

August 15, 1957

Voice of America Broadcasting Policy for Czechoslovakia

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Summary:

Voice of America (VOA) country policy guidelines for Czechoslovakia, endorsed by the Committee on Radio Broadcasting Policy (CRBP), one of a series of East European country guidelines for VOA complementing country guidelines for Radio Free Europe (RFE).

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USIA BROADCAST POLICY FOR CZECHOSLOVAKIA

INTRODUCTION

Included among the various national security policies designed to deter Communist aggression and to enhance the strength and cohesion of the Free World, is a policy determination relating specifically to the Soviet-Satellite States of Eastern Europe. ~~This policy calls for eventual "liberation of the captive peoples" through the encouragement of evolutionary development and peaceful change.~~ Emphasis on evolutionary development is required by the need to reconcile ultimate liberation of the Satellite States with U. S. determination to preserve the peace and to deter nuclear warfare which could threaten the survival of Western civilization as we know it. Although the ultimate objective for the area is governments and institutions of the peoples' own choosing, the immediate objective and emphasis is on loosening the ties binding Czechoslovakia to the USSR and on evolutionary development contributing to eventual achievement of the long-range goal.

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The role assigned to VOA in the advancement of U. S. policy objectives with respect to Eastern Europe is determined by the official character of VOA. The Voice of America is an official arm of the U. S. Government created to explain and interpret U. S. policies and to reflect the life and thought of the American people. The official character of VOA is recognized by the peoples of Eastern Europe who listen to its broadcasts. It is, therefore, incumbent on VOA to explain U. S. policies and positions with precision and care, and for its tone and content to be such that the U. S. Government can accept full responsibility for its programs directed to the area. In fulfilling this role, it is essential that VOA broadcasts place even greater emphasis on straight news and factual information, on exposition of U. S. policies and on a valid delineation of the values, institutions and procedures which sustain American life.

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The directive which follows should be read within the framework set forth above.

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ASSUMPTIONS

1. The Soviet Union possesses and is likely during the foreseeable future to possess the necessary military, political, and economic controls in Czechoslovakia to keep the country within the Soviet orbit.

2. Prospects for both revolutionary change and marked evolutionary change in the near future appear remote, even though the Czechoslovak people resent the foreign interference and the drab character of their existence under the Communist regime.

a. The general docility of the Czechoslovak people and their disinclination to assume responsibility or take unsupported risks even in the interests of their own national independence and personal freedom militate against a popular uprising. The relative economic well-being of the Czechoslovak people as compared with the other satellite peoples also militates against actions the failure of which might jeopardize this well-being.

b. There is no evidence of a major schism in the Party leadership in Czechoslovakia, similar to that between the Gomulka and Natolin factions in Poland, and no potential "national Communist" leader of the Gomulka type is apparent on the Czechoslovak horizon. The USSR and the subservient regime in Czechoslovakia can and probably would take immediate and effective steps to counteract any attempts at rapid "revisionism" within the country. Consequently, any indigenous movement to alter Czechoslovakia's internal system or its relations with the USSR in a substantial way could not succeed without external assistance.

3. The Czechoslovak people do not have a tradition of anti-Russian phobia.

4. The alien nature of the present Communist regime conflicts with the ideals of national independence which have formed an important part of the Czechoslovak heritage during the past two centuries. But the Czechoslovak tradition of nationalism, unlike the Polish and Hungarian traditions, does not include the establishment of national independence through revolt against foreign suzerainty. And the historical experience of the Czechoslovak peoples inclines them to rely

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primarily on the working of impersonal or external forces, rather than upon their own efforts, to bring about the realization of their basic national aspirations.

5. Czechoslovakia is composed of two major ethnic groups, the Czechs and Slovaks, whose historical experience and cultural developments have been distinct, but whose cultural similarities and common interests were sufficient to allow their combination into a single national state in the 20th century, as well as to foster in the present situation a desire among both Czechs and Slovaks for independence from Soviet domination and control.

6. Historically and culturally, the Czechoslovak people, of all the satellite peoples, have been perhaps the most Western in outlook. Czechoslovakia thus offers an especially propitious soil for Western ideas and influences.

7. Political democracy in Czechoslovakia is based on deep-rooted traditions, with kinship to the democracies of the United States and Western Europe, even though the actual exercise of political rights and self-government was of comparatively recent origin, short-lived, and characterized by increasing instability in a multi-party system.

8. There are probably a number of individuals within the Party and the government, particularly at levels below the top, who might actively consider "attractive alternatives" to current Communist practices provided the pursuit of such alternatives offers a reasonable prospect of improving conditions in Czechoslovakia without jeopardizing their present positions and personal security.

U. S. OBJECTIVES

Long-Run Objective: Establishment of a Czechoslovak government independent of Moscow control, responsive to the will of the Czechoslovak people, and oriented in its political, economic and cultural life toward the Free World. The ultimate nature of the government is a later consideration to be determined by the Czechoslovak peoples themselves.

Present Objectives: The immediate goal of U. S. policy toward Czechoslovakia is to bring about a loosening of ties between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union and movement toward a relaxation of internal controls, as a pre-condition

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for the achievement of the long-run objective. This immediate goal encompasses the following objectives:

1. To encourage Czechs and Slovaks to resist Soviet domination of Czechoslovak national life.
2. To encourage Czechs and Slovaks to weaken and reduce ties between Czechoslovakia and the USSR, particularly those contributing to the military and economic strength and diplomatic position of the Soviet bloc.
3. To encourage gradual economic and cultural orientation and political identification with the West.
4. To encourage the liberalization of internal arrangements in a manner calculated to make the life of the people less intolerable and to weaken the controls of the party apparatus.

POLICY GOVERNING VOA BROADCASTS

Since VOA is the official voice of the government of the United States, its broadcasts must conform with announced U. S. policy and its programs must be such that the U. S. Government can accept responsibility for them.

The objectives of broadcasting to Czechoslovakia can be achieved only gradually, and only if programming is (a) designed to advance specific U. S. policies and objectives, (b) prepared with the outlook and sensitivities of the target audience in mind, and (c) consonant with the official character of VOA.

PROGRAM CONTENT

To support U. S. objectives with respect to Czechoslovakia, VOA program content should:

1. Inform audiences in Czechoslovakia on all matters meeting one or more of the following criteria:
 - a. U. S. interests are served by supplying Czechoslovak audiences with factual information on important world news developments, particularly news which is suppressed by Czechoslovak and other Communist news services available to the Czechoslovak

people

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people. Particular emphasis should be placed on factual information concerning important U. S. actions in the foreign relations field as well as developments reflecting democratic processes at work on the American scene.

b. U. S. interests are served by correcting distortions disseminated by media reaching the Czechoslovak people concerning particular issues of importance to the U. S.

c. U. S. objectives are served by reporting and amplifying, where appropriate through editorial reactions, U. S. policies and positions on issues about which we wish the Czechoslovak people to be informed.

2. Seek to assure Czechoslovaks that the people and government of the United States have a sympathetic concern for their welfare and an interest in the realization of their legitimate aspirations.

3. Counter Communist propaganda concerning the "inevitable victory of Socialism" by reporting evidences of Free World unity and determination to defend its vital interests, supported by the strength of the U. S.

4. Sustain hope by emphasizing U. S. official statements pointing out that the U. S. cannot reconcile itself to Soviet domination of the peoples of Eastern Europe, as well as statements reflecting American conviction that the future belongs to freedom.

5. Encourage a questioning and critical state of mind toward Soviet and regime propaganda and indoctrination by providing information on and analyses of the USSR's policies and actions which can be presented convincingly as being contrary to Czechoslovakian interests.

6. Articulate national traditions reflecting Czechoslovakian nationalism and love of freedom. This can be achieved through appropriate commemoration of anniversaries symbolizing important national traditions, and through factual reporting of cultural events taking place in the U. S. which demonstrate the vitality of those traditions.

7. Encourage evolutionary change in Czechoslovakia's
political

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political, economic, social and cultural life toward more liberal forms by factually reporting methods which the U. S. and other Free World countries have employed in dealing with similar problems, without however relating such reporting of methods to any specific Czechoslovakian situation. When specifically authorized by official guidances, VOA may discuss favorable developments within the Soviet orbit and outline "attractive alternatives" which might be attainable under existing conditions in Czechoslovakia.

News: VOA has a special duty to provide a reliable, objective and relatively full coverage of important news developments. To the extent possible news should be presented in the light of the special interests of the audience. Consistent with the requirements of credibility news presentation should place primary emphasis on U. S. news and on those world developments in which U. S. interests are directly involved.

1. Factual, objective reporting should be accorded those United States actions which would advance U. S. objectives with respect to Czechoslovakia.

a. Important U. S. diplomatic communications and important policy statements made by responsible U. S. Government leaders generally should be accorded extensive coverage.

b. While giving coverage in the news to legitimate viewpoints which are not necessarily in accord with the views of the U. S. Government, the overall selection of news items should serve to support the official U. S. posture on any given subject.

2. Special attention should be given news of educational value -- i.e., news which will provide listeners with ideas or stimulate thinking which may engender limited actions in the direction of a relative liberalization of Czechoslovakian political, economic and social life. Such news would include:

a. U. S. and Free World developments.

b. Cross-reporting of "liberalization" measures taken by the USSR or satellite governments, manifestations of popular and intra-party opposition to the Communist system in the USSR or satellites, and unfavorable reactions in the satellites or foreign Communist Parties to Soviet policies, actions or statements.

3. News items

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3. News items, from time to time, which indicate indirectly the well-being and successful readjustment of Czechoslovakian escapees to life in the Free World.

Commentary on the News: Commentaries should supplement the news by (1) providing fuller exposition of U. S. actions and policies, (2) analyzing and interpreting important world developments from the U. S. point of view, and (3) correcting distortions and misconceptions concerning American policies and objectives, significant international programs and actions either sponsored or supported by the U. S., and international developments of major importance to the promotion of U. S. foreign policy objectives.

Essentially, such commentary should be designed to place the facts of the news in perspective and to make them more readily comprehensible to Czechoslovakian listeners with their different orientation and background.

These commentaries, as all other commentaries and features, should be dignified and carefully reasoned, designed to gain acceptance by their logic and inherent honesty. They should avoid dogmatism, exaggeration and self-righteousness.

Roundups of editorial comment should be used to depict American and Free World views with respect to important international developments. While editorial roundups should, where possible, present a variety of reactions short of the extremist and irresponsible, the overall effect should be in support of official U. S. views.

Reviews of significant books, articles or statements of non-governmental leaders in public life may be used effectively as bases for commentaries interpreting and supporting national objectives and official statements.

Americana Features: Features on Americana should serve to delineate those important aspects of the life and culture of the people of the U. S. which will (a) facilitate understanding of specific policies and objectives of the U. S. Government, (b) be of value in suggesting indirectly to Czechoslovak listeners practical and feasible alternatives to existing Communist institutions and practices, and (c) correct Soviet and Czechoslovakian Communist distortions and misconceptions of the life and culture of the U. S. Wherever appropriate, facts or references should be included which would

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indicate an identity or similarity of American and Czechoslovakian interests and background. Americana scripts, as a whole, should present a picture of the economic and social progress of the U. S. and the inherent strength and popular endorsement of its institutions. They should also, over a period of time, convey to listeners in Czechoslovakia the basic principles of our culture--e.g., regard for the dignity, equality and freedom of the individual; government as the servant of the people with defined and limited powers; regard for freedom of conscience, thought and expression. The tone of such scripts should reflect vigor and confidence, but the content should evince appropriate modesty and restraint, so as not to offend by boastfulness.

Special Features: Features advancing U. S. interests are appropriate on:

1. Conditions or developments elsewhere in the Soviet orbit or in other areas of the world, where the purpose of such a feature is (a) to counter misconceptions militating against proper understanding of U. S. policies and programs, and (b) to imply courses of action based on U. S. experience or achievements which might profitably be followed by Czechoslovakia. These features should be authoritative, objective and thought-provoking so as to stimulate questioning of the validity of the official Communist line on these subjects.

2. Anniversaries of historical or cultural importance to Czechoslovak listeners. Such features should reflect American appreciation of Czechoslovak achievements, particularly the contributions of Czechoslovakians to world culture. They also should recall past American contributions to Czechoslovakian national life.

3. Occasional features on (a) the resettlement and success stories involving Czechoslovakian escapees, and (b) stories or interviews on Iron Curtain defectors, where such stories would be of special and unusual interest to target groups.

Commentary on Czechoslovakian Internal Affairs: Commentaries on Czechoslovakian internal affairs originated by VOA shall be held to a minimum and shall be in strict accord with official guidances authorizing such commentaries.

1. Discussion of current conditions in Czechoslovakia should be constructive, giving recognition when merited to

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internal actions or accomplishments making for a better life for the people. Such discussion should be accompanied by indirect, positive suggestions for overcoming present shortcomings.

2. It is imperative that discussion of Czechoslovakian internal affairs be scrupulously accurate and objective and avoid preachment offensive to audience sensibilities.

3. There is no need to dwell on those internal conditions and shortcomings of which Czechoslovakians themselves are well aware.

Commentary on Czechoslovakian Foreign Affairs: When appropriate, occasional commentaries should bring out the absence of any independent Czechoslovakian policies and should indicate that regime actions supporting the selfish purposes of the USSR do not advance the best interests of the Czechoslovakian people.

Commentary on Foreign Affairs of the USSR: On major Soviet foreign policy actions in the international sphere, commentaries may be prepared with a view to making apparent to the listener the contradiction between Soviet practice and propaganda, especially as related to the Soviet's alleged policies on non-intervention in the internal affairs of other countries and espousals of a reduction of international tensions. Such commentaries, in addition to being well-reasoned and expository in presentation, should contain the maximum amount of factual information pointing up:

1. The extent of Soviet economic exploitation of the nations of Eastern Europe, particularly Czechoslovakia, as well as instances of more preferential treatment by the USSR to countries other than Czechoslovakia.

2. Soviet political interference in Czechoslovakia.

3. U. S. and world condemnation and censure of Soviet actions which violate the rights of peoples and nations.

Emigre Materials: Materials concerning Czechoslovak emigres, and emigre organizations, may be carried in the form of news items only when the event or statement deserves attention on the basis of its intrinsic news value. A feature or commentary may be carried provided specific prior authorization is obtained from the VOA policy application chief.

The foregoing

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The foregoing guidance stems from three considerations:

1. In accordance with the United States Government's policy of non-predetermination, it is not in the interest of the United States to espouse any Czechoslovak political groups.
2. There is not at present any Czechoslovak political exile organization with aims consistent with U. S. policy objectives which appears to have sufficient following within Czechoslovakia.
3. As the official voice of the United States, VOA should not in any way appear to be sponsoring particular emigres or emigre organizations, nor should the views of such individuals or groups appear to have U. S. endorsement. Therefore, it is not in the interest of the United States to accord more than routine attention to views expressed by such organizations in VOA broadcasts to Czechoslovakia.

Ethnic Considerations: The ethnic composition of the Czechoslovak population constitutes a special problem. The Czechs (who make up two-thirds of the population) and Slovaks together comprise over ninety per cent of the potential targets for a broadcasting program to Czechoslovakia. Other ethnic minority elements (Magyars, Germans, Poles, Ukrainians, and others) are negligible in numbers; none of them now plays an important role in Czechoslovak society, nor warrants special attention in broadcast programming. But there are traditional cultural differences and historic antagonisms between the Czechs and Slovaks which must be kept in mind. The U. S. policy of "non-predetermination" precludes any attempt to exploit these divergencies. Broadcasts to Czechoslovakia should continue to use both Czech and Slovak voices on an alternating basis. Individual programs may be designed with a greater or less appeal to the Czech or Slovak elements, respectively, provided, of course, they do not offend the sensitivities of the other group; this is a consideration which requires utmost delicacy of handling so that the effect upon hearers shall be in no way divisive.

The German

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The German Question: One of the most effective themes of Communist propaganda, particularly among the Czechs, is the play on traditional Czech fear of Germany, portraying the Soviet alliance as a bulwark against possible German aggression. This Czech fear is exacerbated by the fact that almost three million Sudeten Germans reside in Western Germany, and that their spokesmen continue to agitate for return to their homeland. The Czech-German struggles date as far back as the close of the fourteenth century. More recently, they found expression in the Nazi occupation of Bohemia and Moravia and in the subsequent expulsion of Sudeten Germans from Czechoslovakia.

Output should strive (a) to emphasize concrete evidences of progress in integrating Western Germany into Western Europe through arrangements that are essentially defensive in character and capable of containing German power and channeling it to constructive ends, and (b) to report news, and when necessary prepare commentaries, portraying progress in the entire field of Western European unification, implicitly offering Czechs and Slovaks the "attractive alternative" of looking forward to the long-range possibility of membership in a united European community which would obviate the danger of a German threat to Czechoslovak national existence.

In view of our relations with the Federal Republic and our overall objectives, output to Czechoslovakia should eschew discussion of the problem of the Sudeten Germans.

TONE AND APPROACH

1. VOA should build a reputation for reliability, objectivity, sincerity, and reasonableness which will enhance understanding and support for U. S. policies and programs. Programs should inform and educate, not preach and advise.

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They should provide Czechoslovak listeners with facts, set forth clearly and with maximum accuracy, letting the listeners draw their own conclusions. Attitudes and convictions developed through this process are likely to be the most resistant to the regime's propaganda and the most effective in leading to action. In general, programs which, in addition to their entertainment value, command respect because they are objective and reliable are likely to have a much greater impact.

2. General emphasis in presentation should be positive rather than merely anti-Communist, stressing the constructive purposes and actions of the United States and the Free World.

3. Output should avoid language and tone likely to offend or irritate any significant segment of our audience. Condescension or disputation should also be avoided.

4. Description of and commentary on conditions in Western countries should not be prepared in terms of direct comparisons with Czechoslovakian conditions, except when such comparisons are clearly integral to the presentation.

5. In pursuing policy objectives, we should avoid tone or materials which could be construed as vituperative or as encouraging violence and revolt.

THE CZECHOSLOVAK AUDIENCE

A. General Features of Czechoslovak Society

VOA Broadcasts to Czechoslovakia must take into account not only the specific needs and interests of particular audience groups such as industrial workers, farmers, and intellectuals, but also the general characteristics of the society as a whole which differentiate it from the other East European satellites.

A distinctive feature of the Czechoslovak society is its demographic composition, consisting of two closely related Slav groups, Czechs and Slovaks. These two groups show certain differences in attitudes and behavior, and the areas in which they live likewise differ significantly in economic and political background. The Slovak area is relatively more rural and agrarian than the Czech lands, which are more highly industrialized and urban in character. Agricultural productivity has customarily been higher in the Czech than in the Slovak areas, due to the more favorable topography and more advanced farming

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methods. Under the Communists, however, the rate of industrial development and of investment has been higher in the Slovak portion, as has the movement from the farms to the cities, so that the former gap between the standard of living in the two areas has been narrowed.

Politically, Czechs predominated in the administrative bureaucracy and the governmental leadership in the period between the two world wars, as they had previously participated more actively in the government and administration under the Habsburgs. Partly as a result, a politically significant sentiment for autonomy developed in Slovakia, which has not been eradicated by subsequent events.

But perhaps the most significant differences between the two peoples stem from their different lines of historical development over the centuries. For a thousand years Slovakia was an integral part of the kingdom of Hungary, and with the intensification of national consciousness in the 19th century, the Slovak striving for cultural autonomy had to contend with an increasingly repressive Hungarian policy of Magyarization. On the other hand, the Czechs were for centuries an autonomous part of the Holy Roman Empire, and their interactions and conflicts were largely with German states. The Czechs also experienced a pre-Lutheran form of Protestantism in the Hussite movement and, after becoming almost wholly Protestant in the 16th century, suffered a particularly violent form of the Counter-Reformation which Slovakia was spared. The imposition of Catholicism by German conquerors in the 17th century gave the later Czech struggle for independence a certain anti-clerical tinge which Slovak nationalism did not manifest. The Slovaks today -- both Catholics and Protestants -- tend to be more vigorous in their religious sentiments and more loyal to their church and its leaders than are the Czechs, whose church membership is more often nominal, and among whom there is more free-thinking and agnosticism.

Despite these differences between the two peoples, the Czechoslovak society, taken as a whole, may be characterized as a predominantly industrial and urban society with a relatively high standard of living, whose people have a strong sense of national identity and a traditional orientation toward Western culture and civilization.

1. An Industrial Society

The degree of industrialization in Czechoslovakia is much higher than in the other European satellites. Along with East Germany, Czechoslovakia has the most highly skilled labor force

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force in Eastern Europe, and a high degree of technological advancement.

At the time of the Communist takeover, Czechoslovakia possessed a diversified economy with a strong industrial base and a once-thriving agriculture, whose system was still in a sound condition. Czechoslovak industry, supported by important mineral deposits and a reservoir of skilled manpower, had a distinguished record and a capacity for the manufacture of heavy machinery and armaments as well as for light manufacturing.

Under Communist control heavy industry has been developed intensively at the expense of light industry, consumer goods and services, and agriculture. The economic exploitation of Czechoslovakia by the Soviet Union has not been so crassly evident as in the case of some other satellites, but it is still implicit in the build-up of heavy industry for the production of armaments (of which Czechoslovakia now supplies over 65 per cent of the total output by the European satellites). In steel output, manufacture of machine tools, automotive and electrical equipment, and in the manufacture of armaments, Czechoslovakia ranks at or near the top of the Soviet European satellites.

In agriculture, Czechoslovakia in pre-Communist days had a well-developed cooperative movement. The Communist regime adopted the goal of collectivization, initially promoting it with a vigor second only to that exhibited in Bulgaria. The losses resulting led to a shift from ideology to agricultural productivity and an increased food supply as prime considerations in agricultural policy, and in 1953 the regime felt compelled to moderate its collectivization program, directing it more toward the landless and inefficient farmers. Since then, the private sector has not been so harassed, and to some extent has been assisted by the government. Beginning in 1955 there has been some reversion to collectivization efforts, but in a more temperate fashion than before 1953. Thus, while collectivization remains a goal of the regime, it is now a longer-term goal than it once was.

The movement of labor from the farm to the city under the Communist regime has been appreciable, but it has not caused the severe dislocations which occurred in Poland and Hungary; and although the agrarian sector has suffered from the paramount emphasis upon heavy industry, it was not completely impoverished in the process. Nevertheless, the Czechoslovak farmers retain their strong resistance to the regime.

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Notwithstanding adverse effects of Soviet-dictated policies upon the Czechoslovak economy, the standard of living remains substantially above that of the USSR and the satellites generally. Indeed, it is the best in Eastern Europe and better than in Italy, although below that of most Western European countries. Despite deficiencies in distribution, poor quality and variety of consumer goods, and inadequate

The Czechoslovak society is highly urbanized by contrast with its eastern neighbors, exhibiting in this respect a greater similarity to the social structures of Western European countries. Its population shows relatively less social cohesion and greater social mobility than the more rural agrarian societies, and relatively pronounced cosmopolitan characteristics. At the same time the Czechoslovak society has traditionally been characterized by a lack of sharp class distinctions and extreme differences in income strata. The rate of literacy and level of education are exceptionally high, and knowledge of other languages (especially German and to a lesser extent French and English) is widespread. The median age of the population is comparatively high, testifying to relatively smaller families and higher health standards than in Eastern Europe generally.

2. An Urban Society

Left to their own inclinations, Czechoslovak enterprises would undoubtedly tend to revert to the former preponderance of trade with non-orbit countries. Of late, the USSR has permitted a significant increase in Czechoslovak commitments to export industrial products to countries of the Middle East, the Far East and Latin America. But even with this shift, Czechoslovak foreign trade may be said still to serve primarily the interests of the Sino-Soviet bloc. The Soviets have played upon the theme (traditionally and factually false) that Czechoslovakia finds its natural markets to the East. It is probable that most of the Czechoslovak people are still aware that the natural orientation of Czechoslovakia's trade lies in large measure outside the Soviet bloc.

Because of its high level of industrialization, Czechoslovakia must depend on foreign trade for the marketing of its manufactured products and for the import of a considerable proportion of its raw materials and food. More than 80 per cent by volume of Czechoslovakia's foreign trade once went to countries outside the Soviet orbit, and particularly to the West. Now more than 75 per cent by volume is with the members of the Sino-Soviet bloc, with the USSR as the principal trading partner.

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inadequate housing, many people are able to equip their homes with labor-saving devices and other luxury items such as washing machines and television sets.

Nevertheless, the emphasis on heavy industry and armament production, undertaken at Soviet behest, has been maintained at serious cost in consumer needs and agriculture. The concomitant irritants, felt especially by the white collar worker and farmers in a once-proud country, feed resentment and stimulate Czechoslovak interest in steps to alleviate this situation.

3. The sense of national identity and Western orientation

Nationalism has been the most potent single motivation in Czechoslovak society in the past two centuries. This sentiment has found expression among the Czechoslovak peoples not only in their strongly held ideals of national independence and political liberty, but also in their deep-rooted attachment to their own cultural heritage. At the same time, however, in their attitudes toward other nations, the Czechoslovaks have shown a generally favorable predisposition toward the West, while in their political and cultural development, they definitely belong in the main stream of Western civilization.

Historically there has been no tradition of anti-Russian phobia in Czechoslovak life. In fact, the post-Munich disillusionment with the West actually inclined the Czechoslovaks toward the Soviet Union; but their unrealistic expectations on this score have been chilled by subsequent events. At present, their attitudes toward the Russians reflect more contempt than animosity. Conversely, the earlier enthusiasm for France and England was considerably dampened by Munich. After 1939, England regained to a considerable degree the admiration of the Czechoslovaks, who also retain some regard for French culture. There has always been a basic fund of friendly interest in the United States on which to draw.

It is perhaps unfortunate that Czechoslovak nationalism has not been forged in the fires of revolt against foreign suzerainty in a manner comparable to Polish or Hungarian nationalism. The Czechoslovak state was in effect the creation of the victorious Allied powers in 1919, and the fighting of the Czechoslovak Legions during World War I did not take place on Czechoslovak soil. The Czechoslovak outlook is attuned to this history. The tendency to rely on the impersonal working of history to bring about the realization of basic national aspirations and the qualities of docility and disinclination

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to take risks for a larger cause have already been noted. The Czechoslovaks are a tenacious but not a daring people, although when aroused and committed, their reactions may be explosively violent. But the dominant social tendency is toward conformity with the demands of the Communist regime and, consequently, the expectations of any program directed toward Czechoslovakia must reckon with apathy and inertia.

The political heritage of Czechoslovakia, while running far back into Czechoslovak history, is closely linked to the Western democratic tradition. The actual exercise of political rights and self-government was comparatively recent in origin and short-lived (i.e., for the period between the two World Wars and for three years after the second). Moreover, it was characterized by some instability due to the multi-party system, which led to the proliferation and rivalry of parties representing diverse political segments of the electorate. The period was marked by a serious weakening of the middle class and by compromising tendencies of the non-Communist parties which undermined the constitutional processes and even the will to preserve them.

The virility and prestige of Agrarian political representation, which comprised the largest party in the interwar period, was so weakened even before World War II that it could not revive in the immediate postwar period.

The Communist party itself has a long indigenous tradition in Czechoslovakia; it had one of the largest representations in the interwar parliament and, in the 1935 elections polled about 10 per cent of the national vote; in the first postwar elections it won the support of 38 per cent of the electorate. Under the current regime, there is more than one Party member for every ten persons. From these ranks is drawn the new elite and middle class, forming the backbone of an extraordinarily large bureaucracy which depends on the present state structure and economic organization for its livelihood. Indeed, many who joined the Party after 1945 did so for opportunistic reasons rather than from ideological conviction.

Since the elimination of the Slansky clique, the top leadership of the Party has shown no major schism similar to that in Poland, and no candidate is apparent among this leadership to take the country along a "national Communist" course. Although most Czechoslovak Party officials appear not disposed to take personal risks, however, many of them may see certain advantages in the Yugoslav experiment. And many will

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surely envy the relative benefits of the "Polish road to socialism" even at its present stage, in so far as it would mean a reduction or termination of Soviet intervention in Czechoslovak affairs, and a diminution in the exercise of political controls. A great many Czechoslovaks, however, regard Communism as intrinsically evil, whatever form it may take.

If freedom of choice were now possible, the Czechoslovak population would doubtless elect in preponderant numbers for a representative non-Communist government. Socialistic tendencies, for the most part of a moderate nature, characterized Czechoslovak politics long before the advent of Communism. It may be assumed that some of these tendencies persist, despite the general resistance to Communist indoctrination. The Communist regime's denunciations of internal Social Democratic tendencies indicates an Achilles heel in a system which by totalitarian means has perverted the methods and goals of social democracy.

In culture as in political tradition, Czechoslovakia is the most Western of the European satellites. Czech nationalism, deprived of political expression for over a century after the National Revival of the late 18th century, developed its great strength in literature, music, and the theater. Yet Czechoslovakia developed its national culture in interchange with, rather than apart from, the West; no great movement in Western thought from the Enlightenment on was without its repercussions in Czechoslovakia. And the flowering of Czechoslovak music and literature in the latter 19th and early 20th centuries -- for example in the music of Smetana, Dvorak, Fibich, Bella, Janacek, and Suk, and in the literary work of Vrchlicky, Hviezdoslav, Hurban-Vajansky, Jirasek, Hasek, and Capek -- in turn enriched the main stream of the evolution of the arts in the West. Only the period of Nazi domination, and later of Communist rule, put an end to this two-way interchange between Czechoslovakia and the West in the arts.

Cultural themes are therefore of special interest to Czechs and Slovaks. They are pleased with recognition given abroad to those Czechoslovak cultural achievements of which they themselves are justly proud. At the same time, they desire to know what is going on in all the arts outside the Soviet orbit. Cut off as they have been from free expression themselves and from free access to new cultural trends in Western countries, the artistically discriminating in Czechoslovakia -- who make up a comparatively large proportion of the total audience -- will be generally hungry for cultural fare from the West.

B. Audience Groups

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B. Audience Groups

The groups of particular interest to VOA in broadcasts to Czechoslovakia are the industrial workers, intellectuals, youth, the Communist hierarchy and government officials, farmers, women, military personnel, and religious groups.

1. Industrial Workers — *60% of pop. industrialized proletariat*

The industrial, administrative, and military expansion carried out by the Communist regime has considerably increased the size of this group. Farmers and rural youth have been drawn into industry, along with wives and older children of workers, while many members of the former middle class have been forced into a reduced employment status. In certain material ways, the regime has favored this group. The social security system is as extensive as that of any other country, and the workers are recipients of many fringe benefits and privileges. Real wages, though depressed, are fairly satisfactory.

At the same time, the Czechoslovak workers are subject to the usual harassments of a Communist state-controlled economy, while the trade unions are no longer protective organizations but function as instruments of the state. Workers must drive themselves hard to earn a living wage, and improvement in their standard of living has progressed only slowly since the currency revaluation of 1953.

While there is worker discontent over the strenuous demands which the Communist regime imposes, labor dissatisfaction in Czechoslovakia is probably directed less against working conditions than toward the inability of the workers to reap a greater measure of return in personal gain from their own production. The insistently propagandized ideals and promises under Communism offer a poor substitute.

2. Intellectuals

This group includes authors, journalists, teachers and university professors, scholars and scientists, other professional people engaged in intellectual pursuits and middle-ranking members of the bureaucracy. Some of these, of course, are Communist stooges and opportunists. But in view of the exceptional intellectual traditions of Czechoslovakia, this is an important target, containing in its ranks a considerable element which remains basically anti-Communist in inclination.

In addition

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In addition to this "hard core" of intellectual opposition to Communism, there is bound to be among most of the intelligentsia an intellectual uncertainty, curiosity about trends of thought outside of the Communist framework and frustration over present regimentation which makes the intellectuals a relatively receptive target.

This group is capable of formulating varying degrees of opposition in precise terms and able to conceive of realizable alternatives to present conditions and procedures. Although the intelligentsia of Czechoslovakia (chiefly for traditional, sociological reasons) has not been so active in this regard as its counterparts in Poland and Hungary, there are signs that it is restive under Communist control and is making hesitant efforts to assert an independent spirit.

3. Students and youth

Youth in general and university students in particular should be a prime target. Recent reports of student demonstrations and other student activities would seem to bear out other indications of a significant measure of anti-regime sentiment among Czechoslovak youth. Young people are leaving school aware of the gap between Communist theory and practice. They are restive and resentful under the restraints imposed on their choice of jobs or professions, on their use of leisure time and on their personal freedom.

Czechoslovak youth, in common with youth in other satellites, appear to be demanding a revision and de-emphasis of Marxist-Leninist instruction and a shift of educational orientation somewhat away from pure reliance on Soviet experience. Especially since the Hungarian events, it appears that Communist indoctrination is less effective than was once feared, and has not yet succeeded in destroying independent thinking among youth who have been raised under a Communist regime.

4. The power elite (government and party officials)

The degree of absolute doctrinal loyalty to Moscow Communism as opposed to simple opportunism and expediency even in the top echelons of the Czechoslovak Communist Party is uncertain. It is not unreasonable, however, to assume, on the basis of the many signs of continuing insecurity by the government, that there are a large number of individuals within both the party and government open to active consideration of "attractive alternatives" providing their own security is not

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jeopardized by moves leading the country away from its present Moscow orientation.

Because it includes most individuals in positions of sufficient power and responsibility to be able to do something positive in terms of "liberalization" of the regime, this group should not be ignored.

Of particular interest within this group is the new managerial class. These individuals and their families represent a new intellectual elite. Though some may at one time have accepted without question the system which gave them the initial opportunities to advance through positions of increasing production responsibility, the hampering of their work by the rigidities and stupidities of party hacks may lead them to question the system. From the U. S. perspective, it would be a favorable development if this managerial class were to press for de-centralization in Czechoslovakia, thus tending to loosen the ties with Moscow and attenuate the degree of central Party control in Czechoslovakia. With judicious encouragement, developments favoring decentralization in the Soviet Union (including Khrushchev's statements) and gestures in this direction by the Czechoslovak regime could raise the pressure for decentralization from the managerial class.

5. Farmers

Although about half the population of Czechoslovakia still lives in rural areas, Communist policies have reduced the proportion in some way dependent upon agriculture to less than 25 per cent, and these constitute at the same time an aging class. The farming population still comprises, however, an important audience group. Thanks to the regime's resort to measures of persuasion, indirect pressure, and outright force against this group, it is perhaps the most discontented single group in the country, and the most resistant to the regime.

While less sophisticated than their urban compatriots, the Czechoslovak farmers are distinctly above the level of the peasantry in other East European countries. With a relatively high degree of literacy, they retain the traditional farmers' distrust of government interference and an attitude of waiting to be shown. Their traditional and strong feeling for individual independence should be a key consideration in any approach to this audience.

6. Women

The Czechoslovak Communist regime, in its emphasis
on industrial

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on industrial expansion and building up an administrative bureaucracy, has induced or pressured many women (primarily housewives) into employment outside the home. As a result, many more women have been brought into direct contact with the operations of political and economic life.

In the Hungarian revolt, women were among the most ardent of those who defied the Soviet-Communist regime. In motivation, they included those who resented their decline in economic status and their isolation from the interests of women in western Europe, those who, as farmers' wives, resented the loss of their land to collectives, and those who resented the forced education of their children according to Communist goals and methods. It may be assumed that Czechoslovak women feel similar resentments, and exert corresponding influence on their children and men.

7. Military

Though historically the Czechoslovak peoples have on occasion given good account of themselves in military operations, they are not traditionally militant. At present the armed forces of Czechoslovakia are among the best trained and equipped in eastern Europe. Their morale ranges from fair to good; they have a relatively high educational standard. They are subordinated to Soviet direction under the unified command of the Warsaw Pact, and Soviet influence dominates all phases of the Czechoslovak military program. Officers and men whose reliability was suspect have been purged, and those remaining are subjected to an intensive program of political indoctrination.

Nevertheless, there have been indications that the Communist regime may question the reliability of the armed forces in the event of internal unrest -- especially, it may be presumed, the reliability of the troops and the lower officer echelons. The behavior of these elements would depend to a considerable extent upon circumstances and leadership, but they would probably be averse to repressive actions against their own people. The Hungarian uprising, moreover, suggests that within the satellite military forces there may be strong elements of resistance against the excessive Sovietization to which they are subjected. It is true that Czechoslovakia, unlike the other satellites, does not have the presence of large numbers of Soviet troops as a source of irritation. But in any event, the military is a specific and potentially important target which should not be neglected.

8. Religious groups

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8. Religious groups

Religiously, Czechoslovakia is predominantly Roman Catholic (about three-fourths of the population are nominal adherents); but attachment to the church is weaker in Bohemia-Moravia than in Slovakia, and Protestants have had proportionately a more prominent role in the country's history than their numerical strength would suggest. Despite efforts of the Communist regime to weaken the churches and undermine the teaching and practice of religion, church attendance under Communism has actually increased; public worship has taken on the character of passive resistance against the regime. There is, however, a rather strong tradition of agnosticism in Czech territory; and, while in Slovak territory the clergy has constituted a weighty factor, its leadership has not been of a distinguished quality comparable to that of Poland or Hungary. In sum, religion is not, for Czechoslovakia, the powerful motivating force which it is in Poland or Hungary; and there is, in fact, to a considerable degree among the Czechs a climate not unfavorable to Marxist atheism. It is doubtful, therefore, that religious broadcasts to Czechoslovakia have a sufficient utility to be emphasized, except possibly with reference to the Slovak element or as a means of providing religious education to children. For this purpose, liturgy and dogma are much less important than ethical concepts imbued with religious motivation.

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