THE DILEMMAS OF UNITY: FRENCH COMMUNIST-SOVIET RELATIONS, 1968

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The French Communist Party (PCF) traditionally has been allied closely with the Soviet Union and that state's communist party (CPSU). Yet, since 1968 an erosion of this relationship has become apparent. By charting and analyzing the reactions and official statements of the two parties concerning a specific crisis period in Czechoslovakia in 1968, the beginnings of the strained relations can be determined. The membership of the French Communist Party, through reports in the official party newspaper *L'Humanite*, was kept well informed and remained highly interested in the developments in Czechoslovakia. This contrasted markedly with the negative reactions or obvious silence found in the CPSU's official party newspaper, *Pravda*, and among the Soviet leadership. The evidence provided by the official party news organs illustrated that the PCF differed significantly with the CPSU concerning the entire course of the reform movement in Czechoslovakia in 1968. The events in Czechoslovakia caused the PCF to reassess its subservient position to the party of the Soviet Union.

A major change in PCF relations with the Soviet Union was of great significance. In the case of France (and other Western European states) the French Communist Party often challenged non-communist parties for control of the government. An independent PCF in power illustrated one scenario for France and a PCF subservient to the CPSU illustrated

another. Tracing the reactions of the PCF and CPSU to events in Czechoslovakia prior to and following the invasion in August provided a vehicle to test the extent of the unity and cohesion within the world communist movement and between the PCF and CPSU. The extent of the change in relations, however, was not clear.

The condemnation of the Soviet Union's invasion of Czechoslovakia by the PCF in August of 1968, after years of loyal compliance with CPSU policies, was a turning point in the history of the French Communist Party. However, scholarly writings concerning the PCF position have been ambiguous due to the wide variety of attitudes, opinions, and appraisals of the meaning of the French action. Annie Kriegel offered only a vague inference that there was a "change" toward a more independent posture in PCF policy vis-a-vis the Soviet Union in her book, The French Communists.[1] The compilers of The Yearbook on International Communist Affairs, 1969, stated that the PCF showed only passing interest in Czechoslovakia during the first half of 1968 and that "It was not until the middle of July that the PCF involved itself to any great degree with developments in Czechoslovakia."[2]

In Leaders of the Communist World, Pierre Delain contributed an article on Waldeck Rochet, the secretary-general of the French Communist Party, in which he determined that the PCF reaction was "written by the Soviet leaders at the same time of the marching orders of the [Warsaw Pact] army."[3] In contrast Kevin Devlin expressed the view, in Problems of Communism, that the invasion of Czechoslovakia provided an "apparently enduring conflict of political interests" between the communist movements in Western Europe and the Warsaw Pact.[4] Devlin argued that the PCF approved of and applauded the reform movement in Czechoslovakia.

Ronald Tiersky wrote an analysis of the events of 1968 in his work, French Communism, 1920-1972, at a later date, and even he stated:

> . . . the French Communist leadership has demonstrated a refusal to make any irretrievable commitment on the issue of the relations between the 'fraternal' parties and the CPSU.[5]

However, Tiersky later indicated that "the French Communists have finally drawn the conclusion of over three decades of 'cooperation' in pursuing the Soviet interest."[6] Thus it is evident that the interpretations available on the subject are both limited in scope and greatly varied.

The unique historical allegiance of the PCF to the CPSU leadership partially explains the diversity in interpretations of the French Communists' position in 1968. The themes of internationalism and conformity buttressed this communist movement from the beginning. Additionally, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the party of the first and most powerful Marxist state, historically had assumed the role of head of the global communist movement. However, after 1945, the national communist phenomenon emerged from within the ranks of the European communities. This philosophy was based on the premise that the communist experience was unique in each country due to the individual history, background, and conditions present in each culture, and thus individualized forms of communism must develop. This form of revisionism created a paradox within the international movement.

After the defeat of the fascist alliance in 1945, the CPSU faced a fragmentation of the so-called communist "monolith" and a new challenge to its position as the leader therein. However, from the years prior to World War II until the late 1960s, the official French

Communist Party policies followed closely the dictates enumerated by the Soviet Union. The PCF suffered the consequences of this adherence and conformity to the CPSU policy line. Membership in the party dropped sharply when the PCF endorsed the German-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact in 1939.

The PCF did not always parrot the CPSU policy statements as closely as might be expected. When in 1956, in his "Secret Speech," Nikita Khrushchev denounced Joseph Stalin's "cult of personality," PCF/CPSU friendship became visibly strained for a time. Again in 1964 PCF and CPSU opinions diverged over the issue of the role of religion "in a socialist society."[7] These differences never seriously divided the two parties, and the PCF continued its basic policy of close adherence to CPSU leadership and authority. In 1964 the PCF accepted Khrushchev's position on Peaceful Coexistence with the capitalist states, and supported the authority of the CPSU when it was challenged by the Chinese Communist Party. When Khrushchev was deposed, the PCF (after a brief period of confusion within the ranks) welcomed the new Russian leaders, Leonid Brezhnev and Alexie Kosygin, to the Kremlin. Thus, the PCF's denunciation of Soviet activities in 1968 was most significant given the historical closeness exhibited the PCF and the CPSU. Therefore this reversal of French tactics deserves further examination and careful analysis.

The best sources for examining the views, actions, and attitudes of these two communist parties in the Czechoslovakian affairs of 1968 is a study of the reactions of each party as they were recorded in the official party newspapers. These policy outlets provided a means for reviewing the recorded positions expounded by the respective parties.

By articulating the ideological positions assumed by the parties' leadership, these journals established a chronological documentation of the interests, reactions, and attitudes of the parties. The papers informed the readers, communist and non-communist, of the official and specific policies of each party. In The French Communists, Annie Kriegel pointed out that

> Whenever there is an orthodoxy there is an official information bulletin but not necessarily a newspaper in the real sense of the word. And L'Humanite is read, quoted, and discussed precisely as if it were an official information bulletin.[8]

The use of the documentation of the official party journals provided an effective means with which to compare and contrast the specific party lines expressed by each party and allows for an analysis of the chronology of the subtle developments of the positions of each on a day-to-day basis.

There are limitations to the exclusive use of this methodology. The foremost rests in the narrow, biased perspectives present in the party newspapers. However, the use of supplementary information served to balance the perspective of the situations as they existed at the time and afforded a more accurate account and assessment of the PCF's response to the Czechoslovakian "thaw" and the CPSU's subsequent invasion of that country. The papers supplied an essential element in the interpretation of the ideological dilemmas of 1968 from the perspectives of the actors concerning national communism and of the emergence of an independent PCF, which have not as yet received appropriate scholarly examination.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Annie Kriegel, The French Communists: Profile of a People, tr. Elaine P. Halprin (Chicago, 1972), p. 364.

[2]The Hoover Institute, The Yearbook on International Communist Affairs (Stanford, 1969), p. 328.

[3]Pierre Delain, "Waldeck Rochet, the Kremlin's Organization Man in Paris," in Robert Swearingen (ed.), Leaders of the Communist World (New York, 1971), p. 489.

[4]Kevin Devlin, "The New Crisis in European Communism," Problems of Communism, Vol. XVII, No. 6 (November-December, 1968), p. 57.

[5]Ronald Tiersky, French Communism 1920-1972 (New York, 1974), p. 292.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Francois Fejto, The French Communist Party and the Crisis of International Communism (Cambridge, Mass, 1967), p. 159.

[8]Kriegel, The French Communists: Profile of a People, p. 26.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND

The ancestry of French communism was linked directly to the strong socialist tradition of France. The leaders of the main factions of late nineteenth and early twentieth century French socialism, Jules Guesde and Jean Jaures, were influenced greatly by the tenets of Marxism.[1] In 1905 the two main factions formed the French Socialist Party (Section Francaise de l'Internationale Ouvriere, the SFIO). Yet, strong as this legacy might have been, it was the success of Russian Bolshevism and the creation of the "first socialist state" in Russia that fostered the appearance of French communism. The SFIO fragmented in 1920, when at the Congress of Tours, a majority of the members chose to participate in the Third International. The Section Francaise de l'Internationale Communiste, the SFIC, was born, and within a year became known as the Parti Communiste Francaise, PCF.[2]

The French communist adherence to and membership in the Third International (Comintern) was the most important factor in early relations between Bolshevik Russia and the fledgling French Communist Party. The congresses of the Communist International coordinated the growing world communist movement, and the Bolsheviks, directed by V. I. Lenin, directed the Comintern.[3] The participation of the French communists in the Comintern signified their acceptance of the Twenty-one Conditions required for membership in the Communist International.[4] The French

communists, as well as other "parties applying for Comintern membership," were enjoined "to expell 'revisionists,' 'opportunists,' 'lackeys of the bourgeosie,' and similar vague, unscientific categories."[5] By 1924 the French Communist Party expelled the "vague categories" from the PCF organization by removing the non-Bolshevized leadership. At the same time, the French communists' internal political structure was reorganized along the "Leninist conception of democratic centralism."[6] Thus, the PCF was linked firmly with the party and doctrine of Lenin.

Paying homage to the Comintern generally was recognized as a prerequisite for gaining aid from Bolshevik Russia which supplied the emerging communist parties with finances and information. However, this aid was not without a price. In France:

> The reorganization of the party, the expansion of its apparatus, and the development of new cadres required money; and the leadership's need for money, which it had no means of raising, made it [the PCF] more dependent than ever upon Moscow.[7]

Consequently the early French communists owed not only their ideology and political structure to the Russian communists, but also their financial existence.

The last half of the 1920s proved to be a confusing time for the PCF. The French Communist Party was confronted with problems of reorganizing the party framework, declining membership, and financing the party structure. These difficulties were compounded further by the internal chaos in Moscow due to the struggle for leadership between Joseph Stalin and Leon Trotsky. Stalin emerged victorious in this clash for control of the Soviet Union and the CPSU. Once Stalin became dominate he placed the Comintern on a new course which caused additional problems for the French Communist Party. This course,

orchestrated by the Comintern, changed the PCF from the "united front" tactics utilized in the early and mid 1920s to the "class against class" policies of Stalin in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

The "united front" strategy, begun in 1922, was an effort by the Comintern to solidify the other workers' parties with the growing communist movement. For the new French Communist Party, the "united front" strategy also proved to be a point of confusion in its early development. At this time of bolshevizing the party, the Comintern decreed a reconciliation with the non-communist faction of Tours.[8] Conflict concerning the united front between the Comintern and the French communists resulted. By the first half of 1923, the French Communist Party reluctantly acquiesced to the International, but not without strained relations within the party and toward the leadership of the Comintern.[9]

Stalin rejected the "united front" strategy in 1928 and replaced it with the "class against class" doctrine. The new Comintern policy specifically discarded any cooperation with the non-communist left and asserted, as Tiersky stated, that "European working classes as a whole . . . [should] . . . unite under the sole leadership of the communist parties."[10] Tiersky concluded that this doctrine served only "to lead [the PCF] ever more completely into isolation from the French nation and into contact with the international Bolshevik community centered around the Soviet Communist Party."[11] The "class against class" orthodoxy insulated the PCF from the mainstream of French politics. Although at times reluctantly, the PCF loyally adjusted to the fluctuations in Comintern dogma and the policies of Stalin.

The influence of the PCF in France diminished considerably by the early 1930s. The anti-socialist campaign, which began in the 1920s

effectively alienated all but the most dedicated followers of the French Communist Party.[12] In this decade the PCF's philosophical stance was altered at least three times. The early doctrine of revolution was exchanged quickly for adherence to the tenets of the united front, and then once again revamped to accommodate Stalin's "class against class" doctrine. It was during this time and the early 1930s that Maurice Thorez became the leader of the PCF.

Thorez rose through the local party structure and reached the level of a Politbureau member of the PCF in less than ten years. His success has been attributed to his unwavering commitment and loyalty to the Soviet Union. He followed the dictates of Stalin and the Comintern religiously. He always pleased the CPSU-controlled International, while many of his contemporaries and rivals in the PCF challenged the role of the Comintern in coordinating world communism. At a time when the new communist parties were so dependent on the Soviet Union and its communist party, strict fidelity to the Comintern was an important element in one's rise to power. Even during the chaos in Moscow concerning Stalin's and Trotsky's struggle for power, Thorez avoided a dangerous situation by complying with the dictates of the Comintern, whatever its position.[13] Later, this policy led Thorez to side against Trotsky and Trotsky's supporters in the PCF, primarily Boris Souvarine, a prominent member of the PCF Politbureau.[14] In 1934 Thorez, sanctioned by Moscow, adopted the new strategy of the Popular Front hence eliminating Jacques Doriot, Thorez's most serious rival for leadership.[15] Although initially opposed to the idea of the Popular Front, Thorez changed his position, paid homage to Moscow, reversed the policy of

"class against class," and replaced the old policy with a new cooperative effort with the socialists in France.

The Popular Front was a joining of the Communist and Socialist Parties in France for a "defensive coalition, formed spontaneously after February 6, 1934, by a sort of survival instinct for the defense of democratic principles."[16] This defense was needed to oppose the growing threat of Fascism in Europe. The revolutionary fervor of the "class against class" doctrine was now supplemented by a theme promoting unified action of the Left, and this included the bourgeois as well as communist members. The Comintern formally sanctioned the Popular Front tactic in 1935. The Popular Front of the French Left succeeded in bringing the coalition to power in 1936. The PCF, as a member of this coalition, advocated a posture of national defense that aided not only the interests of France but also the interests of the Soviet Union.[17]

The Soviets too were worried about the Fascist menace. However, the unification of the Left and the common interests of the Soviet Union and France was short-lived. The French Leftist government agreed to the "appeasement" of Adolph Hitler in the form of the Munich Pact of 1938. To avoid war with Germany, the British and French governments sanctioned the German leader's demand during the Munich crisis for the German annexation of the Sudtenland of Czechoslovakia. This brought the dissolution of the Popular Front in France. It was viewed by the PCF (and, of course, by the Soviet Union) that this "appeasement" was an attempt "to make a sacrifice of the Soviet Union, rendering the Maxim 'Better Hitler than Stalin' the watchword of Western European foreign policy."[18] Subsequently, the PCF withdrew support from the

Popular Front government, criticized the Munich Pact, and initiated a stringent anti-Fascist platform as the Second World War drew closer.

Between the dissolution of the Popular Front in 1938 and August of 1939, the French Communists continued staunch opposition to Fascism. In August, however, with the signing of the Nazi-Soviet Non-aggression Pact, the PCF (and Thorez) were caught in a complicated situation. The Soviets, instead of being anti-German, now became neutral toward the Germans, a position the PCF reluctantly was required to embrace. Considering that Hitler was thus free to attack Western Europe (he did not then have to fear an attack from Russia on the east), the French government declared the French Communist Party illegal. After this major shift in policy, the PCF became divided and confused. Some Party members rejected the neutralist policy, others went underground to avoid arrest, and still others (Thorez for one) left France.[19]

The disarray persisted until June of 1941 when the Germans turned on the "neutral" Soviet Union and invaded "Mother Russia." Once again Moscow made an about face as the communist world rallied to arms, including the illegal PCF in German subjugated France, against the Fascist German enemy. What once had been a war among "imperialist nations over world markets," which the Soviet Union was more than happy to avoid was now "a great patriotic war of freedom-loving peoples against Fascism."[20] In the case of the PCF, "The German attack on the Soviet Union made it possible for members of the French Communist Party to be good Frenchmen as well as militant Communists."[21] The French Communists, now sanctioned by Stalin's revived anti-Fascism, became an integral part of the underground French Resistance, and as such, were

catapulted to the forefront of French political parties by the end of the war.

During World War II the PCF supported the French Committee of National Liberation, the anti-Vichy Free French governing body, and with the blessings of Stalin, agitated for a voice in the Free French government.[22] The once outlawed PCF entered the Free French political system in 1943. In 1944 the PCF accepted ministerial posts in the French Committe. However, the PCF's acceptance of the Commissar of Air and the Commissar of State in the provisional French government resulted only after considerable debate with General Charles de Gaulle.[23] By the end of the Second World War the PCF secured and held a place in the post war reconstruction government of France, and was a major political force in French elections.

The years from World War II until 1968 illustrated three successive periods of PCF development.[24] The first period, from the end of the war until 1947, was a time during which the PCF attained its greatest influence in the French government. The second period extended from 1947 until 1962, when the French Communist Party, although still a major political organization in France, was excluded effectively from participation in any coalition government. Throughout this period the PCF had to deal with several major crises within the international movement. The last phase lasted from 1962 until early 1968, a period which emphasized the rejuvenation of the "unity of the Left" theme in French politics. During these years the PCF sustained its firm commitment to the pursuit of domestic goals within the confines of international orthodoxy dictated by the CPSU and the foreign policy of the Soviet Union.

The PCF emerged from World War II as a powerful force in French politics. Support for the Communists among the French people grew mainly from the Party's effective involvement in the Resistance movement during the war. The years of the war and those years immediately after comprised a period of cooperation among the "freedom-loving peoples" of the communist and capitalist ideologies. In this atmosphere the PCF was able to adhere to the Soviet line and at the same time enjoy a period of growing national influence within France. The PCF participated in the French coalition government,* its members serving as ministers, and at times, garnering the largest vote count of the coalition in the popular elections. But this cooperation in France and in the world was an alliance of adversaries, one with little future.

In 1947 the French coalition government went through a series of international and domestic crises which ended with the PCF rejecting the coalition. The PCF clashed with the other factions of the government concerning the fate of French Indo-China, where the French were fighting an armed national movement. The PCF demanded a negotiated settlement of the conflict. The other coalition members (as well as French popular opinion at the time), were motivated by nationalism, and refused to submit to negotiations on the grounds that this would be a blow to French prestige and national honor. Meanwhile, domestically the PCF began agitating for increased workers' wages (although this stand came only after considerable pressure and several wildcat strikes from the rank and file proletariat).[25] On this issue as in foreign

*This coalition consisted of the PCF, SFIO, and MRP (Mouvement Republican Populaire; the right of center party).

affairs the coalition government rejected the PCF position. After the wage-dispute episode, the PCF was forced to withdraw from the government, thereby excluding the PCF members from the ministries and curbing their influence in the French decision-making structure.

Just as influential on the PCF as the internal political disputes in France was the international crisis in the wartime alliance. By the summer of 1947 the leaders of the alliance, the Soviet Union and the United States, had split over issues of national interests and had dissolved what was left of the "freedom-loving peoples" alliance. The result was the Cold War, a conflict between the communist and non-communist worlds. The development further alienated and isolated the PCF from the French domestic political structure as the "us versus them," or communist versus non-communist mentality prevailed in France as in the world at large. Throughout the nineteen-fifties and into the nineteen-sixties, this attitude greatly affected the position of the French Communists, as their national and international policies diverged significantly from those espoused by the other major parties.

The PCF was not without troubles in other areas. The leadership of the Soviet Union, upset with the "encroachment" of American power in Western Europe (a by-product of the war), berated the French and Italian Communist Parties at the first Cominform* meeting for not doing more to prevent this "new imperialism." The unity of the Left position, once cultivated by the Soviets, was now reversed by Stalin and replaced

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*The Cominform was created in the late 1940s by the Soviet Union, most of the East European communist states, and the French and Italian Communist Parties in an attempt to form an organization which would aid in the communication and promotion of a clear-cut and uniform communist doctrine.

with a hard-line anti-American posture designed to bring the major parties of Europe into line with the concept of monolithic unity. The Cominform, with the CPSU firmly in control, promoted this anti-Americanism, and the PCF agreed. By 1947 the PCF, after a brief period of self-criticism for its inability to deal effectively with the changing times (that is, from the unity to the hard-line stance), was locked firmly into the current policy advocated by the Soviet camp.[26] The only real fault of the PCF was its failure to deal rapidly enough with Stalin's remarkable maneuvering in foreign policy.

As a manifestation of the Cold War and the dissolution of the unity of the Left's policy, the non-communist parties in France excluded the PCF from participation in the government. The fifteen years between 1947 and 1962 have been characterized by one author as the period of "Le grand schisme."[27] The exclusion was achieved, although the PCF continually garnered approximately one-quarter of the votes in each of the general elections.[28] Consequently, the PCF positions relating to the domestic and foreign policies of France became largely symbolic in nature.[29] While the French Communist Party in these fifteen years was driven out of the French government, the party was confronted with rapidly changing developments in the international communist community as well.

After World War II, the development of the national communist phenomenon created something of a paradox and certainly produced a change within the international communist movement. The fundamental premise for national communism was that a nation or state, because of its unique history, background, or conditions, developed individual forms of communism in order to fit its special needs and problems.

Consequently, this national posture resulted in conflicts within the ranks of the international forum between members loyal to the CPSU policy and those which deviated from this line in favor of either revisionist or centralist doctrines.

The earliest conflict was illustrated by a clash which began in 1948 between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, or, more specifically, between the leaders of the two countries, Josef Stalin of the Soviet Union, and Josef Broz Tito of Yugoslavia. This disagreement developed as a result of Stalin's apparent inability to accept the non-CPSU dominated Tito and his communist party in Yugoslavia. The outcome of this clash was the eventual expulsion of Yugoslavia from the Cominform and the subsequent condemnation of the Yugoslav party by a majority of the communist parties of the world. Furthermore, out of this conflict arose the principle of Titoism, an independent and individualistic form of communism. The initial crack in the international communist "monolith" thus emerged. As a consequence, two distinct centers of ideology became apparent within the world communist movement.

For the French Communist Party, however, there remained only one center of global communism, that which reigned in Moscow and which Stalin personified. Thorez and the PCF viciously condemned the Yugoslav party in general and Tito in particular. These denunciations continued for years after 1948 and, as Francois Fejto remarked, it was as if "the French Communist Party was like a province or republic of the Soviet Federation."[31] Thorez was a devoted supporter of Stalin, and therefore the French Communist leader's rejection of Titoism came as no surprise.

The challenge of Titoism was contained effectively by the Soviet

Union and the CPSU which thought Stalin maintained firm control of the direction in which world communism progressed. The impact of Stalin's personal leadership, both within the Soviet Union and over the entire communist world, became strikingly obvious after his death in 1953. The Soviet Union and the CPSU lost their authoritarian head-of-state, and the international movement lost its cohesive bond. To be sure, Stalinism without Stalin remained a powerful doctrine throughout the world, but without the man, Stalinism simply could not maintain its previous momentum.

Three years after the death of Stalin, the Marxist states and parties throughout the world were thrown into a tumultuous uproar when Nikita S. Khrushchev gave his devastating "Secret Speech" in February of 1956. The speech, delivered at a closed session of the Twentieth Party Congress of the Soviet Union, signaled an attack on the "cult of the individual."[32] Stalin, the champion of socialism over the German Fascist menace, the great leader of the Soviet Union, the director of the Communist Party of the "first socialist state," and the undisputed head of the world Marxist order, was condemned by Khrushchev for deviation from the true Marxist-Leninist path. Proof, according to Khrushchev, was afforded by the emergence of the cult of the individual, of which Stalin was the center. This cult, Khrushchev argued, "became at a certain specific stage the source of a whole series of exceedingly serious and grave perversions of Party principles, Party democracy, and revolutionary legality."[33] Once Stalin's deviations from the "true path" were declared to be "perversions," what followed throughout much of the communist world was an unleashing of the floodgates of diversity.

Khrushchev's condemnation of Stalin created quite a turmoil within the PCF. To be sure, prior to the "Secret Speech" the PCF leadership, and more significantly Thorez, conflicted with the U.S.S.R.'s "collective leadership."[34] However, once the condemnation of the "cult of the individual" became publicly known, the staunch Stalinist Thorez relented in favor of allegiance to the CPSU. The French Communist Party, dominated by Maurice Thorez, backed the CPSU position in subsequent disputes within international communism and reluctantly shifted its policies from the centralism of Stalin to the doctrines of Khrushchev.

During the 1950s and the 1960s the disputes within world communism took many forms. As a direct response to Khrushchev's anti-Stalin speech, the Italian Communist Party (PCI) and its leader Palmiro Togliatti promoted a more independent attitude vis-a-vis the CPSU. Togliatti asserted that, "The whole system [international communism] becomes polycentric, and even in the communist movement we cannot speak of a single guide."[35] This polycentrist position outwardly contrasted with the traditional approach of centralization with the CPSU serving as the "single guide" to the movement. Furthermore, the Italian communists "supporting the Poles in resisting the idea being promoted by certain other parties . . . that a new organization along the lines of the Cominform was required to restore discipline and unity to the movement."[36] Clearly, there appeared an increased preference among some communist parties for a more diversified international communist movement.

The Italian approach to global communism conflicted sharply with that of Thorez and the belief of the PCF that the CPSU should remain the guide for communism.[37] The PCF and several other communist parties

condemned the polycentrist position as a "tendency toward factionalism."[38] The French Communist Party's positions in relation to the negative interpretation of polycentrism linked the PCF once again closely to the tenets of the CPSU. Although Thorez was slow to embrace totally Khrushchev's divergences from Stalin, in no way was he prepared to accept the Italians' multiple decentralized form of communism.

In the same year as the "Secret Speech" several socialist states in Eastern Europe, which had loyally followed the lead of Stalin, initiated significant steps toward national communism. Hungary and Poland both began to exercise new national policies which Stalin never would have sanctioned. In the case of Hungary, the national movement which seemed "to have won the endorsement of international communism" in the summer of 1956, soon was squelched when, on October 31, Imre Nagy's government publicly rejected the "allegiance to the Soviet camp."[39] This decision to break openly with Moscow and to declare Hungary a neutral state, precipitated an invasion by the Soviet Union which brought the Hungarians back into conformity. Poland initiated a national posture directed by Wladyslav Gomulka which, although not particularly pleasing to the CPSU, was accepted nonetheless by the Kremlin. Poland remained within the Soviet hegemony, subservient to the dictates of the foreign policy of the Soviet Union.

In both the cases of Hungary and Poland, the PCF reacted negatively because of the party's Stalinist tradition and its devotion to the CPSU. The PCF supported the invasion of Hungary by the Soviet Union, equating the Nagy government with the heresies of "revisionism" and of national communism.[40] With the Poles the PCF leadership chose mostly to ignore the solution of Polish relations with the Soviet Union.[41]

As long as Thorez lived, the PCF continued to maintain a Stalinist base tempered by the new leadership in Moscow. Yet, Thorez carefully avoided any direct clash with Khrushchev in the strict tradition of fidelity with the CPSU.

Although Thorez was reluctant to embrace de-Stalinization he maintained his dissatisfaction at a much lower level than did the Chinese. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP), led by Mao tse-Tung, adhered to the theme of Stalinist centralism and global uniformity in the tradition of Stalin. The CCP disagreed ideologically with Khrushchev and the CPSU concerning the policy of peaceful coexistence with the West, and rejected the condemnation of Stalin. And, most important, the CCP rejected the theory of a "peaceful transition of socialism." This theme, supported by many Communist parties both in and outside the governments of respective nations, rejected the axiom that only violent revolution could place a communist party in power in a state. The idea of "peaceful transition" was received well in the communist parties of Italy and France, where it legitimized those parties' methods for vying for power through the established system of representative democracy in the bourgeois states. The CCP leadership believed that the policy negated the revolutionary concepts which formed an inherent part of the basic principles of Marxism and communism. The resulting schism between the two most powerful communist states forced the most serious break in the communist international movement.[42] Although the PCF was intrigued at first by the centralist position of the CCP, by 1963 the lure of the theme of "peaceful coexistence" and the traditional loyalty to the CPSU proved stronger.[43]

Throughout the first eight years of the 1960s the communist parties of the world basically considered the problems created by de-Stalinization. The Sino-Soviet split became more intense during this time, and rose to the level of sporadic border clashes between the two states. In addition, the "resignation" of Khrushchev in 1964 further complicated the international communist situation. Although Moscow's influence waned within the world communist structure, the leadership of the Soviet Union attempted to maintain its position of leadership within the Marxist world. This held true particularly in the states adjacent to the borders of the Soviet Union, other than Communist China. Thorez, until his death in 1964, maintained obedience to the CPSU line, regardless of the changes within leadership in the Kremlin. Waldeck Rochet succeeded Thorez as head of the PCF and, as Pierre Delain stated, Rochet was "the Kremlin's organization man in Paris."[44]

The PCF continued to side with the CPSU on every major issue of international communism. The French communists condemned Titoism and rejected Italian polycentrism; they sanctioned the invasion of Hungary by the Soviet Union and were outspoken critics of Chinese centralism. The PCF approved of Khrushchev's doctrines of "peaceful coexistence" and "peaceful transition to socialism."[45] The theme of close cooperation, fixed loyalty, and commitment to the policies of the CPSU often was reaffirmed. Even Khrushchev's resignation, which brought in Leonid Brezhnev, caused no major reevaluation of PCF policy. Domesticly, "the unity of the Left" was reinstated in 1964 as the position of the PCF and confirmed by the Kremlin.[46] By 1966 the French and Italian communists reconciled seemingly with the "blessings" of the Kremlin.[47] This close cooperation with the Soviet Union remained an integral part of PCF ideology until alternations occurred in 1968.

The policies of the PCF and CPSU during the years traditionally were coordinated. With this background from 1920 until 1968, the denunciation of the actions of the Soviet Union and four countries of the Warsaw Pact by the PCF in 1968, illustrated a substantial change in PCF attitudes. Consequently, the evolution of this change toward a more independent French Communist Party vis-a-vis the Communist Party of the Soviet Union centered upon the PCF attitudes toward the events which occurred in Czechoslovakia in 1968. The position of the French Communist Party throughout this year was illustrated clearly in L'Humanite. This newspaper published official reports and commentaries daily. L'Humanite delineated the positions taken by the leadership of the PCF in favor of the reforms and the liberalization of the government of Czechoslovakia as they were introduced by Alexander Dubcek, and of his eventual plight.

The tone of the articles in L'Humanite contrasted sharply with the articles and official statements offered by the CPSU as they were presented in Pravda. Thus, divergencies can be discerned from the official bulletins of each party. The contrasting tones of the accounts of these journals of the affairs in Czechoslovakia in 1968 indicated conclusively that the PCF rejection of the hegemony of the CPSU was associated directly with the Czechoslovak issue.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Tiersky, p. 14; for an in-depth treatment, see Robert Wohl, French Communism in the Making, 1914-1924 (Stanford, 1966), pp. 2-20 (hereafter referred to as FCM).

[2]Anne Kriegel, Aux origines du communisme francais: 1910-1920 (Paris, 1964), pp. 430-439; Wohl, FCM, pp. 197-227.

[3]Louis Fischer, The Life of Lenin (New York, 1964), p. 525; Theodore H. Von Laue, Why Lenin? Why Stalin? (Philadelphia, 1964), p. 169.

[4]Kriegel, The French Communists: Profile of a People (hereafter referred to as Profile), p. 191; Fischer, pp. 525-529.

[5]Fischer, p. 525.

[6]Kriegel, Profile, pp. 192-195; Wohl, FCM, pp. 396-432.

[7]Wohl, FCM, p. 404.

[8]Tiersky, p. 41; Wohl, FCM, pp. 258-259.

[9]Wohl, FCM, pp. 328-331.

[10]Tiersky, p. 46.

[11]Ibid.

[12]See Kriegel, Profile, for the breakdown of the membership figures.

[13]Robert Wohl, "Maurice Thorez French Practitioner of the Popular Front," in Robert Swearingen (ed.), Leaders of the Communist World (New York, 1974), p. 4.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Ibid., p. 10.

[16]Tiersky, p. 54. This is a quote from Leon Blum noted socialist leader of the time; found in A l'echelle humaine, p. 69.

[17]Tiersky, p. 69.

[18]Ibid., p. 67.

[19]Ibid., pp. 98-102.

[20]Alfred J. Rieber, Stalin and the French Communist Party, 1941-1947 (New York, 1962), pp. 3-4.

[21]Ibid., p. 6.

[22]Ibid., p. 53.

[23]Ibid., pp. 55-59.

[24]For a full examination of the events at this time in the PCF, see: Rieber, pp. 212-358; Riersky, pp. 156-265.

[25]Rieber, pp. 347-349; Tiersky, pp. 153-155.

[26]Tiersky, pp. 161-165.

[27]Ibid., pp. 156-225.

[28]Phillip M. Williams, French Politicians and Elections, 1951-1969 (Cambridge, 1970), pp. 292-293.

[29]Tiersky, pp. 219-225.

[30]This subject is treated in further depth in: Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, The Soviet Bloc; Unity and Conflict, 4th edition (Cambridge, 1971, pp. 58-64, 185-209; Vladimir Dedijer, The Battle Stalin Lost, Memoirs of Yugoslavia, 1948-1952 (New York, 1972).

[31]Fejto, p. 30.

[32]For a full text of Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" in translation, see: The Russian Institute, Columbia University, The Anti-Stalin Campaign and International Communism (New York, 1956), pp. 1-89.

[33]Ibid., p. 3.

[34]Fejto, pp. 44-45.

[35]The Russian Institute, Columbia University, p. 139.

[36]Donald L. M. Blackmer, "Unity in Diversity," Italian Communism and The Communist World (Cambridge, 1968), p. 123.

[37]Fejto, p. 67; Tiersky, pp. 287-288.

[38]Blackmer, p. 196.

[39]Brzezinski, pp. 230-231.

[40]Fejto, p. 76.

[41]Ibid., p. 74.

[42]For a background on the Sino-Soviet split, see: William E. Griffith, The Sino-Soviet Rift (Cambridge, 1964); G. I. Hudson et al., The Sino-Soviet Dispute (New York, 1961).

[43]Fejto, pp. 145-147.

[44]Delain, p. 489.

[45]Fejto, p. 159.

[46]Ibid., p. 200.

[47]Ibid., pp. 167-170.

CHAPTER III

REACTIONS TO THE REFORMS

The response to the events in Czechoslovakia during the first eight months of 1968 illuminated the growth of PCF independence vis-a-vis the CPSU. Alexander Dubcek, who replaced Antonin Novotny as First Secretary of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (CPC) in January, 1968, initiated a program of liberalization and democratization of the Czechoslovakian party, government, and society.[1] Throughout the spring and early summer Dubcek's policies were debated among the communist parties of the world. The French communists were informed of the developments in Czechoslovakia and the French party's reactions to Dubcek's programs in articles, reports, and stories printed in L'Humanite. As L'Humanite's articles reflected one point of view on the CPC reforms, Pravda's articles reflected a different attitude.

Alexander Dubcek initiated his first political and social reforms in January and February, 1968. However, the extent of these reforms: the abolition of censorship of the press, the alteration in the CPC leadership, and other reorganizations was not fully recognized by outside observers until March or later. The press, both of the PCF and CPSU gave similar accounts of the election of Dubcek to the position of First Secretary and to the addition of Jan Piller, Jozef Spacek, Emil Rigo, and Jozef Boruvka to the Central Committee.[2] Both newspapers printed short biographical sketches of Dubcek and commented

briefly on Novotny's resignation. Interestingly, the Pravda article lauded Novotny for his efforts in the "important successes achieved by the Party" during his years as First Secretary.[3] However, the French newspaper reporter in Prague, Phillippa Hentges, emphasized the more general political and economic developments attributed to the Central Committee of the CPC.[4] After the election of Dubcek, both Pravda and L'Humanite reported only sparingly on Czechoslovakia events until the end of February. At that time the Czechoslovakians commemorated the twentieth anniversary of the communists' ascension in power there in 1948.

During the last week of February several articles appeared in Pravda in conjunction with the twentieth anniversary of open communist rule in Czechoslovakia. Pravda published a speech by First Secretary Dubcek which stressed the "solidarity" and the traditional friendship between the people of Czechoslovakia and the people of the Soviet Union.[5] Similar items appeared in Pravda, including a speech by Leonid Brezhnev in which he concentrated on the theme of close friendship and mutual respect between the two communist neighbors.[6] The French Communist Party also observed the Czechoslovakian anniversary. L'Humanite reported on the celebration in Prague in accounts printed on the 23rd and 24th of February.[7] The articles in L'Humanite basically were news stories of the commemoration of the birth of the Czechoslovakian communist state. In addition to the news reports, L'Humanite also published a short address to First Secretary Dubcek from Waldeck Rochet, the General Secretary of the French Communist Party. In this release Rochet expressed hope that the CPC and the PCF would continue to have "new success in our activities in the service of socialism."[8] In both

of the dailies, L'Humanite and Pravda, the unity of the communist world movements persisted as the general theme in the articles dealing with the Czechoslovakian celebration.

A preparatory meeting of the international conference of the Communist and Workers' Parties, held in Budapest, Hungary, also received coverage in Pravda. One item in the paper focused on the ideas of unity, solidarity, and coordination within the international communist movement.[9] This Pravda article underscored the proposition that "Recognition of the independence of parties is an absolute principle in our movement."[10] On February 29 an account of a speech delivered by M. A. Suslov, the head of the CPSU delegation at the consultative meeting in Budapest, was printed in Pravda. The text of Suslov's oration emphasized the CPSU's position on the independence of and fraternity among the various world communist parties. However, Suslov also warned that "dangerous nationalist tendencies have come to light in individual links of the Communist movement."[11] While this was not a direct reference to any particular party, Suslov's message served to illustrate the emerging concern that Soviet officials had for overtly independent courses of socialism within the world movement.

Throughout March of 1968 the government of Czechoslovakia embarked on a course of action that was decidedly different from that which had been implemented under Novotny. By early April, "only ten of the twenty-nine members of the cabinet were held over from the old government."[12] However, the changes being made in Czechoslovakia went beyond the mere restructuring of the ruling leadership. At this point the press in Czechoslovakia began to experience considerably less censorship, and many individuals who had been discredited during the Stalinist

period of the early 1950s were "rehabilitated."[13] At all times, the Czechoslovakian leadership maintained the posture that the communist party proposed to direct the country into a new era of truly socialist democracy. As the events in Czechoslovakia developed in March, L'Humanite issued numerous accounts and interviews covering the developing situation in Prague.

Phillippa Hentges, the correspondent for L'Humanite, offered several reports from Prague regarding the evolution of the party's new programs for social democracy. In the March 13 issue of L'Humanite, Hentges related the approval of the economic and political changes by the regional communist organizations, which the Central Committee had suggested earlier in the year.[14] In the next day's edition, an illustration of the relaxing of the censorship of the press and the opening of free discussion in Czechoslovakia appeared in L'Humanite. This report included discussion of an "open letter" written by students in Prague. These students called for the ridding of the society of "mutual mistrust among the citizens!"[15] They also demanded an end to "American aggression in Vietnam," and also voiced their approval of the direction taken by the party and by Secretary Dubcek.[16] This article thus contributed an additional insight into the growing freedom from Czechoslovakian citizens to criticize party officials and government actions. Professors, students, and others openly denounced the explanation provided by the Minister of the Interior, Josef Kudrna, concerning an altercation between students and police on October 31, 1967, at Charles University in Strahov.[17] On March 16 L'Humanite reported that Minister Kudrna and Prosecutor General Jan Bartuska were

dismissed by President Novotny, partially as a result of the incident at the university.[18]

In a half-page article, topped with the headlines, "The Evolution of the Events in Czechoslovakia," L'Humanite provided further indication of the relaxation of censorship within Czechoslovakia.[19] This article was based primarily on the comments made by Oldrich Cernick, a member of the CPC presidium and the president of the Planning Committee. Cernick's remarks were first made public by the Czechoslovakian Communist Party daily, Rude Pravo. In the news report, Cernick was quoted as saying:

> It is a question of widening the socialist democracy which is one stage more than the bourgeois democracy. In our society where the possibility of restoration of capitalism, by internal forces, is no longer existent, and where the base of social process is the bringing together of the classes and harmonization of the interests of the individuals and of the social groups, all these conditions are brought together for a full blooming of the socialist democracy.[20]

Thus, L'Humanite, the official newspaper of the French Communist Party, afforded a platform for Czechoslovakian politicians to expound upon the changing policies of their new government.

In the meantime, several domestic organizations appealed to the government to reinstate victims of the purges of the Stalinist period and other discredited Czechoslovaks, most of whom were former soliders and partisan fighters. The principal organization behind this movement was the Union of Anti-Fascist Fighters, which issued calls for the rehabilitation of thousands of persons.[21] L'Humanite published a column on March 16, along with other accounts of news from Czechoslovakia, on these "demands" for the reinstatement of the victims by Joseph Hrusek, the president of the Anti-Fascist organization.[22] Clearly, the

pressure for further changes in Czechoslovakia was evident in the reports in the French paper.

In the following days, L'Humanite published almost daily accounts from Prague. Conversely, from the first of March until the final days of that month, Pravda virtually ignored the developments in Czechoslovakia. On March 23 Pravda did mention the resignation of Novotny from his office as the president of the republic.[23] The news account was interesting, short, and factual; it was comparable in context to an "expose" on ball bearings exports from Czechoslovakia, which appeared in Pravda on March 19.[24] In comparison L'Humanite printed preliminary report of the President's imminent dismissal. On March 19 L'Humanite published an account of the demand for the removal of Novotny by the regional organizations of the Czechoslovakian Communist Party.[25] On March 23 the PCF press headlined Novotny's resignation on the "News of the World" page of the daily.[26] Clearly L'Humanite contributed a broader, more in-depth discussion of the Novotny incident than Pravda.

In March, 1968, there was no premeditated divergence on the part of the PCF and its press from any position taken by the CPSU concerning Czechoslovakia. There simply was no stated position or doctrine on the developments in Czechoslovakia from either the leadership of the PCF or of the CPSU. The differences observed between the two official news organs reflected the differing reactions to the events affecting the participants. The official line of the Soviet Union illustrated a "wait and see" attitude, as emphasized by the paucity of commentary on the rapid changes in Czechoslovakia. The French communists, via their party daily, portrayed a greater interest in the developments in Czechoslovakia continued to develop, the CPSU maintained a wary stance

toward the democratic socialism espoused by Dubcek and his followers, and the French Communist Party continued to grant the new leadership in Czechoslovakia extensive press coverage.

In the first real attempt to develop a position toward the changes in Czechoslovakia, a special meeting was called for by the members of the Warsaw Pact. Only Romania did not send a delegation to this meeting. The conference, held in Dresden, German Democratic Republic, was convened primarily due to the alarm that Brezhnev and other pact leaders had concerning the direction in which Dubcek intended to lead the Czechoslovakian state.[27] In this case, both L'Humanite and Pravda recounted the "friendly atmosphere" in which the meeting was held and otherwise maintained a uniformity in reporting on the Dresden meeting.[28]

Soon after the Dresden conference several non-communist analysts reported that the delegation from Czechoslovakia had received pressure from the other participants regarding the soon-to-be-announced program for restructuring the society, politics, and economy of Czechoslovakia.[29] Within days, Pravda denounced this "bourgeois propaganda," while L'Humanite merely reprinted excerpts from the Pravda article.[30] The coverage given by L'Humanite of the Dresden conference solely consisted of the official "public communique" issued from the conference. The same day that the official text of the Dresden meeting was published in L'Humanite, the PCF continued printing reports written by correspondent Hentges on the developments in Prague and the additional "rehabilitations" of the "victims of the years, 1951 to 1954."[31]

At the end of March the press of the French Communist Party expanded its coverage of the transformation of Czechoslovakian society from the Novotny days to the Dubcek "spring." The editors of L'Humanite

assigned a second correspondent to cover the situation in Prague. Antoine Acquaviva by-lined several articles in L'Humanite which examined the developments orchestrated by Dubcek. In the March 27 issue of L'Humanite Acquaviva analyzed the complex problems which had faced the leadership of Czechoslovakia from the beginning of January until the time of the article.[32] The next day Acquaviva continued his news analysis in Czechoslovakia and commented on the conflicting opinions within the Central Committee of the CPC regarding Dubcek's efforts to promote greater democracy.[33] The special articles by Acquaviva quite correctly suggested that the crystalizing situation in the state was complicated not only from internal forces, but also from concerned external forces, the most important of which was the Soviet Union.

In the final days of March, two additional noteworthy developments occurred concerning Czechoslovakia. General Ludvik Svoboda was elected president of Czechoslovakia, replacing the ousted Novotny. This distinguished general was a victim of the Stalinist period, but was "among the first to be rehabilitated" in the early 1960s.[34] Also late in March an ideological attack upon the CPC reforms was written by a GDR ideologue, Kurt Hager. Officials of the Czechoslovakian state protested this attack from Prague and from Berlin. L'Humanite published a short three paragraphs in reference to this subject on March 28, while Pravda passed over the incident altogether.[35]

Decisions concerning the future of Czechoslovakia begun in January, molded in March, were made public policy in April. After lengthy debate and discussion, the Central Committee of the Czechoslovakian Communist Party endorsed Dubcek's Action Program on April 5. The Action Program was the culmination of the Dubcek-inspired reforms. This

platform outlined a comprehensive model for enhanced freedoms and rights which were to be ensured by law. The Action Program further detailed the continued rehabilitation of former purge victims and also set up the framework for a new national construction. The communist party was to remain the vanguard of the people, and there was no mention of the possible legality of forming opposition parties. The Program also was designed to produce a foreign policy which allowed for "peaceful co-existence" with the non-communist countries of Western Europe and North America. The Action Program was a far-reaching document which had supporters and detractors both within and without the Czechoslovakian state. However, for the next several months, Dubcek's "socialism with a human face" would be the foundation on which the formulators of reform in Prague would base their policies.[36]

The passage of the Action Program by the Central Committee of the CPC was recorded extensively in <u>L'Humanite</u>. The French communist daily reported much of the actual debate within the Central Committee over the program as it continued from the first discussions in late March until the document was made public in early April. On April 2, in a joint report made by both of the correspondents for <u>L'Humanite</u> in Czechoslovakia, the French paper outlined the main points of the program Dubcek wished to initiate. Included in the account were point-by-point descriptions of the various clauses included in the Action Program. Among these were: "liberty of expression," "equality of the Czechs and the Slovaks, further "rehabilitations," reorganization of the ministerial structure of the government, and additional reforms.[37] On April 3 <u>L'Humanite</u> reported additional changes in the government of Czechoslovakia, recounting the resignation of presidium members Jiri

Hendryett and Vladimir Koucky. In the same article, once again, officials in Prague were quoted as reaffirming the quest of the CPC as "not to return to bourgeois parliamentarianism," but as an attempt to enhance socialist democracy within their country. And, still again in the same article, Jiri Hajek was reported to have reconfirmed the government of Czechoslovakia's commitment to the Soviet Union and to the Warsaw Pact. Hajek also stressed the desire for a greater role for Czechoslovakia within other multinational organizations such as the United Nations.[39] Nearly every day until the Action Program was made public on April 10, and announced in L'Humanite on April 11, the PCF press published commentaries on Czechoslovakia.

On April 11 L'Humanite printed a brief outline of the actual Action Program and in the same issue devoted almost the entire page of the "News of the World" section of the paper to the Czechoslovakian events. This section included an interview with Alexander Dubcek.[40] Dubcek was questioned about the role of the CPC within the new program and also was questioned about "the place of other parties and organizations of the National Front."[41] Dubcek's responses to these queries were significant; he emphasized the CPC would be in a leadership position, but would accept advice from the various other organizations involved in the National Front.[42] Reports and interviews in L'Humanite thus stressed the importance of the Action Program and by mid-April had directly emphasized the new Czechoslovakian policies to its readers.

The editors of Pravda waited until April 17 to publish any substantial account of the Action Program. In a lengthy article which mentioned the "Soviet Army's heroic struggle" to liberate Czechoslovakia from the German Fascists, Pravda passed over much of the most evident

changes made by the government of Czechoslovakia.[43] During the remainder of April, the information contained in Pravda concerning the events in Czechoslovakia proved infrequent and largely uninformative. The CPSU apparently chose to ignore the developments in Prague, perhaps to allow time for decisions to be made in the Kremlin, and surely to veil consternation of the CPSU leadership over the Action Program reforms.

Besides the Action Program, other significant events occurred in Czechoslovakia in April. One incident in particular was spurred by the increased freedom of the press of Czechoslovakia. Several newspapers in Czechoslovakia printed exposes of the purges conducted in that state during the early 1950s. A few of the reports went so far as to implicate officials of the Soviet Union in these abrogations of justice.[44] In subsequent reports in the Czechoslovakian press, the question of the "suicide" of Jan Masaryk, Foreign Minister during the pre-communist era and son of the revered T. G. Masaryk, was reexamined. As it had been explained in an earlier time, Masaryk jumped to his death in Prague in March of 1948. Certain articles in the CPC newspaper in 1968 suggested that agents of the CPSU secret police official, Lavrentia Beria, were involved in the incident.[45] Rude Pravo published a request to the Soviet Union for help in answering the questions surrounding the death of Masaryk.[46] L'Humanite printed two short articles covering the probe into Masaryk's death in Czechoslovakia, but avoided any comment.[47] Pravda ignored the issue altogether until a month had passed, and, at that time, the press of the Soviet Union printed direct attacks on the Czechoslovakian press.

The events in Czechoslovakia were referred to in a speech given by Secretary General Waldeck Rochet at the plenary session of the Central Committee of the PCF of April 19. Rochet's report was given widespread and detailed publication not only in L'Humanite, but also in Le Monde and other French news organizations.[48] This speech was a far-reaching address which included domestic and foreign topics of importance to the French Communist Party. On the subject of the changes occurring in Czechoslovakia, Rochet pointed out that the "new situation" in Prague had revived "irresponsible elements" which did not share Dubcek's vision for Czechoslovakian socialism.[49] However, Rochet concluded his remarks by saying:

> We wish for the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, for their Central Committee, and for their first secretary, Comrade Dubcek, for the government of the Socialist Republic of Czechoslovakia great success in the application of their program of aspiring to the blooming of socialism.[50]

Rochet's speech was in microcosm the position adopted by the PCF in April. Rochet guarded this commitment by the PCF by denouncing any "anti-socialist" developments in Czechoslovakia, while offering obvious approval of Dubcek's government and Action Program at the same time.

In the first four months of 1968, Alexander Dubcek succeeded in implementing his radically new governmental programs. The Action Program, as the culmination of events in Prague, provided the Czechoslovakian people with the foundation for one of the most open and progressive states in Eastern Europe. The party newspapers both of the PCF and the CPSU published accounts of the developments and events in Czechoslovakia and in their functions as official party mouthpieces, portrayed their respective parties' attitudes toward and interests in the "Prague Spring." In depth and in volume of coverage, the French

Communist Party paper printed far more information regarding the developments in Czechoslovakia than did the CPSU's official press. Pravda restricted its public commentary and reported sparingly on the reforms instituted by Dubcek's government. L'Humanite publicized extensive accounts, included in-depth interviews, and increased coverage at critical moments and, with Rochet's speech in April, afforded guarded support to the Dubcek reform movement. It was significant for the French communists that they were so well informed of the situation in Prague. In April the PCF and Rochet were not at odds with the CPSU, however, the foundation for conflicting policy positions on the Czechoslovak reforms were laid during the early months of 1968.

FOOTNOTES

[1]See the following sources for a full explanation of the events in Czechoslovakia: Robin Alison Remington, ed., Winter in Prague (Cambridge, Mass., 1969); Harry Schwartz, Prague's 200 Days (New York, 1969); Tad Szulc, Czechoslovakia Since World War II (New York, 1971); Hoover Institute, "Czechoslovakia," Yearbook on Communist Affairs (Stanford, 1969).

[2]L'Humanite (January 6, 1968), p. 3, and (January 8, 1968), p. 3; Pravda (January 6, 1968), pp. 1, 5, tr., Current Digest of the Soviet Press, Vol. XX, No. 1 (1968), pp. 21, 22. (Following citation hereafter referred to as CDSP, No. X, all are Vol. XX).

[3]Pravda (January 6, 1968), p. 1; CDSP, No. 1, p. 22.

[4]L'Humanite (January 6, 1968), p. 3.

[5]Pravda (February 22, 1968), p. 4; CDSP, No. 8, p. 18.

[6]Pravda (February 22, 1968), p. 2.

[7]L'Humanite (February 23, 1968), p. 3; (February 24, 1968), p. 3.

[8]Ibid. (February 23, 1968), p. 3.

[9]Pravda (February 22, 1968), p. 4; CDSP, No. 8, pp. 8, 9.

[10]CDSP, No. 8, p. 10.

[11]Pravda (February 29, 1968), p. 4; CDSP, No. 9, p. 17.

[12]Hoover Institute, p. 231.

[13]Szulc, pp. 30, 332-333; Schwartz, pp. 123-124.

[14]L'Humanite (March 13, 1968), p. 3.

[15]Ibid. (March 14, 1968), p. 3.

[16]Ibid.

[17]Ibid.

[18]Ibid. (March 16, 1968), p. 3.

[19]Ibid. (March 15, 1968), p. 3.

[20]Ibid.

[21]Ibid. (March 16, 1968), p. 3.

[22]Ibid.

[23]Pravda (March 24, 1968), p. 4; CDSP, No. 12, p. 17.

[24]Pravda (March 19, 1968), p. 5.

[25]L'Humanite (March 19, 1968), p. 3.

[26]Ibid. (March 23, 1968), p. 3.

[27]Szulc, p. 292.

[28]L'Humanite (March 25, 1968), p. 2; Pravda (March 25, 1968), p. 1.

[29]For examples, see New York Times (March 26, 1968), p. 44; Newsweek (April 8, 1968), p. 52; Economist (March 30, 1968), p. 24.

[30]Pravda (March 28, 1968), p. 4; CDSP, No. 13, p. 21; L'Humanite (March 29, 1968), p. 3.

[31]L'Humanite (March 25, 1968), p. 2.

[32]Ibid. (March 27, 1968), p. 3.

[33]Ibid. (March 28, 1968), p. 3.

[34]Szulc, p. 297.

[35]L'Humanite (March 28, 1968), p. 3.

[36]See Remington, pp. 88-136 for the complete text of the Action Program.

[37]L'Humanite (April 2, 1968), p. 4.

[38]Ibid. (April 3, 1968), p. 6.

[39]Ibid.

[40]Ibid. (April 11, 1968), p. 4.

[41]Ibid. National Front, the group of all legal organizations and parties which supposedly ruled jointly the Czechoslovakian state.

[42]Ibid.

[43]Pravda (April 17, 1968), p. 4; CDSP, No. 16, pp. 13, 19.

[44]Schwartz, pp. 137-139.

[45]*Ibid.*; Szulc, pp. 306, 308.

[46]*Ibid.*

[47]*L'Humanite* (April 11, 1968), p. 4, (April 17, 1968), p. 3.

[48]*Ibid.* (April 20, 1968), p. 1; *Le Monde* (April 21, 1968), p. 8.

[49]*Ibid.*

[50]*Ibid.*

CHAPTER IV

THE SUMMER AND WINTER

The implementation of the Action Program of Czechoslovakia created difficulties between the CPC and the CPSU at the beginning of May. The censor-free press, promised in the Action Program of Czechoslovakia, enhanced the tensions between the press of Czechoslovakia the press of the Soviet Union. The questions asked in the CPC press in April concerning Jan Masaryk's "suicide" prompted, as earlier mentioned, an adament denial in Pravda. This incident marked only the beginning of the long and sometimes vehement conflict between the two presses which extended to cover the issues of ideology, foreign relations and politics. In conjunction with the Masaryk case and others, the Soviet press also began to assail "some western press organs" for attempting to drive a wedge between the fraternally-bonded Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia.[1] The silence of the official newspaper of the CPSU and the other publications of the Soviet Union suddenly ended in the beginning of May, 1968.

The reinvestigation into the death of Jan Masaryk received press coverage in Pravda nearly one month after the CPC paper, Rude Pravo, published the first article on the subject. On May 8, 1968, TASS, the official news agency of the Soviet Union, presented an article printed in Pravda which denied any involvement by agents of the Soviet Union in the death of Masaryk. The report further claimed "enemies of socialist

Czechoslovakia obviously hope to stir up anti-Soviet sentiments among politically unstable people."[2] Six days later, in an article in Sovetskaya Rossia, the daily publication of the Central Committee's Bureau for the Russian Republic and Government, M. Shirymov printed a "review" of several accounts of the role played by T. G. Masaryk, father of Jan and former president of Czechoslovakia, in the waning years of World War I and the interwar period in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. In his review Shirymov ridiculed the prominent patriot, revered by many Czechoslovakians. Shirymov ended his critique with a veiled attack on the CPC press.[3] On May 17 Rude Pravo responded to the Shirymov article with a vehement denunciation. By the end of May the two "fraternal" parties' official newspapers waged an undeclared journalistic war.

During this time, the Soviet press also unleashed written attacks on some unidentified western newspapers which reported on the strained relations between the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia. In some instances the CPSU journalistic attacks on the American and Western European newspapers appeared in the same articles in which it denounced "hostile propaganda" from "individual Czechoslovak newspapers."[4] On May 1 Pravda dicounted the United Press International release recently printed in the New York Times which stated the Soviet Union placed pressure on the government of Czechoslovakia, and concluded the purpose of the U. P. I. and the Times' report was to undermine the fraternal relations of friendship and cooperation between the peoples of the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia.[5] Izvestia, the daily paper of the government daily accused the press of the Federal Republic of Germany of "organizing ideological and propaganda sabotage against Czechoslovakia" by subverting "the cause of socialism in Czechoslovakia."[6] The

most complete attack on "The American Propaganda machine" occurred on May 24 in an article written by V. Kozyakov in the Krasnaya zvezda [Red Star], the daily published by the Ministry of Defense.[7] The author explained the "American political propaganda machine" was "undermining the construction of socialism in Czechoslovakia" and "Western specialists" were acting out of a desire to "tear Czechoslovakia away from the socialist commonwealth."[8]

An article in the Literaturnaya Gazeta provided an additional illustration of the strained conditions between the presses of Czechoslovvakia and the Soviet Union. The Gazeta, the weekly of the Writers' Union of the Soviet Union, published a commentary on an interview granted by a member of the Czechoslovak Writers' Union to a reporter for the Agence France-Press.[9] In the commentary, printed on May 8, the Czechoslovak writer, Jan Prochazka, was assailed for his views on Marxism, the role of the state, free press, and other issues on which he was accused of ideological "deviations." The article was thoroughly negative in its response to all positions outlined by Prochazka in the earlier interview.[10]

By May the reactions exhibited by the various Soviet newspapers and journals emerged after a prolong period of silence. These reactions reflected the growing negative attitude toward the new changes in Czechoslovakia. In addition, the official news agencies of the Soviet Union interpreted the developing interest of the United States and Western Europe in the events in Czechoslovakia as a definite threat to their country's interests.

L'Humanite mentioned little of the growing conflict regarding the friction between the presses of Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union.

On May 8, as a part of a larger article on Czechoslovakian "solidarity with the Soviet Union," the newspaper reprinted the TASS release covering Masaryk's death.[11] However, the contents of the paper clearly were devoid of any commentary on the strife between the two "fraternal parties" during the rest of May. During this month L'Humanite decreased coverage of specific events in Czechoslovakia. The largest item concerning news from Czechoslovakia was published on May 6. This report, written by correspondent Acquaviva, covered an entire page in the French newspaper, and consisted of on-the-street interviews with Czechoslovakian citizens. Acquaviva concluded his report with his personal assessment of the situation in Prague. Acquaviva utilized a question-and-answer format, asking questions such as: "What is the failure of socialism?" He proceeded from this question to illustrate the lack of failure of socialism in Czechoslovakia.[12] In addition, Acquaviva inquired of some students, "What do you mean by liberty?" The answer given by the students focused on their desire "to know."[13] Acquaviva explained that the students wanted to know about the "outside world," and about "our own world." Acquaviva continued with the explanation that the students "also wanted to know how and why the options are determined of our politics, our economy, and our culture, to know and to participate."[14] This L'Humanite article provided the most in-depth analysis of the changes in Czechoslovakia published in France to that time. The Acquaviva article went beyond the news releases and the official statements of the Czechoslovakian leadership and brought to the readers a detailed account of the situation in Czechoslovakia. However, after this article, the news from Czechoslovakia was limited to occasional articles in L'Humanite, most of which emphasized the

"solidarity" between the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia. These articles included a number of excerpts from speeches made by the officials in Prague.

Although solidarity and friendship between the CPC and the CPSU was the theme of the official statements offered by the representatives of both parties, this simply was a facade.[15] Throughout June and into July the animosities between the two were exacerbated by frequent sniping exchanged by the news media of the two communist parties. The harshest attack occurred on June 14 in an article written by the "academician" F. Konstatinov.[16] Konstatinov denounced the CPC Central Committee member Cestmir Cisar for his "attempts to present different, non-Leninist interpretations of Marxism."[17] The attack by Konstatinov and the subsequent rebuttal by Cisar served as indications of the further deterioration of the relations between the ideologists and newspersons of these states. Interestingly, L'Humanite ignored these altercations, and for the most part, issued few reports on news from Czechoslovakia at this time.

From the last days of June until the eventual invasion of Czechoslovakia in August, the situation between the CPC and the CPSU continued to deteriorate. Late in June the "Two Thousand Words," written by the author, Ludvik Vaculik, and signed by seventy Czechoslovakian citizens, was published. This document issued a call for further liberalization within Czechoslovakia and for the removal of those government officials who opposed further reforms.[18] The leaders of the Soviet Union were outraged at this "attack on the socialist foundations of Czechoslovakia."[19] Although Dubcek and the CPC leadership denounced the "Two Thousand Words," the publication of this document led

the CPSU and Warsaw Pact officials to action. In the first week of July CPSU representatives met with the leaders of the communist parties of Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, and the German Democratic Republic in Warsaw, Poland, to discuss the situation in Czechoslovakia. Each of the delegates sent letters to the CPC to express unanimous consternation of the five parties over the turn of events in Czechoslovakia.

A second meeting was held in Warsaw on July 15. The representatives of the Warsaw Pact (again meeting without a delegation from Romania) produced the most critical analysis of the developments in Czechoslovakia yet issued. The communique written during this summit was "in effect an ultimatum outlining the rationale for invasion."[20] This document, published in Pravda on July 18, proposed:

> The forces of reaction, taking advantage of the weakening party leadership in the country and demagogically abusing the slogan of 'democratization,' unleashed a campaign against the C.C.P. and its honest and devoted cadres, with the clear intention of liquidating the party's guiding role, undermining the socialist system and pitting Czechoslovakia against the other socialist countries.[21]

The relationship among Czechoslovakia and the other five "fraternal parties" had deteriorated to a level of crisis by this time.

A reply from the Central Committee of the CPC to the "Warsaw Letter" claimed unanimous support for Dubcek and his government. The Committee also stressed its "allegiance and friendship with the U.S.S.R." Although the Central Committee conceded at this time that certain "internal disputes" had arisen, it also reaffirmed its commitment to the principles embodied in the Action Program.[22] In an editorial the attitude of the "Warsaw Letter" was reiterated and further testimonial was given concerning the fear of "rightest, anti-socialist forces in Czechoslovakia," which would strive to eliminate

"the Communist Party's guiding role in society."[23] At this time the Soviet leadership proposed a meeting in Russia between officials from Czechoslovakia and the Politburo of the Soviet Union. Dubcek and the Presidium of the CPC consented to a meeting, but proposed that talks be held in Czechoslovakia, at the border town of Cierna-nad-Tisou.

For a month prior to the issuance of the "Warsaw Letter" the PCF and L'Humanite maintained a noticeably reserved position toward the growing antagonism between the CPC and the Warsaw Pact members. On occasion short news items were published in L'Humanite, but the interest once prominently displayed in the pages of the PCF paper concerning Czechoslovak reforms was no longer apparent. In July, as the rhetorical conflict grew heated, the French Communist Party increased its press coverage and its direct involvement in the matters between the CPC and the other Warsaw Pact states. L'Humanite reported on the response of CPC Central Committee pertaining to the "Warsaw Letter" and, once again, printed in an adjoining article reaffirmation by the CPC of its commitment to the ideals of communism.[24]

Two days earlier, on July 15, L'Humanite quoted an opinion survey taken by a Prague newspaper, Vecerni Praha, which stated 87% of the persons questioned were "satisfied with the present government," and that the politician who "instills the most confidence" was Alexander Dubcek.[25] On July 15 L'Humanite reported Rochet was enroute to Moscow to consult with representatives of the CPSU.[26] Following this trip, Rochet proposed a meeting of European Communist and Workers' Parties to discuss the situation in Prague. On July 20 L'Humanite announced Rochet had traveled to Prague and had met with the party leadership of CPC.[27] Rochet abandoned the idea of a European conference after

returning from Czechoslovakia. Upon his returning from Czechoslovakia, L'Humanite interviewed Rochet concerning his meetings with the Czechoslovak leadership. Rochet was quoted as stating in rather non-descript terminology, that his conversations with Dubcek and the other members of the leadership of Czechoslovak were conducted within the "framework of socialist cooperation."[28] However vague his statements, one fact remained: Waldeck Rochet, by virtue of his shuttling from Paris to Moscow, and to Prague, committed himself and the French Communist Party to a rectity of the conflict between Czechoslovakia and the rest of the Warsaw Pact countries.

On the first page of the July 23 issue of L'Humanite the headlines heralded the meeting between the leadership of the CPC and the CPSU.[29] The conference provided a forum for discussion of and negotiation for a solution to the CPC-CPSU conflict. The next day L'Humanite printed an interview of Waldeck Rochet written by Radio Luxembourg. The article included Rochet's expressions of "very great satisfaction" with the announcement of the summit meeting between the two Eastern European parties.[30] Rochet indicated he believed the problems could be resolved in an amicable manner.[31] In regard to his visits to Prague and Moscow, the Secretary-General further stated he expressed to the leaders of the CPC and the CPSU "the hope of the French Communist Party to see the existing difficulties overcome between the fraternal parties by negotiation, in respect of the national sovereignty of every country and in a split of proletarian internationalism."[32] Thus, the PCF became firmly committed to a peaceful solution to the conflict. Rochet's efforts clearly illustrated the extent of the concern of the French Communist

Party for the tense situation between the Warsaw Pact countries and Czechoslovakia.

The meeting at Cierna between the CPSU and CPC delegations was followed by another conference held in the first week of August in Bratislava, Czechoslovakia. The second meeting included representatives from Bulgaria, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary, and Poland, as well as from Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union. For the French Communist Party these consultations offered hope for "negotiated solutions." L'Humanitie reporters closely followed the events at these conferences. The PCF press published a TASS report which claimed the Cierna meetings were friendly "exchanges of points of view and opinions."[33] On August 2 an article printed in L'Humanite announced the accord of Cierna was "satisfactory to Moscow," and that once again, the CPC leadership reaffirmed its solidarity with the CPSU.[34] The two parties also agreed to meet with the other concerned members of the Warsaw Pact (again excluding Romania). On August 2 the parties reconvened at Bratislava in a continued attempt to solve the conflict between the CPC and other parties. The French Communist Party followed this conference with increasing anticipation of a solution.

Meanwhile, the CPSU press continued its attacks on Czechoslovakia and the CPC leadership up until the Cierna talks. On July 27 Pravda printed a reproach of the Czechoslovak Ministry of National Defense for printing an article in that office's official paper, the Obdana Lidu, concerning Radio Free Europe. The Pravda article charged the Obdana Lidu editors with "publicizing the hotbed of counterrevolutionary propaganda."[35] Other examples of anti-Czechoslovakian reporting in Pravda included a month-long campaign, beginning in late June, for

meetings in the Soviet Union held to "denounce Czechoslovakia's anti-party tendencies."[36] The Cierna conference and the Bratislava meeting quieted the criticism of Czechoslovakia by the Soviet Union. On August 5, in an editorial in Pravda, evidence indicated the conflict had been averted by the "friendly consultation" and the reaffirmation of Czechoslovakian loyalty to the socialist commonwealth.[37]

The PCF reaction to the Bratislava conference was predictably jubliant. On August 5 L'Humanite published the text of the "Declaration of Bratislava."[38] The document stressed the standard thesis of solidarity, friendship, and equality. On August 6 L'Humanite printed a front page declaration of the positive reception of the Bratislava accord by the Politbureau of the French Communist Party. In language similar to that of the Bratislava declaration, the PCF leaders emphasized the importance of "national sovereign" and of the equality of all the parties.[39] L'Humanite also printed a front page editorial which enumerated the accomplishments made at Bratislava. The author, Yves Moreau, described the accord as an illustration of international cooperation within the communist community.[40] The editorial also commented on the role played by the French Communist Party and by Waldeck Rochet in contributing to the initiation of the talks.[41]

Understandably, the PCF was satisfied with the solutions. The conferences provided what appeared to be a political settlement to the disagreements satisfactory to all parties concerned. Therefore, the PCF claimed at least partial responsibility as a catalyst for the negotiated solution. The agreement allowed the Czechoslovakian Communist Party to continue its reforms within the government, and at the same time, committed the Czechoslovaks to the principles enunciated in the

Warsaw Pact. The Bratislava communique was broad enough to allow for a variety of interpretations. Thus, in mid August, the accord recreated an aura of cooperation within the European communist community. As a communist party in a parliamentarian state, the PCF took pride in its efforts to bring about the negotiated agreement among the parties of the communist states.

Although the PCF press did not comment on the resumed criticism of Czechoslovakia in Pravda and other newspapers in the Soviet Union, the leadership of the French Communist Party undoubtedly was concerned by these continued attacks. On August 14 the Literaturnaya Gazeta printed a condemnation of an article authored by J. Valka in the Prague weekly, Literarni Listy. Valka commented on the Bratislava talks in a rather unfavorable tone.[43] The Soviet journal's author attacked Valka's position on the conference, and then went on to accuse the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) of driving a "wedge between the socialist countries." The journalist also berated Valka for inviting imperialist aggression.[44] On August 16 Pravda included an article which continued the theme of FRG intervention, and in addition, denounced the Western press for its coverage of the Cierna and Bratislava talks.[45] On August 18 Pravda resumed the criticism of the alleged "anti-socialist forces" active in Prague.[46] Thus, the agreement worked out at the beginning of August apparently fell apart, or was never actually implemented. On August 21, 1968, the combined forces of the Soviet Union and four Warsaw Pact member states invaded and occupied Czechoslovakia.

The Soviet Union made the decision to occupy Czechoslovakia, according to Pravda, because:

> . . . party and state leaders of the Czechoslovak Communist Republic have requested the Soviet Union and other allied states to give the fraternal Czechoslovak people immediate assistance including assistance with armed forces. The reason for this appeal is the threat posed to the socialist system existing in Czechoslovakia and to the constitutionally established state system by counterrevolutionary forces that have entered into collusion with external forces hostile to socialism.[47]

Pravda's version of the justification for the invasion was not received in Prague. On the contrary, although the Soviet Union executed the invasion with military perfection, it suffered several political disasters from the outset.

The Presidium of the Central Committee of the CPC overrode its pro-Soviet members and proclaimed this "action [the invasion] to be contrary to the fundamental principles of relations among socialist states."[48] A further problem developed for the invading armies when this proclamation was transmitted across the Czechoslovakian countryside.[49] The Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies were faced with the dilemma of occupying a fellow socialist country of an invitation from Czechoslovakian leaders who refused to come forward after the invading forces secured the country. Furthermore, the invaders were confronted by a population which was instilled with national pride and which held a deep resentment of the occupation. Although the Warsaw Pact intervention went well enough from a military standpoint, politically the foundations of the marginal "solidarity" of the international communist movement collapsed under the tank treads in the streets of Prague.

The reaction of the communist parties throughout the world to be intervention was as varied as their locations. The Latin American parties, led by the government of Fidel Castro in Cuba, approved of the

intervention by the Soviet Union.[50] The Communist Party of China condemned both the actions of the "revisionist" U.S.S.R. and its allies and the "revisionist" government of Czechoslovakia for "collaborating with U.S. imperialism."[51] Most of the Western European parties denounced the invasion as did the Communist parties of Romania and Yugoslavia. The Italian Communist party (PCI) published a communique in that party's official newspaper, L'Unita, which reiterated Italian satisfaction with the Cierna and Bratislava agreements.[52] The PCI also stated the intervention was "unjustified" and expressed "strong dissent" toward the intervention. Interestingly, the PCI added a reaffirmation of "its solidarity with the actions of renovation undertaken by the Czechoslovak Communist Party."[53] The Italian communists not only believed the invasion to be wrong, but also viewed the reforms in Czechoslovakia as positive and correct moves. With the exception of five minor parties, all of the Western European communist parties voiced disapproval of Moscow's actions.[54] Most significant of the European parties to denounce the invasion was the French Communist Party, one of the largest communist parties in the world, and the traditional ally of the CPSU in all policy matters.

L'Humanite devoted the entire front page of its August 22 issue to the invasion. The PCF, in bold headlines, "expressed its surprise and reprobation" at the actions taken by the five socialist countries toward Czechoslovakia.[55] L'Humanite also printed commentaries provided by the communist parties of Yugoslavia, Romania, Italy, Great Britain, Belgium, and Austria, all of which condemned the invasion.[56] The sentiments of the PCF were made clear. No space was given in the August 22 issue of L'Humanite to the pro-intervention arguments. On August 23

the French newspaper published a proclamation concerning the events in Czechoslovakia which passed unanimously by the Central Committee of the PCF. In this lengthy communique the PCF recounted the developments in Czechoslovakia which occurred over the past months, and concluded with a reaffirmation of PCF position that "every communist party must determine its own politics, its own forms of action, its own methods in the struggle toward independence."[57] The document included a statement of the French Communist Party disapproving of the military intervention into Czechoslovakia."[58]

On page two, the August 23 issue of L'Humanite contained the Pravda explanation of the intervention, and printed the news reports from Prague on page three. L'Humanite reported four members of the Presidium of the CPC requested the Warsaw Pact intervention. These members identified as Drahomir Kolder, Vasil Bilak, Alois Indra, and Fratisek Barbirek.[59] However, L'Humanite also printed reports that these men denied making such a request.[60] Although the PCF's initial reaction to the military action in Czechoslovakia was negative, the French communists refused to shatter totally the facade of unity within the communist movement. The PCF issued no absolute rejection of the Soviet Union, but rather continued its call to seek a politically palatable solution to the Czechoslovakia crisis.

In an interview by Radio Luxembourg, Rochet restated the PCF "apprehension" concerning the military occupation of Czechoslovakia.[61] But while Rochet expressed disapproval of the Kremlin's decision, he reiterated that a political solution was still possible which allowed the "withdrawal of the intervening troops" and provided for "normalization" of the situation in Czechoslovakia.[62] Such a political solution

appeared possible when Czechoslovakian and Soviet Union met in Moscow in late August and early September. During these meetings, Rochet and the PCF continued to state French communist disapproval of the intervention and to express hope that a peaceful settlement could be found quickly so as to ease the disruption within the international communist movement.

In the months that followed, the PCF continued to express disapproval of the invasion while maintaining the delicate position of non-antagonism toward the Soviet Union. There was, however, one member of the PCF Central Committee who contradicted this attitude of continued solidarity with the Soviet Union. This man was a "liberal" named Roger Garaudy. Garaudy became an outspoken critic of the actions and policies of the Soviet Union. However, Garaudy was reprimanded by the Politburo for making remarks which were not in line with the policies of the PCF leadership.[63] In an article published in Paris on October 21 in the Nouvel Observateur, Garaudy stated:

> What has been condemned in Czechoslovakia is, essentially, the theses which we French Communist defend . . . it is the Czechs who have applied Leninist thought, while the Soviet leaders have given proof of Stalinist dogmatism.[64]

However, when this comment appeared in the Observateur, Garaudy also "accepted official censure for his breaches of party discipline" which he received as a result of his "revisionist" views.[65]

The October 20-21 plenary session of the Central Committee of the PCF marked the climax of the PCF reaction to the Czechoslovakian crisis. A communique from the Central Committee was published in L'Humanite on October 22. Once again the PCF leadership espoused disapproval of the intervention in the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia,

and once again, it stated the PCF would "maintain" ties with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.[66] The communique reported the censure of Roger Garaudy for his divergence from the party line, and also reported on the censure and resignation of Jeanette Thorez-Vermeersch, widow of Maurice Thorez, who maintained "a contradictory and divergent position" from that of the Central Committee concerning the August intervention.[67] Thorez-Vermeersch argued that the Soviet Union was justified in the intervention.[68] On October 23 L'Humanite printed the report compiled by Gaston Plissonier for the PCF detailing the events in Czechoslovakia. The report was typical of such PCF statements. Plissonier pledged "solidarity" with the CPSU, complained of the military incursion into Czechoslovakia, and explained that some biased information from the Soviet Union and the GDR "aimed at justifying the intervention" was being distributed in France.[69] As a denouement to the affair in 1968, the PCF published a resolution following a meeting between George Marchais and the leaders of the CPSU in November. On December 7, 1968, the PCF approved again the conclusion of Marchais' meeting by reaffirming the unity with the CPSU and committing the French Communist Party to the "independence of every party and of proletarian internationalism."[70]

FOOTNOTES

[1]*Pravda* (May 8, 1968), p. 5; *CDSP*, No. 19, p. 8.

[2]*Pravda* (May 8, 1968), p. 5.

[3]*Sovetskaya Rossia* (May 14, 1968), p. 3; *CDSP*, No. 19, pp. 8-10.

[4]*Sovetskaya Rossia* (May 14, 1968), p. 3.

[5]*Pravda* (May 1, 1968), p. 1; *CDSP*, No. 18, p. 19.

[6]*Izvestia* (May 15, 1968), p. 1; *CDSP*, No. 20, p. 13.

[7]*Krasnaya avezda* (May 24, 1968), p. 3; *CDSP*, No. 21, pp. 3-4.

[8]*Krasnaya avezda* (May 24, 1968), p. 3.

[9]*Literaturnaya Gazeta* (May 8, 1968), p. 3; *CDSP*, No. 18, pp. 9-10.

[10]*Literaturnaya Gazeta* (May 8, 1968), p. 3.

[11]*L'Humanite* (May 8, 1968), p. 3.

[12]Ibid. (May 6, 1968), p. 2.

[13]Ibid.

[14]Ibid.

[15]See these releases: *Pravda* (June 11, 1968), p. 5, (June 13, 1968), p. 4; *Izvestia* (June 22, 1968), p. 4; *CDSP*, No. 24, pp. 7-11, and *CDSP*, No. 25, p. 15, respectively.

[16]*Pravda* (June 11, 1968), p. 3; *CDSP*, No. 24, pp. 7-11.

[17]*Pravda* (June 11, 1968), p. 3.

[18]See Remington, pp. 146-202 for a copy.

[19]*Pravda* (July 11, 1968), p. 3; *CDSP*, No. 28, pp. 3-7.

[20]Remington, p. 224.

[21]*Pravda* (July 28, 1968), pp. 1-2; *CDSP*, No. 29, pp. 4-6.

[22]Quoted in Remington, revised New York Times (July 19, 1968), pp. 234-237.

[23]Pravda (July 22, 1468), p. 4; CDSP, No. 29, p. 3.

[24]L'Humanite (July 17, 1968), p. 3.

[25]Ibid. (July 15, 1968), p. 3.

[26]Ibid.

[27]Ibid. (July 20, 1968), p. 3.

[28]Ibid. (July 22, 1968), p. 3.

[29]Ibid. (July 23, 1968), p. 1.

[30]Ibid. (July 24, 1968), p. 1.

[31]Ibid.

[32]Ibid.

[33]Ibid. (July 31, 1968), p. 3.

[34]Ibid. (August 2, 1968), p. 3.

[35]Pravda (July 27, 1968), p. 5; CDSP, No. 30, p. 5.

[36]See Pravda (June 25, 1968), pp. 1-2, (July 7, 1968), p. 4, (July 19, 1968), p. 1, and (August 19, 1968), p. 4; all CDSP, Nos. 26, 27, 29, and 33, pp. 6-7, 23, 4, and 4, respectively.

[37]Ibid. (August 5, 1968), p. 1; CDSP, No. 31, pp. 5-6.

[38]L'Humanite (August 5, 1968), p. 3.

[39]Ibid. (August 6, 1968), p. 1.

[40]Ibid. (August 7, 1968), p. 1.

[41]Ibid.

[42]Schwartz, pp. 196-198; Szulc, pp. 364-366.

[43]Literaturnaya Gazeta (August 14, 1968), p. 3; CDSP, No. 33, pp. 7-8.

[44]Ibid.; CDSP, No. 33, p. 8.

[45]Pravda (August 16, 1968), p. 4; CDSP, No. 33, pp. 9-10.

[46]Pravda (August 18, 1968), p. 4; CDSP, No. 33, p. 11.

[47] See Pravda (August 21, 1968), p. 1; CDSP, No. 34, p. 3. This same point is reiterated several times. Pravda (August 22, 1968), pp. 2-3, (August 29, 1968), p. 1; CDSP, No. 34, p. 5 and p. 15, respectively.

[48] Szulc, pp. 380-381.

[49] Ibid., pp. 381-383.

[50] Remington, p. 325.

[51] Ibid., Document 47, pp. 326-328; Jen-min Jih-pao (August 23, 1968), quoted from the Peking Review, Vol. XI, No. 34.

[52] Ibid., Document 49, pp. 331-332; L'Unita (August 22, 1968).

[53] Ibid.

[54] Devlin, pp. 60-61.

[55] L'Humanite (August 22, 1968), p. 1.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid. (August 23, 1968), p. 1.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid. (August 27, 1968), p. 1.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Ibid. (August 28, 1968), p. 3.

[64] Devlin, p. 67, quoted from the Nouvel Observateur (October 21, 1968).

[65] Ibid.; L'Humanite (October 22, 1968), p. 4.

[66] L'Humanite (October 22, 1968), p. 4.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Ibid., pp. 5-6, 9-10.

[70] Ibid., p. 6.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Undoubtedly, the invasion by the Soviet Union and the four members of the Warsaw Pact precipitated a divergence in PCF policy vis-a-vis the CPSU. For the first time in its existence, on August 21, 1968, the PCF publicly disapproved of actions taken by the CPSU and the four "fraternal" Warsaw Pact states. Viewed from the perspective of the history of the confirmed allegiance to the Soviet Union by the French Communist Party, any divergence from the policies initiated by the Soviet Union and the CPSU was significant. However, the divergence was more than a politically expedient tactic. The PCF continued to declare its disapproval of the intervention policy. An investigation of L'Humanite's reports made it clear the French Communist Party did not merely react to the single event of the intervention in August, but rather followed the reforms in Czechoslovakia during the first eight months with obvious approval.

Reviewing the reports in L'Humanite from January to April, numerous articles appeared concerning the reform movement in Czechoslovakia. A comprehensive picture of the new democratic socialism envisioned by Alexander Dubcek was printed at times on a daily basis in L'Humanite. L'Humanite articles printed during the May to July period illustrated the efforts of the PCF to analyze and develop a policy for the developments in Czechoslovakia. By July, the PCF and Waldeck Rochet gave

considerable support to a political solution to the Czechoslovak crisis. The PCF in its actions and in its rhetoric condemned the Soviet Union for the invasion which ended the Czechoslovak reform movement.

During this same time period the CPSU reacted in a significantly different way than the PCF. The silence or negative position taken by the Kremlin leaders was reflected in the reports in Pravda. From January until April the CPSU press covered superficially the events in Czechoslovakia, concentrating as much on industrial output as on the political changes, mostly without any commentary. From April until August the news organs of the Soviet Union and the CPSU developed a negative posture toward the reforms of Alexander Dubcek's new government. This negative attitude at times developed into a heated exchange of printed attacks and counterattacks between the presses of the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia. From late August, with the invasion and occupation, until the end of the year, Pravda and other Soviet newspapers and publications concentrated upon the justification of the actions of the five Warsaw Pact countries.

From a review of the two main party newspapers a divergence was evident. The traditional role of the French Communist Party as a vassal of the CPSU in Western Europe clearly was shaken. However, the PCF continued a functional working relationship with the CPSU throughout 1968 and in the following decade. The PCF refused to initiate any separate policy toward Czechoslovakia outside the framework and structure of the international communist movement. The French Communist Party insisted on pursuing options for a political settlement to the Czechoslovakian crisis in order not to reject the Communist Party of

the Soviet Union and to maintain the marginal unity in the international communist movement.

The denunciation of the actions of the Soviet Union in its occupation of Czechoslovakia remained a policy of the PCF into the 1970s. The PCF at times since the conflict in 1968 differed with the Soviet Union and the CPSU on issues concerning the international communist movement and internal French politics.[1] However, during the same time period, the PCF, with new Secretary Georges Marchais, aligned with the CPSU on subjects of ideological importance against the traditional foe Maoist China. The PCF leadership lauded Leonid Brezhnev for his trips to the United States and Western Europe in 1973 and praised the role of the Soviet Union in the victory of communism in Viet Nam in 1975. And, as late as 1978 the PCF and CPSU concerned on support for Viet Nam against Cambodia in those countries' armed conflict. Consequently, while the PCF maintained part of the independent posture initiated in 1968, the French communists also maintained ties and allegiances with the Soviet Union to the present.

These two positions, that of alignment and independence, formed the foundation of the PCF political structure. The PCF is a political party in France with ties to an international political movement with a split role of nationalists and internationalists. The independence-alignment posture was not inconsistent with the past positions taken by the PCF. Throughout its history the PCF has attempted accordance with the policies of the CPSU and the Soviet Union. The actions taken by the French Communist Party in 1968 concerning the Czechoslovakian reform movement vis-a-vis the actions of the Soviet Union were remarkable in the context of the PCF's past traditions. It was the most

independent position ever taken by the PCF. However, the PCF held to the unity of the entire international communist movement and strove for Rochet's "political solution" in order to preserve the faltering unity in global Marxism.

The PCF appeared committed to the internationalism of the communist movement. The theory of the development of a distinct, separate Euro-communist movement with the PCF as an integral member, removed from the influences and policies of the CPSU, lacked credibility. The PCF continued to remain a client to the CPSU in Western Europe although less committed to Soviet dictates since 1968. The PCI and the smaller Spanish Communist Party tended to exercise a greater independence than the PCF in their dealings with the policy-makers in the Kremlin, but not enough to form a separate unit within the communist movement such as China. The evidence illustrated that the French Communist Party in 1968 exhibited an independence from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union heretofore unknown. Yet, the PCF continued to adhere to the influence and policies of the CPSU and the state it represents.

FOOTNOTES

[1]See New York Times (April 21 and September 15, 1977).

[2]L'Humanite (October 16, 1976).

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