

THE CZECHOSLOVAK COMMUNIST COUP IN THE SINO-SOVIET DISPUTE*

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Historians symbolically refer to our contemporary period as an avalanche of unsurpassable social and political upheavals. To them it represents a general historical process of modernization in which science and technology play the strategic role and democracy and Communism the tactical part. Both systems are presently competing to control the minds of men caught in the web of this process. The outcome of this competition, it would seem, hinges on many factors and variables inherent in the problems of modernization.

One such factor — a dominant one — is the method by which modernization takes place. In Communist terminology modernization is conceived as an economic process employing the political means of socialist revolution whose function it is to bring about the birth of the new society, meaning Communism. Hence socialist revolution constitutes a significant part of what might be called Communist ideology of modernization. From Marx to Khrushchev and Mao Tse-tung the Communist theory of revolution had played a key role in the appeal to the minds of men interested in economic and social modernization. Today this appeal is not only intensified but also diversified¹. On the one hand, the Russian Communists are emphasizing the utility of peaceful socialist revolutions by referring to the February (1948) coup in Czechoslovakia as a case in point²; on the other hand, the Chinese are denying the usefulness of peaceful socialist revolution and insist that there is no historical precedent for a peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism.

The aim of this paper is threefold: First, to type all socialist revolutions from 1917 to 1962; second, to reexamine the methods by which the Communist monopoly of power was effected in Czechoslovakia; and third, to evaluate the impact of the February coup on the Communist revolutionary thinking today.

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¹ See „The Proletarian Revolution and Khrushchev's Revisionism.“ Editorial article — comment on the „Open Letter of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (VIII)“ — simultaneously published in central Chinese Communist party daily, Jen-min Jih-pao [People's Daily] and monthly Hung Ch'i [Red Flag], March 31, 1964. (Hereafter cited as JMJP-HC joint editorial.)

² Kar, George: The Socialist Revolution — Peaceful and Non-Peaceful. World Communist Review V/5 (1962) 33.

Basic types of socialist revolutions

Socialist [actually meaning Communist] revolution is used here to denote the Communist bid for the monopoly of power in a non-Communist state. Operationally, then, socialist revolution prevails when the non-Communist state's monopoly of power is effectively challenged and persists until a Communist monopoly of power is established³. Just how Communist power is indeed effected becomes a matter of form of struggle. It can be either peaceful (carried out without employing violence) or non-peaceful (accomplished by violent means). The forms of peaceful revolutionary struggle are: *Coup d'etat* (when the transfer of the habit of obedience from the old to the new government is virtually automatic), plebiscite and electoral process. The forms of non-peaceful revolutionary struggle are: Guerrilla or civil war, armed uprising and military intervention.

Since the power monopoly of the state depends largely on the habit of obedience of the governed (rather than their consent), socialist revolution usually begins with the lessening of the habit of obedience to the old government and ends, if successful, with the effecting of the transfer of power to the new government affiliated with the Communist system. Affiliation of the new government with the Communist system must not necessarily occur at the time of the transfer of power (as was the case in Cuba), however, affiliation with the Communist system is a prerequisite to socialist revolution. If the transfer of power to the government affiliated with the Communist system fails to take place, then the revolution is unsuccessful.

There have been thirty-eight socialist revolutions in the world since 1917. Fourteen were successful⁴ and twenty-four were unsuccessful⁵. Among

³ For a detailed description of this operational definition, see Amann, Peter: *Revolution: A Redefinition*. Political Science Quarterly 77/1 (1962) 36—53.

⁴ In Russia in October, 1917; in North Vietnam on September 2, 1945; in North Korea on September 6, 1945; in Outer Mongolia on October 20, 1945; in Yugoslavia on November 29, 1945; in Albania on January 10, 1946; in Bulgaria on September 9, 1946; in Poland on January 19, 1947; in Hungary in May, 1947; in Romania in November, 1947; in Czechoslovakia on February 25, 1948; in China on October 1, 1949; in East Germany on October 7, 1949; and in Cuba on April 16, 1961. The dates of these revolutions are approximations rather than absolutes. For example, in Cuba, April 16, 1961, had been selected as a symbolic date making Fidel Castro's announcement of Cuba's affiliation with the Communist system. „He repeated it more fully and formally on May 1, 1961, but the former date had gained recognition as the official inauguration of the new era.“ Draper, Theodore: *Castro's Revolution: Myths and Realities*. New York 1962, p. 115. Therefore the dates in this study are to be considered as symbolic expressions enabling us to build a construct for quantitative analysis. Furthermore, there is no general agreement on dates concerning, for instance, military intervention in Eastern Europe after 1944, in either Communist or non-Communist literature.

⁵ In Russia-Petrograd from July 16 to 18, 1917; in Finland from January 27 to April 12, 1918; in Germany-Berlin from January 5 to 12, 1919; in Hungary from March 21 to August 1, 1919; in Bavaria from April 13 to May 1, 1919; in Austria on June 15, 1919; in Germany-Mansfeld in March, 1921; in Germany-Hamburg

the fourteen successful socialist revolutions eleven had been accomplished non-peacefully (in Russia, North Vietnam, China, Korea, Yugoslavia, Albania, Bulgaria (1946), Poland, Hungary (1947), Romania and East Germany) and three peacefully (in Czechoslovakia, Outer Mongolia and Cuba). Of the twenty-four unsuccessful socialist revolutions three were peaceful attempts (in Hungary, India-Kerala and San Marino) and twenty-one non-peaceful attempts (in Russia-Petrograd, Finland, Germany (1919), Bavaria, Austria (1919), Germany (1923), Bulgaria (1923), Estonia, Indonesia (1926), China: Shanghai, Wu-han and Canton, Austria (1934), Spain (1934), Greece (1936), Spain (1937), Greece (1944—45), Burma, Malaya and Indonesia (1948).

Table I.
Four basic types of socialist revolutions, 1917—1962

	peaceful	non-peaceful	
successful	3 (8 %)	11 (29 %)	14 (37 %)
unsuccessful	3 (8 %)	21 (55 %)	24 (63 %)
	6 (16 %)	32 (84 %)	38 (100 %)

Of the eleven successful socialist revolutions that were accomplished non-peacefully, six were usurpations imposed by the agents of the occupying Soviet army (in North Korea, Bulgaria (1946), Poland, Hungary (1947), Romania and East Germany); and five were guerrilla or civil wars (in

on October 5, 1923; in Bulgaria on September 21, 1923; in Estonia on December 1, 1924; in Indonesia-Java and Sumatra in November, 1926; in China: Shanghai in March, 1927; Wu-han from June to July, 1927; and Canton from December 11 to 14, 1927; in Austria-Linz and Vienna from February 12 to 16, 1934; in Spain-Asturias in October, 1934; in Greece from March to May, 1936; in Spain-Catalonia in May, 1937; in Greece from December 1, 1944, to January 11, 1945; in Burma from March, 1948, to present; in Malaya from July 7, 1948, to June 30, 1960; in Indonesia-Madiun in September, 1948; in India-Kerala from April, 1957, to July 31, 1959; and in San Marino from August 14, 1945, to September 19, 1957.

Russia, China, North Vietnam, Yugoslavia and Albania). The form of struggle for the three remaining successful socialist revolutions — accomplished peacefully — two were *coups d'etat* (in Czechoslovakia and Cuba) and one was a plebiscite in Outer Mongolia. Of the twenty-one non-peaceful socialist revolutions that failed, sixteen were armed uprisings (in Russia-Petrograd, Germany (1919), Germany (1921), Germany (1923), Bulgaria (1923), Estonia, Indonesia (1926), China: Shanghai, Wu-han and Canton, Austria (1934), Spain (1934), Greece (1936), Spain (1937) and Indonesia (1948)) and five guerrilla or civil wars (in Finland, Bavaria, Greece (1944—45), Malaya and Burma). The form of struggle for peaceful socialist revolutions that failed was one *coup d'etat* in Hungary in 1919 and two by electoral process in India-Kerala and San Marino.

Table II.

Forms of struggle of four basic types of socialist revolutions, 1917—1962

	peaceful			non-peaceful			
	Coup d'etat	Plebiscite	Electoral Process	Military Interven.	Guerrilla Civil War	Armed Uprising	
successful	2 (5.3 %)	1 (2.6 %)	0	6 (15.8 %)	5 (13.2 %)	0	14 (36.9 %)
unsuccessful	1 (2.6 %)	0	2 (5.3 %)	0	5 (13.2 %)	16 (42 %)	24 (63.1 %)
	3 (7.9 %)	1 (2.6 %)	2 (5.3 %)	6 (15.8 %)	10 (26.4 %)	16 (42 %)	38 (100 %)

In many cases the form of struggle was not a single-factor affair. Overlappings of one form of struggle with another were frequent occurrences in the history of socialist revolutions. For example, in North Korea and Poland military intervention and in Czechoslovakia and Cuba the *coups d'etat* were all preceded by guerrilla wars which if not controlled were at least infiltrated by the Communist takeover at an opportune time.

Perhaps a more important factor affecting the outcome of socialist revolutions was Communist military conquest and cooperation. In fact, Communist expansion was more effective through military conquest and occupation than through any other form of struggle⁶. Thus, while revolutionary

⁶ Since October, 1917, the following territories were acquired by the Communists through military conquest and occupation: Estonia (from October, 1917, to January, 1918), the Ukraine (from December 27, 1917, continuously), Belorussia (from December 30, 1917, continuously), Turkestan (from January 3, 1918, continuously), North Caucasus (from April, 1918, continuously), Latvia (from December, 1918, to April, 1919), Lithuania (from January to May, 1919), Slovakia (from

attempts of all types and forms of struggle account for a total of thirty-eight incidents, military conquest and occupation, during the same period of time involved, amount to forty-two cases⁷.

From 1917 to 1920 (the period of „international solidarity with the Soviet people“), there were seven revolutionary attempts of various types (military intervention excluded) trying to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat, but only one succeeded, that in Russia. During the world depression years, 1929—1933, when strikes, unemployment and demonstrations were higher than during any other period of Communist history, and when Communists all over the world were supposed to be guided by the program of the VI. Congress of the Comintern (issued on September 1, 1928) calling for the creation of a „World Union of Soviet Socialist Republics“ through the violent overthrow of bourgeois power and the substitution in its place of proletarian power, there were no revolutionary attempts anywhere and in many countries the membership in Communist parties declined rather than forged ahead⁸. After the Second World War, during the 1945—1950

June 16 to July 5, 1919), Azerbaidjan (from April, 1920, continuously), Armenia (from November 29, 1920, continuously), Poland-Bialystok (from July 31, 1920, to March 18, 1921), Georgia (from February, 1920, continuously), Mongolia (from March 13, 1920, to June 11, 1921), Poland: Polosk-Kamenetz-Podolsk line (from September 17, 1939, to June 22, 1941, and continuously after World War II), Finland-Karelia (from November 30, 1939, to June 22, 1941, and after World War II continuously), Romania-Bessarabia and Bukovina (from June 28, 1940, to June 22, 1941, and continuously after World War II), Lithuania (from August 3, 1940, to June 22, 1941, and continuously after World War II), Latvia (from August 5, 1940, to June 22, 1941, and continuously after World War II), Estonia (from August 6, 1940, to June 22, 1941, and continuously after World War II), Iran-Azerbaidjan and Kurdistan (from October 6, 1941, to May 6, 1946), Romania (from August, 1944, to May 13, 1955), Czechoslovakia (from October, 1944, to December, 1945), Subcarpathian Ruthenia (from February, 1945, continuously), Bulgaria (from September, 1944, to September 15, 1947), Tannu-Tuva (from October 11, 1944, continuously), Poland (from July, 1944, to May 13, 1955), Hungary (from September, 1944, to May 13, 1955), East Germany (from April, 1945, to May 13, 1955), Austria (from April, 1945, to May 15, 1955), Northern Manchuria (from August 9, 1945, to February 15, 1946), North Korea (from August 14, 1945, to January 1, 1949), Southern Sakhalin, Kurile Islands and Port Arthur (from August 15, 1945, continuously), South Korea (from June 25, 1950, to September 10, 1950), Laos (from June, 1952, to March, 1953), Cambodia (from March to July, 1954), and Tibet (from March, 1959, continuously). (The reason for mentioning Estonia, the Ukraine, Belorussia, Turkestan, North Caucasus, Latvia, Lithuania, Azerbaidjan, Armenia, and Georgia separately from Russia during the Bolshevik Revolution is mostly because these territories had declared national independence, without gaining recognition from any governments, prior to the time of conquest and occupation by the Soviet Red Army, in most cases made up of their own nationals. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was not established until December 22, 1922.)

⁷ See Appendix I.

⁸ On the basis of empirical investigation, one tentative answer to the question of why between 1929—1933 there were no socialist revolutionary attempts is this: The Communists must have learned from their past mistakes that unless they have strong party support from the working class and the discontented masses —

period, there were sixteen revolutionary attempts of various types (military intervention included)⁹, however, this time the ratio was almost reversed: There were twelve successful and only four unsuccessful socialist revolutions. Among the successful socialist revolutions the February (1948) coup in Czechoslovakia was probably of greater significance than any other socialist revolution since World War II. It marked the beginning of a new revolutionary era in the history of socialist revolutions.

The Czechoslovak example

The socialist revolution in Czechoslovakia, as the Czechoslovak Communist historians view it today, began on May 27, 1946, one day after the first post-war parliamentary elections, and ended on June 27, 1948, the day when the Czechoslovak Social Democratic party was absorbed into the Communist party of Czechoslovakia¹⁰. From April, 1945, (when the basic principles to which the post-war Czechoslovak government professed allegiance were spelled out in a document known as the Kosice Programme) until May 27, 1946, the Communists in Czechoslovakia were engaged in a so-called national and democratic revolution. The primary task for the Communists in this period was to build Communist strength in the nation. In practice this meant the organization of a mass Communist party controlled by a hard-core Communist elite¹¹; the assumption of power by the Communist-controlled national committees¹²; the formation of a new peo-

rendering them an even chance in the projected struggle — it is better to abstain and go into more intensive preparation for the revolution than to take an uneven chance and risk defeat, which could be a great setback for world Communism as evidenced from the experience in Finland, Germany, Bulgaria, etc. — countries where the Communist parties, after the abortive attempts, were driven underground.

⁹ China, Indochina, Yugoslavia, Albania, Greece, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Korea, Poland, Hungary, Germany, Outer Mongolia, Malaya, Burma, and Indonesia.

¹⁰ See Veselý, Jindřich: Prag Februar 1948. Berlin 1959, pp. 25 and 345.

¹¹ While the Social Democrats, the Populists, the National Socialists and the Slovak Democrats only began to establish and build their organizations, the Communists were already strengthening their mass party . . . The Communist strength in membership was always stronger than that of all the other parties combined. See Veselý 14 and Kozák, Jan: The New Role of National Legislative Bodies in the Communist Conspiracy. Washington 1962, p. 31. Cf. also Kozák, Jan: Znachenije natsional'noy i demokraticeskoy revolyutsii v Chekhoslovakii dlya bor'by rabocheho klassa za sotsializm [The Significance of the National and Democratic Revolution in Czechoslovakia in the Struggle of the Working Class for Socialism]. Voprosy Istorii KPSS, No. 4 (July 1962).

¹² „In the first months after liberation, the national committees wielded extraordinary powers, for no other authority existed and they expressed the first election of self-government after German oppression. In time they organized in communes, districts, and provinces, and were granted broad powers of administration, both in local affairs and as arms of the authority of the government.“ See Diamond, William: Czechoslovakia Between East and West. London 1947, p. 47. Although elections to the national committees were not held until May 16, 1954, shortly after the general election in 1946, the Communists — because of the support from

ple's security system and army¹³; the prohibition of the revival of the political parties which had represented the reactionary interests in pre-war Czechoslovakia — (in this group was also included the largest pre-war political party, the Agrarian party)¹⁴; a systematic purge of the political, economic and cultural life of the country¹⁵; the settlement of the relations

the Soviet army until May, 1945, and because of the extraordinary strength of their own party since May, 1945 — held 55 per cent of the chairmanships of local national committees, 80 per cent of district national committees, and 100 per cent of provincial national committees. In 37.5 per cent of all local national committees the Communists maintained an absolute majority. See Vratislav Busek and Nicolas Spulber, eds., *Czechoslovakia*. New York 1957, p. 66. — Václav Král, ed., *Vznik a vývoj lidové demokratického Československa* [The Origin and Development of People's Democratic Czechoslovakia]. Československá akademie věd (1961) 225 and 234. — Veselý 25. Thus, the statement that „in 1944—45, under the leadership of the Communist party of Czechoslovakia, national committees became the main mass-media of our national democratic revolution“, was both candid and accurate. See Král 347 and *Komunistická strana Československa; Ústřední výbor, Národní výbory* [National Committees]. Prague 1946.

¹³ After the war the former police force was replaced by the so-called National Security Corps (SNB). The majority of the new security officers were former workers and peasants, some were veterans of the 1944—45 partisan movement, and a large number of the new policemen belonged to the Communist party. The Ministry of Interior, which was in charge of the new security organization, was headed by a Communist whose successful communication of the SNB became one of the major issues during the February, 1948, crisis.

The new Czechoslovak army was built on the Soviet model with Soviet equipment; it resembled the Soviet army in almost every aspect of its organization with the exception that there were no party organizations in the Czechoslovak army units. „In the army [we] introduced only a system of party confidants appointed from the top and reaching down to the company level . . . this system of confidants relied on the support of the enlightenment officers and higher up it was running parallel with the enlightenment apparatus. Thus the organs of enlightenment became the nucleonic forms of the party organs and the party apparatus in the army . . . Developments in the army after 1945 were forged ahead by means of a struggle between the embryos of the new and the remnants of the old elements . . . A significant contribution was made by some army representatives, headed by the then Minister of National Defense, General L. Svoboda, whom the party won to its side and who successfully carried out the military part of the government program.“ See Král 251—252.

¹⁴ This agreement enabled the Communists in Slovakia to divide party power on an equal basis with the Slovak Democrats in spite of the fact that numerically speaking they were actually in a minority. Until the spring of 1946 there were only two political parties — the Slovak Communist party and the Slovak Democratic party — in existence in Slovakia; and because of the „parity system“ (every party being represented by the equal number of officials in the local government), the Communists were able to maintain a lead over their rivals in both the Czech lands (where they had a numerical advantage) and in Slovakia (where they had only one competitor).

¹⁵ „By October, 1946, twenty thousand persons had been arraigned before the People's Courts, one third of them Czechs; 362 of them (of whom 205 were Germans) were executed, 426 sentenced to life imprisonment; 13,548 received sentences amounting to over 100,000 years; 3,771 were acquitted.“ See R. R. Betts, ed., *Central and South East Europe, 1945—1948*. London 1950, p. 176.

between the Czech and Slovak nations on the principle of equality; the expulsion of the German minority, and other measures enabling the Communists to apply the „pincer“ tactic against their enemies.

According to this technique, pressure is first created „from below“ (the masses) through agitation, then it is combined with pressure „from above“ (a Communist-dominated national and local government¹⁶ and parliament) through legislative initiative so that the opposition is constantly on the defense — moving in a Communist-activated area, which can be described as the jaws of a pincer. The aim of this scheme is to force the rivals to yield to exerted pressures by the National Front (representing the political unity) and by the workers and peasants (representing the national unity of the state) so that the adversaries can eventually be controlled and maneuvered into a desirable position for the final kill¹⁷. In Czechoslovakia this final act was accomplished in the middle of February, 1948. Until then the Communists were skillfully employing the „pincer“ technique in a complex process of power struggle.

During the first stage — the national-democratic revolution — the Communists kept alive the struggle against former Nazis and collaborators, against black marketeers and opportunists, against those hostile to the Kosice Programme and against opponents of the Czechoslovak-Soviet alliance. At the same time, within bounds, the Communists encouraged private capitalist enterprise and through their auxiliary organizations and left-wing Social Democrats rallied support for greater civil, political and economic rights in order to bring class antagonism into closer range. However, class struggle on such issues as „reactionary domestic forces“, slow legislative work, „sabotage“ by „the millionnaires“, the Marshall Plan, espionage for a „reactionary power“ and the so-called „plot to overthrow the government“ did not take place until several months after the parliamentary elections of 1946¹⁸. The Communists in Czechoslovakia had decided

¹⁶ Ever since the first Provisional Government was formed in 1945, the Communists, through their fellow-travelers such as Z. Fierlinger, B. Lausmann and L. Svoboda, maintained a simple majority until February, 1948.

¹⁷ As to the question why did the representatives of the non-Communist parties in April, 1945, at Kosice agree to such a program is accurately answered by a Communist historian in this passage: „What could they have done? Their political and organizational positions were very weak yet, whereas the revolutionary clan of the nation was so strong and expressed with such vigor and determination that the representatives of the bourgeoisie in the Government and the National Front had no other alternative but to consent to certain measures which in reality meant the undermining of the very foundations on which the capitalist order was built.“ Veselý 17. Cf. also Taborsky, Edward: Benes and Stalin — Moscow 1943 and 1945. *Journal of Central European Affairs* 13/2 (1953) 154—181.

¹⁸ As a result of the May, 1946, elections, the Communists emerged as the strongest post-war party in Czechoslovakia with 38.1 per cent of the votes cast in their behalf. Second was the National Socialist party with 18.5 per cent; third, the People's party with 15.7 per cent; fourth, the Slovak Democratic party with 14.1 per cent; fifth, the Social Democratic party with 12.1 per cent; sixth, the

first to legitimize their power through the electoral process and then to test it in a class war against the bourgeoisie involving „the revolutionary use of parliament“.

The main ingredients of the Communist strength during the socialist revolution, which in February, 1948, tipped the scales in Communist favor, were: (1) the ability to exploit the labor movement; (2) the monopoly over agricultural policy; and (3) the skill to transform the Social Democratic party into a front organization serving Communist interests.

Ever since the end of the war, the Communist-organized Revolutionary Trade Unions Movement (ROH) proclaimed itself the one and only trade union organization in Bohemia and Moravia. A similar organization, under identical circumstances, was established in Slovakia and on February 28, 1946, the two organizations merged into a single body called the United Revolutionary Trade Unions Movement of Czechoslovakia¹⁹. In spite of the population loss of some 2.5 million since 1939, the strength of the new trade union movement in February, 1948, stood at its pre-war peak of 2 250 000 — eighty-six per cent Czech and fourteen per cent Slovak members²⁰. This membership made it the largest single organization in the country. By law, ROH was permitted to participate and to make suggestions in all legislative and executive matters affecting the workers; it had the right to representation on all public bodies not popularly elected; and it enjoyed a decisive position in management. Since ROH had a hierarchically centralized structure, decision making was vested in a twenty-member Board of Trustees of the Central Council of Trade Unions (URO) — both

Slovak Freedom party with less than one per cent; and seventh, the Slovak Labor party with less than one per cent. It is noteworthy that the Marxist parties (the two Communist parties, the Social Democratic party and the Slovak Labor party) secured 51 per cent of the votes cast. 516,428 out of a total electorate of 7,583,784 evaded the law of compulsory voting, spoiled their ballot papers, sent them in blank, or just declared their indifference to the election. For additional information on the elections, see Diamond 239.

¹⁹ After the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia in 1939, the once scattered and diffused labor movement (in 1930's the number of unions, organized by crafts, reached about 700, of which 485 were organized into nation-wide centrals, while the remainder were independent) had been reorganized and unified (both in the so-called Protectorate and the Slovak state) into two unions, one for private employees and one for civil servants. They became the nuclei for the passive Communist underground movement until the twilight of Nazism in Czechoslovakia. When the Russian Red Army was entering Czechoslovakia, the members of the labor movement began to organize underground national committees, revolutionary guards in factories, and after the liberation they assumed police duties in many cities and towns. Thus, it is safe to assume that what Anton Zapotocký, leader of the Red Unions in pre-war Czechoslovakia, could not accomplish from 1927 to 1938, the Nazis did during their occupation of Czechoslovakia. See Zapotocký, A.: *Boj o jednotu odborů* [The Struggle for the Unification of Trade Unions]. Prague 1949.

²⁰ The number of wage and salary earners in Czechoslovakia for that period was 3,500,000. See State Statistical Office: *Statistická příručka republiky Československé*. Prague 1948, p. 41.

dominated by the Communist party. Thus, whenever the Communist strategists needed to exert pressure on their rivals from below, they could call on the trade unions; the leadership of the labor movement would see to it that labor support for Communist programs was available in noticeable measure. The trade unions in post-war Czechoslovakia were controlled by Communists and not by Social Democratic bureaucrats.

ROH, as a class and socialist organization, consolidated the unity of the workers' class; it enhanced its revolutionary strength and weight and, under the leadership of the Communist party, it used its strength most effectively for the fortification of the people's democratic power and for the advancement of the socialist revolution²¹.

What URO was able to achieve for the Communists during the national-democratic revolution in the labor movement, the „Peasants' Commissions“ were able to master in the agricultural drive during the socialist revolution. As organs of the landless, small and medium farmers (applicants for land), these commissions — founded and controlled by Communists — represented the strongest organized farm group demanding a new land reform in Czechoslovakia²². Their pressure on the non-Communist parties in the Czechoslovak Parliament helped to trigger off a class struggle with the bourgeoisie which in February, 1948, culminated in Communist seizure of power.

The Communist scheme for the advancement of the socialist revolution in agriculture entailed the following steps. First, the members of the Peasants' Commissions discussed a draft proposal for land reform, submitted to them by the Communist-controlled Ministry of Agriculture; then, after voting upon it, they drew up petitions and passed resolutions in favor of the draft bill which was forwarded by thousands to Parliament where the Communists openly agitated and debated for passage of the program. M. P.'s who were opposed to the measure were exposed as friends of „kulaks“ and enemies of the people. Next, the Ministry of Agriculture announced even more drastic land reform proposals — thus exerting more pressure „from above“, which in turn created greater intensity of the class struggle. In order to bring the complex process to a climax, delegations from the Peasants' Commissions — joined by representatives of other Communist-inspired organizations — stormed the Parliament building and shouted slogans

²¹ Kozák 25.

²² In accordance with the Kosice Programme, the first large transfer of land was carried out in 1945 and early 1946 when 2,946,395 hectares of land belonging to „big holders, enemies and traitors“ were confiscated and allotted, on the basis of decrees, to 305,148 families of farm workers, tenants and small-holders. Large landowners — holding more than 50 hectares of land — still occupied approximately one-fifth of the land, which the Communists interpreted as dangerous bourgeois strength in the countryside. Therefore, in the fall of 1946, the Communist-headed Ministry of Agriculture announced a proposal for a drastic „reform“ program that would confiscate land from the so-called „rest-estate holders“ and „speculators“, i. e., land-owners with over 150 hectares of arable or 250 hectares of agricultural land. See Kozák 28—29.

demanding immediate implementation of the proposal — thus exerting more pressure „from below.“ Finally, the pressure from „above“ and from „below“ closed like the claws of a pair of pincers and the badly shaken opposition, suffering from political pressure, gave way to the passage of the land reform laws which were interpreted by Communists and non-Communists alike as one more Communist victory. When the last step of this scheme was actually taken, according to the Communist historian Jan Kozák, on July 11, 1947, the consequences of it were: „the liquidation of more of the economic positions of the bourgeoisie in the village, a big political defeat of the bourgeoisie (its increasing isolation), a considerable strengthening and broadening of the bond between the workers' class and the working peasantry²³.“

Since it was imperative for the Communists in Czechoslovakia during the socialist revolution always to be on the offensive²⁴, pressures against the opposition, similar to those mentioned above, continued in full dosage until February 20, 1948. Twelve non-Communist party leaders in the twenty-six-member Gottwald government — exhausted and unable to cope with such pressures any longer — resigned and thus prompted a Communist-engendered government crisis. While the disorganized opponents were still in shock, suffering from Communist „fair play“, the proponents were displaying „mass support“ for Premier Gottwald by organizing workers' and peasants' demonstrations and by parading armed militia-men in the town squares. Meanwhile, pressure had been mounted against a feeble old man, the President of the Republic, to accept the resignations of the twelve ministers and to appoint new ones (Communists and fellow-travelers) — hand picked long before the February crisis by the Presidium of the Communist party. With the formation of a new government, suddenly the opposition disintegrated, opportunists from the opposite side of the aisles found new allies, and the Communist party seemed to be steadily moving towards the final stage of the socialist revolution. By February 25, 1948, the transfer from the old to the new government through the habit of obedience was for all practical purposes completed. The replacement of the capitalist with the Communist state's monopoly of power, however, had not become final until June 27, 1948.

The period between the February coup and the June *Gleichschaltung* was effectively used by the Communists to win to their side the „orphans“ of capitalism and to consolidate the power of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the new people's democratic state. For these ends the Communists employed the following means: They initiated a third land reform which, as an overture to collectivization announced in November, 1949, limited private ownership of the land to fifty hectares in size²⁵; permitted a new in-

²³ Kozák 31.

²⁴ Král 176.

²⁵ For additional information on this, see Busek 250 ff.

flux of members into the Communist party²⁶; introduced a new constitution which formalized the transmission belts of the new regime²⁷; gradually removed all „enemies of the people“ from responsible positions in the state; and, on May 28, held a new election, this time with a single list of candidates receiving 89.3 per cent of the votes cast (the rest were blank ballots indicating opposition), which legitimized the power they acquired in February, 1948. Hereafter the road was open for the Communists to travel with full speed towards the complete establishment of Communist monopoly of power in the state. It took them only one month to reach their destination.

On June 7, Edward Benes formally resigned his post as President of the Czechoslovak state and on June 27 the Communist party rejoiced over the incorporation of the expurgated rump of the Social Democratic party. According to Klement Gottwald, President Benes' successor, June 27 was as outstanding in the history of the Czechoslovak working class as May, 1945, and February, 1948²⁸. It symbolized the finale of a performance given by the left-wing members of the Social Democratic party under the „baton“ of their leader, Zdenek Fierlinger. First as Premier and later as Vice-Premier, Fierlinger was instrumental in converting the National Front into a „symphony orchestra“ monopolized by Communist patrons.

With Social Democratic support in both the government and the legislature, the Communists were able to put through all their major proposals by simple majority. Since in the multipolar system of the national-front government the balance lay with the Social Democrats, the non-Communists, eager to win Social Democratic support, were also prepared to yield to Social Democratic demands which, in effect, represented Communist proposals advertently assigned for implementation to their front organization.

The post-war Social Democratic party, which was built vertically by the surviving left-wing leaders as an integral part of Communist power²⁹, served both as a Communist catalyst and a national solidifier in the political arena of new Czechoslovakia. Considering the strength of the pre-war Social Democratic party, especially in the labor movement³⁰, the reason for organizing two rather than one Marxist parties, at least in the Czech lands, becomes obvious. In order to capture the forty per cent of all union members who before the war belonged to Social Democratic unions, and in order to

²⁶ For a table on membership changes, see below, p. 383.

²⁷ For details, see Taborsky, Edward: *Communism in Czechoslovakia, 1948—1960*. Princeton 1961, pp. 165—348.

²⁸ *Komunistická strana Československa: S jednotnou stranou dělnické třídy k vítězství socialismu* [With a Unified Party of the Working Class to the Victory of Socialism]. Prague 1948, p. 6.

²⁹ See Z. Fierlinger's testimony of this in his address to the Merger Convention of the two parties on June 27, 1948, in *ibid.* 31—33.

³⁰ For a penetrating analysis of Communist strength in Czechoslovakia and other East European countries, see Burks, R. V.: *The Dynamics of Communism in Eastern Europe*. Princeton 1961.

prevent the right-wing leaders from usurping the potential Social Democratic power, the left-wing leaders, supported by the Soviet army and Czech Communists, built a new Social Democratic party which in reality became a branch of the Communist party under a different label. Under left-wing management, the Social Democratic party had become an indispensable tool of Communist conspiracy. Without Social Democratic support, Communist pressure „from above“ would have been a fiasco and the *peaceful* seizure of power in February, 1948, unattainable.

The above analysis of the peaceful socialist revolution in Czechoslovakia is derived from arguments mostly presented by Communist historians of that country. Our next task is to examine the Communist Chinese interpretation of the socialist revolution in Czechoslovakia in the light of the Sino-Soviet rift and then to extricate the lessons that follow from the controversy.

The Peking viewpoint

Unlike the Communists in Prague, Peking is of the opinion that the Communist monopoly of power in Czechoslovakia was taken from the bourgeoisie non-peacefully during World War II rather than peacefully during the period from May, 1946, to June, 1948. The Chinese Communists argue that in the course of the anti-fascist war the Communist party of Czechoslovakia, by employing „guerrilla warfare and armed uprisings against the fascists“, was able to establish a national coalition government which „was in essence a people's democratic dictatorship under the leadership of the proletariat, i. e., a form of the dictatorship of the proletariat“³¹. The events in February, 1948, according to the Chinese interpretation of the socialist revolution in Czechoslovakia, represent „ . . . a counter-revolutionary *coup d'etat* to overthrow the people's government by an armed rebellion. But the government led by the Communist party immediately deployed its armed forces and organized armed mass demonstrations, thus shattering the bourgeois plot for a counter-revolutionary come-back. These facts clearly testify that the February event was not a ‚peaceful‘ seizure of political power by the working class from the bourgeoisie but a suppression of a counter-revolutionary bourgeois *coup d'etat* by the working class through its own state apparatus, and mainly through its own armed forces“³².

In other words, Peking would like us to believe that the socialist revolution in Czechoslovakia began in August, 1944, (with the „Communist led“ Slovak National Uprising) and ended in May, 1945, (with the „Communist led“ Prague Uprising and the establishment of the Provisional government — designated as „a people's democratic dictatorship under the leadership of the proletariat“). From then on, according to Peking, the administration, the armed forces, the police, the courts, legislation, the schools, trade, indu-

³¹ JMJP-HC joint editorial, March 31, 1964.

³² *Ibid.*

PLACE (In Chronological Order)	MILITARY CONQUEST and OCCUPATION	TYPES OF SOCIALIST REVOLUTIONS				FORMS OF REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLE					
		Peaceful	Non-Peaceful	Successful	Unsuccessful	Military Interv.	Armed Uprising	Guerrilla or Civil War	Coup d'Etat	Plebiscite	Elect. Process
1. Russia (Petrograd)			x		VII. 16—18, 1917		VII. 16—18, 1917				
2. Russia			x	XII. 30, '22				X. 1917 — XII. 1922			
3. Estonia (SRA)	X. 1917 — I. 1918										
4. Ukraine (SRA)	XII. 27, 1917—										
5. Belorussia (SRA)	XII. 30, 1917—										
6. Turkestan (SRA)	I. 3, 1918—										
7. Finland			x		I. 27 — VI. 12, 1918			I. 27 — IV. 12, 1918			
8. N. Caucasus (SRA)	IV. 1918—										
9. Germany (Berlin)			x		I. 5—12, 1919		I. 5—12, 1919				
10. Latvia (SRA)	XII. 1918 — IV. 1919										
11. Lithuania (SRA)	I.—V. 1919										
12. Hungary		x			III. 21 — VIII. 1, '19				III. 21 — VIII. 1, '19		
13. Bavaria			x		IV. 13 — V. 1, 1919			IV. 13 — V. 1, 1919			
14. Austria			x		VI. 15, 1919		VI. 15, 1919				
15. Slovakia (HRA)	VI. 16 — VII. 5, 1919										
16. Azerbaidjan (SRA)	IX. 1920—										
17. Armenia (SRA)	XI. 29, 1920										
18. Poland (Bialystock — SRA)	VII. 31, '20 — III. 18, '21										
19. Georgia (SRA)	II. 1921—										
20. Germany (Mansfeld)			x		III. 1921		III. 1921				
21. Mongolia (SRA)	III. 13 — IV. 11, 1921										
22. Germany (Hamburg)			x		X. 5, 1923		X. 5, 1923				
23. Bulgaria			x		IX. 21, 1923		IX. 21, 1923				
24. Estonia			x		XII. 1, 1924		XII. 1, 1924				
25. Indonesia (Java)			x		XI. 1926		XI. 1926				
26. China (Shanghai)			x		III. 1927		III. 1927				
27. China (Wu-han)			x		VI.—VII. 1927		VI.—VII. 1927				
28. China (Canton)			x		XII. 11—14, 1927		XII. 11—14, 1927				
29. China (Prov. Govt.)			x	X. 1, 1949				XI. 7, '31 — X. 1, '49			
30. Austria (Linz — Vienna)			x		II. 12—16, 1934		II. 12—16, 1934				
31. Spain (Asturias)			x		X. 1934		X. 1934				
32. Greece			x		III.—V. 1936		III.—V. 1936				
33. Spain (Catalonia)			x		V. 1937		V. 1937				
34. Poland (Polosk — Podolsk — SA)	IX. 17, '39 — VI. 22, '41										
35. Finland (Karelia — SA)	IX. 30, '39 — VI. 22, '41										
36. Romania (Bessarabia and Bukovina — SA)	VI. 28, '40 — VI. 22, '41										
37. Lithuania (SA)	VIII. 3, '40 — VI. 22, '41										
38. Latvia (SA)	VIII. 5, '40 — VI. 22, '41										
39. Estonia (SA)	VIII. 6, '40 — VI. 22, '41										
40. Iran (Azerbaidjan — SA)	X. 6, '41 — V. 6, '46										
41. Indochina (N. Vietnam)			x	IX. 2, '45				III. 1941 — VII. 20, '54			
42. Yugoslavia (AVNOJ)			x	XI. 29, '45				XI. 1942 — XI. 29, 1945			
43. Albania (LNC)			x	I. 10, '46				IX. 1942 — I. 10, 1946			
44. Greece (PEEA — EAM — ELAS)			x		XII. 1, '44 — I. 11, '45			III. 1944 — I. 11, 1945			
45. Bessarabia & Bukovina (SA)	VI. 1944—										
46. Karelia (SA)	VII. 1944—										
47. Latvia (SA)	VII. 1944—										
48. Iran (Azerbaidjan — SA)	VII. 1944—										
49. Lithuania (SA)	VIII. 1944—										
50. Estonia (SA)	IX. 1944—										
51. Romania (SA)	VIII. '44 — V. 13, '55		x	XI. 1947		IX. 1947					
52. Czechoslovakia (SNP — PP — SA)	X. '44 — XII. '45	x		II. 25, 1948				VIII. '44 — V. 9, '45	II. 21—25, '48		
53. Poland (KRN — AL — SA)	VII. '44 — V. 13, '55		x	I. 19, 1947		I. 19, 1947					
54. Bulgaria (SA)	IX. '44 — IX. 15, '47		x	IX. 9, 1946		IX. 9, 1946					
55. Hungary (SA)	IX. '44 — V. 13, '55		x	V. 1947		V. 1947					
56. Tannu — Tuva (SA)	X. 11, 1944—										
57. Subcarpathian Ruthenia	II. 1945—										
58. Austria (SA)	IV. '45 — V. 16, '55										
59. East Germany (SA)	IV. '45 — V. 13, '55		x	X. 7, 1949		V. 30, 1949					
60. Northern Manchuria (SA)	VIII. 9, '45 — II. 15, '46										
61. North Korea (PEL — SA)	VIII. 14, '45 — I. 1, '49		x	IX. 6, 1945		IX. 6, 1945		IX. '44 — VIII. 14, '45			
62. So. Sakhalin, Kurile Is. & Port Arthur (SA)	VIII. 15, 1945—										
63. Outer Mongolia		x		X. 20, 1945					X. 20, 1945		
64. Malaya			x		VII. 7—16, 1948			VII. 7, '48 — VI. 31, '60			
65. Burma			x		III. 1948—			III. 1948			
66. Indonesia (Madiun)			x		IX. 1948		IX. 1948				
67. South Korea (KPA)	VI. 25, '50 — IX. 10, '50										
68. Laos (NVPA)	VI. '52 — III. '53										
69. Cambodia (NVPA)	III.—VII. 1954										
70. India (Kerala)			x		IV. '57 — VII. 31, '59					IV. '57 — VII. 31, '59	
71. Tibet (CPA)	III. 1959										
72. San Marino			x		VIII. 14, '45 — IX. 19, 1957					VIII. 14, '45 — IX. 19, '57	
73. Cuba (26JM)			x	IV. 16, 1961				VII. 26, '53 — I. 1, '59	IV. 16, 1961		
Totals	42	6	32	14	24	6	16	10	3	1	2

Key: SRA = Soviet Revolutionary Army
HRA = Hungarian Red Army
SA = Soviet Army
AVNOJ = Anti-Fascist Council of National Liberation of Yugoslavia
LNC = National Liberation Movement
PEEA = Pan-Popular Committee of National Liberation
EAM = National Liberation Front
ELAS = People's Liberation Army
PP = Prague Uprising
SNP = Slovak National Uprising
KRN = National Council of the Homeland
AL = People's Army
KPA = Korean People's Army
NVPA = North Vietnamese People's Army
CPA = Chinese People's Army
PEL = People's Emancipation League
26JM = 26th of July Movement

stry, foreign relations and other parts of the state power monopoly were in the hands of Czechoslovak Communists who in February, 1948, continued to maintain this power in spite of the „reactionary plot“ to overthrow them.

To those individuals who lived in Czechoslovakia prior to February, 1948, or who participated in the struggle against Nazi occupation, or who were members in President Benes' state apparatus, the Chinese explanation of the socialist revolution in Czechoslovakia is at best a fantasy. Communist power in Czechoslovakia was weakest (paradoxically, however, Soviet power — due to the so-called liberation of Czechoslovakia—was strongest) from August, 1944, to May, 1945 — it was gradually stronger in 1946 and 1947 and strongest in 1948.

Table III.

Membership of the Communist party of Czechoslovakia*

Period	Number of Members
May, 1945	27,000
August, 1945	712,776
March, 1946	1,081,544
November, 1947	1,281,138
January, 1948	1,539,672
November, 1948	2,500,000

* Sources: Rudé právo [Prague], March 31, 1946. — Korbel, Pavel: Numerical Strength and Composition of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. Published in mimeographed form by the Free Europe Committee. New York 1954, p. 4. — Klimeš, Miloš and Zachoval, Marcel: Příspěvek k problematice únorových událostí v Československu v únoru 1948 [A Contribution to the Analysis of Problems Related to the February Events in Czechoslovakia in February, 1948]. ČsČH 6 (1958) 191. — Rudé právo, November 20, 1948.

As Table III shows, it took the Communists in Czechoslovakia almost three years, going through a complex process, to build up their power position in the multi-party political society before they could attempt to seize power from their rivals³³. The Communists claimed that while the other parties organized in 60 to 70 per cent of the communities, Communist cells blanketed 96 per cent of all localities³⁴. By the end of 1947, in spite of the sample polls indicating a drop in the Communist vote, the Communists controlled all major arteries of the power organism of the Czechoslovak state. Now the Communists were ready for a showdown with their opponents; they possessed at least an even chance to win the mono-

³³ For a revealing account of how the socialist revolution in Czechoslovakia was effected, see Král, op. cit.; Kozák, op. cit.; and Veselý, op. cit.

³⁴ Rudé právo, November 30, 1948. Cf. also Zinner, Paul E.: Communist Strategy and Tactics in Czechoslovakia, 1918—48. New York 1963, p. 124.

poly of power in Czechoslovakia. They did so — and by doing so — they transferred the power peacefully, without violence, in February, 1948, and not in May, 1945. Czechoslovakia's affiliation with the Communist system was effected after and not before the February coup. Hence the Kremlin explanation, although not absolutely correct, is more plausible today than the Peking viewpoint.

„Here as elsewhere, the fascist occupation regime with its collaborators was overthrown by armed action. But the national and democratic revolution developed into socialist revolution along peaceful lines. The alliance of the Czechoslovak and Soviet people prevented imperialist intervention; the workers' representatives took over the key posts in the government and the national committees, the organs of revolutionary authority; the working people established control over the nerve centers of political and economic life; the working class was united, the Communists formed a bloc with the Left Social Democrats and other democratic forces; the counter-revolutionary putsch was nipped in the bud; meetings, demonstrations and strikes but no destruction of production capacities — such was the general pattern of the February, 1948, events. The workers, led by the Communists, carried arms but did not use them . . .³⁵“

This explanation of the parliamentary road to socialism in Czechoslovakia is predicated on the Kremlin assertion, first introduced at the 20th Congress of the CPSU, that as a result of the changes in the world balance of forces „imperialism and reaction“ have changed their nature, the law of class struggle has changed, and hence armed revolution as a form of struggle has become outmoded³⁶. Since the essence of socialist revolution today is „not so much in coercion as in creating a new society“³⁷, „revolution“ in the Kremlin vocabulary now implies „social coercion“ and not necessarily armed violence.

Under conditions of peaceful coexistence, the Kremlin asserts, „favorable opportunities are created for the intensification of class struggle in the capitalist countries, for the national liberation movement and socialist revolutions“³⁸. Such „opportunities“ include the nationalization of certain „monopolized sectors of industry“, the democratization of the management of public sectors of the economy, the development of the initiative and participation of the working people in all spheres of economic life, the creation of democratic control over capital investments in industry and agriculture, the carrying out of agrarian reforms, and others. Thus, Moscow maintains, „now the working class can carry out the socialist revolution by peaceful means if it wages a struggle to uphold and extend its democratic and social rights and gains“³⁹.

³⁵ Kar 33.

³⁶ JMJP-HC joint editorial, March 31, 1964.

³⁷ Kar 31.

³⁸ Pravda, January 7, 1963.

³⁹ Kar 36.

Peking, however, finds Khrushchev's thesis of peaceful coexistence the same as preaching class peace. The Chinese equate peaceful coexistence and the peaceful road to socialism with heresy committed by revisionism⁴⁰. The Chinese Communist leaders admit that historical conditions have changed fundamentally since the end of World War II⁴¹, however, they categorically deny the Kremlin allegation that „imperialism and reaction“ have changed their nature:

„Abundant historical evidence indicates the reactionary classes never give up power voluntarily . . . They are always the first to use violence to repress the revolutionary mass movement, and to provoke civil war, thus placing armed struggle on the agenda⁴².“

As much as the leaders of the Communist Party of China (CPC) believe that the chief component of the „bourgeois state machine“ is armed force and not parliament, to them the acquisition of a stable majority in parliament by the proletariat through elections is either impossible or undependable. They consider it impossible because roughly onehalf of the Communist parties in the capitalist countries are still illegal and undependable because the bourgeoisie can always change the electoral laws of the country. Thus, in Mao Tse-tung's own words,

„The seizure of power by armed force, the settlement of the issue by war, is the central task and the highest form of revolution. This Marxist-Leninist principle holds good universally, for China and for all other countries . . . We may say that only with guns can the whole world be transformed⁴³.“

Hence the Chinese Communists exalt their own concept of *armed* revolution and repudiate the Kremlin concept of peaceful transition.

Concluding observations

Ten years ago, at the 20th Congress of the CPSU, the Communist theory of socialist revolution was reexamined in the light of certain fundamental changes that had taken place in the world since the Second World War. As a result, revolution was termed synonymous with social coercion rather than armed violence.

⁴⁰ For the complete text of the Chinese criticism, see „The Proletarian Revolution and Khrushchev's Revisionism.“ JMJP-HC joint editorial, March 31, 1964.

⁴¹ „The change is mainly manifested in the great increase in the forces of imperialism. Since the war, the mighty socialist camp and a whole series of new and independent nationalist states have emerged, and there have occurred a continuous succession of armed revolutionary struggles, a new upsurge in the mass movements in capitalist countries and the great expansion of the ranks of the international Communist movement, the international proletarian socialist revolutionary movement in Asia, Africa and Latin America have become the two major historical trends of our time.“ JMJP-HC joint editorial, March 31, 1964.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Problems of War and Strategy, Selected Military Writings. Peking 1963, pp. 267 and 273. Quoted in JMJP-HC joint editorial, March 31, 1964.

Moscow's optimal belief in peaceful socialist revolution — challenged by Peking — is based on the premise that under conditions of peaceful co-existence favorable opportunities are created for the intensification of class struggle in the capitalist countries, for the national liberation movement and socialist revolutions in the underdeveloped areas. The Kremlin leaders cite Czechoslovakia as a case in point. „Here as elsewhere, the fascist occupation regime with its collaborators was overthrown by armed action. But the national and democratic revolution developed into socialist revolution along peaceful lines“⁴⁴. Peking, on the other hand, considers the achievement of the socialist revolution in Czechoslovakia as a non-peaceful development during the final stage of World War II. „From China to Cuba“, Peking proclaims, „all [Communist] revolutions, without exception, were won by armed struggle and by fighting against armed imperialist aggression and intervention“⁴⁵. Peking insists that there is no historical precedent for peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism and hence regards the use of violence a prerequisite to proletarian revolution.

How accurate is the Chinese contention? Is there an historical precedent for a Communist party seizing power peacefully? Who has a better chance of convincing the members of the world Communist movement about the validity of the two types of socialist revolution, Peking or the Kremlin? What should be the role of the non-Communist countries, and, of course, the Czechoslovak exile, in this controversy?

Unfortunately, on the basis of gross figures, Peking's argument for non-peaceful methods of socialist revolutions is historically justified. As Table I shows, eighty-four per cent of all socialist revolutions were non-peaceful and only sixteen per cent were peaceful. Seventy-eight and one-half per cent of all successful revolutions were non-peaceful and only twenty-one and one-half per cent were peaceful. However, if we disregard the old cliché that history repeats itself and take into consideration the present danger involving annihilation of mankind, then the Chinese claim obviously cannot be considered justified. Furthermore, if we accept the premise that it was predominantly the Western challenge manifested by the arms race, the ability to cope with chronic tension during the ice period of the so-called Cold War, the nuclear stalemate and the capability to overkill that compelled the Soviet Union to seek competitive peaceful coexistence, which in turn made war and violent revolution as methods of continuation of foreign policy obsolete, then we must also admit that the success or failure of the Chinese advocacy with respect to their own concept of revolution will greatly depend on whether or not the non-Communist countries will permit Mao Tse-tung to prove his theory in practice. Should the Chinese Communist leader be successful in his endeavor, we can be certain that all gains toward peace would suddenly be jeopardized by the blind ambition

⁴⁴ Kar 33.

⁴⁵ JMJP-HC joint editorial, March 31, 1964.

and excessive optimism of the Communist warmongers. It must be, therefore, the duty of all peace-loving nations of the world to circumvent the Chinese militant philosophy of revolution from becoming a practical tool of international politics. It must be done by all nations using every available means — including that of the *Quai d'Orsay* (aspiring to resolve the issue by using political power rather than military force). As the most powerful non-Communist country in the world, the United States must let Peking know that any Communist Chinese sponsored revolution or military adventure anywhere in the world would necessitate multilateral action against her. Perhaps Communist China will one day realize — as did Communist Russia — that any change by force is futile especially when it incorporates the possibility of self-destruction. If, however, the Soviet Union should continue to promise military aid to Communist China, in case of war, it is doubtful that Peking will soon change its *bellicose* attitude toward the United States and her allies. One might even venture to argue that the present-day polarized Communist system is, military speaking, as strong as ever because it is able to accommodate extremists of the left and the right as well as those in the center of the spectrum without actually sacrificing its security arrangement. Thus, while the Sino-Soviet dispute leads to internal diversification of the Communist system, the unity of its security remains unfettered.

The Sino-Soviet controversy over the concept of socialist revolution must not go unchallenged by the Czechoslovak exile. It should induce a reexamination and a response. It is high time for the world engaged in the struggle between darkness and light to learn about the truth concerning the events of February, 1948. No apologia or rationalizations of any kind can help prevent repetition of the pincer technique, skillfully used by Communists, in Asia, Africa, Latin America or Europe. Just as the Communists were able to learn from their own past mistakes — i. e., the unsuccessful Communist revolutions — so must democracies learn from their weaknesses committed in the past *vis-a-vis* totalitarianism. The argument that the Communist *coup d'etat* in Czechoslovakia in February, 1948, was successful because of „the display of Soviet power“ has very little validity today, especially when the question is raised: Was not the display of Soviet power in Czechoslovakia strongest from May to December, 1945; less strong in 1946 and gradually weaker in 1947 and 1948? Had the Czechoslovak Communists considered „Soviet power“ to be the key to a successful socialist revolution, in all probabilities the Prague coup would have been carried out before December, 1945 — before the Soviet army withdrew from Czechoslovakia. The fact remains that unlike in Poland, Hungary, Romania, Finland, Bulgaria and other countries where the Communist parties were outlawed shortly after World War I, in Czechoslovakia the Communist party had a long tradition — interrupted only during World War II — and a favorable position in the multi-party system of the first republic. It numbered as second largest party in the general elections, held in 1925, and third in the general elections of

1929 and 1935. Hence the strength of the Communist party of Czechoslovakia was built rapidly and effectively after the Second World War. Yet, it took the Communists almost three years, and the use of all available democratic and undemocratic means, to capture the monopoly of power in Czechoslovakia.

This reporter's aim is not to judge but to examine, not to condemn but to correct. Much is to be learned yet from the mistakes committed by the leaders of the democratic forces of the post-World War Two Czechoslovak republik. The plea, therefore, is addressed to those who can bring light to darkness so that truth shall prevail even if the cost is self-criticism and loss of pride. Let us prove to the world that we are worthy pupils of our late teacher, Thomas Garrigue Masaryk.

DER TSCHECHOSLOWAKISCHE KOMMUNISTISCHE STAATSTREICH UND DAS CHINESISCH-SOWJETISCHE STREITGESPRÄCH

Von Peter A. Toma

Die Historiker sprechen von unserer Zeit als von einer Zeit ungeheurer sozialer und politischer Umwälzungen, wobei auf der einen Seite Wissenschaft und Technik den Modernisierungsprozeß repräsentieren, auf der anderen Seite Demokratie und Kommunismus.

In der kommunistischen Terminologie ist die Modernisierung ein wirtschaftlicher Prozeß, bei dem die sozialistische Revolution, die eine neue Gesellschaftsform, nämlich den Kommunismus, hervorzubringen hat, eine bedeutende Rolle spielt. Heute betonen die russischen Kommunisten ausdrücklich die Nützlichkeit friedlicher sozialistischer Revolutionen, indem sie sich auf den tschechoslowakischen Staatsstreich vom Februar 1948 berufen, Revolution leugnen und daran festhalten, daß es in der Geschichte kein Beispiel für den friedlichen Übergang vom Kapitalismus zum Kommunismus gibt.

Vorliegender Beitrag hat sich ein dreifaches Ziel gesteckt: 1. alle sozialistischen Revolutionen von 1917—1962 aufzuzählen; 2. nochmals die Methoden zu prüfen, mit denen das kommunistische Machtmonopol in der Tschechoslowakei hergestellt wurde und 3. den Einfluß des Februar-Staatsstreichs auf das heutige kommunistische revolutionäre Denken zu bestimmen.

Die kommunistische Machtergreifung kann friedlich oder nicht-friedlich vor sich gehen. Die Formen der friedlichen Revolution sind: Staatsstreich, Volksentscheid und Wahlen; die Formen der nicht-friedlichen Revolution sind: Guerrilla- oder Bürgerkrieg, bewaffneter Aufstand und militärische Intervention.

Seit 1917 gab es in der Welt 38 sozialistische Revolutionen. Von den 14 erfolgreichen gingen drei friedlich vor sich, nämlich in der Tschechoslowakei und in Cuba (Staatsstreich) sowie in der Außerer Mongolei (Volksentscheid). Unter den 24 erfolglosen sozialistischen Revolutionen waren ebenso drei friedliche Versuche. In der Geschichte der sozialistischen Revolutionen liefen in vielen Fällen mehrere Formen des Kampfes nebeneinander her, am häufigsten wurde die kommunistische Expansion durch militärische Eroberung und Okkupation bewirkt.

Von den sieben Revolutionsversuchen zwischen 1917 und 1920 hatte nur einer Erfolg, und zwar in Rußland. In den Jahren von 1929—1933, in denen Streiks, Beschäftigungslosigkeit und Demonstrationen häufiger waren als zu irgendeiner anderen Zeit der kommunistischen Geschichte, gab es nirgends Revolutionsversuche und die Kommunistische Partei verlor sogar in vielen Ländern Mitglieder. Nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg, 1945—1950, gab es 16 Revolutionsversuche, von denen 12 Erfolg hatten. Davon erlangte der tschechoslowakische Staatsstreich (1948) größere Bedeutung als irgendeine andere sozialistische Revolution nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg. Er war der Anfang einer neuen Revolutionsära in der Geschichte der sozialistischen Revolution.

Die Sozialistische Revolution in der Tschechoslowakei, wie sie die tschechoslowakischen Historiker heute sehen, begann am 27. Mai 1946, einen Tag nach den ersten parlamentarischen Nachkriegswahlen, und endete am 27. Juni 1948, dem Tag, als die Tschechoslowakische Sozialdemokratische Partei von der Kommunistischen Partei der Tschechoslowakei aufgesaugt wurde. Vom April 1945 bis zum 27. Mai 1946 waren die Kommunisten in der Tschechoslowakei mit einer nationalen und demokratischen Revolution beschäftigt. Die erste Aufgabe dieser Periode war die Bildung einer kommunistischen Stärke in der Nation. Nach dieser Methode wird zuerst durch Agitation ein Druck von unten her erzeugt, der dann, verbunden mit dem Druck von oben, durch gesetzgebende Initiative, die Opposition in eine ständige Verteidigung drängt. Der Zweck dieses Schemas ist, die Gegner zu zwingen, dem Druck von beiden Seiten nachzugeben, und sie schließlich in die für den letzten Schlag wünschenswerte Lage hineinzumaneuvrieren. Die Hauptstützen der kommunistischen Stärke während der sozialistischen Revolution waren: 1. die Fähigkeit, die Arbeiterbewegung auszunützen; 2. die Monopolstellung in der Landwirtschaftspolitik; 3. das Geschick, die Sozialdemokratische Partei in eine Organisation umzuwandeln, die den kommunistischen Interessen diene. Von den 26 Mitgliedern der Gottwald-Regierung traten zwölf nicht-kommunistische Parteiführer auf ständigen Druck von seiten der Kommunisten am 20. Februar 1948 zurück und verursachten somit eine kommunistisch forcierte Regierungskrise. Beneš, der Präsident der Republik, hatte, ebenfalls unter Druck, die Rücktrittserklärungen entgegenzunehmen und neue Minister (natürlich Kommunisten) zu ernennen. Am 25. Februar 1948 war der Übergang von der alten zur neuen Regierung unter dem Anschein der Legalität vollzogen. Der

Zeitraum zwischen dem Staatsstreich im Februar und der Gleichschaltung im Juni wurde von den Kommunisten gut genutzt, um ihre Position zu stärken. Am 28. Mai hielten sie wieder Wahlen ab mit einer einzigen Kandidatenliste, wodurch ihre im Februar erlangte Macht legitimiert wurde. Nun war der Weg frei für die endgültige Errichtung des kommunistischen Machtmonopols. Am 7. Juni trat Eduard Beneš noch formell von seinem Präsidentenposten zurück und am 27. Juni 1948 erfreute sich die kommunistische Partei des Zusammenschlusses mit dem geläuterten Rest der Sozialdemokratischen Partei. Nach Klement Gottwald, dem Nachfolger Benešs auf dem Präsidentenstuhl, war der 27. Juni in der Geschichte der tschechoslowakischen Arbeiterklasse ebenso bedeutend wie der Mai 1945 und der Februar 1948. Ohne die Hilfe der Sozialdemokraten wäre der kommunistische Druck „von oben“ ein Fiasko und die „friedliche“ Machtergreifung im Februar 1948 unerreichbar gewesen.

Im Gegensatz zu den Prager Kommunisten ist Peking der Meinung, daß das kommunistische Machtmonopol in der Tschechoslowakei der Bourgeoisie während des Zweiten Weltkrieges auf nicht-friedlichem Wege entrissen und nicht von Mai 1946 bis Juni 1948 friedlich erlangt wurde; das heißt: Peking möchte glaubhaft machen, daß die sozialistische Revolution in der Tschechoslowakei August 1944 (mit dem kommunistisch-geführten slowakischen Nationalaufstand) begann und Mai 1945 (mit dem kommunistisch-gelenkten Prager Aufstand und der Errichtung der provisorischen Regierung) endete. Von da an wäre die Macht in den Händen der tschechischen Kommunisten gewesen, die im Februar 1948 nur fortführen, ihre Macht zu behaupten. Für Kenner der Verhältnisse ist diese chinesische Interpretation reine Phantasie. Die kommunistische Macht in der Tschechoslowakei war nämlich von August 1944 bis Mai 1945 am schwächsten und wurde dann bis 1948 schrittweise stärker, was eine Tabelle veranschaulicht.

So ist die Erklärung, die der Kreml auf dem 20. Parteitag der KPDSU abgab, und die mit der Auffassung der tschechischen Historiker übereinstimmt, zwar auch nicht korrekt, aber um vieles glaubhafter als die chinesische Ansicht. Auch ist der Kreml der Meinung, daß in der heute veränderten Welt das Wesentliche der sozialistischen Revolution nicht mehr so sehr die Gewaltanwendung als vielmehr die Schaffung einer neuen Gesellschaft sei. Unter den Bedingungen einer friedlichen Koexistenz, behauptet der Kreml, würden günstige Gelegenheiten für die Intensivierung des Klassenkampfes in den kapitalistischen Ländern geschaffen.

Für die Chinesen jedoch ist friedliche Koexistenz und friedlicher Weg zum Sozialismus Häresie, für sie gibt es nur bewaffnete Revolution und sie weisen die Auffassung des Kreml vom friedlichen Übergang zurück. Leider sind Pekings Argumente für die nicht-friedliche Methode der sozialistischen Revolution historisch gerechtfertigt. Es ist darum Pflicht aller friedliebenden Nationen, Peking mit allen Mitteln daran zu hindern, seine militante Philosophie in die Tat umzusetzen.