

REPORT ON COMMUNIST TERRORISM IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

A series of six dispatches by a correspondent of The New York Times who recently left Czechoslovakia to avoid possible arrest on false espionage charges.

By Dana Adams Schmidt

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The New York Times

REPORT ON COMMUNIST TERRORISM IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Police Terrorism Subdues Once Free Czechoslovaks

Spies Lark in Dwellings and Offices—Even State Officials Are Wary

This is the first of six dispatches on Czechoslovakia by a correspondent of THE NEW YORK TIMES, who recently left that country to avoid possible arrest on false espionage charges.

By DANA ADAMS SCHMIDT

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

VIENNA, June 7—The little republic called Czechoslovakia, which got her hopeful start in the United States during World War I and over which the people of the United States shed ineffectual tears at the time of Munich, is today a republic in form only.

The Communists who seized power twenty-eight months ago now call it a "people's democracy" in public and a "dictatorship of the proletariat" in their inner councils. The most accurate description, however, is: "a police state."

For people outside the Communist orbit who, all their lives, have taken relative political freedom and personal security for granted, the dreadful meaning of that phrase is difficult to appreciate.

It is difficult also for the casual visitor to Prague (of whom there are fewer and fewer). When he enters the office of a business associate he can scarcely realize the desk in the corner is empty because the secretary who occupied it was arrested last week, or that the girl at the opposite desk is the police spy who denounced her and

who will shortly make a report to the police on the visitor's conversation with the manager.

As likely as not the manager does not know the identity of the police spy in his office and is desperately but very discreetly trying to get that information.

None of this will the visitor discover. People do not talk freely in Czechoslovakia these days, especially not to foreigners. If they do, the visitor must consider whether by any chance he is dealing with a provocateur.

You have to stay around and get to know people before you feel the situation—feel sick and weak when you learn someone you know has been arrested, nauseated by a note summoning you to a police station, angered every time you see one of those unmistakable men in brown leather coats (the S. T. B.—the Czechoslovak secret police).

Recalls Nazi Persecution

My wife and I were there for nine months, spaced out between the middle of April last year and May 31 this year. Somewhere, I often felt, I had seen this before. It was in Nazi Germany where I was a correspondent for the two years ended in October, 1940.

The chief objects of police persecution under the Nazis, with their Communists, with their class warfare, it is the bourgeoisie—in effect, everyone who had independent economic existence, who was something or had something in the racism, were the Jews. Under the old days.

In neither case, however, was or is the legalized police terror confined to the pariah groups. The entire populace is covered by a network formed by the secret police and supplemented by informers among party members and others in key positions, such as janitors, waiters and secretaries.

The difference between the Nazi and Communist police systems is

that the latter is more complete. It invades the lives of more individuals more deeply.

It invaded mine the day before my departure when I was mentioned in the indictment of thirteen Czechoslovaks as a contact man for an underground group engaged in espionage and plotting to overthrow the Government.

Since I had been nothing of the kind, one might suppose that I, as an accredited correspondent, would protest to the Ministry of Information or to the Foreign Office. And as a matter of form I did so by telephone before departing.

Officials Also Fear Police

It was quite useless, of course, since the Communist officials of those ministries are as powerless and fearful in any matter concerning the police as are the ordinary citizens. Probably more so, since last October when Dr. Evzen Klinger, head of the Foreign Office press department, disappeared.

For a while his colleagues said he was sick. Now they just shrug. It is believed his illness is a suspected Trotskyism.

My protest would have been addressed more appropriately to the new Ministry of National Security headed by Ladislav Kopriva, which, like the Ministry of the Interior, which formerly controlled the police, is completely unapproachable by anyone except the highest Communist officials.

To illustrate the point:

Last year when I had trouble getting a re-entry visa I asked an official of the foreigners' police, who it was that issued the authorizations. I wanted to see the man. "Authorizations come to us from the Ministry," he explained. "I do not know who issues them."

I believe he told the truth. He advised me to see the Foreign Office. But the best the Foreign Office could do was to telephone the police official I had just seen. Incidentally, that official disappeared from his office a few months later.

The most characteristic thing about life in a police state is that people "disappear." They and their friends and relatives have no redress. There is no one to whom to appeal.

If an arrested man is lucky he will be sent to join 20,000 to 30,000 others in a forced labor camp. He may get a hearing before a commission of a Communist-controlled national committee. But under the law he may be sentenced by those commissions to as much as two years in a camp, even without a hearing, for political offenses such as "failure to have or try to acquire a positive attitude toward the people's democratic regime."

Many of Arrested Unlucky

Not so lucky are those brought before one of the regular courts in which professional judges have been supplemented by 36,000 Communist-indoctrinated "people's judges."

Sad indeed is the plight of those who merely are left to rot in prison. In one large cell in Pankrac prison a few weeks ago there were about twenty men who had been there six months and never once had been taken out for interrogation.

In justice it must be said that the Czechoslovak policemen are rarely brutal. But I know or know of persons who have been beaten, persons who have been questioned for twenty-four hours at a time, much of the time under strong lights where the sound of other persons being beaten in the next room could be heard.

In Brno, capital of Moravia, the Government is now building Czechoslovakia's largest prison. New labor camps also are being prepared, presumably to accommodate the victims of another round-up, such as that of last autumn, when 10,000 members of the Czechoslovak bourgeoisie were taken.

If the Communists bother to justify the price of their operations at all, they explain it is part of the class warfare of the Communist revolution that is being fulfilled.

Perhaps the most dramatic aspect of the situation has been the subjection of the Roman Catholic Church to temporal power. Until last autumn the church provided the spiritual leadership of the country's anti-Communist elements.

Last year the bishops and their clergymen still spoke their minds in sermons, pastoral letters and circulars. This year they are silent. They have been deprived of the press and the schools, of the right to meet together or issue statements except by Government permission.

The bishops are prisoners under police surveillance in their residences. The lower-ranking clergymen have been forced to sign oaths of allegiance to the regime. About 300 of the clergy are in prison, including the ten ranking members

of the Catholic orders who were tried for espionage in April.

The men who wield real power in this police state constitute a very small, inscrutable inner circle of Communists who get their orders from the offices of the Cominform in Bucharest or directly from Moscow.

The inner circle includes Bedrich Geminder, Government contact man with the Cominform; Rudolf Slansky, Secretary General of the party; Dr. Alexei Cepicka, Minister of National Defense, and Ladislav Kopriva, Minister of National Security.

It probably does not include Klement Gottwald, who holds the titles of President of the Republic and chairman of the Communist party, or Prime Minister Antonin Zapotocky.

Theirs is the power through their control of the police to carry on a simplified form of statecraft.

Problems such as that of the church are solved by decree. The Opposition is arrested, popular approval in required volume is turned on like a faucet in the form of mass meetings or deluges of telegrams and letters. History is rewritten. Nineteen Eighty-four is at hand.

THURSDAY, JUNE 15, 1950.

Self-Preservation Chief Aim Of Most Czechoslovaks Now

Air of Passivity Is Noted Throughout Land, Though Majority Are Said to Despise Communism—Reds Eye Infiltration

This is the second of six dispatches on Czechoslovakia by a correspondent of THE NEW YORK TIMES who recently left that country to avoid possible arrest on false espionage charges.

By DANA ADAMS SCHMIDT

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

VIENNA, June 2.—Since I left thinking motivated by conviction Czechoslovakia people keep asking: and the part motivated by the instinct of self-preservation. Or put another way, between their consciences and opportunism.

In a country ruled by fear those I am thinking of a former factory owner who was bitterly opposed to communism until he got the long-term effect of fear on posed to communism until he got some persons' minds is such that a well-paid managerial post in a national enterprise.

eventually they can no longer distinguish between the part of their "Perhaps the new system isn't

so bad," he confided to some friends one night. "It is working quite well and I think I can get along all right."

"But what about political values, the freedoms you have lost?" he was asked. The former capitalist looked uncomfortable.

"I know," he replied. "But what can I do about it? A man has to live somehow."

The nearest thing to a statistical basis for an estimate of Communist strength is the last free election in 1946 in which the Communists won 38 per cent of the votes, rather more than that in the Czech lands of Bohemia and Moravia, rather less in Slovakia.

Part of the considerable strength the Communists displayed then may have been opportunistic, because of the strong sense of the proximity of the Soviet Union that had been left by the presence of Soviet troops for several months after the war.

Since those days I believe the Communists have won very few new converts, while the brutality

of their methods has cost them many of their old ones. But they have won a great host of opportunistic "followers."

The size of the Communist party in Czechoslovakia is a poor guide to the Communist strength. It is the largest in the world in proportion to the population, but Communist officials have complained frequently about the number of opportunists and even of bourgeois agents and saboteurs among them. Party leaders are hard at work weeding out the doubtful members.

I would say that whatever they may say and do in their own minds the overwhelming majority of Czechoslovaks today profoundly hate communism. That is almost all peasants, almost all of the old middle class and a good many workers. Of the convinced, active Communists there are not more than 10 per cent. For the most part, these are favored workers and miners and a coterie of intellectuals.

Resistance Mostly in Minds

Given this situation, the question arises how much resistance there is to the Communist regime.

The Czechoslovaks' resistance is mostly in the mind. The Communists have compromised but not conquered their minds. The Czechoslovaks are bourgeois-minded, western-minded people still.

But of active resistance—with all due respect to a heroic few—there is little. Some police sta-

tions and party headquarters have been bombed recently. Last year there was a raid on a prison camp and a railway line near Prague was blown up. And one must not forget the peasants, especially the hard-bitten Roman Catholic peasants of Slovakia, who from time to time have driven off Communist functionaries and policemen with pitchforks and clubs.

In Slovakia, too, the Communist party appears to be smitten with a local brand of Titoism. Slovak nationalism and the historic suspicion of the Czechs is too strong to be smothered, even in the ranks of the Communist party.

On the whole, however, the state of affairs is about what it was under the Nazis. Again, with all due respect to a heroic few and war-time propaganda notwithstanding, there was then little active resistance to the Nazis.

Czechoslovakia is, after all, only a narrow strip of land populated by 12,500,000 persons wedged in between ancient enemies. It is the country of *The Good Soldier Schweik* [a novel by Jaroslav Hasek], the country that got along under Austrian rule with a minimum of friction for 300 years.

Coup Laid to Passivity

It was the passivity of the majority of the Czechs, their anxiety always to avoid a showdown and to get along, that permitted the active minority of Communists to take over in 1948.

The late Dr. Eduard Benes, then President, represented the majority and symbolized its weakness. He toyed with the idea of calling out the Army to stop the Communists. Gen. Ludwig Svoboda, former Minister of National Defense, insisted the Army would not support the President, although the best sources say this was quite untrue at the time. And Dr. Benes, unable to make up his mind, abandoned the one bold move that could have saved his country from Communist rule.

Now that Czechoslovakia has succumbed, freedom is lost and the Communists have established their police state, it is hard to argue with Czechs who say active resistance is useless.

Their position is like that of the Germans after they had succumbed to nazism. It took a war to get rid of the Nazis and it will take a war or internal collapse in the Communist world to get rid of the Communists in Czechoslovakia.

The bourgeois group, which has suffered most, frankly hopes for a war in which it would be liberated by its friends, the Americans.

The people of Czechoslovakia today stand as prisoners in a Communist camp. Their sense of national identity and honor, their sense of the value of political freedom and their revulsion against alien rule is strong. But not so strong as their instinct for individual self-preservation.

FRIDAY, JUNE 16, 1950.

Soviet Expected to Reduce High Czech Living Standard

This is the third of six dispatches on Czechoslovakia by a correspondent of THE NEW YORK TIMES who recently left that country to avoid possible arrest on false espionage charges.

By DANA ADAMS SCHMIDT

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

VIENNA, June 9—Thanks to her capitalistic past as part of the Western world, Czechoslovakia today enjoys the highest standard of living of any country in the Communist world. The future of that standard depends on the answers to these two questions:

Do the Communists want to make Czechoslovakia a show window of their system? Or is it intolerable to the Russians that the Czechoslovaks should continue to enjoy a higher standard of living than their own?

If Communist theory were the only consideration, the first alternative would have to be chosen. By their own materialist standards

the Communists must measure the success of their rule primarily by its effect on the material welfare of the people.

There is a passage in Lenin's book, "Left-Wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder," that applies exactly to Czechoslovakia's present position. He wrote:

"It would also be a mistake to lose sight of the fact that after the victory of the proletarian revolution in at least one of the advanced countries things will in all

probability take a sharp turn—viz, Russia will cease to be the model country and once again become a backward [in the 'Soviet' and in the Socialist sense] country."

In Czechoslovakia, the first of the "advanced countries" to be taken over by the Communists, all the material conditions necessary to make her a new model are present. She has a highly productive industrial economy, manned by educated and skilled people, rich coal resources and foreign trade connections sufficient to provide other needed raw materials and food.

In an off-the-record discussion of this subject, one of the top officials of the Czechoslovak Ministry of Planning told me brightly: to equal it. André Simone, a Communist who has been in Russia often enough to know better, once insisted to me that, of course, the Russian standard of living was higher than the Czechoslovak.

"We not only can do it as well as the Russians, we can do it better."

But he was unusually frank and optimistic. In public all Commu-

nists devoutly pay homage to the Russian model.

Bulgarian Warning Cited

Such Communists are deferring to Russian nationalism for the safety of their own skins. From time to time they are brought up to mark by Russian remarks like that of Marshal Nikolai A. Bulganin during the last celebration of Liberation Day in Prague that "even the slightest" questioning of Russian friendship led inevitably to deviationism and "Titoism."

Because of their touchy nationalism the Russians are likely to force the Czechoslovak standard of living down in two ways:

First, rather than challenge Russian friendship Czechoslovak negotiators must accept whatever economic deals the Russians offer them. While the details on this point are shrouded in secrecy, economic observers in Prague are agreed that the Czechoslovaks often have to sell below cost and Russian deliveries often are delayed and unsuited to Czechoslovak needs.

Second, it is part of the Russian scheme that Czechoslovakia and other "people's democracies" should trade with the Western nations only until alternative trade relations could be established in the East. In placing political considerations ahead of economic issues, Czechoslovak authorities have gone even farther lately. They are deliberately risking Western economic reprisals by flouting West-

ern opinion in a series of trials and expulsions.

Last year 55 per cent of Czechoslovakia's trade was still with the West. This year, it will be only 45 per cent and perhaps far less, if the present political trends continue to add to the country's political and economic difficulties in meeting Western competition.

Western Goods Still Needed

A sharp drop in trade with the West would affect the country's standard of living disastrously, if it came before alternative trade with the East had been organized. From the West, Czechoslovakia must still have specialized machinery, ore, rubber, tin, special alloys, cotton, wool and many other raw materials.

Meanwhile, the Czechoslovak standard of living has been slowly rising since the low point after 1947. This means that basic foodstuffs, except meat and butter, have been taken off the ration list, that clothing rations are being more generously released, and that on the free market all goods are in better supply and have been reduced in price from their earlier astronomical levels.

Even though the prices are still from 50 to 500 per cent above the rates for rationed goods, the free market is well patronized, probably because there is nearly full employment. The shortage of skilled workers resulting from the expulsion of the Sudeten Germans persists.

The beneficiary of this slow improvement is, of course, the "working class." In their standard of living must be included the copious cancer cures nearly universally available for the equivalent of 10 cents or less, the social insurance benefits that have been extended since 1948 to cover nearly all risks, and the large-scale, cheap trade union vacation programs.

The disinherited are the old bourgeoisie, whose remaining wealth still is being whittled down by taxation and confiscation.

The average employed worker probably is still not so well off as his counterpart before the war, although the most favored groups, such as the foundry workers and miners, are doing a little better.

Although the industrial workers are the very ones to whom the Communists look for staunchest support, indications are that they are not satisfied with the progress made. They even have staged several brief strikes against efforts to increase productivity without which the continuing improvement of the standard of living would be impossible. These efforts have included the naming of shock workers of Stakhanovites and tightening of working norms.

Considering the Russian attitude, it seems unlikely, however, that the workers will gain much more and it is possible that, on the contrary, they will be reduced to the bleaker Russian standards and look back on 1950 as the golden age of plentiful consumer goods.

SATURDAY JUNE 17, 1950.

Czechoslovakia Dominated By Nationalized Way of Life

This is the fourth of six dispatches on Czechoslovakia by a correspondent of THE NEW YORK TIMES who recently left that country to avoid possible arrest on false espionage charges.

By DANA ADAMS SCHMIDT

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

VIENNA, June 10—The best advertised words in Communist Czechoslovakia are "narodni podnik." You can walk through Prague's Wenceslas Square and see it on nine-tenths of the shop signs in the space that might formerly have been reserved for the name of the proprietor. It means "national enterprise."

Czechoslovakia is rapidly becoming one vast narodni podnik. The name implies a method of economic organization and also a way of life.

In the short space of time since February, 1948, nearly 100 per

cent of industry, wholesale trade and export-import trade, about 80 per cent of retail trade and 30 per cent of artisans' shops have been organized as national or communal enterprises.

This economic concentration in the hands of the state is capable of generating great power. It can and in many cases does reduce costs by eliminating wastes of

competition and duplication by means of industry-wide planning, standardization, rationalization and direction of labor.

But the Communists are finding that, compared with the selective precision of private enterprise, nationalized enterprise on such a scale is often a blunt instrument.

Thus, Rude Pravo, central Communist Party organ, complained recently that so many sieves were being delivered to ironmongers that every family in the country would have to buy one weekly for a year to get rid of them. Manufacturers, however, declined to stop making sieves on the ground they were prescribed in the plan for this year, which they were determined to fulfill. Meanwhile, pots and pans remained scarce.

A block of new flats near Prague was splendidly equipped with washing machines. But they could not be used because waterproof switches were not provided. More serious bottlenecks have de-

veloped in industry because plans failed to provide some small but vital part of machinery.

A meeting of factory directors a few months ago was concerned with the accumulation of goods in warehouses that could not be delivered because there were no invoices to go with them.

Exports Are Returned

Inaccurate observance of specifications and slipshod workmanship has resulted in an embarrassing volume of goods returned by foreign consignees. One shipment of industrial clays to Denmark came back three times before nationalized enterprise produced what was wanted. An Italian buyer in quest of textile machinery departed in disgust because "they told me they could make what I was after but it wasn't provided in their plan and so they wouldn't."

In pushing collectivization of agriculture this summer the Communists pursue the same narodni podnik principle. "Merge your wasteful strips of private land, pool your horses, machinery and labor and you will be more efficient and productive," the peasants are told."

Although it is a losing battle, the conservative, property-conscious peasants have slowed the introduction of "higher forms of production" to a snail's pace.

The last figures released in February showed that "unified agriculture cooperatives" had been established in every fourth village in Czechoslovakia. Only a few

score, however, had reached "the highest form," in which all land is merged and the peasants are paid only according to their labor. Several hundred others had merged land but included a proportion of contributed land in calculating peasants' pay. Most of the rest were merely working land jointly or sharing the use of machinery.

Poorest Peasants Put First

The usual Communist procedure is to start a unified agricultural cooperative among the poorer peasants of a village—those with up to fifty acres of land. The others cannot resist long. They are denounced as "the village rich," badgered by inspectors and their machinery is confiscated. In this manner 9,399 tractors had been confiscated up to April 1.

The benefits of the narodni podnik life—communal laundries and kitchens, nurseries and organized recreation—do not appear to appeal to the peasants. It is otherwise with the industrial workers who are the Communists' first concern. Less independent minded, their complaint is that benefits are too slow in coming. Many among them still get a lift out of the slogans that "the factories belong to the workers" and "you are working for yourself not for capitalists." Some have observed, however, that while in the old days they could damn or even strike against their boss now that they are working for themselves that sort of thing is dealt with by the police as sabotage.

In the narodni podnik Czechoslovakia, everyone is in effect becoming a civil servant. The

state guarantees work, medical care and old age benefits. It has taken all economic risks out of life and provided full economic (but not political) security.

With the elimination of the profit motive competition in the old sense is disappearing. There is little point in luring customers with attractive window displays, courteous service or by flowers on the table. Since only one company makes iceboxes, last year's model will do. Customers must be grateful for what they get.

"Socialist" Incentives

Conscious of these defects in their system the Communists have sought remedies in "Socialist" incentives. "Shockworkers" or Stakhanovites can earn more by exceeding norms even though they can never hope to go into business for themselves. "Improvers" and inventors are offered prizes.

Appeals are made by "Socialist competition," in which factories and shifts seek to outdo one another and by the soliciting of pledges of "exemplary work" that is to produce more and waste less. The appeals are made on great occasions such as Premier Stalin's birthday.

If, as it seems, the workers have gained some material benefits, the Communists have not succeeded in getting rid of the air of mediocrity—expanding mediocrity—that clings to the narodni podnik life. Shops are shoddy, newspapers tiresome, theatres second-rate and food uninteresting.

Beyond doubt the narodni podnik world is dull.

SUNDAY, JUNE 18, 1950.

CZECH PRESS HEWS TO IDENTICAL LINE

Large Segment of Public Gets
News Via Voice of America
and B. B. C. Programs

BRITON HIGHLY POPULAR

Prague Maintains Censorship
at Source by Restricting
Access to Information

By DANA ADAMS SCHMIDT
Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

VIENNA, June 11—It does not matter much which of Prague's

eight daily newspapers you read. They all print nearly the same "news."

Their opinions on all subjects follow the same line except that they are most authoritatively expressed in Rude Pravo, central organ of the Communist party, a journal that by its large format and turgid and extravagant editorials recalls the Nazi party's Voelkischer Beobachter.

The Communist press, like the Nazi press in its time, is not primarily concerned with informing the public about what has happened; its job is to give the public the party's view of what has happened. That applies to newspapers ostensibly representing other parties as well as to the Communist party organs themselves.

A large part of the Czechoslovak public, including many nominal

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Communists, get around that by not reading any newspapers and diligently listening to the Voice of America and the British Broadcasting Corporation. The B. B. C.'s Bruce Lockhart has become a sort of patron saint of anti-Communist Czechoslovaks. His words are repeated reverently and in guarded tones day by day from one end of the country to the other. Many Czechoslovaks used to write him letters until a rule was made requiring persons sending letters abroad to identify themselves at postoffices.

Regular Fans Marked Down

While listening to foreign radio stations is so general that authorities have not found it feasible to forbid it, regular fans are marked down in party and police records as unreliable and those who repeat what they hear expose themselves to arrest for disseminating subversive rumors.

The same treatment was accorded customers who crowded the United States and British Information Services' libraries until the Government ordered them closed in April and May. In addition to

books, magazines, phonograph records and films the Czechoslovaks found in those libraries precious newspapers that were banned from newsstands.

The newspapers from the West on public sale are The London Daily Worker and L'Humanité of Paris.

Since the public is entitled only to official propaganda, information as such is deliberately confused in the Communist mind with "intelligence." Western reporters and diplomats whose business it is to gather information are automatically suspected of espionage.

Dutch business man Johannes Louwers was convicted of economic espionage because he had asked and received from Czechoslovak associates production data such as is published in trade journals throughout the Western world. Two United States Information Service employees were held by the court to have committed espionage because they gave United States Press Attaché Joseph C. Kolarek an answer when he asked what the Czechoslovak people's reaction was to one of President Truman's speeches about the atomic bomb.

Data Held Espionage

Under a 2-year-old law for the defense of the republic, one could be convicted of espionage for gath-

ering any information not officially published or even for correlating published information.

Application of these strictures has gradually become more intense. It was last autumn that Western correspondents with shock realized the situation, when a priest with whom they had had friendly contact was arrested. Nonetheless, even until early this year they felt able, for instance, to continue to publish statements representing the Roman Catholic point of view in the church-state struggle.

There was and is no censorship on outgoing news. But since the series of trials that began in April Western correspondents and also diplomats have been restricted almost entirely to the official news agency, newspapers and each other for information.

At least three Communists who a few months ago felt sure enough of themselves to talk replied to my telephone calls during April by saying they were "terribly busy," would be for two or three weeks and would call me when they had time. They never called.

Interviews Not Granted

A trade union official whom I asked for data on the vacation and recreation program replied after

lengthy consultations: "It is not possible." Of six interviews with Government officials that I requested through the Ministry of Information during the four months before my departure I received only one—at pensions headquarters. During that time Western correspondents were invited only to those press conferences and trials at which Western nations were to be attacked and insulted. The exception was United Nations Secretary-General Trygve Lie's, at which he was insulted by the Communist reporters.

Thus correspondents, like diplomats, are practically cut off from official sources. They fear to see private sources lest they compromise themselves and the sources.

That is what is technically known as censorship at the source—the same method the Nazis used until the second year of the war. Since the correspondents remaining in Prague still, in spite of everything, occasionally pick up a story that is not official they would undoubtedly feel more at ease if Czechoslovakia would follow Moscow's example by establishing direct censorship of outgoing news.

These then are the means by which Western foreigners in Czechoslovakia are being isolated from the people and the people from the Western world.

MONDAY, JUNE 19, 1950.

U.S. FACES DECISION ON TIES TO PRAGUE

Some Diplomats Feel Relations
Should Be Cut Now in Joint
Action With London, Paris

ECONOMIC BREAK IS URGED

Serious Disruption of Czech
Trade Believed Possible by
Closing Bavarian Border

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By DANA ADAMS SCHMIDT

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

VIENNA, June 12—What the Communists would do to France, Italy or any other Western coun-

try if they succeeded in their stated ambitions would be about the same as what they have done to Czechoslovakia. For Czechoslovakia was a Western-oriented, industrial parliamentary democracy—the first of its kind to fall to the Communists.

Now the extraordinary aggressiveness displayed by the Communist masters of Czechoslovakia and other Russian satellites threatens to open a new and more unpleasant phase in the "cold war" that the Western world is fighting to prevent the further spread of communism.

The Czechoslovaks have, if possible, outdone other satellites in the violence of anti-American and anti-Western propaganda and of measures against the United States Embassy since Viliam Siroky became Foreign Minister on March 14. To recapitulate briefly:

After anti-Communist airmen had flown four Czechoslovak civil airliners to Munich with a mixed load of Communists and anti-Communists and United States authorities had promptly returned the Communists the Czechoslovak press for weeks fulminated against the "Gestapo" methods used by the "Fascist" Americans in interrogating the Communists. Public meetings attempting (without observable success) to stir up hatred of the Americans were held.

Pressure on U. S. Employees

Two Czechoslovak employees of the United States Information Service were arrested and induced by prolonged high pressure interrogation to issue denunciations of the "mendacious, anti-Czechoslovak campaign conducted by United States Press Attaché Joseph C. Kolarek through the Voice of America." At the same time the Czechoslovak police attempted to exploit the romance between one of the arrested men and Information Service librarian Katharine Kosmak to force her to renounce her American citizenship.

Two other Information Service employees were brought to trial and sentenced to fifteen and eighteen years' imprisonment on espionage charges compounded out of activities that would pass as utterly innocent in any Western court. On that basis Mr. Kolarek was expelled and the Information Service library closed.

Soon thereafter the trial of a ring allegedly engaged in espionage for the United States Embassy was followed by a demand that the Embassy reduce its staff by two-thirds. Two weeks later the Foreign Office informed the United States Ambassador that "a reasonable time" had elapsed and that fifty Americans and their families must leave the country within forty-eight hours.

An official implied that Czechoslovakia

slovakia would not be responsible for their safety if they delayed. Later, however, the deadline was extended one week. The pell mell evacuation of Americans by air, rail and road was as humiliating an affair as any supposedly friendly country ever imposed on United States diplomats.

As the United States retaliated in kind, the Czechoslovaks ordered the United States Embassy reduced to twelve members by June 6.

On June 8 the Czechoslovaks concluded their most sweeping espionage trial in which not only the United States, British and French Embassies but most other Western missions were implicated along with several Western newspaper correspondents. It was a vast propagandistic effort topping everything they had done before and undoubtedly portending further steps not only against Americans but also other Western missions.

The immediate questions facing United States diplomats are:

Is Czechoslovakia's Communist Government trying by a series of calculated affronts to force the United States and perhaps other nations to break off relations? Granting that there is every indication that this is the case should the United States allow itself to be provoked as in Bulgaria?

Hitherto the State Department's philosophy, with which most Western diplomats agreed, has been that the Communists would be only too happy to see the West voluntarily eliminate its observation posts and means by which it exerts influence, that the trouble with breaking off relations is that it can only be done once and that restricted representation is better than none.

Shift to Sterner View

But in the past six weeks top-flight United States diplomats have been rapidly swinging to sterner views, which one of them formulated as follows:

Diplomatic missions behind the

Iron Curtain are nearly valueless either as observation posts or as means of exerting influence. The isolation of foreigners confines diplomats to reading the local press and over each other's shoulders. To maintain diplomatic posts in these countries is to expose Western diplomats to further insults damaging to Western prestige.

It would be better to break off relations than to submit to being kicked around. The United States should declare the satellites are manifestly no longer sovereign countries and that if any business is to be done with them the United States will do it through the Soviet Union.

If and when the United States decides on a break, this diplomat added, it would be desirable to coordinate it with simultaneous action by the British and French and, if possible, by the smaller Western countries. They are confronted by a concerted Communist campaign against the West in the satellite area and can strike back most effectively together.

There are others who would go farther. Breaking off diplomatic relations, they observe, is a mere gesture. It becomes meaningful only if economic relations are also severed. Even if others would not cooperate the United States could seriously disrupt Czechoslovak foreign trade by closing the Bavarian-Czechoslovak frontier. Most Czechoslovak trade with the West goes over that frontier.

In 1950 this economic weapon is still effective because Czechoslovakia still needs trade with the West. But with every passing month it becomes less so, as Czechoslovakia is progressively integrated into the autarchic East European economic system and economic dependence on the West is reduced.

To make herself independent of the West in transportation Czechoslovakia is developing a free port at Stettin and helping to develop

the Oder River as a substitute for German and Dutch ports. Russian ore is replacing Swedish ore; Russian machinery is replacing United States machinery and even Russian butter is replacing Danish butter.

Meanwhile, Minister of Industry Augustin Kliment and other Ministers have explained for all to hear that Czechoslovakia intends to trade with the West only until it can substitute trade with Russia and the "people's democracies."

Under these circumstances the question arises whether it would not be better to break off trade relations while that can still serve Western purposes. It would not overthrow the Czechoslovak or other Communist regimes but it would seriously weaken their economic position.

Considerations involved are similar to those when the wartime Allies had to decide whether or not to blockade and perhaps starve their French friends in Vichy France.

The problem of refugees from Iron Curtain countries, too, is similar to the problem of Jewish refugees who escaped the Nazis. The moral obligation to them is the same. According to good estimates, there are at least 30,000 genuine political refugees from Czechoslovakia alone. The International Refugee Organization is closing down in a few weeks. The refugees are not being adequately cared for, employed or provided emigration possibilities.

In the past two months a score of Czechoslovaks who vegetated miserably and hopelessly for many months in Germany have returned and thrown themselves on the mercy of Communist authorities. News of that kind travels fast. This is the kind of thing against which the Voice of America cannot compete.

These are the issues rapidly coming to a climax in our relations with Russia's satellites. They require swift and bold decisions.

TUESDAY, JUNE 20, 1950.