Between Two Suns

Czechoslovakia and the Sino-Soviet Dispute over the International Communist Movement (1953–1962)

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World War II paved the way for the legitimisation of the foreign policy strategy, which the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia had been pursuing since its foundation in the 1920s. Up to that time, the Soviet Union had mainly been considered as an example of the extreme left, but its wartime success and the emphasis it put on Slavic solidarity made its authority generally acceptable. Moscow acted as the main architect of the German defeat and as the guarantor of Czechoslovak independence. However, it was not until February 1948 that the Communists succeeded in fully incorporating the international goals of the Soviet strategy into Czechoslovak national policy. Communist Prague subordinated its interests to the international commitments of the socialist movement as defined by the Soviets and hastily started to reorganise its alliance system to fit this framework. As a result, Czechoslovak foreign-policy goals exceeded the economic and personnel capacity limits of the state, and in the long-term contributed to the increasing dependence of Czechoslovakia on Moscow.

From Moscow's perspective, this unequal partnership was valued for the strategic situation of Czechoslovakia, its relative economic development and traditionally extensive international contacts, hence its interest in controlling Czechoslovak financial and production resources, foreign policy and security forces. Similarly, the Czechoslovak People's Army was not built with a view to defending the nation,

but rather with the aim of implementing the joint Soviet Bloc strategy.[1] The relations between both allies were heavily lopsided in favour of Moscow. As a result, Czechoslovakia loyally defended the political primacy of Moscow within the international communist movement, facilitated the flow of information and contacts, and mediated trade where Moscow could not act itself. Ideologically, this was justified by the slogan on the international division of labour between socialist countries. The foreign policy activities of Czechoslovakia in the service of Moscow had no geographical limits; however, they were most visible in selected countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America during the period of decolonisation. The triangular Egyptian-Czechoslovak-Soviet agreement from September 1955 became a famous symbol of Czechoslovak policy in Africa.[2] Prague accepted a plan, whereby the national liberation movements in the colonial countries were provided aid in their fight for independent statehood and subsequently also economic support. This was to compel them to accept "the irreversible historical process" leading towards socialism and to form an alliance with the Soviet Union. Both bilateral relations and the activities of Czechoslovakia within international organisations were subordinated to this objective. There was also a rival plan from the People's Republic of China (PRC) for the national liberation movements, encouraging leftist radicals to carry out an implacable armed struggle against the national and international bourgeoisie until ultimate revolutionary victory. This plan had, however, already been rejected by Czechoslovakia at the outset of the Sino-Soviet dispute at the turn of the 1950s and 1960s, and therefore it did not present any internal complications in terms of Czechoslovak policy. For Moscow, the dispute with Beijing over the future of international communism was of vital importance and every effort was made to defend its position. A broad range of instruments was created to regulate relations within the Soviet Bloc. Later, some were also employed in less important and less strained contacts with third parties. This text compares archival documents from the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the National Assembly with documents from the Archive of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (mainly from the Presidium and the Political Bureau fund, its International Department fund and the Antonín Novotný fund). It aims to determine which instruments the Soviets used to influence Czechoslovak foreign policy to act in favour of Moscow in the growing dispute with Beijing, and to what extent these were effective.

1 BÍLEK, Jiří – LÁNÍK, Jaroslav – MINAŘÍK, Pavel – POVOLNÝ, Daniel – ŠACH, Jan: *Československá lidová armáda v koaličních vazbách Varšavské smlouvy: Květen 1955 – srpen 1968* [The Czechoslovak People's Army and the Warsaw Pact: May 1955 – August 1968]. Praha, Ministerstvo obrany ČR 2008, p. 17.

2 SIEBER, Karel – ZÍDEK, Petr: *Československo a Blízký východ v letech 1948–1989* [Czechoslovakia and the Middle East 1948–1989]. Praha, Ústav mezinárodních vztahů [Institute of International Relations] 2009, pp. 54–59; LITTLE, Douglas: The Cold War in the Middle East: Suez Crisis to Camp David Accords. In: LEFFLER, Melvyn P. – WESTAD, Odd Arne (ed.): *The Cold War*, Vol. 2: *Crises and Détente*. Cambridge – New York, Cambridge University Press 2010, pp. 305–326, here p. 306.

Two Suns in the Communist Heavens

While the capitalist world, except for local Communists and their sympathisers, was regarded by Prague as hostile, the Soviet Union stood at the centre of the allied Communist Bloc. The significance of the individual Soviet allies within this space was then ranked according to geographical location, strategic importance for the Eastern Bloc and the current political situation. In the latter half of the 20th century, no organisation existed which possessed the ability to encompass the bulk of the world communist movement as did the interwar Comintern (the Communist International). Until its own dissolution in 1956, the successor organisation, the Cominform (the Communist Information Bureau), remained a forum with limited outreach. As a result, there was no platform to formulate agreement on how the Soviet Bloc, strengthened by the presence of the People's Republic of China, should operate. The differences of opinion, which had already begun to separate the Soviet and Chinese Communists from the end of the 1920s, further complicated relations between Moscow and Beijing after the end of the Chinese civil war when Stalin and Mao Zedong completely disagreed on the approach that should be taken to the conflict on the Korean Peninsula. However, until Stalin's death the Chinese Communists accepted the authority of the Soviet Union. This situation resulted in Moscow providing support to the People's Republic of China only so far as building up its capacity to resist external aggression, hence ensuring the stability of the Soviet Eastern border.[3]

While going through a fierce power struggle inside the Party, Khrushchev probably did not expect to be automatically embraced by all Soviet allies. He was preparing a revision of Stalin's foreign policy, which, in relation to China, resulted in his acceptance of a long-standing invitation from Mao Zedong to visit Beijing. During the visit, which took place at the turn of September and October 1954, Khrushchev made every effort to guarantee fulfilment of the economic requirements presented to him by the President of the Chinese Communists Mao Zedong and the Prime Minister Zhou Enlai. While still in Beijing, Khrushchev agreed to provide a loan of more than 400 million roubles, generous technological assistance to back the industrialisation of China, and top Soviet experts to support the first Chinese five-year plan. He also relinquished control of Sino-Soviet companies and the harbours of Port Arthur and Dalian to Beijing. He was convinced that one year after the end of the Korean conflict, which had proved so costly for China, and only four years from the termination of the exhausting Chinese civil war, China would gratefully rely on the strong Soviet economy. Nevertheless, he showed reluctance to fully

3 Stalin's policy obliged the Chinese Communists to cooperate with Chiang Kai-shek. They did not receive any significant support from Moscow, not even when they were attacked and defeated by the Kuomintang in 1927. This failure posed a threat to Stalin's rise to power. Nevertheless, in December 1936, he did support a new deal which united the Chinese Communists and the Kuomintang in an anti-Japanese united front. In 1949, the Chinese Communists won the civil war without any particular assistance from the Soviets.

sharing the Soviet nuclear programme and categorically rejected any suggestion of readjusting the border of the Mongolian People's Republic (Outer Mongolia) in China's favour.[4]

The communist heavens were lit up by two suns, as the historian Sergey Radchenko described Moscow and Beijing, with some exaggeration, in the title of his book, which charts Sino-Soviet relations after 1962.[5] Whereas the Beijing sun dominated the first Asian-African Solidarity Conference in Indonesian Bandung in April 1955, and began to present itself as a model for the national liberation movements in the colonies, the Moscow sun strengthened its European position in reaction to the Federal Republic of Germany's admission into NATO by forming the Warsaw Pact with its six allies in May 1955.[6] However, the following year was critical for Moscow. Khrushchev's criticism of Stalin's personality cult at the 22nd Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union added fuel to anti-Soviet unrest in Poland and Hungary and these events jeopardised, albeit indirectly, the fragile Soviet-Yugoslav reconciliation. Additionally, in the eyes of Mao Zedong, Khrushchev deprived himself of his potential to claim the absolute authority by rejecting the Stalin cult. Later this became the grounds for Chinese criticism of Soviet policy. But, meanwhile, China began to gather its own information on the recent developments in Poland and Hungary and sought to act as a pro-Soviet mediator in disputes within the Communist Bloc (especially in relation to Yugoslavia).[7] Between 7 and 10 January 1957, a delegation

4 TAUBMAN, William: Chruščov: *Člověk a jeho doba* [Khrushchev: The Man and His Era]. Praha, Jiří Buchal – BB/art 2005, pp. 340–342; GALENOVICH, Yuriy M.: *Rossiya v "kitayskom zerkale": Traktovka v KNR v nachale XXI veka istorii Rossii i russko-kitayskikh otnosheniy* [Russia in the "Chinese Mirror": Interpretation of Russian History and Russian-Chinese Relations in the People's Republic of China at the Beginning of the 21st Century]. Moskva, Vostochnaya kniga 2011, p. 158 n.

5 RADCHENKO, Sergey: *Two Suns in the Heavens: The Sino-Soviet Struggle for Supremacy, 1962–1967.* Washington D.C. – Stanford, Woodrow Wilson Center Press – Stanford University Press 2009.

6 The mainly cultural composition of the Soviet delegation to the preparatory Asian conference before the Bandung Conference indicates that at the very outset Moscow had no intention of competing with China in Asia: whereas China was represented by the writer and the Minister of Culture, Guo Moruo, the Soviet delegation included the writers Nikolai Tikhonov (head of the delegation), Aleksandr Korneychuk, Wanda Wasilewska, Ilya Ehrenburg, and Anatoly Sofronov, the chief-editor of the magazine *Literaturnyy ogonok*, together with the member-correspondent of the Academy of Sciences of the Soviet Union, Georgy Zhukov and the President of the Presidium of the All-Union Chamber of Commerce, Mikhail Nesterov, whose task it was to pursue Soviet economic interests (see Sovětská delegace na asijskou konferenci o zmírnění napětí v mezinárodních vztazích [Soviet Delegation to the Asian Conference on Relaxing Tensions in International Relations]. In: *Rudé právo*, 1 April 1955, p. 3). Only Soviet observers travelled to the Bandung Conference. While in Bandung, Zhou Enlai did not give any pretext for Soviet concern. For example, when Egypt asked him for weapons, he loyally referred the request to Moscow. (For details see DURMAN, Karel: *Popely ještě žhavé* [Ashes Still Hot], Vol. 1: *Válka a nukleární mír* [War and Nuclear Peace]. Praha, Karolinum 2004, pp. 433–435.)

7 VELICHANSKAYA, Lyudmila Aleksandrovna – STYKALIN Aleksander Sergeevich: Mezhdunarodnye soveshchaniya predstaviteley kommunisticheskikh i rabochikh partiy v Moskve

headed by Zhou Enlai successively negotiated in Moscow with the Soviets, the government delegation of the Democratic Republic of Germany, and the Party and government delegation of Hungary. Between 11 and 15 January, the Chinese visited Poland to enquire about the situation there and spent the following two days in Hungary. Only then did the delegation return to Moscow, and on 18 January, after taking part in the customary ceremonial formalities, it travelled back to China. During the year, Mao Zedong openly criticised Khrushchev's foreign policy, but, impressed by the successful launch of Sputnik on 4 October 1957, he began to believe again in the Soviet capacity to contribute to the victory of socialism.[8] He therefore participated in the Soviet search for a new effective mechanism that would ensure Moscow's influence over the global communist movement. Both communist powers agreed that this could best be achieved through an international conference of representatives from the national parties. The first Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties from all over the world was held in Moscow as part of the celebrations of the 40th Anniversary of the Great October Revolution. Mao Zedong came to Moscow over a month earlier in order to prepare the final, joint document together with the Soviets. While he repeatedly claimed allegiance to the Soviet model, his behaviour at the conference, as well as his apparent ambition to act as the main theorist of Marxism-Leninism, reflected the increasing international influence of Chinese Communists and their intention to preserve it.[9]

The following period was decisive for the unfolding Sino-Soviet conflict. During just three years, the original ideological clash developed into an insuperable conflict. Khrushchev relied on a threefold policy of bilateral negotiations, accenting the importance of economic relations; carefully prepared multilateral meetings of Marxist-Leninist parties, which allowed him to exert pressure on China; and military strategy. By 1960, it was clear to Moscow that the economic support provided to China had not had the desired effect. On the contrary, China used

(noyabr' 1957g.) [International Meetings of the Representatives of the Communist and Workers' Parties in Moscow (October 1957)]. Moskva, ROSSPEN, 2013, pp. 25–26.

8 TOMLINA, Nataliya G. – VELICHANSKAYA, Lyudmila A. – STYKALIN, Aleksandr S. (ed.): *Nasledniki Kominterna: Mezhdunarodnyye soveshchaniya predstaviteley kommunisticheskikh i rabochikh partiy* [Successors of the Comintern: International Meetings of the Representatives of the Communist and Workers' Parties]. Moskva, ROSSPEN 2013, p. 35; DURMAN, Karel.: *Popely ještě žhavé*, p. 484. See also articles published in the *Rudé právo* daily between November 1957 and February 1958.

9 TOMLINA, Nataliya G. – VELICHANSKAYA, Lyudmila A. – STYKALIN, Aleksandr S. (ed.): *Nasledniki Kominterna: Mezhdunarodnyye soveshchaniya predstaviteley kommunisticheskikh i rabochikh partiy*, pp. 41–44; Rech tov. Mao Cze-duna na Soveshchanii predstaviteley kommunisticheskikh i rabochikh partiy socialisticheskikh i kapitalisticheskikh stran 18 noyabrya 1957 g. v Moskve [Speech of Comrade Mao Zedong Delivered at the Meeting of the Representatives of the Communist and Workers' Parties of Socialist and Capitalist Countries in Moscow on 18 November 1957]. In: *Ibid.,* pp. 566–574; Manifest mira [Peace Manifest] in *Ibid.,* pp. 222–226; SHEN CHZHIKHUA: O kitaysko-sovyetskikh otnosheniyakh (1950–1960-e gg.) [On Sino-Soviet Relations, 1950–1960]. Moskva, Institut Dal'nego Vostoka RAN, 2014, pp. 102–111.

the "economisation" of international relations in the new Soviet diplomatic strategy as further proof of Khrushchev's ideological heresy. In August 1958, without informing Khrushchev, who was in Beijing at the beginning of the same month, China began to bomb the Taiwan Strait, triggering a crisis with the United States. In return, Khrushchev, who had never hesitated to use the Soviet nuclear arsenal for intimidation, refused to continue sharing the technology of atomic weaponry with China and stopped Soviet aid in this area in August 1959.[10] He claimed that the Soviet Union was ready to defend its allies and commenced preparations for a new international coordination meeting of communist leaders. Three years after the first meeting took place, Moscow hosted the second International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, which was to unite the communist movement again under the Soviet flag. At the meeting, Moscow highlighted its strong theoretical background as well as the important role that the practical support of the world communist movement had played in the successes achieved by the Chinese comrades. During that same time, Beijing (with the assistance of some socialist countries) was looking intently into the possibilities of a partnership with Latin-American countries and Moscow feared that it might be relegated to the position of an obsolete European socialist power, which had gradually given up on efforts to define what was the right path to socialism for the newly emerging Asian, African, and Latin-American countries.

Although in September 1959, in his talks with the American President Dwight Eisenhower, Khrushchev defended Beijing as the rightful representative of China and demanded its admission to the United Nations, within the Soviet Bloc he did everything in his power to prevent the emancipation of Mao's diplomacy in its own right. He obstructed Chinese efforts to put all the members of the Soviet Bloc on a par with one another and in so doing to weaken the Soviet bargaining position. He also rejected the idea of escalating the struggle against capitalism and kept promoting peaceful competition. The Soviet Bloc was not as united as Khrushchev had imagined. Nonetheless, his strong position within the Party discouraged Beijing from supporting some of his opponents from the ranks of the Soviet Stalinists. The final declaration, as the Declaration of the Representatives of the Communist, Workers' and Socialist Parties and the Manifesto of Peace from the Moscow Conference in 1957, was signed by all the participating delegations. However, Beijing and Moscow interpreted these documents differently. They were in agreement that the unity of the international communist movement would benefit the common goal – the defeat of world imperialism. On the other hand, they diverged on

10 According to Chinese historian Shen Zhihua, China and the USSR had successfully cooperated on manufacturing Chinese nuclear weapon since 1956. This cooperation was suspended as a result of Soviet-American disarmament negotiations and also because of the high cost of Soviet equipment, which the PRC could not afford to pay for at that moment. See SHEN CHZHIKHUA: O kitaysko-sovyetskikh otnosheniyakh, pp. 88–93; compare TAUBMAN, William: Chruščov: Člověk a jeho doba, p. 392.

the means of achieving this unity, and defined the hierarchy of specific tasks to be undertaken according to different priorities.[11]

At the same time, the growing Sino-Soviet dispute spilled over into the arena of domestic policies. The Soviet October Revolution and its transformation into everyday Soviet reality was not perceived by China as a model to follow and in April 1958, Beijing initiated the campaign of the Great Leap Forward instead, which was based on the concept of the people's communes, and not the working class. In this context, China began to openly label the Soviet Union as the source of "revisionism," "opportunism" and "hegemonism," and subsequently focused attention on building its own system of allies within the World Federation of Trade Unions,[12] the Non-Aligned Movement, and at Asian-African (later also Latin-American) Solidarity Conferences. After political and economic cooperation between Moscow and Beijing was frozen, tensions further increased because of a border dispute. Understandably, this development led to the suspension of cooperation between China and its Soviet allies.[13]

Party-State Mechanism in Czechoslovak Foreign Policy

After 1948, Czechoslovakia adopted the Soviet theory of international relations, as well as the Soviet strategy of establishing international contacts both along state and Party lines. Similar to Moscow – regardless of who held the post of Prime Minister or Minister of Foreign Affairs at any particular moment – it was the role of the Communist Party authorities to analyse important information and, based on the

11 *Národní archiv, Praha* (hereinafter *NA*) [The National Archive of the Czech Republic], fond 1501 [fund - f.], karton 285 [cardboard box – box], archivní jednotka 367 [archival unit – AU], Minutes of the meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, 21 November 1960, Item 20 – Some documents from the meeting of the fraternal communist and workers' parties; compare TOMLINA, Nataliya G. – VELICHANSKAYA, Lyudmila A. – STYKALIN, Aleksandr S. (ed.): *Nasledniki Kominterna: Mezhdunarodnye soveshchaniya predstaviteley kommunisticheskikh i rabochikh partiy*.

12 The split of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU, established in Paris in 1945) in January 1949 was followed by the summer WFTU Congress in Milan and the November meeting of the WFTU Presidium in Beijing, where a Secretariat was established with the aim of promoting unity within the world trade movement. In the latter half of November 1949, the Secretariat organised the first Trade Union Conference of Asian and Australasian Countries and gradually ensured Chinese dominance within this part of WFTU. The non-communist trade union members formed their own International Confederation of Free Trade Unions in December 1949, which continued in existence until 2006.

13 *Archiv Ministerstva zahraničních věcí České Republiky* (hereinafter *AMZV ČR*) [Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic] f. Politické zprávy Kuba, 1965–1969 [fund Political news Cuba, 1965–1969], Special Political Report No. 1, 24 January 1966; *Ibid.*, f. Teritoriální odbor – tajné (TO-T) Čína, 1955–1959 (hereinafter TO-T Čína) [fund Territorial Department – confidential China, 1955–1959], box 2, file 10, Record of the Visit at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Information about the PRC Contacts with Latin-American Countries, 30 July 1959.

recommendations of, or following instructions from the Soviets, to subsequently oblige the constitutional authorities and lower state officials to act accordingly. The Communist Party also strictly regulated the work of foreign journalists. The most important positions in the key areas of state sovereignty were occupied by people who were both Party and state functionaries. The Party determined strategic priorities and state posts served them as instruments for the implementation of these priorities.

Nevertheless, Communist Party leaders could never be certain as to which steps corresponded at any given moment to current Soviet ideology and strategy which were constantly being modified. Contacts with allied parties and groups abroad were therefore essential for the international orientation of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. Ever since Bolshevisation in 1929, these contacts were dominated by the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks), later the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. However, even before that time the All-Union Communist Party's (Bolsheviks) influence was strong, because it financed and hosted the Comintern in Moscow, whose third most numerous section was the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. Thanks to the anti-fascist campaign of the 1930s, the influence of Soviet Communists within the international communist movement further increased. After the dissolution of the Comintern in 1943, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union took over its agenda as a matter of course.[14] It was only willing to loosen its control over the European section, albeit formally and for less than a decade, by setting up the Information Bureau of the Communist and Workers' Parties (Cominform) in 1947.

Czechoslovakia's foreign policy was reformulated mainly through contacts between the parties and was extended beyond national needs to reflect class interests. On 30 March 1956, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia adopted a resolution which reflected the changes resulting from Khrushchev's ideological revision and the related reinterpretation of Soviet foreign policy strategy. Two weeks later, the Czechoslovak Communist Party leadership confirmed its agreement to the dissolution of the Cominform and in mid-June they successfully advocated the new principles of international relations approved in Moscow at the nationwide Party conference. The principles appeared among the tasks of the Czechoslovak state authorities less than six months after their approval by the Kremlin. On Monday 30 July 1956, Prime Minister Viliam Široký presented the idea to the National Assembly on behalf of the government. In the opening of his speech he underlined the significance of the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and claimed that the peace efforts of the Soviet Union and its allies had helped ease international tensions between countries with different social systems. He acknowledged the possibility of political, economic and cultural rapprochement between them and suggested that the spectrum of potential Czechoslovak allies should be broadened beyond the limits of the "Socialist Camp"

14 REES, Tim – THORPE, Andrew (ed.): *International Communism and the Communist International 1919–1943.* Manchester, Manchester University Press 1998.

to include countries with "active peace policies." He specifically mentioned examples of well-functioning cooperation with countries such as Afghanistan, Burma, Egypt, Syria and other countries of the Middle and Near East, promising them assistance with building independent national economies of their own. He also mentioned Austria, France, Italy and the Nordic states, and went so far as to mention Great Britain and the United States.[15]

The loyalty of the top Czechoslovak Communists was, to a great extent, influenced by the fact that the opinion of the Soviet protector usually determined the distribution of power within the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. At the turn of the 1950s and 1960s, it was the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and the President of the Republic, Antonín Novotný, who had a major influence over foreign policy. He amassed the most important information and carefully sought support from Moscow. As Karel Kaplan pointed out, Novotný was familiar with the Party environment and compensated for his lack of experience in the Comintern by direct contact with Soviet diplomats in Prague. Shortly after he was elected First Secretary in 1953, he played an instrumental role in the systematisation of the way the entire state apparatus operated, adapting it to the Soviet model and introducing planning and more rigorous rules into the decision-making process. In the context of these changes, he reserved for himself the right to summon meetings of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, to prepare the agenda, and to formulate the final resolutions.[16] At an emergency meeting with the Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev, which took place in Bucharest in the autumn of 1956, on the eve of the military intervention in Hungary, Novotný brought the Czechoslovak foreign policy position into line with that of the Soviet Union by offering Czechoslovak military units for the suppression of the Hungarian "counter-revolution." The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia confirmed his decision and thus accepted Khrushchev's thesis on the possibility of peaceful coexistence, albeit in a version which was modified in the light of the current crises developing in Hungary and Egypt. Should the world balance of power be threatened, Prague agreed that the policy of non-intervention in the internal affairs of other countries

15 *Společná česko-slovenská digitální parlamentní knihovna* [online] (hereinafter SČSDPK) [The Joint Czech and Slovak Digital Parliamentary Library], Národní shromáždění Republiky československé 1954–1960 [National Assembly of the Czechoslovak Republic 1954–1960], Stenographic Protocols, 11th Session, 30 July 1956, Programme Declaration of the Government [cit. 2014-06-06], Available at www.psp.cz/eknih/1954ns/stenoprot/011schuz/s011001.htm.

16 KAPLAN, Karel: *Antonín Novotný: Vzestup a pád "lidového" aparátčíka* [Antonín Novotný: The Rise and Fall of a "Popular" Apparatchik]. Brno, Barrister & Principal 2011, pp. 83–84 and 91; *NA*, f. Antonín Novotný II., box 192, AU 110, Antonín Novotný's consultation in Moscow in September 1953.

would lose its validity and all means, including military, would be used to cement the cooperation of socialist countries.[17]

In the following year of 1957, when Antonín Novotný became Czechoslovak president with the open support of Khrushchev, it was apparently related to the stance he had taken on the events in Poland and Hungary. It seems that by this time his comments at meetings of the governing body of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia played a decisive role in the formulation of Prague's position towards the rest of the world. Novotný had never concealed his loyalty to the Soviet Union. He was genuinely convinced, as he admitted in his memoirs, that it was in the interest of the Czechoslovak people to act in line with Soviet wishes and therefore he would not take any political decisions without consulting Moscow.[18]

Novotný had a prominent position within the Party and enjoyed in a marked degree the confidence of fellow members. Whenever he participated at Communist Party meetings, he presented his thoroughly prepared speeches, but if necessary would adjust their content to the situation on the ground. Similarly, he could also choose delegates. Although it was the Political Bureau, or the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia which selected the most important participants, Novotný could select additional representatives at his own discretion. Unlike the delegates of other communist parties, who consulted on any unexpected developments that arose in negotiations with officials in their home countries, Novotný acted on his own initiative and only informed the Party leadership at home retrospectively. Novotný's infrequent consultations with Prague prove both his strong position as Head of the Party, and the fact that at the turn of the 1950s and 1960s, the leadership of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia was – despite the lack of information about internal issues in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union – well informed about Soviet actions on the international scene and agreed with them. Having no need to resort to obstruction tactics, Novotný also helped to speed up the process of negotiations at Communist Party meetings.[19]

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17 DURMAN, Karel: *Popely ještě žhavé*, p. 458; PICHOYA, Rudolf G.: *Sovetskiy Soyuz: Istoriya vlasti. 1945–1991* [The Soviet Union: History of Our Home Country. 1945–1991]. Moskva, RAGS 1998, pp. 161–165; compare *NA*, f. Antonín Novotný II., box 192, AU. 112, Discussion between the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, Antonín Novotný, and L. M. Kaganovich during his visit to Czechoslovakia on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of liberation and the unveiling ceremony of the Stalin Monument in Letná Park, May 1955.

18 *SČSDPK*, National Assembly of the Czechoslovak Republic 1954–1960, Stenographic Protocols, 11th Session, 30 July 1956, Programme Declaration of the Government (see Footnote 12). See also ČERNÝ, Rudolf: *Antonín Novotný: Vzpomínky prezidenta* [The Memoirs of President Antonín Novotný]. Česká Kamenice, PolArt 2008, p. 161.

19 *NA*, f. 1501 (the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia 1952–1964 – initial fund designation 02/02) box 281, AU 364/23, Minutes of the 110th meeting of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, 1 November 1960, Decision on the item – Draft letter to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China; *Ibid*., f. Antonín Novotný II., box 53, AU 58, file 39, Antonín Novotný's speeches at the meetings of the international communist movement (international situation, peaceful coexistence,

As regards the state apparatus, besides Prime Minister Široký, it was the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Václav David, long-time member of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and for three years also a member of the Presidium of its Central Committee, who was the key figure in Czechoslovak diplomacy during the Novotný era. He controlled the agenda of the Ministry through meetings of the Collegium, where he was informed about the department's activities, about the most important findings of diplomats, along with the fulfilment of defined objectives several times a month. The minutes of the meetings show that while the planning of specific tasks came under the responsibility of David's subordinates, the main documents were submitted by David directly to the Party leadership and the objectives that were binding for the diplomats were defined only by Party resolutions. If in exceptional cases a substantial policy on Czechoslovak relations with a particular region was drawn up at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the interpretation of developments in the area was usually prepared by the ambassadors through discussions with Soviet diplomats on the ground. The final version of the policy was drawn up after careful examination in Moscow, to where the heads of the territorial departments of the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs travelled for consultations with their counterparts. Only there was the decision made as to whether the programme set out by the Czechoslovak diplomats "correctly" reflected the development tendencies of the region and made use of all available opportunities, or whether it needed to be amended. For example, in August 1956 Antonín Novotný ordered that a draft Czechoslovak foreign policy document should not be presented to the Party leadership nor the government until after the November meeting in Moscow, so that the Soviet experience might be incorporated.[20] Following the same pattern, the list of Czechoslovak priorities in Africa in 1961 included countries which had already established diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union.[21] Similarly, in 1963 Venezuela

situation in the international communist movement and the policy of the Communist Party of China, comments on the matter of meeting convocation, procedural issues), 1960; compare *Ibid*., file 38, Antonín Novotný's report for the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia regarding the meetings of the communist and workers' parties held in Bucharest between 24 and 26 June 1960; *Ibid*., file 43, Resolution of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia regarding the preparation and convocation of the meeting of the communist and workers' parties and the composition of the delegation; compare *Ibid*., file 46, Draft of Antonín Novotný's speech to be delivered at the meeting of the communist and workers' parties in Moscow, 31 October 1960; *Ibid*., file 47, Interim and final report of the delegation of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia on the meeting of the communist and workers' parties held in Moscow between 10 November and 1 December 1960.

20 *Ibid*., f. Antonín Novotný II., box 192, AU 114, Supporting documents for negotiations of the delegation in Moscow (Czechoslovak Foreign Policy), 1956.

21 ZÍDEK, Petr – SIEBER, Karel: *Československo a subsaharská Afrika v letech 1948–1989* [Czechoslovakia and Sub-Saharan Africa in the Years 1949–1989]. Praha, Ústav mezinárodních vztahů 2007, p. 14 n.; compare DAVIDSON, Apollon B.: *Afrika i otechestvennye istoriki: K 50-letiyu* "*Goda Afriki*" [Africa and the History of Nationalism: On the 50th Anniversary of the "Year of Africa"]. In: Novaya i noveyshaya istoriya, Issue 1 (2010), pp. 44–47.

was defined as one of the Czechoslovak foreign policy priorities in Latin America, along with the task of informing the Cuban leadership more extensively about Soviet policy and commitment to fight more consistently against the expansion of "adventurist" Chinese ideas in the region. The final version of the document was then immediately sent from the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.[22]

Yet, the Communist Party has never fully depended on information from Czechoslovak diplomats, Party cells at Czechoslovak embassies or secret service agents. Its International Department obtained information about the Party line from foreign communist and workers' parties, its own employees abroad or special reporters at the Czechoslovak News Agency and media. From 1961, regular consultations were held with a similar department of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Vladimír Koucký, long-time Head of the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and former chief editor of the *Rudé Právo* communist daily, exercised extraordinary influence over the international strategy of Czechoslovak Communists. He often represented the Party leadership abroad, and at home. He instructed the Party propagandists on how to explain international issues from the Soviet perspective and prepared supporting documents for resolutions of the Party leadership regarding suitable policies towards particular states or regions.[23]

Whereas the information Moscow obtained from Prague was detailed, extensive and quickly delivered, the information received from Moscow consisted of instructions or circulars with the decisions of Soviet politicians on specific matters, rather than reports. This information was often encoded in specific ideological language and references to Soviet life and institutions, which were difficult for outsiders to understand. Therefore, the way this information was interpreted and handled was greatly influenced by the skills and attitude of the Czechoslovak politician who conveyed the Soviet view to Prague at that particular time. However, this influence was not absolute. Moscow continuously and retrospectively monitored, through consultations with friendly parties, whether the countries of the "Socialist Camp" were proceeding with due compliance. The countless opportunities for doing

22 *AMZV ČR*, f. Porady kolegia ministra [Meetings of the Collegium of the Ministry], book 22, 25 October 1956. Also *Ibid.*, book 88, Record of the meeting of 31 October 1963, Report on the progress and results of the consultations between the Czechoslovak and Soviet delegations regarding the Czechoslovak foreign policy document towards the Latin-American countries held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union in Moscow between 4 and 8 October 1963.

23 See for example *Německá otázka a hlavní problémy současné mezinárodní situace: Referát tajemníka ÚV KSČ soudruha Vl. Kouckého na celostátním aktivu lektorů a propagandistů dne 7. září 1961 v Praze* [The German Question and Major Current International Problems: Speech of the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, Vl. Koucký, at the nation-wide meeting of instructors and propagandists held in Prague on 7 September 1961]. Praha, Oddělení propagandy a agitace ÚV KSČ [The Department of Propaganda and Agitation of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia] 1961.

so included not only the official visits of Nikita Khrushchev (in 1954, 1957, 1962 and 1964) and Lazar Kaganovich, the First Deputy Prime Minister of the Soviet Union (in 1955), to Czechoslovakia, and the annual visits of Novotný to Moscow, but also direct telephone calls from top Soviet leaders to Novotný, which provided him with instructions during moments of crisis. Several times a year, Czechoslovak Communist Party delegations attended congresses of friendly parties and participated in related meetings of communist leaders. Other delegations took part in the various celebrations of friendly parties and states. The leadership of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held regular consultations with Soviet diplomats and assessors in Prague. Novotný also systematically saw to it that no significant change in Czechoslovak policy happened before the responsible official travelled to Moscow to explore the Soviet position on the issue.[24] Every year, study exchanges of Czechoslovak Communists with friendly parties were organised, expanding the focus of foreign policy to cover primarily internal issues such as science and the education system.[25] Communist leaders also came to Czechoslovakia for work and recreational stays, and occasional technical stops in Prague, which the foreign delegations were obliged to make on their way to the Soviet Union, were used as an opportunity for consultations. From 1956, the number of consultants gradually increased: whereas in 1960 there were 654 consultants, two years later the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia mentioned 439 consultants who stayed in Czechoslovakia for recreational purposes and 1,793 officials travelling through Czechoslovakia, of whom 520 became guests of Czechoslovakia. At that time, Prague maintained contact with 79 countries. Similarly, Czechoslovak delegations stopped in Moscow on

24 *NA*, f. Antonín Novotný II., box 192, AU 452, Antonín Novotný's consultations in Moscow, 1952–1954; *Ibid.*, AU 454, Antonín Novotný's meeting with L. M. Kaganovich (organisation of the work of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, situation in the Czechoslovak national economy – raw materials, industry, agriculture, planning, ideological work, class struggle in the countryside), Antonín Novotný's proposals, 1955; *Ibid.*, AU 455, Discussion between the members of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and the delegation of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union led by A. Aristov, held in Prague on 4 November 1956 (situation in the Czechoslovak Republic, the work and education of the Party apparatus, Party work among the intelligentsia, trade unions, students, the situation in the national economy).

25 For more details see FRANC, Martin: *Úderná skupina? Výprava českých lékařů a přírodovědců do SSSR v roce 1950 ve světle dopisů Ivana Málka* [The Assault Group? The 1950 Expedition of Czech Doctors and Natural Scientists to the USSR in the Light of Letters by Ivan Málek]. Praha, Masarykův ústav AV ČR a Archiv AV ČR [Masaryk Institute and Archives of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic] 2009, pp. 7–55; DEVÁTÁ, Markéta – OLŠÁKOVÁ, Doubravka – SOMMER, Vítězslav – DINUŠ, Peter: *Vědní koncepce KSČ a její institucionalizace po roce 1948* [Science Policy of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and its Institutionalisation after 1948]. Praha, Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR [Institute of Contemporary History of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic] 2010, pp. 70–73 and 77 n.

journeying to and from partners lying further to the East.[26] Cooperation between Higher Political Schools of the Central Committees of the Communist Parties in Prague, Moscow and Warsaw was developed; and Communist Party periodicals exchanged redactors and correspondents. Instructors at the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia participated in international exchange stays which provided opportunities for the presentation of successes at local communist meetings. A greater number of Czechoslovak citizens learnt about life in the friendly countries through twinning relations, established, at the behest of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, with selected state companies, state farms and, beginning in 1961, also with neighbouring countries (mainly with Austria, from where several thousand activists came to Czechoslovakia between 1956 and 1961). The Soviet Union was the most important and the most frequently involved partner in these activities. In contrast, negotiations with the People's Republic of China usually merely led to general plans with no specific time frame and activities which were subject to further negotiation.[27]

Table 1. The number of meetings of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSČ) with leading representatives of socialist and workers' parties 1956–1966

		1956/1957	1960	1961	1962	1963	1965	1966
Bilateral meetings	Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU)	2	-	1	-	1	2	-
	Parties of the European socialist countries	2	2	3	1	3	1	1
	Parties of the capitalist countries	5	-	-	-	-	9	-
	Parties of Third World countries	2	-	-	-	-	2	-
	Parties from Asian countries	2	-	-	1	1	1	1
Multilateral meetings	In the presence of the CPSU	2	9	16	9	3	9	9
	Without the presence of the CPSU	1	-	-	-	-	-	-

26 *NA*, f. Antonín Novotný II., box 192, AU 126, Visit of the delegation of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and the Czechoslovak government headed by Prime Minister Široký to Moscow on 10 April 1957 when returning from the East-Asian socialist countries, Oldřich Černík's transcript, 12 April 1957.

27 *Ibid*., box 49, file MKH [International Communist Movement] – Overview of the contacts between the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and communist and democratic parties.

Table 2. The number of study trips of Communist Party delegations between Czechoslovakia and friendly countries 1956–1966[28]

		1956/1957	1960	1961	1962	1963	1965	1966
In Czechoslovakia	The Soviet Union	6	1	9	2	2	2	6
	The European socialist countries	8	5	16	7	6	14	16
	Other countries	9	1	4	5	4	-	-
From Czechoslovakia (KSČ)	The Soviet Union	9	1	-	3	5	5	7
	The European socialist countries	3	5	12	4	6	12	15
	Other countries	1	-	-	1	-	-	-

Czechoslovakia between Two Suns

Shortly after February 1948, the Chinese communist government of Yan'an was able to open a permanent office in Prague which, as the only one of its kind, served as a base for the activity of its envoys in Europe.[29] In the spring of 1949, when Chinese Communists failed to obtain the visas necessary for participation at the World Congress of Defenders of Peace in Paris initiated by the Soviets, they were welcomed, together with other refused delegates, at the Prague Peace conference which was organised in protest on 23 April.[30] Also, several months before

28 *Ibid.* Both tables were drawn up on the basis of data from the summaries of the meetings of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia with fraternal parties between 1956 and 1966. Data for 1964 are not available. Apart from annual summaries, Antonín Novotný also sporadically received lists with the names of the leading representatives of the friendly parties and their relatives staying in Czechoslovakia at the given dates and records of meetings with them. The foreign trips of Czechoslovak functionaries were discussed and decided upon on an ongoing basis by the Political Bureau, or the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.

29 I would like to thank the sinologist Ivana Bakešová for this information.

30 The title "Prague Peace Conference" is borrowed from the Czechoslovak press and literature of the period. In reality, the World Congress of the Defenders of Peace convened the conference in Prague because the French government did not grant visas to some of the delegates to the Paris Central Congress. Both parts of the Congress were in contact, for example the speech of the head of the Chinese delegation (composed of 44 members), Guo Moruo, in Prague was translated and read at the 4th session of the Paris Congress. The Czechoslovak Communists naturally used the event for self-promotion. (Traduction par M. Gaucheron du discours à Prague de M. Kuo Mo Jo: Messages de Chine. La section de Prague. List des participants aux Assises de Prague. In: *Congrès mondial des Partisants de la paix Paris–Prague, 20–25 avril 1949*. Paris, Les éditeurs français réunis 1949, pp. 455–462, 707–709, 725–730 and 763–771; ROTOTAJEV, A. S. (ed.): *V borbe za mir: Literaturno-estradnyy sbornik* [In the Struggle for Peace: Literary and Popular-Cultural Almanac].

the proclamation of the People's Republic of China, and the related abolition of diplomatic relations with the government of the Kuomintang, the working conditions of the Ambassador of the Republic of China in Prague, Xi-hui Liang, had become remarkably worse.[31] Czechoslovakia recognised the People's Republic of China in a telegram sent by the Prime Minister Viliam Široký to Zhou Enlai on 4 October 1949. The establishment of the new Czechoslovak Embassy in Beijing, a consulate in Shanghai, and the new Chinese Embassy in Prague swiftly followed. Shortly before Christmas, Karl Weiskopf, the well-known leftist writer, travelled to Beijing to take up the post of Czechoslovak Ambassador. He brought personal gifts from Klement Gottwald to Mao Zedong, which included a shotgun, a specially adapted rifle and binoculars, all manufactured by Zbrojovka Brno. Gottwald took care to have the representatives of the People's Republic of China treated with great respect. Already at the meeting with Mao Zedong, which took place during his stay in Moscow, he offered 50 scholarships for Chinese students interested in studying at the Czechoslovak University of Technology. When General Tan-shi-lin, the first Ambassador of the People's Republic of China, came to Prague at the beginning of September 1950, Gottwald rejected the standard protocol, because the importance of the People's Republic of China within the "Peace Camp" required a far more elaborate reception in his opinion.[32]

Translated Soviet literature, publications of the most prominent Czechoslovak sinologist and convinced Communist Jaroslav Průšek, as well as the exhibitions organised by the Czechoslovak-Chinese Society which he presided over, all helped to spread the image of China as a new ally which had successfully organised a rebellion against its exploiters and which had committed itself to the ideals of socialism.[33] However, direct interaction between the inhabitants of the two countries was rare and limited to official meetings. The trading contacts of private Czechoslovak companies, which had exported goods to the Chinese market ever since the 1920s, were severed by World War II and the Chinese civil war. Not even the Czechoslovak citizens who lived in China in the 1940s, mostly in precarious conditions, could have challenged the traditional, romantic and distant Czechoslovak vision of the Orient. Their postwar repatriation was complicated and could only be finalised in 1954. The Czechoslovak authorities were probably aware that even a careful selection of repatriates could not guarantee their positive attitude towards a radicalised China. Therefore, the repatriates were systematically

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Moskva – Leningrad, Iskusstvo 1949; compare ŠIMOVIČ, Ladislav: Z československo-čínskych stykov [From Czechoslovak-Chinese Relations]. In: KOMZALA, František (ed.): *Ve veliké čínské zemi: Sborník statí čs. vládní delegace v ČLR r. 1952* [In the Great Country of China: Collection of Articles of the Members of the Czechoslovak Government Delegation to the PRC in 1952]. Praha, Orbis 1953, pp. 121–136.)

31 LIANG, Hsi-huey: *Mezi Berlínem a Prahou: Střední Evropa ve vzpomínkách čínského historika* [original title – Encounters in Berlin and Prague: An Academic Autobiography]. Praha, Prostor 2006, pp. 372–376.

32 *Archiv Kanceláře prezidenta republiky* (hereinafter AKPR) [The Archive of the President's Office of the Czech Republic], f. Sekretariát prezidenta republiky, Klement Gottwald [The Office of the President of the Republic, Klement Gottwald], box 1, Os 726/5

33 See for example PRŮŠEK, Jaroslav: *Čínský lid v boji za svobodu* [The People of China in the Struggle for Freedom]. Praha, Naše vojsko 1949.

housed in the secluded area of Western Sudetenland and never participated in the official celebrations of Sino-Czechoslovak friendship.[34]

However, the Asian Department responsible for the Chinese agenda at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs lacked experts with knowledge of China. It was also strained by personal conflict, the incompetence of the new employees who had replaced the politically "unsuitable" experts after February 1948, as well as by Czechoslovak participation in the Neutral Nations Commission supervising the armistice in Korea. It could barely cope with its operative information and documentary agenda. In June 1950, the Ministry of Foreign Trade established economic cooperation with the People's Republic of China and began to prepare a deal which would enable both countries to engage in maritime trade.[35] However, the Agreement on Exchange of Goods and Payments was subject to lengthy annual negotiations. The Czechoslovak export list included machine tools, textile and agricultural machinery, engines, tools, measuring instruments, vehicles, and also film studio equipment and musical instruments. China offered raw materials for heavy and light industry, raw materials for consumer goods production, and food. In its first year, trade exchange increased from 1,288 to 4,680 million Czechoslovak crowns (compared to a planned 70 percent increase). According to the Czechoslovak negotiators, it was in Prague's interest to seek a long-term contract in order to avoid competition from other socialist countries. Nevertheless, not even the expert team, which stayed permanently in China from 1952 for this purpose, was able to conclude the contract with Beijing.[36]

In 1951, the arrival of a Czechoslovak military and aviation *attaché* in Beijing, and the participation of a Chinese army delegation in celebrations to mark the Day of the Czechoslovak People's Army signalled that a new era of mutual cooperation was about to open.[37] Eventually, in May 1952 the journey of the Minister of Information, Václav Kopecký, to Beijing culminated in the signing of four new agreements: the Cultural Agreement and Agreements on Scientific and Technical Cooperation, on Postal Services, and on Telecommunications. Immediately after this visit, the Vít Nejedlý Army Art Ensemble set out on a four-month tour of China, and on the basis of these agreements other tours by Czechoslovak delegations and student scholarship stays followed. Various Chinese guests also visited Czechoslovakia. Particularly notable was the participation of Zhou Enlai at Gottwald's funeral in March 1953. Prague also served as an intermediary

34 *AMZV ČR*, f. Porady kolegia ministra [Meetings of the Collegium of the Ministry], book 4, Minutes of the meeting, 17 March 1954.

35 KRÁTKÁ, Lenka: *A History of the Czechoslovak Ocean Shipping Company, 1948–1989: How a Small, Landlocked Country Ran Maritime Business During the Cold War.* Ibidem Press, Stuttgart – Hannover 2015, pp. 22–54.

36 *AKPR*, Klement Gottwald, Čína – obchodní smlouvy s ČLR [Klement Gottwald, China – Trade Agreements with PRC].

37 *Archiv bezpečnostních složek*, Ministerstvo národní obrany Československé socialistické republiky, Generální štáb –Zpravodajská správa [Security Services Archive, Ministry of National Defence of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff], Operative dossier registration No. 133010/AS Jasmín, Peking, 14/20; *AKPR*, Klement Gottwald, Čína [Klement Gottwald, China].

for the People's Republic of China with the countries which regarded the Chiang Kai-shek government as the official government. But the Embassy in Beijing had difficulty keeping up with increasing demands. Only two of its employees could speak Chinese and official information from the press agency Xinhua, present in Czechoslovakia since the latter half of 1948, was no substitute for high-quality diplomatic reports. There was also a lack of technology to ensure a stable radio connection.[38]

From the outset, Prague focused mainly on economic problems, willingly received Chinese trade union members, journalists and health workers for study stays, offered support for Chinese industrialisation and shared its experience in building a communist society.[39] Czechoslovak politicians understood that the domestic authority of Mao was unquestionable. They were also aware that with decolonisation set in motion, his aspirations to determine the rules for the global national liberation movements according to the Chinese model had increased.[40] But Czechoslovakia depended greatly on information and interpretation from Moscow, which was at this time overwhelmed with its own problems and therefore lagged behind events. For example, when the Soviet preparatory council for the Bandung Conference sent a delegation to the negotiations in India, the *Rudé Právo* daily adopted the news bulletin from the Soviet news agency TASS stating that it would be a meeting of 13 Asian countries to which the Soviet Union would send a mostly cultural delegation to negotiate on the principles of reducing international tensions. The Czechoslovak news agency repeated the report.[41] As a matter of fact, the representatives of 19 Asian countries met in Delhi, between 6 and 10 April 1955, to coordinate a common position before the much more important Bandung Conference, where the government representatives of 29 Asian and African countries held talks about nothing less important than their reaction to the US strategy embodied in the recently established Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO).[42] The Ministry

38 *AMZV ČR*, f. Porady kolegia ministra [Meetings of the Collegium of the Ministry], book 1, Minutes of the meeting of 13 August 1953; *Ibid.*, book 4, Minutes of the meeting of 17 March 1954.

39 This is evidenced, for example, by the exhibition "Ten Years of Building Socialism in the Czechoslovak Republic," which opened in Beijing on 15 April 1955 in the presence of the Czechoslovak government delegation headed by the Deputy Prime Minister, Ludmila Jankovcová. Photographs from the period show that the exhibition area of 16,000 square metres was dominated by a 50-tonne carousel lathe and large drilling machines. A similar industrial-cultural exhibition was opened in Guangzhou on 21 February 1956.

40 Foreword and speech of the President of the Central Council of the Trade Unions and the Deputy President of the World Federation of the Trade Unions, František Zupka, in the publication *Všečínská federace práce: Asijské národy v boji za svobodu* [All-China Federation of Trade Unions: Asian Nations in the Fight for Freedom] (Praha, Práce 1951, pp. 5–12 and 330–335).

41 Sovětská delegace na asijskou konferenci o zmírnění napětí v mezinárodních vztazích [Soviet Delegation to the Asian Conference on Relaxing Tensions in International Relations]. In: *Rudé právo*, 1 April 1955, p. 3; VOLF, Alois: Dnes začíná asijská konference [The Asian Conference Starts Today]. In: *Ibid*., 6 April 1955, p. 4; IDEM: Za mír a solidaritu v Asii [For Peace and Solidarity in Asia]. In: *Ibid.*, 14 April 1955, p. 3.

42 Paradoxically, some of the news that the daily *Rudé právo* was taking from TASS at that time was based on information from the Chinese press agency *Xinhua*, a branch of which had its seat in Prague. (See for example Resoluce KS Číny o protistranické skupině [Resolution of

of Foreign Affairs sought to ensure its own better analysis by sending the experienced diplomat Otto Klička to Bandung. His report, which was regarded by the Collegium of the Ministry as ideologically poor, recorded the efforts of the People's Republic of China, India and Burma to promote the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence. In his view, this was natural since it complied with Lenin's expectation that the emancipated East would demand its own share of influence over world affairs. Despite the proposal to pronounce communism a new form of colonialism and the fact that ten of the states adopted a pro-American position (which in the logic of a bipolar world was anti-Soviet), Klička concluded that the national liberation movements moved towards political independence and that the conference was successful. He gave credit for this to peaceful China, which, according to him, served as an example of an improving standard of life since its liberation from imperialism, and which invited the participating countries, through its representative Zhou Enlai, to unite in demanding the elimination of colonialism. According to Klička, the Bandung Conference confirmed that it was not possible to hold any serious talks on national-political questions in Asia without the presence of Beijing and that its acceptance in the UN was needed.[43]

Beijing's aspirations to become more than merely a regional power were evident from Marshal Zhu De's tour of the countries of its European allies. After visiting Romania, the German Democratic Republic, and Hungary, he was received by Antonín Novotný in Prague on 17 January 1956. He stayed in Czechoslovakia for 10 days, but feeling tired by the journey he spent five days in a sanatorium at the spa town of Karlovy Vary. Despite the absence of the Marshal, the members of his delegation participated in the programme of excursions, which included visits to engineering and chemical companies, at their special request.[44]

In the summer of 1956, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs began preparations for the visit of the Czechoslovak government delegation to China, Mongolia and North Korea. After obtaining the approval of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and consequently of the government, the programme was prepared and proposals for the contracts to be signed were sent to the Soviet Embassy. However, shortly before the planned date, at the end of October 1956, the preparations were suspended.[45] On both sides, priority was given to the dramatic events in Hungary. The Chinese discussed it for several days in Moscow, and separately

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the Communist Party of China on the Anti-Party Group]. In: *Rudé právo*, 6 April 1955, p. 3; První mezinárodní konference asijských a afrických zemí zahájena [The First International Asian-African Conference Has Started]. In: *Ibid.*, 19 April 1955, p. 3.)

43 *AMZV ČR*, f. Porady kolegia ministra [Meetings of the Collegium of the Ministry], book 14, box 89, Minutes of the meeting, 2 June 1955. O. Klička's Report on the Bandung Conference; compare Z hlavního projevu vedoucího čínské delegace Čou En-laje [From the Main Speech of Zhou Enlai, the Head of the Chinese Delegation]. In: *Rudé právo*, 20 April 1955, p. 4; BEBA, Karel: První konference asijsko-afrických zemí: Původní telegrafická zpráva z Bandungu [First Conference of Asian and African Countries: The Original Telegram from Bandung]. In: *Ibid.*, 22 April 1955, p. 4.

44 *AKPR*, KPR – protokol T (Tajné [Secret]) 1945–1963, T 189/56, box 101.

45 *AMZV ČR*, f. Porady kolegia ministra [Meetings of the Collegium of the Ministry], book 22, Minutes of the meeting, 25 October 1956, State of preparations for the departure of the

Antonín Novotný discussed it briefly in Moscow and Bucharest. On 4 November, talks were also held between 10 members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and the Soviet delegation in Prague.[46] On 11 November, Novotný and Prime Minister Široký received a joint invitation from Bulganin and Khrushchev to visit Moscow between 25 and 30 January 1957, with a Party and state delegation to discuss the common interests of both states.

When the delegation arrived in Moscow several days after the departure of Zhou Enlai, it was evident that the issues to be discussed would be fundamental. Czechoslovakia rarely had a similar representation. The delegation was led by the President Antonín Zápotocký, followed by the Prime Minister Viliam Široký and the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, Antonín Novotný. The talks were also attended by Václav Kopecký and seven other government ministers, the President of the Slovak Board of Commissioners (Slovak executive body), and the secretaries of the Central Committee, Jiří Hendrych and Vladimír Koucký, on behalf of the Party. The meeting was held at Khrushchev's office in the building of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and in addition to Khrushchev, Nikolai Bulganin, Kliment Voroshilov, Anastas Mikoyan, Vyacheslav Molotov, Mikhail Suslov, Leonid Brezhnev, Averky Aristov and Boris Ponomariov participated. After the opening speech of Novotný, Khrushchev took the floor and moved swiftly from the issue of mutual economic cooperation to an evaluation of the recent visit of Zhou Enlai to Eastern Europe. He expressed his concern about complaints from several Polish Communists to Zhou Enlai and stated that the Chinese Prime Minister, when in Moscow and Warsaw, proposed a meeting of all socialist countries which would be held in Budapest, Bucharest, Prague or Sofia and would also include a debate on military issues. According to Soviet information, he had addressed the Yugoslav President Josip Broz Tito with the same suggestion. During the debate, Khrushchev showed unprecedented openness to sharing control over the global communist movement with the PRC. He stated that the Soviets had agreed to a resolution with the Communist Party of China which designated the Communist Party of the Soviet Union as just one of the parties with extensive experience, and explained that "the leading role of someone is moral. We will jointly lead and jointly respond. Lately, there have been nationalist tendencies. However, it is not enough to use repression, it only helps a little; we need to meet more often." The Czechoslovak delegates strongly opposed the idea of changing

Czechoslovak government delegation to the People's Republic of China, Hungarian People's Republic and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

46 *NA*, f. Antonín Novotný II., book 192, AU 115, Meeting of the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, Antonín Novotný, at the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on 24 October 1956; *Ibid.*, AU 116, Discussion between the members of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and the delegation of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Led by A. Aristov Held in Prague on 4 November 1956; ŠEVELENKO, A. (ed.): *Vospominaniya: Izbrannye fragmenty. Nikita Chrushchov* [Memories: Collected Fragments. Nikita Khrushchev]. Moskva, Vagrius 2007, pp. 354–360.

the established practice according to which the PRC's influence was restricted to Asia. They pointed out that the weakening of the leading role of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union could lead to events similar to those in Hungary happening elsewhere in the world, expressed their loyalty to Moscow, and in the final declaration reaffirmed their commitment to the Marxist-Leninist tenets of socialist construction and proclaimed unity to be the main interest of all socialist countries.[47]

Zhou Enlai did not visit Czechoslovakia in January 1957, when he enquired about the consequences of the crisis in Eastern Europe. At that time, only the representatives of the Chinese machinery import and export company visited Prague, together with the Deputy Foreign Trade Minister. But as early as March 1957, the postponed government delegation, headed by Viliam Široký, visited China to sign the Agreement on Cultural Cooperation, the Agreement on Cooperation in the Health Sector, and most importantly the Friendship and Cooperation Treaty. Apart from Beijing, Široký also visited Shanghai and Nanjing. In his speeches, he took the opportunity to stress the importance of the Czechoslovak position in international relations and the significance of Czechoslovak assistance for Chinese industrialisation. He rejoiced at the fact that the machines manufactured thanks to this assistance were called "the flowers of the mutual friendship" by the Chinese workers, and he proudly recalled the Czech propagandistic slogan from 1949: "From the City of Aš up to Shanghai, the red flag flies high." He did not forget to stress that the friendly community of socialist countries under the leadership of the Soviet Union sought freedom and peace and described China as a beacon of liberty and independence for Asia and other nations. At the airport, when leaving Shanghai, he was bidden farewell, as on other occasions, not only by the regional representatives, but also by the local Soviet consul general.[48]

Nevertheless, the PRC slowly started to abandon its role as a grateful recipient of Czechoslovak industrial assistance. In 1955, it still accepted the offered products without any objections and responded by exporting materials such as rice, tea and spices, and improving cultural cooperation.[49] But after 1956, China became more demanding, it refused to sign a long-term trade agreement and, starting in 1958, the economic negotiations stagnated considerably. This was reflected in the complicated talks on the Trade

47 *NA*, f. Antonín Novotný II., box 192, AU 119, Report on the meeting of the delegation of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia with the delegation of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, p. 15. The meeting programme and related correspondence are available *Ibid.*, AU 118; Final joint Czechoslovak-Soviet declaration including Koucký's corrections according to the Soviet text, *Ibid*., AU 122.

48 Jednota a síla socialistického tábora je zárukou nových vítězství [Unity and Strength of the Socialist Camp are the Guarantee of New Victories]. In: *Rudé právo*, 25 March 1957, pp. 1 and 3; Československá vládní delegace se vrátila do Pekinu [Czechoslovak Government Delegation is Back in Beijing]. In: *Ibid.*, 26 March 1957, p. 1.

49 For example in 1950, China donated the basis of its library to the Oriental Institute, in the autumn of 1954 it organised a tour of the Janáček Academy of Music Arts to China, donated to Czechoslovakia half of the items from the exhibition of Chinese useful arts held at the Prague Hybernia house in February and March 1955, in 1956 it organised an exhibition on Tibet, and its artists participated in the Prague Spring music festival.

and Navigation Treaty. China also indefinitely postponed the promised visit of Zhou Enlai to Czechoslovakia, which he had originally planned with the army delegation for the latter half of 1958 as part of another journey to Eastern Europe. Although the decrease in contacts was probably related to the economic setbacks of the Great Leap Forward, Czechoslovak diplomats in China gradually became isolated and complained about deteriorating access to the authorities and a lack of information.[50]

The reason for this lay in the reserved Czechoslovak position towards the increasing ambitions of the PRC. On 30 April 1957, when the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia evaluated the results of the stopover of Viliam Široký in Moscow on his way back from China, it concluded that it was necessary to deepen friendship and relations with the Soviet Union, consolidate in every way the unity of the "Socialist Camp" and provide support for Soviet disarmament efforts. On Soviet recommendation, it pondered the submission of its own disarmament proposal to the UN General Assembly and planned assistance to the independent development of Asian and African countries, especially Egypt, Syria, Ethiopia, Ceylon, Burma, Afghanistan and Indonesia. It also intensified its verbal attacks against West German revanchism. In this context, both Široký's visit to China, Mongolia and North Korea, and Prague's proposal to better coordinate national economic plans, which was raised at the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) meeting in May, thereby only fulfilled tasks resulting from the understanding between Czechoslovak and Soviet Communists. Any Czechoslovak declarations on the strengthening of friendship between the nations were based on the Soviet-interpreted Leninist tenets of equality and fraternal cooperation.[51]

In mid-July 1957, Nikita Khrushchev visited Czechoslovakia with the President of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union, Nikolai Bulganin. They visited industrial companies, agricultural cooperatives and scientific institutions; debated with workers and with political representatives; and at meetings with their Communist Party partners highlighted their common commitment to socialism. The final joint *communiqué* stated that the visit had confirmed the absolute unanimity of views on all issues discussed.[52] In August 1957, another delegation of Czechoslovak Communists, led by Antonín Novotný, visited Moscow to coordinate policy towards Yugoslavia and Albania with other European socialist states.[53] In contrast, the meeting between the Czechoslovak

50 *AMZV ČR*, f. TO-T Čína, 1955–1959, book 2, file 3, Telegram of the Ambassador Antonín Gregor from Beijing of 10 May 1957; *Ibid.*, Telegrams of the Ambassador Ján Bušniak from Beijing, 2 April 1958, 5 May 1958, 25 June 1958 and 3 March 1959; *Ibid.*, file 10, Overview of contacts with PCR in the 2nd trimester of 1957.

51 *NA*, f. 1501, Minutes of the 179th meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, 30 April 1957; *Ibid.*, f. Antonín Novotný II., box 192, AU 125, Record of the discussion with comrades Khrushchev, Bulganin, Mikoyan and Gromyko, 10 April 1957 (O. Černík, 12 April 1957).

52 *Ibid.*, f. Antonín Novotný II., box 192, AU 132, *Communiqué* on the stay of the Party and government delegation of the Soviet Union in Czechoslovakia, 17 July 1957.

53 *Ibid.*, AU 133, Record of the discussion with comrade Khrushchev held in Moscow on 16 August 1957.

parliamentary delegation and Mao Zedong, held in Beijing on 29 September, was more a courtesy meeting and did not bring any practical results. Talking to Mao Zedong, the head of the delegation, Zdeněk Fierlinger, merely expressed his understanding of the complex tasks faced by the Chinese Communists in eliminating the consequences of colonial oppression. When Mao Zedong appraised the mutual relations as very close and friendly, he responded: "The political relations between Czechoslovakia, the People's Republic of China and the Soviet Union could not be better, as comrade Khrushchev stated when visiting Czechoslovakia. In respect to economic relations, they could be much better and much closer."[54] The departure of Bohumír Lomský, the Minister of National Defence at the head of a military delegation to Beijing on 6 December 1957 gave some indication as to which course Czechoslovakia wanted to take. However, the Czechoslovak expectations did not materialise. The Chinese army's interest remained limited to the possibility of learning about Czechoslovak and Soviet military technology at an expert level. For example, in May 1959, three demonstrations were held within one week, which included a show of MIG-15 and MIG-19 Soviet aeroplanes at the air base in Líně, a simulated response of the border guard near Rozvadov in case of cross-border infiltration, and the show of CS102 and S05 Czechoslovak aeroplanes, and L29 Czechoslovak jet aircraft at Aero Vodochody. Chinese soldiers also attended a motorcycle competition, prepared for them by Svazarm and visited the training area for the motorised rifle troops in Vyškov.[55]

The Conference of the Communist and Workers' Parties, which took place following the success of the Soviet Sputnik on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the October Revolution in Moscow, did not resolve the conflict. The persistent discrepancy in views on how relations between socialist countries should be organised and how they should relate to "world imperialism" and to emerging national liberation movements were reflected in the ambiguous final documents.[56] Czechoslovakia supported the Soviet position. On 3 December 1957, the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia approved a resolution on the Moscow meeting, welcoming the adoption of the Declaration of the Representatives of the Communist and Workers' Parties of Socialist Countries as well as the Peace Manifesto and declared both documents the program of the communist movement, in defence of peace and socialism construction. According to the Political Bureau, the 20th Congress of Soviet Communists contributed to a massive upheaval in communism. This was reasserted by Czechoslovak politicians at meetings of the representatives of the communist

54 *AMZV ČR*, f. TO-T Čína, 1955–1959, book 2, file 10, Record of the discussion of the Czechoslovak parliamentary delegation with the President of the People's Republic of China, Mao Zedong held on 29 September 1957.

55 Svazarm (Union for Cooperation with the Army) was founded in Czechoslovakia in 1951 according to the Soviet model of organising sports in cooperation with the army. It was an umbrella organisation for sports related to national defence such as aviation, dog breeding, shooting, biathlon of amateur radio operators. *AKPR*, KPR – protokol T (Tajné [Secret]) 1945–1963, O 1158/59, box 107.

56 Compare SHEN CHZHIKHUA, O kitaysko-sovetskikh otnosheniyakh (1950–1960-e gg.), pp. 97–111.

and workers' parties of CMEA member countries in Moscow on 25 May 1958.[57] The analysis of the international situation at the 11th Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia between 18 and 21 June 1958, was another demonstration of loyalty to Moscow. The Congress highlighted the possibility of excluding war as a means of conflict resolution and expressed the conviction that it was better to confront the danger of imperialism through economic competition between the two world systems and a relentless struggle for peace and coexistence. To the less developed countries it promised the perspective of participation in the joint use of the resources of socialist countries within the framework of mutual fraternal assistance and economic, political and cultural cooperation. According to the Congress, the colonial nations could learn from Soviet Communists on how to eradicate poverty and underdevelopment by means of non-capitalist, national-democratic development. The Czechoslovak representatives claimed that the existence of the world socialist system was a guarantee of the transition of power to the workers and peasants without civil war, in cooperation with the local national bourgeoisie against the colonisers. The primary position of Moscow was also manifested at the 11th Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia officially. President Novotný first received the Soviet delegation, and only then and with slightly more reserve, the Chinese delegation.[58] Apart from this, based on the decision of the Moscow Conference in November 1957, Prague became the seat of the international editorial office of the magazine Problems of Peace and Socialism which was to publish the contributions of individual central committees of national communist parties and in that way contribute to the unity of the socialist community and to the cultivation of opinions. In reality, the editorial staff promoted Soviet interests. As a result, the Chinese Communists stopped co-financing it, did not deliver any contributions, and in May 1962, refused to support the Chinese edition of the magazine.[59]

On 28 September 1959, Antonín Novotný finally made his visit to the People's Republic of China, which had been postponed for a year. In his speech at the 10th anniversary celebrations of the founding of the People's Republic of China, he spoke about the long tradition of comrade solidarity between both countries which based their revolutionary path on the enduring legacy of the Great October Socialist Revolution

57 Komuniké o poradách [*Communiqué* on Meetings] see KOTYK, Václav: *Dokumenty československé zahraniční politiky: 1945–1960* [Documents of Czechoslovak Foreign Policy: 1945–1960]. Praha, státní nakladatelství politické literatury 1960, pp. 310–312.

58 *Mezinárodní postavení a zahraniční politika ČSSR v období mezi XI. a XII. sjezdem KSČ* [The Czechoslovak Socialist Republic's International Position and Foreign Policy between the 11th and 12th Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia], Praha, Oddělení propagandy a agitace ÚV KSČ 1962 [The Department of Propaganda and Agitation of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia 1962]; Zpráva o činnosti ÚV KSČ na XI. sjezdu a současné hlavní úkoly [Report on the Activities of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia at the 11th Party Congress and Current Major Tasks]. In: *Rudé právo*, 19 June 1958, Supplement, pp. 1–24.

59 *NA*, f. Antonín Novotný II., box 89, AU 164, Rupture between the Communist Party of China and other communist parties (relations between the Communist Party of China – other communist parties), Correspondence between the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the redaction of the magazine *Issues of Peace and Socialism*.

and contributed to the promotion of socialism in the world. He paid tribute to Chinese industrial efforts as observed at the Brno Fairs, and acknowledged the contribution the steadfastness of the People's Republic of China was making to crushing "revisionism" and "imperialism."[60] However, the celebrations were marred by Khrushchev's disdainful comments on the results of the Chinese policy, the Great Leap Forward. Later on, when the Chinese political elite met to celebrate the decade of the Chinese-Soviet Friendship Society, the representative of its partner Soviet-Chinese Friendship Society, Nikolai Tichonov, announced the release of the 3rd Soviet space rocket. The news received only a lukewarm reaction. The showing of the documentary on Khrushchev's journey to the United States took place at the Soviet Embassy in Beijing on 16 October without Chinese participation.[61]

Understandably, China did not take long to respond to Soviet criticism. Still in February 1960, the Chinese observer at the Moscow meeting of the Warsaw Pact supported Khrushchev by praising the reduction in international tension, which was allegedly achieved without any concessions and in favour of socialism. Antonín Novotný noted that the Chinese representative sharply criticised the imperialists and, unsure as to the accuracy of the interpretation, he wondered about the resolute proclamation that China would recognise a disarmament plan only if it participated in it.[62] The key moment came in April 1960, when China published its objections towards Soviet politics in the pamphlet "Long Live Leninism," shortly after Khrushchev's visit to South East Asia.[63] Beijing was critical of promoting peace in countries which still suffered from colonialism and rejected Khrushchev's foreign policy, perceiving it as an inappropriate appeasement to the West. This policy was, in China's view, to be blamed for the imperialists taking the war initiative. China was offering an alternative to the bipolar division of the world. It was focusing on the poor countries of the Southern hemisphere, offering them the shield of its own revolutionary model and economic assistance based on mutually beneficial cooperation.[64] Nevertheless, Prague loyally supported the Soviet strategy. From the perspective of the Czechoslovak representatives, Beijing ignored

60 *AMZV ČR*, f. TO-T Čína, 1955–1959, book 2, file 2, Supporting documents for the journey and correspondence between Antonín Novotný and Mao Zedong; Antonín Novotný's speech of 28 September 1959. In: KOTYK, Václav (ed.): *Dokumenty československé zahraniční politiky: 1945–1960* [Documents of Czechoslovak Foreign Policy: 1945–1960]. Praha, Státní nakladatelství politické literatury 1960, p. 347.

61 *AMZV ČR*, f. TO-T Čína, 1955–1959, book 2, file 10, Record of 5 October 1959; *Ibid.*, Record of the projection of films at the Embassy of the Soviet Union on 16 October and 17 October 1959.

62 REIMAN, Michal – LUŇÁK, Petr: *Studená válka 1954–1964: Sovětské dokumenty v českých archivech* [The Cold War 1954–1964: Soviet Documents in Czech Archives]. Brno, Doplněk 2000, pp. 137–139.

63 Between 11 February and 5 March 1960 Khrushchev visited Afghanistan, Burma, India and Indonesia, countries which had conflictual relations with China at that time (see *Ibid.*, pp. 158–160); compare BAKEŠOVÁ, Ivana: *Čína ve XX. Století* [China in the 20th Century], Volume 2. Olomouc, Univerzita Palackého 2003, p. 70.

64 ALDEN, Chris – ALVES, Ana Cristina: History and Identity in the Construction of China's Africa Policy. In: *Review of African Political Economy,* Issue 115 (2008), pp. 47–52.

the opinion of the majority of communist parties, pursued a strange interpretation of Marxism-Leninism in domestic politics, based solely on Mao Zedong's texts, and underestimated the importance of incentives for the working class. In terms of foreign policy, it disrupted the unity of the "Socialist Camp," complicated its success, and took the side of the contemporary leftists. The Czechoslovak Ambassador also greatly resented the withdrawal of Soviet political economy textbooks from Chinese schools.[65]

Under the pretext of the American U-2 spy plane shot down over its territory, the Soviets tried to convene a meeting of communist parties to discuss international issues during the congress of Romanian Communists in Bucharest. They also promoted the necessity of adopting a final document that would bind all the participants to a common international policy. The Chinese, who had exchanged several letters regarding growing differences of opinion in this area with the Soviets, refused. They asked for time to study what was going to be said in Bucharest and agreed only to a discussion.[66] The developments at the congress proved that they had every reason to be cautious. To the unpleasant surprise of Beijing, the Soviet material distributed during the Bucharest congress did not denounce American imperialism but made public the thinly concealed dispute with the leadership of the Chinese Communists. The Chinese Communists were only capable of a delayed reaction by addressing explanatory letters to the allies in Europe. But the communist parties did not take the Chinese arguments seriously and jointly tried to get them to respect the Moscow line. Finally, the Soviets decided to submit the issue to the new International Meeting of the Communist and Workers' Parties. In mid-July 1960, Khrushchev withdrew the Soviet experts from China and the surprised Czechoslovak experts slowly followed. A teacher of Czech language and literature in Beijing, Jan Líbal, complained that the situation was chaotic and that following the withdrawal of the Soviet experts from the school his work was being made impossible. He complained about the overloading of students with extra-curricular activities and about the shift in opinion reflected in the teaching of the past and present of Czechoslovakia, which resulted in the prohibition of existing textbooks. He also felt he was being shadowed and asked for instructions.[67]

At the beginning of 1960, the Soviet leadership invited the Czechoslovak comrades to send their representative to a preparatory commission for the November Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties, which Moscow proposed to link with the 43rd anniversary of the October Revolution. Antonín Novotný and Vladimír Koucký

65 *AMZV ČR*, f. Porady kolegia ministra [Meetings of the Collegium of the Ministry], book 53, Minutes of the meeting, 15 September 1960, Item – Current political situation in the People's Republic of China and Czechoslovak-Chinese contacts.

66 *NA*, f. Antonín Novotný II, box 53, AU 37, Letters between the Central Committees of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia regarding the convocation of the international meeting of the communist and workers' parties and opportunities for the exchange of opinions during the Congress of the Romanian Workers' Party, dated between 2 and 7 June 1960.

67 *Ibid.*, f. 1501, box 279, AU 362, Minutes of the meeting of the Political Bureau, 25 September 1960, Item regarding the information – Jan Líbal, Report of the professor of Czech language and literature at the University of Foreign Languages in Beijing.

agreed and prepared a list of possible delegates and jointly presented it to the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.[68] On 27 September, the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Suslov, received Koucký and informed him on the previous Soviet-Chinese talks which showed Beijing's intransigence; and presented him with the main background material for the meeting and the next steps to be taken in that regard. Koucký agreed (according to himself he was also an opponent of ideological dogmatism) and promised Suslov that he would help to influence the opinions of other delegations in favour of the Soviets. In this spirit, the work of the drafting commission continued until the conference itself was held in November 1960. After his return, on 26 October, Koucký presented a report at the meeting of the Political Bureau. Five days later, Novotný had his draft speech for the Moscow conference approved. He was particularly concerned not to call the conflict a Sino-Soviet dispute, but rather a clash between the PRC and the whole international communist movement.[69]

On 10 November, in the Georgievski hall of the Kremlin, Khrushchev opened the conference in question by stating that the power struggle between socialism and capitalism had shifted considerably in favour of the first and that new opportunities and problems had emerged which he deemed appropriate to discuss in order to define the new tasks of the world communist, workers' and national liberation struggles. His speech received a standing ovation from all present except the Chinese and Albanian delegations. During the conference, Suslov attacked the Chinese delegate, Deng Xiaoping, by describing the meeting of the World Federation of Trade Unions in Beijing as an example of Chinese escalation of mutual disputes. His stance was backed by delegates from the other parties. The Hungarians, for example, mentioned the evaluation of the Bucharest meeting, according to which the Chinese Revolution was the most important event since the Great October Revolution and the people of China were heroic, but the Communist Party of China had made mistakes which should be recognised and rectified. After 12 days, when the main speeches of all 78 delegations had been made, the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, Deng Xiaoping, asked, against established practice, once more for the floor, seeking to explain that the adoption of the wrong position could not make China abandon its correct minority viewpoint. Upon the recommendation of Khrushchev that "it is better to let the illness manifest

68 *Ibid.*, f. Antonín Novotný II., box 53, AU 43, Correspondence between the Central Committees of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Resolution of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia on the preparation and convocation of the meeting, the delegation composition.

69 *Ibid.*, AU 44, Record of Vladimír Koucký's reception by Mikhail Suslov on 27 September 1960; *Ibid*., AU 45, Report on the work of the Editorial Commission; *Ibid.*, AU 141, China: Bilateral negotiations between the delegations of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Communist Party of China held between 17 and 22 September 1960; *Ibid.*, f. 1501, box 280, AU 363, Minutes of the meeting of the Political Bureau, 25 October 1960, Item 17 – Meeting of fraternal communist and workers' parties in Moscow; *Ibid.*, box 281, AU 364, Minutes of the meeting of the Political Bureau, 31 October 1960, Item 22 – Draft of Antonín Novotný's speech to be delivered at the November consultation meetings in Moscow.

itself, because then it is easier to cure," he was allowed to speak on the following day, despite protests from the representatives of 23 of the participating parties against the unconstructive position of China, which insisted on its erroneous ideas and threatened to lead to a rift in the whole conference. The drafting commission met again to adapt the text of the planned joint declaration from the conference. The issues in question were the appraisal of the role of a national bourgeoisie; the relation of the workers and peasants to the struggle for an independent state; the so-called cult of personality; criticism of Yugoslavia; and the issue of the essence of imperialism, which according to the Chinese could not change its nature, disarm itself or become peaceful. The controversial issues were delegated to a sub-committee of the drafting commission which made its final decision only after bilateral discussions had been held between the Soviet and Chinese Communists. On 1 December, Khrushchev made his final speech and all the participating parties signed a joint final declaration.[70] However, according to Koucký, the Chinese kept seeking a revision of the document, accentuating disproportionately some parts of the declaration while intentionally supressing others. They did not draw any conclusions on the basis of the criticism expressed at the Moscow meetings, and they also articulated their preparedness to strive for changes at the borders of their country.[71] Koucký also noted the extraordinary relations between the People's Republic of China and Albania, North Korea and Vietnam, and condemned them as an alleged reward for their solidarity with the Chinese line in Moscow. He stressed that it was still necessary to fight for the correct interpretation of the declaration.[72]

Conclusion

In the clash between the world of capitalism and the world of Soviet socialism, Mao's China sought to present itself as the most influential power in the "third world" – the world of the future, which according to Beijing shared very little of its past with the former worlds. To those who were willing to become its allies, China promised equal relations and mutually advantageous cooperation in the fight against imperialism in all its forms. In the light of the increasing economic problems of Czechoslovakia, Khrushchev's *protégé*, Antonín Novotný, adhered to

70 *Ibid.*, f. 1501, Vol. 285, AU 367, Minutes of the meeting of the Political Bureau, 21 November 1960, Item 20 – Some of the documents from the meeting of the fraternal communist and workers' parties presented to the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia by Antonín Novotný.

71 The first incident at the Soviet-Chinese border occurred in June 1960. For more details, see KIREJEV, G. V.: *Rossiya i Kitay: Neizvestnye stranitsy pogranichnykh peregovorov* [Russia and China: Unknown Pages of Border Negotiations]. Moskva, ROSSPEN 2006, pp. 56–82.

72 *NA*, f. 1501, box 281, AU 364, Minutes of the meeting of the Political Bureau, 31 October 1960, Item 23 – V. Koucký: Draft letter of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China; *Ibid.*, box 300, AU 384/8, Minutes of the meeting of the Political Bureau, 21 March 1961, Resolution on V. Koucký's report – Development of the situation in the People's Republic of China after the Moscow meetings.

a more realistic foreign policy. The emphasis that the radical Chinese partner put on support for those involved in civil wars in the collapsing colonial world was of no concern to him as it did not translate into any benefits for the internal needs of the system, to which his career was closely linked. On the other hand, Khrushchev offered a transparent hierarchy, traditional lord-vassal relations, the benefit of access to the Soviet market and its raw materials, and stability and peace after years of wars and terror. As for the countries which could become part of Mao's "third world" – revolutionary Cuba, which was perceived by leftist radicals as a new, living proof of the oncoming inevitable collapse of imperialism, claimed allegiance to Moscow through its delegate Aníbal Escalante at the November conference in 1960. In the eyes of Czechoslovak Communists, this confirmed once again that the Soviet approach was correct.

On 1 June 1961, when Nikita Khrushchev conducted talks with the leadership of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia near Bratislava, he was significantly less optimistic in his appraisal of international politics than at the beginning of 1960. Despite a friendly atmosphere, he claimed that he was unlikely to come to an agreement with the American President John Fitzgerald Kennedy and expressed his concerns about the possibility of achieving a satisfactory solution to the "German question." He was also worried about the consequences of the rapid success of the revolution in Laos, which complicated the Soviet policy towards the neutral Asian countries. The unsatisfactory state of relations with Tirana and Beijing led him to a revision of his approach to nationalism, and to the decision not to underestimate the resulting disputes within the Socialistic Bloc in the future. He also said that he would not make any further foreign policy decisions until after discussing them at the 22nd Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. In October 1962, this congress marked a definitive rupture in Sino-Soviet relations.[73]

After the Moscow consultation in 1960, Sino-Czechoslovak relations followed the deteriorating level of Sino-Soviet relations. Any problems had an immediate impact on the sensitive economic cooperation of Czechoslovakia with China. In July 1961, however, Novotný managed to convince Khrushchev to take over part of the Chinese investment orders, which China had rejected, as payment for Czechoslovak support.[74] The leadership of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia tempered the charged

73 WANG, Dong: *The Quarrelling Brothers: New Chinese Archives and Reappraisal of the Sino-Soviet Split 1959–1962.* (Cold War International History Project, Working Paper No. 49 [online].) Washington D.C., Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars [cit. 2013-09-01.] Available at: http://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/the-quarrelling-brothers-new-chinese-archives-and-reappraisal-the-sino-soviet-split-1959; compare *NA*, f. 1537 (Mezinárodní oddělení ÚV KSČ – původní označení fondu 100/3) [International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia – initial fund designation 100/3], box 31, AU 131, Record of the speech of the head of the delegation of the Communist Party of China, Zhou Enlai, at the 22nd Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union; *Ibid.*, The position of the Chinese press regarding the 22nd Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

74 *NA*, f. Antonín Novotný II., box 204, AU 342, Industrial facilities rejected by China, intended for sale to the Soviet Union; *Ibid.*, f. 1501, box 321, AU 408/4, Minutes of the meeting of

anti-Chinese speeches of Vladimír Koucký, and appealed for a calmer and more deliberate tone, but in general it preferred the Soviet "liberator" and calibrated its approach to Chinese politics accordingly. The documents of the leadership of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and materials from the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic show that it had been thus from the beginning of its relations with the Chinese Communists. As for the Czechoslovak position in the Sino-Soviet split, the decisive factor was Moscow's capacity to ensure the highest Party post and, after the death of President Antonín Zápotocký, also the highest state post for Antonín Novotný, who had strongly supported Soviet authority within the international communist movement during his meeting with Khrushchev in January 1957. The increasingly friendly and responsive approach of Soviet Communists towards Czechoslovakia, the attention the Soviets paid to the economic needs of its ally and the share they offered Prague in the joint foreign policy strategy, all further strengthened the long-term loyalty of Czechoslovak Communists towards Moscow.[75]

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the Political Bureau, 12 September 1961. Resolution on the report regarding the economic negotiations held in Moscow between 27 July and 10 August 1961.

75 The loyalty of Czechoslovak Communists was manifested not only by rhetorical attacks against West German revanchism, in relation to the arming of the Federal Republic of Germany and its contribution to NATO defence, but also by the only internationally relevant document of the Foreign Minister, Václav David, which was pushed through at the UN General Assembly in September 1962 as the Declaration of the Legal Principles of Peaceful Coexistence (*Ibid*., f. 1537, box 32, AU 135, Report on the Implementation of the Principles of the Resolution of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia of 21 March 1961 on Sino-Czechoslovak Relations, 10 January 1962).