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1. Deepening of Czechoslovak-Polish Co-operation

Less than two months after Polish Premier Piotr Jaroszewicz paid a "friendly, working" visit to Czechoslovakia (see Czechoslovak Situation Report/17, Radio Free Europe Research, 11 May 1977, Item 3), a Polish party and government delegation headed by First Secretary Edward Gierek arrived in Prague. Shortly after the announcement that Gierek would pay an official visit to Czechoslovakia (Ceteka, 26 June 1977), Czechoslovak and Polish media began to praise relations between the two countries in all spheres and to publish information about them, especially lauding bilateral economic co-operation (see PAP, 27 June 1977; Radio Hvezda, 30 June 1977; Radios Prague, Hvezda, and Warsaw, 2 July 1977; Ceteka and PAP, 3 July 1977; etc.). The media advised that further development of economic co-operation would be the major topic at the meeting between Gierek and Husak, and that the visit would give new impetus to relations between the two neighbors.

The Polish delegation arrived in Czechoslovakia on 4 July 1977. It included Premier Piotr Jaroszewicz, Minister of Foreign Affairs Emil Wojtaszek, party Politburo member Zdzislaw Grudzien, Politburo member and CC Secretary Stefan Olszowski, CC Secretary Ryszard Frelek, Deputy Premier Kazimierz Olszewski, and other officials. It was headed by Polish CP First Secretary Edward Gierek (Radios Warsaw and Prague, 4 July 1977). The first meeting between the Polish party leader and CPCS CC Secretary-General and Czechoslovak President Gustav Husak took place at Prague Castle at noon on the same day.

In the evening hours, Husak gave a dinner in honor of the delegation, and in his speech expressed satisfaction that Czechoslovakia and Poland had identical stands and views on all main questions of bilateral co-operation, as well as in international politics. He said that, he hoped the visit would become another demonstration of the links of fraternity and alliance between the two countries, and would be an

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important milestone in the promotion of mutual all-round co-operation. Edward Gierek noted that nothing separates the peoples of the two countries; everything links them, they are united by the same system, identical national interests, and social ideals, as well as by an identity of socialist aims. He expressed conviction that the visit would further strengthen the friendship between the two countries (Ceteka, 4 July 1977 and Rude Pravo, 5 July 1977).

On the second day of his visit Gierek, accompanied by Husak and their parties, left Prague for the Slovak capital, Bratislava, where he held talks with Slovak party leader Jozef Lenart. At a festive luncheon, both politicians hailed co-operation between their countries and the unselfish friendship of their socialist states (for details, see Radio Bratislava, 5 July 1977; Rude Pravo and Pravda, 6 July 1977).

On the last day of its visit, July 6, the Polish delegation attended a mass meeting of the "working people" in Prague. In his speech, Husak pointed out that Czechoslovakia's and Poland's general standpoints conform completely, and expressed deep satisfaction about the meetings with his Polish counterpart. Husak noted that the conferences and the documents adopted mirrored the great attention paid to the further deepening of the division of labor between the two countries, and said that much had been done in the sphere of economic and scientific-technological co-operation, as well as in specialization of industrial production. He added, however, that there was still much work to be done in that respect, in the interest of the further economic development of both countries.

The Polish party leader, too, expressed his satisfaction with the talks. He remarked that the visit was very fruitful, and said he was sure that the conclusions adopted would further expand mutual co-operation. Gierek expressed the conviction that the measures adopted would contribute to the development and enrichment of cultural exchange and to the expansion of future bilateral contacts (both speeches were published in full in Rude Pravo, 7 July 1977).

The joint communiqué, issued on 6 July 1977, only briefly recapitulated the main events of the visit, stated that there was a "complete identity of opinions and standpoints" on all questions discussed during the conferences, and revealed that, at the conclusion of the meetings, a joint document had been signed by Polish CP First Secretary Edward Gierek and the CPCS CC Secretary-General and Czechoslovak President Gustav Husak (the full text of the communiqué was published in Rude Pravo, 7 July 1977).

The document, entitled "For a Further Development and Deepening of Co-operation between the CPCS and the PUWP, between the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the Polish People's Republic, for Strengthening Friendship Between the Peoples of Czechoslovakia and Poland," was published by Czechoslovak and Polish media on 7 July 1977 (for the full text, see Rude Pravo, 8 July 1977). In the part devoted to international affairs, the document points out that the constant strengthening of the unity, cohesion, and might of the socialist community remains

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the basis of Czechoslovak and Polish foreign policy. The two countries will continue their efforts to help strengthen the Warsaw Treaty Organization as a significant political factor, a source of peace initiatives, an expression of the firm unity of the socialist community, and a guarantee of their own security. The document attacks "the hostile campaigns unleashed against the socialist countries by reactionary forces of the world," and exhorts all fraternal parties to fight against all expressions of opportunism, revisionism, anti-communism and anti-Sovietism [emphasis added]. It further states that the CPCS and the PUWP attach extraordinary importance to the strengthening of the international communist movement on the basis of Marxism-Leninism, and condemns the Chinese leadership, whose "chauvinistic policy" is aimed against the interests of peace and socialism. The document says that the supreme representatives of the two parties and states have agreed that the ideological unity and fraternal co-operation between the two parties, based on the principles of Marxism-Leninism and socialist internationalism, are an essential prerequisite for the all-round development of relations between the two countries. The two parties confirmed their firm determination to develop ever more intensively their all-round co-operation and to deepen their tested bonds with the CPSU and other fraternal communist and workers' parties.

In the economic part of the document, Czechoslovakia and Poland pledge themselves not only to develop mutual co-operation, but also to deepen the co-operation of the two countries with the Soviet Union and with other Comecon countries in the framework of socialist economic integration. The document states that both countries emphasized the necessity to preserve and expand mutual co-operation, especially in the fields of fuels, raw materials, and chemicals. It further notes that it has been necessary to focus efforts on deepening the international division of labor, on specialization and co-operation in the machine industry sector, so that priority could be given to the solution of needs for machinery and equipment for coal mining, the production of coke, the metallurgical and chemical industries, as well as transportation. The document points out the necessity to broaden co-operation in the production and exchange of consumer goods, so that the cosigners' respective domestic markets could be enriched with a full assortment of goods of high technical standard and usefulness.

In the conclusion of the economic part, the document notes that both sides adopted main directives emphasizing a deepening of mutual economic co-operation for the period after 1980, and that a joint program for a further development of economic and scientific-technological co-operation would be worked out on the basis of those directives.

The report on the visit of the Polish delegation was discussed and approved by the Presidium of the CPCS CC on 8 July 1977. The Presidium stressed that "the friendly and cordial atmosphere" in which the talks were held was new proof of the constantly deepening traditional

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friendship between the two countries, and noted that the adopted document was "an important contribution to the further all-round development of fraternal relations." According to Radio Prague (8 July 1977), the Presidium adopted the necessary enabling measures to proceed with a steady implementation of the directives issued during the bilateral conferences.

2. The Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros Hydroelectric Plant: Last Stage of Preparations

After two years of preparatory work, the construction of waterworks on the Danube in the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros sector of the Czechoslovak-Hungarian border region is scheduled to begin in the first half of 1978. This joint Czechoslovak-Hungarian project along a 150-km-long stretch of the river has been described as the largest construction scheme planned for Slovakia during the 1976-1985 period. Provided that the system will be fully utilized according to the designs of the planners, it should become primarily a source of cheap electric energy, as well as of gravel-sand, a material in short supply, and of water for drinking and for agricultural purposes. Other important purposes this new system of waterworks is to serve are the prevention of floods, frequent in that sector of the Danube (the worst flood, in 1965, caused damage amounting to 3,500 million Kcs), icing up of the river, and keeping farm land from becoming waterlogged in an area that is important for agriculture. After the system is completed, it will also become an important sector of the 3,500-km-long Rhine-Main-Danube waterway now under construction which will link the North and Black Seas after 1981 (Technicke Noviny No.26, 28 June 1977).

The Czechoslovak government authorized construction of the waterworks on the Danube in the Czechoslovak-Hungarian border region in January 1974. A draft agreement between Czechoslovakia and Hungary on the construction and operation of the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros system of waterworks was prepared in 1975, and in 1976 an agreement on drawing up a joint project, to be ready in the second half of 1977, was signed in Bratislava by the governments of the two countries. For Czechoslovakia, the national enterprise Hydroconsult, in Bratislava, and for Hungary the firm Viziter, Budapest, were entrusted with work on the project. The preliminary estimate sets the costs of the project at 13,600 million Kcs, of which Czechoslovakia will contribute 6,800 million Kcs. The expenditure on this investment is to be recovered through the generating of electricity in the first nine years of operations. The annual output of electricity for the Czechoslovak economy is expected to reach 1,900 million kwh, which would represent savings of 2,300,000 tons of brown coal, a fuel that will run short in the future (Nove Slovo No.1, 1 January 1977).

The approved plan for the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros waterworks system includes the construction of a dam with seven spillways, each 24 meters wide, on the Danube at the 1,842-km mark, near the Hungarian town of Dunakiliti. This dam will raise the water level of the Danube upstream nearly to Bratislava and will form a river reservoir with a volume of 240,000,000 cubic meters and covering an area of 53 square km; in some places, its maximal breadth will be 10 km. Near the town

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of Hrusov, the raised water will be diverted through a canal 17¹/₄ km. long and 300-650 meters wide, to a canal stage near the Slovak town of Gabčíkovo. This stage will consist of two parts -- a hydroelectric power station with nine vertical Kaplan turbines and a total output of 700 mw, and two locks. From there, the used water will flow through another 8.2-km.-long canal into the old Danube river bed near the town of Pálkövő. Downstream from there, a more than 100-km.-long river basin will connect to another canal stage at the Hungarian town of Nagymaros. This stage will consist of three main parts: a hydroelectric power station with a total output of 146 mw, two locks, and a basin. In a space of 19 hours, water from the small Danube tributaries will accumulate in the Hrusov-Dunakiliti basin, whereupon during the next five hours this water will flow through the turbines of the canal stage at Gabčíkovo to the river basin at Nagymaros. In this process, the latter area will function as a balancing basin. Through it, the waters, purified by gravel strata, will continuously flow through the turbines into the old Danube bed downstream from the Dunakiliti basin, and serve for the irrigation of farm land and to fish breeding ponds.

It emerges from the above description of how the whole system of waterworks is to function that the electric power station at Gabčíkovo will generate energy at peak demand times, while that at Nagymaros will generate so-called basic energy. The total anticipated output -- 846 mw -- of the two hydroelectric stations is to be divided equally between Czechoslovakia and Hungary in accordance with the bilateral agreement. As mentioned above, the construction of the system is scheduled to commence in the first half of 1978, first on Czechoslovak territory, and two years later on the Hungarian side. The first unit is scheduled to start operating in the fifth year of the project, and the hydroelectric power station at Gabčíkovo is scheduled to become fully operative in 1984. The organizational plan for the construction set 1987 as the final date for the completion of the whole system (Ceteka, 5 June 1976).

If the work schedule for these Danube waterworks is kept, a number of unsettled problems must first be solved. First, it will be necessary to advance the date for the completion of the preparatory work now in progress. Moreover, it is essential to purchase large-capacity equipment abroad, which is now lacking, and which will cost 108,000,000 Kcs (Praca, 3 June 1977). The scheme also has a negative side to it: the loss of 1,500 hectares of fertile farm land, which represents a shortfall of 10,000,000 Kcs in annual production.

The terms of the Czechoslovak-Hungarian agreement on the construction of the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros waterworks system are regarded as complicated by Czechoslovak contractors. The agreement provides that some 62 per cent of the total volume of the work and supplies for the investment are to be on Czechoslovak territory and only 38 per cent on the territory of Hungary, while both sides are to share equally in investment and operation costs, as they are also to share equally in the power output and use of the completed project (Technicke Noviny No.5, 29 January 1974).

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Despite the drawbacks listed above, realization of the Danube waterworks project will clearly be a great asset for the Czechoslovak economy. The idea of making use of the Danube waters for navigation, energy, and land conservation purposes in the Czechoslovak-Hungarian border region dates back to 1951. The reason why 28 main alternative plans and 106 variants regarding the location of the river stages were rejected is thought to have been doubts by the government committee concerned that the schemes would prove economic and misgivings lest it leave Czechoslovak territory insufficiently protected (Technicke Noviny, 23 April 1968; for further details, see Czechoslovak SR/3, RFER, 17 January 1973, Item 2). The decision in the end to go ahead with the project was prompted to no small degree by the interest displayed by the USSR in utilizing the Danube waterway. The project will give that sector a navigational depth of 3.5 m. (Pravda, 6 March 1975 and Lud, 23 August 1975).

3. Problems of College Entrance Examinations

As is usual when summer vacation approaches, the educational and daily presses have begun to publish articles on current questions concerning educational policy, primarily the problems caused by the discrepancy existing between the state plan, which permits only a limited number of young people to study the humanities, and the interests of those who apply for enrollment at an institute of higher education. No concrete data exist on the number of young people the individual colleges will be able to accommodate. The first part of the college entrance examinations was held at the end of June; the second stage is scheduled for August.

Slovak Minister of Education Juraj Busa explained the current problems besetting the college admission procedure in an interview with members of the editorial staff of the Bratislava party daily Pravda (24 June 1977). He stated that applicants have for some time displayed relatively little interest in the study of fields "that are of primary importance for the national economy." As has been the case in earlier years, the majority of candidates for enrollment in universities are interested mainly in such branches of study as philosophy, law, and medicine. In Minister Busa's view, this problem can be solved if future students "are given an opportunity to reconsider their interest in college courses and to apply for those branches in which the number of applicants is low." The second stage of the entrance examinations is intended to serve this purpose. If an applicant was rejected for some branch of the humanities in June, he now has the opportunity of taking an entrance examination for a different branch in August.

The theological seminaries are the sole exception in this respect, although the Minister of Education omitted to mention this point. If an applicant for theological studies is refused admission -- and this is the case with more than half of them, because a strict quota system is used -- he does not have the right to apply for admission to any other institute of higher education on the grounds that his Weltanschauung is passé (Rheinischer Merkur, 25 March 1977).

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Busa mentioned specific instances in Slovakia where, in the second stage of the entrance examinations, students will have the opportunity to apply for admission to technical branches, primarily the engineering department of the Bratislava College of Technology, the electrotechnical and engineering department of the Zilina Transport College, all the departments of the Kosice College of Technology (which has electrotechnical, mining, metallurgical, and engineering departments), the woodworking department of the Zvolen Forestry and Woodwork College, the natural sciences department of Comenius University in Bratislava, and a department of natural sciences at the Pavel Jozef Safarik University, in Kosice. In the second stage, applicants may also be enrolled in the teacher training programs at Nitra, Banska Bystrica, and Presov.

No such details about the individual institutes of higher education in the Czech Lands have yet been made public, but it is a fair assumption that there will not be much difference between the two parts of the country.

Replying to a Pravda editor's question as to the opportunities open to applicants rejected in the admission procedure, Busa said that these students "have ample opportunity to make themselves useful in society and the economy" and may later also apply for study courses while employed.

In comparison with articles at the beginning of this year, references to the strict class aspects of the selection of applicants have disappeared from all the current articles. Busa merely remarked, en passant, in the interview that "the democratic principle," according to which the social background of the students enrolled must correspond to the structure of socialist society, would continue to be strictly applied. This reticence may have been inspired by thought of the Belgrade conference. As recently as last January, Bohumil Nemec, secretary of the Prague CPCS Municipal Committee, declared that the CPCS has never disguised its class approach to admission to institutes of higher education and the placing of graduates, adding that it is primarily supporters of the socialist social system who are given every chance to obtain admission to institutes of higher education (Radio Prague, 25 January 1977). Earlier, several officials of the education ministries in Prague and Bratislava had publicly taken the same stand. Practice to date proves that the directives governing selection of students, which Josef Ernest, an official of the Czech Ministry of Education, issued in 1971, are still in force:

The selection of applicants must be clearly political in character. . . . We make no secret of the fact that we want to do this at the schools in a manner that will guarantee that future graduates will be supporters of socialism and that they will place their knowledge at the service of socialist society. Where this is not the case, we have no reason to accept an applicant (Ucitelske Noviny, 22 April 1971).

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The current articles on admission procedure and on the discrepancies between the state plan and students' interests clearly demonstrate that the regime has still not found a satisfactory solution to its problem. The Presidium of the Czechoslovak Scientific Technological Society discussed the question of spurring the interest of young people in the study of technical subjects at its meeting on 6 July 1977 (Radio Hvezda, 7 July 1977). Most of the commentators point out that the situation in the capitalist countries is much worse for students and that the class approach is applied there with steadily increasing consistency. "There is not even a vestige of democracy, freedom, or equal change, despite all the proclamations of bourgeois ideologists about equality, freedom, and justice" (Radio Prague, 25 January 1977).

The new practice of having two stages of college entrance examinations will at least partially help fill the technical branches of study, but it will not solve the crux of the problem. The regime does not intend to abandon its existing type of selection. According to Professor Bohuslav Burianek, the socialist society cannot permit an uncontrolled growth in the number of students. The principles of planning apply even here and must always continue to do so, in order that the requirements of the individual branches of industry for specialists with a college education are met (Rodina a Skola No.11, November 1975).

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