishing data (in the introduction to the book, Zourek explains that he arranged the texts chronologically according to the date of their authors' stay in Czechoslovakia, but in some cases it is not clear exactly when they were written). However, along with the absence of a name index, this is just a minor flaw in an otherwise professionally valuable and aesthetically pleasing publication.

The Czech version of this review, entitled Postřehy odjinud. Latinos o Československu čtyřicátých a padesátých let*, was originally published in* Soudobé dějiny*, Vol. 26, Nos. 2–3 (2019), pp. 378–382.*

Translated by Blanka Medková

Abstract

The anthology Czechoslovakia in the eyes of Latin American intellectuals 1947–1959, *assembled by a Latin American studies specialist Michal Zourek, brings testimonies of fourteen Latin American intellectuals, which describe the time they spent in Czechoslovakia between the onset of the Cold War and the outbreak of the Cuban revolution. Almost all authors of these texts, most of which can be characterized as reportages, including world-renowned writers such as Gabriel Garcíá Márquez, Pablo Neruda or Jorge Amado, shared a left-wing world outlook and claimed allegiance to Marxism. Actually, it was in the end of the 1940s and in the early 1950s that the socialist countries behind the Iron Curtain were most appealing for Latin American left-wing intellectuals, which, according to the author, was true especially for the Soviet Union, with Czechoslovakia as a generally developed country culturally close to the West ranking second. In the reviewer´s opinion, the texts selected from a variety of Latin American sources permit to view post-war Czechoslovakia "through the eyes of others" and provide many unique observations, although they are often uncritical and reflect the authors´ limited knowledge of Czechoslovakia´s reality. Provided with the author´s erudite introduction and conclusion, the anthology is an important source for learning more about relations between post-war Czechoslovakia and Latin American countries.*

Review

Prison Experience of the 1950s as a Specific Historical Phenomenon?

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Klára Pinerová's synthetic work draws on her long-term research into the forms and transformations of the prison service in different countries (her 2013 doctoral dissertation is entitled *Komparace československého a německého vězeňského systému po druhé světové válce* [Comparison of the Czechoslovak and German prison system after the Second World War]) and in different periods (she is currently involved in the research project "Proměny vězeňství v českých zemích v letech 1965–1992: Systémové a individuální adaptace" [Transformations of the prison service in the Czech Lands in 1965–1992: System and individual adaptations]). The reviewed book is based on the thesis that Klára Pinerová successfully defended at the Institute of Economic and Social History of the Faculty of Arts, Charles University, in 2006.

However, this is something that the reader will learn only incidentally from the acknowledgement page.

At the beginning of her work, the authoress surprisingly states that in the early days of her research, prison system was a rather neglected issue, to which historians paid little attention. However, there are plenty of examples that contradict this claim, which the authoress knows and even quotes in her work. Besides, she immediately claims that the subsequent years saw a boom of literature on the issue and that the activity of oral history institutions and independent organizations increased. However, she also believes that "excessive interest increases the risk of unhealthy politicization, as well as of an ahistorical and journalistic approach." (p. 7) It gradually emerges from the somewhat unclear introduction that in her work the authoress focused on analyzing prison experience, and not prison memory. Her primary aim is to generalize a number of individual experiences of political prisoners of the 1950s, identify their common motives and strategies and provide a concise and exhaustive study of the Czechoslovak prison service of that time.

In the introduction, the authoress also describes the basic theoretical works that inspired her research. They are mostly studies from the fields of psychology and penology, which are to become keys for interpreting the processes which prisoners were subjected to: starting with their arrest, through the execution of their sentence and their release, to their subsequent reintegration into society outside the prison walls. The authoress works with Erving Goffman's concept of total institution, as well as with the works of American sociologists Donald Clemmer and Gresham Sykes, in which values and rules of the prisoners' society are described. She also mentions, without reservation, the inspiration she received from Philip Zimbardo's famous Stanford prison experiment of 1971. However, this experiment was demonstrably manipulated, and its results are therefore at least problematic. The participants did not act according to their assigned power roles, but sought to fulfil the presumptions of researchers, who intervened in the process of simulation of relations and behaviour inside the prison.

Klára Pinerová has studied a wide range of published memoirs, secondary literature and archival material, as well as conducted a series of interviews with former political prisoners. Her work is undoubtedly thorough. However, some of her interpretations are open to question, and the work is less successful in yielding new perspectives (see below). In some parts of the book, the authoress intuitively uses concepts that have their own specific definitions and are used in a certain way in current historical debates; the use of them without any further explanation is controversial.

We can ask whether it is really appropriate to refer to the entire period of 1948–1989 in Czechoslovakia as a "socialist dictatorship." This period clearly had its own internal dynamic. The period of the unscrupulous consolidation of power by the Communist Party, the removal of its dissenting opponents and the political show trials clearly differed from the advancing social liberalization leading to the Prague Spring and from the general erosion of "the normalization regime's" legitimacy before its collapse. Nor can the "Weberian" term "communist domination" be used to describe

the specific character of the late 1940s and at least early 1950s, that is, the period which was marked, among other things, by widely used terror and which was also decisive for Klára Pinerová's book. Especially when the authoress paraphrases the recollection of one of the prisoners (economist Jiří Hejda, p. 113), who certainly thought in different terms ("Nor did he believe that Milada Horáková's execution would be carried out, as it would cast a shadow on communist domination.").

It is clear from the subsequent pages that the influence of psychology and social psychology on the authoress's approach was strong. However, this raises two major doubts about the suitability of using these interpretation tools. Firstly, it repeatedly shows that some psychologizing interpretations may sound banal, such as the following passage: "Nature may have had a certain therapeutic effect on the prisoners, because the greenery around the camp and the warmth of the sun may have helped them psychologically, but the weather was not always good. The prisoners had to go to work under any conditions. Low temperature was typical for the weather in the Krušné hory." (p. 258) The following statement also sounds shallow: "So, how did prisoners feel when they went from pre-trial custody, where loneliness was their biggest enemy, to a prison or a camp, where they met different groups of people of different opinions? How did they feel at that moment? We may state that their feelings were at least mixed." (p. 124)

The second doubt arises from the fact that foreign researches of prison communities were not carried out among the prisoners of conscience, whose experience would be comparable to that of political prisoners in Czechoslovakia in the 1950s. The authoress is at least partially aware of this, among other things, when she writes that "the society formed in prison at the early stage of the socialist dictatorship was an experiment in part comparable, in terms of power structure and the structure of the prison population, only with the labour camps in the Soviet Union. Different human fates crossed each other here, and the convicts had to adapt not only to deprivation and inequality in power, but also to the behaviour of people they would have normally evaded or never met." (p. 119) The question is whether a comparison could not be carried out with communities in Nazi concentration camps, which were formed on the basis of race and political criteria, across social strata. It is quite possible that not enough resources exist in order to arrive at any conclusive findings, but it also seems likely that significant similarities between both types of communities could be discovered.

The authoress repeatedly emphasizes social differences between the prisoners of the 1950s. This creates the impression that previously the local prisoners' community was socially homogenous and mainly made up of deprived and uneducated people. In my view, this perspective in fact accepts the logic of the "class struggle," under which those who became political prisoners were representatives of "reactionary" social strata with higher social status. However, to a great extent, this was not the case. Moreover, I assume that there is no relevant research into the issue of Czechoslovak criminal prisoners of the period under discussion (at least, no such research is mentioned in the book). Repugnant images of criminal prisoners on the pages of the book thus raise a different question than the social conflict

highlighted by the authoress. Were they not rather the product of a dehumanized and cruel system, based on humiliation and systematically enforced deprivation? In his books, Italian writer Primo Levi, a holocaust survivor, shows that people who are deprived of their dignity and put through cruel treatment for a long time gradually lose their capacity of solidarity with other, equally affected people.[1] And in this respect, prisoners' personal qualities and resilience matter more than their former social status, moral values or education.

Klára Pinerová's book is structured into five main sections: *Development of the prison system after the Second World War*; *Conditions in the most important prisons and other penal facilities*; *Arrest*; *Prison experience*; *Release*. The section to which greatest space (pp. 118–277) is devoted is the prison experience, and it is in this part of the book that the influence of psychology on the authoress's reasoning is most obvious. By prison experience, the authoress understands "the transforma-tion from a free human being into a prisoner and the social processes in the prison subculture" (p. 119), that is, what happened to the person after the conviction, how this person experienced and survived the imprisonment, and how this expe-rience affected his or her life after release from prison. In order to capture this transformation and social dynamic in the groups of prisoners, Pinerová describes in detail their social relations and day-to-day culture, forms of adaptation to the given environment, mechanisms of power, order and resistance, space and time of the prisoners, as well as the gender perspective. While being well aware of individual differences and diversity, the authoress still seeks to discover and describe some behavioural patterns and social strategies in the given environment. It is a pity that the subchapters of this section are structured rather chaotically, with much infor-mation being repeated and with the authoress fragmenting the text unnecessarily by quoting long passages from biographical sources for illustration. Occasionally, one cannot help but think that there are obvious limits to this psychologizing ap-proach, because the authenticity of the original sources is far more powerful and reflective than any attempt to fit them into psychological patterns and structures. Therefore, I consider this a step in the right direction (enriching historical research with inspiration from other fields), though it still goes only halfway. Perhaps draw-ing on the fields of social and cultural anthropology, as well as literary history or science, would be more profitable.

What I see as valuable in this section are passages that focus on space and time behind the bars (pp. 235–265). There is also a passing reference to the inscrip-tions placed above the labour camp gates by the Vojna and Vykmanov uranium mines, "Prací ke svobodě" [Through work to freedom]) and "Práci čest" [Honour to work] respectively. However, there is no explanation of their origin or the reason for them being installed there. The authoress simply states that they were placed there "following the pattern of Nazi concentration camps." It is doubtful whether the administration of communist labour camps was directly and openly inspired by German concentration camps. It is more likely that it was related to the cult of

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1   See mainly LEVI, Primo: *Je-li toto člověk* [If this is a man]. Praha, Sefer 1995.

work enforced in the Stalinist period, as similar signs also adorned some of the nationalized enterprises or collective farms.

The authoress repeatedly writes about the prisoners' trauma and their stigmatization after their release from prison. Linked to this are the fates of the families of the executed, convicted and long-term prisoners, to which historical literature has paid little attention so far. I believe that opening up this perspective would be enriching and would greatly contribute to the research into the prison system. However, the reviewed book does not include this perspective, except for a few marginal examples. Authentic records of this period and of this kind are more of an exception. Moreover, given their sensitivity and intimacy, they are only rarely published. This issue has perhaps more often been given literary and artistic treatment.

In the subchapter *Gender perspective*, the authoress briefly opens up the issue of incarcerated mothers of small children, but she makes no reference to President Antonín Zápotocký's amnesty granted to them in 1955. (Amnesty was also granted to Miluška Havlůjová, arrested in 1953 when her son was only a few months old. This case attracted relatively large media attention and was described in great detail.[2]) Nor does she engage in deeper reflection on "the family factor" in the aspects that were crucial for the prisoners' fates, such as family cohesion and divorce, the pressures faced by life partners or close relatives who remained at liberty, potential blackmailing of family relations during interrogations, and personal struggles to preserve family.

The authoress engages in some questionable interpretations in the chapter describing arrest and "the forms of inner struggle" of the arrested people. She claims here, among other things, that: "a prayer and a conversation with God may also be considered a form of escape from the prison environment. Many prisoners entered prison as believers and their faith became stronger and more meaningful in this environment. God was a sanctuary, someone they could confide in. For some prisoners, however, their faith turned into fatalism. They believed that what was happening was God's will and that only God knew what was good. But in that case, there was nothing to do but to surrender themselves to his hands and wait for what was to come." (p. 109) I am not quite sure how the authoress was able to determine in which cases it was fatalism and in which cases deep faith. Assessing the spiritual level of human experience is extremely difficult, if not impossible.

In the passages dealing with the issue of coexistence of political and criminal prisoners, which became more intensive after the May 1960 amnesty, the authoress highlights conflicts, violence and a lack of solidarity, allegedly typical of women's collectives. She quotes here from several letters written by art historian Růžena Vacková, in which she complained about this situation. However, the authoress leaves out a noteworthy detail: while in prison, this educated, high-principled and

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2   See JINDRA, Martin: *Strážci lidskosti: Dvanáct příběhů příslušníků CČS(H) vězněných po únoru 1948* [Guardians of humanity: Twelve stories of Czechoslovak Hussite Church members held prisoners after February 1948]. Praha, Blahoslav ve spolupráci s Náboženskou obcí CČSH Praha 1 – Staré Město 2007, pp. 82–88.

in many ways inspiring woman looked after a semiliterate girl, helped her write letters and maintained correspondence with her even after her release. This single example clearly does not encourage any generalization or far-reaching conclusions. But it is one of the significant details to be found in the testimonies of the period, which testify to the capacity of being open and supportive of others even in adverse conditions, as well as to the willingness to altruistically cross unwritten boundaries between individual prison subcultures.

Allusions to the lack of solidarity between women appear again in the subchapter *Gender perspective*: "In the words of female prisoners, the hardest thing about life in prison was living with another woman." (p. 274) The authoress concludes the chapter with a somewhat surprising claim: "An important difference between the current prison system and the prison system during the socialist dictatorship lies in the different social and moral status of prisoners. Women with university and secondary education, highly developed moral principles and high cultural capital had to share the same space with female delinquents sentenced for various criminal offences." (p. 277) This suggests that today a woman with a university education who is sentenced for fraud is incarcerated only with women with the same level of education, and not for example with an illiterate thief. Here I go back to the objection that I raised at the beginning of this review. I believe that the prison experience weighed particularly heavily on political prisoners because they had been imprisoned unjustly, on trumped-up charges, and because they felt they were innocent. They had not been able to defend themselves and had also been denied the right to a fair trial. These factors played a far greater role in the inner frustration of individuals, in developing deep friendships and in mutual solidarity within political prisoners' communities than the fact that they had to coexist with people of a lower social status, as is emphasized by the authoress.

On several occasions, the authoress comments on shifts in collective memory of the prisoners, even though this issue otherwise remains marginal in her text. She goes back to it in the conclusion of her book, when she makes an attempt to characterize a collective identity of the community of former political prisoners. She lists three alleged myths, which she sees as instrumental for establishing their identity. "In the case of political prisoners, it was a myth of extremely hard fate and injustice of the outer world. Until the 1990s, they presented themselves as victims, unjustly imprisoned and deserving political rehabilitation and compensation. From their point of view, the 'communist regime' was illegitimate and they perceived the dictatorship of the Communist Party as pure evil," she comments on the first myth (p. 302). To speak of a myth in this respect is indeed very surprising. It makes no sense that the authoress would conclude her nearly 300 page long text in this way, after having described extremely brutal treatment, show trials, persecution within the prison collectives, life-long trauma, family tragedies and many other hardships. I believe that Klára Pinerová was referring instead to the shift in self-identification of former political prisoners from the position of victims to the position of conscious opponents and fighters against the communist regime, as Françoise Mayer accurately described in her book entitled *Češi a jejich*

komunismus [The Czechs and their communism].[3] In the conclusion, the authoress offers an interesting description of the transformation of the Confederation of Political Prisoners (*Konfederace politických vězňů*), their activities and reactions to the adopted laws, which provided the legal basis for the political prisoners' rehabilitation. The authoress's digression into the post-revolutionary construction of a collective identity, in which she draws on the findings of the previously mentioned French historian, is valuable and would deserve closer attention.

The second of the myths according to Klára Pinerová was the one of "illustrious ancestors and a glorious past," especially evident in the idealization of the First Republic: "In their recollections, during the First Republic everybody had a good life, there was no injustice and nobody cheated on anyone." (p. 302) Rather than a myth, this appears to be the authoress's misunderstanding of how memory works and of how the lived experience of individuals forms layers in the collective memory. When people recall their beautiful, happy and loving childhood, it does not mean that they are unable to see the complicated nature of the period in which it took place. Therefore, positive images of childhood during the First Republic do not deny problems which society faced during that period. People merely talk about their individual experience without questioning in any way other findings or recollections. Thirdly, the authoress identifies "the myth of the group's mission" according to which all political prisoners in their own eyes, without any exception, fought for freedom and democracy. Here, she comes full circle back to the first myth.

Finally, Klára Pinerová asks herself why political prisoners of the 1950s and 1960s did not involve more actively in opposition activities and why, after their return to public life and an attempt to articulate their views jointly in 1968, they retreated into privacy. In the words of the authoress, "they preferred to isolate themselves from the majority society and focus on their own lives." Pinerová explains these attitudes by arguing that "political prisoners perceived the power system as stable and this led them to accept the unequal status." (p. 304) She also talks about the opposition of former political prisoners to Charter 77, which was unacceptable for many of them due to the involvement of some former communists who were politically active in the 1950s. Former political prisoners felt the need to distance themselves from them. However, from my point of view, the reality was much more varied. Upon the August invasion, some of the prisoners of the 1950s began to fear a possible restoration of the situation with which they had had bad experiences. Jaroslav Brodský, founder of K 231, an association of former political prisoners, quoted several times by the authoress in the book, fled to Austria immediately after 21 August. He travelled light and without delay. By this I want to point out that many people were to a great extent influenced by fear, feelings of threat as well as awareness of their position as "people of the second category," also described in detail by the authoress, which did not provide them much security and protection. In contrast to that, some of the prisoners who had been released long after the

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3   MAYER, Françoise: *Češi a jejich komunismus: Paměť a politická identita* [The Czechs and their communism: Memory and political identity]. Praha, Argo 2008, pp. 166–191.

"great amnesty" were among the first signatories of the declaration of Charter 77. This was the case for theologian Josef Zvěřina, who was released from prison as late as 1965, writer Karel Pecka and previously mentioned Růžena Vacková, released from prison as late as 1967. The question rather is: Why did it not bother these people that the Charter 77 community also included former active supporters and protagonists of the repressive regime?

Another important fact is that Charter 77 was far from being the only opposition activity of the "normalization period." In the Roman Catholic environment, it was no exception that former prisoners continued to engage in independent activities and were their main initiators. They can be found among publishers of samizdats or organizers of educational activities, secret masses, etc. By exerting pressure on the atheization of society, the communist regime conflicted with their beliefs and was ideologically unacceptable to them. To what extent they perceived it as more or less stable remains secondary in this context.

The book deserved a more careful editorial hand to eliminate stylistic errors. To illustrate the point, one can mention that sentences are too long and incomprehensible, there are many illogical formulations, the passive tense is overused, words or even passages are repeated with an identical meaning, some words are used incorrectly, various clichés or non-functional similes are also to be found in the text, and occasionally the language of the sources or of misleading terms is adopted. Let us hope that Klára Pinerová's forthcoming publication on the transformation of the prison service in 1965–1992 will receive a more professional editorial review.

It cannot be denied that the authoress has a deep and long-term interest in the issue of prison system and the fates of former political prisoners, the capacity to carry out a thorough heuristic and a strong commitment, as is shown by the way she engages in interviews with contemporary witnesses and attends commemorative ceremonies. As I have tried to point out in this review, in some respects the material could have been better structured and thought-out. The aim of this book to "fill in the gaps" in the knowledge and understanding of the prison experience of the people persecuted for political reasons in the 1950s, which the authoress sets out in the introduction, was fulfilled only partially.

The Czech version of this review, entitled Vězeňská zkušenost padesátých let jako svébytný historický fenomén?*, was originally published in* Soudobé dějiny*, Vol. 26, Nos. 2–3 (2019), pp. 371–377.*

Translated by Blanka Medková

Abstract

In her work titled Until the end of life: Political prisoners of the 1950s – trauma, adaptation, identity*, the authoress attempted to capture the prison experience of*

Czechoslovak male and female political prisoners of the 1950s as a complex socio-psychological phenomenon, from their arrest through their detention and interrogation, sentencing and subsequent internment until their release and long-term consequences the ex-prisoners had to put up with. According to the reviewer´s opinion, however, she has fulfilled her goal only partly. The reviewer admits that the authoress has long been interested in transformations of prison systems in many countries, that she is able to undertake thorough heuristics, and that she invested a lot of personal effort into interviews with contemporary witnesses, trying to mediate their tragic experience to others. In order to capture the social dynamism in groups of prisoners, she describes in detail their relations and day-to-day culture, forms of adaptation to the prison environment, mechanisms of power, order and resistance, space and time behind bars, and also the gender aspect. The reviewer, however, brings into attention limitations of approaches taken over from individual and social psychology, which the authoress seems to prefer, questions the relevance of some comparative examples taken over from foreign research projects, the authoress´s intuitive use of historical terms, as well as some of her interpretations.

Review

The Colourfulness of Prefab Grey

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SKŘIVÁNKOVÁ, Lucie – ŠVÁCHA, Rostislav – NOVOTNÁ, Eva – JIRKALOVÁ, Karolina (ed.): *Paneláci 1: Padesát sídlišť v českých zemích. Kritický katalog k cyklu výstav Příběh paneláku* [The Paneláks 1: Fifty housing estates in the Czech Lands. Critical catalogue of a series of exhibitions "A story of a panelák"]. Praha, Uměleckoprůmyslové muzeum 2016, 4–63 pages, ISBN 978-80-7101-161-3;
SKŘIVÁNKOVÁ, Lucie – ŠVÁCHA, Rostislav – KOUKALOVÁ, Martina – NOVOTNÁ, Eva (ed.): *Paneláci 2: Historie sídlišť v českých zemích 1945–1989. Kritický katalog k výstavě Bydliště – panelové sídliště: Plány, realizace, bydlení 1945–1989* [The Paneláks 2: The history of housing estates in the Czech Lands 1945–1989. Critical catalogue of the exhibition "Residence – housing estate: Plans, realization, housing 1945–1989]. Praha, Uměleckoprůmyslové muzeum 2017, 350 pages, ISBN 978-80-7101-169-9.

"The value of housing estates and panel buildings lies in their truthfulness, in the genuineness with which they reflect, in a manner we have not yet put up with, their time," was what architect Ladislav Lábus wrote in 1997, comparing panel buildings with their "absence of pretence of expression" to folk and industrial architecture,

"the architecture without architects."[1] As excellently illustrated by the books *Paneláci 1* and *Paneláci 2*, the "truthfulness" of panel buildings has become a part of the mainstream of research into the history of architecture and urban planning in the Czech Lands 20 years later.

Both books represent the outcome of unprecedented academic, pedagogic, and managerial efforts which combined historians of architecture and arts with a number of other specialists in areas such as sociology, anthropology or heritage conservation in a long-term research project and extensive popularization and curatorship activities. The scope of the project is also reflected in a rather complicated structure of the two books. The book *Paneláci 1* is, after a fashion, an extensive large-format critical catalogue of almost 500 pages for the exhibition "Residence – housing estate: Plans, realization, housing 1945–1989," which took place in the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague from January to July 2018, but also for the "Story of a panelák" exterior exhibitions, which took place one after another in all regional capitals. The book is the first ever systematic attempt to periodize panel construction in Czechoslovakia (or, more accurately, in its Czech part), as formulated by Martina Koukalová on the basis of the team members' discussions. The different phases of the period in question – *the archaic phase* (Two-Year Plan housing estates, 1946–1947), *the socialist realism phase* (from 1948 till the mid-1950s), *the pioneering phase* (the second half of the 1950s), *the beautiful phase* (the 1960s), *the technocratic phase* (the "normalization" period, roughly till the mid-1980s), and finally the *phase of late beautiful and post-modernist housing estates* (roughly the *perestroika* period) – are illustrated in the text by examples of housing estates from 50 different areas of Bohemia and Moravia. Each of them has been subjected to a thorough art-historical analysis which outlines the development of the concept of the housing estate, provides brief information about its authors and describes the urban planning concept of the housing estate, and the panel technology and decoration used.

Each periodization block of the book *Paneláci 1* is concluded by an extensive socio-demographic study of selected housing estates by Lucie Pospíšilová and Petra Špačková. Although other texts of the authoresses have made an essential contribution to urban geography and sociology, these studies are the only weaker point of the book. For each housing estate (selected for its art-historical characteristics, not for socio-demographic properties), there is a census-based package of socio-demographic data on the development and number of its inhabitants, and their educational, professional and family status structure. Apart from the fact that the data itself is sometimes questionable (for example, the postwar two-year plan housing estates are accompanied by data from 1970), these studies do not make any significant contribution to understanding social dynamism of the housing estates. Instead, they bring, on more than 60 pages, an array of sociological data which is

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1   Odpověď Ladislava Lábuse na redakční anketu: Anketa. Ptáme se architektů [The reply of Ladislav Lábus in an editorial poll: Survey. We question architects]. In: *Architekt*, Vol. 43, No. 22 (1997), p. 53.

difficult to interpret and not very significant. For example, it is not quite clear why a reader needs to know how the share of inhabitants of Prague's Solidarita housing estate employed in the primary sector (i.e. agriculture, forestry and fisheries) changed between 1970 and 2011 (it dropped from 0.77 to 0.25 percent).

The follow-on book, *Paneláci 2*, with an ambitious, but fitting subtitle *The history of housing estates in the Czech Lands 1945-1989,* brings a more systematic insight into the comprehensive history of panel housing estates. Although the publication is a collective and interdisciplinary work, the lion's share of architecture historian Rostislav Švácha is obvious not only from the fact that he wrote a half of its contents, but also from its overall concept. Švácha thus tops off his long-term efforts to re-evaluate the opinion of and attitude to panel buildings, which he started as early as at the end of the 1990s, when his series of articles pointed out the importance of housing estates for both architectural theory and practice, stating that their sweeping condemnations were "out of place and in fact irresponsible."[2] The book *Paneláci 2* is thus basically comprehensive materialization of a simple, but essential proposition which Švácha was advocating as early as 20 years ago, namely that housing estates are not all alike. To distinguish their qualities, Švácha and his team use the chronological segmentation outlined above, which is his basic methodological tool. Theoretically, the strictly chronological criterion is based on the principle of seriality formulated by George Kubler, which is relevant for studies of panel buildings due to its concept of the history of things as a series of problem-solving actions. Although its details and concept can (and undoubtedly will) be discussed at length, the periodization is a very efficient tool that helps convey the fundamental message of both books; to show housing estates, no matter how similar they may seem, as a diverse and dynamically developing object of interest. This effect of both books is further emphasized by excellent use of archival photographs and generally great graphic design of the publications.

Although Švácha's contribution is extraordinary, it is equally impressive how he and Lucie Skřivánková, née Zadražilová (she is the authoress of several fundamental publications on the history of panel construction and the head of the NAKI project which the books emerged from), managed to create a compact team of researchers. A particularly valuable part of *Paneláci 2* is the contribution of Jana Zajoncová on the criticism of housing estates in the 1960s and efforts to humanize them; the same applies to the follow-on text by Michaela Janečková on post-modern tendencies in the construction of late socialism housing estates. The discussion about panel construction is also dramatically enhanced by Martina Koukalová's contribution on rebuilding and redevelopment of older built-up areas, which demonstrates dramatic consequences of this building technology for the urban planning of a socialist city in general.

My critical comments on the *Paneláci 2* are based on two interconnected areas of topics. First, the publication fairly understandably prefers architecture to urbanism,

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2   ŠVÁCHA, Rostislav: Rekapitulace sídlišť [Recap of housing estates]. In: *Stavba,* Vol. 7, No. 5 (2000), pp. 36–41.

yet it does not reflect this emphasis sufficiently enough. A good example of this is the periodization, which sensitively reflects changes in the architecture of housing estates and places four of the six "phases" of their development in the first two decades of the state socialism period. However, the periodization does not capture important changes in the perception of socialist urban planning in the late 1960s and particularly throughout the 1970s, nor does it clarify their significance adequately (except maybe for Martina Koukalová's text on redevelopments). The authors' collective encountered the discrepancy between the architectural and the urbanistic views when analyzing housing estates dating back to the period of socialist realism which are, in their opinion, characterized by good urban planning and poor architecture. However, the exact opposite could be said about some "beautiful" housing estates, highly appreciated in the book, which even the criticism of that time considered poorly-planned. The book does not capture adequately enough the radical change in the perception of socialist housing estates during the "normalization," when they became the target of increasingly intensive criticism of experts and were also problematized by popular culture (the term králíkárna [rabbit hutch] was not coined by Václav Havel after November 1989; it can be already heard, for example, in the *Muž na radnici* [Man at the town hall] TV series by Jaroslav Dietl in 1976). First and foremost, however, housing estates start disappearing from urban plans of large cities in the 1980s. What remains is the panel technology deprived of the housing estate concept and finding its way into inner cities as redevelopment projects under slogans such as a "city for people" and "human scale".

The second comment concerns the perception of "normalization" housing estates, which the book terms "technocratic." In the context of the book, this term has a pejorative connotation. Again, this opinion is understandable from the viewpoint of the history of architecture, but, as a matter of fact, "normalization" housing estates fulfill the ideal which their founding fathers – the "PASists" – were promoting: to provide, as fast as possible and at the lowest possible costs, hygienic housing for broad masses of people using new technological and scientific methods without the interference of market and artistic inspiration.[3] In their view, housing estates were to be "technocratic" rather than "beautiful." According to their original concept, prefabricated panel buildings did not have to display aesthetic curves or stand on feet, but fulfil a clearly defined role in the overall social planning of the society. The "normalization" housing estates were much closer to this ambition than the "beautiful" ones, which were too expensive to be built on a scale demanded by the housing crisis. The perception of the "normalization" in the book generally lags behind the current state of research and often remains at the level of a static and superficial cliché about the "timelessness" borrowed from the Václav Havel's essays.

However, the problematic perception of the "normalization" housing estates has little effect on the fact that both books represent, and for a long time will repre-

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3   The Working Group of Architects (in Czech acronymized as PAS) consisted mainly of Karel Janů, Jiří Voženílek and Jiří Štursa and was strongly influenced by Karel Teige. It promoted a programme of building industrialization and scientification of architecture.

sent, a fundamental interdisciplinary framework for any future research of prefab housing estates which are still inhabited by about one third of the Czech Republic's population. The prestigious Magnesia Litera award granted to *Paneláci* in the non-fiction category in 2018 only underlines their value and contribution.

The Czech version of this review, entitled Pestrost panelové šedi*, was originally published in* Soudobé dějiny*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (2019), pp. 594–597.*

Translated by Jiří Mareš

Abstract

*Both collective publications (*Prefab houses 1: Fifty prefab housing schemes in the Czech Lands. A critical catalogue of the "Prefab house story" series of exhibitions *and* Prefab houses 2: History of housing schemes in the Czech Lands 1945–1989. A critical catalogue of the "Residence – prefab housing scheme: Planning, realization, housing 1945–1989" exhibition*) are products of a broadly conceived interdisciplinary research project the deliverables of which included, inter alia, exhibitions in Prague and all regional capitals of the Czech Republic and which were awarded the prestigious Magnesia Litera prize in 2018 as an extraordinary feat in the field of professional and educational literature. In the reviewer's opinion, they bring the first-ever systematic attempt to periodize the prefab-based building projects in the Czech part of the former Czechoslovakia between the mid-1940s and the end of the 1980s, at the same time providing a multifaceted characterization based on a representative sample of fifty prefab housing schemes in Bohemia and Moravia. Each of them was subjected to a thorough artistic-historical analysis outlining the development of the housing scheme's concept, providing brief information about its authors, describes its urbanistic concept, prefab technology used, and artefacts and decorations. Added to the above is a set of interdepartmental studies analyzing different aspects of the historical development of prefab housing schemes. The compact collective of authoresses and authors has succeeded in presenting the prefab housing schemes, no matter how similar they may seem, as a varied and dynamically developing phenomenon, which fact is underlined by excellent work with archival photographs and the generally outstanding graphic layout of the publications. The only critical comment the reviewer has is that the authors were so absorbed by the architectural aspect of the matter that they tended to overlook substantial changes of the socialist urbanism in Czechoslovakia.*

Keywords: Czechoslovakia; prefab houses; prefab housing schemes; architecture; housing; Communist regime

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Matěj Bílý (1986) is a member of the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes in Prague, studying the history of the Soviet Union and its sphere of interest in Europe after 1945, the Communist regime in Czechoslovakia, and in particular the evolution and organization of the Warsaw Treaty. He published the monographs *Varšavská smlouva 1969–1985: Vrchol a cesta* k *zániku* [The Warsaw Pact 1969–1985: The pinnacle and path to dissolution] (Prague 2016) and *Nervová vlákna diktatury: Regionální elity a komunikace uvnitř KSČ v letech 1945–1956* [Nerve threads of dictatorship: Regional elites and communication within the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in the years 1945–1956] (with Marián Lóži and Jakub Šlouf, Prague 2019).

Hana V. Bortlová (1980), specializing in Latin American studies, is a researcher in the Institute for Contemporary History of the Czech Academy of Sciences in Prague. Her interests include history of Latin America in the 20th century, Czechoslovak foreign policy toward South and Central Americas, history of the Spanish civil war and Franquism, and oral history, particularly in relation to the so-called normalization period and post-Communist transformation in Czechoslovakia. She also translates from Spanish and other languages. She published a monograph titled *Československo a Kuba* v *letech 1959–1962* [Czechoslovakia and Cuba in the years 1959–1962] (Prague 2011), a selection from the correspondence and photographs of the Italian avant-garde photographer Tina Modotti under the name *Umění a revoluce: Tina*

Modotti [Art and revolution: Tina Modotti] (Prague 2015), and a similar selection from the correspondence of Richard Halliburton, an American traveller and writer, titled *Po stopách dobrodruha: Z dopisů rodičům a přátelům 1912–1939* [Tracing an adventurer: From the letters to parents and friends 1912–1939] (Prague 2019).

Marta Edith Holečková (1979) is an exhibitioner at the Institute for Contemporary History of the Czech Academy of Sciences in Prague. She focuses on the history of university education and presence of Third World students in Communist Czechoslovakia, samizdat books and the "second culture" in the so-called normalization period, and oral history. Her works include *Cesty českého katolického samizdatu 80. let* [The paths of the Czech catholic samizdat in the 1980s] (Prague 2009); she participated in a research project the subject of which was the Faculty of Arts in Prague between 1970 and 1989, which culminated in a collective monograph titled *Náměstí Krasnoarmějců 2: Učitelé a studenti Filozofické fakulty UK v období normalizace* [The Krasnoarmějců square no. 2: Teachers and students of the Faculty of arts of the Charles University in the era of normalization] (Prague 2012), and she is a member of the team of authors (led by Michal Přibáň) of the encyclopaedia entitled *Český literární samizdat 1949–1989* [Czech Literary Samizdat 1948–1989] (Prague 2018). Her latest published work is the monograph *Příběh zapomenuté univerzity: Universita 17. listopadu (1961–1974) a její místo v československém vzdělávacím systému a společnosti* [The Story of a Forgotten University. The University of 17th November (1961–1974) and its Position in Czechoslovakian Educational System and Society] (Prague 2019).

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Petr Roubal (1975) is a researcher of the Department of Political History of the Institute for Contemporary History of the Czech Academy of Sciences in Prague. He focuses on modern political rituals and legitimization strategies of the Communist regime, history of the socialist sport and the Sokol organization, history of the Czechoslovak parliamentary system and the political right since 1989. He has published the monograph *Československé spartakiády* [Czechoslovak Spartakiads] (Prague 2016), a study titled *Starý pes, nové kousky: Kooptace do Federálního shromáždění a vytváření polistopadové politické kultury* [Old dog, new tricks. The co-option to the Federal Assembly and the formation of the post-November political culture] (Prague 2013), and participated in the collective monograph *Rozděleni*

minulostí: Vytváření politických identit v České republice po roce 1989 [Divided by the past. Formation of political identities in the Czech Republic after 1989] (together with Adéla Gjuričová, Michal Kopeček, Jiří Suk, and Tomáš Zahradníček, Prague 2011).

Milan Sovilj (1981), a Serbian historian, is a researcher at the Institute for Contemporary History of the Czech Academy of Sciences in Prague. He focuses on the history of Czechoslovak-Yugoslav relations and the history of Yugoslavia. Apart from a number of studies most of which have been published in Serbia, he has published the monographs *U potrazi za nedostižnim: Jugoslovensko-čehoslovačke kulturne veze 1945–1949* (Belgrade 2012) [An effort for the unattainable. Yugoslav-Czechoslovak cultural relations 1945–1949] and *Československo-jugoslávské vztahy* v *letech 1939–1941: Od zániku Československa do okupace Království Jugoslávie* [Czechoslovak-Yugoslav relations in 1939–1941. From the dissolution of Czechoslovakia to the occupation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia] (Prague 2016).

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Oldřich Tůma (1950) is a senior researcher fellow and between 1998 and 2017 the director of the Institute for Contemporary History of the Czech Academy of Sciences in Prague. Initially a byzantologist, he has been studying mainly modern Czech and Czechoslovak history (in particular the 1968–1989 period), history of Central Europe and the Cold War. In addition to a number of studies and edited collections, he is the author or co-author of the publications *Byzantská společnost* [The Byzantine society] (with Věra Hrochová, Prague 1991), *Zítra zase tady! Protirežimní demonstrace v předlistopadové Praze jako politický a sociální fenomén* [Tomorrow here again! The anti-regime demonstrations in the pre-November Prague as a political and social phenomenon] (Prague 1994) and *České průšvihy aneb Prohry, krize, skandály a aféry českých dějin let 1848–1989* [Czech bummers, Or: The losses, crises,

scandals and affairs in the Czech History, 1848–1989] (with Jiří Kocian and Jiří Pernes, Brno 2004). Together with Jaroslav Pánek and other authors, they published *Dějiny českých zemí* [A history of the Czech Lands] (Prague 2008 and 2018).

Eszter Varsa, a social historian with a Ph.D. in Comparative Gender Studies (CEU, 2011), she is a Fellow at the Leibniz Institute for East and Southeast European Studies in Regensburg. Her major fields of research interest are reproductive politics, health education, and Roma in 20th century Central Eastern Europe. Her publications include *Protected Children, Regulated Mothers: Gender and the "Gypsy Question" in State Care in Postwar Hungary, 1949–1956* (CEU Press, 2020), *"The (Final) Solution of the Gypsy-Question:" Continuities in Discourses about Roma in Hungary, 1940s-1950s* (Nationalities Papers, 2017), *"Gypsies"/Roma, and the Politics of Reproduction in Post-Stalinist Central-Eastern Europe* (The Routledge International Handbook to Gender in Central-Eastern Europe and Eurasia, forthcoming). She is co-editor of the special issue on *Sex Education and Reproductive Politics in Cold War Europe* (The History of the Family, 2020).

Luboš Veselý (1978) is a historian at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, currently holding a diplomatic post at the Czech Embassy in Moscow. His subject is the contemporary history of Central and Eastern Europe, in particular the Ukraine and Russia.

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1 In this context, the standardized page numbers 1 800 characters including spaces.
2 Two printed pages are usually equal to three pages as defined in footnote 1.

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