

CZECHOSLOVAKIA/35  
5 October 1977

S I T U A T I O N   R E P O R T

1. The New CSSR-GDR Treaty
2. Harsh Sentences in a Political Trial
3. Second Congress of Socialist Youth Union
4. Teachers' Training Still Being Reorganized

1. The New CSSR-GDR Treaty

On October 3 a Czechoslovak party and state delegation arrived in the GDR on what was termed an official friendly visit at the invitation of the leaderships of the East German party and state. The delegation included CPCS Secretary-General and President of the Republic Gustav Husak, party Presidium member and federal Premier Lubomir Strougal, party Presidium member and CC Secretary Vasil Bilak, federal Deputy Premier Jindrich Zahradnik, head of the CPCS CC International Department Antonin Vavrus, and First Deputy Foreign Minister Frantisek Krajcir (Radio Hvezda, October 3). The Czechoslovak leaders were returning the visit paid by an equally high-powered East German delegation to Prague in 1974.

The highlight of the current visit came on its first day when a new Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation, and Mutual Assistance was signed by Husak and Erich Honecker. It replaces a similar agreement reached on 17 March 1967 in Prague which was ratified on 26 June 1967 and became effective the same day (see Collection of Laws, 22 September 1967).

The new treaty differs from the old one on two points of fundamental importance. First, both the Preamble and Article 5 enunciate what has become known in the West since the 1968 occupation of Czechoslovakia as the Brezhnev Doctrine. The Preamble repeats almost verbatim the formula used in the declaration issued after a meeting of the leaders of Czechoslovakia, the USSR, the GDR, Poland, Hungary, and Bulgaria in Bratislava on 3 August 1968. It states that "the strengthening, development, and protection of socialist achieve-

5 October 1977

ments resulting from the heroic efforts and self-sacrificing work of the people are the joint international obligation of the socialist countries."

Article 5 then applies this general maxim to relations between Czechoslovakia and the GDR. The high contracting parties, it states, "will take the necessary measures for the protection and defense of the historic achievements of socialism and of the security and independence of the two countries."

The second major alteration is the deletion of any reference to a unified Germany. Article 11 of the 1967 treaty said on this question:

In the event of the establishment of a unified, peace-loving, and democratic German state, the further validity of this treaty will be re-examined.

There is no similar provision in the treaty now concluded. On the contrary, the reality of two wholly independent German states is now emphasized in very definite terms. The Preamble asserts that "the GDR has fulfilled the principles of the Potsdam Agreement and has become, as a sovereign independent socialist state, a UN member with full rights." Obviously, this change reflects current East German aspirations.

Of secondary importance are changes that, in effect, formalize developments that have taken place in the last 10 years in the international arena. Thus, a reference to the invalidity of the 1938 Munich Agreement contained in the 1967 treaty (Article 7) has disappeared -- obviously because an agreement between Czechoslovakia and the FRG on this issue has been reached since then.

A new and more precise formulation has been found to describe the status of West Berlin. Whereas the 1967 treaty (Article 8) merely stated that "the high contracting parties consider West Berlin to be a separate political entity," its successor (Article 8) says that:

In harmony with the quadripartite agreement of 3 September 1971 the high contracting parties will maintain and develop their contacts with West Berlin, proceeding from the fact that it is not part of the Federal Republic of Germany and will not be administered by it in the future.

Finally, the new treaty is more elaborate in its treatment of questions of co-operation and mutual assistance, listing in some detail the fields in which such co-operation is desirable and necessary in the interest of the two contracting parties and of the whole socialist community. It is possibly significant that a specific provision has been added to the effect that this co-operation is to include, in addition to the various mass organizations, towns, schools, regions, districts, factories, and other institutions, the "organs of state power." This presumably implies co-operation between individual ministries, police forces, border guards, customs, et al.

5 October 1977

In contrast to the 1967 agreement, which was to run for 20 years, the new treaty is to have a 25-year life and will be automatically extended for another 10 years if notice of intention to terminate is not given 12 months before its expiry date.

The new agreement is not in any way peculiar to Czechoslovakia and the GDR: the latter has concluded similar agreements with other Warsaw Pact countries in the recent past.

## 2. Harsh Sentences in a Political Trial

a. The Trial in Usti nad Labem. A politically motivated trial in the north Bohemian town of Usti nad Labem ended on September 28 with the pronouncement of surprisingly harsh sentences on the two defendants. Vladimir Lastuvka, 35, and Ales Machacek, 30, were sentenced to three and a half years' imprisonment each for having distributed literature that included copies of the Charter 77 human rights manifesto (Reuter from Vienna, September 28; AFP and UPI from Prague, September 29). The trial, from which Western observers were excluded, lasted for three days. The defendants lodged an appeal against the sentences.

Lastuvka is a physicist who has been employed in an industrial enterprise in Decin, northern Bohemia. Machacek, an agronomist by training, has reportedly been working in a chemical enterprise in Usti nad Labem. Both were arrested in February 1977 and subsequent appeals from the West for their release failed to evoke any response from the Czechoslovak authorities (see The Times, 21 February and 15 June 1977). Up to the moment of writing the Czechoslovak media have remained silent about the arrests and the trial. The two men were reportedly charged with "subversion of the Republic," for which para. 98 of the Penal Code prescribes sentences of between one and five years' imprisonment. If the crime is committed "in contact with a foreign power or a foreign agency," or is of "major" dimensions, the penalty is three to ten years (Collection of Laws, 10 October 1973, p. 382).

Viewed from the strictly legal aspect one might argue that the sentences were not overly high. Lastuvka and Machacek were reportedly charged with other offenses in addition to distributing the text of Charter 77. They were accused of having had close contacts with active émigré circles, including the excommunist publishers of the Palach Press (London), Index (Cologne), and Jiri Pelikan's Listy in Rome (AFP, September 27). Since all these organizations are considered "foreign agencies" in the context of the law quoted above, the judge who pronounced the sentences seems to have kept close to the lower limit permitted by the code.

It is well known, however, that in Czechoslovakia the courts do not have the inviolability of watertight compartments. Not only are they not protected from interference by the political authorities, but the entire procedure from the period closely following arrest down to sentencing itself is managed by CPCs organs, either central or regional. It is interesting to speculate whether the trial of these two men was ordered by the Prague center or by the more rabid



regional organization in Usti nad Labem. Probably the former: it is unlikely that any subordinate party organ would dare to decide such a potentially explosive matter without having consulted the Prague center or at least some prominent politician or faction within it.

Be that as it may, it is surprising that the Czechoslovak authorities decided to stage this plainly political trial shortly before the resumption of the Belgrade CSCE follow-up conference. The crucial question is whether the trial of Lastuvka and Machacek was conceived as a purely regional affair which with some luck (denied to the authorities, as it turned out) would hardly be noticed by the Western media, or whether it could be a forerunner of future judicial action against prominent signatories of the Charter such as journalist Jiri Lederer (still in jail), playwright Vaclav Havel, former Foreign Minister Jiri Hajek, writer Ludvik Vaculik, or dramatist Pavel Kohout. Although such radical steps would appear counterproductive from the point of view of the Czechoslovak regime at the moment, no conclusive answer can yet be given on this point.

b. New Charter 77 Spokesmen. The Charterists have not remained inert in the meantime. There are again three Charter spokesmen, as there were at the group's inception. The vacancies caused by the death of Jan Patocka and the withdrawal of Vaclav Havel from that function (though not from his support of the Charter) have been filled by the philosopher Ladislav Hejdanek and the singer Marta Kubisova, both noncommunists like their predecessors.

Ladislav Hejdanek, 50, studied philosophy and sociology at Prague's Charles University, where he graduated in 1952. A practicing member of the Church of the Czech Brethren, he was active in 1968 in the ecumenical movement among Czech intellectuals and students. Hejdanek was fired from his post at the Philosophical Institute of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences in 1970 and subsequently forced to change employment a number of times. In 1972 he was sentenced to nine months' imprisonment for "incitement" -- i.e., the dissemination of leaflets calling the people's attention to their constitutional right to abstain from voting in general elections. He was again temporarily detained in March 1977 in the context of preventive police measures taken on the occasion of the funeral of Charter 77 spokesman Professor Jan Patocka.

Marta Kubisova, 35, is a former protest singer who achieved national fame during the Prague Spring and immediately after the invasion. In her most famous song, "The Prayer," she bemoans the lost freedom of the Czech nation after the invasion. Kubisova has stuck firmly and unflinchingly to her Prague Spring positions and has been prevented by the regime from making public appearances as a reprisal. The words she uttered a few days after the invasion are on record:

Naturally, I shall try to go on living, but I shall lead an honest life. . . . In particular, I shall never reconcile myself with the occupation and shall never work for /the occupying troops/. . . . If I am prevented from singing for our people I shall simply advertise in the papers for a position in a household where I can do the laundry and cooking (Mlada Fronta, 31 August 1968).

Kubisova was reported to have been working as a waitress (in 1972). Earlier this year she sent a letter to Western correspondents in Prague calling on artists throughout the world to support the campaign for human rights in Czechoslovakia.

In present circumstances both Hejdanek and Kubisova have little to fear from the authorities except arrest: the regime has so far been hesitant to stage trials based solely on charges of supporting or even representing Charter 77. In a letter addressed to the Charter 77 signatories -- there are now approximately 800 of them -- Jiri Hajek, Kubisova, and Hejdanek make it plain that the Charterists intend to continue their activities and that their plan is to concentrate on violations of the human rights of individuals. Informal regional committees of Charter supporters are to be formed to observe and report any transgressions by the authorities (see, e.g., Le Monde, September 26, and UPI, September 27).

### 3. Second Congress of Socialist Youth Union

The Second Congress of the Socialist Youth Union of the CSSR (SYU) was held in Prague between 29 September and 2 October 1977. Nearly 1,100 delegates, representing approximately 1,361,000 full members and 1,274,000 Pioneers, attended the congress in addition to about 500 guests and 77 delegations from abroad.

There are more than 4,600,000 young people aged between 15 and 35 and about 2,200,000 children between 6 and 15 in Czechoslovakia today. The SYU has 42,812 basic organizations, and the Pioneers are organized in 4,702 groups comprising 65,348 troops. The average age of the SYU membership is 21.9, and it includes 47.6 per cent of Czechoslovakia's apprentices, 69.1 per cent of its secondary school pupils, and 96.9 per cent of its college students. As membership of the youth organization is one of the important preconditions for advancement in one's chosen career, the ratio of young people belonging to the SYU increases as the level of education rises. Some 62.2 per cent of the membership are working youth, and as far as the social structure is concerned, 381,308 (28 per cent) are blue-collar workers, 95,103 (7 per cent) are specialists in industry, 60,677 (4.5 per cent) are farmers, 158,070 (11.6 per cent) are apprentices, 227,033 (16.7 per cent) are secondary school pupils, 129,176 (9.5 per cent) are college students, 31,800 (2.3 per cent) are teachers, and 169,013 (12.4 per cent) are white-collar workers and administrative personnel. Other professions account for 108,803 (8 per cent) (Dokumentacni Prehled CTK, 31 August 1977).

The state-wide congress was preceded by SYU district conferences in April, regional and municipal conferences in May, and congresses of the national unions in September. The Czech congress of the SYU (8-10 September 1977) was attended by 700 delegates representing more than 750,000 members. The report of the union's Czech Central Committee was delivered by its chairman, Miloslav Dockal, who is 38 and the father of two children. As is usual at meetings of this kind he spoke first of the organization's successes, but followed this up with a warning against complacency. He announced "with pride" that the tasks which the first state-wide SYU congress in 1972 had assigned to the SYU "could be successfully fulfilled," but later



5 October 1977

admitted that "some problems and shortcomings continue to exist" in the work of the SYU; in particular, he complained about members who fail to fulfill their responsibilities and are too passive.

The shortcomings include a failure to develop "regular, single-minded, and systematically executed mass physical training, tourism, and defense activities." The "international anticommunist reaction" is conducting a stepped-up and concentrated struggle against the socialist countries and is aiming primarily at the younger generation, so it is important to "intensify our ideological-educational influence on more young people and win them over to a committed attitude toward socialism," he said.

Federal Premier Lubomir Strougal, who led a delegation from the CPCS CC and the National Front, expressed dissatisfaction with some aspects of the work of the SYU, particularly with the situation in physical training and sports. At the same time he criticized the tendency of many organizations to underestimate the problems of the young and said that young people's incorrect opinions and unrealistic demands ought to be patiently discussed with them. He referred to the social and other problems faced by young people "in the capitalist world of today" and in contrast painted "the new, broad prospects" of socialist youth in glowing colors (Rude Pravo, 9 September 1977).

The Czech SYU congress resolution had an economic as well as an ideological aspect. Young people, it stated, are expected to make a greater contribution toward implementing the socioeconomic program of the 15th CPCS Congress and, at the same time, the SYU must contribute actively toward the further education of the young in the spirit of a Marxist Weltanschauung. The SYU must eradicate the lingering traces of bourgeois ideology and morality, as well as survivals of an egoistic and consumption-oriented approach toward life (Mlada Fronta, 13 September 1977).

One week later (15-17 September 1977) 750 delegates from the Slovak SYU, representing some 440,000 young Slovaks, convened in Bratislava. The chairman of the Slovak SYU CC, Michal Zozulak, aged 37, submitted the report of his committee. He declared that the union had fulfilled the tasks set by the first congress in 1972, but that the primary organizations "still continue" to concentrate their attention on organizational questions and pay little heed to the effectiveness of political education. Slovak CP CC First Secretary Jozef Lenart, speaking in behalf of the party and state authorities, emphasized the need to make greater progress in the areas of physical training and sports and called on all young people to acquire an up-to-date knowledge of the achievements of the natural sciences and thus contribute toward the continued development of the country's forces (Mlada Fronta, 16 September 1977). The short resolution repeated -- in content and at times even in phraseology -- the resolution of the Czech congress.

Although the SYU was formed only in 1970, it had a predecessor in the Czechoslovak Youth Union, which disintegrated officially

5 October 1977

in 1969 but in practice much earlier, after more than 20 years of life. It disappeared without being formally disbanded by a congress. A few months of relative democratization sufficed for the young people who had been born, or at least brought up, under the communist regime and who were described as the "new Gottwald youth" to cast off the shackles of strict party control and to resurrect the democratic traditions of the prewar youth movement. The progressive officials of that time envisaged the setting up of independent common-interest youth organizations that would not be subject to any supreme body, and in fact 21 of them were established within a short space of time (Otazky Miru a Socialismu No. 11, November 1973). The postoccupation regime would have none of this, and the consolidation process" with its purge undid what the reformers had done (see Czechoslovak SR/18, RFER, 30 April 1970, Item 3).

Reflecting the new federal arrangement of the state, a new federal union and two national youth organizations were founded in 1970; they brought together over 240,000 full members and 498,000 Pioneers (Zivot Strany, 16 October 1972). In March and April 1971 membership cards were exchanged, which brought another purge involving 90,000 members; "later" an additional 20,000 left the movement (Mlada Fronta, 26 January 1972). The losses were more than made good through vigorous recruitment, and at the time of its first congress in September 1972 the SYU had grown to 820,000 members in 28,233 organizations and 900,000 Pioneers in 4,159 groups (Tribuna, 27 September 1972; see also Czechoslovak SR/34, RFER, 4 October 1972, Item 1). Yet another exchange of membership cards took place in the summer of 1976; its purpose, like that of earlier purges, was to "strengthen the ideological, organizational, and action unity of the SYU" (Mlada Fronta, 11 August 1976).

The postoccupation regime drew its own conclusions from the inglorious end of the postwar Czechoslovak Youth Union. Membership of the SYU, it decided, must be made more attractive to the young. Today even discothèques are allowed, although the "mindlessness" of this kind of entertainment is sometimes criticized; the regime now hopes to rear "an anti-imperialistic youth in jeans" (Nova Svoboda, 1 September 1977).

But the continued and even intensified ideological schooling of its members remains the SYU's first priority. For this purpose "a long-term, comprehensive system of political schooling" was introduced in 1972, consisting of three levels and complemented by "interesting events" such as competitions, quizzes, question-and-answer evenings, movies, and visits to historical buildings and "places associated with the struggle of the working class and CPCs." In the school year 1976/1977 there were 46,274 political instruction classes with 1,175,847 members -- 94.2 per cent of the organization's total membership -- and an additional 100,000 boys and girls who participated but were not SYU members. A new form of ideological educational activity is being developed: "work with books: some 3,031 circles of "friends of literature" with 42,470 members are now in operation in the SYU.

Since the first congress, instruction "in the spirit of revolutionary and international traditions" has been given much attention, and 4,387 "halls and corners of revolutionary and



5 October 1977

international tradition" have been formed within union organizations; of these 1,045 are in the rural areas and in agricultural co-operatives, where marked "weaknesses" in ideological work apparently exist. Moreover, 2,036 "theaters" (in practice small stages), 1,593 music groups, 2,518 "recitation collectives," 582 folklore groups, 322 poetry theaters, and 2,890 other cultural circles, collectives, and ensembles are active within the organizations (Zemedelske Noviny, 24 September 1977). To officer this powerful ideological drive the SYU has an army of 63,359 team leaders, 58,605 instructors, and 4,834 group leaders at its disposal, as well as 315 Pioneer houses, 712 club facilities, 614 youth clubs, and 7,041 club rooms for the primary SYU organizations (Dokumentacni Prehled CTK, 31 August 1977).

In his opening address to the Second SYU Congress on 29 September 1977 the union's chairman, Jindrich Polednik, announced "with feelings of joy and pride" that the tasks of the first congress of 1972 had been fulfilled. During the intervening five years it had been possible to build and develop the work of the SYU and Pioneer organization in accordance with the program of the 15th CPCS Congress, and continuous efforts were being made to prompt the young people to look at and learn to assess signs and events, both domestic and international, from positions of Marxism-Leninism and to make them understand "more profoundly" that the socialist camp and the fraternal USSR are of primary importance to the CSSR. Without the Soviet Union, Polednik said, there would be "neither a free nor a socialist Czechoslovakia."

He criticized those who had not contributed to the success that had been achieved, but used their SYU membership for personal benefit. Polednik admitted, however, that "there are quite a few weak points and shortcomings" in the work of the SYU and that signs of superficiality and formalism exist (Czechoslovak TV, 29 September 1977).

In the afternoon of the same day the leader of the party and National Front delegation, CPCS General Secretary and President of the Republic Gustav Husak, went to the rostrum. He first took stock of the positive aspects of Czechoslovakia's socialist society and its development and praised "the democratic atmosphere of the congress" and the "joyful vital optimism" of the young. He said that an overwhelming majority of working people and young folk have confidence in and support the policies of the party. Later in his speech, however, he mentioned some "worries and problems": because of power cuts factories are without electricity, difficulties exist in transportation, in the investment sphere construction is behind schedule, modernization of production is proceeding at a slow pace, major problems exist in the structure of production, etc.

In conclusion he referred to the "Western bourgeois exploiting society" with its deplorable unemployment figures and expressed solidarity with all democratic, progressive forces; "They may count not only on our solidarity and sympathy, but also on our support." Husak tried to belittle the importance of the Czechoslovak human rights movement and spoke of a few "bankrupt and dissatisfied people who write letters that are commissioned by bourgeois



propaganda." In the West, he said, this was magnified out of all proportion, although only "a few insignificant persons" are involved of whom the public has never heard. "These things do not trouble me," he ended, "because, as the Arabian proverb has it, the dogs bark but the caravan moves on (Czechoslovak TV, 29 September 1977).

An entirely orthodox closing resolution marked the end of the congress on October 2. Jindrich Polednik was re-elected chairman of the Czechoslovak SYU, and Miloslav Dockel and Michal Zozulak were reappointed his deputies (Radio Bratislava, 2 October 1977).

#### 4. Teachers' Training Still Being Reorganized

There is no element in the complex of institutes of higher education that has been the object of so many reforms, structural changes, and modifications as the training of teachers. Protracted, inadequately prepared, and often interrupted reforms have covered a plethora of subjects: nomenclature (teachers' institutes, pedagogic faculties, high and higher schools of pedagogy, pedagogic Gymnasiums, etc.), the duration of courses, internal changes, ideological assessments and postgraduate training for teachers, and personnel changes in the staff and leadership of the institutes.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the integration of teachers' training into the Czechoslovak college system (it was implemented in practice during the school year 1946/1947). Under a Presidential Decree issued by Edvard Benes on 27 October 1945 and entitled "On the Training of Teachers," the teachers' institutes of the first republic were changed overnight into university faculties or independent educational faculties (Sbirka Zakonu a Narizeni Republiky Ceskoslovenske, No. 132/1945, p. 334).

Most experts admit that "the development of the training of teachers in Czechoslovakia between 1946 and 1976 has been highly complicated and characterized by many institutional reforms" (Docent Chrudos Vorlicek in the periodical Pedagogika, No. 3/1977). Vorlicek divides these reforms into four distinct periods:

- (1) The founding and development of the pedagogic faculties (1946 and 1953)
- (2) The period of high schools of pedagogy and higher schools of pedagogy (1953-1959);
- (3) The years of independent pedagogic institutes (1959-1964); and
- (4) The era of revived pedagogic faculties and their development (1964 and 1976).

These four periods are discussed in some detail below.

a. The Pedagogic Faculties. The pedagogic faculties in the universities began to function in the school year 1946/1947, in spite of a catastrophic shortage of professors. Minister of Education Zdenek Nejedly, the father of this reform, solved the problem by increasing the work load of the professors in the philosophical

faculties, whom he ordered to lecture and conduct seminars in the pedagogic faculties as well; he also augmented their ranks by promoting experienced assistants. Consequently, many pedagogic faculties -- in contrast to the others -- became communist strongholds even before the February upheaval. Quite naturally, professional standards varied. In the 1946-1950 period female candidates for kindergarten teaching and those who wished to teach at all school levels studied at the pedagogic faculties; correspondence courses were also introduced. Starting from 1948 a quota system (numerus clausus), disguised as the "statewide direction of college studies," began to be introduced in the pedagogic faculties and at other institutes of higher education.

A government resolution of 30 May 1950, which established pedagogic Gymnasiums to train teachers for elementary schools and schoolmistresses for kindergartens (Vestník Ministerstva Školství, Věd, a Umění, Issue 22/1950), cut across this still incomplete reform. It was in effect a return to the teachers' institutes of the first republic, albeit under a different name. In 1953 the pedagogic faculties were closed, and after some time the pedagogic Gymnasiums followed.

b. The High and Higher Schools of Pedagogy. The conversion of the pedagogic faculties into independent high and higher schools of pedagogy was effected through the Law on the School System and Teachers' Training of 24 April 1953 (Sbírka zákonů a Nařízení ČSR No. 31, 24 April 1953). This law, enacted under the aegis of the new Minister of Education, Ernest Sykora, gradually undid the "revolutionary system" of Nejedlý's reforms. The "explanatory parliamentary report" accompanying this law stated that institutes of a similar type existed in the USSR and that, therefore, the high and higher schools of pedagogy "are an analogue of the pedagogic institutes in the USSR" (Pedagogika No.3/1977).

Not long after this reform had been completed it emerged that it had totally failed to take into consideration the whole tradition of the training of Czech and Slovak teachers. The "analogue" of the Soviet model proved to be ill thought-out and badly elaborated. So the college training of teachers at universities was gradually resumed and the high and higher schools of pedagogy were abolished -- in Olomouc, for instance, the High School of Pedagogy was merged with Palacký University on 1 September 1958. This period of fruitless internal and external change ended in a major reorganization of teachers' training under Minister of Education Frantisek Kahuda, a practical educator, in 1959.

c. The Pedagogic Institutes. Government Decree No. 57 of 31 July 1959 postulated the setting up of pedagogic institutes in 14 Czech and Moravian towns. In Slovakia they were established in five larger towns, mostly in accordance with the regional system.

The tasks of the pedagogic institutes were to train teachers for the first five grades in three-year courses, and teachers for the sixth and higher grades in four-year courses; the two streams merged during the first two years (Pedagogika, No. 3/1977). Correspondence courses were made available, and the new institutes (for the first time) paid careful attention to the apprentice training



system. This was, however, a gesture rather than a piece of positive educational work bearing lasting fruit.

The pedagogic institutes soon became the target of criticism from the majority of educationalists. They were reorganized year after year, which in itself implied the persistence of unsolved problems in the underlying concept. It became apparent that in practice an institute of higher education cannot rely on a regional catchment area alone, and that the problems involved are far-reaching. In 1962 voices began to be raised calling for the abolition of the pedagogic institutes, and in 1964 the Minister of Education, Cestmir Cisar, closed them down and restored the pedagogic faculties. The overriding concern of a succession of education ministers was reform and modification. Cisar was the first of them to criticize the unconsidered application of Soviet practices to the Czechoslovak educational system.

d. The (Re-established) Pedagogic Faculties. A Decree "Concerning Pedagogic Faculties," issued by the National Assembly Presidium on 12 August 1964 (Sbirka Zakonu a Narizeni CSSR, Part 69, 12 August 1964) provided that pedagogic institutes be converted into pedagogic faculties in all universities, while independent pedagogic institutes were to be re-established as pedagogic faculties. Seven of the institutes closed down during the upheaval without alternatives being created in their place; those in Karlovy Vary, Pardubice, and Jihlava were especially missed.

In contrast to the previous reforms the new one evoked "a large measure of agreement" among the professionals (Pedagogika, No.3/1977). The modifications made in the pedagogic faculties, particularly in the second half of the 1960s, created far more favorable conditions for existing courses of study and new ones were gradually introduced. An important role was played here by Law No. 19 of 16 March 1966, concerning the institutes of higher education, which was enacted during Jiri Hajek's tenure at the Ministry of Education. (Sbirka Zakonu a Narizeni CSSR, Part 7, 30 March 1966). It introduced independent scientific work at the educational institutions, the election of academic officials, and some democratization of the teacher training system.

e. "Normalization." After 1969 all the democratic reforms stemming from the university law of 1966 were gradually rescinded, and the educational system and the training of teachers were brought under strict party oversight. This naturally led to a decline in professional standards. Federal Premier Lubormir Strougal declared in a speech to a teachers' delegation in 1974 that the restructuring of the educational system then in progress required "better political preparation" of Czechoslovakia's teachers. Despite the successes that had been achieved, Strougal said, the ideological-political preparation of students at the pedagogic faculties was still too general and the existing system of further education for teachers lacked properly designed syllabuses. The goal was clear: to produce only teachers able to educate children so that they became mature "socialist men" fit to build a socialist society (Radio Hvezda, 29 March 1974).

Since then not much has changed in the work of the pedagogic faculties, and this year warnings have been issued that the country is threatened by a shortage of educational workers over the whole range from kindergartens up to institutes of higher education (Rude Pravo, 16 August 1977); many teachers who entered the educational service in 1945 are due to retire soon, and this will increase the need for newly trained teachers. The school authorities are said to be resorting to the use of pensioners and fledgling high-school graduates without any teaching qualifications.

The cadre policies of the party, which eliminated the best qualified educators for political reasons, must bear the blame for the shortage of teachers in the 1970s as they did in the 1950s. The postwar integration of teachers' training into the general scheme of college education was undoubtedly a wise move: it made possible the expansion of teacher training and won many new recruits for the profession. But a procession of half-baked reforms undid much of the good that had been done, and only in the second half of the 1960s did it again become attractive to enter the profession. Today the situation is similar to that of the late 1950s: there is little enthusiasm for the vocation of teacher and the overpoliticized training that leads to it. Yet another reform seems inevitable.

- end -