

LETTERS

To the Editor:

Although Professor David W. Paul makes some positive comments about my book *Czechoslovakia's Role in Soviet Strategy* in his review (*Nationalities Papers*, Spring 1982, Vol. X, No. 1), I have to object to his building a straw man in order to destroy him. Among the distortions contained in the review are his allegations that I make "the unsubtle suggestion that [T. G.] Masaryk was senile;" that I "characterize" the political divisions during the Prague Spring "as a clear cut split between 'liberals' and 'conservatives';" that I place Alexander Dubček "within the 'conservative' camp;" I "generalize from the Czechoslovak case to a broader world focus;" and that the revolutionary movements in some parts of the Third World "arise as ancillary forces in a worldwide communist strategy, directed from Moscow." Such statements do not appear in the book at all. These misrepresentations reflect upon the reviewer and his intellectual honesty.

The fact is that Masaryk perceived wrongly the developments in Russia not merely in 1918, but already in 1917 when a few weeks before the Bolshevik revolution he reported to the British intelligence that Russia "will not make a separate peace, and will continue to hold a certain number of German troops on the Eastern front. There is no danger of separate peace. . . ." What Paul may or may not know is that in 1917 Masaryk arrived in Russia carrying a British passport issued to him by the British Foreign Office in the name of Thomas George Marsden. According to the top British intelligence agent in Russia in 1917, the "original purpose" of Masaryk's going to Russia was "propaganda working through some 12,000 [sic] Czech agents in Russia." Indeed, Masaryk's assessments of the developments in Russia that he made in the 1920s were as wrong as were those that he had made in 1917 and 1918. These are facts, not "wishful thinking."

Paul's statements that I place Dubček into the "conservative camp" and that I "characterize" the developments in Czechoslovakia in 1968 as a "clear cut split between 'liberals' and 'conservatives'" is nonsense. I do not believe in these labels, in the first place, because they are meaningless. The cited Communist party document speaks for itself and not for me; at no place do I identify myself with it. (Incidentally, it used different labels.) Dubček and the group that arrived in Moscow to sign the capitulation toward the end of August 1968 was characterized best by one of its members, Zdeněk Mlynář. He writes: "Actually we are imbeciles, but our imbecility has the appearance of ideology of reform communism." ("*Jsme vlastně blbci, ale naše blbost má podobu reformního komunismu.*")

One can easily document that relaxation in Czechoslovakia took place already under Antonín Novotný. For example, in the summer of 1967 Pro-

essor Jan Triska of Standord University, a post-1948 refugee, travelled to Prague and gave a lecture there. It is highly doubtful that he could have done it in the 1970s.

Dubček, indeed, was a pliable tool of Moscow when he, in July 1968, removed from a key position in the Communist party General Václav Prchlik who was advocating preparations for a possible Soviet invasion. His removal assured the Soviets that there would be no military resistance during the invasion.

The imposition of martial law in Poland, instead of the “expected” invasion, is one of further evidences that corroborate my thesis about the Soviet military and strategic interests in Czechoslovakia and their achieving the objective by the invasion. The thesis has been widely accepted among policymakers and in the academic community since I first stated it after my visit of Czechoslovakia in the summer of 1968. The Soviets did not have to invade Poland; they have had their military formations in that country ever since the end of World War II.

In contrast to Paul, I do not generalize, since there is an element of fallacy in any generalization. Had Paul been more objective, instead of making unfounded and undocumented charges about “lapses in the author’s objectivity”, he would have noticed on pp. 256-57 of the book statement saying that Czechoslovakia “provided a model for revolution that was exported with some successes and some failures to the Third World, and, in 1974-75, the attempt was made to apply it in Portugal.” The given examples illustrate how the various factors present (or absent) in these revolutionary situations, including that of geography, contributed to either the success or failure of attempted revolutions. I make it clear that each situation is unique; this is just the opposite of “generalizing.”

Instead of judging the book *Czechoslovakia’s Role in Soviet Strategy* on the basis of Paul’s distortions, the readers should read it and form his/her own conclusions about it (the book was published by University Press of America, Washington, D.C., and the price of the 1981 printing is \$12.75).

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Professor David W. Paul does not feel that a response is necessary.