

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

(11)

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Monday, May 27, 1968, 3:45 P.M.

MEMORANDUM TO THE PRESIDENT

427

SUBJECT: Czechoslovakian Influence Seeping into East Germany

Communist officials in East Germany are uneasy about the effect which developments in Czechoslovakia are having in their country.

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East German Communist Party members are wondering about what effect the changes in Czechoslovakia will have on their communist state. The following specific instances illustrate the extent of the East German communist leaders' problems:

1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

1. Communists returning to East Germany from weekend trips in Czechoslovakia report that the Czechs are saying their government is now more democratic, more humane, allows greater free speech. One party leader suggested that only true communists be permitted to take vacation and weekend trips to Czechoslovakia so that only a "clear Marxist viewpoint would be taken by East German visitors in discussions with Czechoslovakian citizens."

When the Czechoslovakian tour leader boarded a bus filled with East German tourists at the border, he greeted the occupants by saying, "My dear followers of Ulbricht, you are now entering a free country. Here you can express your opinion freely and no one will lock you up."

2. Persons living on the border are doubtful that the Soviet troops in their area are there to participate in a maneuver, as the press reports, but believe that the Soviet forces have been deployed to the Czech frontier in an effort to control the changes taking place in Czechoslovakia. Some East Germans say they do not understand why their troops should intervene in the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia.

3. Many East Germans are listening to radio broadcasts originating in Prague because they doubt that they are getting the facts on the Czechoslovakian situation from East German stations.

4. Students are closely following events in Czechoslovakia, Poland, West Germany and France. One student said there is a critical situation in the socialist camp and that perhaps East Germany is the next country where the youth will rebel.

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W. Rostow

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