

Czechoslovakia: The party central committee has approved far-reaching changes, but also called for slowing the pace of reform.

Unanimous approval was given to the long-touted "action program," described in a document of several hundred pages which will be published soon. The Slovak government will be granted autonomy. The courts were charged with rectification of past injustices and payment of compensation to thousands of nonparty persons. It was recommended that local elections be postponed until next fall so that representative candidates can get on the ballot.

The order expelling dissident writers from the party last summer was rescinded. It was announced that investigation of the defection of General Sejna is not yet complete, suggesting that an attempt will be made to avoid a witchhunt which could involve many officials still in the regime.

The central committee's statement on the political situation suggests that many members fear that the "democratization" process is going too far. It is also clear, however, that a minority of ardent reformers believe that even more radical changes should be made. Party leaders were criticized for taking three months to call a meeting of the central committee as well as for failure promptly to inform the membership of changes.

Party leader Dubcek attempted to moderate these views, taking the position that the new policies must be thoroughly prepared in order to be successful. He warned against extremism and sought to allay the party's fears about its future, saying that rather than stepping back, the party had a new and important role to play. He endorsed calls for holding a party

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congress before the scheduled date of 1970, but said that enough time should elapse so that an evaluation of Czechoslovakia's new course and its leadership could be at the heart of the congress' agenda.

A new government will be announced today or tomorrow and will shortly present its program based on the party "action program" to the National Assembly.

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