

## MOSCOW LOSING PATIENCE WITH CZECHOSLOVAK LEADERS

Moscow's forbearance with the stubborn Czechoslovaks may be coming to an end, and the Soviets could be on the verge of a move against liberal Czechoslovak leaders.

On 25 September, the Soviet Union implicitly charged Czechoslovakia's leadership with acting in direct contradiction to the Moscow agreement of 26 August and with supporting counterrevolutionary elements in the country. TASS, the official Soviet news agency, issued a statement sharply critical of the Dubcek regime for failing to remove from control of the news media the "same people" who before and after the invasion have been attacking the Communist Party, the Communist system, and the USSR and its allies. TASS implied that nothing was being done to control the anti-Communist "underground," which it claimed was perpetrating acts of terror and subversion, and was circulating illegal literature. The statement charged that the "truth" about such antisocialist activities had not yet been told to the Czechoslovak people.

Publication of the TASS broadside climaxed a rising crescendo of Soviet press criticism, and coincided with the repositioning of Soviet troops and armored cars in downtown Prague. It also came a few hours after the East German party's main daily, Neues

Deutschland, resumed personal attacks on Czechoslovak party chief Dubcek, alleging that he was not really a Communist but a "Social Democrat in the West German sense." The Polish press had for some days been printing charges of duplicity on the part of Czechoslovak leaders.

From their point of view, the Soviets have good reason for concern. The Dubcek regime has been daily trying to hold the Soviets to their promise of non-interference in domestic affairs, while at the same time it has been proceeding on a number of courses unacceptable to Moscow. Thus, while some liberals, such as former foreign minister Hajek, have resigned, the announcement of their departure has been coupled with news of the ouster of pro-Soviet officials.

Moreover, Prague has yet to accede to Soviet special envoy Kuznetsov's urgings to revamp the government. Indeed, President Svoboda is said to have threatened to resign, along with the entire leadership, if Moscow insists on such changes. The party presidium has instead recommended the resignation of all those--even at lower levels--who no longer enjoy the confidence of the people. Many such individuals are old friends of Moscow.

Prague has temporarily postponed some economic reforms, but in a manner clearly designed to put the onus on the Soviets.

SECRET

SECRET

Czechoslovak economists are stoutly defending the government's decision to proceed with other aspects of the economic reforms--including the controversial workers' councils--in the face of attacks from Moscow. As planned before the invasion, non-Communists are to share in the management of social, economic, and "other processes," despite insistent demands from the occupiers for restoration of the Communist Party's control. Revised party statutes, which emphasize "democratization"--now synonymous to counterrevolution in the Soviet lexicon--will remain largely valid.

Censorship is ineffective and Premier Cernik has even defended the news media, adding that the government will not punish anyone for his political views. In addition, the Czechoslovak population seems intent on erecting a growing shield of acclaim to protect Dubcek from Soviet ire. Towns are being renamed in his honor, "Dubcek fan clubs" are springing up, and Dubcek pins are prominently worn.

Nevertheless, the Soviets 25X1 have withdrawn one of the three division's that moved into Czechoslovakia from Hungary.