

T-176E

X/15 GDR -- THE CZECHOSLOVAK BROADCASTS OF RADIO BERLIN
INTERNATIONAL

MUNICH, 13 May 1969 (Communist Area Analysis Department: GDR -- Dorothy Miller).

Summary: In contrast to East German domestic media, the broadcasts of Radio Berlin International in Czech do not mince words in attacking Czechoslovak reformist leaders still in prominent positions, and particularly their ideological and cultural policies. This difference between the propaganda media seems to indicate that while intent on shielding the East German population from any polemics with reformist thought, the regime believes that no words about Czechoslovak reformers are vile enough.

Since the demise of the allegedly Czechoslovak radio station "Vltava," which was known to broadcast over the wave lengths of Radio Berlin International from Dresden, the latter station has resumed its former activities, however with correct station identification. Far from being satisfied with the leadership changes in Prague, East German propaganda continues its violent attacks against "anti-socialist forces" and "rightist opportunists" during a twelve hour program in the Czech language.

There are striking differences between the coverage of Czechoslovak developments by East German media in German and Radio Berlin International in Czech: while the former emphasize the "positive" evolution in the CSSR following Husak's take-over, and speak of a "hopeful beginning of the normalization of relations between the CSSR and the fraternal countries," the latter launches frontal attacks against Prague's reform politicians, intellectuals and artists.

As a typical example of Radio Berlin International broadcasts, there was a commentary by a certain Martina Bohusova at the end of April. She was introduced as "Prague correspondent of Radio Berlin International," but seems to be completely unknown in Prague journalistic circles. She stated literally:

The time has come to settle accounts with all those who lurk in the background, who have soiled the clean slate of our Party and who are responsible for the fact that our relations with the Soviet Union have been raised to a nationalistic platform. We want to free our Party from all rightist and anti-Soviet parasites who continue to poison our ranks...

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The struggle against alleged "anti-socialists" in the CSSR by Radio Berlin International's Czech broadcasts concentrates mainly on ideological questions. There is hardly a day that passes without indictments of Czechoslovak cultural policy, of the mass media, of theater groups or film ensembles. An unnamed commentator, for example, recently criticized the work of the Prague Ministry of Culture, which is headed by the relatively liberal Minister Miroslav Galuska. The heads of the film enterprises are permitted to decide for themselves which films are to be shown in their theaters. The fact that programs in Czechoslovak movie-theaters are not determined by cultural functionaries, as in the GDR, entails the danger, according to the commentator, that "the directors of film theaters compose programs which consist of sex, brutality, murder and cheap entertainment," instead of exhibiting films "for general political and ethical education." As a result of such cultural policy, which does not take into account the interests of the Party, the commentator continued, it has happened that the opera group of the Prague National Theater intends to participate in the cultural festival in Kiel (West Germany) instead of "seeking partners among the socialist family." Generally speaking, Radio Berlin International concluded, the contacts of Czechoslovak artists with artists of Western countries "give rise to concern regarding whom the Czechs and Slovaks chose as their friends."

Conclusion

By contrasting the above examples of Radio Berlin International in Czech with the reticent and more positive coverage of Czechoslovak developments in East German media, it becomes clearer than ever that the SED regime is still attempting to seal off its own country hermetically from any Czechoslovak thoughts of reform. This explains the absence of polemics with Czechoslovak progressive or "rightist" exponents for home consumption while, when addressing the Czechoslovak public, no terms are vile enough to insult and debase those reformist leaders who are still in prominent positions at present.

26/1225/69