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English-Speaking Communists, Communist Sympathizers and Fellow-Travellers and Czechoslovakia in the Early Cold War

(Anglicky mluvící komunisté, komunističtí sympatizanti a podporovatelé a Československo v počátcích studené války)

Supervisor Mgr. Ondřej Vojtěchovský, Ph.D.

2017

Statement of originality of the dissertation:

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own work and that I wrote it independently, using only duly listed and properly cited sources and references, and that it has not been submitted in connection with any other university course or in fulfilment of the requirements of the same degree or of any other.

Prague, 22 September 2017 Kathleen Brenda Geaney

Abstract

The dissertation is a study of some of those people with Communist Party affiliations and fellow-travellers, who journeyed behind the Iron Curtain to see for themselves what life was like in the new people's democracy. The research focuses on Czechoslovakia as a tourist destination for a surprising number of anglophones in the early years of the Cold War. It argues that Soviet experience served as a best practices model for officialdom in Prague. This was modified where necessary to take into account the lessons learnt, national particulars, and the new geopolitical context. In both situations, foreigners were evaluated in terms of importance and potential as far as the communist cause was concerned.

Key words: Czechoslovakia, communism, Cold War, English-speaking foreigners, hospitality techniques

Anotace

Disertace se věnuje těm členům a sympatizantům komunistické strany, kteří cestovali skrze železnou oponu, aby na vlastní oči viděli život v nové lidové demokracii. Výzkum se zaměřuje na Československo v počátcích studené války, které se stalo cílem až překvapujícího množství anglojazyčných turistů. Práce ukazuje, že sovětský příklad sloužil jako model pro přijímání těchto návštěvníků pro oficiální místa v Praze. Československé úřady si nicméně tento vzor přizpůsobily na základě získaných zkušeností, místních podmínek a také geopolitického kontextu. Přístup k nim byl přizpůsobován na základě hodnocení jejich přínosu a důležitosti pro věc komunismu.

Klíčová slova: Československo, komunismus, studená války, anglicky-mluvící cizinci, metody pohostinosti

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INTRODUCTION

"From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the continent," declaimed Winston Churchill in words that are often seen as the opening salvo in the Cold War conflict.[1] Even though debate on when and how the Cold War actually started continues, and it is doubtful if historians will ever reach a consensus on the matter, it is indisputable that two blocs came into being. One, headed by the United States, represented the capitalist West and championed "freedom," the other was led by the Soviet Union and campaigned for socialism and "peace." Not surprisingly, the two camps were mutually incompatible. In the early Cold War years, they both created images of their adversary as "the Other." In the East, the West was labelled an "imperialist warmonger," among other epithets, while in the West, the East was the anti-democratic, totalitarian camp.[2] When reading about the early years of the Cold War, one sometimes conjures up a mental image of an actual physical curtain made of iron on the border separating the two opposing sides, surrounded with barbed wire, electric fencing, and heavily armed frontier guards ready to shoot would-be escapees and intruders alike. One visualizes a virtually impenetrable barrier between the "good" West and the "bad" East, which only a few lucky souls managed to cross in the right direction – westwards. However, is this picture adequate? Or has our image of the period under scrutiny and the questions it raises been influenced by the perspective of the Cold War winner more than we are prepared to admit? Was everything really only black and white?

Over the years, an enormous number of books have been printed about the early Cold War period, East–West relations and confrontations, proxy wars fought elsewhere in the globe, political developments in the two camps, the different forms of repression within both, the fears, stigmatization, and malaise engendered as a result, as well as corresponding cultural and social issues. The Second World War is for many a watershed in world history and indeed the

[1] Quoted in for example GADDIS, John Lewis, *The Cold War: The Deals, the Spies, the Lies, the Truth,* London – New York: The Penguin Group 2005, p. 95.
[2] Krakovsky Roman, The Peace and the War Camps: The Dichotomous Cold War Culture in Czechoslovakia 1948–1960, in VOWINCKEL Annete – PAYK Marcus M. – LINDENBERGER Thomas (eds.), *Cold War Cultures: Perspectives on Eastern and Western European Societies,* New York – Oxford, Berghahn Books 2012, pp. 213–234, here 213.

expression “post-war” itself often seems to carry with it the notion that study of the early phase of the Cold War should focus on post-1945 developments, with only cursory attention paid to what went before. This, too, seems to be the pattern for the teaching of history at all levels and has a marked effect upon our understanding of the Cold War itself.

By the same token, when one looks at the question of visitors to the Soviet Union who were in sympathy with the socialist experiment, a field that is also well-documented by experts, almost all works on the topic finish with the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939. Understandably, it would have been difficult to visit the “home of socialism” during the war years, but what of the early Cold War period? What of those communists, fellow-travellers, news reporters and simply adventurers who journeyed to the Soviet Bloc at this time to see the Soviet Union or the newly created people’s democracies for themselves? What, too, of the strategies developed by the Soviet Union in the 1930s to promote a positive image of itself and its system among those who travelled there? Did the new satellite states start from scratch in this regard or was the proven Soviet model rolled out in the capitals of the new Soviet allies, with suitable modifications made where necessary for specific features of the individual countries? These questions are worth asking inasmuch as the generation of die-hard Western supporters of the Soviet system did not disappear overnight, but rather they, together with very many who were well-disposed towards socialist ideas in general, were inspired and fortified in their beliefs by what they saw as the steadfast endurance of the Soviet people during the war and by the heroic exploits of the Red Army. Time and circumstances, however, would in due course take their toll on numbers.

Of course, geopolitical realities changed profoundly after the war with the jockeying for position that accompanied the two-bloc rivalry. Czechoslovakia, formerly part and parcel of Western Europe economically and politically, was wedged into the Eastern camp and, as such, actively followed the instructions and fraternal advice that emanated from the bloc’s taskmaster, the Soviet Union. Like the other satellites in the region, Czechoslovakia took part in the various USSR-led campaigns directed against the mortal enemy, the West. While the majority of such endeavours were targeted at the domestic audience, the goal of some was to win over and

mobilize those in the West who were sympathetic, or potentially so, to the Soviet cause. Among them were many from the intellectual élite, academics, scientists, writers, artists, clergymen, as well as ordinary men and women. Some were troubled by the development of the atomic bomb and the nightmare scenario of a nuclear holocaust. Others were disturbed by the persecution of communists, particularly in the United States, and by increasing American hegemony in Europe and the wider world. Still more had been alienated from the capitalist system entirely because of the ravages of the Great Depression in the 1930s and the concomitant rise of Fascism.

Such concerns coalesced in the post-war, Soviet-promoted peace campaign. While the enemy was now the warmongering United States and its Western "lackeys" rather than Hitlerite Germany, nevertheless the peace campaigners could draw on experience from the earlier era. The goals and actual course of the post-war peace campaign were different, resonating as they did with developments in the contemporary political world, and, in addition, there was no one of the stature of Willi Müzenberg to direct proceedings, but there were also similarities. Compared to the period that went before, too, accounts by Westerners who travelled to the USSR in the early Cold War years, many of whom were already active in the peace campaign or would soon be willing conscripts, are relatively few, and those that do exist, generally tend to be isolated and idiosyncratic. No attempt has been made to co-ordinate and collate these disparate narratives or to take stock of visitors' reports of trips to the new people's democracies. Such a study, it seems to me, as well as examining the scale of such activities in their own right, would not only illumine the internal functioning of the "peace" camp but would also shed fresh light on the dynamic of the larger, bipolar conflict.

Given the fact that so many excellent works are already available on the Cold War and on Czechoslovakia's internal development after the communist coup of 1948, these topics are not explored in any great depth in this work but are referred to when appropriate. Rather, the primary focus is on Czechoslovakia's relations with the communist movement in the English-speaking world and the associated peace campaign in the early Cold War years. As was the case with other Soviet satellites in the region, the Czechoslovak Communist Party forged bonds with corresponding national communist parties in the West and these were strengthened by personal

contacts. On the other hand, Czechoslovakia's role was exceptional in that it lay at the cutting edge between East and West, a likely battlefield should hostilities erupt in earnest. The country had been a popular destination for foreign visitors long before the 1948 communist coup. Nor did it suffer the WWII devastation that Poland and Hungary experienced, for example, but rather belonged among the more financially secure states in the region and the standard of living among the general population was higher than that in the other people's democracies. The same holds true for the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia itself. The Party had pretty solid financial resources and Party leaders were not averse to dipping into the coffers for the benefit of foreign comrades, many of whom would be known in person and, very often too, so would their language.

As an illustration, the case of the hapless Bedřich Geminder, a Czech-German who joined the central apparatus of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in 1946, might be mentioned. Geminder had been prominent in Comintern headquarters in Moscow and worked closely with its chairman, Georgi Dimitrov. After the dissolution of the Comintern in 1943, Geminder served as director of the press and news agency of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. On returning to Prague, he became head of the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and was responsible for relations with foreign communist parties and sympathizers. Geminder remained in this position until his arrest in 1951.[3] Not surprisingly, given his background, he was already on familiar terms with many of the visitors who would come to Czechoslovakia in the early Cold War years.

During this period, too, Czechoslovakia provided a haven for many persecuted communists from abroad, most notably perhaps, Greeks and anti-Tito Yugoslavs. Among other immigrant communities who found a home among the Czechs and Slovaks, some temporarily, others permanently, Italians and Spaniards were probably the most prominent, but English-speakers, francophones, and indeed Iranians should not be overlooked either.[4] Many aspects of

[3] BARTOŠEK Karel, *Zpráva o putování v komunistických archivech Praha – Paříž 1948–1968* [A report about wandering in communist archives Prague – Paris 1948–1968], Prague – Litomyšl, Paseka 2000, p. 59.
[4] For example: HRADEČNÝ Pavel, *Řecká komunita v Československu: Její vznik a počáteční vývoj (1948–1954)* [The Greek community in Czechoslovakia: Its creation and early development (1948–1968)], Prague, Ústav pro soubodé dějiny Akademie věd 2000; TSIVOS Konstantinos, *Řeská emigrace v Československu (1948–1968): Od jednoho rozštěpení ke druhému* [Greek immigration in Czechoslovakia (1948–1968):From one split to another],

this wider topic, however, still await investigation. At the same time, Prague was where the headquarters of several international communist organizations were located, the International Union of Students and the World Peace Council being probably the best known.[5] All such institutions employed foreign staff, both from the East and the West.[6] Prague was also the centre for worldwide radio broadcasts of communist propaganda, with, unsurprisingly, many of those taking part coming from the targeted countries.[7] Mention should likewise be made of the numerous young people, especially from colonial regions in Africa and Asia awaiting independence, who came to pursue studies in different fields. However, it must be borne in mind that communist Czechoslovakia was a closed society. All those who wished to enter or leave had to have the requisite visa and a not inconsiderable amount of time was spent by the communist authorities in assessing letters of recommendation and proposed activities when processing entry visa applications. Nevertheless, with so many foreigners inside its borders, notably from the West, the bulk of whom were there to serve the Czechoslovak and Soviet cause in one way or another, the question inevitably arises as to just how impenetrable the so-called "Iron Curtain" actually was.

The work presented here is a study of some of those people, Party members and well-wishers for the most part, who journeyed behind the Curtain to see for themselves what life was

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Prague, Fakulta sociálních vědy Univerzity Karlovy – Dokořán 2011; KRÁLOVÁ Kateřina – TSIVOS Konstantinos et al, *Vyschly nám slzy: Řečtí uprchlíci v Československu* [Our tears dried up: Greek refugees in Czechoslovakia], Prague, Dokořán 2012; DANFORTH Loring M. – BOESCHOTEN Riki van, *Children of the Greek Civil War: Refugees and the Politics of Memory,* Chicago – London, The University of Chicago Press 2012; VOJTĚCHOVSKÝ Ondřej, *Z Prahy proti Titovi! Prosovětská jugoslávská emigrace v Československu* [From Prague against Tito! Pro-Soviet Yugoslav immigration in Czechoslovakia], Prague, Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Karlovy 2012; ZÍDEK Petr, *Češi v srdci temnoty: Sedmadvacet historických reportáží o prvním čtvrtstoletí vlády komunistů* [The Czechs in the middle of darkness: Twenty-seven historical reportages on the first 25 years of communist rule in Czechoslovakia], Prague, Euromedia-Group – Knižní klub 2013; HRUBY Peter, *Dangerous Dreamers: The Australian Anti-Democratic Left and Czechoslovak Agents*, Bloomington (Indiana), iUniverse 2010, published also in Czech as: IDEM, Nebezpeční snílci: Australská levice a Československo, Brno, Stilus 2007.

[5] One of the British employees of the International Union of Students was, among others, John Prime. An interesting interview with him where he talks about his personal experience in Czechoslovakia and the functioning of the IUS in the early Cold War years can be found in: National Sound Archive, British Library, F 7857 (tape 8), F 7919 (tape 9), F 7921 (tape 11), F 7922 (tape 12), F 7924 (tape 14), F 7925 (tape 15), F 7855 (tape 16).

[6] Among the other international communist organizations, one can mention the International Organization of Journalists, the World Federation of Trade Unions, the Christian Peace Conference, and the International Radio and Television Organization. For more information see for example: STAAR Richard F. (ed.), *Yearbook on International Communist Affairs,* Stanford, Hoover Institution Press 1990.

[7] See for example: COOKE Philip, "Oggi in Italia": The Voice of Truth and Peace in Cold War Italy, *Modern Italy,* Vol. 12, No. 2 (June 2007), pp. 251–265; RECCHIONI Massimo, *Iltenente Alvaro: la Volante Rossa e i rifugiati politici Italiani in Cecoslovacchia*, Italia, Derive Approdi 2010.

like in the new people's democracy. To be more precise, the research focuses on Czechoslovakia as a tourist destination, so to speak, for a surprising number of anglophones in the early years of the Cold War. Particular emphasis is devoted to those with Communist Party affiliations and to fellow-travellers, those who, in the words of J. Robert Oppenheimer, "accepted part of the public program of the Communist Party," were "willing to work with and associate with Communists," but were not *bona fide* Party members.[8] In this context, however, it is important to stress that even devout communists often eschewed formal membership of their home Party for tactical reasons.[9] Of course, the impressions gained from a short visit to a country may differ markedly from those formed by long-term residents. The attitude of some of these in turn may have been influenced by the belief that their exile in Czechoslovakia, or elsewhere in the Soviet Bloc, was merely a prelude, a period of marking time until, following the logic history, the Party assumed power in their home country, a prospect that seemed to grow ever dimmer as the months rolled into years. At the same time, it would be interesting to know how many of the short-term visitors, whether instilled with deeply-rooted ideological convictions or not, would have welcomed the actuality of a full-blown communist regime assuming power in their home countries, but though the impassioned slogans were cranked out at will, perhaps little thought was expended on the subject.

A contrastive analysis of conditions prevailing in early communist Czechoslovakia embarking on its vaunted programme of Sovietization and those in the pre-war Soviet Union proper, as it constructed its giant engineering complexes in Magnitogorsk and elsewhere, shows clear dissimilarities, not least in terms of size, population, and industrial development. The international environment had changed dramatically, too. Sovietized Czechoslovakia looked out on a world divided into two competing blocs, each seeking to outdo the other in inventing and amassing weapons of devastating mass destruction. Recruiting adherents from outside their borders was high on the political agenda of both antagonists, as was making much of those already committed. In this respect, several striking parallels are evident in the approach of the

[8] POLENBERG Richard (ed.), *In the Matter of J. Robert Oppenheimer: The Security Clearance Hearing*, Ithaca (NY), Cornell University Press 2001, p. 59.
[9] CAUTE David, *The Fellow-Travellers: Intellectual Friends of Communism* (revised and updated edition), New Haven – London, Yale University Press 1988, pp. 4–5.

authorities in the pre-war Soviet Union and in communist Czechoslovakia to streamlining short-term Western visitors to their lands, in our case the English-speakers. It is clear that the Soviet experience served as a best practices model for officialdom in Prague. This was modified where necessary to take into account the lessons learnt, national particulars, and the new geopolitical context. In both situations, foreigners were evaluated in terms of importance and potential as far as the communist cause was concerned, and, when the results were positive, the facilitators swung into action. Bureaucratic hurdles were sorted, the ground smoothed, and the purveyors of the wide range of tailored treats attuned their services in line with the hospitality techniques developed in Moscow. It had taken the Soviet Union several years to polish the necessary persuasive skills. Their application in Czechoslovakia in the early years of communist rule was sometimes imperfect, and there were occasional glitches as we shall see, but this improved with time and the Muscovite mentors could be well-satisfied on the whole with the progress made by their Czechoslovak *protégé*.

When it came to adding an extra, authoritative voice to the various Soviet-sponsored campaigns then underway, the visiting foreigners were ideal, above all when they could present themselves as neutral witnesses on their return home. Especially welcome were travel accounts, booklets, newspaper articles, and radio interviews detailing the "real" conditions obtaining in the Soviet Union and the people's democracies, which extolled the great strides made in eliminating poverty and unemployment in such a short period of time and explained away controversial aspects of the regimes in a fog of verbiage and half-truths. Western governments were aware of the dynamic such reports provided to their adversary and were acutely perturbed by the momentum the visitors generated for the peace campaign, as an instance in point. At the same time, consonant with the position and status they occupied in their homeland, prominent fellow-travellers and fraternal delegates would always be invited for briefing sessions with their opposite number in the host Party, or indeed officials higher up the ladder, where in a comradely atmosphere up-to-date information and analysis of the situation in their home countries would be passed on and the Party line propounded.

By and large, visitors to either the pre-war Soviet Union or communist Czechoslovakia tended to be motivated by commitment, curiosity, or simply a desire to avail of the good cheer and whatever else was on offer, or, indeed, in very many cases, a combination of all three. For the most part, they comprised Party members, trade unionists, writers, artists, and politicians, but holiday-makers of a "progressive" bent were to be found, too. At gatherings and festivals in the new people's democracies, peace was the mantra, but much of the tub-thumping from the stage had been heard before. Many of the crackerjack orators and campaigners who mouthed the anti-Western flimflam from conference platforms would have cut their teeth at similar events a couple of decades earlier when the enemy was Nazi Germany. Hitler's Reich had fallen but, despite the pealing bells, the tears of joy, the crowds dancing on the streets, there had been no happy ending, the speakers thundered. The guns still pointed east. The Trumans and Churchills had hoisted the flags and pennants of war once more and were making a mockery of the millions dead, the millions maimed.

Certainly in terms of numbers, visitors to the pre-war Soviet Union far outweighed those to early communist Czechoslovakia. Yet in the Czechoslovak case, figures were by no means negligible either. The representative sample of English-speaking people who visited the country in the early Cold War years, considered in this study, speaks for itself. The visits are particularly noteworthy when the milieu in which they took place is taken into account. This was "the time of the toad,"[10] a time, one imagines, when even Stephen Crane's classic tale of the American Civil War, *The Red Badge of Courage*, was being discreetly removed from bookshelves because of its title, a time when communists and communist sympathizers in the Western world were hounded and had their passports confiscated or stamped as invalid for travel to the Soviet Bloc.

[10] Dalton Trumbo was one of a group of ten Hollywood screenwriters and directors who cited the First Amendment to the American Constitution and refused to answer questions about Communist Party membership at a hearing of the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) in October 1947. All ten, who became known as the Hollywood Ten, were convicted of contempt of Congress and, once the legal system had run its course, began one-year prison sentences in 1950. "Possessed of dossiers on millions of Americans," Dalton wrote, HUAC was riding roughshod over the United States Constitution and had arrogated to itself the right to ask of those summoned before it the "single question – 'Are you now or have you ever been a member of the Communist party?' – a question to which thirty years of propaganda has lent a connotation so terrible that even the asking of it, regardless of the answer given, can imperil a man's career and seriously qualify his future existence as a citizen free from violence under the law." TRUMBO Dalton, *The Time of the Toad*, p. 7.

The work is divided into two main parts. The first is a short, introductory section which looks at travellers to the Soviet Union in the pre-war decades and how the hospitality techniques brought into play to gain their approval for the new socialist experiment were perfected. This is the context for the main focus of the research, which is an examination of how the skills learnt were then transferred to Czechoslovakia as the authorities in the new people's democracy set out to win the favour of corresponding visitors to their fledgling communist state. The analysis concentrates on native English-speakers, Party members and fellow-travellers for the most part, who ventured behind the Iron Curtain to see the newest member of the communist bloc, and the people whom Hitler had vowed to tear into little bits,[11] for themselves. A sense of the whole is essential for our understanding of the parts,[12] and, indeed as far as Czechoslovakia is concerned, "the parts can only be understood in reference to a whole,"[13] in this case Soviet suzerainty.

Within this wider framework, distinctive facets of the Czechoslovak situation are scrutinized. This is followed by an analysis of the English-speaking visitors themselves, their motives for travelling to Czechoslovakia and, where records exist, what impressions they formed during their stay. Shared characteristics enable most to be grouped in categories. Thus, beginning with the arts world, an assortment of cultural figures, musicians, poets, novelists, and the like, who made the journey in the early communist years, including those who came for the Karlovy Vary film festival, is presented. In this section, too, Joan Littlewood's Theatre Workshop tour of the country in 1948 is described as is Paul Robeson's performance at the Prague Spring Festival the following year. This is followed by a close-up of the lawyers and politicians of the left who arrived, in particular the British barrister D. N. Pritt, and then of the many transit passengers who used Prague as a staging-post in a journey whose terminal point was further east. Since the peace campaign was of major importance at the time, it is hardly surprising that the spotlight turns to how this impacted on Czechoslovakia and to the various

[11] STEED Wickham, Preface to HEISLER J. B. – MELLON J. E., *Czechoslovakia: Land of Dream and Enterprise*, Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department of Information 1945, p. 11.
[12] TOSH John, *The Pursuit of History: Aims, Methods and New Directions in the Study of Modern History* (5th edition), London – New York, Longman 2010, p. 36.
[13] PALMER Richard E., *Hermeneutics*, Evanston (IL), Northwestern University Press 1969, p. 118.

activists who gathered in Prague to further the cause. W. E. B. Du Bois is to the forefront here, while the Paris-Prague Peace Congress of 1949 and the Second Congress of the International Union of Students which took place in the city in 1950, and related topics, are all treated in detail. Representatives of different Christian denominations had always made up a significant segment of visitors to Czechoslovakia and this continued during the early communist years. However, a major shift took place. Whereas in the past the Catholic Church had dominated the religious landscape of Czechoslovakia and the bulk of pious visitors had been priests and nuns from its ranks, this ceased to be the case under the communist regime. It was pastors from the Protestant churches who now came for the various spiritual occasions celebrated in the country. The Christian Festival of 1950 is carefully considered, with special attention paid to Hewlett Johnson, the Dean of Canterbury, and to his Australian counterpart, the Reverend Frank Hartley. This in turn leads to an exploration of parades and festivals and to selective communist appropriation of Czechoslovak and Russian history for commemorative displays, which the English-speaking guests would either have watched or participated in. Many of the spectators would have been British holidaymakers who made the trip with the London-based Progressive Tours company and they provide the next group to be investigated. Then the study moves to fraternal delegates and trade unionists from the English-speaking world, with the leader of the Communist Party of Great Britain, Harry Pollitt, specifically singled out.

As well as being interesting in its own right, providing a breakdown of the English-speaking travellers who reached Czechoslovakia in the early communist years also sets the scene for an exploration of how the hospitality techniques developed in the USSR were applied by those in control in Prague. A sizeable amount of money, time, effort and manpower was assigned to create positive impressions among the receptive visitors. Details of this expenditure and whether the investment was worthwhile are among the topics investigated and also what differentials existed in the treatment meted out to, say, an ordinary British holidaymaker as opposed to someone deemed to be higher up the communist scale of values in terms of propaganda potential. How the visitors spent their time in Czechoslovakia, where they stayed, their daily fare of meals, visits, and evening entertainment, are also among the questions addressed. So, too, are the results achieved, the impressions of Czechoslovak life that the guests

left with and reported on to their fellow-citizens at home. At the same time, I try to view the points at issue against the backdrop of the international great power rivalry in all its complexity. The peace campaign and the anti-Western rhetoric were strategic weapons employed by the Soviet side in the conflict, and English-speaking visitors to Czechoslovakia were, wittingly and unwittingly, pressed into service to help shape public opinion not only in their own countries and in the West in general but also among the domestic Czechoslovak audience.

METHODOLOGY AND SOURCE CRITICISM

There were several reasons why I decided to undertake a study of communist and fellow-travelling visitors from the English-speaking world, i.e., from the United States, the British Isles, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, to early Cold War Czechoslovakia. In the first place, this had never been done before. The people concerned did not form a single, unified whole but were often distinctly different in terms of background and personal experience. Even within individual English-speaking countries, there was no homogenous group but rather a pronounced diversity in respect to class, urban-rural origin, education, and employment, in addition to the travellers' own unique, idiosyncratic characteristics. However, despite this dissimilarity, they all spoke the same native language – English, no matter how unalike when it came to dialect and accent. My initial hypothesis had been that the hospitality techniques refined in the pre-war Soviet Union were recalibrated for Cold War purposes and transferred to communist Czechoslovakia. This was verified in the findings from the sample of English-speaking visitors analysed in my investigation.

All the English-speakers who were the subject of my inquiry belonged to the "freedom" camp led by the United States, whether they were happy to be in this position or not. Many were well-known to one another, having shared the same platform at congresses and peace gatherings over the years, and, incidentally, they provided a readymade market, although perhaps not necessarily readership, for booklets on the achievements of Czechoslovakia and other allied countries within the Soviet Bloc, as well as the struggle for peace and socialism, when the travellers put pen to paper on their return home. Often visitors to Czechoslovakia were

given such publications as gifts to ensure wider distribution and this, doubtless, contributed to making the names of the most prominent English-speaking Soviet apologists household names not only in leftist circles in the West but among the public at large and, perhaps as an unwelcome corollary, to having their own special folder in the filing-cabinets of the security services in their home countries.

When speaking of the early Cold War period, I have in mind the years that followed the ending of the Second World War, in the case of Czechoslovakia those after the communist seizure of power in February 1948, until Nikita Khrushchev's exposure of Stalin's personality cult in 1956 and the Hungarian Uprising the same year. However, no strict timeline is possible here. The managing of foreign visitors involved mechanisms and hospitality techniques that did not change overnight with the death of either Stalin or the Czechoslovak communist leader, Klement Gottwald, in 1953 or with the wide circulation of Khrushchev's secret speech in 1956 and the thaw in East-West relations. Although the notion of a historical continuum may be rejected as spurious by some commentators,[14] there is, nevertheless, as one British historian noted, a historical process evidenced in "the relationship between events over time which endows them with more significance than if they were viewed in isolation."[15] While the term "early Cold War years" may seem imprecise and open-ended, it is necessary for classificatory purposes and to tease out "the relationship between events over time" without any artificial chronological constraint imposed from outside. On the other hand, it is undoubtedly the case that, this feature of the research notwithstanding, particular emphasis is certainly placed on the years 1949–1952 when the Cold War confrontation was at its hottest. It is noteworthy, too, that this timespan corresponds to the period when Czechoslovakia enjoyed the greatest vogue in popularity among the various left-leaning, English-speaking guests and, paradoxically, it was also the time when the regime was at its most repressive.

The purpose of my research was not to produce "a collection of snapshots of the past."[16] Rather, it was to put together the pieces of a fragmented puzzle, a veritable jigsaw of bits and

[14] See, for example: GILLOCH Graeme, *Walter Benjamin: Critical Constellations*, Cambridge, Polity Press 2002, p. 228.
[15] TOSH John, *The Pursuit of History,* p. 12.
[16] *Ibid,,* p. 11.

pieces, and produce an integral picture of a subject that had not been mapped before. It became clear at an early stage that the work involved more than simply formulating new questions and seeking answers in well-trodden source material. Indeed, what initially seemed to be a purely Czechoslovak topic, a survey of English-speaking communists, fellow-travellers, and others who visited the country during the early Cold War period soon proved to have far wider ramifications. New sources had to be ferreted out, most of which lay outside the Czech Republic. They were to be found in the English-speaking countries themselves, in Great Britain, the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. In fact, this was the reason behind my decision to write the dissertation in English rather than in Czech. The force and immediacy of the material might well have been lost in translation. The trail also led to the Soviet Union, to the renowned experts on the topic of visitors to the USSR in the pre-war decade and to the study of the hospitality techniques developed there.[17] This served as a background against which my own tentative assumptions and hypotheses could be framed.

The work is based on extensive archival research. With regard to Czech archives, I conducted my enquiries mainly in the National Archive of the Czech Republic (NACR) in which the fund of the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia was especially useful. I also consulted sources in the Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic and the Archive of the Czechoslovak Security Services (ABS), but came across little of relevance there for my purposes. On the other hand, I discovered a substantial amount of interesting material in the reports prepared by the British Embassy in Prague for the Foreign Office in London, which are located in the London-based National Archives (TNA). The People's History Museum (PHM), where the Labour

[17] For example: HOLLANDER Paul, *Political Pilgrims: Western Intellectuals in Search of the Good Society,* New York, Routledge 2017; IDEM, *Political Pilgrims: Travels of Western Intellectuals to the Soviet Union, China, and Cuba 1928–1978,* New York – Oxford, Oxford University Press 1981; DAVID-FOX Michael, *Showcasing the Great Experiment: Cultural Diplomacy and Western Visitors to the Soviet Union, 1921–1941,* Oxford – New York, Oxford University Press 2012; IDEM, *Origins of Stalinist Superiority Complex: Western Intellectuals inside the USSR,* Washington DC, National Council for Eurasian and East European Research 2004; FITZPATRICK Sheila – RASMUSSEN Carolyn (eds.), *Political Tourists: Travellers from Australia to the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1940s,* Victoria, Melbourne University Press 2008; MARGULIES Sylvia R., T*he Pilgrimage to Russia: The Soviet Union and the Treatment of Foreigners, 1924–1937,* Madison – London, The University of Wisconsin Press 1968; KULIKOVA G. B., Prebyvaie v SSSR inostrannykh pisateley v 1920–1930-kh godakh, *Otechestvenaya Istroiya,* No. 4 (2003), pp. 43–59; ORLOV I. B., Stanovlenie instituta gidov-perevodchikov v SSSR (1929–1939), *Soviet and Post-Soviet Review,* Vol. 31, No. 2 (2004), pp. 205–227.

History Archive is housed, and the Working Class Movement Library, both located in Manchester, also turned out to be a truly valuable resource. In the United States, I had the opportunity to access personal estates and records. Most profitable in this regard were the letters written by Eleanor Wheeler, an American defector who moved to Czechoslovakia with her family in 1947 because of her husband's activities and beliefs.[18] The Wheeler Papers 1947–1957 are stored in the University of Washington Special Collections, Seattle, WA (UWSC). Another truly remarkable fount of information is located in the Special Collections of Cornell University, Ithaca, NY (CUSC). It might be noted in passing that materials prepared in Prague by the International Union of Students during the early Cold War period can only be retrieved outside the Czech Republic. In addition to the sources mentioned, I also found significant data in the Library of Congress in Washington, DC (Martha Dodd Papers) and in the National Sound Archives of the British Library, as well as its Humanities Section, in London.

My search for relevant material led me to publications by the various international communist and front organizations headquartered in Prague, as well as to those of friendship with Czechoslovakia societies, including various articles and reports in Western left-wing

[18] George Shaw Wheeler and his wife Eleanor came to Czechoslovakia with their four children in November 1947. Wheeler had been an economist with the government in Washington until being posted to the American zone in Germany in 1945 to take charge of de-Nazifying former Reich labour officials. He was removed from his position in 1947 when his political reliability came under scrutiny (GRIFFITH Robert, *The Politics of Fear: Joseph R. McCarthy and the Senate*, Amherst (MA), University of Massachusetts Press 1987, p. 34). Wheeler arrived in Czechoslovakia with a letter of recommendation from former American Vice-President, Henry Wallace (Archive of the Czechoslovak Security Services (ABS), fund 638164 MV, George Shaw Wheeler – findings, 1949); and also a note from the Soviet Envoy in Prague, Mikhail Bodrov, to Rudolf Slánský, Secretary General of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (National Archive of the Czech Republic (NACR), fund the International Department of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, 100/3, ar. j. 5, sv. 19, Note from Bedřich Geminder, the Head of the International Department, to Oldřich Papež, 3 January 1950. Geminder's message is a translation of Bodrov's Cyrillic script. Bodrov's original note is also enclosed). Wheeler became a lecturer in economics at the University of Economics in Prague and also worked as a newspaper correspondent. So, too, did his wife Eleanor who was a stringer for the *Religious News Service* (NACR, fund the International Department of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, 100/3, ar. j. 5, sv. 19, Letter from the Wheelers to the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, 20 March 1950). In 1950 the Wheelers applied for political asylum and remained in Czechoslovakia until 1969 when they returned to the US. Eleanor Wheeler died in 1981. Before his death in 1997, George Wheeler returned to Prague to join his two daughters. For further details, see: WHEELER George Shaw, *The Human Face of Socialism: The Political Economy of Change in Czechoslovakia*, New York, Lawrence Hill 1973, pp. xii-xiv; SCHMIDT Dana Adams, *Anatomy of a Satellite*, Boston, Little, Brown and Company 1952, pp. 209–211; DAVIDSON Eugene, *The Death and Life of Germany: An Account of the American Occupation*, London, Jonathan Cape 1959, pp. 37–38. See also: Library of Congress, Martha Dodd Papers, ID No. MSS80875, Letter Frank Wheeler to Martha and Alfred Stern dated 18 October 1983. For information on the Wheelers' asylum request in Czechoslovakia, see: GEANEY Kathleen, At Home among Strangers: The Extraordinary Year 1950 in the Life of an Ordinary American Family in Communist Czechoslovakia, *Comenius: Journal of Euro-American Civilization,* Vol. 2, No. 1 (2015), pp. 25–52.

journals and the mainstream press by peace activists and English-speaking guests who visited the country during the period. In terms of the contemporary Czechoslovak press, back issues of *Rudé právo*, in particular, were a prime source of information. I also had recourse to autobiographical accounts, written either during the early Cold War period itself or later by people who had spent time in the new Czechoslovak communist state. These were often of a self-serving nature as the authors sought to distance themselves from a system they had once passionately embraced. My quest did not end there. In order to better understand the mind-set of those who actively participated in promoting the advance of socialism and the Soviet-led peace campaign, not just in Czechoslovakia but internationally, the milieu in which they operated, and the repercussions their involvement in such activities had on them in their home countries, my reading of secondary sources was of major importance. I also drew on contemporary literary works where appropriate to illuminate areas under consideration.

I am conscious of the fact that there may well be other materials relevant to my chosen topic of which I am unaware. In this sense, my research, though extensive, is by no means exhaustive. Historical inquiry is a cumulative enterprise and it is my hope that other historians will, in due course, add to what I have begun. I know, too, that it is the task of historians to tease out the multifarious, causative strands that may have a bearing on the events being investigated and to impose order on complexity. In the narrative of the past, historical insight is achieved by an imaginative reconstruction of the episode in question and by simulating what happened.[19] While history proceeds "from multiple causes and their intersections,"[20] facts have to be established and substantiated.[21]

On the other hand, it is also my belief that historians are interpreters of the past, not just its mediums or chroniclers. While analyzing whatever sources I could get hold of in my quest for answers, I realized, like many before me have done, that not everything from the past is recoverable and that the study of history and our knowledge of former times is based only on

[19] GADDIS John Lewis, *The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past,* Oxford – New York, Oxford University Press 2002, p. 65.
[20] GADDIS John Lewis, *The Landscape of History,* p. 65.
[21] DRAY W. H., On the Nature and Role of the Narrative in History, in ROBERTS Geoffrey (ed.), *The History and Narrative Reader,* London – New York, Routledge 2001, pp. 25–40, here p. 29.

the evidence that has survived.[22] In this context, the historian has to exercise judgement. Furthermore, no report is completely reliable but has to be sifted and evaluated in comparison with others, especially where politics is concerned. Authors, like everyone else, tend to change with the times, to trim their sails, consciously or unconsciously, in line with the prevailing wind. As former cadres look back over the heady days of their youth, for instance, and their then uncompromising rectitude, it frequently seems to the reader that like the Athenian oligarch Theramenes two-and-a-half millennia earlier, the shoe they wore was good for either foot. There had never been any unequivocal identification with the communist side in the ideological divide, far from it indeed. Always, it now appears, a nagging element of doubt troubled their thoughts. In such cases there is seldom need for editorial comment. The words bear testimony against themselves. The writer doth protest too much.

The intrusion of the self is, of course, a feature of both ends of the reading process. Author and reader alike carry personal baggage. People's views, political and otherwise, have been shaped over time and this background inevitably influences the what and wherefore of recall and reception, what is spoken and what is heard, written and read.[23] It is hardly possible to separate out completely the historical period under review from the historian's own present. Moreover, as we survey the past from the vantage point of today, with our knowledge of the trajectory history took and the results of action or inaction on the part of individuals and societies, the role of randomness and coincidence often becomes obscured. Sometimes, too, we tend to forget that what appear to be irrational decisions from our cognizant perspective were made in good faith and were based on what information those concerned then had at their disposal.[24]

The British historian Mary Fulbrook has likened our profession to that of a detective in some respects. Historians are confronted with a puzzle. Its decipherment depends not just on finding answers but on formulating the right questions to gain those answers. Matters, however,

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[22] ELTON G. R., *The Practice of History* (2nd edition), Oxford, Blackwell Publishing 2007, pp. 8 and 55.
[23] HOWELL Martha – PREVENIER Walter, *From Reliable Sources: An Introduction to Historical Methods,* Ithaca (NY) – London, Cornell University Press 2001, pp. 60 and 69.
[24] GADDIS John Lewis, *The Landscape of History,* pp. 49 and 59. Furet François, From Narrative History to Problem-Oriented History, in ROBERTS Geoffrey (ed.), *The History and Narrative Reader,* pp. 269–281, here 271.

do not end with resolution and the tying together of loose ends. Like the homunculus in his phial in *Faust*, the project has yet to "join the fullness of creation."[25] The historian must now distil the essence of the inquiry into the form of a mystery tale, as it were. This, in turn, needs to be so structured that it will engage the reader's attention right to the very end. The historian has the information necessary to unriddle the conundrum posed at the outset of the story but clues and evidence have to be presented in such a manner, sequentially and stylistically, that the reader methodically follows the plot right through to its successful denouement and the book is laid aside with a satisfied sigh. The time was well-spent.

The historian's task, Mary Fulbrook continues, might also be contrasted with that of a barrister. The historian-barrister takes on a brief, gathers all the requisite information, analyzes and structures the data, and then seeks to present the case in a way that affords the best possible chance of success. The facts are crucially important of course. Evidence is assembled and key witnesses summoned in corroboration. Ambiguities and lack of clarity are eliminated. Next comes the job of synthesizing and consolidation. The argument has to be couched in a manner that is not only coherent and cohesive, but also persuasive.

Unlike the barrister, however, the historian also has to serve as a bridge, a guide and translator as it were, between one society and another. This facet of the profession is, in some slight ways, similar to the role of those whom we shall meet shortly escorting visitors around communist Czechoslovakia but without the ideological undertones. The language and conventions of the past are learnt and then reconfigured in terms that are culturally understandable to an audience in the present.[26] Like Ariadne uncoiling her clew of thread to lead Theseus through the Labyrinth, the historian unrolls the thread of the tale that will conduct the reader through the maze of facts, hearsay, motivations, opinions, and suppositions that surround a historical event to the journey's end.

[25] GOETHE Johann Wolfgang von, *Faust*: *Part Two,* London, Penguin 1959, p. 133.
[26] FULBROOK Mary, *Historical Theory,* London – New York, Routledge 2002, p. 192.

"There is no history of mankind," wrote Karl Popper in 1945, "there is only an indefinite number of histories of all kinds of aspects of human life."[27] The story of the English-speaking visitors to Czechoslovakia in the early Cold War period is one such aspect and, following the precepts laid down by Mary Fulbrook and other historians, I hope I have managed to decode the past and fulfil the task that I set myself in this project, successfully.

[27] POPPER Karl, *The Open Society and Its Enemies: Volume Two. Hegel and Marx*, London, Routledge 2008 (first published 1945), p. 299.

WELCOME TO THE SOVIET UNION AND LATER THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACIES

VISITORS TO THE SOVIET UNION: A BRIEF DESCRIPTION

This part of the work focuses on visitors (not only from the English-speaking world) who came to see the Soviet experiment for themselves in the 1920s and 1930s and on the various techniques applied to convince the guests of the superlative merits of socialism in practice. The main thrust of the section is to show that it was in this period that the hospitality skills, which would later be employed in the bloc countries, were honed and perfected. While clearly there are marked differences in the specific conditions that prevailed in the early years of communist Czechoslovakia and those in the Soviet Union in the two decades that followed the October Revolution, nevertheless there are also similarities and it is hoped that a close examination of the Soviet model will provide a template against which corresponding features in the cordiality extended to visitors by the masters in the new satellite state can be measured.

In her 1924 account of her experiences in Russia, Emma Goldman divided visitors to the fledgling communist conglomerate into three types. Though written before the peak of such trips, Goldman's categorization is a useful classificatory instrument. The first set of travellers consisted of "earnest idealists," among whom "were many emigrants from the United States who had given up everything they possessed to return to the promised land."[28] Most, according to Goldman, "became bitterly disappointed after the first few months and sought to get out of Russia."[29] However, for very many by the 1930s that was no longer an option. In the second

[28] GOLDMAN Emma, Travelling Salesmen of the Revolution, in STEINBERG Julien, *Verdict of Three Decades*, New York, Books for Libraries Press 1950, pp. 116–117. Emma Goldman was one of the 249 left-wing militants deported from New York to Petrograd via Finland in December 1919 on the heavily-armed transport ship *USAT Buford*, the so-called "Soviet Ark." For some Americans, this was far too lenient altogether. "They should be put on a ship of stone with sails of lead and their first stopping place should be Hell," was the advice offered by General Leonard Wood (WEXLER Alice, *Emma Goldman in Exile. From the Russian Revolution to the Spanish Civil War*, Boston, Beacon Press 1989, p. 10), who along with Theodore Roosevelt had led the cavalry regiment known as the Rough Riders in the 1898 Spanish-American War. Caught in the trawls of the 1903 Anarchist Exclusion Act and the Immigration Act of 1918, a steady stream of deportees would follow in their wake.

[29] GOLDMAN Emma, Travelling Salesmen of the Revolution. Some of the "earnest idealists" would have been deportees. The American historian and former Communist Party member Ronald Radosh wrote that after his mother's cousin Jacob Abrams had served almost two years of the prison term handed down to him in 1919, under the Sedition Act of 1918, they "were offered a commutation of their sentences, on condition that 'they be deported

group were journalists and adventurers, many of them eager apologists for the Soviet regime. Generally unfamiliar with the Russian language, "they never got further than the surface of things," she says, and "spent from two weeks to two months in Russia […] as the guests of the Government and in charge of Bolshevik guides."[30] On their return home, many "presumed to write and lecture authoritatively about the Russian situation," often glowingly.[31] The third category, according to Goldman, which constituted the majority of visitors, were "delegates, and members of various commissions" who "infested" Russia. "These people," she maintained, "had every opportunity to see things as they were, to get close to the Russian people, and to learn from them the whole terrible truth," but "they preferred to side with the Government, to listen to its interpretation of causes and effects" and then go forth "to misrepresent and to lie deliberately in behalf of the Bolsheviki […]."[32]

In terms of this third category, a "trip to the Soviet homeland was a necessary stage in the development of party cadres," in which activists got a chance "to admire its latest economic and social achievements."[33] This hands-on observation of "the progress of Communism on the spot was the stuff of party comrades' dreams,"[34] made all the sweeter perhaps by the fact that Moscow was most likely footing the bill. Indeed the reason why British trade unionists, for example, failed to see through the "flapping veil of illusions" has been attributed partly to their partiality for banqueting and drink.[35] Not surprisingly, therefore, such guests tended to hear what they were meant to hear, see what they were meant to see, and report accordingly, with

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to Russia and never return to the United States […].' Thus, in June of 1922, Abrams and his wife sailed off to the still young revolutionary republic, the Soviet Union. But he quickly discovered that even then, the USSR was utopia lost" (RADOSH Ronald, *Commies: A Journey Through the Old Left, the New Left and the Leftover Left*, San Francisco, Encounter Books 2001, pp. 4–6).

[30] GOLDMAN Emma, Travelling Salesmen of the Revolution, pp. 116–117.

[31] Sometimes the enthusiasts did not even wait until they returned home to spread the good news as this 1933 entry from the diary of the British diplomat, Reader Bullard, testifies: "I hear stories of misery every day – families ordered to leave in ten days with nowhere to go. One asked the OGPU what they were to do: throw ourselves in the river? The man from the OGPU replied: 'That is your business.' Yet some English workman who came here on a May Day delegation and was put up to speak on the wireless, assured his hearers that this was the only country where the government was trying to put the Sermon on the Mount into practice. This sort of thing makes one despair. How the Kremlin must laugh" (BULLARD Reader, *Inside Stalin's Russia: The Diaries of Reader Bullard 1930–1934*, Oxfordshire, Day Books 2001, p. 182).

[32] GOLDMAN Emma, Travelling Salesmen of the Revolution, p. 117.

[33] LÉVESQUE Andrée, *Red Travellers: Jeanne Corbin and Her Comrades*, Montreal & Kingston, McGill-Queen's University Press 2006, p. 138.

[34] *Ibid.*

[35] WRIGHT Patrick, *Iron Curtain: From Stage to Cold War*, Oxford, Oxford University Press 2007, p. 246.

effusive accounts of the splendours on offer in the Soviet paradise continuing throughout the Cold War years. One besotted Canadian couple writing in 1951 about their trip to the Soviet Union had this to say: "Living in Moscow or Kiev is almost like living out in the country. The air is sparkling clear, fragrant with the smell of grass and trees" and "as for the streets and sidewalks, you could eat off them. They are washed spotlessly clean several times a day."[36]

With regard to Goldman's second group of sightseers, the "journalists and adventurers," those with or without a finger in the utopian pie, a trip to Russia in the 1920s and 1930s "had become virtually *de rigeur* for any intellectual worthy of the name."[37] "What is desired and demanded," wrote André Gide on his 1936 trip, "is approval of all that is done in the USSR."[38] Some would comply, some would not. Others prevaricated.[39] Those with the temerity to faithfully record what they heard and saw, such as Gide himself, or the Welsh reporter Gareth Jones and fellow-journalist Malcolm Muggeridge, who first brought news of the terrible famine in the Ukraine to the outside world, would be pilloried and denounced by the yes-men and yes-women. Muggeridge was vilified in the pages of the *Guardian* and elsewhere. Some correspondents "took their cue from *Pravda* and accused him of being hysterically unbalanced

[36] CARTER Charlotte – CARTER Dyson, *We Saw Socialism,* Toronto, Canadian-Soviet Friendship Society 1951, p. 31. "For forty years Carter published pro-Soviet magazines (first News-Facts, and after 1956, Northern Neighbors), as well as other collections and monographs, by re-writing and building on articles sent to him by Soviet press agencies, taking every policy turn in step with the official Moscow line. For example, discussion of Khrushchev's 1956 'secret speech' distancing the CPSU from Stalin appeared in Carter's publication for the first time in the 1980s when Gorbachev's glasnost allowed discussion of that theme in the USSR. The invasions of Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968 were presented from the Soviet (i.e. 'liberation') point of view […]" (ANDERSON Jennifer, *Propaganda and Persuasion in the Cold War: The Canadian Soviet Friendship Society, 1949–1960*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Carleton University in Ottawa (2008), p. 8, available online at: https://curve.carleton.ca/system/files/etd/636d773d-b182-4454-9338-c07adffbfd23/etd_pdf/0fb7e7f30e99c6ea1040100565f4a6f1/anderson-propagandaandpersuasioninthecoldwarthecanadian.pdf; see also: CARTER Dyson, *Whatever Happened in Czechoslovakia*, Ontario, Gravenhurst 1968).

[37] VITOUX Frédéric, *Céline: A Biography,* New York, Marlowe and Company 1994, p. 295. Indeed, as the American journalist Louis Fischer put it: "to have been to Moscow had become as necessary in some circles as to have sat on the terrace of the Café de la Paix" (FISCHER Louis, *Men and Politics*, London, Jonathan Cape 1941, p. 185); while Kingsley Martin, editor of the *New Statesman*, writing tongue-in-cheek in 1932, declared that "the entire British intelligentsia has been to Russia this summer" (WATSON George, *Politics and Literature in Modern Britain*, London, Macmillan 1977, p. 51).

[38] GIDE André, *Return from the USSR* (1937), in STEINBERG Julien, *Verdict of Three Decades*, p. 306.

[39] For more information, see for example: TAYLOR S. J., *Stalin's Apologist: Walter Duranty The New York Times's Man in Moscow,* Oxford – New York, Oxford University Press 1990, pp. 198–199.

and a liar."[40] Gide, for his part, was derided as "a decadent fool, an insidious trickster, deceitful agent of the capitalist system, in short, as a Trotskyite."[41]

On the other hand, for those journalists who were prepared to toe the Party line, social life in Moscow, according to Malcolm Muggeridge who arrived in 1932, could be quite pleasant though much of a muchness on the whole: "parties took place at one embassy or another almost every evening, and reminded me very much of the British Raj; more or less the same guests turned up at all of them – and one had the same feeling, as in India, of being a little privileged isolated community having practically no contact with the surrounding country and its people. Ideological sahibs."[42]

From the outset, the literati and their associates arrived in droves. The sculptress Clare Sheridan, a cousin of Winston Churchill, was among the first who "scandalized polite British society" by travelling to Moscow, where she created busts of the leading Bolshevik luminaries, including Lenin and Trotsky.[43] The promise of the millennium which the Soviet Union seemed poised to deliver drew progressive artists from a host of countries.[44] Across the Atlantic, following the trail blazed by Louise Bryant, wife of John Reed and later of Ambassador William C. Bullitt, Anna Louise Strong, and other trend-setters, the Cherokee-American actor and humourist Will Rogers made his pilgrimage to the USSR in 1926.[45] A year later, to mark the tenth anniversary of the Revolution, Sinclair Lewis, Theodore Dreiser, and the cartoonist William Gropper, toured the country. In 1928, it was the turn of the Swiss-French architect, Le Corbusier. To encourage and smooth the way for would-be travellers, the *Intourist* travel agency, working alongside the earlier VOKS (the All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with

[40] HUNTER Ian, *Malcolm Muggeridge: A Life,* Nashville, Thomas Nelson Publishers 1980, pp. 82–85.
[41] MANN Klaus, *The Turning Point*, New York, Markus Wiener Publishing 1984, p. 316.
[42] Quoted in MAHONEY Barbara S., *Dispatches and Dictators: Ralph Barnes for The Herald Tribune*, Oregon, Oregon State University Press 2002 p. 79. The life of Western journalists with an entrée to the diplomatic circuit in Czechoslovakia in the early Cold War years was not very different. "Their social life revolved around cocktail parties, dinners, dances and teas, which would have been fine occasionally to 'meet people,' but apart from the few high officials who accepted diplomatic invitations in the line of duty, the only Czechs who appeared were representative of the dispossessed capitalist class" (SCHMIDT Dana Adams, *Anatomy of a Satellite*, p. 6).
[43] COOK Blanche Wiesen, *The Declassified Eisenhower*, New York, Doubleday 1981, p. 5.
[44] See, for example: DOVE Richard, *He Was a German: A Biography of Ernst Toller* (London, Libris 1900, p. 185) for the "widespread enthusiasm" the October Revolution evoked in Germany.
[45] See: YAGODA Ben, *Will Rogers: A Biography*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf 1993, pp. 233–234. The story of John Reed and Louise Bryant would be the subject of Warren Beatty's 1981 classic film *Reds*.

Foreign Countries), was set up in Moscow the same year. VOKS looked after prominent visitors while *Intourist* catered for the more run-of-the-mill holidaymaker whose worth was seen more in terms of hard cash than in propaganda value. In 1930, came the Bengali and Nobel Prize-winning poet Rabindranath Tagore and also an Irish delegation from the Friends of Soviet Russia, led by the suffragette and nationalist, Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington. Then in 1931 it was the turn of the American poet E. E. Cummings and the same year George Bernard Shaw celebrated his 75th birthday in Moscow.

The "great G. B. Shaw was more interested in being seen than in seeing, in being heard than in hearing," noted the American journalist Eugene Lyons somewhat exaggeratedly, and his official guides had little difficulty in keeping him insulated from any "contaminating contact" with the actual facts of life around him.[46] Granted an interview with Stalin, the entourage of Shaw and members of the "Cliveden set," later known for their pro-German stance in the years of Nazi appeasement, arrived at the Kremlin.[47] In the course of the ensuing conversation, the canny Stalin reminded his Anglo-Irish audience of Cromwell's conduct in Ireland and wondered "when the English were going to stop beating their young as part of their education." [48] Among others whom Stalin invited into his inner sanctum were Lion Feuchtwanger, H. G. Wells and the Dean of Canterbury, Hewlett Johnson. In like manner, several years later, Nikita Khrushchev would meet Simone Signoret and Yves Montand, and the Cuban leader Fidel Castro personally welcomed C. Wright Mills and also Jean-Paul Sartre.[49]

For "Shaw and others, who flashed through Moscow in those years,"[50] their visit was a shuttle from model factory to model *sovkhoz* [state farm], from model crèche to model penitentiary. In the case of writers, there might be the added pleasure of seeing their

[46] LYONS Eugene, *Assignment in Utopia*, London, George G. Harrap n/d (first published 1937), p. 428.
[47] For more information, see: NORMAN Rose, *The Cliveden Set: Portrait of an Exclusive Fraternity,* London, Jonathan Cape 2000, pp. 133–135.
[48] *Ibid.* See also: HOLROYD Michael, *Bernard Shaw: Volume III 1918–1950. The Lure of Fantasy,* London, Chatto and Windus 1991, pp. 233–255.
[49] HOLLANDER Paul, *Political Pilgrims*, p. 360. During the visit of the English folk group, the City Ramblers, to the sixth International Youth Festival in Moscow in August 1957, the musicians were invited to the Kremlin and "there are even photographs of Khrushchev listening to skiffle music with a bemused look on his face" (FRAME Pete, *The Restless Generation: How Rock Music Changed the Face of 1950s Britain*, London, Rogan House 2007, pp. 240–241).
[50] GRIFFITH Flight-Lieutenant Hubert, *This Is Russia*, London, Hammond and Company 1944, p. 22.

publications prominently displayed in bookstores or maybe even on the desks of their Bolshevik hosts,[51] and in the particular example of Shaw the gratifying surprise on arrival of walking "into the station restaurant to find two waitresses intimately acquainted with his works," leading him "to conclude that waitresses in England were not nearly so well read as their Soviet-Russian counterparts."[52] For Shaw, too, a cheering crowd of thousands bearing aloft streamers and slogans was on hand to greet his alighting from the train in Moscow. Then, to make his stay even more memorable, he was taken to the theatre to see a production of Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill's *Threepenny Opera*, where before the performance began the actors lined up on stage under a banner written in English that read: "To the brilliant master, Bernard Shaw – a warm welcome on Soviet soil."[53] Variations on this theme would be played out in the decades to come wherever communist governance extended, with Simone de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre experiencing a similar rapturous reception in China and Mary McCarthy in Vietnam.[54]

For those visitors to the USSR made of sterner stuff than the aging Shaw, there was the world beyond Moscow and Leningrad. In the summer and autumn of 1931, the indomitable Anna Louise Strong went by way of the Volga down to Stalingrad to see the giant Tractor Works, across to Rostov to the new Agricultural Machinery Plant and the giant farms, over to Dnieprostroy where the great dam was almost completed, back to Kharkov where another tractor plant was getting ready to open. Then, she went to Novo-Sibirsk and the giant steel

[51] GROSZ George, *An Autobiography,* USA, University of California Press 1998, p. 181.
[52] WRIGHT Patrick, *Iron Curtain*, pp. 296–297. The Australian historian, Manning Clark, was similarly impressed during a visit to the Soviet Union many years later in 1958 when he saw "lift-girls in Moscow reading Tolstoy, and workers in the underground railway reading what our circulating libraries would brand as 'heavy' books" and people prepared "to stand in a queue for twenty-four hours to put their names on a subscription list for the collected works of writers such as Tolstoy, Balzac, Dickens, or Turgenev" (CLARK Manning, *Meeting Soviet Man*, Sydney, Angus and Robertson 1960, p. 103).
[53] Quoted in: HOLLANDER Paul, *Political Pilgrims,* p. 356. Would Shaw fit the bill as a particularly good example of a "useful idiot," to use the phrase attributed to Lenin? Whether one agrees or not, Shaw's advocacy of the Soviet Shangri-La from the comfort of his London home could have unforeseen consequences. The British diplomat Reader Bullard mentions the plight of a penniless English married couple and their children. "This man was an unemployed plate-layer who read an article by Bernard Shaw about Russia and sold up and started off via the Far East. From Harbin they went from one place to another in search of work. Finally, after sleeping several nights in the railway-station, half-starved, and the women and children ill, they came to the Moscow Consulate and asked to be sent home" (BULLARD Reader, *Inside Stalin's Russia*, p. 73).
[54] HOLLANDER Paul, *Political Pilgrims,* p. 356.

works growing in Kuznetsk, back to the tractor works which was being constructed in Chelyabinsk, and on to Magnitogorsk where a steel town rose around the Iron Mountain.[55]

The American playwright Elmer Rice who visited the USSR in 1932 had a more modest itinerary. So, too, had Alfred Stern and his then wife, Marion Rosenwald, the Sears and Roebuck heiress.[56] Two years later, Martha Dodd, whom Stern would marry in 1938, left the comfort of her embassy home in Berlin to follow in the footsteps of Anna Louise Strong, except that in Martha Dodd's case, a visit to a "Prophylactorium," a home for retired prostitutes, was added for good measure. Nothing daunted by anything she saw on her trip, Martha Dodd would continue her hot pursuit of a will-o'-the-wisp that would eventually lead her, and her husband, on a merry dance all the way from Manhattan's tuxedo-land to old age in an apartment in communist Prague and the grubby reality that the rose-tinted spectacles had shielded her from in her youth.

Stefan Zweig, writing about his 1928 trip to the USSR, when, along with Mahatma Gandhi, he was invited to celebrate the centenary of Tolstoy's birth, admitted that he himself "in many a moment in Russia came near to saying hosanna and to becoming exalted from the exaltation," but later realized that his impressions, exciting and stimulating though they were at any particular moment, "could yet have no objective validity." His stay in the country was too short, he claimed, a mere fortnight, and his "ignorance of the language had prevented close touch with the man in the street." Zweig's conviction was reinforced when, after a celebration with some students, amid the "embraces and hearty handshakes," an anonymous letter in French was thrust into his coat pocket that spoke of the harsh truth that lay behind all "the warmth and wonderful comradeship."[57]

Two-and-a-half decades later, these furtive attempts to enlighten visitors on actual conditions behind the Iron Curtain would still be remarked on. In his account of a trip to Poland in 1954 as one of a party of British Labour MPs, Desmond Donnelly relates how he once found himself in the company of a Pole who spoke to him very quickly in English about the real state

[55] STRONG Anna Louise, *I Change Worlds,* Seattle, The Seal Press 1979, p. 316.
[56] LYONS Eugene, *Assignment in Utopia,* p. 504.
[57] ZWEIG Stefan, *The World of Yesterday,* London, Cassell and Company 1943, pp. 256–257.

of affairs in his country but an interpreter escort quickly approached and interrupted their conversation.[58] This linguistic barrier that Donnelly's story unintentionally points up was formidable, even more so in the Soviet Union with its exotic Cyrillic script, and necessarily limited visitors' information to what was imparted by guides and conference interpreters or what might be imaginatively construed from brief interactions with hotel staff. Yet perhaps Stefan Zweig's contention, and Emma Goldman's, that lack of knowledge of the Russian language precluded many from contact with the common man is not the complete story. Cosseted in the luxury of their Manhattan or Mayfair circles, for instance, those visitors to the manor born or otherwise feather-bedded would probably have had few encounters with the vernacular of the street in their native land either. Indeed, as Zweig himself put it, "in our own homes one never reached the underlying population."[59]

However, language or the lack of it was no deterrent. The sightseers kept coming. Shaw was followed in 1932 by his co-pillars of the Fabian Society, Sidney and Beatrice Webb, whose book on trade unionism Lenin had helped translate into Russian. Two more from among the many that might be mentioned were the world champion heavyweight boxer Gene Tunney, who made his appearance in Russia the same year, and the American corporate lawyer Samuel Untermeyer, who was, not for the first time, in Red Square in 1937.[60] Untermeyer's nephew, Laurence Steinhardt, would become US ambassador to Czechoslovakia from July 1945 to September 1948.

Hollywood was well represented, too. The swashbuckling Douglas Fairbanks and his celebrated actress wife Mary Pickford, came in 1926 and, unknown to the doyenne of the silent screen, the couple's visit to a Moscow film studio may have inspired the making of *A Kiss from Mary Pickford* by the Russian actor and director Sergei Komarov a year later.[61] The year 1933 brought Harpo Marx and his *début* on the Moscow stage, although not without an introductory gloss by the Soviet film director Vsevolod Pudovkin, who "delivered a speech punctuated with appropriate quotations from Lenin, Stalin, and Engels on the role of humour in society, on the

[58] DONNELLY Desmond, *The March Wind*, New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons 1960, pp. 106–107.
[59] ZWEIG Stefan, *The World of Yesterday,* p. 255.
[60] DAVIES Joseph E., *Mission to Moscow*, London, Victor Gollancz 1945, p. 141.
[61] See: http://www.silentfilm.org/archive/a-kiss-from-mary-pickford-1927 (acccessed on 14 June 2016).

social significance of Hollywood, and finally on the real meaning of Marx, Harpo." Then Harpo came on and the "Russians, whose laughing muscles had grown flabby from insufficient exercise, held their sides and asked for more."[62] The director and producer Cecil B. De Mille arrived in 1931. For some, however, their time in the USSR would later be held against them. De Mille's fellow-director Joseph Losey, who spent several months studying theatre in Moscow in 1935, faced the wrath of the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). While there was no question mark attached to Cecil B. De Mille's political leanings,[63] Joseph Losey, whom we will meet again later, was a different story and HUAC scented blood. However, like Charlie Chaplin, Losey would cut loose from the ties that bound him to America and the Hollywood film industry and move to Europe, where he would have a very distinguished career as a director.

In all, some 100,000 or so foreigners visited the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s and while the majority were either bewitched by the Soviet spell before arrival or, already predisposed, were soon won over, there were, too, as already mentioned, the dissenting voices. Alongside the hymns of thanksgiving raised by the trade union and fellow-travelling enthusiasts could be heard the critics such as Gide, Céline, and Muggeridge. Nor, despite the best efforts of the panegyrists, were their opinions entirely muffled or discredited. Inevitably though, how each of the tens of thousands of European and American intellectuals, writers, scientists, artists, and dilettantes reacted to what they saw and heard on the ground would be governed by their own individual political orientation, social background and national culture.[64] That said, however, it was no mean feat to resist the charm offensive.

[62] See: FISCHER Louis, *Men and Politics*, pp. 285–286.
[63] DOHERTY Thomas, *Pre-Code Hollywood: Sex, Immorality, and Insurrection in American Cinema, 1930–1934*, New York, Columbia University Press 1999, p. 65.
[64] DAVID-FOX Michael, *Showcasing the Great Experiment*, pp. 1 and 245.

THE STALINIST SPELL

It is only natural given what is known today about the reality of the Stalinist Soviet Union that questions arise as to how it was possible for so many intelligent people to give their uncritical support to such a despotic system and to the other repressive regimes it spawned worldwide. What apparently superior features did the Stalinist ordering of society possess compared to democracy, say, as practised in their own lands? What drove them into the ranks of Communist Party members and of the fellow-travellers, those sympathizers with Soviet communism and its later offshoots, who made no formal political commitment and remained outside their national communist parties, at least officially? [65] These were the same people who came to Czechoslovakia in the early Cold War period, this is their background and as such should not be omitted.

Of course, there is no time-machine available to travel back and request answers from the individuals themselves, and, even if there were, human nature and the inner drive for self-approval being such, what responses would be forthcoming would probably be hedged around with explanations as to besetting circumstances, the lack of viable alternatives, and the like.[66] Nonetheless, several general motivating factors can be identified applicable both to those who actually visited the socialist motherland and the armchair travellers. First and foremost, it is important to bear in mind that Soviet communism was a flexible concept with no single feature that would of itself attract sympathizers uniformly or exclusively. [67] In fact, the image it conjured up was so multifaceted that there was something to appeal to anyone who was interested. Sylvia Margulies puts it thus: "to the worker, the Soviet Union was to appear as a revolutionary fortress, a land of opportunity, the only home of the world proletariat. For the intellectual, the society became a humanitarian one, non-revolutionary, devoted to the advancement of mankind. And to the businessman, it was a thriving society, desirous of cooperation economically with the capitalist world in mutually beneficial arrangements."[68]

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[65] HOLLANDER Paul, *Political Pilgrims,* p. 27. MILLS Charles W., *From Class to Race: Essays in White Marxism and Black Radicalism,* Lanham – Boulder – New York – Oxford, Rowman & Littlefield 2003, p. 89.
[66] For more information in this area, see for example: TAVRIS Carol – ARONSON Elliot, *Mistakes Were Made, But Not by Me,* London, Pinter & Martin 2015.
[67] DAVID-FOX Michael, *Showcasing the Great Experiment,* p. 209.
[68] MARGULIES Sylvia R., *The Pilgrimage to Russia*, p. 16.

In addition, the political, economic and cultural context in which the communist myth took shape played a decisive part. Many of the communist supporters and fellow-travellers were convinced that the Soviet Union possessed both the will, and the requisite mental and physical resources, to create a fair and equitable society, whereas the Western democracies, on the other hand, had betrayed their own once so-progressive ideals.[69] Indeed, for many, capitalism offered neither strong spiritual values nor a sense of purpose and community. It had nothing to give other than mere individualist preoccupation with material and financial achievement and allowed no space for personal relationships.[70] In contrast, the Soviet Union portrayed itself as a humanitarian society, the centre for progress, spiritual edification and the spreading of Enlightenment ideals around the world.[71] Finally, the aura surrounding the Soviet leader, Joseph Stalin, should be taken into account. Some of his greatest admirers, such as Lion Feuchtwanger and Dudley Collard, were ready to accept and propagate the Kremlin line on everything that occurred, not least the political trials.

In like manner, the economic crisis and all the problems brought by the Great Depression, which persisted worldwide for most of the 1930s beginning with a huge surge in unemployment and ending with a significant increase in poverty globally, created moral outrage, social criticism, the radicalization of some, and political estrangement among others. Indeed, some analysts have argued that during times of slump, the right to vote becomes a luxury when compared with the right to work. It is hardly surprising therefore that intellectuals and others would look for solutions to such man-made calamities and, inevitably, eyes turned to the Soviet Union, and the dynamic economic and social transformation that was taking place there in the 1930s.[72] In fact, the Soviet ideal, as presented to the outside world, a harmonious co-operative devoted to collectivism, production, and work for all, seemed a panacea for the perennial economic woes plaguing mankind.[73]

[69] CAUTE David, *The Fellow-Travellers,* p. 264.
[70] HOLLANDER Paul, *Political Pilgrims,* p. 99.
[71] MARGULIUES Sylvia R., *The Pilgrimage to Russia,* p. 27. PRIESTLAND David, *The Red Flag: Communism and the Making of the Modern World,* London, Penguin Books 2009, p. 183.
[72] MARGULIUES Sylvia R., *The Pilgrimage to Russia,* p. 11.
[73] PRIESTLAND David, *The Red Flag,* p. 183.

The injustices of capitalism and a fascination with Five-Year Plans to build socialism, however, were not the sole reasons behind the approbation of the Soviet experiment. The spectre of Nazism and fascism that loomed ominously over the international political arena during the decade of the 1930s and the lack of a coherent response to the threat added to the allure of the USSR.[74] This was especially so during the so-called Popular Front period, which came into being after the Seventh Congress of the Comintern in the summer of 1935 and lasted until the signing of the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact on 23 August 1939.[75] The magnetism was easy to explain. The powers in the Kremlin and their cohorts in the Comintern were able to play the international situation to their advantage by presenting the Soviet Union as the protector of peace and the uncompromising opponent of Nazi and fascist expansionist plans. In this regard, particular credit should be paid to the indefatigable organizing genius of Willi Münzenberg who managed to mobilize a grand coalition of trade unionists, committed communists, fellow-travellers, progressives, sympathizers, idealists, anti-colonialists, liberals, philanthropists, Esperantists, adventurers, misfits, malcontents, cranks, pacifists, moles and undercover agents, to serve the cause, whether wittingly or unwittingly.[76] Indeed, the French historian Tony Judt was undoubtedly correct in his estimation that the decade of the 1930s was the age of political engagement.[77]

Several other considerations should also be borne in mind when looking at visitors to the Soviet Union and fellow-travellers in general. Before the outbreak of the Second World War, the Soviet Union was an exotic destination and for many the overriding motive to journey

[74] HOLLANDER Paul, *Political Pilgrims,* p. 80. More information on the attraction can be found in for example: ALMOND Gabriel A., *The Appeals of Communism,* New Jersey, Princeton University Press 1965; or SASSOON Donald, *One Hundred Years of Socialism: The West European Left in the Twentieth Century,* London – New York, I. B. Tauris & Co. 2010. Vivian Gornick captured this fascination with the Communist Party nicely: "Years later, the 'us' and 'them' of my life would become Jews and Gentiles, and still later women and men, but for all of my growing up years 'us' and 'them' were socialists and non-socialists; the 'politically enlightened' and the politically *un*enlightened; those who were 'struggling for a better world' and those who, like moral slugs, moved blind and unresponsive through this vast inequity that was our life under capitalism" (GORNICK Vivian, *The Romance of American Communism*, New York, Basic Books Inc. Publishers 1977, pp. 4–5). Many similar experiences are quoted throughout the text.

[75] BROWN Archie, *The Rise & Fall of Communism,* London, Vintage Books 2009, p. 88. For more information about international communism in the Popular Front period, see for example: PRIESTLAND David, *The Red Flag,* pp. 185–233; SERVICE Robert, *Comrades: Communism. A World History,* London, Pan Books 2007, pp. 173–178.

[76] For more information on Münzenberg's role, see: KOCH Stephen, *Double Lives: Stalin, Willi Münzenberg and the Seduction of the Intellectuals*, London, HarperCollins 1995.

[77] JUDT Tony, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945,* London – New York, Penguin Books 2005, p. 335.

there was simply a thirst for adventure. On top of that, authors and journalists were aware that the USSR offered the visit-the-land-of-socialism type of travel story and as such had a tempting appeal when it came to publishers. Additionally, some writers, such as the Australian novelist Frank Hardy, whose works had been translated into Russian, would have the satisfaction of being paid tribute by an existing, and, as a result of the visit, expanding, readership. This was an especially attractive prospect for those who felt under-appreciated in their home countries.[78]

At the same time, in the penthouses of New York millionaires it had become rather "chic" to "sympathize demonstratively with the Reds," while in colleges and universities on both sides of the Atlantic "it was almost a matter of intellectual honour to be Left Wing."[79] Added to this was the exciting novelty of Soviet-philia itself.[80] All played a part in the decision of the Soviet-bound to experience the phenomenon at first-hand. Some wanted no more than a general picture of the work in progress, others had their sights set on exploring specific issues. Denis Nowell Pritt, the British barrister and King's Counsel, for instance, was fascinated by Soviet penology. He believed that the Soviet prison system was dedicated to reshaping and re-educating those sentenced by the courts. "Terms of imprisonment," he wrote, "are on the average shorter than in England and the treatment is one of the most remarkable features in the whole system. The Russians apply fully and logically the theory that imprisonment must be reformatory, and not in the smallest degree punitive; and they regard society as sharing with the criminal the responsibility for his crime."[81]

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[78] FITZPATRICK Sheila, Australian Visitors to the Soviet Union: The View from the Soviet Side, in FITZPATRICK Sheila – RASMUSSEN Carolyn (eds.), *Political Tourists*, pp. 1–39, here pp. 16–17, 19 and 25.
[79] BOVERI Margret, *Treason in the Twentieth Century*, London, Macdonald and Co. 1961, p. 24. The American novelist, 1953 Stalin Peace Prize recipient, and later apostate communist Howard Fast spoke of "the mink-coated allies of the working class" (FAST Howard, *The Naked God*, New York, Frederick A. Praeger 1957, p. 66). It might also be mentioned that: "In 1934 Communism had become the fashionable political hair shirt worn by many Cambridge undergraduates who wanted to sweep away forever the May Balls, champagne and punts" (COSTELLO John – TSAREV Oleg, *Deadly Illusions*, New York, Crown Publishers 1993, p. 180).
[80] DAVID-FOX Michael, *Showcasing the Great Experiment,* p. 134.
[81] Quoted in HOLLANDER Paul, *Political Pilgrims,* pp. 143–144. Pritt would later become friends with one of the "mink-coated allies," the writer Martha Dodd and her millionaire husband Alfred Stern during their time in Prague. Pritt, as we shall see later, was a regular visitor to the city, often on the way to other countries in the Soviet Bloc and later to Castro's Cuba: "Nowadays, the best way to Cuba is via Prague, and I hope to break my journey on the way back, and have a few days in your lovely city, in or about the third week of January" (Library of Congress, Martha Dodd Papers, ID No. MSS80875, Letter from D. N. Pritt to Martha Dodd dated 22 December 1961). The Sterns would follow the same route to Cuba in 1963, in their case for seven years.

As mentioned earlier, the Soviets had developed a whole range of hospitality techniques in the 1920s and 1930s to coddle the sightseers. The latter for their part, lacking any profound understanding of the structure of Soviet society and the manipulative skills employed, believed in large measure in the sincerity of their hosts.[82] The good fellowship on display, which would later be replicated in the people's democracies, made full use of that part of the human psyche that believes in the efficacy of being-on-the-spot, of direct experience. The first item on the agenda of those catering for the privileged visitors was to ensure that they were lodged in snug accommodation, were served plenty of sumptuous food and convivial drinks, had comfortable and reliable transport at their disposal, and did not go home empty-handed. With each indulgence paid came a corresponding rise in the self-image and sense of well-being of the guest. At the same time, the welcome extended was in proportion to the position the visitor was perceived as occupying on a hierarchy of importance in terms of Soviet interests, the higher up the scale, the sweeter the smile.

In an apt turn of phrase, the historian Paul Hollander wrote that the Soviet approach to visitors was aimed at feeding not only the stomach, but, of equal consequence, the ego. The Soviets, and those regimes which would follow in their tracks, were very much aware that bonds of obligation and gratitude trigger a willing receptiveness, and selective perception, on the part of the guest to whatever is put on show by the host.[83] For those visitors at the top of the pecking order in terms of exploitative value, arrangements would be made for them to meet the supreme leader in person or other less significant figures as a very special mark of favour. This would have been the case with G. B. Shaw for instance. In their home countries, such individuals would seldom if ever have direct contact with heads of state and even more rarely would they be given the opportunity to discuss their work, exchange opinions on world affairs or share concerns about the future of mankind with them.[84] For those not deemed of sufficient worth to be granted the privilege of an audience with the paramount potentate or one or other of the

[82] BROWN Archie, *The Rise & Fall of Communism,* p. 88.
[83] HOLLANDER Paul, *Political Pilgrims,* pp. 17 and 355–356.
[84] *Ibid.,* p. 360.

lesser dignitaries, there was no shortage of other unctuous means to enhance self-esteem and thereby strengthen the bond.

Planning the tours received considerable attention. Sights, festivals, meetings, each potential venue was carefully sifted and discussed by the authorities in advance to ensure the desired impression was created. Those whose trip was planned to coincide with the First of May Parade in Moscow, and later the capitals of the fellow-states, were particularly blessed. This was a memory that would be relished and gloated over for many a long day afterwards. Describing the lead-up to the great event in 1928 Moscow, the American journalist Eugene Lyons wrote: "As May Day approached, innumerable pictures and busts of Stalin, Lenin, Karl Marx, Voroshilov and other leaders, living and dead, suddenly filled the shop windows; gigantic wood and cardboard representations of workers, peasants, and soldiers and models of machines and factories blossomed at the main intersections. Creepers of red bunting proliferated across the houses, inscribed with boasts and threats and promises. American tourists, the first swallows as harbingers of the holiday season, alighted in the hotel lobbies, twittering excitedly of crèches and museums and factories. They called one another and every Russian in their vicinity 'comrade' with such deep childlike relish and looked at everything around them with the hypnotized eyes of lovers."[85]

One salutary effect of the rigid planning of itineraries, as far as the hosts were concerned, was that the visitors were cocooned from the actual life going on around them. There were few incentives or opportunities to wander around at will. This is not to say, however, that the drabness of city streets, the meagrely-stocked shop windows, or the down-at-heel look of passers-by in comparison with compatriots back home would have completely escaped notice, at least in the case of some.[86] For their part, the ordinary man or woman in the street had even less inducement to approach the foreigners, partly because they would probably have assumed that these were already staunch admirers of the system or were in the process of being groomed

[85] LYONS Eugene, *Assignment in Utopia,* pp. 100–101.
[86] DAVID-FOX Michael, *Showcasing the Great Experiment,* p. 98.

to be such and partly because they knew full well what would result from any ill-advised move to establish contact.[87]

The tours themselves followed a pattern. Industrial plants, newly-constructed dams, canals and bridges were high on the agenda. Then came the visit to a collective farm, a school or kindergarten with well-fed children at play romping around in immaculate smocks, and very likely a fully-modernized hospital. Heritage sites had a place, too, and maybe an evening at a concert or ballet.[88]

The role of the guide-cum-interpreter was crucial. A knowledge of languages of course was a pre-requisite for the job but just as important was political reliability. Personality, too, had to be taken stock of since professional duties might include the subtleties of indirect political persuasion and selective translation. A congenial match between guide and group could work wonders. When Simone de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre visited communist China in 1955, for instance, their guide on the journey from Shenyang to Canton was the author Chen Xuezhao who had lived in Paris for a number of years and spoke fluent French.[89] Yet behind all the *bonhomie* and good cheer, mistrust lurked. Suspicion was an omnipresent feature of Soviet life and so, also, was surveillance.[90] An unguarded question or remark by the visitor, an incautious curiosity into matters outside the contours of the official programme, and the smiles might turn to frowns.

The rationale behind the promotion of the communist state as a travel destination was twofold and was ultimately linked to the Soviet quest for international dominance. On the one hand, it was a means of gaining much-needed hard currency. On the other, it helped shape public opinion both at home and abroad.[91] In tandem with the efforts of the Comintern and the various friendship organizations abroad, the accounts that visitors might be expected to publish on their never-to-be-forgotten experiences in the home of socialism would serve as an effective

[87] HOLLANDER Paul, *Political Pilgrims,* p. 372. MARGULIUES Sylvia R., *The Pilgrimage to Russia,* p. 124.
[88] HOLLANDER Paul, *Political Pilgrims,* pp. 23 and 372.
[89] BRADY Anne-Marie, *Making the Foreign Serve China: Managing Foreigners in the People's Republic*, Maryland, Rowman and Littlefield 2003, p. 95. See also: HOLLANDER Paul, *Political Pilgrims,* p. 384. MARGULIUES Sylvia R., *The Pilgrimage to Russia,* pp. 119–122.
[90] MARGULIUES Sylvia R., *The Pilgrimage to Russia,* p. 135.
[91] *Ibid.,* p. 21. See also: DAVID-FOX Michael, *Showcasing the Great Experiment,* p. 54.

counterpoise to the negative press and public image the Soviet Union had to contend with.[92] Nor were these hopes disappointed. By and large, the sojourn in the land of promise confirmed the sanguine preconceptions of a more edifying society that had been formed by the visitors from what they had read and heard about the Soviet Union, in line with their own predilections, before they set out.[93] The symbolic neutrality of such witnesses, who had more often than not internalized the concept of being "friends of the Soviet Union," gave added credibility to their claims and was therefore of greater propaganda value than materials promulgated by the Comintern or the national communist parties under its wing.[94]

One of those who succumbed to the Soviet spell and deserves particular attention was Paul Robeson, stage and screen actor, singer, orator, linguist, and radical civil rights and political activist. Robeson had become interested at an early age in issues connected with race and civil rights and had read voraciously, not least in the works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Over time, his views became more pronounced and militant. In addition, his own personal experience of racism and discrimination, especially in the United States but also in Europe, led him to believe in the ethical superiority of socialism and, by extension, of the Soviet Union, which he saw as a racism-free state. His songs often focused on the oppressed, whether Welsh miners, Russian peasants, Czech freedom fighters, Irish revolutionaries or Jewish extermination camp victims. Many addressed topical questions, such as the Spanish Civil War, which he observed in person, poverty, racism, and unemployment. His close association with the American Communist Party and his support for the Soviet Union resulted in his being blacklisted, forbidden to travel abroad, and the banning of his records on radio during the early years of the Cold War.[95]

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[92] DAVID-FOX Michael, *Showcasing the Great Experiment,* p. 109. MARGULIUES Sylvia R., *The Pilgrimage to Russia,* p. 31.
[93] DAVID-FOX Michael, *Showcasing the Great Experiment,* p. 209.
[94] HOLLANDER Paul, *Political Pilgrims,* p. 27.
[95] BLUM Paul Von, Paul Robeson: The Quintessential Public Intellectual, *The Journal of Pan African Studies,* Vol. 2, No. 7 (2008), pp. 70–81, here pp. 71 and 73–74. An interesting example of his political activism directed against racism can be found in: DURKIN Hannah, Remembering Slavery on Screen: Paul Robeson in *The Song of Freedom* (1936), *Slavery & Abolition,* Vol. 34, No. 2, pp. 252–265. See also: FORD Carin T., *Paul Robeson: "I Want to Make Freedom Ring,"* New Jersey, Enslow Publishers Inc. 2008; SWINDALL Lyndsay R., *Paul Robeson: A Life of Activism and Art,* Lanham – Boulder, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc. 2013; BOYLE Sheila Tully – BUNIE Andrew, *Paul Robeson: The Years of Promise and Achievement,* Amherst – Boston, University of Massachusetts Press 2001.

The welcome Robeson received during his visits to the Soviet Union in the 1930s made him a life-long champion of socialist ideology and a vocal advocate of the USSR even in the face of mounting evidence of the horrors of Stalinist repression. His first trip took place in 1934 but long before that he had been observing the Soviet experiment from afar. He read the accounts of W. E. B. Du Bois and avidly questioned other friends who had been there on their impressions, among them Hewlett Johnson, the Dean of Canterbury.[96] Moreover, having mastered the Russian language, Robeson was able to read *Pravda* and *Izvestia* for himself. When he received an invitation from Sergei Eisenstein to come to Moscow to discuss the making of a film, he did not hesitate to take up the offer. The lavish reception that greeted him on arrival and Eisenstein's attentive companionship throughout his stay led Robeson to comment: "I was not prepared for the endless friendliness, which surrounded me from the moment I crossed the border." When leaving the Soviet Union a year later, he said: "In Soviet Russia, I breathe freely for the first time in my life." On another such visit he stated that the Soviet Union was where he felt like a human being for the very first time in his life.[97]

On top of the various receptions organized in his honour, Robeson was assured that the Soviets fully supported the African-American cause. He had the opportunity to talk to several Soviet children and was impressed by the fact that they "[had] never been told to fear a black man."[98] He also met the then Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs, Maxim Litvinov. In addition, he was in contact with several African Americans, including his wife Eslanda's two brothers who had decided to settle permanently in the Soviet Union. All spoke of how happy they were that they had made this decision. He visited schools and said he was struck by the progressive approach the Soviets had to minorities. It was his opinion, too, that food was plentiful wherever he went unlike the situation in the United States, which was still suffering the effects of the Great Depression. He was taken to see workers' homes and collective farms and to experience

[96] MCCONNELL Lauren, Understanding Paul Robeson's Soviet Experience, *Theatre History Studies,* Vol. 30 (2010), pp. 138–153, here p. 140–141.
[97] Quoted in CAREW Joy Gleason, Translating Whose Vision? Claude McKay, Langston Hughes, Paul Robeson and the Soviet Experiment, *International Communication Studies,* Vol. 23, No. 2 (2014), pp. 1–16, here p. 12.
[98] Quoted in MCCONNELL Lauren, Understanding Paul Robeson's Soviet Experience, p. 141.

the healthy ambience for himself. Then to crown it all, he was bade welcome in the Kremlin and would later describe his feeling of warmth and happiness in Stalin's presence.[99]

Another fervent admirer of Stalin and the Soviet Union was the aforesaid Dean of Canterbury, Hewlett Johnson, or the Red Dean as he was labelled in anti-Soviet circles. Johnson was born in 1874 in a well-to-do suburb of Manchester. Though trained as an engineer, he decided to study theology at Wycliffe Hall in Oxford. Even in his early clerical years, he had become known for his outspoken radical views, his readiness for hard work, and his campaigning to improve the lot of workers. Gradually, his standing in the Anglican Church rose until eventually in 1931 he was appointed Dean of Canterbury, a position he retained until 1963. His commitment to social concerns and to improving industrial conditions continued and he was not slow in asserting his view that the government should do more to remedy the economic inequalities that were prevalent in Britain at the time. He began to attend lectures run by the Workers' Educational Association and met several members who had already visited the Soviet Union.

At the same time, Johnson became friends with Ivan Maisky, the Soviet Ambassador to Britain, whom he invited to the Deanery. More and more the Dean's interest in learning about the Soviet experiment was stimulated. In sermons and public statements he drew attention to the ills resulting from the Great Depression and condemned Fascism. The year 1937 proved especially important for him. Firstly, he visited Spain, then burdened by the ongoing civil war and, secondly, he finally travelled to the USSR where he remained for three months. After his return home, he wrote a booklet entitled *Act Now! An Appeal to the Mind and Heart of Britain,* in which he contrasted the relative merits and demerits of socialism and Fascism. This, unsurprisingly, came down heavily on the side of the former and uncritically favoured Soviet solutions to global problems. In addition, he put together an enthusiastic report entitled *The Socialist Sixth of the World* (published as *Soviet Power* in the United States), which sold well around the world in 25 different languages.[100]

[99] *Ibid.,* pp. 141–144.
[100] Hewlett Johnson Papers can be found in the University of Kent Special Collections. CAUTE David, *The Fellow-Travellers,* pp. 260–261.

Also in the forefront of the ranks of the most loyal English-speaking defenders of the Stalinist Soviet Union, stood the aforementioned D. N. Pritt, the well-known lawyer and political activist. He was born in 1887 and educated at Winchester College and London University, where he completed a degree in law. Shortly after the First World War he joined the Labour Party and at the same time made steady advances in his legal career as a specialist in the commercial field, as a result of which he was appointed King's Counsel in 1927. In 1936, he served on the Labour Party's Executive Committee. In the early 1930s he joined the Society for Socialist Inquiry and Propaganda, later titled the Socialist League. Other members included Harold Laski, Stafford Cripps, Clement Atlee, Aneurin Bevan and Michael Foot. Pritt's first visit to the Soviet Union was in 1932 as part of G. D. H. Cole's New Fabian Research Bureau's "expert commission of enquiry." The following year he promoted the view that the Labour Party should form a United Front against Fascism with groups such as the Communist Party of Great Britain. The Labour Party, however, rejected this approach.

Pritt was deeply interested in the Soviet experiment and, as noted earlier, in Soviet jurisprudence in particular. In 1933, he had been a staunch advocate of the imprisoned future Comintern leader Dimitrov, the most prominent of the defendants in the Reichstag Fire Trial in Nazi Germany.[101] Three years later, he attended the first Moscow show trial pitted against Zinoviev, Kamenev,[102] and other "enemies of the people," and while "the more faint-hearted Socialists" in the world at large were "beset with doubts or anxieties" at the guilty verdicts handed down, this was by no means the case with Pritt. He concluded that "the charge was true, the confessions correct, and the prosecution fairly conducted."[103] In his account of the proceedings, Pritt remonstrated against what he termed "acute Communistophobia"[104] and fully endorsed Stalin in his bid to purge his political opponents. This was the time, as his colleague

[101] Pritt was president of the International Commission of Legal Inquiry into the Reichstag Fire.
[102] Tariq Ali termed the two men the "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern of the Russian Revolution" (ALI Tariq, *Fear of Mirrors*, London, Arcadia Books 1998, p. 126). Pritt had requested Dimitrov for a ticket to the trial (BANAC Ivo (ed.), *The Diary of Georgi Dimitrov 1933–1949*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press 2003, p. 25).
[103] Pritt D. N., Preface to *The Moscow Trial (1936)* issued by The Anglo-Russian Parliamentary Committee, London 1936, p. 5.
[104] Pritt D. N., *At the Moscow Trial*, New York, International Publishers 1937, p. 24. Available online at https://www.marxists.org/history/usa/parties/cpusa/anti-trotsky/At%20the%20Moscow%20Trials%20-%20Pritt.pdf (accessed 30 January 2017).

Margaret Cole maintained, that Pritt "fell in love" with Soviet socialism and became an outspoken supporter of the Soviet Union.[105] Given the ominous international situation that had arisen by the latter half of the 1930s, it is not surprising that he was also very much in favour of a military alliance against Nazi Germany which would include Britain and Russia, an issue on which he wrote extensively. Indeed, this was all the more reason, he thought, why any lingering misgivings on the even-handedness of the Moscow trials should be dispelled: "We are not merely living in an epoch in which one country after another is in danger of economic collapse or Fascist barbarism, or both, if it cannot achieve Socialist government; but in narrower and more immediate politics it is of tremendous importance to peace and progress that no misunderstandings, particularly no manufactured or engineered misunderstandings, should arise between USSR and the Western democracies."[106] At the same time, he was active in the Soviet-British Friendship Society and edited its journal *Soviet Life and Work*. According to Pritt, the journal was apolitical and only aimed to show British people how fellow-workers functioned in the Soviet Union, but, of course, this was far from being the case.[107]

In making use of the services of such eminent names as Paul Robeson, Hewlett Johnson and D. N. Pritt, the Soviet Union was practising the tried and trusty advertising technique of product association. Having a Hollywood starlet promote a particular brand of soap for her complexion, for example, or a football celebrity recommend a breakfast cereal is a common marketing ploy to manufacture public image and is basically no different from a notable clergyman in full priestly garb ringing the praises of the Soviet Union from the pulpit. That Communist Party members would wholeheartedly approve what went on in the Soviet Union was only to be expected but that distinguished, and ostensibly independent, intellectuals, journalists, politicians, and clerics would follow suit, this was something worth striving for by the planners in Moscow. The fulsome reports of the marvels of the Soviet enterprise that would

[105] In the 1940s, Pritt was president of the British Society for Cultural Relations between the Peoples of the British Commonwealth and the USSR.
[106] Pritt D. N., *At the Moscow Trial*, p. 4.
[107] http://spartacus-educational.com/TUpritt.htm, http://www.revolvy.com/main/index.php?s=Denis+Pritt (both accessed on 20 August 2016); CAUTE David, *The Fellow-Travellers*, pp. 142–143 and 145. More information on Pritt's political career can also be found in the Archive of the Communist Party of Great Britain available online at http://www.communistpartyarchive.org.uk/group.php?cid=CP-IND-MISC&pid=CP-IND-MISC-04 (accessed on 22 August 2016).

surface in books, magazine features and the public lectures of pampered visitors meant a favourable return on the investment in hospitality and heartiness.[108] At the same time, the satisfied guests could be relied on to gloss over any blemishes associated with exposing the so-called enemies of the people, say, by repeating neat turns of phrase such as making omelettes entails breaking eggs or chips fly from trees being chopped down and shift attention back to the magnificent progress being made in the Soviet industrial and social spheres.

Robeson, for instance, was particularly taken by the 1936 Soviet Constitution. This was the codification in statute form of all that he held dear. In 1937, he told an audience that "it is not difficult to realize the source from which their [Soviet citizens'] unstinted loyalty to their government and Party flows, after one has read this unforgettable, great Socialist Constitution. […] Mankind has never witnessed the equal of the Constitution. Undoubtedly its provisions which have already been realized in life, not only mark out the glorious highway to Socialism, travelled by the toilers of this country for all who desire to see, but as well they are symbolic to the future path of mankind."[109]

Johnson, for his part, announced, with his usual dexterity, that the Soviet Constitution of 1936 was proof both of Stalin's genius and of his willingness to relinquish power. In April 1939, at a meeting of Soviet well-wishers that included John Strachey, Harry Pollitt and Paul Robeson he expatiated on the moral strength and the equality of educational opportunities in the USSR.[110] At the same time, he missed no occasion to emphasize the moral and spiritual consequences of poverty and social injustice, all too evident in the western world, in contrast to Soviet success in eradicating both.[111] In his booklet *The Soviet Power*, published in 1940, he maintained: "The experiment that is being worked out in a sixth of the earth's surface is founded on a new organization of economic life based on clearly defined principles which are thoroughly understood and accepted. […] Our system lacks moral basis. […] Such is the moral aspect of contemporary economic society. Its scientific aspect is the wholly irrational wastage of wealth,

[108] HOLLANDER Paul, *Political Pilgrims,* p. 348.
[109] ROBESON Paul, When I Sing (1937), in FONER Philip S. (ed.), *Paul Robeson Speaks,* New York, Citadel Press 2002, p. 116.
[110] CAUTE David, *The Fellow-Travellers,* pp. 89 and 173.
[111] HOLLANDER Paul, *Political Pilgrims,* p. 88.

the artificially induced shortage, the poverty amidst plenty. […] In opposition to this view of the organization of economic life is that of the Soviet Union where cooperation replaces competitive chaos and a Plan succeeds the riot of disorder. […] The Community rather than the self-seeking individual stands in the centre of the picture. […] The elimination of the profit-motive makes room for the higher motive of service […]."[112]

Pritt, in turn, assured his audience that the trials taking place in the Soviet Union in the latter half of the 1930s were conducted according to best legal practice. He insisted that Stalin and his associates were not the sort to engage in a conspiracy to liquidate rivals, as opponents in the capitalist world claimed. During the Second World War, both Johnson and Pritt were strong proponents of the view that it was only because of the purge of enemies and potential "quislings" which occurred between 1936 and 1939 that the Soviets were able to effectively resist the German attack.[113] In addition, both men, and others, argued that the proceedings had resulted from a particular set of historical circumstances during which the Soviet Union faced a grave external threat. In fact, far from being a blot on the Soviet body politic, the trials demonstrated the inherent superiority of the socialist to the capitalist system.

Among other prominent Western defenders of the Soviets and their achievements were Harold Laski, Corliss Lamont, Rockwell Kent, and Edgar Young. Reference has already been made to Anna Louise Strong. It was her belief, for instance, that a corrective programme of forced labour was central to rehabilitation. She had no hesitation in writing: "The labour camp is the prevalent method for handling serious offenders of all kinds, whether criminal or political. […] The labour camps have won a high reputation throughout the Soviet Union as places where tens of thousands of men have been reclaimed."[114] Another lifelong friend of the USSR was the Reverend Harry F. Ward, Professor of Christian Ethics at the Union Theological Seminary in New York. His considered opinion was that Soviet wage differentials were transitional and designed for the greater good of society. Work itself followed the same pattern. More and better-quality labour meant greater social benefits for the Soviet population.[115] The list of

[112] Quoted in *Ibid.,* p. 117.
[113] CAUTE David, *The Fellow-Travellers,* pp. 127 and 133.
[114] Quoted in HOLLANDER Paul, *Political Pilgrims,* p. 145.
[115] *Ibid.,* p. 114.

apologists could continue but the basic tenet of their vindication remained the same. The Soviet Union could do no wrong. The directors of the hospitality project could be pleased. Their investment had paid off.

It had paid off so much so that regimes based on the Soviet model were not slow in emulating a strategy that returned such dividends. Nor was this confined to the satellite states bordering the Soviet Union in Europe. It was also taken up further afield in China, Vietnam, Cuba, and, though to a much lesser extent, Cambodia, Albania, and Mozambique. In terms of Chinese communism, the American journalist Edgar Snow was the exponent with the widest audience, although Owen Lattimore might also be mentioned in passing.[116] As for fellow-travellers who openly voiced support for communist Vietnam, the German playwright Peter Weiss is a particularly good example. Others include the American novelist Mary McCarthy, the actress Jane Fonda, and the folk-singer Joan Baez. With regard to Cuba, the German author Hans Magnus Enzensberger probably stands out most, but of course the roll-call could go on.[117]

[116] For more information on Snow's relationship with Chinese communism, see for example: RAND Peter, *China Hands: The Adventures and Ordeals of the American Journalists Who Joined Forces with the Great Chinese Revolution,* New York, Simon & Schuster 1995. See also: LATTIMORE Owen, *Ordeal by Slander,* New York, Carl and Graf 2004 (first published 1950).
[117] CAUTE David, *The Fellow-Travellers,* pp. 347, 363, 391–392, 399, 415–417.

WELCOME TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA: INTRODUCTION

Following the example of their Soviet mentor before the Second World War, the communist authorities in Czechoslovakia, as well as those in the other countries of the "peace camp," set great store by appearances. To present the people's democracy in the best possible light to committed communists, as well as to the whole gamut of left-leaning, fellow-travelling well-wishers and observers in the English-speaking world and elsewhere beyond the Iron Curtain was the objective. It would be outside the scope of this work to look at each of the countries under Soviet dominance in the region in turn but, by and large, the Czechoslovak pattern, not least in its hospitality techniques, would hold true for all. Books and booklets explaining and extolling the onward march to peace and prosperity were translated into English and then printed by, most notably but not exclusively, the state-owned Orbis Publishing House in Prague. Front organizations headquartered in the city, such as the International Union of Students, lent a hand.[118] Disquisitions on the February crisis, the peace campaign and Czechoslovakia's active part in it, long-term planning, land reform, national health insurance, gender equality, the fifteenth-century Hussite movement, alleged forerunner and harbinger of the new polity, all were grist to the mill.[119] Nor, amid all the pressing concerns to be explicated, were the beauty and attractions of Prague itself overlooked.

[118] "I believe that Prague is becoming the main world center of Communist education outside of Moscow, partly because its relatively high standard of living makes it attractive to foreigners, and partly because the Russians do not want a large number of foreign students in Moscow" (SCHMIDT, Dana Adams *Anatomy of a Satellite*, p. 271). More information can also be found in: OLŠÁKOVÁ Doubravka, V krajině za zrcadlem: Političtí emigranti v poúnorovém Československu a případ Aymonin [In the land behind the mirror: Political immigrants in post-February Czechoslovakia and the Aymonin case], *Soudobé dějiny*, Vol. 14, No. 4 (2007), pp. 719–743; BAŠTA Jiří, Propagandistické využití kauzy amerického emigranta profesora G. S. Wheelera [Propaganda usage in the case of the American immigrant G. S. Wheeler], *Securitas Imperii*, Vol. 12, No. 7 (2001), pp. 224–251.

[119] The following is a small sample of the publications on offer: *Czechoslovakia: Land of Peace and Building of Socialism*; *Czechoslovakia on the Road to Socialism* (Prague, Orbis 1949); NECASEK Frantisek, *Klement Gottwald: A Communist Premier of Czechoslovakia. A Biography* (Prague, Mladá fronta 1950); MACEK Josef, *The Hussite Movement in Bohemia* (Prague, Orbis, 1953 – new, enlarged edition published in 1958); *Czechoslovakia in the Fight for Peace and for Collective Security in Europe* (Prague, Orbis 1954); KOPECKÝ Václav, *The Development of Cultural Enlightenment Work in Czechoslovakia* (Prague, Orbis 1951); ŠTOLL Ladislav, *Face to Face with Reality* (Prague, Orbis 1949); KRÁL Karel, *Czechoslovakia: The Country of Peace and Labour* (Prague, Práce 1953); *Czechoslovakia's New Labour Policy* (Prague, Orbis 1949); GLOS Bohuslav, *Mobilisation of Labour in Czechoslovakia: The Problem of Manpower* (Prague, Orbis 1948); *Czechoslovak National Insurance* (Prague, Orbis 1949); GOTTWALD Klement, *Long-Term Planning in Czechoslovakia*; *The First Czechoslovak Economic Plan: Government Memorandum and the Text of the Two Year Plan*; DVOŘÁČEK Jaroslav, *Czechoslovakia Today* (Prague, Orbis 1957); EISLER Pavel, *Munich: A Retrospect* (Prague, Orbis 1958). Many of these books can be found in the Working Class Movement Library in Manchester.

On top of that, biographies of Czechoslovak communist leaders as well as compilations of their speeches at Party conferences were translated into English, and so, too, the works of selected Czechoslovak authors. These were then shipped off to leftist circles and booksellers in the English-speaking world, as far afield as Australia. Julius Fučík's much-lauded *Notes from the Gallows* would be a paradigm of what was on offer.[120] English translations of articles in the national press along with original writings by native English-speakers living in Czechoslovakia likewise frequently appeared in communist and communist-affiliated journals worldwide. Radio, too, had a role to play in building the image. Prague was the centre for "peace camp" international broadcasting, the goal of which, as advertised, was "to counter the misinterpretation and lies of the American and 'Marshallised' radios; to inform the youth and unmask the warmongers and their agents, the World Federation of Democratic Youth has now regular radio broadcasts […] through Radio Prague."[121]

Before proceeding to the topic of English-speaking visitors to Czechoslovakia in the early Cold War period proper, a short detour to take into account the international Cold War context and the Soviet-Bloc strategies at play would probably be useful. In September 1947, at the inaugural meeting of the Communist Information Bureau, or the Cominform as it became known, Andrei Zhdanov, a member of the Soviet Politburo, postulated the "two camp" thesis. As Zhdanov saw it, on one side was the "peace camp," consisting of the "peace-loving" and "progressive" forces led by the Soviet Union, and on the other the "warmongering," capitalist, imperialist camp spearheaded by the United States. Two years later, in 1949, a Cominform resolution ordained that peace "should now become the pivot of the entire activity of the

[120] A Living Banner of Struggle for Peace and Happiness, *World Youth,* January 1951. The collection of *World Youth* journals is to be found at Cornell University Special Collections, Ithaca (NY). *Notes from the Gallows*, with an accompanying note from Augustina Fuchik, was re-published by New Century Publishers, New York, in 1948.
[121] This advertisement regularly appeared on the back cover of the *World Youth* journal in 1950 and 1951, and, no doubt, in other issues during the early Cold War period as well. See also United States Congress House Committee on Un-American Activities interrogation of Frances Damon of the World Federation of Democratic Youth in connection with a radio interview she gave in Prague for the IUS on 17 August, 1950. Available at: https://books.google.cz/books?id=GdEJAAAAIAAJ&pg=PA6268&lpg=PA6268&dq=frances+damon+prague&source=bl&ots=pvY4AWjThy&sig=j4BBZCDbHJLjQgEuUkbUZQuHgm0&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjrl9eXi5DWAhUBNxQKHQ-lDDkQ6AEIJjAA#v=onepage&q=frances%20damon%20prague&f=false (accessed 17 April 2017). Radio broadcasts from Prague were in French, English, Spanish, Russian, Italian, German, Bulgarian, Polish, Romanian, Hungarian, Greek, Serbo-Croatian, and Slovene.

Communist Parties."[122] The campaign took shape at the World Congress of Partisans for Peace held jointly in Paris and Prague in April the same year when, as a follow-up, national peace committees were created worldwide. At its second congress in November the following year in Warsaw, the Partisans renamed themselves the World Peace Council.[123] Part of their remit was to mobilize Western communists and fellow-travellers against NATO and a series of strikes and protest rallies were organized in the early Cold War period. Party members were used to obeying orders from the Soviets in Comintern times and had no difficulty incorporating the "peace" struggle into their political platform and general strategies.[124]

It is noteworthy that the World Peace Council enjoyed considerable success among intellectuals in the early Cold War years. The Partisans elected the Nobel Prize-winning French atomic physicist and Party member, Frédéric Joliot-Curie, as president, and fellow-scientist and communist activist, the Irish-born John Desmond Bernal, as vice-president. Among the more successful initiatives launched by the movement was the Stockholm Peace Appeal of March 1950 which called for a total ban on nuclear weapons as an "instrument of intimidation and mass murder of people" and denounced all those who made use of them as war criminals.[125] The appeal was worded by the prolific Soviet writer, 1952 Stalin Peace Prize winner, and, in the rather unkind words George Orwell used to describe him, "literary prostitute,"[126] Ilya Ehrenburg, and soon gathered millions of signatures, the bulk of which came from the Communist world, a figure of 9,482,000 in the case of Czechoslovakia.[127] The campaigners "were ostensibly directed by committees composed of influential and well-known figures from the artistic and scientific communities but were in practice controlled, much like their forebears

[122] Quoted in DEERY Phillip, The Dove Flies East: Whitehall, Warsaw and the 1950 World Congress, *Australian Journal of Politics and History,* Vol. 48, No. 4 (2002), pp. 449–468, here p. 450. Extracts from the Cominform communiqué were published in the West as well. See for example: Excerpts from Communique Adopted by Cominform, *The New York Times,* 30 November 1949.
[123] DEERY Phillip, The Dove Flies East, p. 450.
[124] GILBERT Mark, *Cold War Europe: The Politics of a Contested Continent,* Lanham – Boulder – New York – London, Rowman & Littlefield 2015, pp. 61–62.
[125] *Ibid.*
[126] ORWELL George, The Prevention of Literature (first published in 1946), in *Books v. Cigarettes*, London, Penguin 2008, pp. 39–40.
[127] The Czechoslovak Committee of the Defenders of Peace, *RFE* [Radio Free Europe] *News and Information Service*, 1958, p. 8, available online at: http://osaarchivum.org/files/holdings/300/8/3/text/15-2-173.shtml (accessed 30 July 2016).

of the 1930s, by hard-working communist functionaries, many of them based in Prague."[128] As the bus conductor and former communist councillor for the London Borough of Hackney, Bob Darke, wrote: "Of course no one in his right mind could disagree with the superficial justice of the campaign, the urgent desire for peace, the banning of the most terrible weapon man has produced. But it did not take much intelligence to see that the Party's propaganda was directed one way."[129] On the other hand, no one in his or her right mind could disagree either with J. D. Bernal's assertion that "the only counter-move to annihilation of one side is annihilation of the other, and incidentally," no doubt with his native Ireland in mind, "of all neutrals as well."[130]

One further very serious international development needs to be briefly highlighted against the backdrop of the peace campaign. On 25 June 1950, two months after the Stockholm Peace Appeal got underway, North Korean forces crossed the 38th Parallel on the Korean peninsula at the instigation of the Kremlin and the new rulers in Beijing, who had calculated that the offensive would not unleash a nuclear holocaust, and who immediately blamed the government in Seoul and their American backers for the resumption of hostilities. Contrary to what was reported by press correspondents on the ground, communist news bulletins stoutly maintained that it was not the North which had attacked the South but rather the other way around. This was the Party line and it would be trumpeted by the flag-bearers of peace, not least by Hewlett Johnson, Dean of Canterbury, a man described by Viscount Swinton as a "puppet prelate" in a November 1950 British House of Lords' debate.[131] Throughout the early 1950s the peace banners and marching feet would be seen on the streets of Western cities on a regular

[128] JUDT Tony, *Past Imperfect: French Intellectuals, 1944–1956*, New York, New York University Press 2011, p. 224.
[129] DARKE Bob, *Cockney Communist*, New York, The John Day Company 1953, p. 179.
[130] BERNAL J. D., *World Without War*, London, Routledge – Kegan Paul 1958, p. 1. It might be mentioned in passing that, in an address to a peace conference in Moscow in 1949, Bernal had maintained: "It was not the atomic bomb that defeated Japan, but the knowledge of the overwhelming strength of the Soviet Union" (British Peace Committee, *Peace to the World: A Report of the Soviet Peace Conference,* with Speeches of the Dean of Canterbury and J. D. Bernal, London, British Peace Committee 1949).
[131] Viscount Swinton's words were: "In this horrid business I think perhaps the most despicable people are the puppet prelates, who prostitute their priesthood and their faith in the service of anti-Christ. I cannot forbear to say that I think most, of your Lordships would put in that category the Dean of Canterbury, who in this matter I hope and believe has few, if any, fellow-travellers in the ministers of any denomination in this country" (Hansard, House of Lords Debate, 29 November 1950, Vol. 169, cc604–52).

basis but of course not always under the tutelage of the Peace Partisans.[132] Britain had joined the nuclear diarchy in 1952 and the same year brought the first fledgling march, organized by the Operation Gandhi faction of the pacifist Peace Pledge Union, to Aldermaston, some 50 miles or so west of London, where Britain's Atomic Weapons Research Establishment was based.[133] As British testing of nuclear weapons continued, with three hydrogen bombs detonated over Malden Island in the Pacific Ocean in the summer of 1957, these protest marches would grow into the huge Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) by the end of the decade.[134] The Partisans, for their part, were more focused on Korea. They were also strongly exercised by the vexed question of West German rearmament and the run-up to its enrolment in NATO. This finally took place in May 1955 with the Warsaw Pact formed the same month in response.

At the same time, under the aegis of the word "Peace" a myriad of front organizations, mutating from one to another, came into being. Prague was the hub as Paris had been for the peace groups in the 1930s[135] and, as in Willi Münzenberg's Paris, there was work aplenty for the Prague-based "peace" campaigners: information bulletins to be sifted and disseminated internationally, news agencies and columnists briefed, reports written, letters typed, brochures produced, contacts initiated and developed with like-minded organizations abroad, conferences, rallies, trips and concert tours arranged, translations made, publications edited and proofread, books distributed, and a corresponding bureaucracy kept in train to handle this veritable hive of activity, with dossiers to be compiled and updated, and the reliability or otherwise of the comrades in the enterprise noted.[136] On top of that, Prague, a communist state in the heart of

[132] See, for example: TAYLOR Richard – YOUNG Nigel (eds.), *Campaigns for Peace: British Peace Movements in the Twentieth Century*, Manchester, Manchester University Press 1987.
[133] See: SCALMER Sean, *Gandhi in the West: The Mahatma and the Rise of Radical Protest*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 2011.
[134] Although it is outside the purview of our study, see also TOMPKINS Andrew S., *Better Active than Radioactive! Anti-Nuclear Protest in 1970s France and West Germany*, Oxford, Oxford University Press 2016.
[135] For a breakdown of the international peace organizations in the 1930s, see WEISS Holger (ed.), *International Communism and Transnational Solidarity: Radical Networks, Mass Movements and Global Politics, 1919–1939*, Leiden, Brill 2016, p. 56.
[136] "There are no friends or brothers, only 'comrades.' What is a comrade? It is he who runs beside you (as wolves do) but only up to a certain point. He may march beside you for twenty years, join you in combat and adversity, but if you break the wolf pack law or if, for one or another reason, you cease to suit him, he will jump on you and tear you to pieces instantly with his fangs. He is neither friend nor brother but merely 'comrade' and no more" (BAZHANOV Boris, *Bazhanov and the Damnation of Stalin,* Athens (OH), Ohio University Press 1990, p. 121).

Europe, with its aura of mystery and allure, its *outré* image, was a magnet in its own right for left-leaning young Westerners and their camp followers, those who would like to kick over the traces of their bourgeois or petty-bourgeois upbringing and dip their toes in the waters of international adventure and intrigue but simultaneously maintain the illusion that they were not too far east, not too committed.[137]

For young Australian communists like Stephen Murray-Smith or Ron Gates, and their counterparts from other English-speaking countries, Prague was "the place to go […] everyone raves about it."[138] Czechoslovakia was "the great land of promise."[139] Ron Gates remained for three months, Stephen Murray-Smith for two years.[140] Indeed in some respects, though coming from opposite ends of the spectrum in terms of ideology and messianic fervour, and without the trauma of a world war in all its unspeakable experience behind them, the droves of native English-speakers who descended on the city over 40 years later after the Velvet Revolution, when once again "Czechoslovakia was Eldorado for young people, idealists and adventurers,

[137] Describing the 1950s Czechoslovak capital, the English novelist Lionel Davidson wrote: "Prague, it is a fact, is still the most Ruritanian of the capitals of Europe. Despite the hands and brains [a reference to a catch-phrase on a huge picture of Lenin at the Můstek end of Na Příkopě], an aura of romance lingers over the city. At sunset lamps are lit in the linden trees on the embankment. A hundred points of saffron reflect the last light of day from the pinnacle Hradcany on the Heights. As the neon slogans begin to flash in the Vaclavske Namesti, so the turreted grey buildings and the cobbled courtyards of the old town come into their own. One feels the presence of Black Michael and enigmatic young countesses; one is no more than a stone's throw from Zenda" (DAVIDSON Lionel, *The Night of Wenceslas*, London, Penguin Books 1964 (first published by Gollancz 1960), p. 77).

[138] MCLAREN John, *Free Radicals: Of the Left in Postwar Melbourne*, Melbourne, Australian Scholarly Publishing 2003, p. 74.

[139] HYDE Douglas*, I Believed: The Autobiography of a Former British Communist*, London, The Reprint Society 1952 (first published 1950), p. 207.

[140] By 1954 "hundreds of refugees from the West, communist sympathizers, dupes, fellow-travelers [...] had come to Prague imagining 'a new heaven and a new earth.' Native English speakers who brought something with them – translation skills for instance – were welcomed and wooed, encouraged into jobs and provided with accommodation, usually at the expense of native Czechs who were moved sideways or purged" (MCNEISH James, *Dance of the Peacocks: New Zealanders in Exile in the Time of Hitler and Mao Tse-Tung*, Auckland, Vintage 2003, pp. 305). It must be remembered that one of the main social problems in the early years of communist Czechoslovakia was housing. One historian noted that "in the big cities – Prague, Bratislava, Brno, Ostrava, Kosice – the housing shortage was so drastic that the dramatic human problems it created affected the entire social and psychological make-up of the nation" (SZULC Tad, *Czechoslovakia Since World War II*, New York, The Viking Press 1971, p. 239). For more information on the housing question in Czechoslovakia in the period under review, see: ZARECOR Kimberly Elman, Designing for the Socialist Family: The Evolution of Housing Types in Early Postwar Czechoslovakia, in PENN Shana – MASSIMO Jill (eds.), *Gender Politics and Everyday Life in State Socialist Eastern and Central Europe*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan 2009.

with nothing better to do,"[141] were not unlike the young Australians and others who reached Prague after the 1948 coup.

But even before the city was discovered by the young Australians, "Prague had become after the war the most important communications centre in Central Europe [at least until the communists had consolidated their hold on power after the February 1948 coup], the last capital east of the Elbe from where it was possible for foreign newspaper correspondents to report freely and without censorship on events not only in Czechoslovakia but in countries east and south of the Carpathians. What Vienna had been before the war, Prague had become now: the Central European headquarters of all important foreign news agencies and the base of the correspondents of the great foreign dailies. The hub of journalistic life was the Press Room on the top floor of the beautiful Národní Klub," Stephen Pollak wrote in his memoirs.[142]

For the post-1948 newcomers, peace was the rallying cry but the activists' task also included proclaiming the achievements of socialism, the advantages of economic planning, industrialization, collectivization, equity in employment, medical, and educational opportunities, while concurrently shrugging off as disinformation and malice whatever stories of persecution or hardship might surface. This was the setting which English-speaking foreigners found in Czechoslovakia on arrival. The country itself was promoted in various communist and "peace" publications and in Prague radio broadcasts as an attractive destination for summer and winter holidays.[143] Visitors would be able to see for themselves the great strides that had been made. "Who, formerly, could buy skis, boots, skiing clothes?" asked one 1950 article. "Who could go to the mountains and live in first-class hotels? In the pre-war period, […] winter increased the misery of the people, frost added to starvation. A common man could not think of sport. That was only the affair of the rich."[144] These days were gone. Now the ski

[141] HAWKER Mary (née Wheeler), The Rise and Fall of ELT, in SCHMIED Josef – VOIGT Katrin – HAASE Christoph (eds.), *English for Central Europe: Interdisciplinary Saxon-Czech Perspectives*, Göttingen, Cuvillier Verlag 2005, p. 69.
[142] POLLAK Stephen W., *Strange Land Behind Me*, London, Falcon Press 1951, p. 309.
[143] "This was in days before the travel leaflets for mass tourism made of Prague, Budapest, and Warsaw exciting gems of historical architecture and filled the modern Black Sea coast hotels of Rumania and Bulgaria with West German holiday-makers" (SCOTT Hilda, *Does Socialism Liberate Women? Experiences from Eastern Europe*, Boston, Beacon Press 1975 p. 74).
[144] Winter Sports in Czechoslovakia, *World Youth,* December 1950.

slopes and the swing doors of the grand hotels were open to all working people and their families, not just the doormen in top hats and with braids on their uniforms.

The company responsible for looking after tourists to Czechoslovakia was the long-established ČEDOK travel agency. Nationalized in 1948, ČEDOK catered to the needs of run-of-the-mill visitors. Important guests were the preserve of the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, chaired in the early Cold War period by the suave but ill-starred Bedřich Geminder. In those first years of East-West confrontation, ideological considerations were uppermost in any dealings with vacationers from outside the Bloc, most of whom might be labelled "political tourists." The mid-1950s, however, saw a perceptible mellowing in approach. In 1956 ČEDOK came under the management of the Ministry of Foreign Trade and, at the same time, there was a marked drive to encourage American and other Western tourists to visit the country, not least to help foreign currency reserves, with a dilution of the former strident ideological overtones in the advertising literature.[145] It was not that political tourists were no longer wooed or made welcome, but that the number of non-committed travellers granted visas increased. With the changed international climate that followed Stalin's death in March 1953, and especially after Nikita Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin in February 1956, the priorities of the Czechoslovak regime, as of the other satellites and indeed the Soviet Union itself, changed substantially. Other factors were at play, too. The tacticians behind the American policy of "communist containment," for instance, turned to such imaginative strategies as "jazz diplomacy" to gain the hearts and minds of young Czechoslovaks and other potential rebels and converts in the Soviet Bloc and outside.[146] This led to a blurring of the edges in the ideological divide.

ČEDOK had a sister company in central London, which was particularly active in the 1950s. Located near Marble Arch, Progressive Tours, a Party-run travel agency, which will be looked at more closely further on, organized trips, arranged accommodation and helped with

[145] Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955–1957, Eastern Europe, Vol. XXV, Document No. 65 – Dispatch from the Embassy in Czechoslovakia to the Department of State, 26 June 1956, Prague, available online at https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v25/d65 (accessed 14 December 2016).
[146] See, for instance: DAVENPORT Lisa E., *Jazz Diplomacy: Promoting America in the Cold War Era* (Jackson, University Press of Mississippi 2013), and ESCHEN Penny M. Von, *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Harvard, Harvard University Press 2006).

visa requirements for Party members, trade union delegations, and others tempted to discover life behind the Iron Curtain for themselves.[147] Nor was Czechoslovakia such "a faraway country" as all that. There were no vast oceans to be traversed so a trip to Prague from Britain was not prohibitively expensive and the city could be reached by road or rail after crossing the Channel. In addition, government travel restrictions on British Party members and communist sympathizers were by no means as draconian as was the case in the United States or Australia. Based on the documents available, it is clear that Progressive Tours worked closely with the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in coordinating details and the itineraries of prospective travellers. The enterprise was not one to be taken lightly.[148] The objective was to send "progressives" to Czechoslovakia, Party members or fellow-travellers as the case might be, who would disseminate positive, first-hand, on-the-spot information about the state of the country on their return home, tailor-made to fit Party and Soviet needs. Progressive newspaper correspondents would fit the bill nicely. Derek Kartun and Sam Russell of the British *Daily Worker*, for example, were happy to oblige.[149] Kartun came to Prague to report on the trial of Milada Horáková and her co-accused in 1950,[150] as he had the László Rajk trial in Budapest the previous year.[151] Russell (a.k.a. Sam Lesser)

[147] For an overview of Progressive Tours holidays in Soviet-bloc countries, see: https://historyonthedole.wordpress.com/2016/02/16/mail-order-socialism/ (accessed 21 November 2016).

[148] NACR, fund the International Department of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, 100/3, sv. 25, a.j. 91, Report by Dr Brož to the Ministry of the Interior, which arrived on 24 April 1950. For more information, see also: SAYLE Alexei, *Stalin Ate My Homework*, London, Sceptre 2010, p. 72. It should be noted, too, that for many British citizens who had relatives in Czechoslovakia – mothers and fathers of British-born wives who had married Czechoslovak soldiers or airmen during the Second World War for instance – travelling to Czechoslovakia with Progressive Tours was the only means available to them to see their daughters and Czechoslovak grandchildren. However, this could sometimes take years since would-be travellers had to demonstrate their progressive stance to Progressive Tours officials. The parents of Yvonne Šebesťáková, whose husband had fought at Tobruk during the Second World War, only managed to get to Czechoslovakia in 1956. They were accommodated in Mariánské Lázně and in an interview the author had with Yvonne Šebesťáková on 17 May 2011, she recalled the difficulties she had in being allowed to see them. For more information on British-born wives see: GEANEY Kathleen, At Home among Strangers: British-Born Wives in Czechoslovakia (1945–1960), *Kosmas: Czechoslovak and Central European Journal*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (Fall 2014), pp. 129–144.

[149] NACR, fund the International Department of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, 100/3, sv. 204, a.j. 715, *Daily Worker* Editor J. R. Campbell to Pavel Kavan, 24 August 1949.

[150] NACR, fund the International Department of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, 100/3, sv. 204, a.j. 715, Letter to Pavel Kavan, 10 October 1950.

[151] KARTUN Derek, *Tito's Plot Against Europe: The Story of the Rajk Conspiracy*, London, Lawrence and Wishart 1949, published also in Czech as: IDEM, *Titovo spiknutí proti Evropě. Rajkův případ ve světle skutečností,* Prague, Orbis 1950.

covered the Slánský case two years later.[152] While in Prague, both men were the official guests of the Czechoslovak daily, *Rudé Právo*, and were treated royally. Any expenses they incurred over and above the official junketing were partly offset by the Czechoslovak side, too.[153]

Of course, the communist authorities in Prague were well aware, as were their mentors in the Kremlin, that laudatory accounts of travel experiences in Czechoslovakia published in the West by professedly neutral witnesses were of far greater propaganda value than those of old Party hacks. Although conditions were naturally different from those in the 1930s Soviet Union, nevertheless the organizers could draw on the expertise gained by the Soviets in cosseting select visitors and ensuring that the host country appeared in the best possible light.

At the same time, it should not be forgotten that Czechoslovakia had a special position in the "peace" bloc in its own right. It was situated on the westernmost edge of the Iron Curtain, had a relatively high living standard compared to the Soviet Union and fellow people's democracies, and in the preceding decades had built up a considerable standing worldwide, particularly in the arts.[154] "You will find that Prague's reputation as one of the world's most beautiful cities does not rest solely on the Old City," claimed the South African journalist and political activist, Harry Bloom, writing under the pseudonym Walter Storm. "Modern Prague also has attractions and a personality of its own. The shopping area is centred on the famous St Wenceslas Square [Václavské náměstí], surely one of the most spacious and graceful thoroughfares in all Europe. There are modern shops, whose large display windows show that window-dressing is a real art in Czechoslovakia. In the numerous glass-covered arcades, for some reason always a little mysterious and inviting, you will find many of the most interesting

[152] Originally Manassah Lesser, he adopted the name Sam Russell, a semi-palindrome of his own name, while in Spain during the Spanish Civil War.

[153] NACR, fund the International Department of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, 100/3, sv. 204, a.j. 715, Note by Pavel Kavan 4 September 1949; *Ibid.,* Letter by Pavel Kavan, 28 August 1950. Douglas Hyde, news editor of the *Daily Worker* until his apostasy from the Party fold in 1948, "had not been comfortable with the *Daily Worker*'s culture of social drinking" (GILDART Keith – HOWELL David, *Dictionary of Labour Biography,* Vol. XIII, London, Palgrave Macmillan 2010, p.167). Hyde would have been decidedly far more uncomfortable with the conviviality his colleagues enjoyed at the Press Club in Prague.

[154] It was common for the Soviets to settle defectors in Prague. "Perhaps they thought Westerners would be more at home in Czechoslovakia, which was more economically advanced and closer culturally to Europe and the United States than was Russia" (USDIN Steven T., *Engineering Communism: How Two Americans Spied for Stalin and Founded the Soviet Sillicon Valley*, New Haven, Yale University Press 2005, p. 142). This was the case with the American fugitives, Joel Barr and Alfred Sarant, in 1950, for instance, whom Usdin writes about, who were given new identities and jobs in Prague.

shops and restaurants. At night, the main streets glitter and wink with hundreds of illuminated advertisements, like a lesser Broadway."[155] Prague had another enthusiast in the American Marxist, Lou Diskin, Chairman of the New York State Labor Youth League, who told his readers: "the shops are full. Food, clothes, glassware, toys, sport equipment press against the windows."[156] Such glowing accounts would surely drown out any negative impressions of the country that might be current in the West and this was precisely the goal set by the Czechoslovak organizers.

There was more. The Canadian Party stalwart, Elgin Scotty Neish, was enraptured by the linguistic harmony he encountered in 1952: "Here in the dining room of the Hotel Flora, Prague it is common place to sit down to your meal and upon starting a conversation with the person on your right, find that he or she does not speak English and have an Irishman across the table translate what you have to say into Spanish for the benefit of the delegate from Guatemala on my right who through my translator tells me he can also speak French but not English, or in the case of the person on my left who comes from Indonesia who speaks both French and English and his own native tongue."[157] None of this corresponded with the prevailing Western image of life on the other side of the Curtain, the climate of fear and the "impenetrable border."

Such fulsome "hands on" appraisals did yeoman's service for the Czechoslovak authorities and their Soviet backers, and, inadvertently, validated Walter Strong's comment "that window-dressing is a real art in Czechoslovakia." It is not the intention in this work to create a catalogue of all those who visited Czechoslovakia in the period in question but to cast

[155] STORM Walter – STORM Beryl, *We Meet the Czechoslovaks*, Prague, Orbis 1948, p. 10. Harry and Beryl Bloom "had decided, after the warm reception accorded to them by the Czech Party, to make Prague their permanent abode" (POLLAK Stephen W., *Strange Land Behind Me*, p. 305).

[156] The Czechs celebrate the Russian Revolution, *Challenge: Young America's Voice for Peace, Jobs and Freedom*, November 1950. After serving with distinction on all the battlefields of western Europe during the Second World War from Omaha Beach to the River Elbe, where the American forces finally linked-up with the Red Army, Lou Diskin, following his discharge from the military, worked with the World Federation of Democratic Youth in Prague. In later life, always faithful to Party tenets, he would manage his own bookstore and publishing-house in the US. *People's World*, 8 August 2003, available online at http://www.peoplesworld.org/article/lou-diskin-marxist-educator-working-class-activist/ (accessed 30 April 2017).

[157] ISITT Benjamin, Fellow Traveller: A British Columbia Fisherman Writes Home from the Eastern Bloc, 1952, Labour/le Travail, Vol. 63 (Spring 2009), pp. 105–130, here p. 112.

light on several previously unexplored areas. The Soviet model has been analyzed in great detail by such renowned historians as Paul Hollander, Michael David-Fox, and Sheila Fitzpatrick. Although this present study concentrates on Czechoslovakia, the Soviet prototype is omnipresent in the background. It is important to stress, however, that while the country researched is Czechoslovakia, the findings would probably be appropriate for all the people's democracies in the post-war period. At the same time, even though the work is directly concerned with English-speakers, it can be assumed that similar hospitality techniques were employed on other foreigners from the West as well. That this was indeed the case is substantiated by the fact that comparable information on Czechoslovakia can be found in contemporaneous communist, "peace," and fellow-travelling publications and in radio broadcasts in French, Italian, Spanish, and other languages.

VISITORS TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA: THE SETTING

Most visitors to communist Czechoslovakia in the early Cold War period were content with a short stay of a week or so. The majority were Party members, trade unionists, or delegates to one or other of the international conferences regularly held in the city, or to the various festivals of youth, peace or communist-oriented cultural events taking place in Prague or elsewhere in the country. It could be argued that a goodly portion of the guests were of a feather with those who toured the Soviet Union in former decades. Indeed some who had made the pilgrimage to the "birthplace of socialism" before the outbreak of the Second World War were the same seasoned travellers who turned up at the passport control desks of the infant Czechoslovak communist state in those early years. For many, Czechoslovakia was merely a transit point in a journey whose ultimate destination was further east. Among all could be found the same motley crew of apologists, idealists, journalists, and adventurers. Some of the guests were completely bowled over by the hospitality and good fellowship lavished on them, while more had a rather skeptical view, as had been the case in the USSR in earlier times and indeed was still the norm.[158]

But how was one to distinguish the real from the unreal? As in the mirrored labyrinth the Prague municipal authorities had arranged to be constructed for the 1891 Exhibition in the city, and which still draws visitors today, what one saw in those arenas where the Cold War was played out was a distorted world of images and make-belief. Nor was this by any means exclusive to one side only in the conflict. In this theatre of the absurd, this looking-glass war, the HUAC hearings in the US could hold their own with the best examples from the communist camp. When, for instance, the playwright Arthur Miller was summoned before the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1956, the federal prosecutor, US Attorney William Hitz, "opened each of his orations with one or another variation of 'Now, when Mr. Miller went into

[158] Writing about his trip to the USSR in 1961, one English communist had this to say: "From undesirable British nobodies, we were transformed into distinguished Soviet somebodies. Now I knew how British communist leaders must have felt on entering the 'promised land': one moment vilified in their own country, the next treated as revolutionary premiers-in-waiting for whom red carpets and limousines were their due. Three cheers for the revolution" (RIORDAN Jim, *Comrade Jim: The Spy Who Played for Spartak*, London, Harper Perennial 2009, p. 61).

Czechoslovakia, he knew he was forbidden by the stamp on his passport to enter that country [...].'"[159] Like Alice puzzled by the Hatter's comment about his watch at the Mad Tea-Party in *Alice in Wonderland*, the "remark seemed to have no sort of meaning in it, and yet it was certainly English,"[160] Miller's defence lawyer was equally baffled. Each time he rose "on a point of order to wearily repeat" that his client had never set foot in Czechoslovakia in his life, "the judge simply turned back to Hitz and asked him to continue."[161]

[159] MILLER Arthur, *Timebends: A Life*, New York, Grove Press 1987, p. 450.
[160] CARROLL Lewis, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, in *The Complete Illustrated Works of Lewis Carroll*, London, Chancellor Press 1982, p. 68.
[161] MILLER Arthur, *Timebends*, p. 450. Alice, by all accounts, was seven years old at the time of her adventures in Wonderland. The 10-year-old child star, Shirley Temple, and first American Ambassador to Czechoslovakia in the post-communist era, was labelled "a 'stooge' of the 'reds'" by the anti-communist expert and scholar, J. B. Matthews, at a hearing of the House Committee Investigating Un-American Activities chaired by Texas Congressman Martin Dies, Jr. in 1938. On hearing this piece of news, "the chairman of the House committee leaned forward eagerly and said, 'Go on, professor'" (BROUN Heywood, *Collected Edition of Heywood Broun*, New York, Harcourt, Brace and Company 1941, p. 457).

THE ARTS WORLD

A MEDLEY OF CULTURAL FIGURES WHO VISITED CZECHOSLOVAKIA IN THE EARLY YEARS OF THE COLD WAR

Among the more general run of visitors to Czechoslovakia at this time, the intelligentsia was well-represented. The English novelist Graham Greene was one of the first out of the traps. He happened to be in Prague during the February 1948 coup itself, although there may have been more to his presence at that particular juncture than simply that "of the globetrotting writer who was just passing through."[162] At the time, Greene was assisting the director, Carol Reed, and Orson Welles, in making the *film noir* classic of his novel *The Third Man* in Vienna, which would be released the following year. The year 1948 also saw the celebrated Hollywood screenwriter, Donald Ogden Stewart, in Czechoslovakia. Stewart, who two years later would be hounded by HUAC and leave America for good rather than inform on his friends, was a guest speaker for young progressive writers at the famous Dobříš Castle near Prague.[163]

The acclaimed American journalist, John Gunther, was in Prague when the funeral of the country's former president Edvard Beneš took place in September 1948. Gunther had always found Czechs an unemotional people, "somewhat yeastless" to use his expression, but on this occasion it was different: "Women we had talked to, and who knew we were Americans, stuck their hands through the half-open windows and clutched at us sobbing […]." It was as though they knew too well that a chapter in their lives was closing and another, ominous one

[162] SHELDEN Michael, *Graham Greene: The Man Within*, London, Heinemann 1994, pp. 31–32 and also pp. 318–319. Indeed "there are indications that the trip Greene made to Austria and Czechoslovakia in early 1948 ostensibly for film research purposes provided suitable cover for informal intelligence activities on the sensitive edge of Moscow's sphere of influence" (SHAW Tony, *British Cinema and the Cold War*, London, I. B. Tauris 2001, p. 28).

[163] UWSC, Eleanor Wheeler Papers 1947–1957, Accession No. 1625–001, Letter of Eleanor Wheeler dated 30 April 1950. In her letter Wheeler mentions meeting a "little English woman" at the 1948 Dobříš gathering. "I had thought," sniffs Eleanor Wheeler, "she would approve of intellectuals getting a castle, but she sighed and said it was a pity that 40 or 50 people should be living there at one time, it was better for one family to live there graciously – she enjoyed thinking of that even if she couldn't 'live graciously any more.' Donald Ogden Stewart was there at the time and when I told him the story he commented 'Hell, we're living graciously.'" The little English woman was no doubt the future highly successful but apolitical English novelist and Czech translator, Edith Pargeter. For her part, Pargeter preferred the writers' school at "Roztez, near Kutna Hora, the previous year, where the journalists had their own castle in a former German hunting-lodge" (PARGETER Edith, *The Coast of Bohemia*, New York, The Akadine Press 2001 (first published 1950), p. 129).

was opening. "About ten thousand militiamen," Gunther continues, "who are the armed Communists out of the workshops and factories, stood guard over the parade. Tough babies! As we halted for traffic I would try to catch the eye of one and smile. Nobody ever smiled back."[164]

There had been smiles galore, however, for the African American concert singer, Bill Dillworth, a few months earlier at the Jiří Voskovec and Jan Werich theatre in Prague. Dillworth had "learned a little Czech which is very popular with people whose language is so generally neglected by other countries. When he wanted his accompanist to explain what the words of an encore meant, the accompanist blushed and wouldn't talk (not that it was risqué just the man was shy). So Bill said 'Nemluvi cesky,' (he doesn't speak Czech) and everyone roared. Then he sang a whole song from the Czech version of *Finian's Rainbow* in Czech."[165]

With lyrics by the soon-to-be-blacklisted American songwriter of "*Brother Can You Spare a Dime?*" fame, Yip Harburg, *Finian's Rainbow* was a huge success in Prague. Indeed the musical, and the not-so-little Irish leprechaun, was still going strong a couple of years later: "In the heavily Czechosized and Communized version of this show the elf of the original play is replaced by hulking Jan Werich (who was known on Broadway during the war), in the guise of a water sprite at the bottom of a well. Somewhat unaccountably the Marshall Plan keeps bobbing up. But Werich still succeeds in making it a good show. When I departed in 1950 it was in its third season, and the Czech version of '*How Are Things in Gloccamorra*' had become almost a national song."[166]

The Dutch communist film-maker, Joris Ivens, was another early visitor to the city.[167] He had been commissioned to produce a documentary about the new people's democracies of Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Poland, and Yugoslavia, although, following the break with Tito, the Yugoslav episode was quietly dropped. Together with Australian co-director, Catherine

[164] GUNTHER John, *Behind the Curtain,* New York, Harper and Brothers 1949, pp. 214–216.
[165] UWSC, Eleanor Wheeler Papers 1947–1957, Accession No. 1625–001, Letter of Eleanor Wheeler dated 27 April 1948.
[166] SCHMIDT Dana Adams, *Anatomy of a Satellite*, p. 294.
[167] For more information on Joris Ivens, see: STUFKENS André, *Passages: Joris Ivens en de kunst deze eeuw,* Nijmegen, Museum Het Valkhof 1999. A revised edition of the book was also published in Czech: STUFKENS André, *Joris Ivens: Filmař světa,* Prague, Akademie múzických umění 2016.

Duncan, Ivens set up headquarters at the former Turkish Embassy building in Prague and was soon visited by many of his old comrades such as Bertolt Brecht and Hanns Eisler.[168] The film, *Pierwsze Lata* [The First Years], was released in 1949 and its Czechoslovak segment portrayed "the struggle of the national hero, Jan Hus, against the Roman Catholic Church; the exploitation by the capitalists in the Bata factories; the liberation of the country by the Soviet armies; new industrial developments."[169]

For the "old-time British Communist"[170] or, if approached from the opposing camp, the "distinguished British film historian and scholar,"[171] Ivor Montagu, and his wife, Prague was a frequent destination as the Peace campaign got underway. From today's perspective, it may seem somewhat odd that when this son of an English peer of the realm and famed international table tennis player visited Czechoslovakia in 1950, he expressed a wish to have two portraits of Stalin laughing. He also wanted a Korean badge to show his support for the communist version of the events taking place on the Korean Peninsula. Together with other members of his delegation, among them Professor Bernal in his capacity as Vice-President of the World Peace Council, they met Korean students from the north of the peninsula who were likewise in Prague at the time and who told their sympathetic listeners in great detail their slant on the situation in their war-ravaged country.[172] Montagu also expressed interest in Czechoslovak poetry dealing with the "Greek democratic people's fight for freedom."[173] But there was time for leisure, too, with the Montagu couple given the option of a skiing holiday in either the Slovak Tatras or the Czech Krkonoše Mountains.[174]

Two British communist composers, Alan Bush and Bernard Stevens, were in Prague for the Second International Congress of Composers and Musicologists in May 1948, as was the

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[168] SCHOOTS Hans, *Living Dangerously: A Biography of Joris Ivens*, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press 2014, p. 219.
[169] SADOUL Georges, *Dictionary of Films,* Berkeley – Los Angeles, University of California Press 1972, p. 284.
[170] CLEWS John C., *Communist Propaganda Techniques*, New York, Frederick A. Praeger 1964, p. 255.
[171] COLE Lester, *Hollywood Red*, Palo Alto (CA), Ramparts Press 1981, p. 380. Lester Cole, one of the blacklisted Hollywood screenwriters, spent 10 months in prison for his communist beliefs. He is probably best known today for scripting the 1966 film, *Born Free*.
[172] PHM, CP/IND/NOW/12/03, Letter from F. Vrba of the Czechoslovak Ministry of Information to Ivor Montagu dated 14 September 1950.
[173] PHM, CP/IND/NOW/12/64, Letter from Paul to Ivor Montagu dated 22 February (year not given, probably 1949 or 1950).
[174] PHM, CP/IND/NOW/12/64, Letter from Jiří Weiss to Ivor Montagu dated 11 March 1950.

German Hanns Eisler.[175] A set of Zhdanovian principles on how music should reflect progressive social change was adopted by the delegates and became known as the Prague Manifesto.[176] In March 1949, the Chairman of the Union of Czechoslovak Writers, Jan Drda, welcomed the Welsh poet, Dylan Thomas, to Prague. Thomas, we are told, made "a cringing speech about his respect for the Czech revolution" to the Writers Union whose guest he was.[177] Among the other Czech writers Thomas met were Jiří Mucha, Vitězslav Nezval, and Vladimír Holan, and he also spent an evening with the Scottish poet Edwin Muir, Director of the British Council in Prague at the time. While Thomas was doing the sightseeing round, it seems, "he liked to give his official minders the slip and disappear into a bar" and on one occasion "became so annoyed with the unwanted presence of one translator that he mounted the Charles Bridge, embraced a statue and threatened to jump into the river."[178] Although Thomas's sympathies were squarely to the left politically, he was not a communist, nevertheless his visit to Czechoslovakia later caused him difficulties obtaining a visa to the United States during the McCarthy years.[179] In July 1949, the West Indian communist poet and ex-priest, Peter Blackman, was also welcomed at the airport by Jan Drda.[180]

Dylan Thomas's travails at the US Embassy in London did not deter his Welsh friend, the composer and conductor, Daniel Jones, from visiting Czechoslovakia a few years later in 1955. Indeed, musicians, poets, painters, all graced the streets of Prague in those early communist years. Social realism was well represented, particularly Australian. The Melbourne "ex choir scholar at Trinity Grammar turned artist, bohemian and then Communist,"[181] Noel Counihan, arrived for two weeks in May 1953, all expenses paid. His friend and fellow-artist

[175] CARROLL Mark, *Music and Ideology in Cold War Europe*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 2008, p. 37. Hanns Eisler along with his wife Lou had been deported to Prague from the US on 26 March 1948.
[176] For details of the ramifications of the Prague Manifesto in the English music world during the early Cold War years, see: WATERS Julie A., Marxists, Manifestos, and 'Musical Uproar': Alan Bush, the 1948 Prague Congress, and the British Composers' Guild, *Journal of Musicological Research,* Vol. 30, No. 1 (2011), pp. 23–45.
[177] LYCETT Andrew, *Dylan Thomas: A New Life*, The Overlook Press, Woodstock and New York 2004, pp. 265–266.
[178] *Ibid.*
[179] ACKERMAN John, *A Dylan Thomas Companion*, London, Macmillan 1991, p. 47.
[180] TNA, FO 371/77248, Czechoslovakia: Weekly Information Summary prepared by the British Embassy in Prague for the period 30 June to 6 July 1949. More information on Peter Blackman can be found at: https://miranda.revues.org/6430 (accessed 16 May 2017).
[181] INGLIS Amirah, *The Hammer and Sickle and the Washing Up*, Melbourne, Hyland House 1995, p. 56.

and bohemian, Roy Delgarno, had come four years earlier in 1949, a time when, according to a later account, "it looked like an invasion of Australian Communist painters in Prague."[182] But there was room for Australian writers, too. The Australian-born novelist, Jack Lindsay, for instance, a British Communist Party stalwart and seasoned campaigner in the fields of peace and culture, arrived in 1950.

The same year the American radical cartoonist, William Gropper, who, as mentioned earlier, had toured Russia in 1927 with Sinclair Lewis and Theodore Dreiser, turned up in Prague on his way back from the Warsaw Peace Conference and was guest of honour at a farewell party hosted by the Wheelers in their Vinohrady flat at the end of his stay. "It always gives us a lift when Americans pass through that we can be proud of," wrote Eleanor Wheeler of the occasion, "because we are patriotic enough to want to brag sometimes."[183]

But not all the American visitors invited to the Wheelers' festive board were so regarded by their hosts. One old friend, a "real, solid, progressive type," who came to the Sunday dinner gathering in 1956 took on "the alert look of someone who is watching for pickpockets in a crowd" as the table talk developed. The topic was the uprising in Budapest and, as Eleanor Wheeler later confessed: "We get hot under the collar when people want to sit down and decide whether Soviet tanks have a moral right to move against terrorists who have been hanging Communists to lamp posts (and boasting about it on the various 'free' Hungarian radios in Munich, Tangiers, Stuttgart, etc.). We try to explain what seem to us the realities and then we get shrill […]."[184]

No such discord arose with another defender of the Soviet intervention in Hungary and frequent visitor to Prague during the 1950s, the Scottish communist poet, Hugh MacDiarmid. "We would not have missed Hugh McDiarmid [*sic*] for anything," enthused Eleanor Wheeler,

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[182] HRUBY Peter, *Dangerous Dreamers*, p. 154 – although Hrubý seems to have confused Roy Delgarno with the American cartoonist, Roy Delgado.

[183] UWSC, Eleanor Wheeler Papers 1947–1957, Accession No. 1625–001, Letter of Eleanor Wheeler dated 20 February 1950. Some of the Wheelers' guests might well have rubbed shoulders on the street with non-English speaking luminaries from the American continent. The exiled Brazilian author, Jorge Amado, a committed communist and Stalin Peace Prize recipient, moved to Czechoslovakia in 1950 after expulsion from France along with the Haitian poet, René Depestre. Both remained in Prague until 1952.

[184] UWSC, Eleanor Wheeler Papers 1947–1957, Accession No. 1625–001, Letter of Eleanor Wheeler dated 19 November 1956.

adding in parentheses, "his real name is Christopher Grieve, in case you are as ignorant as I was ten days ago."[185] Eleanor Wheeler found MacDiarmid delightfully stimulating and opinionated, though, as she confesses, she "understood almost nothing" of his poetry. On the other hand, he seems to have been "the despair of his escort from the Ministry of Culture because what he really likes to do is to settle down in some ancient and attractive beer shop and alternate good Pilsner with schnapps while declaiming good poetry, and he does not want to go to opera."[186] During his time in Prague, MacDiarmid met and became friends with the New Zealand defector, Ian Milner, who translated some of his poems into Czech.[187] Milner was a lecturer in English Literature at Charles University and was probably introduced to MacDiarmid by Jessie Kocmanova, Professor of English at Masaryk University in Brno, a Scottish-born war bride whose father, the Spanish Civil War veteran and trade union leader, Tom Murray, had been Secretary of the Scottish-USSR Society and was a friend of MacDiarmid's.[188] On one occasion in 1958 MacDiarmid travelled to Prague with fellow-Scot, the playwright and songwriter, Ewan MacColl,[189] who, as we shall see shortly, had been a partner in Joan Littlewood's Theatre Workshop tour of Czechoslovakia 10 years earlier.[190] MacColl and his wife Peggy, half-sister of the American communist folk-singer, Pete Seeger, had just won the *Prix Italia*, worth £ 1,800 according to MacDiarmid, for *The Ballad of John Axon*, a radio dramatization of the English train driver from Stockport, John Axon, who sacrificed his own life in 1957 in order to save the

[185] *Ibid.,* Letter of Eleanor Wheeler dated 10 July 1955.
[186] *Ibid.* Yet a stanza such as the following from MacDiarmid's *Second Hymn to Lenin*, first published in 1932, written in Lallans or Lowland Scots dialect needs no translation:
Oh, it's nonsense, nonsense, nonsense,
Nonsense at this time o' day
That breid-and-butter problems
S'ud be in ony man's way.
MACDIARMID Hugh, *Three Hymns to Lenin*, Edinburgh, Castle Wynd Printers 1957, p. 15.
[187] For details on the publication of MacDiarmid's poetry in Czech see, for example: PHM, CP/IND/NOW/12/64, Letter to Ivor Montagu dated 22 March 1958.
[188] MACDIARMID Hugh, *New Selected Letters*, Manchester, Carcanet Press 2001, p. 340. See also: GEANEY Kathleen, At Home among Strangers, p. 144.
[189] Ewan MacColl, whose original name was Jimmie Miller, was born in Salford, about which his 1949 song, *Dirty Old Town*, popularized by the Irish folk group the Dubliners, was written. His parents were Scottish who, like very many others, had come south in search of work.
[190] Ewan MacColl had been married to Joan Littlewood. After their amicable divorce in 1948, Joan Littlewood married Gerry Raffles, a former Manchester University student who became manager of the Theatre Workshop.

lives of his passengers. Everything was fine financially, MacDiarmid informed his wife Valda in a letter home and he was "being careful so far as spirits are concerned and keeping to beer."[191]

Also in 1958, another of Ian Milner's friends, the Australian historian, Manning Clark, arrived in Prague for a visit on his way home from a trip to the Soviet Union. Clark was back in Prague again six years later when, during a mid-July heatwave, Milner and himself "spent the best part of the two days sitting inside [Milner's flat in Podolí], blinds drawn, talking incessantly over cups and cups of tea with lemon and Turkish coffee."[192] Talking incessantly about what, one wonders. Milner says: "More than anything else, he wanted to talk about Dostoevsky as his 'model' for our troubled times."[193] He should have added "and our own troubled lives."[194]

THE KARLOVY VARY FILM FESTIVAL

The annual international film festival at Karlovy Vary, which held its first competition in 1948, stands out as a major cultural event and a magnet for foreign visitors from both East and West during the early Cold War years.[195] Where once the blue-blooded had promenaded the colonnaded walkways of this elegant spa resort and sipped the waters and champagne, it was now the turn of the blue-collared.[196] Moreover, for one heady season each year, the town was a

[191] MACDIARMID Hugh, *New Selected Letters*, p. 337. For an account of Pete Seeger's own successful tour of Czechoslovakia in 1964, his anti-Vietnam war repertoire being "loudly booed" in Prague notwithstanding, see: DEITCH Gene, *For the Love of Prague*, Baset Books, Prague 2000, pp. 146–147.
[192] MILNER Ian, *Intersecting Lines: The Memoirs of Ian Milner* (ed. Vincent O'Sullivan), Wellington, Victoria University Press 1993, p. 175.
[193] *Ibid.*
[194] And thereby hangs a tale! In *The Quest for Grace*, the second volume of his autobiography, Manning Clark wrote of his indebtedness to Milner: "Melbourne University was my goal. I clung to the hope that there was a place […]. But the universities did not want what I had to offer. They were polite: they would love to have me, but, alas, I had no university teaching experience. There must be a way over this brick wall. In 1944 I volunteered to take two tutorials a week in political science at the university (the historians were still on the other side of the brick wall). Ian Milner, the acting head of the Department of Political Science, was enthusiastic. A lectureship in political science was advertised. I applied. Some counselled Ian Milner to play safe. He stood firm, and persuaded the electoral committee to recommend my appointment. I had climbed over the wall" (CLARK Manning, *The Quest for Grace*, Melbourne, Penguin Books 1991, pp. 144–145).
[195] From 1959 until 1993, however, Karlovy Vary rotated with Moscow on a yearly basis as host for the event.
[196] This could pose problems, too. The trade union newspaper *Práce*, for instance, "complained that workers at Karlovy Vary 'very often go to concerts wearing only shorts. And when they are asked to dress properly they say: "No bourgeois will prevent us from feeling comfortable"'" (SCHMIDT Dana Adams, *Anatomy of a Satellite*, p. 258). A writer for the illustrated communist weekly, *Haló Nedělní Noviny*, complained that "Communist delegates to the international film festival in Karlovy Vary 'not only smoked and spit on the ground, but laughed and shouted at one another so loudly that this place which should serve as a health resort resembles St. Matthew's fair. They

rendez-vous for progressive filmmakers from far and wide, and for the aristocracy of the Soviet Left. Meeting Dolores Ibarruri (La Passionaria) in person, for instance, was something that one English war bride, Ivy Norman-Kovanda, claimed she could never forget.[197] The 1950 festival held under the slogan, "For Peace – For a New Man – For a More Complete Man," was graced with the presence of no less a personage than the Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister, and former State Prosecutor, Andrei Vyshinsky, "who had been taking the cure" at the baths.[198]

The indefatigable Eleanor Wheeler was drawn there, too, and from 1949 onwards she helped out behind the scenes preparing English versions of the Film Festival Bulletin. The 1949 Crystal Globe award was won by *The Battle of Stalingrad* (Part I) and Eleanor Wheeler informs her readers that her own high point was when Aleksei Dikii, the former stage director and the actor who played Stalin in the movie, for which he also received a prize, kissed her hand at a get-together after the ceremony and said she was "a dandy translater [*sic*]."[199] They all joined in chorus singing Spanish and Russian songs, with Eleanor Wheeler's American student friend Dot on guitar. Everyone was in high spirits and Grigori Aleksandrov, director of *Meeting on the Elbe*, the film depicting the convergence of the Soviet and American armies on the river in the final days of the Second World War in Europe, quipped that Dikii, who was no communist, "thought of the final Communist society as the period when vodka ran out of the water taps."[200]

No such friendly encounter between the former allies, however, occurred when Barney Rosset, the American producer of another prize-winning film at the festival, *Strange Victory*, a documentary indictment of post-war race relations in the US, arrived at Prague Airport with his wife, the artist, Joan Mitchell. Both were committed fellow-travellers and Joan Mitchell had even begun taking lessons in Marxism in Paris where she was living at the time. But disillusionment soon followed their landing. Someone in the customs hall obviously had not

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sat on the grass; they threw paper everywhere; they played cards late into the night in the hall or on the terrace of the Wilson Hotel; they sang songs which were by no means in good taste, and they got drunk'" (*Ibid.,* pp. 333–334).

[197] NORMAN-KOVANDA Ivy, *Tapestry from Suffolk to Prague*, unpublished manuscript in the possession of the author, p. 157.

[198] SCHMIDT Dana Adams, *Anatomy of a Satellite*, p. 291.

[199] UWSC, Eleanor Wheeler Papers 1947–1957, Accession No. 1625–001, Letter of Eleanor Wheeler dated 14 November 1949.

[200] *Ibid.* Tactfully, Dikii made no mention to the animated Eleanor Wheeler of the four years or so he spent incarcerated in Stalin's GULAG a decade earlier. There would have been precious little vodka on tap there.

been briefed. “Having long romanticized Communism, which they equated with personal freedom, they were appalled when authorities attempted to confiscate Barney’s bottle of cognac, a small thing but telling.”[201] Then to add insult to injury, they were unable to get visas to join their Dutch filmmaker friend, Joris Ivens, in Hungary. The upshot was that “they left Prague as apostates” and, as Joan Mitchell’s biographer added, the “Communist chapter of Joan’s life closed at Ruzyně Airport: ‘Let’s be bourgeois pigs,’ joked Barney, ‘and go back to Paris!’”[202]

The American filmmaker and photographer, Paul Strand, a close associate of the director of *Strange Victory*, Leo Hurwitz, from the 1930s, was also in Karlovy Vary in June 1949, for a showing of his film, *Native Land*, set in the years of the Great Depression. Both men would shortly be blacklisted in their homeland. Before going on to permanent exile in France, Strand met and became firm friends with Honor Arundel, children’s author and film critic for the *Daily Worker*, the official newspaper of the British Communist Party, who was also at the festival.[203]

Another film set in the time of the Great Depression, *Give Us This Day*, made in England by the Hollywood Ten director, Edward Dmytryk, received an honourable mention at the 1950 festival. Dmytryk would become *persona non grata* the following year when, after returning to the US and serving several months in prison for his refusal to testify before HUAC, he recanted and gave the Committee the names of the American Communist Party members they were looking for and found that his job prospects in Hollywood took a marked turn for the better.[204]

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[201] ALBERS Patricia, *Joan Mitchell: Lady Painter*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf 2011, p. 133. From its inception in 1918, Czechoslovakia had been a tolerant, open society and this image still lingered among many people in the West for some time despite the communist coup. As Arthur Miller put it, this was “not some ‘Eastern’ country with whose unfree habits of life we in the West are unfamiliar – Prague, after all, is farther West than Vienna” (MILLER Arthur, Foreword to KAVAN Rosemary, *Love and Freedom: My Unexpected Life in Prague*, New York, Hill and Wang 1988, p. x). For more information on Barney Rosset and *Strange Victory*, see: GONTARSKI S. E. (ed.), *The Grove Press Reader 1951–2001*, New York, Perseus Oto 2000, p. xix.

[202] ALBERS Patricia, *Joan Mitchell*, p. 133.

[203] MACDONALD Fraser, Paul Strand and the Atlanticist Cold War, *History of Photography,* Vol. 28, No. 4 (Winter 2004), pp. 356–373, here p. 360.

[204] The authorities in Prague kept a close eye on who said what at the HUAC hearings. “The March 8, 1948, issue of the ‘Washington Post’ carried a news item datelined March 7, at Prague, Czechoslovakia, indicating that the Czechoslovakian Government had banned movies starring certain individuals who gave testimony of an anti-Communist nature before the House Committee on Un-American Activities. The article stated that the films of the following stars had all been barred: Adolphe Menjou, Gary Cooper, Robert Montogomery [*sic*], Robert Taylor,

The same year 1951 the panel of judges at Karlovy Vary were shown *The Browning Version*, directed by Anthony Asquith, son of the former British Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith. Described in a Czech film journal of the time as "an exception to present-day British film production, which is under the influence of Hollywood,"[205] Asquith's sensitive adaptation of the Terence Rattigan play, and his speech to the audience, "won him a warm reception."[206] His listeners, however, would have been predisposed in his favour. The script of Asquith's wartime film, *The Demi-Paradise*, had been approved by Ivan Maisky, the Soviet ambassador to Britain, and conveyed "the hopes many in Britain carried for a new dawn in Anglo-Soviet relations," but unlike, say, *Mission to Moscow* made by Warner Brothers the same year (1943), "the film could in no senses be described as pro-communist."[207] Nor could Asquith himself ever renege on his own Liberal upbringing and throw in his lot with the Party. Yet whatever scruples he harboured in this regard did not prevent him from extending a helping hand to those hounded for their communist beliefs. When the legendary American director, Joseph Losey, for instance, was blacklisted in the US and forced to find work in Britain in January 1953, he "was assisted immeasurably by Anthony Asquith."[208]

There were two winners at the 1954 film festival. One was the Soviet film *Vernye druz'ya* [True Friends] directed by Mikhail Kalatozov and the other, the film that gave Eleanor Wheeler "the great pleasure of hearing an American film cheered by an international film audience," was *Salt of the Earth* made independently by another of the Hollywood Ten after his release from an American penitentiary, Herbert J. Biberman. Eleanor Wheeler was jubilant. "One worker who attended" the screening, she declared, "said it made him have a much

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and Ginger Rogers'" (MAYHEW Robert, *Ayn Rand and Song of Russia: Communism and Anti-Communism in 1940s Hollywood*, Maryland, Scarecrow Press 2004, p. 90).

[205] RYALL Tom, *Anthony Asquith*, Manchester, Manchester University Press 2011, p. 131.

[206] SCHMIDT Dana Adams, *Anatomy of a Satellite*, p. 293.

[207] SHAW Tony, *British Cinema and the Cold War*, pp. 8–9. For more information on the Warner Brothers' film adaptation of the memoirs of the American ambassador to the Soviet Union, Joseph Davies, and other movies made during the short-lived "Soviet-American love-in that began in 1941," see: ROBINSON Harlow, *Russians in Hollywood, Hollywood's Russians*, Boston, Northeastern University Press 2007, pp. 115–125. For details of how subsequent Cold War rivalries were reflected in the film world, see: SHAW Tony – YOUNGBLOOD Denise J., *Cinematic Cold War: The American and Soviet Struggle for Hearts and Minds,* Lawrence (KS), University of Kansas Press 2010.

[208] GARDNER Colin, *Joseph Losey*, Manchester, Manchester University Press 2004, p. 15. A former communist flatmate of George Orwell, the blacklisted Irish-American writer, Michael Sayers, introduced Losey to Dirk Bogarde who would go on to star in some of Losey's most memorable films.

friendlier feeling toward Americans, for he saw that they were ordinary people like himself, not just bank directors and gangsters as he gathered from the usual Hollywood film, and not just murderers of Korean civilians as he saw from newsreels."[209]

From about the mid-1950s, the festival became less stridently political and more focused on the artistic merits of the competing films. The organizers set their sights on making Karlovy Vary rank with the more prestigious international film festivals. This was in line with the thaw that had taken place in international relations, despite the various ups and downs that would still occur from time to time.[210]

IT AIN'T NECESSARILY SO

Reflecting the improved international atmosphere and the change in domestic conditions after Stalin's death, both the Czechoslovak government and their counterparts in Washington worked to broaden cultural links between their countries. Among the sponsored visits to Prague were those of the American concert pianist, Julius Katchen, then living in France, and prominent American sports champions from the world of skating and tennis.[211] In February 1956, the New York Everyman's Opera troupe consisting of 87 members staged the George Gershwin musical, "Porgy and Bess," as part of their European tour in front of an enthusiastic audience which included top government officials, the US Ambassador, Alexis Johnson, along with other

[209] UWSC, Eleanor Wheeler Papers 1947–1957, Accession No. 1625–001, Letter of Eleanor Wheeler dated 19 July 1954. Before the showing, the Wheelers had dinner with Rosaura Revueltas, who received best actress award at the festival for her role in the film, and they would meet again over the years in both Prague and East Berlin, where Rosaura Revueltas found work with Bertolt Brecht's theatrical ensemble (*Ibid.,* Letters of Eleanor Wheeler dated 27 September 1955 and 5 March 1956). For more information on *Salt of the Earth*, see: BIBERMAN Herbert, *Salt of the Earth: The Story of a Film*, Harbor Electronic Publishing 2003 (first published 1965); BELFRAGE Cedric, *The American Inquisition 1945–1960*, New York, Thunder's Mouth Press 1989, pp. 150 and 228; CAUTE David, *The Dancer Defects*, Oxford – New York, Oxford University Press 2003, p. 184; CAUTE David, *The Great Fear: The Anti-Communist Purge Under Truman and Eisenhower,* New York, Simon and Schuster 1978, pp. 357–358; and COLE Lester, *Hollywood Red*, pp. 355–357.

[210] BLÁHOVÁ Bedřiška, For a New Man, For Better Humankind: On the Road to Socialism and Global Dominance (1948–1949), in LARS Karl – SKOPAL Pavel (eds.), *Cinema in Service of the State: Perspectives on Film Culture in the GDR and Czechoslovakia, 1945–1960*, New York, Berghahn Books 2015, pp. 245–274, here pp. 253–254 and 262–263.

[211] BELMONTE Laura A., *Selling the American Way: US Propaganda and the Cold War*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press 2010, p. 71.

members of the diplomatic corps, at the Karlín Music Theatre in Prague.[212] The Czech press maintained that the musical was a realistic portrayal of the living conditions of Black Americans and their exploitation in the US.[213] During their 10-day stay in Prague, the opera troupe were *fêted* by the Ministry of Culture and of Foreign Affairs, met leading figures from the country's literary and artistic world,[214] and were also guests at a banquet hosted by the American Embassy.[215]

Eleanor Wheeler maintained that *Porgy and Bess* split the American colony in Prague. The Wheelers "paid the relatively high price for tickets regretfully," says Eleanor Wheeler, "feeling that we would be embarrassed by the 'white man's idea of the Negro.' We were carried away by the vital performance and forgot to think about white men's ideas or race friction, just good music, wonderful colour and spirit. […] We were trying to figure why we had this reaction and have decided that it makes a difference where you see it. The Czechs were listening to the music and sympathizing with the trials of Porgy and Bess, and their minds were not cluttered up with 'Negroes are like that' or 'the Negro problem.' And here the whole element of the fishermen's work came out more strongly. I can't understand why that is continuously overlooked. One whole scene is based on the fact that the fishermen – the backbone of the community – had to go out for their catch even when it meant almost certain death. The dope peddlers were not liked in Catfish Row, they were told 'Of all the people I don't like, I don't like you the most.'"[216] Eleanor Wheeler probably not, but perhaps there were some in the

[212] Rozhovor s dirigentem Everyman Opera Alexandrem Smallensem [Interview with the conductor of the Everyman Opera, Alexander Smallens], *Rudé právo,* 7 February 1956; Newyorská Everyman Opera v Praze [New York's Everyman Opera in Prague], *Rudé právo,* 10 February 1956; American Musicians to Play in Prague, *The New York Times,* 9 May 1956.

[213] "The Czech press said the opera 'realistically showed exploitation of the American Negroes by whites, and the poor and primitive state of the Negroes'" (*Spokane Daily Chronicle*, 18 February 1956). Years later, referring to the performance, the novelist, Ivan Klíma, would write: "[…] I could see before me the little street in the suburbs of Detroit, where a lot of black children were shouting on the sidewalk and a white-haired black man sat in a wheelchair in front of a dingy low house. Someone was playing a trumpet, or more likely had put on a record with Louis Armstrong or somebody, there was rubbish everywhere, bits of paper, advertising leaflets and Coca-Cola cans, and in the hot air hung a smell of onions, slops and human bodies" (KLÍMA Ivan, *Love and Garbage*, London, Penguin 1991, p. 76).

[214] Beseda se členy Everyman Opera [Discussion with members of the Everyman Opera], *Rudé právo,* 12 February 1956; Beseda se členy Everyman Opera [Discussion with members of the Everyman Opera], *Ibid.,* 18 February 1956.

[215] UWSC, Eleanor Wheeler Papers 1947–1957, Accession No. 1625–001, Letter of Eleanor Wheeler dated 17 March 1956.

[216] *Ibid.*

audience, and in the cast, who smiled wryly at the drug dealer Sportin' Life's approach to ideological certainties, in his case as revealed in the Bible, in his song, *It Ain't Necessarily So.*

Later in the year, Czechoslovak audiences had a further opportunity to enjoy contemporary American music when the Boston Symphony Orchestra, under conductor Charles Munch, played in Prague as part of its "Old World" tour.

JOAN LITTLEWOOD'S THEATRE WORKSHOP ON TOUR IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA IN 1948

Reference has already been made to Joan Littlewood's Theatre Workshop from the north of England which toured Czechoslovakia in 1948.[217] Strongly influenced by the acting methodology developed by Konstantin Stanislavsky and Bertolt Brecht's epic theatre, as well as by ordinary, iconoclastic British working-class humour and music-hall traditions, Theatre Workshop's blend of political satire and dramatic exuberance had already ruffled many a feather in the home country.[218] As one theatre critic put it, Littlewood "did not care which persons of influence she upset so long as she upset them."[219] Littlewood was a left-wing idealist with strong anti-establishment views and her lively representations of working-class life and kitchen sink realism stood in marked contrast to the restrained British theatre of drawing-rooms and adultery of the time.[220] She was convinced that theatre should function as a medium for

[217] In some respects, Joan Littlewood's Theatre Workshop tour of Czechoslovakia could be compared to that of the Graeme Bell jazz dance-band, whose members had arrived in Prague on one-way tickets from Melbourne for the World Youth Festival in August 1947 and stayed until the following December, playing their special Australian brand of Dixieland at the *Fénix Kavárna* in Prague and at open-air concerts throughout the country.

[218] The first to introduce Stanislavsky techniques "in England were the pioneering founders of Theatre Workshop, Joan Littlewood and Ewan MacColl. Littlewood always insisted that her actors define their objectives in Stanislavskian terms to give their work real urgency, and she also employed improvisational études to deepen and strengthen the actors' understanding of situation and character" (LEACH Robert, *Makers of Modern Theatre*, London, Routledge 2004, p. 46). The Theatre Workshop was also influenced by the dance theories of the Bratislava-born choreographer, Rudolf Laban, who opened his Art of Movement Studio in Manchester in 1946 (HARKER Ben, *Class Act: The Cultural and Political Life of Ewan MacColl*, London, Pluto Press 2007, pp. 76, 89–90).

[219] ELSOM John, *Cold War Theatre*, London, Routledge 1992, p. 34.

[220] Julia Jones, one of the actors on the 1948 Workshop Theatre tour of Czechoslovakia, maintained that Joan Littlewood "really did start the big revolution in the theatre, and she was doing things like Look Back in Anger long before Look Back in Anger was written – about working people, you know. The theatre was very much a middle-class affair, you know: 'Anyone for tennis?' and things like that! But Joan changed it [...]" (Theatre Archive Project interview with Julia Jones on 30 March 2007, available online at: http://sounds.bl.uk/related-content/TRANSCRIPTS/024T-C1142X000162-0100A0.pdf (accessed 21 May 2017)).

workers to communicate with one another about the things that mattered in their lives,[221] and actively encouraged audience participation in what was happening on-stage. Their shows were very much in the spirit of the earlier workers' theatre and the Russian Blue Blouse movement as well as its German equivalents, such as the *The Red Megaphone* (*Das Rote Sprachrohr*) in Berlin or Friedrich Wolf's *Spieltruppe Südwest*.[222] Because of its political orientation, the Theatre Workshop was kept under close surveillance by the British MI5.[223]

The proposal to tour Czechoslovakia raised more eyebrows.[224] The arrangements were made by Gerry Raffles, the Workshop's General Manager with behind-the-scenes help from the Labour MP, Tom Driberg.[225] Raffles, by his own account, travelled to Prague in July 1948 where he met with representatives of the Ministry of Information, and the *Umění lidu* section of the Czechoslovak Co-operative and Trade Union movement. After an unpromising start with a "discourteous man" from the Ministry named Loewenbach, but who at least offered him lunch, Raffles was fortunate enough to be introduced to a leading Czech theatre critic sitting at

[221] GRAINGER Roger, Joan Littlewood and the De-Mystification of Acting, *Theatre Notebook,* Vol. 67, No. 1 (2013), pp. 36–43, here p. 36.

[222] Mention might also be made in passing of the ill-fated agitprop troupe *Kolonne Links*, which toured the Soviet Union in 1931 and then, to their cost, returned to settle there. A few years would pass, however, before the price would be exacted and during that period the group was permitted to travel abroad and stage their show in Czechoslovakia and neighbouring countries in 1934. For infomation on how the Salford Red Megaphones co-founded by Ewan MacColl, "later morphed into Theatre Workshop" and the influence of the Blue Blouse movement on radical British theatre, see: WARDEN Claire, *British Avant-Garde Theatre*, London, Palgrave Macmillan 2012, pp. 60–61. GOORNEY Howard, *The Theatre Workshop Story* (London, Methuen 2008, (first published in 1981)) gives the history of the theatre by one of its leading actors and is a good counter-balance to Joan Littlewood's account. An excellent starting-point for exploring corresponding theatrical trends in the US is TAYLOR Karen Malpede, *People's Theatre in Amerika: Documents by the People Who Do It,* New York, Drama Book Specialists 1973.

[223] For more information, see: SMITH James, *British Writers and MI5 Surveillance 1930–1960*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 2012. Ewan MacColl, writes his biographer, "received sporadic royalties from behind the Iron Curtain – in 1954 MI5 heard that a large cheque had arrived from Moscow; their informer noted that 'Members of Theatre Workshop were inebriated for an entire evening celebrating'" (HARKER Ben, *Class Act*, p. 119).

[224] "Now Czechoslovakia, by the time that we got there, had had a change over to communism, and that was something fresh [...]. I remember just before I left my father said to me 'You can't go there, it's full of Russians!' There wasn't a Russian anywhere in sight" (Theatre Archive Project interview with Julia Jones).

[225] Driberg was one of the British Labour MPs named by Josef Frolík when he defected from Czechoslovakia to the United Kingdom in 1969. The MI5 agent Peter Wright claims he went to see Driberg who "finally admitted that he was providing material to a Czech controller for money […] but apart from picking up a mass of salacious detail about Labour Party peccadilloes, he had nothing of interest for us" (WRIGHT Peter, *Spycatcher*, New York, Dell 1988, p. 455). On the other hand, it has also been alleged that "Tom Driberg knew far too much about MI5 to risk prosecuting" (DORRIL Stephen – RAMSAY Robin, *Smear! Wilson and the Secret State*, London, Grafton 1992, p. 198). See also: FROLIK Josef, *The Frolik Defection: The Memoirs of an Intelligence Agent*, London, Leo Cooper 1975, pp. 97–98.

an adjacent table in the restaurant and things began to move. It was agreed that the Theatre Workshop would come to Czechoslovakia that September.[226] This they did, arriving in Prague by train from Paris on the day ex-President Beneš died and the city was in mourning. After a successful run at the Burian theatre, they set off to tour the provinces with Ewan MacColl's adaptations of Molière, Chekhov and Garcia Lorca, as well as two original dramatic pieces by MacColl himself.[227] On the whole, despite the occasional rant from the floor of the theatre about the Munich betrayal, and the odd gripe from the Workshop's British and Irish actors about "bloody dumplings again,"[228] the five-week tour went well, with the Theatre Workshop performing its lively fusion of "the wildly comic and the deadly earnest"[229] to full houses in 16 different towns in Czechoslovakia.[230] In addition to Prague, they played in Pilsen, České Budějovice, Brno, Olomouc, Ostrava, Zlín, as it was still known then, and Bratislava, among others.

The Czechoslovak national press had nothing but praise for the tour. "Molière's wit sparkled among theatrical bubbles as Howard Goorney's Sganarelle leapt and turned with puppet-like agility," wrote a theatre critic in *Práce* of a performance of *The Imaginary Cuckold*

[226] Letters from Gerry Raffles addressed from the Beránek Hotel, Prague, to Joan Littlewood dated 26 and 27 July 1948, in LITTLEWOOD Joan, *Joan's Book: Joan Littlewood's Peculiar History as She Tells It*, London, Minerva 1995, pp. 331–333.

[227] In addition to *Joan's Book*, pp. 344–354, see also: TNA, FO 371/71265, Czechoslovakia: Weekly Information Summary prepared by the British Embassy in Prague for the period 10 to 16 September 1948.

[228] LITTLEWOOD Joan, *Joan's Book*, p. 361.

[229] TAYLOR John Russell, *Anger and After*, London, Eyre Methuen 1977 (this revised edition was first published in 1969), p. 290. Of course, the Theatre Workshop was not operating in a void nor breaking new ground in Czechoslovakia when it came to theatrical exuberance and audience participation. Sophisticated Prague audiences would have been familiar with the *Osvobozené divadlo* [Liberated Theatre] of Jiří Voskovec and Jan Werich, whom we have already referred to: "Music, dances, 'funny dialogue,' and sundry other scenes à la music hall made these performances lively, highly contemporary events. The theatre became again a contemporary institution, where new thought and entertainment were generated by the electrifying, ever renewable contact between actors and audiences" (GOETZ-STANKIEWICZ Marketa, *The Silenced Theatre: Czech Playwrights Without a Stage*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press 1979, p. 28).

[230] A full account of the 1948 Theatre Workshop tour of Czechoslovakia, whose members incidentally included the actor Richard Harris, can be found in LITTLEWOOD Joan, *Joan's Book*, pp. 329–361. The Czechoslovak audience would not have known that the Munich Agreement had no fiercer critics than Littlewood and MacColl. In their Theatre Union production, *Last Edition: A Living Newspaper Dealing with Events from 1934 to 1940*, which avoided the Lord Chamberlain's wartime censorship, and that of his lampooned namesake who still had two months to run as premier, by opening as a club performance at the Round House in the inner city district of Ancoats in Manchester on 14 March 1940, "the sordid realpolitik of the 1938 Munich Agreement was recast as a Hollywood mobster scenario" (HARKER Ben, *Class Act*, p. 59), with the sketch "Who Killed Johnny the Czech?" drawn as "a classic gangster narrative of false allegiances, double-crossings and shoot-outs to capture the spirit and failure of the Munich Agreement" (HOLDSWORTH Nadine, *Joan Littlewood's Theatre*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 2015, p. 52).

he had seen; while Ewan MacColl's ballad-opera, *Johnny Noble*, declared a columnist from *Stráž Lidu* in Olomouc, "is so vivid, so real – we must learn from them."[231] In fact, MacColl's 1939 satiric comedy, *Hell is What You Make It*, was performed at the Realistic Theatre in Smíchov (formerly Švanda's Theatre) a year later.[232]

Members of the Workshop, in turn, were impressed by what they saw in Czechoslovakia. Gerry Raffles was particularly taken by the encouragement Czechoslovak writers received from the state, asserting that "every writer is guaranteed by law an extra room rent free at his flat or house in which he can write." The cost of theatre tickets also stood out favourably when compared with the situation in Britain. "All nationalised industries in Czechoslovakia," says Raffles, "are taxed ten per cent of their profits and this money is used to buy seats at theatres and concerts, which are then given free to the workers in the industry," while special trains and buses are put on to bring workers from outlying districts to the theatres in the city.[233] The Czechs, for their part, were struck by how the Theatre Workshop actors did not shirk from lending a hand with off-stage jobs, which seems to suggest that their own performers were not too accommodating in that regard.[234]

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[231] LITTLEWOOD Joan, *Joan's Book*, pp. 776–777. Howard Goorney, a friend of Gerry Raffles since childhood, had made his *début* with Theatre Workshop in Manchester in 1938 when he played a shepherd in Ewan MacColl's adaptation of *The Good Soldier Schweik*.

[232] HARKER Ben, *Class Act*, p. 88

[233] LITTLEWOOD Joan, *Joan's Book*, pp. 767–769.

[234] *Ibid.,* p. 344. According to Eleanor Wheeler, this situation was improving and "the distaste for manual labour is lessened among the intellectuals. Two years ago when assigned a topic for essay in Czech to compare university students in US and here, I said that intellectuals here had a lot to learn from the Americans not being afraid to do jobs with their hands, professors not ashamed to be seen carrying coal, etc., while the American students might learn a thing or two in being able to see the perspectives of socialism, not to be hidebound in their reactions to economic theory" (UWSC, Eleanor Wheeler Papers 1947–1957, Accession No. 1625–001, Letter of Eleanor Wheeler dated 22 October 1951). But the world had turned upside down. A 1949 publication claimed that "University professors as well as students took part in the [work] brigades, and many of them joined their students in the mines. Twenty-one professors and lecturers took part in brigades from the Brno universities alone; Dr Novák of the Faculty of Natural Science, and Dr Jelínek of the Veterinary School, for example, went to the Ostrava mines where they ran educational groups for the miners after their shift, and revised with their students for examination" (BRÁZDOVÁ Eva, Students Help to Build Their Country in National Union of Czechoslovak Students, in *Students in Czechoslovakia*, Prague, Orbis 1949, pp. 70–91). The professors would be joined by those transferred from other occupations. The Prague restaurant known as the "British Mess," for instance, "was deprived of its waiters by the Labor Office, which assigned them to what it called 'productive work' in factories and mines. The proprietor and his wife tried to carry on by waiting on tables themselves, but soon thereafter he was arrested and sent to a labor camp and the place had to close down" (SCHMIDT Dana Adams, *Anatomy of a Satellite*, p. 17).

THE PRAGUE SPRING FESTIVAL OF 1949 AND PAUL ROBESON

Running parallel with the efforts of Joan Littlewood and Eugene MacColl to develop working-class consciousness through drama in Manchester were those of Unity Theatre in London.[235] Among the many gifted actors to appear on stage without pay in the playhouse located behind St. Pancras railway station, and one who also "insisted on being included on the rota for sweeping the theatre" like everyone else, although his offer was resolutely refused lest the dust damage his vocal cords, was the renowned African-American bass-baritone, Paul Robeson.[236]

Like Littlewood and MacColl, too, Robeson visited Czechoslovakia in the early years of the Cold War. His concert in the Czech capital was part of his 1949 European concert tour.[237] According to the American journalist Dana Adams Schmidt, the Spring Music Festival in Prague "was still a fairly neutral affair" in 1949 compared to the following year, when it became "frankly and fully political."[238] Robeson had already sung on the Prague stage 20 years earlier in 1929 during the years of the first Czechoslovak Republic and he would come again in 1959 when his passport, confiscated by the American authorities in 1950, had been restored. His appearance at the 1949 Spring Music Festival in Prague was greeted by "adoring crowds" and he was a guest of honour at "extravagant receptions hosted by the country's highest dignitaries (including Czechoslovak President Gottwald)." [239] Nonetheless, some American press

[235] Indeed, Lionel Bart, whose 1960 smash hit musical *Oliver!* reached New York's Broadway, spent time with both.

[236] CHAMBERS Colin, *The Story of Unity Theatre*, London, Lawrence and Wishart 1989, p. 153. Robeson acted in several plays in Britain in the 1920s and 1930s. His performance with Unity Theatre was in *Plant in the Sun* by the American playwright, Ben Bengal, and revolved around a sit-down strike at a New York sweet factory, in which, incongruously but successfully, the 40-year-old Robeson played a 19-year-old worker of Irish descent sacked for "talking union." The play opened on 14 June 1938, a few months after Robeson had returned from visiting the International Brigades in Spain, and ran for two months. The *London Times* dismissed the production as propaganda but the *New Statesman and Nation* labelled it "a rattling good play […] [about] realities in the struggle of American labor" (LUBASCH Arnold H., *Robeson: An American Ballad*, Maryland, Scarecrow Press 2012, p. 98). Robeson was deeply moved by his meeting with the Lincoln Brigade in Spain in which he saw American volunteers united in a common cause, "black and white fighting together unlike in the segregated US army" (CHAMBERS Colin, *Here We Stand: Politics, Performers and Performance*, London, Nick Hern Books 2006, p. 21).

[237] A short video from his performance is available here http://www.britishpathe.com/video/paul-robeson-at-prague-spring-music-festival-aka-p/query/Czechoslovakia (accessed 9 December 2016).

[238] SCHMIDT Dana Adams, *Anatomy of a Satellite*, p. 297.

[239] DUBERMAN Martin Bauml, *Paul Robeson*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf 1988, p. 350. Duberman goes on to say that "arriving at the National Theatre one night to hear Smetana's *Prodaná nevěsta* [The Bartered Bride], Robeson entered just behind a British Communist Party leader who mistook the enormous applause as meant for him and – to general amusement – smilingly acknowledged the crowd."

correspondents reported the opposite to have been the case to their readership at home.[240] Robeson's visit to the TESLA plant in Prague was a treasured moment for Morton Nadler, an American engineer working in their Research and Development Department at the time. "The management needed somebody who spoke English to accompany him, so I had the great joy and privilege to be chosen!"[241]

In an interview conducted by the veteran communist reporter Art Shields for the New York-based *Daily Worker,* Robeson stated that his audience in Prague was made up of 15,000 young workers and students who matched his songs with their own.[242] He was certainly lionized by the International Union of Students, and even more so when he generously agreed to devote the profits from his Prague concerts to finance a trip by foreign students based in the city to the Second World Festival of Youth and Students to be held in Budapest the same year.[243] Robeson also featured on Czech national radio in a programme entitled *Songs of Two Oppressed People* (Black Americans and Jews).[244] It should be mentioned in passing that Paul Robeson was not the only African American concert singer to take part in the 1949 Spring Music Festival. The acclaimed soprano Ellabelle Davis also graced the Prague stage for the event, "where she drew the largest attendance record of the festival," before going on to perform at the La Scala Opera House in Milan.[245]

Of course, not everyone in Prague welcomed Paul Robeson's visit with open arms or "his complete and unwavering support" for the Soviet Union.[246] The young jazz enthusiast

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[240] For example, *The New York Times* of 7 December 1949 opined that "Prague Disk Fans Prefer Harry James to Robeson." A similar claim about the American bandleader outranking Robeson in popularity among the Czechs was made in *Time* on 19 December 1949.
[241] NADLER Morton, *No Regrets*, pp. 9–10, in the author's possession and which used to be available online at: http://filebox.vt.edu/users/tampsa/pdf.files/ (accessed and downloaded on 12 June 2011).
[242] Interview by Art Shields with Paul Robeson, *Daily Worker,* 17 June 1949, in FONER Philip S. (ed.), *Paul Robeson Speaks,* p. 200.
[243] Prague Students Decorate Robeson, *The Chicago Defender* (National Edition), 11 June 1949. See also: MICKA Radovan, Foreign Students Find a Home in Czechoslovakia, in *Students in Czechoslovakia*, pp. 159–160.
[244] SHNEER David, Eberhard Rebling, Lin Jaldati, and Yiddish Music in East Germany, 1949–1962, in FRÜHAUF Tina – HIRSCH Lily (eds.), *Dislocated Memories: Jews, Music, and Postwar German Culture,* Oxford – New York, Oxford University Press 2014, pp. 161–186, here p. 168.
[245] NETTLES Darryl Glenn, *African American Concert Singers Before 1950*, North Carolina, McFarland & Company 2003, p. 53. See also: American Singer Is Hit in Europe, *Atlanta Daily World,* 28 April 1950.
[246] ABT John J. (with Michael Myerson), *Advocate and Activist: Memoirs of an American Communist Lawyer*, Urbana, University of Illinois Press 1993, p. 162.

Josef Škvorecký for one resented the presence of "that Black apostle" in the Czechoslovak capital, or at least so he claimed later.[247] Among Prague Communist Party circles, too, we are told, there were some misgivings, with rumours circulating that Robeson was a US agent, which, given the ambivalence of the Party line towards foreigners at the time, lavish hospitality but always the wary eye, the lingering mistrust, is not altogether surprising.[248] Robeson spent his last evening in Prague with a group of Black Americans living in the city and, after they had left, had a long talk with his old friend, and one of his many future biographers, the journalist and film critic Marie Seton, whom he had run into unexpectedly.[249] However, whatever plans they may have discussed for a return visit to Prague the following year had to be scrapped. The uproar Robeson had stirred up in the US during the French leg of his tour, when he proclaimed at the Paris Conference in April that "it was unthinkable for black Americans to fight in a war against the Soviet Union in the service of a nation that had enslaved them for so many generations," crystalized.[250] Now in retaliation Robeson joined the ranks of other fellow-Americans denied a passport to travel abroad. As he wrote to a British friend at the time, "[…] I am a prisoner within the confines of my native land. The day will however come when the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights will be observed even here in my country and I shall be free again to sing for and talk to you. […] Racism must go, peace and democracy must prevail."[251]

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[247] ŠKVORECKÝ Josef, Red Music, in *The Bass Saxophone*, London, Picador 1980, p. 16.

[248] DUBERMAN Martin Bauml, *Paul Robeson*, p. 351. They took their cue from on high. "'Stalin distrusted everyone,' said Ivan Maisky, the Kremlin's envoy in London from 1932 to 1943. 'The only man he trusted was Hitler'" (SALISBURY Harrison E*., A Journey for Our Times*, New York, Carroll and Graf 1984, p. 188).

[249] DUBERMAN Martin Bauml, *Paul Robeson*, p. 351. See also: SETON Marie, *Paul Robeson*, London, Dobson Books 1958.

[250] EHRLICH Scott, *Paul Robeson*, New York, Chelsea House Publishers 1988, p. 85; Robeson Blasted for Paris Speech: White, Other Leaders, Repudiate His Stand, *The Chicago Defender,* 30 April 1949; Robeson, Du Bois Cause Uproar at Paris Meeting, *The Pittsburgh Courier,* 30 April 1949. On the other hand, the African American communist lawyer, Ben Davis, declared at a rally of 3,000 residents in Harlem in August 1949 that "the enemy of the Negro people is not in Moscow, Czechoslovakia, Hungary or Romania – our enemy is in Mississippi, Georgia and among those in this country who force us to sit behind curtains in trains as though we were lepers" (*Daily Worker*, 8 August 1949). In 1951 Davis was sentenced to five years in prison for being a member of the Communist Party.

[251] PHM, CP/CENT/ORG/01, box 7–11, Letter by Paul Robeson to British comrades dated 23 October 1955. Robeson's words would soon be echoed by the popular American communist novelist, Howard Fast, when his play *Thirty Pieces of Silver* premiered at Prague's Chamber Theatre in Hybernská on 16 March 1951. Fast wrote to Ota Ornest, the director and stage manager (and "a guardian angel" to the Theatre Workshop tour three years earlier; see: LITTLEWOOD Joan, *Joan's Book*, p. 344) to explain why he could not attend the opening night: "You see, I am a real prisoner here, behind the Iron Curtain which, actually exists [...]

Robeson was a complex individual. An extraordinarily talented man whose father had been a plantation slave in North Carolina, Robeson pitted himself against the reactionary establishment in his home country and paid the price. "The battlefront is everywhere," he had declared on his return from Spain in 1938.[252] The fight against the slights, humiliations, discrimination, harassment, violence, sometimes random, sometimes judicial, that were the daily lot of the African American, let alone the lynchings in the Deep South, Robeson saw as part of a wider struggle, one that would continue long after the Battle of the Ebro. In this broader conflict, however, his judgement clouded perhaps by egalitarian propaganda from the Soviet Union, the embraces and hearty handshakes as staged as his own performances with Unity Theatre, and by the bitterness of his personal experience of racism in America and what he encountered on a trip through Nazi Germany in December 1934, when for no reason other than the colour of his skin he "narrowly escaped being savagely beaten by the brownshirts,"[253] Robeson threw in his lot with Stalin.[254] Loyal to the cause he had espoused, he managed to reconcile his libertarian beliefs with the Nazi-Soviet pact and the follow-up Soviet invasion of Poland and Finland.[255]

Even though Robeson was prevented from returning to Czechoslovakia for a decade, the warmth he had felt on his visits to Prague remained. He was convinced that the people on the "other side" of the Iron Curtain had a deep understanding of the racial question and supported African Americans in their fight for equality. "Here [in Czechoslovakia and other Soviet satellites] thousands of people – men, women, children – cried to me to thank progressive

behind the terrible and monstrous curtain which separates the United States from the rest of the world" (SCHMIDT Dana Adams, *Anatomy of a Satellite*, pp. 294–295). "A dark story that details the rise of Judas Iscariot, [Howard Fast's] *Thirty Pieces* can be read as a parable about all those who forsake their ideals for material gain. Apparently well received in Prague, the play was performed by sixteen other Czech companies" (SORIN Gerald, *Howard Fast: Life and Literature in the Left Lane*, Indiana, Indiana University Press 2012, p. 232).

[252] CHAMBERS Colin, *Here We Stand,* p. 21.

[253] EHRLICH Scott, *Paul Robeson*, p. 101.

[254] Indeed, in 1936 Robeson had his son Pauli "enrolled at the elite Moscow academy whose pupils included Stalin's daughter and Molotov's son," so that, in Robeson's words, "the boy need not contend with discrimination because of colour" (TZOULIADIS Tim, *The Forsaken: From the Great Depression to the Gulags. Hope and Betrayal in Stalin's Russia*, London, Abacus 2009, p. 24; published also in Czech: IDEM, *Opuštění: Z velké krize do gulagu. Naděje a zrada ve Stalinově Rusku,* Prague, BB Art 2010).

[255] CHAMBERS Colin, *Here We Stand,* p. 23. In the same way, Robeson had ruled out any expression of sympathy for those executed by the Stalinist régime, maintaining that it was "the government's duty to put down any opposition to this really free society with a firm hand" (TZOULIADIS Tim, *The Forsaken,* p. 24).

America for sending one of its representatives, begged me so to take back my love, their heart-felt understanding of the suffering of the Negro brothers, that I wept time and time again. […] Here in the Soviet Union, in Czechoslovakia, in battered but gallant Warsaw […] are the nations leading the battle for peace and freedom."[256] Nor despite the overseas travel ban imposed by a vindictive America was he completely shut off from Czechoslovak affairs. In 1954, for instance, he was asked to sing one of Antonín Dvořák's songs for the film *Z mého života* [From my life] that the Czech director and screenwriter Václav Krska was making about the composer's life. Robeson gladly agreed, heartened by the thought that his rendition would be "[…] in the language of the people of Huss [*sic*] and Dvořák, Fuchik [*sic*] and Gottwald."[257]

[256] For Freedom and Peace: Address at the Welcome Home Rally, Rockland Palace, New York City, 19 June 1949, in FONER Philip S. (ed.), *Paul Robeson Speaks*, pp. 208–209.
[257] Bonds of Brotherhood, Jewish Life, November 1954, in *Ibid.,* pp. 392–393.

LAWYERS AND POLITICIANS OF THE LEFT

Like Czechoslovakia, Martha Dodd, the American author whom we met earlier who fled to Prague with her husband Alfred Stern in 1957, was fond of visitors and was not stinting in hospitality to those she favoured.[258] Her opulent apartment in the silk stocking district of New York had been a lure for the American literati, particularly those of the parlour pink variety, and her Prague abode would sustain the image.[259] But like Czechoslovakia, too, she usually wanted something in return. Indeed, for both Martha Dodd and her adopted country, there was no such thing as a free lunch. This is perhaps nowhere better exemplified than in the case of the British barrister and Labour MP, D. N. Pritt, whom we also looked at earlier, and whom the Sterns treated whenever he and his "lively lovely wife" Molly appeared in Prague.[260] Although Pritt could do little for the Sterns legally since their espionage entanglement was in the US, he did discuss their case with a certain Charman Lal during a holiday in Bulgaria. Lal was so disgusted at their ordeal that he invited the Sterns "forthwith to come to live in India," an offer they did not take up.[261] Pritt also wrote a preface for an edited version of her father's *Diary*, which Martha Dodd had arranged for publication in the GDR.[262]

[258] According to the Soviet agent, Jürgen Kuczynski, this included on occasion the sexual. In an interview with the writer, Shareen Blair Brysac, at his home in East Berlin in 1991, Kuczynski spoke of his "fifty-year friendship with Martha Dodd. He visited her in Prague and in the 1960s accompanied her on a trip to Dresden. 'Martha Dodd,' he laughed. 'We called her the anti-Fascist nymphomaniac – a wonderful woman. She should have written her memoirs. She once said to me, "Jürgen, you're the only resistance fighter I haven't slept with"' (BRYSAC Shareen Blair, *Resisting Hitler*, Oxford – New York, Oxford University Press 2000, p. 218).

[259] Although Martha Dodd, as also her husband, was of a far deeper shade of red, she liked to parade the fashionable pink, a pigment, it seems, that "was also a standard colour of women's undergarments, which led Richard Nixon to use this Red-baiting line against Helen Gahagan Douglas in his 1950 Senate campaign: 'She's pink right down to her underwear!'" (LEVINSON Martin H., *Brooklyn Boomer: Growing Up in the Fifties*, Bloomington (IN), iUniverse 2011, p. 73).

[260] Library of Congress, Martha Dodd Papers, ID No. MSS80875, Letter by Martha Dodd to D. N. Pritt dated 23 July 1963; *Ibid.,* Letter from D. N. Pritt to Martha Dodd dated 13 February 1962.

[261] Library of Congress, Martha Dodd Papers, ID No. MSS80875, Letter by Martha Dodd to D. N. Pritt dated 20 August 1960; *Ibid.,* Letter to Martha Dodd by D. N. Pritt dated 9 September 1960 (in which he advises her not to "believe all that Charman Lal promises"); *Ibid.,* Letter from Martha Dodd to D. N. Pritt dated 3 December 1960. See also: *Ibid.,* Letter by D. N. Pritt to Martha Dodd dated 13 February 1962 where he thanks her for her hospitality.

[262] Library of Congress, Martha Dodd Papers, ID No. MSS80875, Letter by Martha Dodd to the New Zealand-born communist sinologist, Rewi Alley dated 15 November 1961; *Ibid.,* Letter by Martha Dodd to Tang Ming Chao of the China Peace Committee dated 27 December 1961. For Pritt's success in gaining the release of their mutual friend, Jürgen Kuczynski, "almost the first German civilian to be interned" in Britain at the beginning of the Second World War, see: PRITT D. N., *The Autobiography of D. N. Pritt: Part One. From Right to Left*, London, Lawrence and Wishart 1965, pp. 230–231.

The Czechoslovak communists were no less adept than Martha Dodd at playing Lady Bountiful whenever D. N. Pritt booked into the Jalta Hotel in Wenceslas Square, which had been purpose-built in the 1950s and, unbeknownst to Pritt presumably, was equipped with state-of-the-art listening devices in the bedrooms.[263] Pritt, whom George Orwell punningly labelled Stalin's "hired liar,"[264] could always be relied on to deliver the goods when it came to promoting the Soviet Party line and he was well recompensed for his services.[265] At his home in the old market town of Basingstoke in Hampshire, Pritt "wore linen Cossack shirts hand-embroidered at the neck and cuffs, […] ate off hand-painted pottery plates, each depicting a different peasant working with a scythe, flail, pitchfork and sickle," while the family were "waited on by servants, nannies, maids, butlers and chauffeurs."[266] Not to seem lagging by Moscow standards, Charles University awarded Pritt an honorary doctorate for his 70th birthday

[263] Library of Congress, Martha Dodd Papers, ID No. MSS80875, Letter by D. N. Pritt to Martha Dodd dated 25 June 1959. For information about the more sinister side of the Jalta Hotel, see: https://www.private-prague-guide.com/article/museum-of-the-cold-war-prague/ (accessed 26 May 2017).

[264] WRIGHT Patrick, *Iron Curtain,* p. 331.

[265] Pritt had a two-pronged approach as vindicator of Soviet misdeeds. First there would be a refusal to accept that an event ever actually happened. It was all down to Western propaganda. Failing that, the victims had only themselves to blame. His denial of the Soviet massacre of Polish officers at Katyn in 1940 is as good an example as any: "Towards the end of 1948 the 'Katyn massacre' accusations against the USSR were revived in the British Press. When the Nazis advanced on Smolensk in the summer of 1941, they moved so rapidly that the Soviet authorities could not evacuate a large number of Polish prisoners of war, who were in a camp in the Katyn forest, west of Smolensk, and they therefore fell into the hands of the Germans.
Then, in the winter of 1942–3, when the vast majority of these prisoners had been shot by the Nazis and buried in the forest, the Nazi propaganda office, under Goebbels, published a story to the effect that the prisoners had been shot and buried by the Soviet authorities before they evacuated the area in 1941. It was a typical Nazi propaganda story, and the wholesale shooting was a typical Nazi activity, and there was no reason whatever to believe the story; but, to the disgrace of the British and of the Polish Government in exile, the Nazi story was seized upon and widely reported. (This was, incidentally, the ground on which the USSR broke off diplomatic relations with the Polish Government in exile.)
There were many proofs that the story was as untrue as most of Goebbels' fabrications; in particular there was plenty of evidence that the Polish prisoners had been alive, in German hands, after the Soviet authorities had retreated. But that did not stop the allies of the USSR, even during the war, from accepting and broadcasting the story. And in this year of 1948, five or six years later, it did not stop the *Daily Telegraph* opening its columns to letters repeating it once again.
I had to take part in this correspondence; and of all the available refutations I selected the simplest and most complete, namely the comments on it made by Goebbels himself in his diary […]" (PRITT D. N., *The Autobiography of D. N. Pritt: Part Two. Brasshats and Bureaucrats*, London, Lawrence and Wishart 1966, pp. 152–153).

[266] OSLER Mirabel, *The Rain Tree*, London, Bloomsbury 2011, p. 37.

in 1957.[267] His books were translated into Czech and he could be sure that whenever his flight touched down at Prague Airport, he would want for nothing.[268]

Of more immediate practical use to Martha Dodd and Alfred Stern, however, was the eminent American lawyer and civil rights advocate, Leonard Boudin. In addition to the Sterns, Boudin, after his confiscated passport had been restored and he could travel abroad again, represented other US exiles in Prague such as Joseph Cort and Morton Nadler.[269] The Sterns made much of Boudin. On arrival at Prague Airport, he would be "driven in a big black Mercedes to their luxurious government-owned villa, with superb plumbing and a year-round garden. […] Although the Sterns were appalled by the economic deprivation of neighbours, they and their eleven-year-old son took trips to Russian seaside spas, collected antiques, and were tended by four servants, plus a gardener and chauffeur."[270] Boudin found life in the Czech capital depressing. "Although Czechoslovakia was one of the richest manufacturing countries of Europe," food was scarce and there was little living space for children.[271]

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[267] Library of Congress, Martha Dodd Papers, ID No. MSS80875, Letter to Martha Dodd by D. N. Pritt dated 8 December 1960.

[268] Pritt's book, *Star-Spangled Shadow* (London, Frederick Muller 1947) was published in Czech as *Stín pruhů a hvězd* (Prague, Svoboda 1948); his *Spies and Informers in the Witness-Box* (London, Hanison 1958) was published in Czech as *Špióni a undavači* (Prague, SNPL, 1959); his prefaces to other publications in Czech include the foreword in *Válečné zločiny amerických jednotek v Koreji a v Severovýchodní Číně* [The war crimes of American troops in Korea and north east China; originally translated from German DIE KRIEGSVERBRECHEN DER AMERIKANISCHEN TRUPPEN IN KOREA UND NORDOSTCHINA] (Prague, Právnický ústav Ministerstva spravedlnosti 1952); and the foreword in *Mír je majetkem lidu a může být zachován aktivním bojem lidu: Dopis F. Joliota-Curie Warrenu R. Austinovi* [Peace is the wealth of the people and can be preserved by the active struggle of the people: Letter of F. Joliot-Curie to Warren R. Austin] (Prague, Orbis 1952).

[269] NADLER Morton, *No Regrets*, p. 45.

[270] BRAUDY Susan, *Family Circle: The Boudins and the Aristocracy of the Left*, New York, Alfred Knopf 2003, p. 401n. The Mercedes was an important addition to the lives of the exiled Sterns. In a letter to David Rome, bereaved husband of the recently deceased Adele Stern, Alfred Stern's daughter from his earlier marriage to Marion Rosenwald, Martha Dodd wrote of their new life in Prague: "We are soon moving into our home on a hill overlooking the city. It is quite lovely and large enough for our needs. We are getting our Mercedes next month. It will be a great boon – as you know [word is illegible but probably "know"] we love to tour the countryside – and Czechoslovakia is a most beautiful country" (Library of Congress, Martha Dodd Papers, ID No. MSS80875, Letter by Martha Dodd to David Rome dated 1957). An instructive comparison might be made with her father when he took up office as US Ambassador to Germany in the summer of 1933: "the new man was said to be an unassuming sort who had vowed to lead a modest life in Berlin as a gesture to his fellow Americans left destitute by the Depression. Incredibly, the new ambassador was even shipping his own car to Berlin – a beat-up old Chevrolet – to underscore his frugality. This in a city where Hitler's men drove about town in giant black touring cars each nearly the size of a city bus" (LARSON Erik, *In the Garden of Beasts*, London, Black Swan 2012, p. 24).

[271] BRAUDY Susan, *Family Circle*, pp. 107–109.

Boudin also represented the former Secretary of the National Lawyers Guild, Martin Popper, when he was summoned before HUAC in 1959. Popper, who had been part of the Hollywood Ten's defence team and also attended the post-war Nuremberg trials, had clients in Czechoslovakia whom he visited for briefings.[272] In September 1948 he was in Prague for a conference of the International Association of Democratic Lawyers and, it is alleged, was present on 28 October the following month at the celebrations to mark the anniversary of the founding of Czechoslovakia. His trips behind the Iron Curtain, however, did not escape the notice of the Passport Office in Washington. His applications for passport renewal in 1954 and 1956 were rejected on the grounds that his proposed travel would not be in the national interest and "would further the cause of the world Communist movement."[273] In 1961 he was convicted for contempt of Congress but the conviction was overturned on appeal.

A mutual friend of Martha Dodd and D. N. Pritt, the left-wing Labour MP for East London, Konni Zilliacus,[274] was another visitor to Czechoslovakia and sister people's democracies in the early Cold War years.[275] During a stay in Prague in 1946, Zilliacus had a meeting with an old acquaintance from WWII London, the Marxist economist and Government adviser, Ludvík Frejka, or Ludwig Freund as he would have been known in Britain, dressed "in grey flannel trousers, soft shirt, Norfolk jacket and cardigan, smoking a big pipe, [who] looked

[272] O'DWYER Paul, *Counsel for the Defense*, New York, Simon and Schuster 1979, pp. 122–123. Still active in the anti-nuclear crusade decades later, Martin Popper opening a two-day symposium in New York of lawyers and law professors from the United States, Europe and Japan, on nuclear disarmament, said: "There will be no Nuremberg tribunals to judge crimes against humanity after a nuclear war, because there will be no victors, no vanquished, no nothing" (*New York Times*, 7 June 1982).

[273] *Hearing Before the Committee on Un-American Activities House of Representatives Eighty-Sixth Congress First Session*, Washington, Government Printing Office, 1959, p. 844.

[274] The Pritt-Zilliacus friendship would not last, however. The support of Zilliacus for Tito and Yugoslavia "brought a tirade of Soviet-inspired propaganda against him. At home, the mouthpiece of Moscow's hostility to Zilliacus' independent stance was Stalin's leading apologist, D. N. Pritt" (BERGER Stefan – LAPORTE Norman, *Friendly Enemies: Britain and the GDR, 1949–1990*, New York, Berghahn Books 2014, p. 34).

[275] For example, NACR, fund the International Department of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, 100/3, sv. 204, a.j. 715, Instructions from Pavel Kavan to Bedřich Geminder, undated, 1948. See also: LILLEKER Darren G., *Against the Cold War: The History of Political Traditions of Pro-Sovietism in the British Labour Party, 1945–89*, London, Tauris Academic Studies 2017, pp. 68–108. Zilliacus himself was the author of the booklet, *I Chose Peace* (London, Penguin 1949). A friend of Zilliacus, the Russian-born, British novelist, William Gerhardie, who had fought alongside him during the Allied intervention in Siberia after the Great War, wrote that Zilliacus "was born in Japan of a Finnish father and an American mother, was educated in England and America, and married a Polish lady in Manchuria, and their children were born in Switzerland" (GERHARDIE William, *Memoirs of a Polyglot*, London, Robin Clark 1990 (first published 1931), p. 151).

and spoke like a Cambridge don."[276] The reunion would have fatal consequences. Frejka along with 10 other co-defendants in the Slánský trial was hanged in December 1952. During their conversation in 1946, the pair discussed the Czechoslovak reconstruction plan and Frejka explained to Zilliacus how the new state would "go its own way to Socialism" in "a democratic, national way."[277] Fate decreed otherwise. Because of "his close friendship with the renegade Marshal Tito," Zilliacus "would prove a most dangerous connection" for Frejka and his co-accused retrospectively.[278] Zilliacus, however, was only one among the many who had been given a cameo role in the conspiracy drama and if he had been found wanting, others would have been produced to play the part.[279]

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[276] ZILLIACUS Konni, *A New Birth of Freedom: World Communism Since Stalin*, London, Secker and Warburg 1957, p. 141. Ludwig Freund adopted a Slav version of his name in 1945. Freund had been editor of the communist newspaper the *Rote Fahne* in 1930s Prague. He fled to Britain with his family to escape the Gestapo and retrained as a welder at the expense of the Czech Trust Fund but was detained as a "friendly" alien by the British authorities in the summer of 1940. Released when Hitler invaded the Soviet Union, he found employment with the communist *Daily Worker*, after the Home Secretary and Minister for Home Security, Herbert Morrison, rescinded his January 1941 ban on the newspaper. According to a co-worker on the paper, Ludwig Freund was a "likeable" man who sported "tweed suits and tweed caps" and "finished up by looking more English than the English" (HYDE Douglas*, I Believed*, pp. 192–194).

[277] ZILLIACUS Konni, *A New Birth of Freedom*, p. 141.

[278] MILES Jonathan, *The Nine Lives of Otto Katz*, London, Bantam 2011, p. 27 (published also in Czech as: IDEM, *Devět životů Otto Katze: Příběh komunistického superšpióna z Čech,* Prague – Litomyšl, Paseka 2012). Zilliacus himself writes: "In 1949 I was excommunicated by the Cominform countries, including Czechoslovakia, for saying Tito was right to resist Stalinist dictation, and in 1952 was pilloried in the Slansky trial as the 'veteran spy' and agent of the Anglo-American Intelligence Services who had been the go-between between the 'Slansky centre' and the Western Powers. I had transmitted instructions to Slansky, the Secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, to overthrow Socialism and restore capitalism in Czechoslovakia under the guise of Titoism and, still following Tito, to tear Czechoslovakia out of the Socialist peace camp and put her into the American war camp. I was supposed also to have set up similar centres in the other People's Democracies – and all this in close conjunction with Tito and his Fascist agents, as well as the British and American Intelligence Services." Zilliacus adds, "It was queer to read in the reports of the trial detailed confessions by people I had known in London and Prague to things that neither they nor I had ever done" (ZILLIACUS Konni, *A New Birth of Freedom*, pp. 145–149).

[279] This would simply have meant another call to the ÁVH [Államvedelmi Hatóság: State Security Authority, the Hungarian political police] in Budapest who would pump the incarcerated American, Noel Field, the "Typhoid Mary" of the cloak-and-dagger world (LEWIS Flora, *The Polish Volcano*, London, Secker and Warburg 1959, p. 34), for more names, no matter how implausible. Lumped with Zilliacus in Otto Katz's testimony, for instance, were Noel Coward and Claud Cockburn, who had actually retired from journalism for health reasons and was living in Ireland at the time (MACLEOD Alison, *The Death of Uncle Joe*, London, Merlin Press 1997, pp. 35–37). The nightmarish insubstantiality of Zilliacus's alleged role is underscored by Hugo Dewar, a Trotskyite and former Communist Party member: "A deposition on the score of Zilliacus's alleged activities was taken from Mordechai Oren, the Israeli citizen arrested by the Czech authorities in December 1951 […] Listen to what he was made to say about Zilliacus. In 1947 Herbert Morrison told him that 'Zilliacus is a staunch champion of British imperialism and a veteran agent for British reactionary Governments as well as a diehard enemy of the USSR and the People's Democracies.' In addition, Morrison informed Oren that 'Zilliacus told me in confidence in 1947 that great political changes were afoot in Yugoslavia and that Tito already had one foot in the US camp.' The stupidity of putting such language into the mouth of Herbert Morrison is at once apparent. Oren – or rather, the inquisitors – make Morrison himself

The Labour MP, Colonel George Wigg, the man who in 1963 would break the news of the Profumo affair, came to Prague in March 1948 for Jan Masaryk's funeral and noted "little sign of revolution or change."[280] Commenting on his visit, the exiled Czech journalist, Josef Josten, wrote: "When the circumstances surrounding the visits of foreigners are examined, it must be admitted that they would be hard put to it to find out what the man-in-the-street really thought about the changes, and what was going on under the surface. They are interviewed by representatives of the Communist regime (Colonel Wigg, for instance, saw the Communist Minister of Justice, Dr Čepička, and Mr. Rudolph Slánský, the Secretary-General of the Communist Party) or by officials trusted to say the right things. The wayward officials had already been purged. And the Communist officials naturally did not take the visitors by the hand and lead them to the uranium mines in Jachymov, where, guarded by Red Army men, thousands of Czech people work and die on forced labour. Language difficulties in any case would make it difficult to talk to a passer-by. The possibilities for a foreign visitor of obtaining information in this way were and are extremely limited."[281]

Among other British politicians who made the pilgrimage to Prague soon after February 1948 was, unsurprisingly, the ex-miner and veteran Communist MP for the West Fife constituency in Scotland, Willie [William] Gallacher, the only sitting deputy who had "publicly refused to be a party to the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia," on the eve of Neville Chamberlain's fateful flight to Munich in September 1938.[282] When, in a House of Commons

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confess and speak in the jargon of the Stalinists" (DEWAR Hugo, *The Modern Inquisition*, London, Allan Wingate 1953, pp. 133–134). Ironically, as a "friendly" alien, Frejka (Freund) was one of the internees Herbert Morrison inherited in October 1940 when he succeeded Sir John Anderson as Home Secretary and Minister for Home Security. Although among exiles in Britain, "there were high hopes that a fundamental change of policy towards aliens would be seen," they proved illusory. Morrison was as obdurate as his predecessor in keeping Frejka and the others interned. See: *Morrison's Prisoners* published by the National Council for Democratic Aid, London, n/d, p. 2. Zilliacus, on the other hand, never lost his faith in the socialist millennium. Martha Dodd met him in Prague on his way home from Cuba in 1963 and wrote that both "he and his wife were ecstatic" about Fidel Castro (Library of Congress, Martha Dodd Papers, ID No. MSS80875, Letter by Martha Dodd to D. N. Pritt dated 21 January 1963).

[280] JOSTEN Josef, *Oh My Country*, London, Latimer House 1949, p. 232.

[281] *Ibid.,* pp. 232–233.

[282] SMETANA Vít, *In the Shadow of Munich*, Prague, Karolinum Press 2008, p. 56. See also: GALLACHER William, *The Rolling of the Thunder*, London, Lawrence and Wishart 1947, pp. 205–208. In this book, says fellow-Stalinist James Klugmann, "Gallacher describes how Attlee as leader of the Opposition got to his feet and gave Chamberlain his blessing for this Munich journey of unsurpassed treachery. He describes how Sinclair, for the Liberals, and Maxton, for the I. L. P., one by one, echoed the Tory wishes for success. One man only in the House, Willie Gallacher, representative of the Communist Party, raised his voice in protest

debate in November 1949, Winston Churchill described Czechoslovakia as "a mere pawn in the Kremlin game," the British Labour MP for Norwood in south London, Ronald Chamberlain, who had been to Prague earlier in the year, interjected that this allegation was "rubbish." In the exchange that followed, Willie Gallacher leapt to Chamberlain's defence, leading Churchill to conclude that "Communist Members and fellow-travellers have a pretty good run in this House."[283] Chamberlain and his wife no doubt had a pretty good run in Czechoslovakia, too, since, to the gratification of his hosts, before departing from Prague, he insisted publicly that everything he had read in Britain about Czechoslovakia and the people's democracies was distorted, his own impression was favourable and also belied the charge that there was no religious freedom in Czechoslovakia.[284]

Of course while some British deputies were sounding off in parliament and citing their own personal experiences as proof positive of the benign state of affairs in Czechoslovakia, and various commentators were maintaining the opposite to be the case, that the Prague "citizenry walks mostly in shabby clothes with hunched shoulders, as if stupefied by shock and misery," and quoting an American woman in Prague as saying she would "like to go to a country where people don't have stainless steel teeth,"[285] none of this seems to have cut any ice with British civil servants. "Czechoslovakia is the only country we saw, aside from England," maintained

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at the Munich voyage" (KLUGMANN James, Czechoslovakia: On the Road to Socialism, *Communist Review*, London, April 1948, pp. 99–109). Whatever aversion Gallacher had to appeasing Hitler, he had none when it came to Stalin and, for instance, called for the forced repatriation of all Poles still resident in Britain after the Second World War to the new Polish communist state. Even though he himself had said of Munich, "No one desires peace more than I and my party, but it must be a peace based upon freedom and democracy and not upon the cutting up […] of a small state" (OSTROWSKI Mark, *"To Return to Poland or Not to Return": The Dilemma Facing the Polish Armed Forces at the End of the Second World War*, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of London, School of Slavonic and East European Studies, n/d, pp. 332–333 and pp. 215–216, available online at: http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/1349014/1/DX194948.pdf (accessed 25 April 2010)), the high-minded principles could be shelved and the usual double standards applied when Moscow was the perpetrator of the dismemberment as with Poland in 1939, and again in 1945, or indeed with Czechoslovakia in the case of Carpathian Ruthenia for that matter. The author of the first two volumes of the *History of the Communist Party of Great Britain*, former British Military Intelligence agent, and onetime editor of *Marxism Today*, James Klugmann, was noticeably quiet on that score, too.

[283] Hansard, House of Lords Debate, 17 November 1949, Vol. 469, cc 2203–338. See also: NACR, fund the International Department of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, 100/3, sv. 204, a.j. 715, The Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the Secretariat of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, 16 March 1949.

[284] TNA, FO 371/77249, Czechoslovakia: Weekly Information Summary prepared by the British Embassy in Prague for the period 14 to 20 September 1949.

[285] GUNTHER John, *Behind the Curtain*, pp. 226–230.

John Gunther in his account of his 1948 trip through Europe, "where rationing is taken with strict seriousness."[286] In October 1949, flour, potatoes, and other items were taken off ration in Czechoslovakia but already three months before that, a visit to explore actual nutrition conditions in the country first-hand by a British Ministry of Food official, Dora Dollingworth, was arranged.[287] Britain itself only finally put an end to rationing in July 1954.[288]

[286] *Ibid.,* p. 226. This was still the case a year later: "In early 1949 another drastic measure was taken. Four years after the war, rationing remains stricter in Czechoslovakia than in any other country in Europe. It was announced that ration cards would go henceforth only to the 'useful workers.' Others, people who still owned their small shops or leaned on savings and worked only part-time, had to buy on the new free market, where many goods are sold at extremely high prices" (SMITH Howard K., *The State of Europe*, London, The Cresset Press 1950, p. 349).

[287] NACR, fund the International Department of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, 100/3, sv. 204, a.j. 715, Company for rational nutrition to the Ministry of Nutrition, 29 July 1949. See also: SCHMIDT Dana Adams, *Anatomy of a Satellite*, pp. 379–380.

[288] Children growing up in Britain in the post-war years, and their parents, would have had little to satisfy a sweet tooth. "Sweets and chocolate were rationed from 1940 and the manufacture of ice cream was banned in 1943. When restrictions on sweets were lifted in April 1949, demand was such that they had to be swiftly reimposed. Sugar remained rationed until as late as September 1953, and it was only when butter, margarine and cooking fat became freely available in May 1954 that fancy cakes made a welcome reappearance in bakery windows across the country" (BRAGG Billy, *Roots, Radicals and Rockers. How Skiffle Changed the World*, London, Faber & Faber 2017, pp. 122–123).

TRANSIT PASSENGERS

After the arrest of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg in New York in the summer of 1950, a number of other Americans either directly implicated in spying themselves, or fearing guilt by association, fled the country. Many crossed the border into Mexico, but this was by no means a safe haven when it came to escaping the reach of the FBI, as Morton Sobell, a co-accused with the Rosenbergs, found to his cost. He was abducted from his new home in Mexico City and whisked back to the US to face prosecution along with his friend and former classmate, Julius Rosenberg. The US Court of Appeals ruled that this illegal action "presented no jurisdictional impediment to trial."[289]

As the years passed, the American expatriate population in Mexico expanded. Martha Dodd and Alfred Stern, who arrived towards the end of 1953, were the "big fish" in the pond, known for "their considerable wealth, ostentatious lifestyle and unorthodox marriage,"[290] but they would rub shoulders with, for instance, Maurice Halperin, the former Professor of Latin American Studies at Boston University who came the same year.[291] "The common denominator of this community was a pro-Soviet orientation in political matters," but the degree of commitment varied. Maurice Halperin, we are told for instance, "took the party line with a few grains of salt."[292] For most of the fugitives, both those in Mexico and elsewhere, the ultimate destination was Moscow. Just as two decades earlier, Prague had not only been a refuge in its own right,[293] but also a regular stopping-place for German comrades and fellow-travellers

[289] UNTERMAN Katherine, *Uncle Sam's Policemen: The Pursuit of Fugitives across Borders*, Harvard, Harvard University Press 2015, p. 211. Testimony was given at their trial that the Rosenbergs, too, had contemplated the Mexico option (FINEBERG Andhil, *The Rosenberg Case Fact and Fiction*, New York, Oceana Publications 1953, p. 23).

[290] ANHALT Diana, *A Gathering of Fugitives: American Political Expatriates in Mexico 1948–1965*, California, Archer Books 2001, pp. 53–54.

[291] For information on Halperin's alleged spying activities and his visit to Prague in 1958 *en route* to the Soviet Union, where he worked for three years, see: WEST Nigel, *VENONA: The Greatest Secret of the Cold War*, London, HarperCollins 1999 pp. 286–287; also USDIN Steven T., *Engineering Communism,* p. 144.

[292] KIRSCHNER Don S., *Cold War Exile: The Unclosed Case of Maurice Halperin*, Columbia (MO), University of Missouri Press 1995, pp. 152–153.

[293] Most notably in the case of the writer, Thomas Mann, and his family: "They are a fine people, the Czechs – imaginative, brave, and liberal. I make this statement unafraid of being called a Czech nationalist, although it happens that I am not only an admirer of Czechoslovakia but also a citizen of that country. Thanks to the generous gesture on President Beneš's part, my whole family – excepting Erika, who is a British subject [thanks to her "lavender marriage" with the poet W. H. Auden in 1935] – was granted the citizenship of Czechoslovakia" (MANN Klaus, *The Turning Point*, pp. 301–302). For information on Czechoslovak pre-war exile policy see for example:

fleeing the clutches of the Gestapo after Hitler became Chancellor of Germany in January 1933, and in the crackdown that followed the burning of the Reichstag building a month later, while they waited for their papers to be processed and USSR entry visas issued before continuing their journey across the Russian frontier, so, too, was it for the American exiles who reached the city in the wake of the Rosenbergs' detention and indictment for treason, and for those who came later.[294] For some, however, their stay in the Czech capital might involve years rather than weeks or months.[295]

But Prague's standing as a transit centre and clearing-house for those whose destination was further east, whether Moscow, or even beyond that again to China, in the early Cold War years was not confined to American exiles. For Willie Gallacher in 1950, for instance, the terminus of his journey was Moscow.[296] The previous year, the English-born cadre and member of the Central Committee of the Australian Communist Party, Ernie Thornton, likewise passed through Czechoslovakia *en route* to Moscow.[297] Despite his own English background, Thornton had "a burning hatred of the British,"[298] and "hoping to impress the Russians with his qualities as an 'iron Bolshevik,' and merciless denouncer of the enemies of the working class," he picked on "that pro-British fellow," John Fisher, during his stay in Prague. The son of a former leader of the Australian Labour Party and Prime Minister, Fisher with his wife and two children had been living in Prague since 1945, where he worked for the Anglo-American Section of the

BRINSON Charmian – MALET Marian (eds.), *Exile in and from Czechoslovakia during the 1930s and 1940s,* Amsterdam – New York, Rodopi 2009.

[294] One major difference, however, between the democratic Czechoslovakia of the 1930s and the post-February 1948 communist state was that in the earlier period: "No visa was required for Czechoslovakia, a passport was sufficient" (ANDERSON Mark M. (ed.), *Hitler's Exiles: Personal Stories of the Flight from Nazi Germany to America*, New York, The New Press 2000, p. 145).

[295] MILES Jonathan*, The Nine Lives of Otto Katz*, p. 281.

[296] PHM, CP/IND/GALL/03/09, Report written by Gallacher, May 1950.

[297] NACR, fund the International Department of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, 100/3, sv. 25, a.j. 91, Report by H. Glaserová, 8 April 1949.

[298] Not to be confused with the British Labour MP for Farnworth in Greater Manchester from 1952 to 1970 who was also named Ernest Thornton, the Ernest Thornton we are concerned with was born at Huddersfield in Yorkshire on 13 March 1907 but was brought to Sydney in 1924 as part of the Dreadnought Scheme, whereby British boys between the ages of 16 to 19 were shipped to Australia to train as rural labourers. For more information on the Dreadnought Scheme, see: http://guides.naa.gov.au/good-british-stock/chapter3/dreadnought%20.aspx (accessed 3 September 2017).

Ministry of Information. Thornton put a stop to that and the alleged "luxurious life' enjoyed by the Fishers in Prague" came to an abrupt end in December 1949.[299]

Two years later, in July 1951, Thornton was back in Prague and staying at the Alcron Hotel on Štěpanská, from where he petitioned Bedřich Geminder, whose arrest as one of Rudolf Slánský's co-conspirators would follow later in the year, to facilitate the passage of 14 young Australians on their way to China by a very circuitous course since they would be unable to go through British-run Hong Kong.[300] This arrangement, Thornton claimed, had already been sanctioned by Comrade Kuznetsov in Moscow, who would himself be shot in just a few months. An internal memorandum on the 14 Australians to the political secretariat of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia on 25 July 1951 stated that "Czechoslovak visas should be issued separately since their Australian passports would probably be marked 'Not valid for Czechoslovakia.'"[301] In this respect, Australia, America's UN ally in the Korean War, was following Washington's lead in clamping down on communists and fellow-travellers going abroad. From 1 September 1950, all Australians who intended to visit countries behind the Iron Curtain had first to obtain permission from the Australian Department of Immigration and ASIO, the Australian Security Intelligence Organization.[302]

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[299] SCHMIDT Dana Adams, *Anatomy of a Satellite*; pp. 203–205; POLLAK Stephen, *Strange Land Behind Me*, pp. 302–303. In November 1934, Egon Erwin Kisch "had given the young Fisher his break in Melbourne when he told him to wait a little longer before the *Strathaird* left the pier. Although Fisher had to return to the offices of his newspaper, he decided to follow Kisch's advice and thus witnessed his jump off the quarterdeck." Fisher was deeply grateful for the scoop. The two men became friends and Fisher travelled with Kisch on his return voyage to Europe, where "Kisch made sure that Fisher met everybody who was anybody between Paris and Moscow" (ZOGBAUM Heidi, *Kisch in Australia*, Victoria (Australia), Scribe Publications 2004, pp. 116–118). Fisher became Australian Press Attaché in Moscow during the war.

[300] NACR, fund the International Department of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, 100/3, sv. 25, a.j. 91, Report for Comrade Geminder, 26 July 1951. The then British Labour MP, Desmond Donnelly, who stayed at the Alcron Hotel for a few nights in August 1952 while waiting for Russian and Chinese visas to come through, wrote that the Alcron was "the main 'delegation' hotel for all travellers to Czechoslovakia. It is a kind of Ellis Island for the Iron Curtain" (DONNELLY Desmond, *The March Wind*, p. 21). Fellow-Labour MP, Tom Driberg, found the Alcron "rather like an English station hotel" (DRIBERG Tom, *Guy Burgess: A Portrait with Background*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicholson 1956, p. 98).

[301] NACR, fund the International Department of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, 100/3, sv. 25, a.j. 91, Note for the Minister of Foreign Affairs, V. Široký, dated 26 July 1951. See also: HRUBY Peter*, Dangerous Dreamers*, pp. 142–143.

[302] CAIN Frank, *The Australian Security Service Organization: An Unofficial History*, Victoria (Australia), Spectrum Publications 1994, p. 101.

The 14 young travellers eventually spent a month in Prague, and "while discussions apparently went on between Czech, Soviet and Chinese authorities" concerning the nature of their mission, they fretted at the delay. They also felt depressed at the fact that the spirit of the people they met, including communists, did not accord with their expectations of socialism in practice. Nevertheless, they resigned themselves to their fate and, as Eric Aarons, the leader of the group wrote later, they had "several heavy sessions in Prague's biggest and poshest, and almost empty, hotel, drinking the delicious and very potent Czech export beer."[303]

Shortly afterwards, the Australian novelist, Frank Hardy, in defiance of the new travel code enacted in Canberra, likewise transited through the Alcron while waiting for his Russian visa to come through and eventual word from the Soviet Writers' Union in Moscow that he could stay in the USSR for as long as he wished. In the hotel he had the good fortune to run into the Dean of Canterbury, Hewlett Johnson, and his wife, who gave him a glowing account of their recent trip to Russia.[304] Hardy's report on his own travel experience was published in 1952 under the title *Journey into the Future*, alluding to the famous statement by the American newspaperman Lincoln Steffens on his return from a visit to Petrograd in 1919: "I have seen the future and it works."[305] The no less radiant story Hardy had to tell concerned the present and also the past, or at least the past as he saw it. This, for instance, is what he had to say about Stalingrad and the "first" of "the two great battles for the city in modern times:" "On May 31, 1918, the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party decided to send Joseph Stalin to take over the defence of Tsaritsyn. He arrived there on June 6 with two seemingly impossible tasks facing him. To drive back the English, French, Czechoslovak, German and Denikin 'white' Russian armies who seemed certain to take the city, and to supply food to starving Moscow and Petrograd." It goes without saying that the Boy's Own hero accomplished both assignments

[303] AARONS Eric, *What's Left?*, Melbourne, Penguin Books 1993, p. 80.
[304] "When I first went to the Soviet Union, some of my friends said I would find a privileged class and I did – the children.' This I was told by Mrs. Hewlett Johnson, whom we met with her husband, the 'Red Dean,' at the Hotel Alcron, Prague, the day before we left for Moscow" (HARDY Frank*, Journey into the Future*, Melbourne, Australasian Book Society 1952, p. 23).
[305] Lincoln Steffens was a friend of the unsinkable Anna Louise Strong, who once told him: "I'm reporter enough to know that there is no absolute truth. Truth is for each of us our picture of the world. When I say I want to tell the truth, I mean I want to paint my picture" (STRONG Anna Louise, *I Change Worlds*, pp. 386–387). Frank Hardy had a pretty deft hand with the paint-brush, too.

without a hitch. Then, the "city saved and the counter-offensive launched, Stalin was recalled to Moscow at the end of the year, to transfer his military genius to other tight spots."[306]

Later Hardy would become disillusioned with the Soviet experiment and describe *Journey into the Future* as "the only basically dishonest book I ever wrote."[307] But for the moment he was unrepentant and there would be a price to pay for his temerity in flouting the Australian travel ban. He himself puts it: "And that is how we broke through the so-called Iron Curtain – but we had to break the law of our own land to do it and eventually lost our passports. We had seen first-hand that the 'iron curtain' had not been built by the USSR."[308] This is a very similar sentiment to what his fellow-Australian, Stephen Murray-Smith, a correspondent with Telepress in Prague from 1949 to 1951, had to say about the Iron Curtain: "Let me conclude by saying once more that the Iron Curtain, then, IS a reality, but it is an Iron Curtain shutting us off from people like the Czechs, not them from us. One of my last jobs in Czechoslovakia was to prepare for publication by the Czechoslovak youth organisation a volume of Henry Lawson's short stories, and for the Czechoslovak Trade Union movement a History of Australian Trade-Unionism. The Czechoslovak workers and young people demanded these books. Who dare say that the Iron Curtain is imposed from *that* side of the fence in view of facts like that?"[309]

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[306] HARDY Frank, *Journey into the Future*, pp. 233–234. Hardy's account of events at Tsaritsyn can be contrasted with that of the French communist writer, Louis Aragon, published in 1962: "He [White General Anton Denikin] decided to abandon Tsaritsyn, meaning to save Rostov, Taganrog and Novocherkassk, the heart of his realm. It was too late: on January 3, 1920, the Whites of Tsaritsyn, were surrounded and wiped out; and [Red Army commander] Yegorov's proclamation, announcing the liberation of the city, gave the chief honour to the cavalry of Gorodovikov and Timoshenko. Stalin, at Orel on his way from Moscow, countersigned the proclamation." Aragon adds by way of a footnote: "It is clear that *militarily* there was nothing to justify giving Stalin's name to Tsaritsyn fifteen months after Lenin's death, since neither this chance signature at Orel upon his arrival from Moscow nor the events of 1918, when he was removed from his post by the central committee at the time when the troops from the northern Caucasus raised the blockade, meant that he had anything to do with the happenings in the city" (ARAGON Louis, *A History of the USSR from Lenin to Khrushchev*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson 1964, pp. 154–155).

[307] MCLAREN John, *Writing in Hope and Fear: Literature as Politics in Postwar Australia*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1996, p. 11.

[308] HARDY Frank, *Journey into the Future*, pp. 12–13.

[309] MURRAY-SMITH Stephen, *"There Is No Iron Curtain": An Australian Journalist in Eastern Europe*, Melbourne, International Bookshop 1952, pp. 6–9. Telepress, which "was to have been a Communist type of Reuters," was under the control of Bedřich Geminder and collapsed after he was taken into custody. Keith McEwan, one of the 14 young Australians waiting at the Alcron Hotel for their travel papers to China, wrote that Murray-Smith later described himself as lucky to have escaped unscathed in the fallout from Geminder's detention. After Murray-Smith had said goodbye to his colleagues, "and was descending the stairs to catch the train to Warsaw and home, [Comrade Kot'atkova, the Telepress director] gazed down the stairs after him and said, 'I wonder if I should have had him arrested after all'" (MCEWAN Keith, *Once a Jolly Comrade*, Brisbane, Jacaranda Press 1966, p. 79). See also: HRUBY, Peter, *Dangerous Dreamers*, pp. 160–166. A

The Canadian fisherman, Scotty Neish, would have agreed. He was one of an 11-strong group of delegates from the Labour-Progressive Party, as the Canadian Communist Party was then known, who stopped off in Prague while on their way to the Asia and Pacific Rim Peace Conference in Beijing in 1952.[310] The itinerary of the former Communist Party MP for Montréal-Cartier, Fred Rose, a year later was more modest. After serving a six-year gaol sentence for spying for the Soviets, blacklisted, harassed by the Canadian security services, and disowned by the Party he had loyally served, he was simply passing through Prague on his way to his birthplace, Poland, although his home city of Lublin would then have been part of the Russian Empire, and loss of his Canadian citizenship. "The boys threw him to the wolves," said one Party leader. The General Secretary of the Party in Canada, English-born Tim Buck, justified the Party's position, "You saw what the British party did with Alan Nunn May. Can we do differently?"[311]

British colleague of Murray-Smith's at Telepress, Stanley Harrison, was arrested and, together with his Croatian wife Gina, sent off "on brigade" to a farm for six months in 1949, but the work turned out to be light enough "consisting mainly of pulling insects off trees" (MACLEOD Alison, *The Death of Uncle Joe*, p. 202). In time, the couple returned to London. Stanley Harrison became a sub-editor with the *Daily Worker,* while his wife Gina found work at Collet's, the former left-wing bookshop on Charing Cross Road. Unlike her husband, Gina Harrison left the CPGB in 1956 following the Soviet invasion of Hungary. For more information on Stephen Murray-Smith and his wife Nita, see also: ABS, Fund T-1395 MV.

[310] ISITT Benjamin, Fellow Traveller, p. 105. Seditious organizations had been banned in Canada since the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919 and outdoor communist meetings had been prohibited since 1928. The "jails of almost every province held militants and [trade] unionists imprisoned as a result of their participation in labour conflicts or demonstrations" (LÉVESQUE Andrée, *Red Travellers: Jeanne Corbin and Her Comrades*, p. 40). Non-naturalized Canadians faced deportation at the end of their sentences.

[311] WEISBORD Merrily, *The Strangest Dream: Canadian Communists, the Spy Trials, and the Cold War*, Montréal, Véhicule Press 1994, pp. 159–160. The British physicist Alan Nunn May likewise spent six years behind bars (1946–1952). "In May 1963, [J. D.] Bernal was asked to advise on a new professor of physics for the University of Ghana. There were five candidates, and Bernal said that his top choice was Alan Nunn May, 'a most distinguished physicist.' May had become a communist while a Cambridge undergraduate in the thirties; during the war, he worked as a member of the British nuclear research team in Canada. After the war, he was the first atomic spy to be unmasked and served six years hard labour for supplying secrets to the Soviets" (BROWN Andrew, *J. D. Bernal*, p. 407). Another atomic physicist, Klaus Fuchs, was convicted by a British court in 1950 and served nine years in prison. Fuchs had been recruited by Jürgen Kuczynski, and Kuczynski's sister, Ursula, a GRU [Soviet Military Intelligence] agent, had been his controller in Britain. Ironically, Jürgen Kuczynski would return to Germany at the end of the Second World War as a high-ranking officer in the US army before joining his sister in the Russian sector of Berlin. The information supplied to MI5 by Fuchs during interrogation was passed to the FBI. Fuchs's colleague on the Manhattan Project, the Italian nuclear physicist Bruno Pontecorvo, defected to the USSR but Fuchs's go-between at Los Alamos, Harry Gold, was taken into custody and his confession led to the arrest of David Greenglass and, in due course, Greenglass's sister, Ethel Rosenberg and her husband, Julius. The Kuczynskis managed to elude the dragnet. During a trip to Prague in 1949 to meet her brother, Ursula Kuczynski let officials at the USSR embassy know of her desire to move out of Britain and return to Germany and, with GRU approval, she left England with her family in 1950 (WILLIAMS Robert Chadwell, *Klaus Fuchs: Atom Spy*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press 1987, pp. 61–63).

Prague's international appeal as a favoured port of call on the way to Moscow and elsewhere within the Soviet Bloc in the Cold War years is further attested to in the case of the beleaguered Cambridge spies, Donald Maclean and Guy Burgess. According to Vladimir Petrov, a secretary at the Soviet Embassy in Canberra who defected in 1954, the pair flew to Prague from Paris. More likely is the claim made by the already mentioned British Labour MP, Tom Driberg, who visited Burgess in Moscow and later wrote an aseptic biography of his friend, that the wanted men took the midnight train from Paris to Zurich and from there the first available flight to Prague.[312] Fellow-Soviet agent George Blake relates that in 1952 while working for British Intelligence he was informed that Donald Maclean's American wife, Melinda, had disappeared from her address in Switzerland with their three young children and was thought to be attempting to join her husband in the Soviet Union. Blake and his colleagues were assigned the task of monitoring Soviet air force telephone lines in Austria to see if any information might be picked up on whether the family had arrived in the Soviet Zone to be taken from there by military aircraft to the USSR. "Many years later in Moscow," Blake recalls in his memoirs, "when we had become good friends I told her [Melinda Maclean] this story. She was highly amused that I should have been involved, even in a very indirect way, in the search for her. As it happened she had indeed passed through Austria and been taken from there by car to Prague from where she had been flown to Moscow."[313]

[312] DRIBERG Tom, *Guy Burgess*, pp. 97–99. According to Yuri Modin, their Russian controller, Burgess and Maclean travelled from Paris to Geneva and Berne by train. "On their arrival at the Swiss capital, Burgess made his way to the Soviet Embassy, where he was given two false British passports with photographs slightly altered and different surnames. […] Carrying their new documents, the fugitives pressed on to Zurich, where they caught a plane to Stockholm via Prague. In the airport of the Czech capital they walked out of the international zone and were immediately taken in hand by KGB agents" (MODIN Yuri, *My Five Cambridge Friends*, London, Headline Book Publishing 1994, p. 209). Burgess, says, Modin, "was incapable of reconciling himself to life in the USSR. His impossible dream was to return to England" (*Ibid.,* pp. 245–246), "and he never stopped harassing the heads of the KGB to let him do so" (*Ibid.* p. 254). As to why he "hadn't turned back at Prague," Modin concluded that he continued on to Moscow "for the fun of it, expecting some kind of party at the Kremlin in his honour, and he was genuinely stunned when they [the KGB] forbade his return to England" (*Ibid.*, pp. 209 and 245). See also: PURVIS Stewart – HULBERT Jeff, *Guy Burgess: The Spy Who Knew Everyone*, London, Biteback Publishing 2016. In addition to the numerous historical works on the espionage activities of the Cambridge spies, an interesting article on the subject is: FLAXMAN Erwin, The Cambridge Spies: Treason and Transformed Ego Ideals, *Psychoanalytic Review,* Vol. 97, No. 4 (August 2010), pp. 607–631.

[313] BLAKE George, *No Other Choice*, London, Jonathan Cape 1990, p. 16. According to Yuri Modin, Melinda Maclean's "trip was simplicity itself; at that time our system for moving people out of Austria to the USSR functioned very nicely (MODIN Yuri, *My Five Cambridge Friends*, p. 227).

Even with all the advanced computerized technology available at immigration checkpoints today, the state-of-the-art surveillance equipment, the e-gates, and the intense scrutiny passports are subjected to, along with the goodwill in international information sharing, people of dubious background still manage to slip through the system. Given the expertise in passport forgery honed during the 1930s and the Second World War,[314] it is a matter of conjecture how many undercover individuals avoided detection at border controls in the early Cold War years, and about whom we know nothing, when no such analytic techniques were in place. From time to time, however, an inkling of what this sealed book might contain is disclosed. Thus, for instance, we are told that the alleged Australian spy, Jim Hill, brother of the prominent communist lawyer and activist, Ted Hill, once "flew to Prague on a false passport the Czechs had procured for him in Switzerland, so as to travel in secret."[315] Jim Hill had worked alongside another probable communist agent, the New Zealander, Ian Milner, in the Australian Department of External Affairs in 1945 before Milner moved to the UN in New York in 1947 and from there to permanent residence in Czechoslovakia, while Hill was transferred to London in 1950.[316]

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[314] For information on the use of fake passports in general, and the specific exploits of the Czechoslovak communist agent, Stephen Pollak, who carried out his various Comintern assignations while travelling under a false Canadian passport, see his memoirs, *Strange Land Behind Me*, pp. 57–58, 74 and 76–77. Reflecting on his new, made-to-measure Canadian passport, Pollak remarked: "I remembered the old Russian saying from Tsarist days that man consists of body, soul and his passport. Things had not changed much since then, except perhaps that to-day the passport came first" (*Ibid.,* p. 77). Perhaps it is also worth remembering that after "the scythe-swingers of the Comintern," to use Carl von Ossietzky's memorable phrase, had tracked down the former NKVD intelligence officer, Ignace Reiss (a.k.a. Ignace Poretsky et al) his dead body together with a forged Czechoslovak passport were found near Lausanne in September 1937 (DUFF William E., *A Time for Spies: Theodore Stephanovich Mally and the Era of the Great Illegals*, Nashville, Vanderbilt University Press 1999, p. 168). See also: OSSIETZKY Carl von, *The Stolen Republic: Selected Writings of Carl von Ossietzky* (ed. Bruno Frei), London, Lawrence and Wishart 1971, p. 195.

[315] LAURENCE Charles, *The Social Agent*, Chicago, Ivan R. Dee 2010, pp. 100–101 (published also in Czech as: IDEM, *Společenský agent Jiří Mucha: Láska a žal za železnou oponou. Intriky, sex, špioni,* Prague, Prostor 2012). The book stirred up a lot of controversy in the United Kingdom as Jiří Mucha's wife, Geraldine, did her utmost to prevent its publication. For a more homely, but much more deserving, instance of passport skulduggery, which in this case happened after the February 1948 coup, there is the story of Phyllis Nichols, wife of the British Ambassador to Czechoslovakia, who "flew in and out [of Prague Airport] several times, taking with her on her own children's passport the children of Czechs who had flown for Britain during the war and had married English women" (STERNBERG Cecilia, *The Journey*, New York, Dial Press 1977 (available also in Czech and German), p. 41).

[316] See: FITZGERALD Ross – HOLT Stephen, Historian the Real Red Ragger, *The Australian*, 9 May 2009: "It is indisputable that Hill and Milner (who subsequently settled in communist Czechoslovakia teaching at Charles University in Prague) provided highly classified material to the Soviet Union. This has been verified in the decrypted US National Security Agency's so-called Venona transcripts of coded '40s communications between the Soviet embassy in Canberra and Moscow, declassified in 1995–96." See also: LENIHAN Denis,

THE WORLD OF PEACE

Of all the peace campaigners who passed through Prague in the heady days after the launch of the Stockholm Appeal, one of the most prominent was the African American civil rights activist, W. E. B. Du Bois. Du Bois's visit to Prague in the summer of 1950 was partly to address the World Congress of Defenders of Peace and partly to sort out a family tangle. His granddaughter, who had come to the city with an American youth contingent, had become infatuated with a young Czech. There was no talking to the headstrong young lady. She had found in the romantic film technician the man of her dreams and that was that. But the crush did not last. Before long, she had decided for herself that her Czech suitor "was really looking for a way out" of the people's democracy and ditched him. [317] Du Bois had also spent a few days in Prague on his return from the all-Soviet Peace Conference in Moscow in August the previous year and delighted a Czechoslovak female friend who had shown him around the city, it seems, by sending her a pair of nylon stockings when he reached home.[318]

In his address to the Peace delegates in Moscow in 1949, Du Bois had declared, among other things, that "the power of private corporate wealth in the United States has throttled democracy."[319] Du Bois's comments chafed an already nettled Washington. When Du Bois applied for a passport to visit Prague the following year, it was granted, but with reluctance. Then while he was informing his Prague audience that Americans had been induced to believe that their country was "in imminent danger of aggression from communism, socialism and liberalism, and that the peace movement cloaks this threat,"[320] the US government struck back.

Was Ian Milner a Spy? A Review of the Evidence, available online at: http://ojs.victoria.ac.nz/kotare/article/view/785/594 (accessed 14 November 2011). For a dissenting view on the subject, see: MCNEISH James, *Dance of the Peacocks*, pp. 315–325.

[317] LEWIS David Levering, *W. E. B. Du Bois, 1919–1963: The Fight for Equality and the American Century*, New York, Henry Holt 2008, p. 547.

[318] *Ibid.,* p. 545.

[319] DU BOIS W. E. B., *In Battle for Peace: The Story of My 83rd Birthday*, New York, Masses and Mainstream 1952, p. 184. *In Battle for Peace* was translated into Czech by Vladimír Černý and published by Svobodné slovo, Prague, in 1954 as *V bitvě za mír: Vyprávění o mých osmdesátých třetích narozeninách* (Prague, Svobodné slovo – Melantrich 1954). See also: Letter from Du Bois to Josef Hromádka dated 10 January 1955, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives, MS 312.

[320] DU BOIS W. E. B., *In Battle for Peace*, p. 41. "I think the menace of Bolshevism in the United States is as great as the menace of sunstroke in Greenland or chilblains in the Sahara," declared Roy W. Howard of

The Department of Justice demanded that the Peace Information Center, which had been established under his chairmanship in New York in April 1950 to provide information on anti-war initiatives worldwide and to promote the Stockholm Appeal, be registered as "agents of a foreign principal." When no attempt was made to do so, Du Bois was indicted in Washington in November 1951 on the grounds that the Peace Information Center had wilfully neglected to register with the authorities. According to the prosecution, the Center, as an affiliate organization of the World Congress of Peace and the Defenders of Peace organization in Paris, was acting as the representative of a foreign power. This was a charge that Du Bois and his co-defendants vehemently denied.[321] Although the prosecution failed to prove its case and Du Bois was eventually cleared of any legal wrongdoing, his passport was not returned since the trip he proposed to make abroad after his acquittal "would be contrary to the best interests of the United States."[322]

Because of Du Bois's prestige as a scholar and civil rights campaigner, the trial received extensive coverage in the international press and messages of sympathy and support poured in from around the world. The noted linguist and Rector of Charles University, Professor Jan Mukařovský wrote to Du Bois: "Charles University in Prague, fully appreciative of your personal qualities and your contribution to the great fight against oppression by those who try to mask their violence and terror, sends you its heartful greetings and warmest sympathy"; while the Minister of Culture and Education, Professor Zdeněk Nejedlý, assured him that Czechoslovak historians stood firmly with him in his "present struggle to avoid a new world

Scripps-Howard Newspapers in 1933 (FISCHER Louis, *Men and Politics*, p. 202). Such a scenario had become even still less likely by 1950.

[321] In his novel, *The Ecstasy of Owen Muir*, Ring Lardner, Jr., another of the Hollywood Ten, has one of his characters describe the intricacies of what was involved: "'I was indicted by a federal grand jury for failure to register as a foreign agent.' […] Mrs. Couto explained that the law she was accused of violating was the Foreign Agents Registration Act. Because the Council for Permanent Peace had sent two delegates, including her son Gene, to the Paris World Congress for Peace the previous April and had since publicized a manifesto emerging from that congress, the Department of Justice had concluded that the American organization was operating as a publicity agent for the six hundred million people, largely foreigners, in whose name the manifesto had been issued" (LARDNER Jr. Ring, *The Ecstasy of Owen Muir*, Berlin, Seven Seas 1966 (first published 1954), pp. 225–226 (published in Czech as *Extase Owena Muira*, Prague, SNKLHU, 1957)).

[322] DU BOIS W. E. B., *In Battle for Peace*, p. 192.

war."[323] To underline the high regard in which Du Bois was held in Prague, he was granted an honorary doctorate from Charles University on 23 October 1958, and, his passport finally restored, travelled to the Czech capital to receive the award in person.[324] Du Bois and his second wife, Shirley Graham, spent two weeks as guests of the Czechoslovak government.[325]

The Australian peace campaigners had earlier arrived in force, too, to greet the alignment of the new Czechoslovak people's democracy with the peace camp. The British-born couple, Norman and Evelyn Rothfield, co-founders of the Australian Peace Council, came to Prague in 1948 to learn about Czechoslovakia's "success on the way to socialism."[326] An intriguing story concerns the Australian journalist and playwright, Nancy Wills [a.k.a. Nancy Macmillan], whose musical play about Paul Robeson's tour of Australia in 1960, *Deep Bells Ring,* premiered in Brisbane in 1987. According to the "Red Buster," Peter Hrubý, "Australian citizen and member of the CPA, Mrs. Wills (maiden name McMillan)" had come to Europe for the Peace Congress in Paris and "had been living in Prague for a month in Hotel Šroubek" in Wenceslas Square (Grand Hotel Evropa since 1951). Bedřich Geminder, the then Head of the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, was informed of the presence of this "correspondent of various Australian progressive journals," who "had a personal letter from the general secretary of the party, L. L. Sharkey" but whose CPA membership card had no name on it. Long before Nancy Wills had penned her *Deep Bells Ring*, bells began ringing in the Czech capital, too, but in Prague's case it was alarm

[323] *Ibid.,* p. 188. For East German reaction to the Du Bois trial, see: MCBRIDE David – HOPKINS Leroy – BLACKSHIRE-BELAY Carol (eds.), *Crosscurrents: African Americans, Africa, and Germany in the Modern World*, Suffolk, Boydell and Brewer 1998, pp. 198–199.

[324] When the American artist, Rockwell Kent, applied for a passport to return to Ireland to paint in 1953, he was informed that he would not be granted a passport "to travel anywhere for any purpose." Backed by the Emergency Civil Liberties Union and with the gifted civil rights lawyer, Leonard Boudin, who, as already mentioned, was himself denied a passport, as counsel, Kent sought vindication of his constitutional right to a passport through litigation. The case dragged on until eventually in June 1958 the Supreme Court in a five-to-four decision decided in his favour. This landmark ruling meant that thousands of people, "interned in America," including Paul Robeson and W. E. B. Du Bois, were free to travel outside the country (TRAXEL David, *An American Saga: The Life and Times of Rockwell Kent*, New York, Harper and Row 1980, p. 204).

[325] HORNE Gerald, *Black and Red: W. E. B. Du Bois and the Afro-American Response to the Cold War, 1944–1963*, New York, State University of New York Press 1985, p. 321. "Shirley Graham caustically noted that Harvard never invited Du Bois to lecture and the Harvard Club in New York barred his entrance, but while abroad Du Bois was treated like a touring potentate" (*Ibid.*).

[326] See: TNA, FO 371/71265, Czechoslovakia: Weekly Information Summary prepared by the British Embassy in Prague for the period 3 to 9 September 1948; Czechoslovakia: Weekly Information Summary prepared by the British Embassy in Prague for the period 7 to 13 September 1949.

bells. Nancy Wills's "request for financial support was refused" and "Comrade Šváb, of the secret police, noted, 'If her visa is not valid any more, she should leave.'"[327]

THE PARIS – PRAGUE PEACE CONGRESS OF 1949

This tale of two cities took place in April 1949, the same month that had seen the birth of NATO. The peace congress, partly a response to the NATO inception, was originally scheduled to convene in Paris but the French government "made nervous by the communists' ascension to power in China, refused entry visas for over 300 delegates, mostly Chinese," and these "were then accommodated at a parallel meeting in Prague."[328] The Prague gathering was hobbled together at 48 hours' notice with some delegates still arriving while the event was in session. The razzle-dazzle of celebrities in Prague was not as impressive as in Paris but, nevertheless, some notable names did grace the occasion with their presence. Harry Pollitt and John Gollan were there from the British Communist Party and so was Richard Dixon, the Chairman of the Australian Communist Party.[329] Some Paris delegates, such as the veteran American China hand, Maud Russell, left Paris for Prague as a gesture of solidarity with the Chinese refused entry at French ports.[330]

The Prague gathering was chaired by Jan Drda, head of the Czech Writers Union, who berated the "atomic pirates of Wall Street, their auxiliaries, and lackeys in other countries." But their machinations against world peace were manifest to all and while these Western

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[327] HRUBY, Peter, *Dangerous Dreamers,* p. 155. For information about Paul Robeson's tour of Australia in 1960, see: CURTHOYS Ann, Paul Robeson's visit to Australia and Aboriginal activism, 1960, in PETERS-LITTLE Frances – CURTHOYS Ann – DOCKER John (eds.), *Passionate Histories: Myth, Memory and Indigenous Australia*, Australian National University Press 2010 (available online at: http://press-files.anu.edu.au/downloads/press/p70821/pdf/ch0842.pdf (accessed 30 May 2017)).

[328] BROWN Andrew, *J. D. Bernal*, p. 328.

[329] Prague Congress Resumes, *The Chicago Daily Tribune,* 23 April 1949. Many of the communist attendees coming from the English-speaking world stayed in Prague to attend the congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. See for example: Today 55 Countries Represented at Czech Communist Congress, *The Washington Post,* 26 May 1949; SCHMIDT Dana Adams, Czech Communists Hold Big Congress, *The New York Times,* 25 May 1949.

[330] UWSC, Eleanor Wheeler Papers 1947–1957, Accession No. 1625–001, Letter of Eleanor Wheeler dated 3 May 1949. "As one of the western delegates who also attended the 'Little Peace Congress' in Prague, Russell was quoted in the *New York Times* defending the conference and criticizing an aggressive US foreign policy that she claimed was abhorred by 'millions of Americans' because it 'violated all our political traditions'" (GARNER Karen, *Precious Fire: Maud Russell and the Chinese Revolution*, Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press 2009, p. 202).

troublemakers "secretly agree upon new plans for aggression for new world conflagration and new massacres, the people of the whole world now clearly and resolutely raise their voice." The congress called for "an active denunciation and quarantine of imperialist warmongers" and the enthusiastic Drda declared that the Prague rally had given a "new fighting meaning to world peace."[331]

Eleanor Wheeler was overwhelmed by the excitement of it all: "The peace conference was impressive and moving. Last night the different nations put on a performance at the opera after the regular opera had finished, so the rustic Wheelers dropped off during the final dances. But we certainly stayed awake when the Greek children who are here in Czech homes ('kidnapped' you heard, no doubt) sang and danced in that particularly fluty way that Greek folk songs have. It was wonderful to think that about 5,000 were getting the care that enabled them to sing and dance but sad to think of all the ones at home that could be developing if their country was allowed peace. Then when the curtains were about to be drawn the Russian delegate with the handlebar moustaches and a chestful of medals called out of the dark, 'Attention! The Chinese armies are in Shanghai [*sic*]!' Much noise broke loose but we weren't making enough noise to suit a Spanish delegate behind us. He evidently had been in exile in Russia for he spoke Russian to us, clapped us on the shoulder shook us and said, 'Don't you see that Shanghai today means Canton tomorrow?'"[332]

At both venues, Paris and Prague, speakers hammered out their two-camp vision of the world from the platform. It was at the Paris conference, too, that, as earlier mentioned, Paul Robeson incensed Washington by flatly rejecting any notion that African Americans would join their fellow-countrymen in taking up arms against the Soviet Union. NATO generals in their new state-of-the-art war room at the spic and span NATO headquarters in Brussels pricked up their ears.[333] To add to the discomfort, anxieties concerning a fifth column operating behind the

[331] SCHMIDT Dana Adams, Prague Has Own Session, *The New York Times,* 21 April 1949; WITTNER Lawrence S., *The Struggle Against the Bomb: One World or None*, Stanford (CA), Stanford University Press 1993, p. 178.
[332] UWSC, Eleanor Wheeler Papers 1947–1957, Accession No. 1625–001, Letter of Eleanor Wheeler dated 3 May 1949.
[333] Manpower for their armed forces, the cannon fodder, would no doubt have been a recurring headache for NATO planners, particularly when taking into account the sheer magnitude of the armies that would potentially be ranged against them in the field. Apart from other considerations, Robeson's alleged comment would have been another sharp twinge for the already fraught generals. The situation was so serious that in 1948, Washington passed the

lines in the event of a global conflict surfaced and were further heightened by the setting up of a movement at the Paris Conference called Partisans for Peace. The very name sent shudders down the spines of the NATO chiefs-of-staff.[334]

Two thousand or so delegates were in the Salle Pleyel, the same concert hall in Paris where Willi Münzenberg had hosted the 1933 Anti-Fascist Workers' Congress, to hear Robeson's defiant declaration. Arts and culture were well represented with, among other illustrious names, Pablo Picasso, whose iconographic *La Colombe* (The Dove) was chosen as the symbol of the movement, Charlie Chaplin, Diego Rivera, Arnold Zweig, Pablo Neruda, Italo Calvino, Jorge Amado, and Jean Genêt present.[335] The "most concentrated inflammatory anti-American propaganda effort in this part of Europe since the beginning of the cold war," was how Genêt characterized the event.[336] But for Howard Fast, another attendee, it was seventh heaven: "Kissed on the lips by Pablo Picasso, seated next to Louis Aragon, poet, novelist, and cochair of the conference, and not far from Paul Robeson, Fast was 'transported into another world […] where Communists were honoured, not hunted down and imprisoned."[337]

Selective Service Act which required all men between the ages of 18 and 26 to register for military service. The same year, "the British government, facing a shortage of volunteers for the armed forces, introduced legislation which required every male between the ages of seventeen and twenty-six to register for compulsory national service of eighteen months' duration. There were exemptions for certain trades such as farming and coal mining, and those who went into higher education […] were allowed to defer their call-up until they had completed their studies" (BRAGG Billy, *Roots, Radicals and Rockers*, pp. 75–76).

[334] Phillip Deery noted that "the First Secretary at the British Embassy in Moscow, Jack Nicholls, wrote to the IRD [Information Research Department] convinced that if a third world war broke out the Peace Committees 'will be expected to commit acts of sabotage, to refuse to join the armed forces, to impede war production and indeed to perform all the acts required of a fifth column.' The Chiefs of Staff also subscribed to this perspective. At a meeting at the [British] Ministry of Defence on 11 October [concerning the proposed Sheffield Peace Conference, see below], they became 'extremely hot under the collar' when discussing the imminent Congress. They stated that 'the primary object of the Congress is to prevent recruiting for the forces of Western Europe' [...]" (DEERY Phillip, The Dove Flies East, p. 462). At the same time, US Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, spoke of "the Trojan dove from the Communist movement" (WITTNER Lawrence S., *The Struggle Against the Bomb,* p. 272).

[335] Genêt, who had spent five months in Brno in 1937 – "a wet, dismal city, oppressed by the smoke of factories and the colour of the stones" (GENÊT Jean, *The Thief's Journal*, London, Penguin 1985) – up to no good as was his wont, was still very much a *lumpen* figure as far as the orthodox in the Party were concerned. While interned at the Camp des Tourelles during the war, a guard had on one occasion wanted to chain him to a communist political prisoner and the communist "had been insulted by the idea of being attached to a common criminal" (WHITE Edmund, *Genet*, New York, Vintage Books 1994, p. 571). Although as Genêt's literary reputation rose, some cadres became more accepting, this was by no means the case with all. The previous year, 1948, both Louis Aragon and Paul Éluard had rejected out of hand a request to add their signatures to those of other writers in a petition to the French president to acquit Genêt of his criminal record (WHITE Edmund, *Genet*, pp. 306 and 336).

[336] BROWN Andrew, *J. D. Bernal*, p. 329.

[337] SORIN Gerald, *Howard Fast,* p. 173. For a list of the artists and writers who attended the congress, see: TEITELBOIM Volodia, *Neruda: An Intimate Biography*, Austin (TX), University of Texas Press 1992.

Among well-known politicians in attendance were Konni Zilliacus, D. N. Pritt, and Pritt's fellow-advocate and London MP, John Platts-Mills.[338] A mildly discordant note was struck by the leader of the Italian Socialist Party, Pietro Nenni, when he maintained that, contrary to the two-camp doctrinaires, nations were not being asked to choose between the US and the USSR. Such a choice, he went on, "would mean that we are already at war and that we already consider the struggle for peace lost."[339] Harvey Moore, a British lawyer representing the International Association of Jurists, called for a ceasefire in the civil war then raging in China. With Mao's army on the threshold of victory,[340] there was a palpable lack of enthusiasm for the suggestion, and even less when a former assistant attorney general in Washington, O. John Rogge, contended that the Soviet Union as well as the US was responsible for world tensions.[341]

Things were back on track, however, when W. E. B. Du Bois told listeners that the United States was "leading the world to hell."[342] But the forces of darkness would not prevail. "Metropolitan Nicolas, head of the Russian Orthodox Church" [*sic*], says a deeply moved Du Bois, in "sweeping robes with jewelled breast-plate, […] stately headdress, long white beard and flashing eyes" closed his address to the assembled delegates "with an invocation to 'our Father God for blessings to shower down upon the head of our beloved son, Joseph Stalin!'"[343] Other chaplains to the Partisans voiced their support. The smiling Dean of Canterbury, Hewlett Johnson, his large pectoral cross dangling like a weapon of war, was there to fight the good

[338] John Platts-Mills had been in Prague during the communist coup in February the previous year from where he declared on a short-wave broadcast that: "The most striking incident I saw was right at the end of a gathering in Wenceslaus Square, when a group of women set on the police officers and kissed them. I had not noticed the police until then. […] What has really happened is that the right wing of every party in the Government, what I call the backward section, has been ousted, and the progressive section of each party has come into power […]. I wish them success for their future" (JOSTEN Josef, *Oh My Country*, p. 232).
[339] SMITH S. A. (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Communism*, Oxford, Oxford University Press 2014, pp. 325–326.
[340] "During the meeting, it was announced that Nanking had fallen to the communist forces of Mao Zedong, news that was received by the audience with 'delirious enthusiasm'" (BROWN Andrew, *J. D. Bernal*, p. 329).
[341] WITTNER Lawrence S., *The Struggle Against the Bomb,* p. 179.
[342] *Ibid.*
[343] DU BOIS W. E. B., *In Battle for Peace*, p. 31. Similar celestial approval of Stalin had been conveyed by the Metropolitan Sergius on the anniversary of the revolution in November 1941 when he "hailed Stalin as 'the divinely appointed leader of our armed and cultural forces leading us to victory'" (DALLIN David J., The New Religious Policy, in STEINBERG Julien, *Verdict of Three Decades*, p. 557).

fight.[344] In the frontline with Johnson stood the Reverend Arthur W. Moulton from Salt Lake City. All were gathered together in the righteous cause, all were ready to "demonstrate to the world that peace [was] in danger."[345] Four months later, on 29 August, in Semipalatinsk in Kazakhstan, the Soviets detonated their first atomic bomb, blasting everything in the vicinity, flora and fauna, buildings and caged guinea-pigs to smithereens. By June, the following year, the Peace bird had flown the coop with the commencement of the Korean War.

THE SECOND CONGRESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL UNION OF STUDENTS AND THE MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COMMITTEE OF THE DEFENDERS OF PEACE: AUGUST 1950

In August 1950 the peace offensive had re-converged on Prague for the Second Congress of the International Union of Students. The gathering attracted student representatives from all over the world, with native English-speakers dwarfed in the *mêlée* of competing voices.[346] Contemporary sources differ on the exact number of participants. The official communiqué distributed after the congress spoke of more than 1,000 delegates from 78 countries; *World Student News,* the journal of the International Union of Students, mentioned 637 delegates from

[344] Johnson was in Moscow for the VE Day celebrations on 9 May 1945 in the course of which Patriarch Alexei "presented Johnson with 'a magnificent jewelled enamelled crucifix suspended by a massive gold chain' which he placed around the Dean's neck. The Dean treasured the crucifix for the rest of his life, never failing to wear it whenever he was in public. It was an act that repeatedly annoyed Archbishop Geoffrey Fisher [of Canterbury] who tried in vain to insist that a pectoral cross should be worn only by a bishop. His plea that Johnson might compromise by wearing the crucifix only within the Canterbury precincts, where nobody could possibly mistake him for a bishop, fell on deaf ears" (BUTLER John, *The Red Dean of Canterbury: The Public and Private Faces of Hewlett Johnson*, London, Scala Publishers 2011, pp. 152–153).

[345] PHM, CP/CENT/ORG/01, box 1–6, *Six Hundred Millions for Peace: A Report on the World Congress for Peace, Paris, April 20th to 25th, 1949,* Foreword by J. G. Crowther, p. 3. See also: "Peace" Congress Will Open: Joliot-Curie to Preside at Paris Meeting. Protest on the Atlantic Pact Is Seen, *The New York Times,* 20 April 1949; American "Reign of Terror" Cited by US Writer, *Los Angeles Times,* 25 April 1949; "Pro-Western Speeches Jolt Paris "Peace" Parley, *The Christian Science Monitor,* 25 April 1949; Fixed Soviet "Peace" Unit Voted, *The Christian Science Monitor,* 26 April 1949; International Propaganda Organ Is Created as World Peace Congress Ends Paris Session, *The Washington Post,* 26 April 1949; "Peace War" on US Voted by Paris Session, *Chicago Daily Tribune,* 26 April 1949; War on Russia Hit by Paris Body, *The New York Times,* 26 April 1949; Peace Congress by US Delegates Assailed, *The Washington Post,* 28 April 1949; Dr Du Bois Delighted Over Significance of Paris Meeting: Sees Weary World Crying for Time to Heal Wounds, *Atlanta Daily World,* 17 May 1949; Dr Du Bois Predicts African "Awakening," *The New York Times,* 2 June 1949.

[346] Among those attending was Olaf Palme, the chairman of the International Committee of the Swedish Federation of Students (SFS) and the future prime minister of Sweden, whose murder on a Stockholm street in 1986 remains one of the great unsolved mysteries. On his return home from the congress, Palme gave the American embassy in Stockholm "the names of the Swedish communists who had been present in Prague" (KOTEK Joël, *Students and the Cold War*, London, Palgrave Macmillan 1996, p. 174).

72 countries, while the Czechoslovak Communist Party daily, *Rudé právo*, put the figure at 863 delegates from 68 countries. Whatever the tally, all sources agree that the meeting was a "triumphant success."[347]

The congress was given wide publicity in "progressive" circles in English-speaking countries. One article in the lead-up to the event noted that "[m]any British students are anxious to visit Prague this summer to learn something more about the work of the IUS and more particularly the life of students in other countries. […] Many of the observers will hitch-hike or travel by car and one group of students is reported to be travelling out in a second-hand coach bought especially for the purpose."[348] The stock telegrams of felicitations and many happy returns of the day poured in from the top ranks of the Party in the English-speaking world, such as Abe Moffat, President of the National Union of Scottish Mine Workers, as well as from Party hangers-on and fellow-travellers. As might be expected, several of those who sent greetings have already been dealt with as visitors to communist Czechoslovakia in the early Cold War years in their own right, so they will not be mentioned here. More, such as the journalist, Albert E. Kahn, would probably have made the trip, too, except that, like the artist Rockwell Kent who also conveyed his congratulations to the IUS, their passports had been withdrawn by the authorities in Washington.

The following sample of well-wishers among left-leaning dons and scholars not already referred to in this work gives some idea of just how much sympathy the left had garnered in entrenched academic circles in Britain: Christopher Hill (Marxist historian and Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford), Andrew Rothstein (recently dismissed from a post as lecturer at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, London University),[349] W. A. Wooster

[347] CUSC, Box 2, No. 6494, sign. K-268-A-2-B, Appeal of the Second Congress of the International Union of Students to the Students of the World; *Ibid.,* The Second World Youth Congress, *World Student News,* Special Issue, Vol. 3, No. 5, p. 25; see also: Slavnostní zahájení II. kongresu MSS: Představitelé světového mírového hnutí zdraví mladé bojovníky za mír [Ceremonial opening of the Second Congress of the International Union of Students: The representatives of the world peace movement salute young peace fighters], *Rudé právo,* 15 August 1950, p. 1. See also: KOTEK Joël, *Students and the Cold War*, pp. 189–199.

[348] CUSC, Box 2, No. 6494, sign. K-268-A-2-B, S. K. Jenkins (President of the National Union of Students of England, Wales and Northern Ireland), IUS Congress Preparations in Britain, *World Student News,* Vol. 4, No. 7–8 1950, p. 16.

[349] "At the end of the 1940s, employment in the universities was largely closed to members of the organized left. One case that drew complaints from the teaching unions was the dismissal of Andrew Rothstein from the School of Slavonic and East European Studies in the University of London, where he taught Soviet Institutions. Yet such

(Honorary General Secretary of the Association of Scientific Workers) and his wife Dr Nora Wooster,[350] P. M. S. Blackett (Professor of Physics at the University of Manchester),[351] the economist Maurice Dobb (Fellow and Lecturer at Cambridge University),[352] V. Gordon Childe (Director of the Institute of Archaeology, London University), George Thomson (Professor of Classical Greek at Birmingham University and noted Gaelic scholar), E. H. S. Burhop (Chairman of the Atomic Scientists' Committee of the Association of Scientific Workers),[353] and Dr R. E. G. Armattoe (the "Irishman" from West Africa).[354]

Arts and culture were not remiss in compliments either. From Dublin words of encouragement were despatched from Seán Keating, President of the Royal Hibernian Academy, and from fellow-artist and RHA member, Harry Kernoff. Irish compatriot and

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instances of blatant prejudice, sackings and the like were rare. More typically, institutions simply declined to employ young applicants with socialist credentials" (RENTON David, *Sidney Pollard: A Life in History*, London, I. B. Tauris 2004, p. 25). There were other factors at play, too. "The 1944 Education Act had opened the grammar schools to bright working-class students, which in turn led to greater demand for university places. Encouraged to go for the glittering prize of a degree, many state-educated graduates found that, despite their qualifications, the Establishment maintained a class ceiling that made sure only the right kind of people prospered" (BRAGG Billy, *Roots, Radicals and Rockers*, p. 219). One such Establishment figure, the writer Somerset Maugham "dismissed state-educated university students as 'scum'" (*Ibid*., p. 220).

[350] "Both husband and wife were crystallographers and left-wing activists. Nora (née Martin) had been a research student of J. D. Bernal." In December 1945, she embarked "on a British Council-sponsored tour of Czechoslovakia lecturing on the use of X-rays in metal industries. She also probably used the opportunity to do some union-related work" (DUNMUR David – SLUCKIN Tim, *Soap, Science, and Flat-Screen TVs: A History of Liquid Crystals*, Oxford, Oxford University Press 2014, p. 150).

[351] Bertolt Brecht was of the opinion that Blackett's book, *Military and Political Consequences of Atomic Energy*, (published in the UK in 1948 and in German translation in 1949) "shows that Truman dropped the atom bombs he had as a move against the entry of the USSR into the war against Japan" (BRECHT Bertolt, *Journals 1934–1955*, (ed. John Willett and Ralph Manheim), London, Methuen 1993, p. 425). This was what J. D. Bernal had in mind in his speech to the 1949 peace conference in Moscow referred to earlier.

[352] Dobb was "probably the first academic in Britain to carry a Communist Party membership card (1920)." It was Dobb who in 1933 put Kim Philby in touch with Willi Münzenberg and Otto Katz/André Simone in Paris. Philby later vehemently denied that Dobb was a talent-spotter for USSR intelligence (KNIGHTLEY Phillip, *Philby KGB Masterspy*, London, Andre Deutsch 2003, pp. 30 and 258).

[353] The Australian-born Eric Burhop had worked on the Manhattan Project to develop the atomic bomb at Berkeley and is referred to in the Venona transcripts (WEST Nigel, *VENONA*, p. 107). He was rejected for the post of Chair of the Physics Department at the University of Adelaide in 1948 because his "political colour might raise serious difficulties" (DEERY Phillip, Scientific Freedom and Post-war Politics: Australia, 1945–55, *Historical Records of Australian Science,* Vol. 13, No. 1, pp. 1–18, here pp. 21–22, available online at: http://vuir.vu.edu.au/587/1/Scientific_Freedom_and_Post-war_Politics.pdf (accessed 24 September 2010)). Burhop was also temporarily refused a British passport in 1951 but it was restored after a public outcry and his undertaking that he would not use it to travel to the Soviet Bloc. He helped organize the first Pugwash conference but he himself "had to attend unofficially because Bertrand Russell was reluctant to have Western scientists regarded as Communists associated with the conferences" (MARQUIT Erwin, *Memoirs of a Lifelong Communist*, p. 222, available online at: www.tc.umn.edu/~marqu002/memoirs.html (accessed 6 April 2017)).

[354] ROBINSON Philippa, R. E. G. Armattoe: The 'Irishman' from West Africa, *History Ireland*, Vol. 14, No. 4 (Jul/Aug 2006), unpaged, available online at: http://www.historyireland.com/20th-century-contemporary-history/r-e-g-armattoe-the-irishman-from-west-africa/ (accessed 20 June 2017).

playwright, Sean O'Casey, likewise sent his respects.[355] From the music world, warm commendations came, surprisingly, from the conductor, Sir Malcolm Sargent,[356] and, not so surprisingly perhaps, from the composer, Rutland Boughton.[357] The left-wing actor and writer, Miles Malleson, also conveyed his regards.[358] Nor must the benedictions of churchmen be forgotten. Along with those leftward clerics already commented on, and their expected

[355] Although O'Casey never formally joined the Communist Party, his "ardent enthusiasm and lifelong adulation for the USSR, which he considered one of the world's greatest human experiments in creating a society of a new type, deserves primacy in evaluating his socialist legacy" (LOWERY Robert G., The Socialist Legacy of Sean O'Casey, *The Crane Bag*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (1983), pp. 128–134, here p. 128). For information on how O'Casey's plays were viewed in Czechoslovakia in the 1950s, see: SKOUMAL Aloys, Irské drama znovu v Realistickém divadle: Sean O'Casey [Irish Drama Again in the *Realistické* Theatre], *Divadlo*, Vol. VIII, No. 12 (Dec 1957), pp. 1007–1012. See also: MORAN James, *The Theatre of Sean O'Casey*, London, Bloomsbury 2013, pp. 182–183.

[356] Although Malcolm Sargent had conducted in the concert at the Royal Albert Hall in London to honour the 26th anniversary of the Red Army in February 1944, he was not by any stretch of the imagination a fellow-traveller. In fact he declined to lend his support to an appeal being organized for Paul Robeson, stating that since he does not know why Robeson has been blacklisted in America, he has not the "slightest justification in taking part in any disturbance on the matter." For more information, see: the British Library website: http://blogs.bl.uk/music/2013/03/update-on-the-malcolm-sargent-collection.html#sthash.99MOA8cO.dpuf (accessed 21 June 2017).

[357] Indeed, whereas in the West, "Zhdanovist ideas about music had very little attraction, and even the most left-wing composers and musicians found themselves defending the indefensible when they tried to interpret them," Roland Boughton was a "striking exception." In a letter to Alan Bush dated 18 February 1948, Boughton wrote: "The Russian Communist Party criticism of modern music is as you can imagine, a great satisfaction to me." What exactly was this criticism that Boughton found so satisfactory? In 1950, the same year as the IUS congress, Zhdanov told a "Convocation of Activists of Soviet Music" that "'a whole series of works by contemporary composers are infiltrated and overloaded to such a degree by naturalistic sounds that one is reminded – forgive the inelegant expression – of a piercing road drill, or a musical gas-chamber.' [Tikhon] Khrennikov, the new Chairman of the Composers' Union in the Soviet Union, followed, describing Messiaen, Jolivet, Hindemith, Berg, Menotti and Britten as 'modernist, decadent, pathological, erotic, cacophonous, religious or sexually perverted monsters.' The path taken by Prokofiev and Stravinsky, he said, had 'all ended in Monte Carlo, where the Diaghilev Ballet found its right mission at last – to cater to an audience of gamblers, profiteers, and prostitutes'" (THACKER Toby, *Music After Hitler, 1945–1955*, London, Routledge 2007, pp. 108–109).

[358] "Although not publicly a Communist, he [Malleson] counted members of the CPGB amongst his friends" and in 1952 "joined a delegation of MPs and trade unionists for a three-week visit to the PRC [People's Republic of China]" (THORPE Ashley, *Performing China on the London Stage: Chinese Opera and Global Power, 1759–2008*, London, Palgrave Macmillan 2016, p. 145).

messages of goodwill to the IUS in Prague, can be added the Rev. Stanley Evans[359] and the Rev. Edward Charles (Vicar of St Luke's Church in Birmingham).[360]

Prague itself was dressed for the occasion. One American student observer, Bill Holbrook, wrote: "the symbolism displayed in flags and tremendous pictures of Stalin and Gotwold [*sic*] were impressive if not terrifying. The Soviet flag as well as Stalin's picture were being displayed prominently. Also very much in evidence was the picture of a peace dove symbolizing the significance of the Stockholm appeal. Pictures of lesser known Communist leaders of the various people's republics of Eastern Europe and New China were also displayed."[361]

All those who filed into the congress hall in Prague were presented with a booklet in which Czechoslovakia was described as the "land of peace and building socialism." The student representatives were further informed that: "All comes from our honest work, and this is also a guarantee that our social order in which the masters and managers are our working people: workers, peasants, intelligentsia – we can make bold and beautiful plans for the future. Our work, our joys, our dreams and plans, full of striving for peace, make our lives rich and happy."[362] They were welcomed by Vice-Premiers Zdeněk Fierlinger and Ludvík Svoboda, with Ministers Václav Kopecký and Zdeněk Nejedlý also in attendance to add their encomiums. Leading figures from many fields of Czechoslovak life, such as the outstanding athlete Emil

[359] "Evans was at the forefront of the Anglican left. He closely followed the official line of the British Communist Party, even acting as the *Daily Worker* correspondent at the Cardinal Mindszenty trial in Hungary in 1949." In April 1950, a blacklist of clergy associated with the Society of Socialist Clergy and Minsters (SSCM), which had been formed during the War, was drawn up for Lambeth Palace, the administrative centre of the Church of England. Evans, "after 17 years in Orders by 1953 and with a family to keep," was high on the list and had to rely on temporary postings and work outside the Church such as journalism to make ends meet. He "was left in no doubt that his political activism was responsible." During the height of the British campaign to save the Rosenbergs in 1953, he led a deputation to Winston Churchill at Chequers, the country residence of British prime ministers, demanding that Britain intervene with Washington to prevent the couple's execution, and his "poor employment prospects were now considerably worse." Eventually, he was granted a living outside central London, where, in the words of a colleague, he was "left to rot" (LAWSON Tom, *God and War: The Church of England and Armed Conflict in the Twentieth Century*, London, Routledge 2012, pp. 139–142).

[360] For more information on the subject of well-wishers, see: CUSC, Box 2, No. 6494, sign. K-268-A-2-B, Editorial "Forward to Peace and Happiness ... Words of the IUS Songs," *World Student News,* Vol. 4, No. 7–8 1950, pp. 2–6; and Slavnostní zahájení II. kongresu MSS: Představitelé světového mírového hnutí zdraví mladé bojovníky za mír, p. 4.

[361] SCHWARTZ Eugene G., *American Students Organize: Founding the US National Student Association after World War II*, New York, Praeger 2006, p. 559.

[362] CUSC, Box 2, No. 6494, sign. K-268-A-2-B, Czechoslovakia – Land of Peace and Building Socialism, *World Student News,* Special Congress Issue Prague, No. 1, 13 August 1950, p. 2.

Zátopek, were also present and gave speeches.[363] On top of the meetings and working groups, a packed programme of events had been laid on for the guests. A special performance by Czechoslovak Pioneers was staged: "No one could resist the force of their declaration that while they would devote everything to the cause of peace, older people could contribute much more, and they look to the students for ever more intense action for peace."[364] Friendly football and volleyball matches were arranged, as well as swimming, gymnastics, and other sporting competitions.[365] An exhibition detailing the work and progress of the International Union of Students was on display.[366] Then in the evenings it was best bib and tucker – from a revolutionary perspective – aperitifs and sumptuous dinners, followed by dancing, screening of Soviet-Bloc films, music recitals, and Russian ballet.[367]

The congress was an integral component part of the "peace" campaign and had several objectives. First in importance, as the hand-outs emphasized, the attendees had to unite and act "in the defence of peace and student interests." Delegates were exhorted to dedicate themselves to work for "peace," to turn the slogan "We Want Peace" into reality. One practical way to advance the cause of peace was to broaden and regularize distribution of the various publications prepared by the International Union of Students in Prague.[368] The obstacles to be overcome were many and arduous but there was no backing away from them. At issue was the question of world peace, the fate of humankind itself. "In this struggle, we know that we have to fight daily against intimidation and disruption. To those who preach the inevitability of war, who slander and prosecute organisations and individuals working for peace, we oppose our

[363] *Ibid.,* Second IUS Congress Opened, *World Student News,* Special Congress Issue Prague, No. 2, 15 August 1950, p. 1; see also: Průběh druhého dne zasedání kongresu [The course of the second day of the meeting of the congress], *Rudé právo,* 16 August 1950, p. 3; Podle vzoru sovětských sportovců budeme statečnými obránci míru [Following the example of Soviet sportsmen we will be brave peace fighters], *Rudé právo,* 17 August 1950, p. 5.
[364] CUSC, Box 2, No. 6494, sign. K-268-A-2-B, A Congress for Peace, *World Student News,* Special Congress Issue Prague, No. 2, 15 August 1950, p. 1.
[365] *Ibid.,* Congress Sport Events Closed Achieved Their Purpose – Furthered the Cause of Peace and Solidarity, *World Student News,* Special Congress Issue Prague, No. 2, 15 August 1950, p. 3.
[366] Zahájení výstavy o životě a práci Mezinárodního svazu studentstva [The opening of the exhibition about the life and work of the International Union of Students], *Rudé právo,* 18 August 1950, p. 5.
[367] CUSC, Box 2, No. 6494, sign. K-268-A-2-B, Dinner of Song, Dance and Friendship, *World Student News,* Special Congress Issue Prague, No. 4, 20 August 1950, p. 2; see also: Z kulturních pořadů II. kongresu MSS [From the cultural shows of the IUS], *Rudé právo,* 16 August 1950, p. 4; Třetí den zasedání kongresu [The third day of the meeting of the congress], *Rudé právo,* 17 August 1950, p. 5.
[368] CUSC, Box 2, No. 6494, sign. K-268-A-2-B, Letter from Josef Grohman (President of the IUS) and Giovanni Berlinguer (General Secretary of the IUS) to the National Students Association of the United States, undated, 1950.

belief in the possibility of co-existence and peaceful cooperation of the different social and economic systems. […] 'Which side are you on?' This is the question the congress places before the students. […] We fight for peace not merely to save our own lives and those of our friends, but to continue the mission of humanity to build always better, to create a new and wonderful edifice of life, to enrich the store-house of knowledge, to live without want and fear, without discrimination, without oppression."[369]

At the first mention of the war in Korea, the Congress delegates "broke out into clapping and rushed to the members of the Korean delegation, lifted them on their shoulders, and handed them bouquets of roses […] the entire North Korean delegation, armed with roses, were carried on the shoulders of the students through the convention hall amidst chanting and the play of floodlights. […] As the Koreans – some of whom were in uniform – passed the desk where Robert West of the NSA [American National Student Association] observer delegation was sitting, they shouted slogans of defiance at him."[370]

When the hullabaloo finally subsided, the "continuing US criminal aggression" on the Korean peninsula was reviled by speakers outright: "American planes bomb in the most barbarian way the Korean towns and villages, kill thousands of peaceful citizens – children, women and men – without mercy. The Congress of the International Union of Students condemns these brutal bombings and other methods of extermination of the peaceful Korean population by the American aggressors. […] Students as well as millions of people in all countries declare: 'Hands off Korea! Korea for the Koreans!'"[371] The Congress demanded that the UN Security Council put "an end to American aggression in Korea." In addition, the Stockholm Appeal was endorsed.[372] Contemporary documents indicate that all the resolutions were carried, perhaps not unexpectedly, "overwhelmingly and without opposition."[373]

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[369] *Ibid.,* Editorial "Forward to Peace and Happiness ... Words of the IUS Songs," *World Student News,* Vol. 4, No. 7–8 1950, pp. 1–2.
[370] SCHWARTZ Eugene G., *American Students Organize,* p. 559.
[371] CUSC, Box 2, No. 6494, sign. K-268-A-2-B, Students Unite in the Fight for Peace, National Independence and a Democratic Education! Decisions of the 2nd IUS World Student Congress – Prague, August 14–23 1950, p. 1.
[372] II. kongres MSS žádá Radu bezpečnosti o zastavení americké agrese v Koreji [The Second Congress of the IUS demands that the Security Council terminates American aggression in Korea], *Rudé právo,* 18 August 1950, p. 2.
[373] CUSC, Box 2, No. 6494, sign. K-268-A-2-B, Letter from Josef Grohman (President of the IUS) and Giovanni Berlinguer (General Secretary of the IUS) to the National Student Association of the United States, undated, 1950.

Several representatives from the English-speaking world spoke. Chester Davis, an African-American delegate, highlighted the difficulties faced by "progressive" American students when "fighting to preserve world peace." In fact, Davis claimed, one of their members present at the conference itself had been beaten up by the American police for taking part in a peace rally, another had been arrested for circulating the Stockholm Appeal among fellow students. He could go on. What was more pressing, however, was the slaughter in Korea. His talk, peppered throughout with the stock "peace bloc" clichés concerning "American imperialists" and the "bestial war" they were waging, Davis, speaking he said on behalf of all "progressive" American students, insisted on an immediate end to American intervention in the dispute on the Korean peninsula.[374]

Davis then expatiated at length on the extremely difficult conditions which daily confronted African Americans in their homeland. He described the various methods the government used to prevent them from gaining education. They were not allowed to study at "white" universities and even in "their own" schools, colleges and universities they were taught about the "racial superiority" of the "whites." There was more. Davis outlined the limitations placed on academic freedom in the United States in general as a result of the preparations being made for a new world war. This could be seen, he asserted, in the expulsion of "peace-supporting" students from educational facilities at all levels and in the removal, and indeed burning, of "progressive" books from the shelves of university libraries. It was clear that "under the mask of democracy," a process of "fascistization" was being implemented in the US.[375] At the same time, Davis and other American speakers were at pains to stress that "[…] just as

[374] Davis's reference to the "bestial war" being waged by the Americans in Korea would be amplified in Czechoslovak newspaper reports in the coming years. "According to the communist press, torture chambers, nicknamed 'death-on-credit,' were set up in the American prison camps where the prisoners were 'tortured by electric current and red-hot irons' and hanged by the neck with a steel collar. When a prisoner of war screamed, the American 'murderers' pulled him behind an iron plate, opened his mouth by force, poured in gasoline, and ignited the gas. The prisoners were constantly beaten so that their 'skin and flesh were torn and blood kept running.' There was also a 'steam prison' in the camp. 'It was a huge case with hot steam. They throw a man into it and when his body is boiled, they throw it to the dogs'" (TABORSKY Edward, *Communism in Czechoslovakia 1948–1960*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press 1961, p. 497).

[375] II. kongres MSS je výrazem odhodlání bojovat za mír, národní nezávislost a demokratisaci školství [The Second Congress of the IUS is the expression of determination to fight for peace, national indepedence and the democratization of the education system], *Rudé právo,* 22 August 1950, p. 3; see also CUSC, Box 2, No. 6494, sign. K-268-A-2-B, American Students Repudiate Aggression in Korea, *World Student News,* Special Congress Issue Prague, No. 4, 20 August 1950, p. 3.

every capitalist country has two sides, there are two Americas – the America of imperialists, the money-grubbers, the Hearsts, the Trumans and the MacArthurs, and the America of the people, especially the workers, those who uphold the traditions of freedom, of genuine brotherhood of man."[376]

The theme was taken up by another American student who claimed that "the bombings, murders and crimes committed by American imperialism on the Korean people could not happen in the name of the American people."[377] Similar speeches were made by students from other English-speaking countries. British students, for example, pledged to intensify their efforts to bring an end to the ongoing war in Korea and to strengthen and increase the "peace" movement at home.[378] Not everything, however, went according to plan. The address by the President of the National Union of Students of England, Wales and Northern Ireland, Stanley Jenkins, had an "explosive impact" on the audience. Brushing aside the standard Soviet rhetoric on the issue, Jenkins criticized the Bloc's stance against Yugoslavia and the pariah Marshal Tito. The listeners bristled. Jenkins was immediately attacked on all fronts for this "demagogic speech, seditious attacks against the Soviet Union, defence of titoist Fascists," and the like. The

[376] CUSC, Box 2, No. 6494, sign. K-268-A-2-B, Two Americas, *Challenge: Young America's Voice for Peace, Jobs and Freedom,* November 1950, p. 11.

[377] Průběh čtvrtého dne zasedání [The course of the fourth day of the meeting], *Rudé právo,* 18 August 1950, p. 3. An American student named John Marqusee was reported by the United Press to have seconded a motion calling for "death to the American aggressors" in Korea. The following morning, Marqusee claimed at a subsequent HUAC hearing, he received a telegram from his mother "in which great alarm was expressed. What had happened was that as bad as my statement was in retrospect, the UP had made it a good deal worse and made an error in transmitting it to the United States and included things in the resolution which weren't in, and included things in my speech which weren't in. On the basis of that, the president of the university [Cornell University, Ythaca (NY] stated, 'If the statements as reported are correct, Marqusee will be expelled.' I cancelled my ship reservations and came home by plane" (see: *The Cornell Daily Sun*, 18 September 1950 and the records of the HUAC Hearings, pp. 4351–4352 available online at: https://books.google.cz/books?id=ttkJAAAAIAAJ&pg=PA5410&lpg=PA5410&dq=john+marquesee+prague&source=bl&ots=GJcEptGsB_&sig=Rsy5nNqfkPS26aIQgONc1Rz9L7M&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiqwZ-sz9HUAhUFcRQKHQu3C7oQ6AEIJTAB#v=onepage&q=john%20marquesee%20prague&f=false). As it transpired, Marqusee was not expelled from university. However, during his interrogation by the House Un-American Activities Committee, Marqusee gave the names of the alleged subversives the Committee demanded. His son later wrote: "After months of pressure, from his own family as much as from the repressive organs of the state, my father, with my mother by his side, just as before, reached a deal and agreed to name names. 'To this day we regret the mutual decision we made,' my mother wrote. 'It has been a source of incredible pain and shame.' When my father, forty-five years after the event, lay dying, sapped by chronic pain and humiliating dependence, he went over it yet again, as he had with me many times. 'I fucked it up,' he moaned. The note of helplessness went right through me. There was no absolution anyone could give him" (MARQUSEE Mike, *If I Am Not for Myself: Journey of an Anti-Zionist Jew*, New York, Verso Books 2011, pp. 42–43). It can be assumed that it was Marqussee who donated his IUS publications to the Cornell Univesity Special Collections.

[378] CUSC, Box 2, No. 6494, sign. K-268-A-2-B, Fighting Koreans Backed by British Students, *World Student News,* Special Congress Issue Prague, No. 4, 20 August 1950, p. 3.

baying for blood by the Bloc representatives was echoed by some of his fellow-countrymen.[379] Worth noting is that the Scots had their own representative at the congress, outside the NUS proper, in the person of James Henderson.[380] The Irish student delegate, Paul O'Higgins, spoke of the discrimination "progressive" students faced in Ireland. Nonetheless, he maintained that even though young men and women were arrested and expelled from educational institutions for circulating the Stockholm Appeal, the "peace" movement was growing steadily in the emerald isle.[381] Noel Ebbels, speaking on behalf of Australian students, voiced his support for the Soviet Union and their efforts to terminate the war in Korea.[382] It should be added that the right to address the assembled delegates was not the monopoly of students. For instance, Professor J. D. Bernal's harangue to the receptive listeners, we are told, laced with the requisite sound and fury, drew thunderous applause.[383] So, too, did that of W. E. B. Du Bois.[384]

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[379] Průběh druhého dne zasedání kongresu [The course of the second day of the meeting], *Rudé právo,* 16 August 1950, p. 3. Jenkins had used details passed to him by the Information Research Department (IRD) of the British Foreign Office in preparing his speech. "The IRD was pleased: 'Jenkins' first-class performance in Prague shows that our very discreet handling and briefing has borne excellent fruit.' After the non-Communist groups split from the IUS the Foreign Office helped subsidise some of their efforts" (JENKS John, *British Propaganda and News Media in the Cold War*, p. 108). The British NUS disaffiliated from the IUS in 1950.

[380] Průběh čtvrtého dne zasedání [The course of the fourth day of the meeting], *Rudé právo,* 18 August 1950, p. 3.

[381] II. kongres MSS je výrazem odhodlání bojovat za mír, národní nezávislost a demokratisaci školství, p. 3. A fellow-comrade of Paul O'Higgins in the Irish Workers League in Dublin at the time, Roy Johnston, recalled "trying to sell the paper [*Irish Workers' Voice*] in public places and encountering personal hostility, a consequence of the apparent promotion of support for the USSR and the post-war Eastern European scene. Anti-communism was ingrained in Irish culture, a consequence of the perceived attitude of Communist governments to religion. The atmosphere had been made much worse by the Korean war. Our earlier attempts to make contact with the CPNI [Communist Party Northern Ireland] and to begin developing some analysis of the national question, under [Desmond] Greaves influence, had foundered; the Northern comrades, mostly crypto-Unionists, were glad of any excuse, such as that presented by the priority of the 'peace issue' seen globally, for not discussing all-Ireland issues. Our failure to do this undoubtedly fuelled the 1950s IRA" (JOHNSTON Roy, *Century of Endeavour*: *Politics in the 40s as seen by JJ and RJ*, 2003, available online at: http://www.rjtechne.org/century130703/1940s/polit40.htm (accessed 23 June 2017)).

[382] Třetí den zasedání kongresu [The third day of the congress], *Rudé právo,* 17 August 1950, p. 5. At Melbourne University, "Ebbels had come top of the first-class honours list in combined history and political science at the end of 1948 (jointly with Ian Turner); went to Prague as head of the Press Department of the IUS; and returned at the end of 1951 to move straight into his next party job, on the national committee of the Youth Carnival for Peace and Freedom. (It was rare for a communist to recognize a [*sic*] ex-member, but one morning in January 1952, when he was in Sydney for a national committee meeting, we happened to pass in Macquarie Street and to my surprise he turned his head, smiled, and said that he would be returning to Sydney soon: 'We must meet,' he called. Ebbels had become somewhat disillusioned during his stint in Prague. Alas, hitch-hiking back to Sydney early in February he was thrown off the back of a semi-trailer and died.)" (BARCAN Alan, *Radical Students: The Old Left at Sydney University*, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press 2002, p. 282.)

[383] Třetí den zasedání kongresu, p. 5.

[384] Du Bois's championing of the USSR would continue to the end of his life. In the revised edition of his biography of John Brown, published by International Publishers in New York a year before his death in 1963, for instance, he expressed the wish that the doomed abolitionist "could see today the results of the great revolution in Russia;

The finale to the Second Congress of the International Union of Students was a monster "peace" rally in Prague's Old Town Square. Contemporary photographs show the area massed with activists and onlookers, their banners and slogans, such as "Long Live Peace," "We Want Peace," "Hands off Korea," "Long Live the Soviet Union," "Long Live Comrade Stalin," and more of that ilk, raised aloft and obscuring, significantly, even the dominant image in the square, the monument to the martyred apostle of free speech, Jan Hus, who himself had once been a rector at Charles University. Among those urging on the mobilized crowd to greater effort in the cause of peace was Halsted Holman, American Vice-President of the IUS Council and head of the official US delegation to the conference.[385] "We came from a country," he declared, "where war preparations are going ahead in a speedy tempo, whose government unleashed an intervention war, supports many other such wars and increases persecution of its own people on a daily basis as a part of the war plans. […] We, the delegation from the United States, pledge to double our efforts in cooperation with the peace-loving people in the United States and the whole world. Together we will enforce peace." At the conclusion of his speech, it is reported, there were enthusiastic ovations with all those present chanting in unison "Long Live Progressive America."[386]

The Second Congress of the International Union of Students was not the only international event taking place in Prague at this time. A meeting of the Permanent Committee of the Partisans of Peace overlapped with the student gathering.[387] Once again Frédéric Jolit-Curie, Ilya Ehrenburg and Pietro Nenni, were among the Defenders of Peace delegates who travelled to Prague for the occasion.[388] So, too, did the African-American rights activist,

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that he could see the new world of Socialism and Communism expanding until it already comprises the majority of mankind" (DU BOIS W. E. B., *John Brown* [revised edition], Berlin, Seven Seas Publishers 1974, p. 296).

[385] KOTEK Joël, *Students and the Cold War*, p. 166. See also: Stanford University Oral History Collections, Stanford Digital Repository, Halsted R. Holman (2015), available online http://purl.stanford.edu/fp091ys5085 (accessed 7 May 2017).

[386] Velkou mírovou manifestací na Staroměstském náměstí vyvrcholil II. kongres Mezinárodního svazu studentstva [The Second Congress of the International Union of Students culminated in a great peace manifestation in Old Town Square], *Rudé právo,* 24 August 1950, p. 1.

[387] CUSC, Box 2, No. 6494, sign. K-268-A-2-B, Appeal of the Second Congress of the International Union of Students to the Students of the World.

[388] Slavnostní přísaha pracujícího lidu před představiteli světového mírového hnutí: Ještě usilovnějším budováním socialismu posílíme světovou frontu míru. Významné projevy vedoucích činitelů Světového výboru obránců míru na velké mírové manifestaci v Praze [Ceremonial oath of the working people in front of the world peace movement: By an even more eager building of socialism we will strengthen the peace front. Significant speeches

Charlotta Bass, who began her address by emphasizing how honoured she felt at having been given the opportunity to speak to so many "defenders of peace."[389] She then went on to assure the audience that there were "peace-loving" people in the US even though the situation there was alarming. "We know that we are now on the edge of a new war and we follow the headlines in the newspapers with increasing anxiety," a columnist for the communist daily, *Rudé právo*, quoted Bass as saying. "We know that the great threat to world peace comes from our beloved country. We saw the rise and flourishing of Fascism in Europe. When the Second World War ended, we thought Fascism was destroyed forever. We now know that the government of the United States invests millions of dollars to resurrect those putrescent governments which supported our enemies in the war. We see how the threat of Fascism is on the rise, particularly in our United States."[390]

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by the leading officials of the Defenders of Peace committee at the great peace manifestation in Prague], *Rudé právo,* 18 August 1950, p. 1.

[389] The American authorities were aware of Charlotta Bass's movements in Europe and her journey to Prague. The following is indicative of the kind of derogatory language used by FBI officials when turning over surveillance to the Central Intelligence Agency. Charlotta Bass is described as "short, elderly, negro [sic], female, gray hair, fat, wearing glasses, waddling walk" (GLASRUD Bruce A. – WINTZ Cary D. (eds.), *African Americans and the Presidency: The Road to the White House*, New York, Routledge 2010, p. 55).

[390] Velká mírová manifestace pražských pracujících [Great peace manifestation of the Prague working-class], *Rudé právo,* 18 August 1950, p. 3. As well as taking a swipe at the Marshall Plan, Charlotta Bass probably had West Germany in mind. Konrad Adenauer became Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany on 15 September 1949. He was unequivocally in favour of German rearmament and of positioning West Germany firmly within the Western camp. The issue of West German rearmament was very much on the Western agenda after the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950 when an invasion similar to that across the 38th Parallel on the Korean peninsula was envisaged from East Berlin. The Potsdam principle of German demilitarization was brushed aside with the American State Department two months later recommending a Western European army that would include contingents from West Germany. In the absence of such a force, it was thought, "a Soviet tank assault could not be stopped before it reached the Pyrenees" (WILLIAMS Charles, *Adenauer: The Father of New Germany*, London, Abacus 2003, p. 365). Although the threat of such a Soviet offensive was unfounded, the belief that West Germany should join NATO became Washington policy and enrolment finally took place on 9 May 1955. In Prague, where a sense of foreboding with regard to the expulsion of the German population from Czechoslovakia after the Second World War still lingered, fears of a revanchist Germany were stoked by Adenauer's policy of early release from prison of convicted Nazis and by the fact that among many in West Germany there seemed to be a glossing over of the experience of the Second World War, an apparent inability as yet to come to terms with the Prussian-Nazi aberration and to re-connect with German humanistic traditions. "As late as 1954," we are told, "less than half the population had a negative impression of Hitler" (BIDDISCOMBE Perry, *The Denazification of Germany: A History 1945–1950*, Gloucestershire, Tempus Publishing 2007, p. 219). See also: The Union of Anti-Fascist Fighters (ed.), *Criminals on the Bench: Documents Concerning Crimes Committed on the Occupied Territory of Czechoslovakia by Two Hundred and Thirty Nazi Judges and Public Prosecutors Who Today Hold Legal Posts in Western Germany*, Prague, Orbis 1960; KRÁL Dr Václav, *Lesson from History*, Prague, Orbis 1961; and National Council of the National Front of Democratic Germany Documentation Centre of the State Archives Administration of the German Democratic Republic, *Brown Book: War and Nazi Criminals in West Germany. State Economy Administration Army Justice Science*, n/d. The border between West Germany and Czechoslovakia was an unstable tectonic plate where two massive opposing forces rubbed against each other.

The Partisans of Peace were unanimous in agreeing that efforts to promulgate information about the Stockholm Peace Appeal worldwide should be stepped up in order to gain as many signatures and supporters as possible.[391] The delegates also reiterated their call to the UN Security Council to bring about a speedy and peaceful solution to the Korean conflict, and arrangements were put in train to hold their Second Peace Congress in England in November that year.[392]

THE SHEFFIELD-WARSAW CONGRESS: NOVEMBER 1950

But the battle strategy worked out in Prague did not go according to plan. The forces of reaction marshalled their administrative resources and counterattacked. The Partisans of Peace were put on the defensive and had to make do with Sheffield instead of London as a venue for the proposed conference. Then, in a speech to the Foreign Press Association on 1 November, Prime Minister Attlee resolutely declared: "we are not willing to throw wide our doors to those who seek to come here to subvert our institutions, to seduce our fellow citizens from their natural allegiance and their daily duties and to make propaganda for those who call us 'cannibals and warmongers.'"[393] For those with misgivings about the Attlee action, William Clark of *The Observer*, who had been invited to join the welcoming committe at Sheffield but declined, wrote that it might perhaps interest them to know that "the Czech delegation has announced its intention of presenting every member of the peace-loving Congress with an illuminated poem

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The threat of war hung in the air awaiting the spark that would set it off. Nor were Czechoslovak anxieties in any way allayed by NATO generals debating the feasibility, as well as the merits and demerits, of a tactical nuclear war in Central Europe throughout the 1950s and beyond (see: TRAUSCHWEIZER Ingo Wolfgang, *Creating Deterrence for Limited War: The US Army and the Defense of West Germany, 1953–1982*, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Maryland (2006), available online at: http://drum.lib.umd.edu/bitstream/handle/1903/3390/umi-umd-3202.pdf;sequence=1 (accessed 25 June 2017). See also: GRANT Matthew – ZIEMANN Benjamin, *Understanding the Imaginary War: Culture, Thought and Nuclear Conflict, 1945–90*, Manchester, Manchester University Press 2016; KISSINGER Henry, *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy*, New York, Norton 1957; KAHN Herman, *On Thermonuclear War*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press 1960; and KAHN Herman, *Thinking About the Unthinkable*, New York, Horizon Press 1962.

[391] Slavnostní přísaha pracujícího lidu před představiteli světového mírového hnutí, p. 1.

[392] Světový výbor obránců míru svolává jménem stamilionů mužů a žen II. mírový kongres [The Partisans of Peace calls a second peace congress in the name of hundreds of millions of men and women], *Rudé právo,* 19 August 1950, p. 2.

[393] Hansard, House of Commons Debate, 14 November 1950, Vol. 480, cc 1560–70.

which makes the following kindly suggestions: 'Wherever the American G. I. sets foot he will be murdered, poisoned, set aflame, beaten, starved, baked as in hell [...].'"[394]

Accordingly, the British Home Office, acting on the advice of the Information Research Department (IRD) within the Foreign Office, refused visas to Frédéric Joliot-Curie, Dmitri Shostakovich, Ilya Ehrenburg, and many others. In the past, the Information Research Department had "made use of the writing talents of Malcolm Muggeridge and George Orwell," and had even "subsidized the publication of *Animal Farm* internationally." Then in 1949, "the cachectic Orwell passed a blacklist of three dozen or so 'crypto-communists and fellow-travellers' to the IRD."[395] Immigration officials did not stand on ceremony when the full list of undesirables reached their desks. William Patterson, for example, the veteran communist and secretary of the American Civil Rights Congress, arrived by air from Paris on 27 October and, after being held at the airport overnight, was put aboard a US-bound plane the following day.[396] The upshot was that the conference was re-located to Warsaw.[397] Eight Czechoslovak and five charter planes were commissioned to take "nearly 200 Britons (including that peripatetic

[394] JENKS John, *British Propaganda and News Media in the Cold War*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press 2006, p. 121. The Sheffield Telegraph was similarly forthright: *"*The Sheffield Congress is the last place for peace lovers to find themselves. It is not concerned with peace at all. We got a clue to its real purpose by studying the records of the small group of communists and fellow-travellers who direct it. These include people who urge the Greek guerillas to fight their elected government; who urge the Malayan bandits to attack our troops and murder our civilians; who justify the aggression of North Korea against South Korea. They are surely the most bloodthirsty peace lovers in history" (BROWN Andrew, *J. D. Bernal*, p. 332).

[395] BROWN Andrew, *J. D. Bernal*, p. 333. Muggeridge and Orwell had become friends in Paris in 1944 when Orwell was a correspondent with the *Observer*. "Naturally they talked of writing, and Muggeridge took an 'inordinate interest' in *Animal Farm*, which Orwell was then just completing. Muggeridge even suggested to Orwell that at the end of the allegory, when the animals start going about on two legs, a drove of fellow-travellers, such as the Dean of Canterbury, assorted *New Statesman* writers, and others might put in an appearance going about on all fours. Orwell was amused but considered the idea 'too unkind'" (HUNTER Ian, *Malcolm Muggeridge*, p. 176).

[396] According to a report in the 28 October 1950 issue of *The Mail* in Adelaide, Australia, Patterson had visited Prague earlier the same month, where he told an audience: "We must develop a greater hatred for American imperialism than we ever developed for Hitler." In December 1951, Patterson "organized the historic petition to the United Nations, *We Charge Genocide*, documenting the pattern of lynchings and racist violence against African-Americans. 'Pat' had been indicted for contempt of Congress for refusing to co-operate with HUAC. During the HUAC hearings, Rep. Latham, who later brought the charges against him, ranted at Pat, calling him a 'black son of a bitch'" (ABT John J, *Advocate and Activist*, p. 196).

[397] "In Warsaw, a large printing plant that was being built was quickly converted into an assembly hall to accommodate the congress" (BOYD John, *A Noble Cause Betrayed ... but Hope Lives On: Pages from a Political Life. Memoirs of a Former Ukrainian Canadian Communist*, Edmonton, University of Alberta 1999, p. 19, available online at: https://archive.org/stream/noblecausebetray64boyd/noblecausebetray64boyd_djvu.txt (accessed 29 January 2017)). For a contemporary commentary, see, for example: From Sheffield to Warsaw: Triumphant March of Peace, *World Youth,* December 1950.

fellow-traveller, the Dean of Canterbury, Hewlett Johnson),"[398] as well as Pablo Picasso and J. D. Bernal, to Prague, "where they were greeted by a large contingent of singing boys and girls,"[399] before continuing the final leg of their journey to Warsaw.

At the conference itself it was very much a case of more of the same as far as the speechifying went. Alexander Fadeyev, Secretary-General of the Union of Soviet Writers, "treated the crowd to his trademark vitriol, accusing the Americans of turning Korea 'into a desert of ruins and ashes, flooding the country with the blood of children, and performing all sorts of fascist bestialities, similar to those that led to the Nuremberg Trial.' The fact that the simultaneous translation service was not working properly did little to dampen enthusiasm."[400] At the end of the proceedings, a large number of the British delegates returned from Poland to Britain, all expenses paid, on the infamous Polish cruise ship the S. S. *Batory*.[401] This was the same passenger liner that the German communist agent, Gerhart Eisler, brother of the composer Hanns Eisler and of the legendary communist-turned-informer, Ruth Fischer, had used to abscond from the US, and a possible five-year gaol sentence for illegal entry, in May 1949,[402]

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[398] DEERY Phillip, The Dove Flies East, p. 464.

[399] BROWN Andrew, *J. D. Bernal*, p. 335.

[400] *Ibid.,* p. 336. Fadeyev had "introduced himself to the free world with his unique performance at the 1948 Wroclaw International Peace Congress when he indulged in extraordinarily savage attacks on Western culture. He vilified the 'decadent British intellectuals,' denounced American culture as 'giving off the stench of decay' and came out with the oft-quoted statement: '*If hyenas could type and jackals could use fountain pens, they would write like T. S. Eliot, Eugene O'Neill, Dos Passos, Jean-Paul Sartre or André Malraux*'" (PALOCZI-HORVATH George, *The Writer and the Commissar*, London, The Bodley Head 1960, pp. 24–25). Fadeyev shot himself in 1956. "I thought I was guarding a temple," he wrote in his suicide note, "and it turned out to be a latrine" (TZOULIADIS Tim, *The Forsaken,* p. 321).

[401] "Their Polish hosts, sympathizing deeply with them because of the hardships British 'austerity' had imposed, generously gave each of them a parcel of Polish food when they departed. Along with the food parcels, the ever-thoughtful Communists included quantities of propaganda leaflets, and when we reached Southampton these leaflets were left aboard the ship in very large numbers" (CWIKLINSKI Jan*, The Captain Leaves His Ship: The Story of the Captain of the S. S. Batory by Jan Cwiklinski Formerly Master of the Polish Motorship Batory, as Told to Hawthorne Daniel*, New York, Doubleday and Company 1955, p. 231).

[402] CAUTE David, *The Great Fear*, pp. 233–234. According to D. N. Pritt, Eisler eluded the American task force which searched the vessel in New York "by sitting quietly in a chair on the deck." However, when the S. S. *Batory* docked in Britain, the fugitive was "frog-marched" off the ship by British police on foot of an American arrest warrant. At the ensuing Bow Street Court hearing in London, D. N. Pritt, who appeared for Eisler, secured his acquittal. But, Pritt writes, the affair was not quite over, since Eisler "needed to continue his interrupted journey to Germany, without further interference from the Americans. The best way was to put him on one of the Czechoslovak planes that then flew direct from London to Prague, whence he could easily travel to Berlin; but they normally flew over Western Germany, and US military planes in that country could easily force the Czechoslovak plane to land, and the US authorities were so angry that they seemed quite likely to take that course […] I found the Home Secretary fairly willing to help […] he met my suggestion of false papers with the frank statement that any forgery that proved to be necessary could be most efficiently carried out inside the Home Office. In the end, though I forget what precise arrangements were

and which convicted fellow-Soviet intelligence agent, Valentin Alekseyevich Gubichev, had likewise sailed out of New York on two months earlier.[403]

In terms of fighting like with like, the Congress for Cultural Freedom was the most prominent anti-communist drive. Launched in West Berlin on 26 June 1950 by the American journalist, Melvin J. Lasky, the Congress attracted many leading disillusioned communists. Among them were the Italian novelist Ignazio Silone, the American academic Sidney Hook, his friend and fellow-philosopher James Burnham, who "delivered an attack on neutralism, pacifism, and the 'pious litany of the Left,'"[404] and Arthur Koestler. The conference was not unexpectedly attacked by ardent Stalinists, such as Gerhart Eisler from his nest in the Russian sector of Berlin, who referred to the participants as "literary monkeys"[405] but was also assailed by some of the delegates themselves, many of whom, with no political hymn sheet to sing from, found Koestler's anti-communist showmanship distasteful. The British historian Hugh Trevor-Roper was particularly scathing, maintaining that he, at least, had never swallowed "that obscurantist doctrinal rubbish" which never fully leaves the digestive system.[406] The highlight of the congress was the rally of some 15,000 Berliners, with memories of the Soviet blockade the year before still fresh in their minds, at the Funkturm Garten in the city.[407]

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made, Eisler reached Prague safely" (PRITT D. N., *The Autobiography of D. N. Pritt: Part Two*, pp. 269–272). "In your family, things happen as in Shakespeare," was how Charlie Chaplin summed up the family woes to Hanns Eisler (BETZ Albrecht, *Hanns Eisler: Political Musician*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1982, p. 197). See also: LEVINE Caroline, *Provoking Democracy: Why We Need the Arts*, New Jersey, Wiley-Blackwell 2007, pp. 82–85. The Prague route from the US to East Berlin was also an option contemplated by the novelist Heinrich Mann: "I'd like to pretend that I'm travelling to Prague," he wrote to the writer and diplomat F. C. Weiskopf, "and actually go there to begin with. I'm entitled because I have a Czech passport" (STEPHAN Alexander, *"Communazis": FBI Surveillance of German Emigré Writers*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press 2000, pp. 82–83).

[403] RAFALKO Frank J. (ed.), *A Counterintelligence Reader,* Vol. 3, pp. 59–60, available online at: https://fas.org/irp/ops/ci/docs/ci3/ch1.pdf (accessed 11 May 2016).

[404] DIGGINS John P., *Up from Communism*, New York, Columbia University Press 1994, p. 326.

[405] CESARANI David, *Arthur Koestler: The Homeless Mind*, New York, The Free Press 1999, pp. 361–364.

[406] *Ibid.*

[407] For Burnham, "The Berlin airlift was 'a decision not to decide,' a timid effort to avoid a Soviet confrontation instead of sending an armed convoy through the blockade, a 'minute risk' that would have brought 'enormous gain' by demonstrating to the world that the communists can be beaten at their own game" (DIGGINS John P., *Up from Communism*, p. 323). See also BURNHAM James, Our Spineless Foreign Policy, *American Mercury*, LXX (January 1950), pp. 3–13. For an alternative reading of the Berlin Airlift, see: WHEELER George S. *Who Split Germany? Wall Street and the West German Trade Union Leaders*, Berlin (GDR), Confederation of Free German Trade Unions 1962, pp. 102–103. Wheeler saw the airlift as: "One of the most misunderstood events in recent history, and one of the greatest Cold War propaganda successes of Wall Street."

PRAGUE: THE "LITTLE MOSCOW" OF SATELLITE EUROPE

The Australian authorities were in somewhat of a quandary over the Sheffield-Warsaw conference affair. As mentioned earlier, effective from 1 September 1950, all Australians who intended to visit countries behind the Iron Curtain had first to obtain permission from their Department of Immigration and the Australian Security Intelligence Organization. As for those Australians already overseas whose itinerary included just such a trip, in particular those who had left for Sheffield for the Partisans of Peace conference and then been re-channelled to Warsaw, among whom was the weathered activist, wife of the Lord Chief Justice of Australia, and driving force behind the "Sheepskins for Russia" campaign during the war, Jessie Street, they, too, were included in the new regulation and would need to have their passports endorsed for travel to Poland. However, since they had already left for Prague *en route* to their destination, the British authorities were requested to "impound the Australians' passports if they returned to the UK and the Australian immigration officers were ordered to seize the passports when the delegates returned to Australia."[408]

In all, a total of 25 Australians "defied the ban and assembled in Warsaw."[409] But retribution would follow and, once the cadres reached home, they would go no more a roving overseas for some considerable time to come. One of the more prominent peace activists, Ian Turner, had his passport confiscated at Freemantle on his return "in punishment for his travel in the forbidden countries in Eastern Europe."[410] For the moment, however, it was fun and fellowship. "On the way back to London [from the Warsaw Congress]," wrote Turner, "a happy night in the *U Fleků* beerhall in Prague, with my Australian comrades, the Gotts and the Murray-Smiths."[411] Soon this close-knit phalanx of Australian Party cadres would be united again and

[408] CAIN Frank, *The Australian Security Service Organization: An Unofficial History*, Victoria (Australia), Spectrum Publications 1994, p. 101. A similar fate befell those Australians who attended the [East] Berlin World Youth Festival in 1951. "The festival was a triumph for the Australian dancers, whose performances were very well received but, on their return to Australia, their passports along with those of the other delegates were confiscated as had been the case for the Warsaw contingent" (DOULMAN Jane – LEE David, *Every Assistance and Protection: A History of the Australian Passport*, Sydney, Federation Press 2008, p. 137).

[409] See: National Archives of Australia at: http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/snapshots/uncommon-lives/jessie-street/index.aspx (accessed 19 June 2017). The fact that Jessie Street was travelling on a British passport, to which she was entitled since her father was English, complicated matters for the authorities in Canberra.

[410] INGLIS Amirah *The Hammer and Sickle and the Washing Up*, p. 102.

[411] TURNER Ian, My Long March, in *Room for Manoeuvre* (selected and edited by Leonie Sandercock and Stephen Murray-Smith), Victoria (Australia), Drummond Publishing 1982, p. 131. Edith Pargeter was quite

enjoying their beery get-togethers down under, passportless, but all three at least out of harm's way and far more knowledgeable about the realities of life behind the Curtain, even if this knowledge was, as yet, kept to themselves.

With the international situation deteriorating as the fortunes of war see-sawed on the Korean peninsula and with Australian troop casualties mounting, many in Australia wholeheartedly supported the government in its travel restrictions. "Communist Trips Abroad a Danger to Security" was a headline in the 24 July 1950 edition of the Sydney *Morning Herald*. Underneath the caption, the columnist noted: "The Governments of the North Atlantic Alliance, and of democratic countries outside it, must consider whether they can afford any longer to allow the agents of Soviet Russia in their states to attend conferences dedicated to subversion." There was more going on at these communist gatherings than met the eye, it was claimed: "In the Russian sector of Berlin last week," the writer declared, "the 'German Socialist Unity Party' held a congress graced by the presence of '50 key Communists' from 17 countries. Nothing is more certain than that these visitors did not assemble in Berlin merely to hear ancient Wilhelm Pieck, the dummy President of a dummy East German Government, call on the West German Communists to sow general industrial unrest. Their journey is more likely to have had Prague – the 'Little Moscow' of satellite Europe – as its real destination. A meeting of the Cominform, and a special briefing by Moscow of its agents in the West as well as its supporters in the East, would both conform with, and confirm, the growing tension in world relations."[412]

fond of the black beer on offer in U Fleků, too, although she found the pub itself "dirtier" than St. Thomas Brewery (u svatého Tomáše) on the other side of the river in Malá Strana, which had also been brewing its own black beer since the Middle Ages and, in addition, offered "in the way of music everything from 'Sedlak, Sedlak,' to 'Finnegan's Rainbow'" (PARGETER Edith, *The Coast of Bohemia*, pp. 248 and 251).

[412] Communist Trips Abroad a Danger to Security, *The Sydney Morning Herald,* 24 June 1950.

THE CHURCHES

CHURCH AND STATE AT LOGGERHEADS

As dialogue got underway between the Czechoslovak authorities following the communist takeover and the main religious denomination in the country, the Catholic Church, over issues of property, education, and the degree of state intervention in clerical affairs, intractable rivalries were blurred for a while. Indeed, an uninformed observer who happened to be in the precinct of Prague Castle on 14 June 1948, when negotiations were in progress, might have thought a harmonious balance had been reached as "the entire Cabinet together with President Gottwald attended Mass celebrated by Archbishop Beran in St. Vitus Cathedral,"[413] all no doubt looking like the proverbial cat who had swallowed the cream.

However, the hosannas and manifestations of goodwill notwithstanding, the talks eventually broke down with nothing achieved. The result was that the communists decided on unilateral action and passed their own laws on the matters in dispute despite formidable opposition from clerics and the laity alike, particularly in Slovakia. A report from Prague in the 30 July 1948 edition of the London-based *Catholic Herald* proclaimed that: "More than 300,000 pilgrims to shrines of Our Lady in Czechoslovakia within the last six weeks, is the answer of the Catholics of Slovakia and Bohemia to the new Communist domination of their country and the more immediate threat of open persecution."

The battle lines were drawn up. Two monolithic forces were pitted against each other in the age-old struggle between church and state. The description by the American ex-communist, Scott Nearing, of the Catholic Church "jealously guarding its self-assumed monopoly of truth and trusteeship of the faith and morals of the human race"[414] could apply in equal measure to

[413] BUSEK Vratislav – SPULBER Nicholas (eds.), *Czechoslovakia*, New York, Frederick A. Praeger 1957, p. 143.
[414] NEARING Scott, *Socialism in Practice. The Transformation of East Europe*, New York, New Century Publishers 1962, pp. 103–104. Nearing's son, John Scott, was one of the radical American pioneers who travelled to the Soviet Union in the early 1930s to help build socialism and was lucky to get out with his Russian-born wife and daughter 10 years later in 1942. His book *Behind the Urals: An American Worker in Russia's City of Steel* (United States, Create Space Independent Publishing 2016) is an account of his life in the new Soviet industrial city of Magnitogorsk.

the Communist Party. Attack was met with counter-attack.[415] On 10 June 1949, a 300-strong group of lay people and priests gathered at *Obecní Dům* in Prague to form the pro-government Catholic Action organization, *Katolická akce*. Archbishop Beran retaliated by issuing a pastoral letter branding the new group schismatic. On 20 June, the Vatican excommunicated members of *Katolická akce*. Eight days later, on 28 June, the threat of excommunication was extended to include all Communist Party members and their allies, and marriage between Catholics and communists was prohibited.[416]

The pot was kept boiling by the so-called Čihošť Miracle, which very much occupied the authorities in Prague at the time. When Canadian Party leader, Tim Buck, arrived in March 1950, he was even favoured with a special showing of a newly-made film that deconstructed the "miracle" to a series of manipulated wires and pulleys.[417] The phenomenon itself occurred on 11 December 1949, when parishioners in the village of Čihošť, 100 kilometres or so south-east of Prague, reported that while the priest was giving a sermon in the local church dedicated to the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a wooden cross over the tabernacle moved several times, with a distinct inclination towards the west on one occasion.[418] The *New York Times* correspondent, Dana Adams Schmidt, who, together with his wife, had been in Prague since April 1947 maintained that he picked up the news item from the Czechoslovak communist daily, *Rudé právo*. It seemed to have the makings of a good story, so Schmidt along with John R. Higgins of the *United Press* drove out to investigate.[419] The village had become a place of

[415] For more information, see for example: KAPLAN Karel – PALEČEK Pavel, *Komunistický režim a politické procesy v Československu,* Brno, Barrister & Principal 2008; SKALICKÝ Karel, The Vicissitudes of the Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia, 1918–1988, in STONE Norman – STROUHAL Edward (eds.), *Czechoslovakia: Crossroads and Crises, 1918–1988*, London, Palgrave Macmillan 1989, pp. 314–317.
[416] See: SKALICKÝ Karel, The Vicissitudes of the Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia, 1918–1988, pp. 314–317; COPPA Frank J., *Politics and the Papacy in the Modern World*, New York, Praeger 2008, p. 150.
[417] NACR, fund the International Department of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, 100/3, sv. 103, a.j. 331, Report on the stay of Tim Buck in Prague, 21 March 1950.
[418] SCHMIDT Dana Adams, *Anatomy of a Satellite*, p. 22; KAPLAN Karel – PALEČEK Pavel, *Komunistický režim a politické procesy v Československu,* pp. 75–76.
[419] For Schmidt's articles on the Čihošť miracle, see for example: SCHMIDT Dana Adams, Miracle at Cihost, *The New York Times,* 10 February 1950; Miracle Alleged to Be Faked, *The New York Times,* 5 April 1950; "Miracle" Reaction Frightens Czechs: Villagers Close Their Doors before Describing Events after Priest is Arrested, *The New York Times,* 9 April 1950; US Writer Linked to Czech Miracle: An Imaginary Talk in Prague Booklet Depicts New York Times Man as Plotter, *The New York Times,* 10 April 1950; Prague Says Priest Faked Miracle of Moving Cross, *The New York Times,* 7 May 1950; NY Times Reporter Quits Prague to Escape Arrest, *The New York Times,* 2 June 1950. The *United Press* correspondent, John R. Higgins, was accused of "unobjective reporting" and

pilgrimage and variations on the initial apparition tale had begun to circulate.[420] *Pravda* of Pilsen printed "a new version in which the Virgin Mary was said to have appeared in the clouds waving an American flag and followed by United States soldiers and tanks."[421]

Proceeding in line with the old stratagem that ridicule is the best antidote, but ridicule hand in hand with a ruthless clampdown, the authorities re-wrote the story casting the parish priest of the district, Father Josef Toufar, as the villain in a wider and more insidious plot that had the United States, acting in concert with the Vatican, as the back-room instigator of warmongering provocations against Czechoslovakia and the "peace" camp. The "cunning" Dana Adams Schmidt was up to his neck in it, at least according to Jiří Žák, the author of a booklet on the subject that was published in April 1950, in which Žák gives a dramatic reconstruction of a spurious meeting between the arch-conspirators, Dana Adams Schmidt and the papal internuncio to Prague, Monsignor Ottavio de Liva, where the devilish plot is concocted so that "the ordinary people here will immediately think that Gracious God wants them to turn to the West."[422]

Father Toufar was arrested and died during interrogation by the Czechoslovak security police, the StB.[423] When Schmidt learnt that his name was listed in an indictment drawn up for

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ordered to leave the country by 15 April. Another colleague, Nathan Polowetzky of the *Associated Press* had been expelled on similar grounds the previous week.

[420] A somewhat similar story had surfaced in faraway Assisi in February the previous year just as the Italian election campaign, in which the communists were expected to do well, was getting underway. The eighteen-foot-high statue of the Blessed Virgin on the roof of the Basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli was seen to bow by some onlookers on a number of occasions at dusk. Members of the region's Communist Party were incensed, maintaining that this was nothing but an "electioneering trick" prompted by the United States. Nevertheless, as thousands flocked to see a repeat of the miracle, rumour had it that following the statue's original tilt "the collection boxes in the church were filled with torn-up Communist party cards" (GUNTHER John, *Behind the Curtain*, pp. 2–3).

[421] SCHMIDT Dana Adams, *Anatomy of a Satellite*, pp. 24–25. See also: HODAČ Vladimír, *Čihošťský zázrak,* Prague, publishing house unknown 1950; *Poučení z Čihoště,* Prague, Ministerstvo informací a osvěty 1950. For a more informative work, see for example: DRAŠNER František, Čihošťský zázrak: Zpráva o P. Josefu Toufarovi, Prague, Libri 2002.

[422] ŽÁK Jiří*, Exkomunikace, zázraky, sabotáže: Od Krakova přes Čihošť k Banské Bystrici* [Excommunication, miracles, sabotage: From Cracow through Čihošť to Banská Bystrica], Prague, Rudé Právo 1950, pp. 50–53. In the foreword, his friend and fellow-writer, Jiří Macků, labels Schmidt and De Liva, "criminals, racketeers, spies, and saboteurs vainly trying to disrupt the building of our new world" (*Ibid.,* p. 7). See also: SCHMIDT Dana Adams, *Anatomy of a* Satellite, pp. 23–25.

[423] In November 2014, Father Josef Toufar's remains were exhumed from a mass grave in Prague's Ďáblice Cemetery and, after authentication tests had been carried out by forensic geneticists, were re-buried under the floor of his old parish church in Čihošť in July 2015. It might be noted in passing that in 1958, this time near the town of Turzovka in north-west Slovakia, a forester named Matúš Lašut reported seeing an apparition of the Virgin in the wood where he had been praying. Condemned for spreading false tales and misleading

the court in Prague, he and his wife grabbed what few belongings they could remove from their room in the Esplanade Hotel on Washingtonova without arousing suspicion and, perhaps glancing wistfully at the street sign as he turned the corner, drove hurriedly to Rozvadov on the border with West Germany on 31 May 1950.[424] According to Robert Vogeler, a fellow-American who at the time was himself languishing in a prison cell in Hungary, Schmidt was lucky to get out of Czechoslovakia. He could, in the words of Vogeler, "have made an ideal scapegoat, especially since his wife was the daughter of Russian fugitives who had settled in Turkey following the Bolshevik *coup d'état* in 1917" and "would almost certainly have suffered the fate that was to befall [William] Oatis, the correspondent of the Associated Press, in April, 1951."[425]

In the meantime, coercion in Czechoslovakia was proceeding apace. On 31 March 1950, 10 clergymen were put on trial accused of treason and spying for the Vatican. Two weeks later, all monasteries and convents in the country were closed and the buildings turned into flats and government offices. The religious orders who had been settled there for centuries had their possessions confiscated or destroyed by the State Security Service. Libraries were ransacked

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his fellow-citizens, Lašut was imprisoned, beaten, confined to a mental institution, and then imprisoned again in a bid to make him withdraw his claims but to no avail.

[424] SCHMIDT Dana Adams, *Anatomy of a Satellite*, pp. 27–28. Earlier the same month, further south along the frontier region between Czechoslovakia and West Germany, a Sudeten expellee came across a wooden statue of the Virgin Mary from his old chapel in Unterlichtbuchet (Dolní Světlé Hory) "lying at the border." Nobody could account for it. Some suggested that "possibly religious Czech soldiers" had "brought her across the border and laid her in the grass there, since the Madonna herself had no place [in Czechoslovakia] after the entire German population was chased away." More claimed that "the Madonna arrived by herself carrying the cross. Others reported that when the statue was found, it had stood at the border and bowed. Alternatively, it had 'emigrated' and was discovered by local children who followed a heavenly voice into the bushes. It shone brightly in the light to draw attention to itself, or pangs of conscious [*sic*] had forced a Czech to deliver it across the border" (KOMSKA Yuliya, *The Icon Curtain: The Cold War's Quiet Border*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press 2015, pp. 84–86).

[425] VOGELER Robert A., *I Was Stalin's Prisoner*, London, W. H. Allen 1952, pp. 268–269. Robert Vogeler, who had been the representative of *International Telephone and Telegraph* in Hungary, Austria, and Czechoslovakia, was arrested by the Hungarian security police in November, 1949. Charged with economic, military, and atomic espionage in February the following year, he made a full confession of guilt in court and was sentenced to fifteen years with hard labour. After serving 17 months, he was released and returned to the US. In his later account, Vogeler admitted that he had made twenty-three business trips to Czechoslovakia between 1947 and 1949, on one of which, in the spring of 1947, he visited the uranium mines in Jáchymov, which were being excavated under Russian control by political prisoners. In his own words: "In the spring of 1947, during one of my early visits to Czechoslovakia, I drove up to Carlsbad (now Karlovy Vary) with a Czech friend of mine. It was no secret that the uranium mines in nearby Jachymov had become one of Russia's principal sources of atomic raw materials. Neither was there anything secret about my trip. Thousands of people used to drive up to the Erz Mountains, to see what they could see, and I was as curious as the next man […]. It was true that, on my return to Vienna, I told certain representatives of our government what little I knew about Jachymov. Would any American interested in the survival of his country have done any less?" (*Ibid.*, pp. 69–70.)

and ruined.[426] The monks and nuns were incarcerated, many in the Premonstratensian friary at Želiv, which had been turned into a strict regime internment camp. On 27 November 1950, the trial of Stanislav Zela, theologian and auxiliary bishop of Olomouc, opened in Prague.[427] On 10 January 1951, the trial of three Slovak bishops was staged.[428]

In the early stages of the war between church and state, people in rural communities tried to "protect their priests against the police and in some small encounters both policemen and faithful have been killed."[429] Such local clashes, however, provided the authorities with the pretext to take the special measures they had been angling for. The former news editor of the *Daily Worker* in London, Douglas Hyde, recalled an executive meeting at the time when discussion turned to the situation in Czechoslovakia and being told that "those special measures would probably have to take the form of armed action at some point. Sooner or later the Catholic

[426] An eyewitness relates what happened to the old library of the Benedictine Monastery in Rajhrad in southern Moravia: "Rajhrad, a Benedictine monastery near Brno, had a beautiful library, a very ancient library filled with precious books. Agents of the state came and took all the books outside, threw them into piles, and left them there in the rain. 'My father lamented when he saw something so barbarian. He went there several times and tried to take some books, but it was not possible. They were closely guarded by the militia. Later on my friend and I learned that some of the books had been taken to old empty barns just outside the town. We went there together at night, in the dark, and we filled several boxes, as much as we were able to carry. We could not use a flashlight, so had no way of choosing the more valuable manuscripts. We took what we could and hurried off when the soldier went away. The boxes were so heavy, it was hard to carry them. When we sorted the books, we tried to determine what kind of book it was from how the book was bound. The rare books we hid under the staircase in the tower of the church. Later on we carried all the books to our home. Once one of the boxes broke open in front of the railway station and everything fell out. I prayed I would not be discovered, because if I had been caught, I would have gone straight to prison. We hid the books until 1968, when we gave them to the Jesuits'" (WINTER Miriam Therese, *Out of the Depths: The Story of Ludmila Javorova Ordained Roman Catholic Priest*, New York, Crossroad Publishing 2001, p. 55).
[427] Two days later, the persecution of the Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia was raised in the House of Lords in London. In the course of his opening address, the Archbishop of York informed peers: "In Czechoslovakia, the previous assent of the State is required before anyone performs spiritual duties. A specially appointed Minister has been given full control of all ecclesiastical appointments; and not only that, district committees have been set up with wide powers over religious teaching, societies and property. This summer, only two or three months ago, a law was passed in Czechoslovakia inflicting severe penalties on any priest or minister who performs any pastoral function without the consent of the State" (Hansard, House of Lords Debate, 29 November 1950, Vol. 169, cc 604–52). The Crusade for Freedom was launched by General Eisenhower in September 1950 to help "the peoples of the captive nations," and the Catholic Cardinal in New York, Francis Spellman, fully endorsed the initiative "to save mankind from this cancerous growth of Communism and the evils growing out of its rotted roots" (http://coldwarradios.blogspot.cz/2010/12/give-us-this-day-our-daily-truth_03.html (accessed 14 April, 2016)). So, too, did Ronald Reagan, president of the Screen Actors Guild. Reagan was also the narrator in the Crusade's 1951 fund-raising documentary, *The Big Truth*, which opens with two soldiers in Czechoslovak uniform in hot pursuit of a man fleeing across the heavily-fortified border to the American zone in West Germany, a setting not unlike the real-life escape of the Czech comedian and future Radio Free Europe star, Jara Kohout, in October 1948.
[428] Czechoslovak Ministry of Information and Public Culture, *The Trial of The Treasonable Slovak Bishops Ján Vojtaššák, Michal Buzalka and, Pavol Gojdič*, Prague, Orbis 1951.
[429] SULZBERGER C. L., *A Long Row of Candles*, London, Macdonald 1969, pp. 406–407.

peasants could be provoked into violence, some incident would be presented as the intended forerunner of armed insurrection and tough counter-measures would then provide the chance for conducting the thorough-going purge which was required. A bit of terror would soon settle them."[430]

It did but the lesson had to be reinforced, particularly since, as had happened earlier in the USSR, many of the farmers were resisting the government's policy of collectivization and the Church was on their side. Such obduracy would not be tolerated. The village of Babice in southern Moravia was selected as the spot where the showdown with the "kulaks" and their allies would be staged. The occasion followed an armed attack on the local communist-dominated council in the summer of 1951, an incident that may well have been a provocation by the StB, in which three committee members were shot dead. Following the usual choreographed trials that lasted from July 1951 to May 1952, 11 men were hanged, including two priests and, not surprisingly, the most well-to-do property owners in the locality.[431] Then in July 1954 it was the turn of the Bishop of Litoměřice, Štěpán Trochta, to be accused of spying for the Vatican and be handed a sentence of 25 years.[432] So, with religious and other real or potential objectors dead or behind bars or entombed alive in the uranium mines at Jáchymov, the country was indeed pacified. That put an effective stop to the traditionally steady stream of regular and secular Catholic priests and nuns visiting the country, except for those few who were prepared to defy the state and travel clandestinely.

When it came to the smaller churches, state policy was an adroit mixture of purge and perquisites. Some were simply dissolved. On 28 April 1950, following the example of the Soviet Ukraine in 1946, the Greek Catholic Uniate Church in eastern Slovakia was forced to

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[430] HYDE Douglas, *I Believed*, pp. 228–229. Hyde's "'autobiography of a former British communist,' published in Britain in January 1951, provided a document of Cold War disillusionment in communism with which perhaps only *The God that Failed* bears comparison. On its first appearance in Britain – shortly after the original American edition – *I Believed* was selling some three thousand copies daily [*Times*, 25 January 1951]" (GILDART Keith – HOWELL David, *Dictionary of Labour Biography,* Vol. XIII, p. 167). Early in 1951, the *Daily Express* serialized Hyde's confessions and the paper "sold up to 65,000 extra copies each day" (JENKS John, *British Propaganda and News Media in the Cold War*, p. 46).

[431] For more information, see, for instance: http://www.mistapametinaroda.cz/?id=401&lc=en and http://www.news.va/en/news/czech-republic-unveils-bust-to-executed-priest.

[432] Bishop Trochta was released in the 1960 amnesty. See: http://www.kampocesku.cz/article/7290/stepan-cardinal-trochta.

merge with the Orthodox Church. The Greek Catholics had already been considerably reduced in number by the Soviet annexation of Ruthenia and the purpose behind the fusion of both churches at this juncture was to ensure that what believers did remain would no longer profess loyalty to the Pope in Rome.[433] The Jehovah's Witnesses were banned outright in 1949. Their members were subjected to intermittent harassment by the security forces until a show trial in March 1953, when leading Witnesses were given long prison sentences.[434] In January 1950, two Mormon missionaries from the US, Stanley E. Abbott and C. Aldon Johnson, were arrested and accused of spying. Following detention and interrogation, they were deported on 23 February. Then on 6 April, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints itself, whose total followers in the country numbered fewer than 200, was officially proscribed.[435] In June 1950, the Salvation Army was disbanded and its property seized.[436] The year after it was the turn of the YMCA.[437]

The two main Protestant churches, on the other hand, the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren and the Czechoslovak National Church, possibly swayed by their traditional hostility to the Catholic Church, were in general more flexible in their dealings with the new regime. Furthermore, the fact that Protestant clergymen, unlike celibate Catholic priests, were, in most cases, married, with children to educate and bring up, would probably have made them more susceptible to pressure from the authorities.

In addition, there were many in the Protestant camp who actively embraced the country's anchorage inside the Soviet sphere of influence with open arms. Within the episcopate of the Czechoslovak Church, for instance, Dr Miroslav Novák, Bishop of Prague, "announced that his church supports the new government of Communist premier Klement Gottwald."[438] Dr

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[433] For more detailed information, see: BUSEK Vratislav – SPULBER Nicholas (eds.), *Czechoslovakia*, pp. 142–153. See also: SCHMIDT Dana Adams, *Anatomy of a Satellite*, p. 329; COURTOIS Stéphane et al, *The Black Book of Communism*, Harvard, Harvard University Press 1999, pp. 410–412; and KORBEL Josef, *The Communist Subversion of Czechoslovakia 1938–1948*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press 1959, pp. 139–141.
[434] See: https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/302000011, pp. 176–183 (accessed 3 July 2017).
[435] See: http://www.mission.net/czech/prague/page.php?pg_id=1842 (accessed 16 November 2011).
[436] See: http://www.salvationarmy.org/ihq/news/04254332B4B8DE3D802577DE0054A890 (accessed 3 July 2017).
[437] See: http://www.en.ymca.cz/about-ymca/history/ (accessed 3 July 2017).
[438] Lewiston Evening Journal, March 16 1948, available online at: https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1913&dat=19480316&id=Ei4jAAAAIBAJ&sjid=-mYFAAAAIBAJ&pg=4807,6404325&hl=en (accessed 30 July 2016).

Novák maintained that he offered his backing to the communists not because he felt the need "to swim with the current of the times, but because we see in the instituting of a socialist society the first and necessary precondition for Jesus' message of the Kingdom of God on Earth, a message of the Kingdom of brotherhood, love, and freedom finally becoming a reality."[439] Another factor motivating his decision, he claimed was his experience of the appalling unemployment in the first Czechoslovak Republic, "I had to christen children in places which could hardly be called homes. Their parents could not come to church because they and their children lacked adequate clothing. […] But now in the new Czechoslovakia and other socialist countries, such things could not exist." He went on: "[…] Christian activities have far greater freedom in the socialist countries than in the capitalist world. The representatives of these lands are not dependent on the good will of exploiters of the working people, who know how to exploit religion, also, in the interest of their purses."[440]

THE PROGRESSIVE PILGRIMS AND THE CHRISTIAN FESTIVAL OF 1950

The Professor of Theology at the Comenius University in Prague, Josef Jukl Hromádka, would have found no fault with that. He was a leading spokesman for the Evangelical Church and a man for whom there was "no fundamental contradiction between Christianity and communism."[441] Rather, the real enemy confronting Western Protestants was in his opinion "the anti-Soviet Catholic front."[442] Hromádka, who had been deeply traumatized by the 1938 Anglo-French capitulation to Hitler at Munich, fled to the United States a year later and was appointed Guest Professor of Apologetics and Christian Ethics at Princeton Theological

[439] ABRAMS Bradley F., *The Struggle for the Soul of the Nation: Czech Culture and the Rise of Communism*, Maryland, Rowman and Littlefield 2005, p. 260.
[440] PHM, CP/CENT/ORG/01, box 7–11, Visit to Czechoslovakia: The Report of British Clergymen Who Attended Christian and Peace Conferences and Festivals in Czechoslovakia on July 1, 2, 3 and 4 1950, published by the Group, distributed by Collet's 1950, p. 12; *Ibid.,* "The World Peace Congress and the Role of the Churches": Speech by Dr Miroslav Novák, of the Church of Czechoslovakia, Bishop of Prague, to the Conference of Christian Priests and Ministers in Luhačovice, 2 July 1950, in Bishop M. Novak, The Church Demands Peace, with an Introduction by Edward Charles, London, Illustrated Periodicals 1950, pp. 5–12.
[441] BUSEK Vratislav – SPULBER Nicholas (eds.), *Czechoslovakia*, p. 152. Hromádka belongs to the theological tradition of Reinhold Niebuhr in the US, Paul Tillich in Germany, John Macmurray in Scotland, and the Russian exile, Nikolai Berdyaev, "religious thinkers, combining Marxist descriptions of the alienation of the proletariat with pronouncements of judgment upon the rich culled from the Scriptures" (MERKLEY Paul, *Reinhold Niebuhr: A Political Account*, Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press 1976, p. 81).
[442] ABRAMS Bradley F., *The Struggle for the Soul of the Nation*, p. 272.

Seminary. In 1945, he published *Doom and Resurrection*, a book he dedicated to the American Vice-President, Henry A. Wallace, who, as part of a wartime goodwill mission to the Soviet Union the previous year, had visited penal settlements in the Soviet *gulag* and been favourably impressed by the showcase display put on by the warders.[443] Hromádka moved back to Czechoslovakia two years after the war had ended and resumed his university career. Although not in Prague at the time but Hungary, he welcomed the Communist Party's accession to power in February 1948 "confident that if a Christian has the goods to deliver they can be delivered under a communist state."[444] "[…] we fear nothing," declared Hromádka. "We look to the days ahead with hope and peace."[445]

This was a view endorsed by Hromádka's friend, the American presidential hopeful, Henry Wallace. Two days after the event, Wallace described the communist takeover in Czechoslovakia as inevitable and in no way different from what the US was doing in France and Italy. He went further, saying that "a 'get tough' policy only provokes a 'get tougher' policy" and that the communist coup had been made in anticipation of an uprising by Czech die-hards, which the American Ambassador in Prague, Laurence Steinhardt, had encouraged.[446]

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[443] Wallace and Professor Owen Lattimore from the Office of War Information who accompanied him were deeply impressed by what they saw and what they did not see. "All prisoners in the area were kept in their huts. Watchtowers were demolished […]. Wallace was shown a farm, the best in the area; fake girl swineherds, who were in fact NKVD office staff, replaced the prisoners for the occasion. All the goods that could be scraped up in the neighbourhood were put in the shop windows, and so on" (CONQUEST Robert, *The Great Terror: A Reassessment*, New York – Oxford, Oxford University Press 1990, p. 329). See also: APPLEBAUM Anne, *Gulag: A History of the Soviet Camps*, London, Penguin 2004, pp. 398–401. During Lattimore's interrogation by HUAC in 1950, Iowa Republican Senator Bourke Hickenlooper was very agitated by the fact that Lattimore's son David, who was 16 at the time, had attended the 1947 International Youth Festival in Prague as part of a school group of students and teachers. "He was sixteen years old," wrote the boy's father, "just the age to be eager to prove that he could get along on his own in a strange country, in spite of the difficulty of language. The whole experience did him an immense amount of good – and that was true also of thousands of other American youngsters who were over in Europe that summer. But one of Hickenlooper's suspicious questions was – 'Did he go to Russia?' He didn't; but Hickenlooper certainly succeeded in extending the range of all possible insinuations of guilt – guilt by association, guilt by nonassociation, guilt by commission, guilt by omission, guilt by matrimony and finally, guilt by paternity" (LATTIMORE Owen, *Ordeal by Slander*, New York, Carroll and Graf 2004 (first published 1950), pp. 211–212).

[444] HARTLEY Marion, *The Truth Shall Prevail*, Melbourne, Spectrum Publications 1982, p. 89.

[445] Quoted in SHANNON David A., *The Decline of American Communism: A History of the Communist Party of the United States since 1945,* London, Stevens and Sons 1959, p. 162. See also: BUSEK Vratislav – SPULBER Nicolas (eds.), *Czechoslovakia*, p. 152.

[446] O'NEILL William L., *A Better World: Stalinism and the American Intellectuals*, London, Routledge 1989, p. 146. DEVINE Thomas D., *Henry Wallace's 1948 Presidential Campaign and the Future of Postwar Liberalism,* Raleigh, The University of North Carolina Press 2013, pp. 109–110. On Steinhardt's conduct in Czechoslovakia, see for example: LUKEŠ Igor, *On the Edge of the Cold War: American Diplomats and Spies in Postwar Prague*, Oxford – New York, Oxford University Press 2012 (published also in Czech as: IDEM, *Československo nad propastí: Selhání amerických diplomatů a tajných služeb v Praze 1945–1948,* Prague, Prostor 2014). For a

Wallace "echoed the sentiments of the Communists so promptly that it is apparent that he […] let others put words in his mouth."[447] One of those others, as he himself acknowledged, was Josef Hromádka, a Czech whom "he had long admired."[448] Wallace later admitted that his comment on the Czechoslovak crisis was his "greatest mistake."[449] But at the time, he and many like him, not least among the visitors to Czechoslovakia and the armchair fellow-travellers, marginalized or ignored communist pressure tactics. As William L. O'Neill put it, misgivings

polemical discussion between Igor Lukeš and the leading expert in the field on the topic Vít Smetana on information to be found in this publication, see *Soudobé dějiny* of the Institute for Contemporary History of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Nos. 3–4 (2015) and 1–2 (2016).

[447] SHANNON David A., *The Decline of American Communism*, pp. 161–162. A typical example of Wallace's poor judgement can be seen in the case of the militant Bulgarian-Macedonian Comintern agent, George Pirinsky [born George Zaikoff], secretary of the American Slav Congress, a subsidiary of the All Slavic Committee in Moscow and listed as a subversive organization in the US. Pirinsky had been active in the post-WW2 campaign against "the warmongers and the Slav baiters" and the American "policy of rebuilding the industrial might of Germany" (*The Pittsburgh Press*, 20 January 1948). A large conference of the Slav Congress in Chicago on 24–25 September 1948 backed Wallace's bid for the American presidency. Wallace was present at the gathering and "brought down the house when he grasped Pirinsky's hand and shook it warmly saying, 'Truman and Attorney General Tom Clark have slandered the American Slav Congress, but I consider it an honour to speak before this gathering'" (NOWAK Margaret Collingwood, *Two Who Were There: A Biography of Stanley Nowak*, Detroit, Wayne State University Press 1989, p. 223). Pirinsky was deported to Czechoslovakia in August 1951 and from Prague moved to Sofia to join the Bulgarian communist government (KOSTOV Chris, *Contested Ethnic Identity: The Case of Macedonian Immigrants in Toronto, 1900–1996*, Bern, Peter Lang AG 2010, pp. 147–148).

[448] SHANNON David A., *The Decline of American Communism*, pp. 162-3.

[449] *Ibid*. p. 161. The results of the American presidential election would be disappointing for Hromádka. The American Communist Party had thrown "all of their strength into Henry Wallace's presidential campaign and supported the Progressive Party as a Popular Front alternative to the Democrats" (KLEHR Harvey – HAYNES John Earl – FIRSOV Fridrikh Igorevich, *The Secret World of American Communism*, New Haven, Yale University Press 1995, p. 12). Their wholehearted endorsement, however, was a disaster for the Wallace campaign. Wallace was tarred with the same brush as the communists in the public mind. For very many American voters, his election, to use a colourful expression William Burroughs employed in a different context to the American Beat poet, Allen Ginsberg, a few months later, would have left "the back door of the Ship of State ajar so that the cur of Communism can slink in and plunder the American ice-box" (BURROUGHS William S. *The Letters of William S. Burroughs 1945 to 1959*, London, Picador 1993, p. 44). Harry Truman was returned to the White House for four more years in office while Wallace retired to his farm in South Salem, New York, and with him hopes of stemming mounting Cold War rivalry. Many of the American exiles in Prague would have been supporters of Henry Wallace. Martha Dodd, for instance, had been a campaign fundraiser and in a letter to Arthur Miller recalled Miller's visits to their "place near Ridgefield" where he "played tennis with Henry Wallace" (Library of Congress, Martha Dodd Papers, ID No. MSS80875, Letter by Martha Dodd to Arthur Miller dated 1 December 1977). According to Jane Foster, a fellow-American exile, in her case in France, and a former political confidante of Martha Dodd, the Sterns' country house "was a converted eighteenth-century farm, provided with every comfort and with large grounds and a small lake, where one would have been able to swim except for two of the nastiest swans I have ever known. They came at one viciously if one even approached the lake. The male was called Vladimir Ilyitch and the female Krupskaya" (FOSTER Jane, *An UnAmerican Lady*, London, Sidgwick and Jackson 1980, pp. 98–99).

were banished by the thought that "80,000 Prague school children [were] to have a week's holiday in the mountains free of charge."[450]

As a member of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches and of the World Peace Council, Hromádka, who believed Cold War tensions were solely the result of Western provocations, publicly defended accommodation and discussion with Party representatives as the only correct way to meet the new challenges posed to the Church by communist ideology.[451] Hromádka contended that the teachings of the gospel needed to adapt to the new international reality and historical context. In his view, the communist regimes created in Central and Eastern Europe provided the means whereby the Christian ideals of humanitarianism, social justice, and democracy might be achieved even though the process would necessarily entail a difficult, transitional, revolutionary period. Christian-Marxist dialogue was not to be a war of words but a sincere endeavour to develop cooperative programmes for the public good.[452]

International realities, however, changed dramatically in June 1950 with the eruption of all-out war on the Korean peninsula. Early the following month a series of Christian peace conferences and festivals was held in Czechoslovakia with Josef Hromádka the leading light of the proceedings.[453] Three hundred delegates, including many from the English-speaking world,

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[450] Quoted in O'NEILL William L., *A Better World*, p. 161.

[451] On the world stage Hromádka represented the nonthreatening face of the communist regime in Prague: "In addition to official and semi-official channels for the dissemination of propaganda in foreign countries, the Czechoslovak government has made full use of non-official channels, such as various international gatherings of church, labour, and youth groups. Since the government approves or actually selects a delegation to any international gathering, only those favoured by Communist authorities and expected to foster the regime's objectives are appointed. The task of these unofficial propagandists is not so much to serve as apologists for current Communist policies as to create favourable attitudes toward communism among groups which normally are hostile, indifferent, or inaccessible to official or semi-official propaganda. To this end, moderately critical attitudes on the part of such unofficial propagandists have been encouraged by the government. The best example is provided by the activities of Protestant theologian Josef Lukl Hromadka, Dean of the Jan Hus Theological Faculty in Prague, and head of the Czechoslovak delegation to the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches held in Amsterdam in 1948 and the Second Assembly in Evanston, Illinois, in 1954. Hromadka has been critical of both West and East, though far less of the latter. This has made him acceptable to some Protestant groups in the West, and it has served to create the illusion that freedom of thought and the right to dissent are respected in Communist Czechoslovakia" (BUSEK Vratislav – SPULBER Nicholas (eds.), *Czechoslovakia*, p. 124).

[452] MCARTHUR Robert, Locating Christ in a Communist World: The Reverends Frank Hartley and Victor James as Political Travellers, *Australian Historical Studies,* Vol. 40 (2009), pp. 178–196, here 183–184.

[453] PHM, CP/CENT/ORG/01, box 7–11, Visit to Czechoslovakia: The Report of British Clergymen Who Attended Christian and Peace Conferences and Festivals in Czechoslovakia on July 1, 2, 3 and 4 1950, p. 3. Slovanský den na Děvíně mohutnou manifestací za mír a přátelství mezi národy: Projev předsedy vlády Antonína Zápotockého k desetitisícům pracujících [The Slav Day at Děvín with a great demonstration for peace and friendship between nations: The speech of Prime Minister Antonín Zápotocký]; Československý lid je odhodlán bojovat za mír a mír

attended the gathering at the Moravian spa town of Luhačovice under the benign eye of the state represented by Prime Minister Zápotocký, Vice-Premier Fierlinger, and the renegade priest, Father Josef Plojhar, Minister of Health.[454]

Taking the floor alongside Hromádka, were the Anglican Dean of Canterbury, Hewlett Johnson, and the Reverend Keith Dowding, a Presbyterian minister from Australia, whose brother Bruce, a wartime British Special Operations Executive (SOE) agent, had been executed by the Germans in Dortmund in June 1943.[455] They were joined by churchmen from numerous Christian denominations coming from near and far, East and West, to spread the gospel of peace. "I have talked this evening with an Archbishop from Armenia, the Father Prior of the Budapest Franciscans, an Orthodox Bishop from Romania, and a German Lutheran pastor," exclaimed one British cleric excitedly. "There has never been anything like this!"[456] Vice-Premier Fierlinger, in his address to the conference, assured the delegates that the Czechoslovak government was not in any way opposed to religion but respected the convictions of all believers both within the country and outside. This, he stressed, was reflected in the Czechoslovak Constitution of 1948 which guaranteed complete freedom of religion. However,

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ubránit: Velká mírová manifestace katolických věřících na Velehradě [Czechoslovak people are ready to fight for peace and defend it]; Mírové shromáždění na Kozím hrádku na paměť Mistra Jana Husa [Peace gathering at Kozí hrádek to commemorate Master Jan Hus]; Konference českých a slovenských duchovních pro mír a pokrok: Závěr zasedání duchovních křesťanských církví v Luhačovicích [The conference of Czech and Slovak clergymen for peace and progress: The conclusion of the gathering of clergymen of Christian churches in Luhačovice], *Rudé právo,* 5 July 1950, pp. 1 and 5. Red Dean Heads Czech Peace Trip, *The Washington Post,* 30 June 1950.

[454] Josef Plojhar had thrown his weight behind Klement Gottwald in February 1948. He co-founded the *Katolická akce* project in June 1949 as a sort of alternative to the Vatican for "progressive" Catholics and this would shortly transmute into the "Peace Movement of Catholic Clergy" (MHKD). Plojhar was repudiated by the Catholic Archbishop of Prague, Josef Beran. "[U]nlike previous archbishops of Prague who had usually been Austro-German, Beran was himself a Czech" (KENT Peter C., *Lonely Cold War of Pope Pius XII: The Roman Catholic Church and the Division of Europe, 1943–1950*, Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press 2002, p. 174). In the ensuing *mélange* of "reactionary" and "enemy-of-the-people" epithets levelled at the prelate, it transpired that in the past Plojhar "had always claimed to be a German" and that in Dachau Concentration Camp where both churchmen had been interned during the war, Plojhar "had received the special privileges accorded to all German nationals there" (BROWN John, *Who's Next? The Lesson of Czechoslovakia*, pp. 213–214). Stephen Murray-Smith bemoaned the fact that so few people outside Czechoslovakia had heard of Josef Plojhar: "How many Australians know that the Minister for Health in the Czechoslovak Cabinet is a Roman Catholic priest named Father Plojhar? Very few, I'll warrant. It is a reflection of the efficacy of the barriers erected between us and people like the Czechoslovaks by our own Government and by its press and propaganda organs. This is the *real* Iron Curtain – even if it *is* largely made of newsprint" (MURRAY-SMITH Stephen, *"There Is No Iron Curtain,"* pp. 15–16).

[455] For more information on Bruce Dowding, see: https://furtherglory.wordpress.com/2012/12/30/british-soe-agent-bruce-dowding-was-executed-by-beheading-fallbeil-during-world-war-ii/ (accessed 2 July 2017).

[456] PHM, CP/CENT/ORG/01, box 7–11, Visit to Czechoslovakia: The Report of British Clergymen Who Attended Christian and Peace Conferences and Festivals in Czechoslovakia on July 1, 2, 3 and 4 1950, p. 7.

he added, "we reject the attempts of the upper hierarchy which, under pressure of foreign influence, supports reaction against socialism and identifies itself with the baleful campaign against the Soviet Union to which, in the first place, we owe the liberation of our country."[457]

Father Alexander Horák, a Slovak priest who had also gone over to the communists and was active in the World Council of Churches, waxed lyrical as he turned to the Western delegates from the platform: "Dear friends and brothers, you have had and will have the opportunity of looking around in our country and taking note of the joyous tempo of harvest work, the lively bustle of construction, the hymn of labour which resounds from our factories. You will see our shops well stocked with food; and when you consider that we have no unemployment, and you look into our churches, view our pilgrimages and see for yourself that our people lack nothing in the performance of religious duties, you will realise the stupidity of false propaganda by those who desire war."[458]

After the Luhačovice conference, the delegates were taken to Děvín Castle near the Slovak capital of Bratislava to witness the celebration of the so-called Slav Day. The following morning in a giddy whirl of bags and suitcases and camaraderie, with everyone making droll comments and in good spirits, it was off to Velehrad, where the visitors joined an estimated 125,000 assembled outside the basilica of Saints Cyril and Methodius. The logistics involved in this annual pilgrimage to the historical Moravian town seem to have been formidable. "From early dawn, vehicles of every description, coaches, buses, lorries or hay-carts drawn by tractors, converged to the monastery," Hewlett Johnson informs us, adding that "fifty-six special trains were run by the government."[459] Johnson joined the dignitaries on the podium where he says, "A Roman Catholic priest, Father Plojhar, took the chair. Mr. Zapotocky, the Prime Minister, spoke first, ending his speech with the phrase: 'May God give you prosperity.' Mr. Fierlinger, the Vice-Premier, spoke next. After him the Metropolitan of Moscow and a succession of visiting ecclesiastics."[460]

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[457] *Ibid.,* p. 9.
[458] *Ibid.,* p. 10.
[459] JOHNSON Hewlett, *Eastern Europe in the Socialist World*, London, Lawrence and Wishart 1955, p. 144.
[460] *Ibid.,* pp. 144–145.

Johnson was very impressed: "Tremendous applause greeted the speeches, punctuated with rhythmic clapping and slogans such as 'Long Live Our Progressive Priests,' 'Ban the Bomb,' 'Long Live Socialism.' Very closely did I scan the vast audience for any sign of dissentients, any who did not clap or cheer. I saw none. This is significant for it was a definitely religious audience which had stood for upwards of four hours in a blazing sun, applauding speeches that were socialist in form and substance, delivered by the highest officers of state. It is significant because it gives the lie to propaganda stories of savage religious prosecution."[461] In speaking to journalists from *Rudé právo,* Johnson stressed: "It is important that I tell people around the world, especially those who want another war, what I saw in Czechoslovakia. I can assure you that there are millions of people both in Western Europe and across the ocean who, the same as you, desire peace. […] Work for unity, for the plan, for the working-class and for children and by doing so you will evoke a response in my country. By doing so, you can contribute to the great peace efforts worldwide."[462]

Leaving Velehrad behind, the messengers of peace sped towards South Bohemia, where they found "the same crowded audience, the same enthusiasm, the same themes, prefaced by introductory worship,"[463] this time in a field near Tábor. It was on this spot that Jan Hus had addressed his followers five centuries earlier. "Here, in this new economic socialist order," wrote the dean about the occasion, "we were witnessing the completion of the second half of the early Reformers' aims: freedom from economic as well as from ecclesiastical domination, real democracy and real religious freedom – primary and complementary demands."[464] Beside the dean on the rostrum once again stood his friend and *confrère,* Josef Hromádka, no doubt pleased to regale the Dean of Canterbury with tales of his intrepid Hussite captain namesake, Petr Hromádka, who had chosen this very site for the camp and the new town in 1420. No doubt, too, Johnson was struck by the symbolic appropriateness of the Hussite Tábor, the Czech word for "camp," and the linguistic parallel to their own "peace camp." Less than two years

[461] PHM, CP/CENT/ORG/01, box 7–11, Visit to Czechoslovakia: The Report of British Clergymen Who Attended Christian and Peace Conferences and Festivals in Czechoslovakia on July 1, 2, 3 and 4 1950, p. 23.
[462] Quoted in Slovanský den na Děvíně mohutnou manifestací za mír a přátelství mezi národy, p. 5.
[463] JOHNSON Hewlett, *Eastern Europe in the Socialist World*, p. 145.
[464] *Ibid.*

before, in October 1947, to the accompaniment of "sonnets [*sic*] on the trumpet and trombone,"[465] Dr Hromádka, in his capacity as Chair of the Hus Czechoslovak Evangelical Theological Faculty of Charles University, had bestowed an honorary doctorate in theology on Hewlett Johnson. In his speech of acceptance, the dean "cited the great heritage of Western freedoms, of speech and worship, of assembly and demonstration and press, freedoms which, since the time of Jan Hus, Czechs have had their share in making, freedoms which need continual re-making, and not one of which we can afford to lose."[466]

Now these same freedoms were under threat from American warmongering in Asia. A resolution was signed by the peace camp devotees, the new Taborites, condemning "American armed intervention in Korea," and the "godless plans of the Western powers, who, in a vain endeavour to prevent the victorious advance of socialist ideas, wanted to hurl humanity into a fresh catastrophic war." The declaration went on to proclaim: "We are Christians, we are the bearers of Christ's teaching of love and peace and therefore we stand for peace. Accordingly, we proudly enrol the great 'peace' led by the Soviet Union." In an interview with the Czechoslovak daily, *Lidové noviny*, Johnson maintained that it was the duty of the clergy to take part in the "building of a socially just state" which believed in "brotherhood and collective

[465] MATTHIESSEN F. O., *From the Heart of Europe*, Oxford – New York, Oxford University Press 1948, p. 111. For information on F. O. Matthiessen, see: REDDING Arthur F., *Turncoats, Traitors, and Fellow-Travellers: Culture and Politics of the Early Cold War,* Jackson (MS), University of Mississippi 2008, pp. 37–56.

[466] *Ibid.,* p. 111. How this overture to freedom could be squared with the dean's exaltation of Felix Dzerzhinsky, the fanatical founder of the Cheka, is anybody's guess: "A granite block behind the Lenin Mausoleum in the Red Square covers the body of Felix Dzerzynski [*sic*], one of the greatest Poles of history who united the cause of national and social liberation of the Polish proletariat with the victory of the social revolution. Two other names stand out as mountain peaks, Copernicus in the realm of science, and Chopin in the realm of art" (JOHNSON Hewlett, *Eastern Europe in the Socialist World*, p. 112). Johnson took pride in the fact that while in Canterbury he went "to bed at night beside the bones of Thomas à Becket, who died for liberty" (BUTLER John, *The Red Dean of Canterbury*, p. 173). The dean died at the ripe old age of 92 but he might not have lived so long had he fallen into Dzerzhinsky's hands in 1918. "We generally shoot Englishmen," is what a young Russian guard told a fellow-countryman of Johnson's, an English language teacher in Moscow, before escorting him to the Lubyánka Prison where Felix Dzerzhinsky presided (URCH R. O. G., B. A., *"We Generally Shoot Englishmen": An English Schoolmaster's Five Years of Mild Adventure in Moscow (1915–20)*, London, George Allen and Unwin 1936, p. 166). "It's a hateful necessity," Iron Felix described his task, "but someone has to clean out the latrines" (REGLER Gustav, *The Owl of Minerva*, London, Rupert Hart-Davis 1959, p. 196).

security for people of goodwill of all colours, creeds and race" and that everyone should "take responsibility" for this.[467]

THE RED DEAN AND THE PINK PARSON

The Dean of Canterbury and member of the editorial board of the *Daily Worker*, Hewlett Johnson, had a somewhat paler equivalent in Australia, the Reverend Frank Hartley, a Methodist minister who was dubbed the "pink parson" by the anti-communist Australian Prime Minister, Sir Robert Menzies, for his opposition to the government's unsuccessful bid to ban the Communist Party by referendum on 22 September 1951.[468] By a narrow majority, the Australian electorate chose the right of free speech and did not approve the proposal to amend the constitution. Flushed with victory, Hartley journeyed to Europe to attend the second session of the World Council of Peace in Vienna in January 1952. Before the congress, in defiance of Australian passport restrictions on travel to countries in the Soviet Bloc, he went to Prague to meet Josef Hromádka and was very impressed by all he saw. He was particularly taken by the Jan Hus monument in Old Town Square and by the links he discovered that reached from Hus to Jan Comenius and then, via the social and religious reformer Count Zinzendorf and the Moravian Christians in Saxony, to John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, and thence to his own church in Australia.[469] Hartley and Hromádka took to each other instantly: "As we walked along Prof. [Hromádka] took my arm in a most brotherly fashion and we discussed conditions in Australia and Czechoslovakia. There is not the slightest doubt as far as Professor is concerned that what happened in Czechoslovakia is for the good of his country. He recognised the rightness of the government policy at the time of the crisis in February 1948, and is in no way regretful of the great social and political changes that have confused so many people."[470] The

[467] TNA, FO 371/86340, Press extracts dealing with the religious conference and related events in Czechoslovakia prepared and translated by the British Embassy in Prague, 5 July 1950.
[468] HOWE Renate, Hartley, Francis John (1909–1971), Australian National University, Australian Dictionary of Biography, available at: http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/hartley-francis-john-10448/text18529 (accessed 31 March 2016; published first in hardcopy 1996). Menzies had been similarly thwarted in his anti-communist drive seventeen years earlier, when as Federal Attorney-General, he had sought to prevent the disembarkation of Egon Erwin Kisch in Australia.
[469] HARTLEY Marion, *The Truth Shall Prevail*, pp. 91–92.
[470] Notes of Frank Hartley, quoted in MCARTHUR Robert, Locating Christ in a Communist World, p. 187.

bond of friendship between the two men would strengthen with further visits by Hartley to Prague in the years to come, as would the faith of both in Soviet-style communism.[471]

At the end of the Vienna conference, Hartley accompanied the Russian Orthodox delegates to Moscow and found on this visit, and on the many other trips he made to the Soviet Union later, that, despite the frequently heard complaints at home of persecution of the churches in Russia, there was "complete freedom of religious worship and practice as guaranteed in the Constitution."[472]

The Reverend Frank Hartley, had served as chaplain with the Australian forces in the Middle East and Papua, New Guinea, during the Second World War. Tormented by the horrors he had seen, he raised the banner of world peace after demobilization and was one of the principal organizers of the Australian Peace Congress held in Melbourne in April 1950. But this was a field that had long since been mapped out by professionals, by the likes of Willi Münzenberg and his cohorts, ever since the 1932 Amsterdam World Congress against War and the First World Peace Congress in Brussels four years later, and the well-intentioned amateur, Frank Hartley, was now standing shoulder to shoulder with trained, practised cadres who were promoting an agenda drawn up in a room different from that of the committee headquarters of the Australian Peace Congress.

Among the speakers who shared the podium with Hartley at the 1950 National Peace Congress in the Melbourne Exhibition Hall was the flamboyant Dean of Canterbury, Hewlett Johnson. Invited to attend by the President of the New South Wales Peace Council, Jessie Street, the dean, fully refreshed after his long trip from Canterbury, "marched into the Exhibition Building through a guard of honour of children with flowers and blue and white peace flags in the most perfect Melbourne autumn sunshine."[473] Johnson, with his resounding approbation of

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[471] *Ibid.,* pp. 187 and 191–192. During his visits to Prague, Hartley would call on the Wheelers where he was well-liked and always sure of a hearty welcome. See: UWSC, Eleanor Wheeler Papers 1947–1957, Accession No. 1625–001, Letter of Eleanor Wheeler dated 27 November 1951 and 19 April 1956. Eleanor Wheeler had a similar high opinion of Dr Hromádka: "To accuse Hromadka of not having principle is to be very obtuse. He radiates fine personality and profound and honest thinking. His outright endorsement of the present regime has been the result of an evolution in his thinking, sincere at every step" (*Ibid.,* Letter of Eleanor Wheeler dated 23 April 1952).
[472] HARTLEY Marion, *The Truth Shall Prevail*, p. 262. See also: MCARTHUR Robert, Locating Christ in a Communist World, p. 187.
[473] GIBSON Ralph, *My Years in the Communist Party*, Melbourne, International Bookshop 1966, p. 163.

Stalin and all things Soviet, was "one of the highlights" when it came to mounting peace conferences and communist front jamborees.[474] Delighting one audience after another with his antics on stage, dockers, students, railwaymen, all were captivated by the sprightly 76-year-old Red Dean in his frock coat and gaiters as he skipped from platform to platform, ably shepherded by the secretary of the Australian Peace Council and Communist Party stalwart, Ian Turner.[475] The dean "had brought with him the World Peace Council's Stockholm Appeal to the Nations to ban the atomic bomb, a petition which his oratory now launched with great enthusiasm around the country."[476] But just how negligible an impact the Stockholm Appeal had on Australian legislators can be seen in the fact that two years later the Menzies Liberal Party Government passed the *Defence (Special Undertakings) Act 1952*, which permitted the British Government to carry out tests of nuclear weapons in remote parts of the Australian continent.[477] In the corners of the Pentagon and the Kremlin, the mounds of signatures gathered dust, and the clamour of the peacemongers on the streets of Western cities had precious little effect on whether or not the planet would be blasted back to the Ice Age.

Frank Hartley's spouse Marion, a Scottish-Australian missionary, was, like her husband, another Christian idealist who conflated the precepts of Jesus Christ with those of Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism and took to heart Hromádka's words concerning the necessity of Christian-Marxist concord. In 1965, Mrs Hartley was recuperating in a hospital in Moscow and, as she wrote later, she could see the red star shining above the Kremlin. "Whatever the Kremlin star meant to others," she continued, "for me that twinkling red star was the Star of Bethlehem, ushering a new life of health to us both."[478]

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[474] BARCAN Alan, *Radical Students*, p. 241. The Red Dean's riveting stage performance is captured by Bob Darke: "I sat on several platforms behind the venerable Dean of Canterbury watching him walking up and down as he spoke, his long white hands fluttering in the air as if he were drawing fallen hairs from somebody's coat shoulders" (DARKE Bob, *Cockney Communist*, p. 179).
[475] Ian Turner was expelled from the Party in 1958 after he had sent a letter of protest to the Soviet authorities at the hanging of Imre Nagy, leader of the Hungarian government during the failed uprising of 1956. His friend Stephen Murray-Smith soon followed. Ken Gott was forced to leave the Party in 1956 after his condemnation of the Soviet invasion of Hungary. True to form, the Red Dean held his peace throughout.
[476] INGLIS Amirah, *The Hammer and Sickle and the Washing Up*, p. 91.
[477] ARNOLD Lorna – SMITH Mark J., *Britain, Australia and the Bomb: The Nuclear Tests and Their Aftermath*, London, Palgrave Macmillan 2006, p. 38.
[478] HARTLEY Marion, *The Truth Shall Prevail*, p. 89.

There was nothing twinkling or healthful in what lit up the sky in the remote Severny Island in northernmost Russia four years earlier, when on 30 October 1961, the so-called Tsar Bomba, the most powerful bomb ever exploded in human history, was tested with shock waves shattering windows as far away as Finland and Norway.[479] The scowls in Washington meant little. The Americans had detonated the first hydrogen bomb over the Marshall Islands in 1952 and in a further test less than two years later, their 15 megaton device was found to be in good working order and ready for immediate delivery.

Meanwhile, some popular Western magazines were maintaining that nuclear war might not be all that bad after all. "*US News and World Report* carried a cover article, 'If Bombs Do Fall,' which told readers that plans were underway to allow people to write checks on their bank accounts even if the bank were destroyed by nuclear attack. The same issue contained a side story about how well survivors of the Japanese bombings were doing. *Life* magazine placed a man in a reddish fallout costume on its cover along with the headline, 'How You Can Survive Fallout. 97 out of 100 Can Be Saved.' Besides advising that the best cure for radiation sickness 'is to take hot tea or a solution of baking soda,' *Life* ran an advertisement for a fully-stocked, prefabricated fallout shelter for only $ 700. The accompanying picture showed a happy family of five living comfortably in their shelter."[480] We are back with Alice at the Mad Tea-Party again, the "remark seemed to have no sort of meaning in it, and yet it was certainly English."

[479] See: http://www.atomicheritage.org/history/tsar-bomba (accessed 12 September 2017).
[480] MALAND Charles, *Dr Strangelove* (1964): Nightmare Comedy and the Ideology of Liberal Consensus, in ROLLINS Peter C. (ed.), *Hollywood As Historian. American Film in a Cultural Context*, Kentucky, The University Press of Kentucky 1983, pp. 192–193. See also: *US News and World Report*, 25 September 1961, pp. 51–55; *Life*, 15 September 1961, pp. 95–108.

THEM AND US

The communist authorities in Prague would have correctly assumed that not all visitors to the city were gazing starry-eyed at the red banners and flags lining Wenceslas Square. The future Australian historian, Geoffrey Serle, who was a Rhodes Scholar in Oxford at the time, "had gone to Prague soon after the coup with a Canadian student as British delegates to a Charles University celebration" and was enraged at the communist takeover.[481] Serle "found that beneath the acquiescent surface of the population at large there was a deep bitterness."[482] April 1948 marked the six-hundredth centenary of Charles University, a date that was not passing unnoticed in the international academic world. "In the summer of 1946 an informal inter-university committee was formed under Sir David Ross as chairman to consider how British scholars could best join in celebrating in April 1948 the sixth centenary of the Caroline University of Prague," and a "message of greeting and goodwill" was prepared, which "was signed by every one of the seventeen Vice-Chancellors of the United Kingdom in their individual capacity, and by ninety-three other historians, including fifty-three past and present holders of Chairs of History." However, plans were overtaken by events on the ground. "Unhappily," continued the lifelong friend of Czechoslovakia, R. W. Seton-Watson, "before ever our message could be made public or sent to Prague, its words no longer corresponded with the situation in Czechoslovakia, where on 24 February [*sic*] a totalitarian regime was established, freedom of speech and of the press was abolished, and academic freedom was gravely impaired. Under the circumstances the British universities were unanimous in regretfully withdrawing their delegates to the celebrations in Prague"[483]

[481] INGLIS Amirah, *The Hammer and Sickle and the Washing Up*, pp. 64–65.
[482] MCLAREN John, *Free Radicals,* p. 77.
[483] SETON-WATSON R. W., *Prague Essays* (Foreword dated 7 April 1948), Oxford, Clarendon Press 1949. See also: TNA, FO 371/71336. Ten years later saw a repeat. In 1958, H. Gordon Skilling received an invitation from Dr Vladimír Soják, head of the newly-formed Institute of International Politics and Economics (UMPE), "to attend a 20th-anniversary conference on the Munich crisis of 1938, which the institute was sponsoring from 25 September to 2 October in the former Palffy Palace on Valdštejnské Náměstí. It was limited almost entirely to scholars from eastern Europe, with a few Dutch, French, Italian, and other delegates, many of them communist in outlook. The only English delegates were Lord Stansgate, formerly Anthony Wedgwood Benn, left-wing Labour MP, and Andrew Rothstein, a Soviet citizen and Marxist. Some Western scholars, such as J. W. Wheeler-Bennett, of Britain, had refused to attend. English was not used, and speeches were translated into French, German, and Russian only […]. The weather was

Further boycotts were to follow. The Czech gymnastics organization, Sokol, dating from the 1860s, had always had a strong representation in the US. The first All-Sokol convention was held in Chicago in August 1909 and, as one commentator noted, no community of Czechs in America was without either a Sokol branch, an amateur theatrical club or a choral society.[484] There was a long tradition of Sokols from the New World attending the quadrennial Sokol *slet*, or rally, in Prague and for native Czech Sokols to travel to the corresponding Czech-American gathering. The summer 1948 *slet*, however, was shunned by the US in disapproval of the communist action in February.[485]

But not all Americans would comply. The Spanish Civil War veteran, James Miller Robinson, for one, used "his slender savings for a trip to the Sokol sports festival in Prague."[486] Miller would have been one of those marked down in FBI records as a "premature anti-Fascist" and shortly after the end of the Second World War "the code word 'premature anti-Fascist' jumped out of the classified FBI dossiers and into the lingo of the House and Senate subcommittees that were hunting for Communists and their cronies in every corner of American society."[487] But before the subcommittees could get their hands on him, or the American Legion, the Knights of Columbus, and the Daughters of the Revolution could swing into action with their blacklist and petty harassments, Miller had left the country. He liked what he saw in Czechoslovakia and stayed on. "He heard a lot of hot talk about Communists and a '*coup d'état*,' but he had no quarrel with the Communists. The important thing to him was that in Prague the colour of his skin, instead of being a handicap, was a distinction."[488] Miller's move

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rainy and dull and seemed to reflect the drabness and mediocrity of life in Prague" (SKILLING H. Gordon, *The Education of a Canadian*, Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press 2009, pp. 146–147).

[484] ČAPEK Thomas, *The Čechs (Bohemians) in America*, Boston and New York, Houghton Mifflin 1920, p. 254.

[485] Výstavní panel výstavy Pod křídly Sokola: Přípravy XI. všesokolského sletu 1948 [Exhibition panel of the exhibition Under the Wings of the Sokol: Preparations for the XI. all-Sokol slet 1948], available at: https://www.ustrcr.cz/data/pdf/vystavy/sokol/panel32.pdf (accessed 30 May 2017). Nevertheless, the US was not forgotten. The contingent from Pilsen who were in third place in the opening parade behind the band of athletes from Prague and the delegation from the USSR, unfurled the Stars and Stripes as they marched through the sports arena and unhesitatingly displayed American flags and banners, much to the annoyance of those in the reviewing stand (SCHWARTZ Eugene G., *American Students Organize*, p. 585). With regard to the parading athletes' snubbing of President Gottwald in the reviewing stand, see, for instance: JOSTEN Josef, *Oh My Country*, pp. 226–227.

[486] SCHMIDT Dana Adams, *Anatomy of a Satellite*, p. 206.

[487] WEISS Andrea, *In the Shadow of the Magic Mountain: The Erika and Klaus Mann Story*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press 2008, p. 249.

[488] SCHMIDT Dana Adams, *Anatomy of a Satellite*, p. 206.

would have been heartily approved by his friend Eleanor Wheeler, although she did not have much time for Sokol itself. As far as she was concerned, the association had "degenerated into a chauvinist and middle-class organization in some respects. The mere cost of providing costumes and taking time to exercize [*sic*] kept most of the 'Undesirable' elements out."[489]

The powers-that-be in Prague would have found no fault with that assessment. The Sokol movement was suppressed, as had happened also in 1941 under the Nazi occupation, and was replaced by the Soviet-inspired *Spartakiáda*, which had its first *slet* at the stadium in Strahov in 1955,[490] in which the two Wheeler boys took part. The day Eleanor Wheeler attended the show, the weather was not kind. There was a storm burst in the middle of the performance, "such a terrific one that the flags blew down, the field was covered with a sheet of water and visibility was zero." But they put a brave face on it, gymnasts and spectators alike, and one gentleman at least enjoyed the downpour. "There is an awfully sour customer," wrote Eleanor Wheeler, "who has been doing special correspondence for France-Presse. He has been going around for weeks looking as if he had limburger cheese on his moustache. When the storm broke loose and the performers did somersaults in the mud he showed the first evidence of cheer that he has shown since we first saw him here."[491]

Lucille Giscome, Eleanor Wheeler's friend who shared their Vinohrady apartment,[492] and was always ready to help out when needed,[493] had charge of the two young Wheeler girls

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[489] UWSC, Eleanor Wheeler Papers 1947–1957, Accession No. 1625–001, Letter of Eleanor Wheeler dated 23 June 1955. For Eleanor Wheeler's friendship with James Miller Robinson, see: *Ibid.,* Letter of Eleanor Wheeler dated 8 December 1952.

[490] NACR, fund the International Department of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, 100/3, sv. 178, a.j. 596, Report for Comrade Baramová, 1955.

[491] UWSC, Eleanor Wheeler Papers 1947–1957, Accession No. 1625–001, Letter of Eleanor Wheeler dated 12 July 1955. For a contrastive analysis of Sokol and the *Spartakiáda*, see: THORNE Vanda, *Ideologies and Realities of the Masses in Communist Czechoslovakia*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pittsburgh (2005), pp. 110–144, available online at: http://d-scholarship.pitt.edu/7182/1/VandaThorneETD2005.pdf (accessed 6 June 2010).

[492] Lucille Giscome was a native of North Bay, Ontario. "At the time of her enrolment in 1942 as the first Bahá'í in Ottawa, she worked for the Dominion Bureau of Statistics and wrote articles for one of the local Ottawa newspapers. She had outspoken views which met with disapproval by various officials. She left for Toronto, and after unsuccessful attempts to find work as a journalist, travelled to England, after which she settled in Czechoslovakia. In that country, speaking fluent Czech, she found new friends and was able to work as a journalist. In later years she fell ill and wanted to return to Canada but was refused entry on a legal technicality. She died in Czechoslovakia" (ETTER-LEWIIS Gwendolyn – THOMAS Richard, *Lights of the Spirit: Historical Portraits of Black Bahá'ís in North America*, Illinois, Bahai Publishing 2006, p. 155).

[493] "Lucille and the girls went to the last Spartakiada performance on George's ticket. It was my suggestion, knowing Lucille's ability to get anywhere on her honest brown good looks. Just as Negroes in Georgia sometimes have their good white friend who gets books from the library, etc., we have our good Negro friend

on the last day of the *Spartakiáda* and all three thoroughly enjoyed the event: "They rolled in the door that evening drunk with enthusiasm, telling of the soldiers forming a map of CSR on the field, folk dances within the outline, in the various costumes of the republic, soldiers dancing rounds with little children […]."[494]

"The new must be an improvement on the old, otherwise there is no point in it," Andrei Zhdanov had pronounced categorically[495] and the *Spartakiáda* gymnastics display at Prague's Strahov Stadium which replaced the Sokols was, in the words of Eleanor Wheeler, "a huge success from beginning to end."[496] But then Eleanor Wheeler belonged to the progressive, revolutionary camp and could hardly have said otherwise. Analyzing the use of both terms in Czechoslovak parlance of the day, one observer noted: "With the word 'revolutionary,' the word 'progressive' (*pokrokový*) is perhaps the most widely used term of the official literary scholarship. *Pokrokový* literally means 'allied with the interest of the people.'"[497] Indeed, "progressive" was the wedge that separated "the interest of the people" from that of the reactionaries. Thus, the *Spartakiáda* was progressive while Sokol was reactionary. The Zhdanovian process of dividing and "othering" applied not just to the world of letters and sport but to all aspects of life. At times this could feed neatly into pre-existing "them and us" prejudices, particularly so in Czechoslovakia, where it would dovetail with a propensity for differentiation, perhaps most noticeable in the widespread use of the possessive adjective *náš* (our), which in the past had focused on forging a Czech identity in opposition to Germanization.

An illustrative example in this respect is that of the Hana Benešova Children's Home established near Prague in 1947 as a joint project of the British and American Unitarian Service

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who gets cashiers to buy surplus movie tickets, gathers up useless articles (meaning we don't need them) and gets a good price at a secondhand store, gets in places for us, and so on. The difference is that anything we are entitled to we don't need her help on, and we try not to exploit her too often on the extras" (UWSC, Eleanor Wheeler Papers 1947–1957, Accession No. 1625–001, Letter of Eleanor Wheeler dated 12 July 1955).

[494] UWSC, Eleanor Wheeler Papers 1947–1957, Accession No. 1625–001, Letter of Eleanor Wheeler dated 12 July 1955.

[495] HODGKINSON Harry, *Doubletalk: The Language of Communism*, London, George Allen and Unwin 1955, p. 85.

[496] UWSC, Eleanor Wheeler Papers 1947–1957, Accession No. 1625–001, Letter of Eleanor Wheeler dated 12 July 1955.

[497] SOUČKOVÁ Milada, *A Literary Satellite: Czechoslovak-Russian Literary Relations*, Chicago, The University of Chicago 1970, pp. 103–104.

Committees in coordination with the Czechoslovakian Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. The American child-care worker who was sent to the institution to enhance child-caring techniques found her Czech colleagues "strict disciplinarians" who made no attempt "to build loving bonds with the children." For the Czech staff, on the other hand, the "new methods of caring for children were an unwelcome intrusion into their lives." The stand-off took on all the contours of a classic them-and-us conflict, but in this case one with Zhdanovian overtones. Helen Fogg, the director of child and youth projects for the Unitarian Service Committee, came to Prague from the US following the communist coup to find out if a training course for child-care workers could be set up to improve matters. The authorities, however, found the project unwelcome and the organization's involvement in the Czechoslovakian program ended. In a follow-up letter to PLAN International in 1950, the Czechoslovakian Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare noted "the 'altruistic help of the USSR' in helping the country provide for its own needy children."[498]

Zhdanov's understudy in the Czechoslovak Communist Party, Ladislav Štoll, maintained that it was "not possible not to take sides, not to join in the struggle."[499] As Victor Serge wrote of the Soviet Communist Party in an earlier decade: "Woe to him who says nothing. Silence is interpreted as evasion, as an attempt to elude crushing responsibilities."[500] Yet Štoll and his mentor's ideologically rigid, binary interpretation of the world notwithstanding, there were non-committed English-speaking visitors, apolitical individulas, who came to Czechoslovakia during this period, too. Once the visa hurdle had been crossed and the currency exchange requirements satisfied, they seem to have gone about their lawful business in the state without undue let or hindrance.[501] Take, for instance, the English naturalist, Kenneth

[498] FIELDSTON Sara, *Raising the World: Child Welfare in the American Century*, Harvard, Harvard University Press 2015, pp. 39–40, and 82.
[499] ŠTOLL Ladislav *Face to Face with Reality*, p. 30. See also: ŠTOLL Ladislav, *Třicet let bojů za českou socialistickou poesii* [Thirty years of battles over Czech socialist poetry], Prague, Orbis 1950.
[500] SERGE Victor, *From Lenin to Stalin*, New York, Pioneer Publishers 1937, p. 59.
[501] Guests of the Party would of course be looked after in this regard, but for lesser lights unofficial currency transactions could have serious consequences in the people's democracies. During his visit to Prague in 1950, H. Gordon Skilling was woken at 3 a.m. in his room at the Flora Hotel by two men in civilian clothes who wanted to check his passport and his currency exchange certificate (SKILLING H. Gordon, *The Education of a Canadian*, p. 125). "They found everything in order and left with apologies." Investigating possible currency irregularities was a favoured weapon in the security services' arsenal and infringements would be prominent on any charge-sheet drawn up against foreigners. Thus, for instance, a Mrs. Jolan Barbara Ellis was arrested in Bratislava on 26 September 1948 for currency offences (http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1950/jun/14/eastern-

Whitehead, who made several trips to communist Czechoslovakia to hunt and study deer,[502] or Ralph R. Hultgren, Professor of Metallurgy, at Berkeley, who spent his sabbatical leave in Czechoslovakia and Poland in 1948–1949, although this was a time, we are told, "when living in Eastern Europe had its difficulties."[503] Mention might be made here, also, of Dr Paul Doty of Harvard University, who gave the opening address at the Symposium on Macromolecular Chemistry in Prague in 1957.[504] The same year Doty attended the first Conference on Science and World Affairs held in the village of Pugwash in Nova Scotia, and in the ensuing years he would make more than forty trips behind the Iron Curtain to work directly with Soviet scientists to advance the cause of peace and help avert the horror of a nuclear conflict.[505]

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europe-imprisoned-british#S5CV0476P0_19500614_HOC_21, accessed 23 July 2016), while one of the charges brought against Cardinal József Mindszenty in Budapest in February 1949 was that of illegal currency dealing. One commentator noted at the time: "There is absolutely no reason to believe the charges were false. The Hungarian exchange rates are so ridiculous that very nearly everyone has dealt some time or other on the currency black market" (SMITH Howard K., *The State of Europe*, p. 309).

[502] Durham University Library, Archives and Special Collections, Whitehead Collection, Reference Code: GB-0033-WHI: WHI/5/47 1960–1983, Printed ephemera on deer and hunting in Czechoslovakia (1960–1983), and *Ibid.,* WHI/6/236 1959–1960 Correspondence on deer and hunting in Czechoslovakia (1959–1960).

[503] Ralph R. Hultgren *(in memoriam), Mineral Technology,* Berkeley, University of California 1993, p. 72, at: http://content.cdlib.org/view?docId=hb0h4n99rb;NAAN=13030&doc.view=frames&chunk.id=div00032&toc.depth=1&toc.id=&brand=calisphere (accessed 29 November 2010).

[504] UWSC, Eleanor Wheeler Papers 1947–1957, Accession No. 1625–001, Letter of Eleanor Wheeler dated 13 September 1957.

[505] WILKE Sharon, *Celebrating the Life and Career of Professor Emeritus Paul Doty*, Harvard Kennedy School, 21 December 2010, available at: https://www.hks.harvard.edu/news-events/news/articles/paul-doty-profile-bcsia (accessed 31 May 2017). The situation of such scholars is not unlike that of those English-speaking persons who moved to Czechoslovakia for one reason or another after the war, and whom the new communist government simply inherited and, by and large, allowed go about their business unhindered. Most would sooner or later leave. Sir Charles Mackerras, for instance, as a young man in 1947 had won a scholarship from the British Council and was studying the art of conducting under the guidance of Václav Talich at the Prague Academy of Music. He went back to London shortly after the communists seized power, where he would spend a good portion of his remaining long life making the treasures of Czech musical composition familiar to western audiences. For more information on Mackerras in Prague, see: http://176.34.179.56/classical-music/theartsdesk-qa-sir-charles-mackerras (accessed 6 October 2010). The German-born British biochemist, Ernst Boris Chain, who, like Sir Charles Mackerras, was also knighted by the British Queen, was in Czechoslovakia in his capacity as Chairman of the World Health Organization to oversee the running of the penicillin plants set up in the country by UNRRA. He remained at his post, coming and going, despite the communist coup and this may well have been the reason why his request for a visa was turned down by the American State Department in 1951. Chain also had to contend with the American embargo on the selling of spare parts for the upkeep and up-dating of the machinery at the penicillin-making plant in Czechoslovakia and the US refusal to allow any of the European countries participating in the Marshall Plan to help out either. See: DOUGLAS Dorothy W., *Transitional Economic Systems: The Polish-Czech Example*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul 1953, pp. 298–289. See also: BUD Robert, *Penicillin: Triumph and Tragedy*, Oxford – New York, Oxford University Press 2007, pp. 86–88; and CLARK Ronald W., *The Life of Ernst Chain: Penicillin and Beyond*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicholson 1985. There was, too, the Danish scholar Greta Hort. She had become a British citizen while at Cambridge in the 1930s, and came to Prague from Australia, where she had been Principal of the Women's College at the University of Melbourne, in 1946 along with her close friend Julie Moschelles, who had been Professor of Geography at Charles University until the Nazi invasion of 1938. After the death of Julie Moschelles in 1956, Greta Hort managed to secure a position at Aarhus University in

PARADES, FESTIVALS, AND RED-LETTER DAYS

"Pilgrimages and political rallies, corybantic revivals and patriotic parades – these things are ethically right so long as they are *our* pilgrimages, *our* rallies, *our* revivals and *our* parades." So wrote Aldous Huxley in his epilogue to *The Devils of Loudun*.[506] We have already seen how the authorities, unhappy with the nationalist tendencies of the Sokol movement and its innate disinclination to kowtow to any extraterritorial Big Brother, had the organization disbanded and replaced with its own altogether more tractable *Spartakiáda*. The Czech flag would flap in the breeze over the heads of the athletes but it would do so alongside that of the hammer and sickle in indissoluble brotherhood.

The most potent symbol of Czechoslovak debt to her ally and guardian was 9 May, or Liberation Day as it was then known, celebrated in honour of the sacrifices made by the Red Army in their struggle to rid the country of Nazi occupation. On the title-page to the English translation of Alexander Gonchar's prize-winning novel, *Golden Prague*, is a picture of a tank on a pedestal. The author describes how the battle-weary Soviet troops, having at last driven out the enemy, stand proudly aloft their tanks as they roll in triumph along the city's streets. The leading tank, we are told, "raced through Václavské Square, and thousands of upraised hands stretched eagerly towards the standard-bearer. They would have wished to lift him, tank and all, and bear him, the symbol of their hope, through the whole city. And that was what would indeed be done soon – free hands would build a lofty pedestal and place on it this war-scarred Soviet tank cast of the victorious steel of the Urals […]."[507] Opposite the Kinský Garden on the Malá Strana, the landmark would be there for all to see.

It was an apt, albeit unwitting, metaphor for what was to come. But the irony would have been lost on the Soviet guests in Prague for the parade as they acknowledged the plaudits

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Denmark and was eventually allowed an exit-visa from Czechoslovakia. For more information on Greta Hort, see: MARTIN John Stanley, *Greta Hort: Scholar, Educationalist and Pioneer, Bridge-Builder between Jews and Christians*, Melbourne, University of Melbourne 2003.

[506] HUXLEY Aldous, *The Devils of Loudun*, London, Penguin 1972 (first published 1952), p. 318. See also: SARGANT William, *Battle for the Mind: A Physiology of Conversion and Brain-Washing*, Cambridge (MA), Malor Books 1997 (first published 1957), pp. 188–189.

[507] GONCHAR Alexander, *Golden Prague*, Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing House 1950, p. 196.

of the crowd,[508] while above their heads on "the roofs of the buildings in what is the most dramatic, if not also the most beautiful, main square in Europe, Václavské Náměstí (Wenceslas Square) there stood the illuminated slogan, Sovětský Svaz, Náš Vzor (Soviet Union, Our Example)."[509] This, of course, was for domestic consumption and, although neither the words nor the parade were for the benefit of a non-native audience, the import of the propaganda was not lost on foreigners either. For many of the visitors, the May Day demonstration the week before would have been the high point of their Czechoslovak holiday. The banners and bunting were still in place along the streets of the capital. "Everywhere great red flags flutter in the late autumn winds. Almost every building wears a large display depicting the greatness of socialism, of the Soviet Union, Lenin and Stalin,"[510] wrote an animated Lou Diskin. The Soviet Union truly deserved the tribute, he exclaimed, noting sadly that similar expressions of gratitude and jubilation would be impossible in his home country, the United States.

The American foreign correspondent Joseph C. Harsch maintained that his most vivid memory of Prague in 1949 was the May Day procession coming down Wenceslas Square with banners showing "bloated American capitalists trying to shoot the dove of peace, Negro lynchings, and all the other themes so dear to the charades of communism."[511] Ken Marks, a young Australian cadre working with the International Union of Students in Prague at the time, whose "nondescript" job entailed "putting pidgin into readable but not necessarily digestible English,"[512] saw the same 1949 parade and wrote years later: "The cheerleading over the loud speakers was a nauseating repetition of communist slogans, 'Long Live Gottwald,' 'Long Live Stalin,' 'Long Live the Soviet Union' with a notable lack of response from the few spectators."[513] On the other hand, another Australian with the IUS, Ken Gott, in a letter home

[508] See, for example: SCHMIDT, Dana Adams, Big Parade Marks Prague Liberation: Anniversary Observed with Cheers for Russian Guests and Soviet Friendship, *The New York Times,* 8 May 1950.
[509] WATERMAN Peter, *From Coldwar Communism to the Global Emancipatory Movement. Itinerary of a Long Distance Internationalist* (available online at: http://www.into-ebooks.com/download/498/ (accessed 23 January 2017)).
[510] The Czechs celebrate the Russian Revolution, *Challenge: Young America's Voice for Peace, Jobs and Freedom*, November 1950.
[511] HARSCH Joseph, *The Curtain Isn't Iron*, London, Putnam 1950, p. 98.
[512] MARKS Ken, *In Off the Red*, Melbourne, Schwartz Publishing 2005, p. 156.
[513] *Ibid.,* p. 158. The effect of the propaganda on the local population in any of the satellite states is debatable. During a clandestine visit to Leipzig in the Russian sector of Germany in 1948, for instance, the then newspaper correspondent, Werner Knop, viewed an exhibition at the House of Soviet Culture comparing life

to his wife Beth, claimed that 500,000 people took part in the 1950 May Day parade. The march past took seven hours: "The first impression one got was the joy and spontaneity of those taking part. […] Neat rows of people marching are all very well, but a joyous, laughing, surging throng of people, some with arms linked, and all of them calling out greetings and slogans to the bystanders, is far more impressive […]. Except for about 50 tractors right at the end, there was practically nothing mechanised […], statues, solid caricatures, globes and models […] were on wheels, but they were human-propelled […]. The army was well represented, but not in a definitely organised way. Now and then would be a solid group of up to 50 officers and men, but most of the soldiers were mingled with the people, arm in arm with their wives, girlfriends. […] The most hilarious and satirical contributions came from the student section […], a savage papier-maché model of the Pope in a sedan chair and the most terrific impersonations of Hitler in a shroud, with wings and harp, Tito wearing an outsize head and cap to match, Churchill and Franco."[514] Then, clearly with no attempt to laugh up his sleeve, Gott stressed that "peace was the theme of every section of the march."[515]

But while peace lay "at the root of all Soviet needs and ambitions,"[516] war was the goal actively pursued by Washington and its Western European cronies. Soviet journalists reporting from the United States "painted a picture of unmitigated horror for ordinary Americans: unemployment, harassment, crime, racism, warmongering."[517] The outbreak of the Korean War on 25 June 1950 was portrayed as vindication of that judgement.[518] Within days, the

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in America and in the Soviet Union. "The American pictures were mainly concerned with showing police attacks on striking workers, Negroes being lynched, and surplus food being destroyed." The display was accompanied by an explanatory text which stated that "Americans are increasingly hated in every country where the masses are given a taste of their methods of terroristic democracy. That is the case, not only in Berlin, but in Germany everywhere." Knop goes on, "I watched the expressions of people reading this, and there was no mistaking the angry sneers provoked by the words 'in Germany everywhere'" (KNOP Werner, *Prowling Russia's Forbidden Zone*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf 1949, pp. 59–60).

[514] Quoted in: MCLAREN John, *Free Radicals: Of the Left in Postwar Melbourne,* Melbourne, Australian Scholarly Publishing 2003, p. 74. In a journal entry for 21 February 1950, Harrison Salisbury wrote: "Nothing new about Yugoslavia. I think the Russians are bound to pick at it, the way a kid does with a festering sore" (SALISBURY Harrison, *Moscow Journal*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press 1961, p. 119). Following the logic of the "Soviet Union, Our Example" dictate, the Czechoslovaks had begun picking at it, too.

[515] Quoted in: MCLAREN John, *Free Radicals,* p. 74.

[516] PRITT D. N., *Star-Spangled Shadow*, p. 122.

[517] LEDER Mary M., *My Life in Stalinist Russia*, Indiana, Indiana University Press 2001, p. 318.

[518] Early warning of American warmongering, too, had been given in February 1949 in *The Truth about American Diplomats*, "a slim tract [published in the USSR] bristling with large claims about the 'anti-Soviet clique' in control of the US Embassy – a gang of rapacious racketeers and warmongers" by a former official at the Information

Czechoslovak government was alerting citizens of a co-ordinated American air campaign against both North Korea and the countries bordering the American occupation zone in Germany: "'The parasites of Wall Street have called upon parasites from the insect world for help," declared *Rudé právo* on 30 June 1950.[519] Soviet readers were warned that "America was preparing to wage bacteriological war and was deliberately infecting Europe with the Colorado beetle."[520] As Desmond Donnelly strolled up Wenceslas Square from the nearby Alcron Hotel on his first trip to Prague in August 1952, "a great neon sign about the American barbarians and

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Service of the US Embassy in Moscow named Annabelle Bucar, who had defected to the Russians the previous year (CARRUTHERS Susan L., *Cold War Captives: Imprisonment, Escape, and Brainwashing*, Oakland (CA), University of California Press 2009, pp. 46–48). See also: BUCAR Annabelle, *The Truth about American Diplomats*, Moscow, Literaturnaya Gazeta Moscow 1949, pp. 103–127. Harrison Salisbury noted that the Bucar book was a bestseller in Moscow (SALISBURY Harrison, *Moscow Diary*, p. 31). There would certainly have been some feverish reading of the "confessions" at the American Embassy. Bucar paints little word pictures of each of her former colleagues in none too flattering colours. A case somewhat analogous to the Annabelle Bucar defection in Moscow was that of the tragic Arna Rides in Prague, a medical doctor with the British Council who went over to the Czechoslovak side and the "forces of peace" in February 1950 (SCHMIDT Dana Adams, *Anatomy of a Satellite*, pp. 206–209). Arna Rides, who had joined the Communist Party while a student at Sheffield University, denounced the British Council as a spy organization and lived unhappily ever after (URWIN-LEWITOVÁ Iris, unpublished memoirs in the possession of the author, pp. 18–47). The United States Information Service (USIS) libraries in Prague and Bratislava were shut down by the authorities in April 1950 and closure of the British Council followed a month later.

[519] Kamil Winter, Pokus imperialistů o ohrožení naší úrody [Attempt of imperialists to endanger our harvest], *Rudé právo,* 30 June 1950, in MACURA Vladimír, *The Mystifications of a Nation: The 'Potato Bug' and Other Essays on Czech Culture*, Wisconsin, The University of Wisconsin Press 2010, p. 56.

[520] LEDER Mary M., *My Life in Stalinist Russia*, p. 318. Neither side in the Cold War stand-off could afford to adopt a holier-than-thou attitude in this regard, since "every major protagonist in the last war – Soviet, German, British and American research centres were in operation testing the ways of bringing out effective bacterial weapons" (CLEWS John C., *Communist Propaganda Techniques*, p. 250). The Americans reached an agreement with the Japanese General, Ishii Shiro, the officer with overall responsibility for developing biological weapons in Manchuria, whereby he exchanged his extensive archive of data for immunity from prosecution as a war criminal. Shiro's colleagues were tried and sentenced for war crimes in the Russian city of Khabarovsk in December 1949 but were repatriated to Japan in 1956 as "part of a Soviet-Japanese deal in which the prisoners exchanged information beyond that of the trial testimony for clemency in an arrangement highly reminiscent of the United States' bargain with its captives"(LOCKWOOD Jeffrey A, *Six-Legged Soldiers: Using Insects as Weapons of War*, Oxford – New York, Oxford University Press 2009, pp. 128–138). British research in the area was mainly concentrated at the Ministry of Defence facility at Porton Down in Wiltshire, although a hands-on application of findings was tried out on the island of Gruinard in north-west Scotland in 1942, when RAF aircraft dropped anthrax-infected bombs on a herd of sheep – a modern times variant of the attack on a herd of sheep by the deluded Homeric hero Ajax, except that Ajax, as portrayed by Sophocles, was mad at the time. But what of the British defence establishment? The test results were satisfactory and the island remained uninhabitable until the end of the 1980s (see, for example: Legacy of Fear on Blighted Anthrax Island, *The Telegraph*, 14 October 2001). Although Hitler had prohibited the development of biological weaponry for aggressive purposes, research in the area continued, particularly at the SS Military Medical Academy at Posen under the direction of Professor Kurt Blome, with clinical trials carried out on concentration camp inmates. In the course of their investigations, the SS scientists released swarms of Colorado beetles into the German countryside (LOCKWOOD Jeffrey A, *Six-Legged Soldiers*, pp. 128–138). For a 1944 encounter at the village of Rohrbach in the Black Forest with the Colorado beetle on its steady journey eastwards, see BIELENBERG Christabel, *The Past Is Myself*, London, Corgi Books 1989, p. 153.

the germ war" glowered down defiantly.[521] But the guardians of peace would outface the warmongers. In the hotel itself: "Gilt busts of Stalin and Gottwald […] glared across from a red plush curtain background. Messrs. Stalin and Gottwald haunted the Alcron. Their portraits were in the lift, on the landing, and even in my bedroom."[522] Donnelly's initial feeling of disquiet soon faded, however, when he and his fellow delegates tucked into an "excellent seven or eight course meal […] washed down with Bulgarian wine," all provided by their Chinese hosts.[523]

Most of the long-term leftist English-speaking residents in Prague would have taken part in the May Day parades. Morton Nadler set off with fellow workers from the TESLA plant with his little daughter Mary Ellen on his shoulders for the 1949 parade.[524] Ann [Chapman] Kimmage relates that as an eleven-year-old on the eve of her first May Day march she was "too excited to fall asleep" at the thought of stepping off down Václavské Náměstí with her schoolmates in their pioneer outfits "shouting slogans with thousands of other people and waving to the party leaders on the grandstand."[525] Eleven year-old Nora Wheeler helped organize the Vinohrady annex to the 1950 parade, "marshalling her friends with flags and slogans that she and [her sister] Mary Jo (6) had painted."[526]

Of course, May Day and Liberation Day were not the only occasions for people to take to the streets. H. Gordon Skilling talks of a parade through Prague in 1950 by the Czech League of Youth (ČSM), the participants carrying "huge pictures of Stalin, Gottwald, Široký, Slánský, and Zápotocký, not to mention Marx, Engels, and Lenin," that lasted three hours.[527] Nor were the visitors left out in the cold when it came to the tread of marching feet. That same year, for example, Progressive Tours holidaymakers, trooped through the streets of Mariánské Lázně behind the banner *Britští pracující zdraví Československo* [British workers salute Czechoslovakia] calling for "peace between all peoples," their ranks swelled with "Czech

[521] DONNELLY Desmond, *The March Wind*, p. 22.
[522] *Ibid.*
[523] *Ibid.*
[524] NADLER Morton, *No Regrets*, p. 20.
[525] KIMMAGE Ann [née Chapman and Čapková], *An Un-American Childhood*, Georgia, The University of Georgia Press 1996, pp. 95–97.
[526] UWSC, Eleanor Wheeler Papers 1947–1957, Accession No. 1625–001, Letter of Eleanor Wheeler dated 2 May 1950.
[527] SKILLING H. Gordon, *The Education of a Canadian*, pp. 127–128.

people, including women and girls in colourful national dress. They were accompanied by incoming short-term visitors from many other countries who were holidaying with us there."[528] But there were obstacles in the path to peace. The Secretary of the British-Czechoslovak Friendship League raised the question of German rearmament: "What they [the Czechoslovaks] want above all else is to go on building this life in peace and security, free from foreign interference and free from the danger of a re-armed, remilitarised Germany which, as history has taught us, is a danger to the British as well as to the Czechoslovak people."[529]

SPREADING THE PEACE MESSAGE

Many of the events involving foreigners in Czechoslovakia were organized on a much larger scale, however, often under the auspices of the International Union of Students. In 1949, while the Peace Congress was underway in Paris and Prague, a group of foreign students set off around the country on the "Peace Train," an agitprop tour to Czechoslovak towns and villages not unlike that of Joan Littlewood's Theatre Workshop the previous year. This was presented as a "peace" contribution by the Czechoslovak students to the upcoming IUS Congress. Students from 28 nations took part, including American, British and Canadian representatives. Among other places, the peace voyagers took their tidings of peace to factories, collective farms and youth hostels.[530]

"The thousands who watched," wrote an official from the National Union of Czechoslovak Students, "the miners and workers of Ostrava and Gottwaldov [Zlín] who heard the Dutch students call for the freedom of Indonesia and saw them embrace their Indonesian colleagues, who heard the American students sing, in Czech, '*Už nikdy válku, chceme mír*' [No more war! We want peace!], experienced the most powerful demonstrations for peace they had

[528] *We Saw Czechoslovakia*, Watford, Farleigh Press Ltd. 1951, unpaged, chapter One Word on All Lips.
[529] KENTON Lou, Help Us Build Friendship, in *Czechoslovakia through British Eyes: Report of the Trade Union Delegation's Visit, August 1953, at the Invitation of the Czechoslovak Central Council of Trade Unions,* London, British Czechoslovak Friendship League 1953, p. 8.
[530] CUSC, Box 2, No. 6494, sign. K-268-A-2-B, The Line Is Clear: For Peace!, *World Student News,* Vol. 4, Nos. 7–8 1950, p. 7.

ever seen."[531] Eleanor Wheeler, too, was lost in admiration for the peace initiative: "The students have come back […] full of enthusiasm for the reception they had, the warm-hearted people they met, the fine fellowship among the different nationalities on the train, and the touching promises from brigade workers that they would increase their output because they were inspired by seeing 200 students from foreign lands who were declaring for peace."[532]

The potential of international sports competitions to rouse those unmoved by "other means of propaganda," and, simultaneously, to demonstrate the "rise of living standards of the broad masses and the growth of the national economy," was not overlooked either.[533] Earlier in 1949, the World University Winter Games, a "peace" tournament run by the IUS, were staged at the ski resort of Špindlerův Mlýn in the Krkonoše mountains north of Prague. But perhaps the most famous contest in this category was the annual "Peace Race" between Prague and Warsaw, the Soviet Bloc's equivalent of the *Tour de France*, which was first launched in the summer of 1948, the same momentous summer sports-wise that saw the "flying Czech," the legendary runner Emil Zátopek, shoot to fame at the London Olympic Games. Side by side with the competitors from behind the Iron Curtain, guest cyclists from the West also pedalled their bikes along the highways and byways of the Peace Race track. As with other such events,

[531] MICKA Radovan, Foreign Students Find a Home in Czechoslovakia in National Union of Czechoslovak Students, in *Students in Czechoslovakia*, pp. 158–159.

[532] UWSC, Eleanor Wheeler Papers 1947–1957, Accession No. 1625–001, Letter of Eleanor Wheeler dated 25 June 1950. The notion of a Peace Train traversing the country bringing its message direct to the people evokes few images today but would have been a hallowed spectacle at the time. In American presidential elections, for instance, it was customary for hopefuls to set off with their entourage on a flag-bedecked train for three to four months. "Every night it stopped at a town or city for a mass-meeting in the biggest hall or arena the place afforded, so the people could see the candidate and hear him speak in person. All day the train chuffed on, up and down, back and forth across the land, making frequent whistle-stops with the candidate waving and shaking hands and making short speeches from the end of the last car. I suppose the last such full-scale campaign was that of 1948, with Harry Truman giving 'em hell off the end of his train" (DAVENPORT Marcia, *Too Strong for Fantasy*, London, Collins 1968, p. 241). When Woodrow Wilson was locked in battle with Cabot Lodge and the American Senate over ratification of the Versailles Treaty and the setting up of the League of Nations, he took his message direct to the people in September 1919 in a gruelling ten-speeches-a-day, four-week journey on his *Mayflower* train across the land. Although the demise of the whistle-stop train as a means of drumming up support for various causes would soon succumb to ubiquitous television coverage, they still ran from time to time, notably the national clemency train that left New York for Washington in June 1953 at the height of the crusade to prevent the execution of the Rosenbergs (FINEBERG Andhil, *The Rosenberg Case*, pp. 109–110). Any such allusion would have been anathema to the activists on the Czechoslovak Peace Train of course, but the classic association was with Trotsky's armoured train assembled in Moscow in August 1918 and which carried along with units of the Red Army, a full plethora of propaganda materials and agitprop personnel.

[533] APPLEBAUM Anne, *Iron Curtain: 1944–1956,* New York – London, Doubleday 2012, pp. 328–330.

enthusiasm was obligatory and both Czech and Polish local Communist Party leaders were instructed to mobilize crowds of spectators along the route.[534] A rather unique episode was the "peace relay" race, again attracting Eastern and Western participants, to the aborted peace conference in Sheffield in November 1950: "The relay had commenced on 10 October; from Bulgaria it passed through Rumania, Hungary, Austria, Switzerland and France. Another group of 'peace runners' went through Poland, Czechoslovakia, Germany, Holland and Belgium."[535]

[534] *Ibid.,* pp. 328–330.
[535] DEERY Phillip, The Dove Flies East, p. 449.

A HOLIDAY TO REMEMBER

BRITISH HOLIDAYMAKERS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

For those outside the pampered upper echelons of the Party desiring to visit Czechoslovakia in the early Cold War period, one option was to go there on an officially-regulated holiday. In 1950, for instance, over 406 British tourists visited the communist state with Progressive Tours, the company referred to earlier. According to the Czechoslovak Embassy in London, the trips were highly effective in terms of propaganda and were having a great response.[536] The following year, 1951, the Czechoslovak and British administrators of the programme determined that a total of 1,000 to 1,350 British tourists would make the journey to Czechoslovakia with Progressive Tours. This number was eventually reduced to 800.

Radicalism, as the Americn lawyer Bethuel M. Webster, remarked in his defence of the economist William Remington before a Loyalty Review Board in Washington in November 1948, was "like a case of measles. It is a good thing to have it as a child and not […] as an adult."[537] Many of those who travelled to Czechoslovakia with Progressive Tours would have caught a mild dose of "radical measles" in their youth. Maybe as adolescents in the 1930s, they had been outraged by William Mosley's British Union of Fascists, the Blackshirts, parading through the streets of East London and cheered the Communist MP, Phil Piratin, as he railed against police permits being granted for such provocations. Perhaps as they sipped tea in a Lyons' Corner House, they watched the "Hunger Marchers" trudge past outside in the rain and sludge and felt a surge of empathy with the unemployed protesters. Their parents had belonged to the poor, too, ground down by the daily drudgery to make ends meet. Memories might return of the dark tenement buildings, back to sooty back and racked by vermin, whooping cough, and TB, where they had spent their childhood, in a land hopelessly divided by class and accent. Still, despite it all, they might sigh, they had held out against the German juggernaut. They had

[536] NACR, fund the International Department of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, 100/3, sv. 204, a.j. 715, Report for the Secretariat of the Central Committee prepared by Bedřich Geminder of the International Department of the Central Committee, 9 November 1950; *Ibid.,* Record of meetings on the issue of Progressive Tours holidays in Czechoslovakia, October 1950; *Ibid.,* Recreation of Britons in Czechoslovakia in 1951, 20 October 1950; *Ibid.,* Notes of the stay of British holidaymakers in Czechoslovakia in 1950, 5 June 1951.
[537] MAY Gary, *Un-American Activities: The Trials of William Remington*, New York – Oxford, Oxford University Press 1994, p. 124.

voted for Clement Attlee's Labour government in 1945, and read the occasional publication from the Left Book Club, since one could not but have doubts about a lot of what was printed in the daily newspapers and broadcast on radio about the Soviet Bloc, but they were no communists. They had never joined the Party.

The Progressive Tours brochure looked attractive, adventurous, and a trip to Czechoslovakia would let them see for themselves what life was really like behind this so-called Iron Curtain. What they saw confirmed their impression. The fact that the whole of their stay in the country was chaperoned and that contact with native inhabitants was very limited, not least by language constraints, were not thought to be major impediments to understanding,[538] but even if the odd suspicion did surface from time to time, Czechoslovakia, as their guide stressed, was in the "peace camp" and, with memories of World War Two still fresh in their minds, that was important. Even if some measures, the trials and so on, seemed repressive, the communists were striving to build a just society and, after all, "you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs."[539]

In other words, the audience was receptive. This whirl behind the Iron Curtain certainly beat the B&B in Margate where they had spent their honeymoon or anything Blackpool had to offer. For many, it was a series of firsts, their first holiday abroad, their first time staying in a hotel, their first time drinking a glass of champagne, albeit people's champagne, their first time at an opera, their first time being treated as someone whose comfort mattered.[540] Then, with

[538] In any case, who would they meet? Apart from the official representatives of whatever factory or co-operative their guide took them to, the Australian historian Manning Clark's list, give or take, from his 1958 trip to Moscow is as good as any: "[...] the people we met – the maids, waitresses, porters, chauffeurs, money-changers, newspaper-sellers, watch-repairers, women in charge of the dining-room, cloakroom attendants [...]" (CLARK Manning, *Meeting Soviet Man*, p. 17).

[539] TAYLOR S. J., *Stalin's Apologist*, p. 185. Indeed, what Walter Duranty, the Liverpool-born correspondent for the *New York Times*, who was stationed in Moscow during the 1920s and 1930s, said about foreigners on sightseeing trips to the USSR at the time "[…] that most of them take home from Russia the proofs of what they went to find there, whether it is paradise for the peasant and worker, or hell on earth for all" (DURANTY Walter, *I Write As I Please*, New York, Simon and Schuster 1935, p. 126), would hold good for visitors to the new communist republic of Czechoslovakia, too, except that the vetting system for would-be visitors had vastly improved in the meantime. A Czechoslovak visa for anyone thought to be in the hell-on-earth bracket would be pie in the sky.

[540] The British war bride, Ivy Norman-Kovanda, mother of Karel Kovanda, also mentions seeing opera for the first time, when in 1948, while her husband was on a trade mission to Moscow, she was taken to the Prague National Theatre by a friend to see *The Barber of Seville*, *Madame Butterfly*, and *Nabucco* (NORMAN-KOVANDA Ivy, *Tapestry from Suffolk to Prague*, p. 164).

everything, lock, stock, and barrel, presented in simple black and white terms, imperialism versus socialism, war versus peace, progressive versus reactionary, and with almost all predisposed to accept what was shown them at face value, the organizers had no cause for dissatisfaction with the results. The pattern for handling visitors had been set in the USSR in the interwar period and now the Soviet model was rolled out and adjusted to meet the needs of the people's democracies and the new conditions created by the Cold War.

The slogan "The Soviet Union our Model," which was articulated by the Czechoslovak Communist Party leader, Klement Gottwald, was not simply a catchphrase bandied about at rallies and public gatherings but a goal actively pursued.[541] For all the new satellite countries, "copying the model of the Soviet Union was obligatory in every sphere."[542] The approach to visitors was no different. They were an asset to be exploited. Of course, an exact replica was out of the question. The sheer size of the USSR for one thing, together with the disparity in population, industrial background, history and education were others. The Soviet Union was the nucleus of the bloc after all, Czechoslovakia a mere satellite. The Soviet Union was where the socialist experiment had first been put into practice. Czechoslovakia was simply following the trail blazed by the Soviet pioneers. The Soviet Union was the real champion of the Second World War, the country which truly smashed Nazi Germany. In no way could Czechoslovakia aspire to that status. In the Soviet Union, socialism was Stalin, but since none but himself could be his parallel, in Czechoslovakia, too, socialism was Stalin.[543] That communist satraps in Prague or in the capitals of the other people's democracies could ever attain such absolute

[541] SKILLING H. Gordon, *The Education of a Canadian*, p. 127. A rather ghoulish illustration of the Gottwald slogan occurred in Prague in March 1953. In a suitably scaled down version of the Doctors' Plot in the USSR, the Jewish-Slovak neurologist, and friend of the American Morton Nadler, Ladislav Haas was taken into custody. Haas had been ordered to conduct an "examination of the then communist president, Klement Gottwald, who suffered from syphilis. After the latter's death in 1953 Haas was unexpectedly arrested and accused of being involved in the president's death, and was then, though not convicted, imprisoned for two years" (KUTTER Peter (ed.), *Psychoanalysis International: A Guide to Psychoanalysis throughout the World*: *Vol. 1. Europe,* Stuttgart, Frommann-Holzboog 1992, pp. 42–43). See also: NADLER Morton, *No Regrets*, pp. 18–19.

[542] TORANSKA Teresa, *Oni: Stalin's Polish Puppets*, London, Collins Harvill 1987, p. 320. Though made specifically about the early years of Communist Poland, the comment could apply with equal force to the other new states in the Soviet Bloc.

[543] "As Rosa Luxemburg had prophesied, 'The dictatorship of the proletariat will become the dictatorship of the Party, the dictatorship of the Party will become the dictatorship of the Central Committee, the dictatorship of the Central Committee will become the dictatorship of one man'" (WEISBORD Merrily, *The Strangest Dream*, p. 215).

authority as the demigod in the Kremlin commanded was unthinkable. They were Russia's viceroys, nothing more.

The American correspondent, Joseph Harsch, visited Antonín Zápotocký at government buildings in Prague in 1949 and wrote: "Perhaps he hadn't been told when he took office that he was not to hold the reins of power in his own hands."[544] Zápotocký knew all right and he knew, too, that he had to be vigilant at all times to anticipate the will of his Soviet master, to interpret correctly the raised eyebrow, the half-smile, or the unfinished sentence.[545] Wait to see how the cat jumps was the motto of all functionaries, from president to *domovnice* or janitor.[546] Hostility to the West was at its peak[547] and the prospect of a Third World War breaking out

[544] HARSCH Joseph C., *The Curtain Isn't Iron*, p. 96. As prime minister of Czechoslovakia from 15 June 1948 to 14 March 1953, and, after the death of Klement Gottwald, as president from 21 March 1953 until his own death on 13 November 1957, Zápotocký had just as much real power in Prague, in relative terms, as he had when he acted as a *kapo* or prisoner taskmaster (*Funktionshäftling*) in Sachsenhausen concentration camp north of Berlin, where he was incarcerated from 1940 until his release in 1945. There, a Punchinello, he danced to the tune of the SS guards. Later, it would be Stalin and his successors in the Kremlin who would pull the puppet-strings. Nevertheless, the "Czechoslovak people were to be given the illusion that they were being ruled by their own people – not by Muscovite agents" (SCHMIDT Dana Adams, *Anatomy of a Satellite*, p. 487).

[545] "There was no need for Stalin to give direct orders – to ask that a prize be awarded to X, a flat be allocated to Y, or an Institute be set up for Z. Stalin was above such matters; they were dealt with by subordinates who divined Stalin's will through his tone of voice and the look in his eyes" (GROSSMAN Vasily, *Life and Fate*, London, Vintage Books 2006, p. 748).

[546] In addition to his regular tasks of cleaning the building and maintenance, the Russian *dvórnik*, was a conduit of valuable information to attentive ears on the comings and goings of residents, what visitors they had, in particular any of a compromising nature such as foreigners, and of whatever tittle-tattle was doing the rounds. So, too, was the all-seeing female Czech equivalent, the *domovnice*, a permanent fixture on the ground floor of blocks of flats whose sharp eyes missed little that passed up and down the staircase or went on in the neighbourhood. The dual role of concierge and eavesdropper was paralleled in Nazi Germany in the *Blockwart*, usually a low-ranking Party official whose duties likewise included sweeping hallways and gathering intelligence, a practice that was continued by the Russians in their sector of the city after the capture of Berlin. In the words of one Holocaust survivor, "Some of the newly red wardens were the very same men who had done the very same job for the Gestapo" (CLARE George, *Berlin Days*, London, Pan Books 1990, pp. 32–33).

[547] The Russian author and dissident, Vladimir Bukovsky, who was born in 1942, recalled his childhood reading fare: "I started to read very early, at the age of about five, mainly from newspapers. I was very fond of the cartoons, which I used to copy out before reading the captions. Tall, skinny, ungainly Uncle Sam, with his striped trousers, top hat and goatee, together with a portly John Bull wearing boots and a tail-coat, never left the pages of the Soviet press in those days. And the things that used to happen to them: one day they would tumble into a puddle, another day they were being kicked out of somewhere by a couple of hefty fellows, and sometimes they simply fought one another […]. If the British lion appeared in the arena, he was inevitably shown with a patch on his behind or the imprint of somebody's boot" (BUKOVSKY Vladimir, *To Build a Castle*, London, Andre Deutsch 1978, p. 71). Zápotocký preferred to land a kick on the American rear. Referring to his time in Talinn, or Reval as it was then known, where he stayed while on his way to the Second Congress of the Communist International in Petrograd and Moscow in the summer of 1920, he wrote: "You ran across the debauchery, the arrogance, and conceit of the Americans at every step. They were puffed up with conceit and threw their weight about" (ZÁPOTOCKÝ Antonín, *Red Glow Over Kladno*, London, Lawrence and Wishart 1954, p. 307; originally published in Czech as *Rudá záře nad Kladnem* (Prague, Práce 1951)).

haunted the Kremlin and, by extension, the satellite capitals.[548] The Soviet Union under the steadfast and victorious leadership of Generalissimo Stalin had saved the West but the ungrateful warmongers in Washington and London were itching to unleash "the dogs of war" again.

In the meantime, the Czechoslovak holiday scheme had attracted the interest of the British authorities. There were a number of reasons for this. After the coal mine tragedy in Whitehaven in north-west England in August 1947, in which over a hundred miners lost their lives, the Czechoslovaks promised £ 40,000 for the relief of victims and their families. This was a reciprocal gesture of solidarity on the part of the Czechoslovak miners for their fellow-miners in Britain who had contributed £ 135,000 for the re-building of Lidice, the mining community village where the Nazis had carried out the butchery and wholesale, wanton destruction and demolition that followed the assassination of *Reichsprotektor* Reinhard Heydrich in 1942, and the shattered lives of its few surviving former inhabitants.[549] According to British accounts, the leaders in Prague subsequently announced that the country's sterling currency reserve would not permit this amount to be transferred to Britain and they offered to use the money to provide holidays in Czechoslovakia for miners and their families instead.[550]

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[548] The American journalist, Harrison Salisbury, captured the feeling in Moscow: "On March 13 [1949], I sat down at my typewriter in my new office in Room 317 of the Metropol, looking out over the asphalt of Theatre Square and across to the Moskva Hotel and the tumbledown pile that housed Moscow's animated-film theatre. I began to tap out my first copy for *The New York Times*. I wrote about the mood I had found in Russia. It was, I said, 'a preoccupied land, preoccupied lest new war break out while the scars of the old are not yet healed.' This was my most important impression, that a palpable fear of war coloured almost every phase of Russian life, and lay behind the terror. Moscow itself had not been damaged by World War II, but most of European Russia had been devastated. Leningrad bore deep scars. Its outskirts were a vast ruin. The same was true of the other great cities – Kiev, Kharkov, Stalingrad, Minsk. When you realized the totality of destruction, I wrote, you understood more easily why fear of what would happen if new war came was so vivid in people's minds" (SALISBURY Harrison, E., *A Journey for Our Times*, p. 319).

[549] The Whitehaven disaster would also have reminded older miners of the "Czech mining disaster of 3 January 1934, when 142 miners from the Sudeten-German town of Osseg or Osecha [or Osek in Czech] were killed in a pit and 200 women and children came to Prague to demonstrate outside the parliament building" (BRECHT Bertolt, *Journals 1934–1955*, p. 472).

[550] TNA, FO 371/86316, From the Foreign Office to the Treasury, 5 February 1950. A correspondent for the *West Cumberland Times*, 15 February 1950, wrote: "Holidays for the above amount [£ 42,000] would include transport by air from London to Prague and return a fortnight's stay [*sic*], whereby the participants would be provided with five meals per day according to agreement. They would have the opportunity of organizing excursions to the surrounding, [*sic*] districts, in addition to seeing the capital of Czechoslovakia, and the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement would make no special charges for the administrative costs connected with the realisation of the scheme. The British NUM, on the other hand, pledges itself to obtain permission of the British authorities for the landing and taking off of the Czechoslovak special planes."

Arthur Horner, of whom more later, along with two other National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) representatives travelled to Prague in early February 1948 to discuss the plans in person.[551] Satisfied with the way the scheme was working out in practice, the authorities in Prague then decided that the Czechoslovak holiday tours would be sold to "progressive" Britons as well for £ 37.10 a head[552] and part of the proceeds would go to the Whitehaven Fund. It was agreed that the business would be run by Progressive Tours since they already had expertise in organizing package holidays behind the Iron Curtain.[553]

Not surprisingly, officials in Britain soon realized the propaganda potential of the holiday-in-Czechoslovakia idea. Staff at the British Embassy in Prague had no illusions about how the tours could be used to increase "communist sentiment" among the vacationers and how this in turn could spread to families, friends and colleagues after their return home. "[…] the Czechs on their side," the British Embassy's report to the Foreign Office went, "no doubt will do everything to persuade the visitors that Czechoslovakia is a workers' paradise. Nor should they have much difficulty in doing so if they lock them up in a series of delightful mountain resorts and surround them with engaging young communists of both sexes."[554]

In 1951 the scope of the programme was broadened. Some vacationers would travel in summer, others would go in winter for a skiing holiday.[555] The dates and price were fixed and

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[551] "This meeting was held in Prague on February 1st, With Mr. Stephenson was Mr Arthur Horner, general secretary, and Mr Dennis Edwards and the CTT was represented by it [*sic*] general secretary, Evzen Erban, and Josef Kaisky, secretary of the General Council. National secretary Josef Kohout attended on behalf of the Czechoslovak Miners' Union" (*West Cumberland Times*, 15 February 1950).

[552] "In 1950, the average UK annual salary was just over £ 100" (*The Telegraph*, 5 June 2017).

[553] TNA, FO 371/86316, Board of Trade (C. M. P. Brown) to Foreign Office (Anthony Meyer), 19 May 1950; *Ibid.,* Minutes of the Northern Department, 3 November 1950. See also: NACR, fund the International Department of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, 100/3, sv. 204, a.j. 715, Report for the Secretariat of the Central Committee prepared by Bedřich Geminder, 9 November 1950; *Ibid.,* Record of meetings on the issue of Progressive Tours holidays in Czechoslovakia, October 1950.

[554] TNA, FO 371/86316, British Embassy in Prague (Chancery) to Northern Department, 7 February 1950.

[555] The holidays were run in co-ordination with the Czechoslovak trade union organization. Indeed, it could not have been otherwise since it had become "almost impossible for persons not connected with the trade union to make a reservation at a good skiing resort or spa" (SCHMIDT Dana Adams, *Anatomy of a Satellite*, p. 382). For very many of the winter holidaymakers, this would be their first time skiing. Peter Waterman, a young English communist who worked with the International Union of Students in Prague in the 1950s, was also a novice in the sport and found the experience exhilarating, fulfilling his "childhood dreams of turning somersaults in the air." On the other hand, although "skiing was one of those situations in which the Czechs came alive," he wrote later, restaurant service in the ski resort was a different story: "New Year's Eve there was a special menu, ending with a dessert that we call in English, or American, Baked Alaska – icecream covered with baked meringue. We waited an hour and a half for the main dish of chicken. And then the waiter finally turned up with my first dish […] Baked Alaska" (WATERMAN Peter, *From Coldwar Communism to the Global Emancipatory Movement*, unpaged).

the trips were partly subsidised by the Czechoslovak state. The attractions of a break from work spent in Czechoslovakia were highlighted in the *Daily Worker* and other communist publications: "[…] For the first time – winter sports with Progressive Tours. This may seem a new idea, but in Czechoslovakia a winter sports holiday is not the prerogative of the rich, but something in which thousands of workers take part – a holiday that gives a real zest for life for the rest of the year. The loan of skates and boots is included. […] sharing the actual holiday of the Czech trade unionists at their beautiful Bohemian spa, Mariánské Lázně, owned and run by the Czech TUC. As in 1950, there will also be visits to factories, farms, mines […] to see the way they are being built by the people themselves […] excursions to other holiday centres […] and a short stay in the historic and beautiful capital, Prague. […] Why not start saving for your Czech holiday right away […] use Progressive Tours' weekly savings plan."[556]

Following their return home, many exhilarated holidaymakers wrote articles for the British press about their stay behind the Iron Curtain. By and large this was an exercise in painting the lily.[557] A certain Gordon Willis commented: "Wherever we went, amongst factory workers, miners, social and health workers, holiday-makers or workers enjoying the health resorts, I found that they were convinced that they were building a happy and prosperous life with a steadily improving future in view."[558] Mr Turner of Nottingham stated, "I have never in my life been among such happy people […]."[559] The panegyrics continued: "It is clear to us that the new life in your country is a happy life, the smiling faces, the loving care bestowed on the children, the eagerness of youth, prove this without words."[560] The more extrovert even gave lectures on the experience, usually at local Communist Party meetings but, occasionally, to wider audiences made up of fellow and armchair travellers.[561]

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[556] *We Saw Czechoslovakia*, cover advertisement, 1951.
[557] The tour organizers would have ensured that there was no opportunity for contaminating contact with discontented local inhabitants. Eleanor Wheeler once had the, for her, misfortune of spending a holiday with a friend at the hotel Spissky Domov in the Slovak High Tatras. "The discouraging factor for both of us," she wrote of the experience, "was that our hotel – not a trade union resort – was a collection centre for disgruntled bourgeoisie. They are a small percent of the population, but when concentrated they are poison" (UWSC, Eleanor Wheeler Papers 1947–1957, Accession No. 1625–001, Letter of Eleanor Wheeler dated 21 July 1951).
[558] *Czechoslovakia through British Eyes,* p. 5.
[559] *We Saw Czechoslovakia,* unpaged, chapter Something to Sing About.
[560] *Ibid.,* unpaged, A Letter We All Signed – to the Mayor and Municipal Councillors of Mariánské Lázně.
[561] The writers and speakers would be well supplied with literature detailing Czechoslovak achievements in building socialism with all the salient facts and figures. One such publication in 1960 lists a total of 196 possible

In any event, those with a less rosy picture to present would not be welcome. Although in his case it was not a fortnight's holiday but a three-year stint with the International Union of Students in Prague in the 1950s, another former English communist, Denis Hill, relates: "Over the years I had, in common with all other members, many times listened to talks given by various people about their 'trips' to some Socialist country. It was quite the thing for someone to go to Bulgaria, or Russia, or wherever, for a couple of weeks of luxurious and cosseted holiday, and to then come back and tell the rest of us about 'life' in the worker-paradises. Well, here were Joy and I, former active members of the branch, returned from a three-year stint in Eastern Europe. *We* were never asked to give any talks about it. This is because it was known that we were critical."[562]

Ideally, from the tour organizers' point of view, the prospective vacationer would be "progressive" in outlook and a trade union member. It was up to the British side to vet candidates for the trips so that no "reactionary" or, heaven forfend, actual "agent," was selected to join the group. In practice, this meant that those chosen were either trade unionists, members of the British Communist or Labour Parties, or, in some cases, were politically unaffiliated, at least ostensibly.[563] As the business expanded and the number of Britons making the trip increased, the Progressive Tours representatives thought it would be useful if a member of the

questions that might be asked and provides corresponding answers. See: KRÁL Karel, *Czechoslovakia in Questions and Answers*, Prague, *Práce* 1960.

[562] HILL Denis, *Seeing Red, Being Green: The Life and Times of a Southern Rebel*, Brighton, Iconoclast Press 1989, p. 362. Denis Hill and fellow-English communist, Peter Waterman, referred to earlier, were colleagues but there was no love lost between them. Waterman, whose job with the IUS in Prague was English Editor of *World Student News*, resented the fact that Hill had been asked by the Party in London to "keep an eye" on him and also grumbled about Hill's allegedly "Fascist" tendencies. Waterman writes, for instance: "Although his autobiography was entitled From Red to Green, one finds little eco-politics in it. I wondered whether it should not have been called From Red to Brown. I found it, ten years after he died, in a 'Revisionist' (i.e. Nazi) bookshop in Sussex" (WATERMAN Peter, *From Coldwar Communism to the Global Emancipatory Movement*, unpaged). Hill, on the other hand, had little time for the 19-year-old Waterman and criticized him for socialising with Czechs rather than with the other Brits: "Whereas the rest of us had frequent contact, shared our meals, did our drinking and our party-ing together, our editor 'went native' and submerged himself into a circle of Czech friends in the film-school and other student circles. Partly this was an age-thing, of course. He was much younger than the rest of us and perhaps the generation question was more important than we realised at the time" (HILL Denis, *Seeing Red, Being Green*, p. 269).

[563] Desmond Donnelly noted that in 1952 "it was virtually impossible for anyone but a Communist sympathizer to visit any Iron Curtain country; and even then it was impossible to go except as a member of an organised party under the auspices of an organisation acceptable to the Communist Governments" (DONNELLY Desmond, *The March Wind*, p. 19).

British Communist Party were to oversee every 400 holiday-makers.[564] Of course, attracting British tourists to Czechoslovakia also fulfilled the latent function of enabling the state to acquire exchangeable foreign currency, *valuta* as it was termed, so desperately needed at the time.[565] As in the Soviet model, some of the visiting foreigners would simply be relegated to "the category of cash cows."[566]

THE CZECHS HAVE THE WORLD BY THE TAIL – BUT NOTHING IS LEFT TO CHANCE

A lot of thought went into planning. There was nothing haphazard about where the visitors would go in Czechoslovakia and who they would meet, but the guests, especially those politically inclined, were to be given the impression that they could move around freely and mix with whomsoever they wished. The strategy worked. George Park, for instance, a motor technician from Coventry, wrote on his return home that "what we saw and did was not limited by our hosts, but rather by time and physical endurance."[567]

Indeed, many of the traveller tales emphasized the sense of spontaneity and freedom of choice felt by the tourist in Czechoslovakia. "We have been here in Prague four days and have been wandering individually and in groups all over this large city, taking pictures and talking to people to our heart's content," Elgin Scotty Neish proclaimed. "These people appear to me to have the world by the tail with a down hill pull. They are well dressed, the shops are full of food, including wines and beer.[568] Other visitors stressed the falsity in news reportage about Czechoslovakia in their home countries. Eleanor Wheeler gives a translation in one of her letters of a message which a tour group from Belgium and Luxembourg read at a press conference in

[564] NACR, fund the International Department of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, 100/3, sv. 204, a.j. 715, Recreation of Britons in Czechoslovakia in 1951, 20 October 1950; *Ibid.,* Notes of the stay of British holidaymakers in Czechoslovakia in 1950, 5 June 1951.
[565] *Ibid.,* Report for the Secretariat of the Central Committee prepared by Bedřich Geminder, Appendix, 9 November 1950.
[566] DAVID-FOX Michael, *Showcasing the Great Experiment*, p. 176. What Eugene Lyons said of Russia in 1930 would be apposite: "That summer's tourist flood, the largest as yet in Soviet history, had left a considerable sediment of glittering *valuta* – the possibilities of cashing in on world-wide curiosity suddenly bulked large in the Soviet imagination" (LYONS Eugene, *Assignment in Utopia*, p. 349).
[567] PARK George, I Was Struck by Their Eagerness and Pride, in *Czechoslovakia through British Eyes,* p. 8.
[568] Letter by Elgin "Scotty" Neish of September 1952, in ISITT Benjamin, Fellow Traveller, p. 115.

July 1952: "We have been able to ascertain with our own eyes that the information published by the newsparesr [*sic*] and news agencies in the capitalist world are false. Whether in the factories, the producers' cooperatives, the social and cultural organizations, the Belgian and Luxembourg delegates have had the occasion, in the course of freely held conversations, to see that the Czechoslovak people are united behind their government and that they are building socialism with enthusiasm, guaranteeing a better future and a firm peace. […] 'The delegates will fight energetically against war which brings only ruin and misery to their peoples. Long live friendship among the peoples. Long live peace."[569]

One Progressive Tours holidaymaker even prepared a letter for the Mayor of Mariánské Lázně highlighting the fact that his deputation had been given the chance to roam around at will and examine whatever took their fancy: "With nine fellow trade unionists from Great Britain," he declared, "I moved quite freely among the people. We conversed with them in English, German and, through an interpreter, in their own language, and we asked hundreds of questions."[570] Willie Gallacher had a similar story to tell – there was never any question of visitors not being absolutely at liberty to talk to anyone they chose to.[571] Of course whether anybody thought fit to respond in a country where knowledge of English among citizens in itself was viewed with suspicion is another matter.[572]

This is not to suggest, however, that visitors were peremptorily prevented from exploring Prague or other parts of the country on their own. Indeed, when Willie Gallacher and his wife Jeanie visited Czechoslovakia in the early Cold War years, they often called to see Ivy Kovanda, the British-born wife of Karel Kovanda, an employee in Czechoslovakia's foreign trade section, at the family flat in the Vršovice district of Prague, at least until the Kovandas moved to Říčany, 20 kilometres from Prague, in November 1952. "On reflection," Ivy Kovanda

[569] Quoted in: UWSC, Eleanor Wheeler Papers 1947–1957, Accession No. 1625–001, Letter of Eleanor Wheeler dated 10 July 1952.
[570] Letter to the Mayor and Municipal Councillors of Mariánské Lázně written by one of the 406 British tourists who visited Czechoslovakia in 1950, in *We Saw Czechoslovakia,* unpaged.
[571] For example, PHM, CP/IND/GALL/03/11, Report written by William Gallacher, MP, in September 1948.
[572] Stephen Murray-Smith had a different take on the subject: "In Czechoslovakia it is enough to speak English on a train to have some greasy character sidling up to you with a hard luck story" (MCLAREN John, *Free Radicals,* p. 78). Be that as it may, the British war bride, Iris Urwin [Lewit], who lived in Prague at the same time as Murray-Smith, wrote: "Among the things which I very much disliked in Czechoslovakia then was the obligation to take letters for abroad to the Central Post Office with the envelope opened and to show your identity card to make sure they knew who was writing to which country" (URWIN-LEWITOVÁ Iris, unpublished memoirs, p. 45).

wrote later, "we lived in a tiny world of our own, unable to communicate fluently with the local people and not even feeling the need to do so."[573] This would have made the visits of the Gallachers all the more endearing and it was "always such a pleasure when, over a cup of tea, we would get up to date with each other's news."[574] These conversations would have been outside the purview of state control but it is hardly likely that they did more than scratch the surface as far as discussing everyday life in the communist state was concerned, even though Ivy Kovanda, as she afterwards admitted, was becoming "increasingly bewildered by the extreme and repressive measures which the Czechoslovak Communist Party was employing 'in defence of socialism.'"[575]

There is also the intriguing possibility that occasionally the Czechoslovak authorities were simply unaware of the presence of some foreigners, with no undercover role, in the country, where they went and whom they met.[576] In 1955, for example, Poland and Czechoslovakia signed an agreement allowing citizens of either state to travel within a 10-kilometre radius in the neighbouring land without passports. "The question of whether the convention applied to foreign residents of either country never came up," says Erwin Marquit, an American, then resident in Poland. Marquit made the trip with a number of Poles but went beyond the designated Czechoslovak zone to accompany a Greek companion who had hopes, unsuccessfully as it happened, of turning an honest penny by exchanging goods on the black market. Marquit admits that he scarcely thought "of the consequences of an American without

[573] NORMAN-KOVANDA Ivy, *Tapestry from Suffolk to Prague*, p. 146.
[574] *Ibid.,* p. 157.
[575] *Ibid.,* p. 187. Perhaps Gallacher reminisced about his trip to Moscow for the second world congress of the Comintern in 1920 and his encounter with Lenin. On the other hand, there may have been more to Gallacher than just a typical "Moscow stooge." See, for instance: THORPE ANDREW, Communist MP: Willie Gallacher and British Communism, in MORGAN Kevin – COHEN Gidon – FLINN Andrew (eds.), *Agents of the Revolution: New Biographical Approaches to the History of International Communism in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*, Bern, Peter Lang 2004, pp. 132–158.
[576] While parachute drops of infiltrators continued at least until 1953, such agents would, presumably, have been Czechoslovak nationals not foreigners. See: GROSE Peter, *Operation Rollback: America's Secret War Behind the Iron Curtain*, New York, Houghton Mifflin 2000, p. 213. Violation of Soviet Bloc airspace by probing NATO fighter planes was routine at the time. See: USDIN Steven T., *Engineering Communism*, p. 159. A minor irritant by comparison was the regular release of barrages of hydrogen-filled balloons, when the wind was blowing in a Czechoslovak direction, carrying thousands of leaflets with freedom slogans, in the hope that they would be picked up and read across the frontier. See: KOVRIG Bennett, *The Myth of Liberation: East-Central Europe in US Diplomacy and Politics since 1941*, Baltimore (MD), The Johns Hopkins University Press, pp. 149–150.

passport or visa being caught traveling illegally in Czechoslovakia with another illegal traveler from Greece." The resourceful Marquit, however, who had separated from the original Polish group and also from his disappointed Greek trader, and was now travelling alone, managed to talk his way past the Czechoslovak-Polish border crossings on his return.[577]

"There are chinks in the curtain," claimed the American journalist John Gunther in 1949. "For instance in Prague we spent some hours in the company of James A. Farley; we accompanied him on a visit to Lidice and were fellow guests at a luncheon honouring the Archbishop of Prague. But high Czechoslovak authorities we met subsequently had no knowledge at all that Farley was in the city. They could hardly believe it when I happened to mention that this distinguished American, so antipathetic to Communism, was a visitor in their capital and was going about quite freely – as a guest of the United States ambassador!"[578]

These would of course have been exceptions. With regard to the more orthodox, run-of-the-mill visitors, in order to lend more credence to their testimony, and at the same time feed their sense of self-worth, the hypothetically neutral witnesses were admonished not to shy away from criticism when it came to conditions prevailing in the country. If there was room for improvement, then this should be divulged and appropriate remedies would be taken to rectify the matter. "On every occasion, we were asked to state our criticism freely […]. We must admit quite frankly that it was very difficult for us to make any criticism, as we ourselves had never had the opportunity to be with our wives and families in places such as those now being enjoyed by workers in Czechoslovakia."[579] For many, this would certainly have been the case. On top of that, the guests were to get the impression that ordinary people in Czechoslovakia were well informed both about the domestic state of affairs and the international situation. "I met political and trade union leaders and I met the ordinary people in their homes – at their jobs – in their holiday centres," one man claims. "I found eagerness, particularly among the workers, to

[577] MARQUIT Erwin, *Memoirs of a Lifelong Communist*, pp. 182–183.
[578] GUNTHER, John, *Behind the Curtain*, pp. 34–35. What the Czechoslovak authorities thought of John Gunther's lunch companion is clear from this report in the *Catholic Herald*: "The Prague newspaper Svobodné Slovo has suggested that Mr. James Farley, former US Postmaster General, should be the next US envoy to Vatican City, replacing Mr. Myron Taylor. Mr. Farley's qualifications for the job, said the paper, were his general managership of Coca Cola and his friendship with Gen. Franco" (*Catholic Herald*, 3 February 1950).
[579] *Scottish Miners' Delegation to Czechoslovakia,* Scotland, National Union of Mineworkers 1951, p. 22.

discuss their economic shortcomings and to tell in astonishing detail what they were doing to overcome their difficulties. From the conversation of the workers I talked to, I should say that the average Czech is better informed about political and economic matters than the average worker in this country," says another.[580] Experiencing first-hand the facilities enjoyed by ordinary working people like themselves would have strengthened whatever positive feelings visitors had towards Czechoslovakia before their journey while their cheery and uplifting reports on their return home would have gladdened the hearts of the tour organizers.

LIDICE

Any organized tour to Czechoslovakia invariably included a visit to Lidice. Sightseers were taken to both the re-built village and the few scarred remnants of the former habitations, the symbol and pinnacle of Nazi brutality towards Czechs during the Occupation. For many this would have been a very moving experience. In 2008, a man named Joe Hewer recalled: "I visited Czechoslovakia in 1956. I was nine years old and we went to Lidice, a place I will never forget. I'm 61 now. I was with a party of miners' widows and orphans as guests of the Czech miners. My father and 103 other miners were killed in an explosion in the William Pit disaster at Whitehaven in Cumbria on 15 August 1947. Czech miners contributed to a fund for the miners' dependants, we travelled to London and then on to Dover, we crossed the Channel to Ostend and then continued by train to Czechoslovakia. We stayed in a beautiful town called Marianské Lazně. I will never forget our visit the people were so kind and friendly to us all. We had two days in Prague and I remember visiting a youth camp by a lake in a woodland setting. We played games with the children and had our meals with the Czech youngsters. When it is near the anniversary my memories of Czechoslovakia always come back to me. Thank you for everything you did for us all."[581]

The story of Lidice would have been well-known in the English-speaking world. Apart from news reports, the 1943 film, *The Silent Village*, directed by Humphrey Jennings with its

[580] KELLY Dick, Their Health Services Staggered Me, in *Czechoslovakia through British Eyes,* p. 2; MANDERSTON Jim, A Dream of Socialist Construction Comes True at Gottwaldov, in *Ibid.,* p. 2.
[581] http://www.radio.cz/en/section/mailbox/mailbox-2008-08-24 (accessed 1 July 2016).

re-enactment of the horror, transposed into a Welsh mining community setting, would, for those who saw it, have lent an immediacy to the event and brought home "the distant realities of the brutal fascist occupation of Europe (its Central and Eastern regions in particular) to the people of Britain […] particularly to an often solipsistic England."[582] Many English-speaking volunteers would also have travelled to Czechoslovakia to lend a hand in Lidice's rebuilding. H. Gordon Skilling on his first visit to the village in 1948, for instance, "came on a brigade of young people, including some 40 Canadians, sweating away on the construction site."[583]

On the 10th anniversary of the atrocity in 1952, a "Lidice Commemoration Weekend" was organized with a concert and public meeting at which the Mayor of Lidice, Helena Leflerová, one of the Lidice women to survive and who would go on to become a Member of Parliament, officiated.[584] However, ever since the liberation of their homeland, Czechs had been coming in their thousands to the revered site. The English-speaking community in the country joined them. In July 1948, it was still possible to board an excursion bus at the Powder Tower in Prague, as Edith Pargeter discovered, that would take in both Lidice and also Lány,[585] "where Tomáš Masaryk, his wife Charlotte, and his son Jan shared a common grave in a large grass-covered plot, without gravestones, but marked with a large M," as H. Gordon Skilling, who included both places on his one-day trip by car the same month, observed.[586] That would not last much longer.[587] When the IUS took Denis Hill and other colleagues to Lidice, "which

[582] http://sensesofcinema.com/2006/cteq/silent-village/ (accessed 29 June 2017). The Rural District Council of Ystradgynlais, a town in southwest Wales not far from the village of Cwmgiedd where the film was made, later wrote to the Lidice Society: "The ordinary lives of the coal workers and their families in that ill-fated village were similar in every way to those of the coal workers and their families in Cwmgiedd and throughout this district" (WHEELER Eleanor, *Lidice*, Prague, Orbis 1955, p. 28). Wheeler's book, with its collection of poignant photos, was translated into several languages.

[583] SKILLING H. Gordon, *The Education of a Canadian*, p. 116.

[584] PHM, CP/CENT/ORG/01, box 1–6, Lidice Lives, Souvenir Programme 7–8 June 1952.

[585] PARGETER Edith, *The Coast of Bohemia*, p. 176.

[586] SKILLING H. Gordon, *The Education of a Canadian*, p. 116. Recalling her relationship with Jan Masaryk in the postwar years, Marcia Davenport wrote: "I went with him to mass-meetings in commemoration of war victims, the massacred people of Lidice, the dead of the camps and the fighting forces, whose widows and orphans were assembled. Surrounded by every travesty the Communists could make of these occasions, sharing the rostrum with Gottwald or Slánský, the head of the Communist Party, Jan would wait until they and their howling minions had had their say. Then he stood up and spoke to the people about faith and decency and the brotherhood of man and the reason why Czechoslovaks had died in the cause of these" (DAVENPORT Marcia, *Too Strong For Fantasy,* p. 344).

[587] It was a time of change. History was being re-written. "In one of his postwar publications, [Jan] Bartuška [Attorney-General and Professor of Law at Charles University] acclaimed Stalin as the Founding Father of Czechoslovakia in 1918" (ULČ Otto, *The Judge in a Communist State: A View from Within*, Ohio, Ohio University Press 1972, p. 96) not T. G. Masaryk. "For the dramatist of Stalin's court," wrote the Russian literary critic Nikolai

is more or less an obligatory place to visit," shortly after his arrival in the country, there was no mention of Lány. The chartered bus went from Lidice to "the industrial town of Kladno, noted in Czech working class history as a centre of revolutionary struggle."[588]

But, for all, their first trip to Lidice was a *Via Dolorosa*. One Progressive Tours holidaymaker wrote: "we were not ashamed of our tears as we walked in silent procession over that sacred earth to place our wreath on the memorial that stands over the mass grave of the victims, a place which has become a place of pilgrimage for all who visit Czechoslovakia."[589] With the sadness came the firm resolve that "never again shall there be another Lidice."[590]

Part of the pathos of the Lidice experience was meeting the surviving widows, mothers and sisters of the men and boys murdered. On the other hand, among some of the native English-speakers who made the trip to the village on more than one occasion, a note of cynicism creeps in. The Australian Ken Marks, for instance, recounts that he "too, met some of these tragically sad women, sad not only from their losses but from being routinely paraded before visitors by the State propaganda machine." [591] Desmond Donnelly was even more scathing when describing his second trip to the village, this time in 1954: "Lidice was much as before. The same German atrocity stories were told. The same pathetic middle-aged women who were the survivors of the old village told their stories as though they were part of a circus act, singing for their free houses and state pensions."[592]

Almost inevitably perhaps, a link was made with the war in Korea. The editor of the Australian Communist Party newspaper *Tribune*, Rex Chiplin, for instance, felt the need to repeat what the widowed inhabitant, Marie Zapletalová, had said: "We Czech mothers have

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Gorchakov of the author Alexei Tolstoy, "history was merely a stick to point in whatever direction the 'master' desired" (GORCHAKOV Nikolai A., *The Theatre in Soviet Russia*, New York, Columbia University Press 1957, p. 317). The Czechoslovak "political chameleons," such as Jan Bartuška, went one better. The whole course of human history, for the moment at least, culminated in Stalin.

[588] HILL Denis, *Seeing Red, Being Green*, p. 262.

[589] *We Saw Czechoslovakia,* unpaged, chapter The Martyred Village.

[590] MANDERSTON Jim, A Dream of Socialist Construction Comes True at Gottwaldov, in *Czechoslovakia through British Eyes,* p. 3. At the conclusion of his foreword to *Heroes and Victims*, a 1945 publication that listed the names of Czechs murdered by the Nazis, Jan Masaryk uttered the same sentiment: "Never again must there be another massacre of Lidice" (Masaryk Jan, in forward to *Heroes and Victims,* Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs Information Service, London, Lincolns-Prager 1945, p. 4).

[591] MARKS Ken, *In Off the Red*, p. 170.

[592] DONNELLY Desmond, *The March Wind*, p. 93.

seen Lidice and we have seen North Korea with thousands of Lidices and we say all mothers of the world must stand against the wars of imperialist robbers; all must understand what we have understood – a fascist is a fascist whether a German, a Britisher, a Frenchman or an American. Hitler rose out of imperialism. New fascism is arising out of American Imperialism, more barbaric and more murderous than Hitlerite fascism was."[593] Eleanor Wheeler reports that a Mexican delegation, on their way home from a Preparatory Peace Conference in China, whom she escorted to the village in 1952, maintained that "after all they had seen as evidence of the war in Korea, while they were in Peking, Lidice stood as a symbol rather than as a culminating point of barbarity."[594]

The British Labour MP, Sir Barnett Stross, a Polish refugee who had come to Britain with his parents after the First World War, founded the movement *Lidice Shall Live* among the miners of his constituency of Stoke-on-Trent in central England in September 1942. The goal was to rebuild Lidice and the concerted effort soon spread and bore fruit. "New Lidice, built on a nearby rise of ground, is fast becoming a modern village with ultra-modern homes, streets, playgrounds, restaurants, etc.," wrote Scotty Neish after his visit in 1952.[595] Father Jack Boggis, author of the *Socialist Christian Catechism* and a member of the Christian clergymen tour two years earlier, was similarly impressed by what he saw: "The flats are soundly constructed, roomy and comfortable, with laundering rooms in the basement equipped with up-to-date washing and drying machinery. There are pram garages with ramps – *not* steps! – leading to them. And the rents are about from one-twelfth to one-fourteenth of the incomes of the workers who occupy them. […] We had not the time to visit the five other equally large projects [in Prague], all working at the same time, at which socialist emulation was ensuring speed without scamping."[596] The reconstructed Lidice strengthened the resolve to strive unremittingly for the

[593] CHIPLIN Rex, *Over the Wall: The Story of a Trip through Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union, China, and the Mongolian Peoples Republic*, Sydney, Current Book Distributors 1957, p. 10.
[594] UWSC, Eleanor Wheeler Papers 1947–1957, Accession No. 1625–001, Letter of Eleanor Wheeler dated 20 July 1952.
[595] ISITT Benjamin, Fellow Traveller, p. 114.
[596] PHM, CP/CENT/ORG/01, box 7–11, Visit to Czechoslovakia: The Report of British Clergymen Who Attended Christian and Peace Conferences and Festivals in Czechoslovakia on July 1, 2, 3 and 4 1950, p. 5. For more information on Father Jack Boggis, see: http://www.stgitehistory.org.uk/media/jackboggis.html (accessed 2 July 2017).

"peace cause."[597] "When you see how these people are building, building, building – how can they want anything but peace, peace, peace," Father Boggis added.[598] But not everybody would be satisfied. When H. Gordon Skilling returned to Lidice on a visit to Czechoslovakia in 1967, he found: "The new town was an architectural monstrosity of uniform, dull brown houses. There was a lovely rose garden, but no plaque indicated the donors."[599]

The Rose Garden of Peace and Friendship was opened in the village on 9 May 1955. This was a solemn occasion presided over by Dr Hromádka, Chairman of the Czechoslovak Committee for the Establishment of the Rose Garden. Eleanor Wheeler, who was there with her husband George and their Canadian friend, Lucille Giscombe, mentions that dignitaries were present from around the world, including Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister of India,[600] as well as other leaders from both sides of the Iron Curtain. The British delegation was a large one, with Harold Naylor, the Lord Mayor of Stoke-on-Trent, William Isaac Thomson, Deputy Mayor of Coventry, delegations of miners from around the country, and of course Dr Barnett Stross present.[601]

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[597] KELLY Dick, Their Health Services Staggered Me, in *Czechoslovakia through British Eyes,* p. 2; MANDERSTON Jim, A Dream of Socialist Construction Comes True at Gottwaldov, in *Ibid.,* p. 3; *We Saw Czechoslovakia,* unpaged, chapter The Martyred Village; *Scottish Miners' Delegation to Czechoslovakia,* pp. 6–7. See also: Letter by Elgin "Scotty" Neish of September 1952, in ISITT Benjamin, Fellow Traveller.

[598] PHM, CP/CENT/ORG/01, box 7–11, Visit to Czechoslovakia: The Report of British Clergymen Who Attended Christian and Peace Conferences and Festivals in Czechoslovakia on July 1, 2, 3 and 4 1950, p. 5.

[599] SKILLING H. Gordon, *The Education of a Canadian*, p. 227. On the other hand, another commentator notes that "the Czech authorities constructed a new Lidice immediately adjacent to the old one, with some 150 houses and about 500 people. It presents an immaculate appearance, with well-maintained homes, a community centre, and wide streets shaded by birch trees […]. A monument to the dead of Lidice in the shape of a granite semicircle stands on a small rise overlooking the lush green countryside. A series of plaques lists other atrocities of World War II, including Oradour and Dresden, as if to place the victims of Lidice within a fellowship of suffering. Around the semicircle are numerous vases of red roses, the symbolic flower of Lidice" (GARRETT Stephen, *Conscience and Power: An Examination of Dirty Hands and Political Leadership*, New York, St. Martin's Press 1996, p. 102).

[600] India would open its own rose garden in Chandigarh tweve years later, the city Nehru himself had planned and that Le Corbusier had brought to life. When he addressed the crowd assembled at Rajendra Park in Chandigarh on 9 November 1957, it is quite possible that the memory of Lidice was at the forefront of Nehru's mind: "It was felt that to build a new city to be the capital of Punjab would give people something new to look forward to. We wanted them to look to the future with new hope after the trauma they had been through. We felt the new capital would be a symbol of new hope." See: http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/chandigarh/community/-nehru-s-chandigarh-comes-to-life-in-delhi/122494.html (accessed 13 September 2017).

[601] WHEELER Eleanor, *Lidice*, pp. 29–30; also UWSC, Eleanor Wheeler Papers 1947–1957, Accession No. 1625–001, Letter of Eleanor Wheeler dated 20 June 1955. The British-Czechoslovak Friendship League, we are told, sent Klement Gottwald a telegram of congratulations on his election as president and assured him that "it would continue in its efforts to bring about still closer friendship and understanding between Great Britain and Czechoslovakia. This message carried the signature of Dr Barnett Stross, Socialist MP, then Chairman of the League" (BROWN John, *Who's Next?*, p. 196). Most likely, this was a perfunctory communication. As Chair of the British-Czechoslovak Society, Stross "used his position to protest against

The Wheelers returned to Lidice two years later for the 15th anniversary of the razing of the village. They sat among delegations from Britain as well as from both sides of divided Germany while their son Toby helped out in the crowd as a Red Cross volunteer.[602] The main speaker at the gathering, with Dr Hromádka once again at the helm, was the Chairman of the National Assembly, Zdeněk Fierlinger, who drew a parallel between the terror inflicted on Lidice with the potentially similar fate that would engulf the entire world should a nuclear conflict break out, and he "gave credit to the American scientists in their important statement against the hydrogen bomb tests."[603] Eleanor Wheeler tells us that when she went to the local village store to get a roll of film for her camera before the start of the event: "The storekeeper assured me that I was probably getting a very distortedly rosy view of Czechoslovakia if I was a journalist."[604] Assuredly, too, Eleanor Wheeler was having none of that and, sensibly enough, the man did not argue the point. Two days later, a farewell dinner was given in honour of the public figures who had participated in the commemoration. Eleanor Wheeler and Lucille Giscombe went along. They shared a table with a councillor from East London named Abe Wolffe, who was there with his wife, and they had "quite a chin-chin" about their families, although Eleanor Wheeler was somewhat disappointed at the fact that "representing the US were only some Czechs and Slovaks back in the old country for a visit. They got a big hand at the ceremonies, though." There were smiles all round, too, when Lucille Giscombe managed to "hunt down" a Canadian from Vancouver.[605] So North America had some presence at least at the valedictory event.

human rights issues in the country. However, this cut little ice with MI5: Stross was on the left of the Labour Party, an émigré and thus a natural target for the security services" (DORRIL Stephen – RAMSAY Robin *Smear!*, pp. 193–198). The British-Czechoslovak Society only operated outside Czechoslovakia and had its headquarters in Bayswater in London. There had been a Czechoslovak-British Friendship Society in Prague, "supported particularly by the large number of Czechs who had fought in the West during the war and who had returned with British wives. But this was closed down by the Czech authorities early in 1950, at about the same time as they had closed down the British reading-rooms which until then had been run by the British Council in Prague and Bratislava" (CLEWS John C., *Communist Propaganda Techniques*, pp. 116–117).

[602] UWSC, Eleanor Wheeler Papers 1947–1957, Accession No. 1625–001, Letter of Eleanor Wheeler dated 19 June 1957.

[603] *Ibid.*

[604] *Ibid.*

[605] *Ibid.,* Letter of Eleanor Wheeler dated 24 June 1957.

By and large, it was a question of preaching to the converted, as their guides painstakingly explained to the visitors the great progress that had already been made in Czechoslovakia, and this pre-existing sympathy was reinforced by their now hands on experience of socialism in practice.

It is true that there was a lot to admire.[606] Former distinctions in pension and vacation entitlements between manual and non-manual workers had been done away with. Medical care was free for all insured persons and their families, including dependent relatives. Maternity benefit was set at 100 per cent of wages and lasted for 18 weeks.[607] On top of that, the new Nationalization Law meant, and this had a direct impact on many of the foreign guests, that, among other things, "all health resorts and watering places" became the property of the state.[608] The new Family Law Act, which took effect on 1 January 1950, ensured that husband and wife had the same rights and duties in marriage and "that all important family matters shall be decided by mutual agreement" and "that all property except for personal belongings, inheritances, or gifts, shall be joint property."[609] In addition, "school fees and charges were abolished, including those for universities, and a system of night schools and extramural studies was established to make it possible for people who were already working to complete their education."[610] In terms of helping working mothers, "in 1950 alone 14,000 places were added in nurseries and 50,000 in nursery schools, so that by the end of the year there were more than 23,000 children under three, and 256,000 between three and six, receiving all-day care."[611] There was no gainsaying these facts and figures and some contrasted sharply with the situation in the visitors' own country.

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[606] According to the Canadian historian, H. Gordon Skilling, conditions in Prague had improved considerably by 1950, "more food was available in shops and restaurants," and "people looked better dressed and better shod" (SKILLING H. Gordon, *The Education of a Canadian*, p. 125). For information on the Czechoslovak economic situation in the period under review, see: PRŮCHA Václav et al, *Hospodářské a sociální dějiny Československa 1918–1992* [Economic and social history of Czechoslovakia 1918–1992], Brno, Doplněk 2004–2009; KALINOVÁ Lenka, *Společenské proměny v čase socialistického experimentu: K sociálním dějinám 1945–1969* [Social changes in the times of the socialist experiment: On social history 1945–1969], Prague, Academia 2007.
[607] DOUGLAS Dorothy W., *Transitional Economic Systems*, p. 246.
[608] *Ibid.,* p. 90.
[609] SCOTT Hilda, *Does Socialism Liberate Women?*, p. 90.
[610] *Ibid.,* p. 92.
[611] *Ibid.,* pp. 92–93.

"I am the British-born wife of a Czech," declared Margaret Schierlová, a British war bride who travelled with her husband to live in his home country after demobilisation and whom Progressive Tours holidaymakers met in Mariánské Lázně. "I came here at the end of June 1946, and I am perfectly happy here and have not the slightest desire to go back to England. The reason that I want to stay here is that I am the mother of two small children. In Czechoslovakia I am profoundly sure that their future is safe. They will not be faced with the danger of unemployment, and for the immediate present I am sure that my children are better off growing up in an atmosphere where peace is on every lip and in every heart than in a country where even the children's comic papers are full of stories about atom bombs. My children are being brought up in a socialist country which is determined not be drawn into war."[612] Margaret Schierlová would go on to become a highly proficient translator of scientific and other works from Czech to English.

When the impressive statistics on citizens' welfare were accompanied by bonds of obligation created by the host, selective perception on the part of the guest was made even more likely. The objective was to gain the hearers' approval for the good and to gloss over the bad. The barrage of facts became all the more palatable at the receiving end when, following the Soviet model, gratitude was triggered in the visitors by all the wining and dining, and accommodation so luxurious that it would most likely have never even been imagined by the lucky recipient. Further perquisites came in the form of gifts either materially or, to use Paul Hollander's expression, by "ego massage." The visitors' self-esteem would be raised by the subtle manipulation of such human frailties as the liking to be thought knowledgeable, for instance, someone with whom the slight, temporary strictures in economic life, attributable in no small degree to weather conditions and sabotage by reactionary remnants, as well as the triumphs of socialist transformation could be discussed.

For the chosen few, nothing was overlooked, not even spending money: "Upon our arrival in Prague," says Scotty Neish, "[…] [we] were given 500 Kroner [*sic*] in Czechoslovakian money and 20 meal tickets, and splendid rooms in one of the finest hotels in

[612] *We Saw Czechoslovakia,* unpaged, chapter One Word on All Lips.

Prague. The meals we receive free are excellent and the 200 Kroners [*sic*] a day to pay incidentals which we might need or presents to take home."[613] Joan Littlewood recounts how members of Theatre Workshop were at all times accommodated in decent rooms, given food "all day long," and "always got a delicious four-course meal in the evening." They were also offered a week's holiday in the Sudeten mountains at the end of the tour.[614] On top of that, in each town they came to they were greeted by the mayor in person, flowers would be proffered along with invitations to participate in local events. Nor was there any dearth of presents. In the city of Ostrava, Joan Littlewood was deeply touched when given "a miner's lamp" and "a gorgeous bouquet with a ribbon inscribed in gold 'Miners of Ostrava to the Workshop.'"[615]

Dispensing gifts featured prominently in the hospitality programme. Even ordinary vacationers could be beneficiaries. Holidaymakers with Progressive Tours, for example, were lost in admiration at the bookshops in Prague, the "wide selection of volumes, beautifully exhibited," and, as luck would have it, "were always given a friendly volume."[616] Prague bookshops likewise attracted the attention of the American Communist Party activist, Lou Diskin: "The book stores [in Prague], which are as numerous as bars are in New York, seem to shine most of all [the shops]."[617]

As is clear from their advertising literature, Progressive Tours set great store on the welcome their customers received. Presents were merely one element, albeit an important one, in the minds of the tour planners who no doubt made the reasonable assumption that satisfied travellers would not be reticent in spreading the word of Czechoslovak munificence among friends and colleagues back home. The Anglican clergyman, Reverend Alan Ecclestone, Vicar of the Holy Trinity Church in Darnell, Sheffield, for example, wrote in 1951: "I think the most moving thing was our reception here in Czechoslovakia. For many of us it will be one of the most truly moving experiences in our life. […] When we came into the station of Mariánské Lázně and found it literally crowded with people who had been waiting for hours to receive us,

[613] Letter by Elgin "Scotty" Neish of September 1952, in ISITT Benjamin, Fellow Traveller, p. 114.
[614] LITTLEWOOD Joan, *Joan's Book*, pp. 344 and 354–355.
[615] *Ibid.,* p. 359.
[616] *We Saw Czechoslovakia*, unpaged, chapter Prague.
[617] The Czechs celebrate the Russian Revolution, *Challenge: Young America's Voice for Peace, Jobs and Freedom*, November 1950.

with a band to play to us, and young people, full of vitality and happiness, waiting there to shake our hands and to greet us in the names of the people of this state. We could not but feel that this was truly a new world […].”[618]

A certain Miss Jane Graham had a similar experience while on a trip with Progressive Tours in 1955: “It was late in the evening when we arrived at Mariánské Lázně, the Czech spa where we were told we were going to have the same kind of holidays as ordinary Czech trade unionists. A brass band was waiting to play us in. A party of Czech young brigadiers swarmed all over chanting ‘We Want Peace.’ They pressed bunches of flowers on us and wrung our hands […].”[619] For Charlie Findlay, a young engineering worker from London, it was no different. He was particularly taken by the accommodation he was given in Mariánské Lázně in 1951: “I would like to say something about the hotel in which I am staying. It is really more like a palace. The room […] is all done in white enamel, has two luxurious beds, two wardrobes made of most beautiful wood. Of course I realise that they were originally built for quite different people, but the Czech workers have inherited these luxuries, and we have been enjoying them too […].”[620]

The bed of down, like the floral welcome, was par for the course,[621] while behind the scenes the visitor list would have been methodically perused long in advance. The status and

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[618] *We Saw Czechoslovakia,* unpaged, chapter Eastward Bound. For information on the stay of these particular Progressive Tours tourists, see also: NACR, fund the International Department of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, 100/3, sv. 204, a.j. 715, Report for Comrade Geminder by Eva Vergeinerová, 18 August 1950. The Rev. Alan Ecclestone had been a member of the Communist Party since 1948. He stood six times, unsuccessfully, as a CPGB candidate for Sheffield Council. See: *The Living Church*, Vol. 144, New York, Morehouse-Gorham Company 1962, pp. 10 and 23. It was the custom for his wife, Delia, as dedicated a Party member as himself, to sell the *Daily Worker* to worshippers inside the church but eventually she had to bow to pressure from the congregation and agree to sell the newspaper outside. See: http://www.grahamstevenson.me.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=178:alan-ecclestone-&catid=5:e&Itemid=20 for details (accessed 13 June 2017).

[619] PHM, CP/CENT/PEA/01/06, Miss Jane Graham Comes Back from Prague: Does What She Saw and Found Out on Holiday There Mean a Neat Success For Mr Arthur Horner?, *Bulletin of the World Council of Peace,* 15 July 1955.

[620] *We Saw Czechoslovakia,* unpaged, chapter Eastward Bound.

[621] The bouquets of flowers were not always presented by neat, little schoolgirls in trim dresses either. Speaking of the Labour Party delegation’s trip behind the Iron Curtain in September 1954, Desmond Donnelly described how they were greeted on arrival at Gdansk Airport “by the local Communist officials carrying a huge bunch of flowers for Lord Silkin. For the next few days we were to get used to this sight of reception committees of heavy gangster-like men in bulging suits greeting us with flowers at every town. Hugh Delargy used to shout, ‘There are more thugs with flowers!’” (DONNELLY Desmond, *The March*

expectations of the incoming travellers would have been assessed and arrangements made for meetings with suitable Czechoslovak officials and dignitaries during the course of their stay. Factory workers and miners would be taken care of by representatives of the Czechoslovak Trade Unions, and a mixed bag of Party spokespeople, war veterans, municipal administrators, actors, singers, artists, poets, and the like, would be trotted out as appropriate to clink glasses and speak their lines of salutation.

ITINERARIES

The itineraries mapped out for the visitors followed a pattern similar to that in the Soviet Union. Josephine (Jo) Langer, whose husband Oskar, a former economist at the Slovak Ministry for Food Production and Distribution and whose testimony at the November 1952 "anti-state conspiracy trial" in Prague had helped incriminate both the General Secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, Rudolf Slánský, and himself,[622] found employment as a tour guide.[623] Her job was to show the glories of the new people's democracy to some of the batches of Western sightseers, "mostly members of the International Peace Organization." In her memoirs, written after the communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe had collapsed, she describes how difficult a task this was for her, saying she "would be depressed days ahead

Wind, p. 107.) The incongruity would have been heightened by the fact that it is not customary for men in the English-speaking world to be presented with flowers.

[622] Unlike Slánský, Oskar Langer was spared hanging and was sentenced at a secret trial the following year to 22 years in prison.

[623] Jo Langer's cousin was the celebrated French actress, Simone Signoret, who, together with her equally famous husband, Yves Montand, came to Czechoslovakia by train in February 1957 at the start of a concert tour. At the time, Simone Signoret was unaware of the ordeal her relatives in Bratislava had undergone a few years earlier and spurned attempts by Jo Langer to contact her at the Alcron Hotel in Prague. On arrival at the Czech border, Simone Signoret relates, they were greeted by "two gentlemen, their arms full of red carnations" who outlined their programme of performances and added one small request: "The Czech police and the Czech army would be so very appreciative if Montand would sing a little supplementary concert for them; would that be possible?" The suit was declined and "Montand explained gently that he had never in his life devoted an evening to the police or the army of any country and surely they couldn't expect him to change these old habits in Prague" (SIGNORET Simone, *Nostalgia Isn't What It Used to Be*, New York, Harper and Row 1978, p. 188). Many years later, both Yves Montand and Simone Signoret would star in the 1970 Costa-Gavras film, *L'aveu*, ("The Confession," "Vyznání" in Czech), based on an adaptation of the story of one of Rudolf Slánský's and Oskar Langer's co-defendants, the ex-Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Artur London.

of the scheduled arrival of these 'pigeons,'"[624] as she labelled them – possibly linked in her mind with gullibility and Picasso's ubiquitous dove of peace.[625]

For Jo Langer, but not the guests, it would have been the same old round, a visit to "a perfectly equipped nursery with one nurse to almost every baby," as she says hyperbolically, then an "agricultural co-operative where everything was in good order and even the chickens cackled Marx by heart, and where by an incredible coincidence we always happened to stop for a chat with the same smiling, buxom, talkative milkmaid." Next came "the same modern factory, where the manager spouted heroic production statistics," and afterwards the "same lavish lunch" where "normally unavailable ham was served and glasses of export brandy were clinked for Eternal Peace."[626] No doubt, one question that never arose at the dinner-table, with its row of crossed miniature flags running down the centre, was the provenance of the treats on offer.[627]

Jo Langer's scorn notwithstanding, there is clear evidence of the unstinting admiration felt by visitors for the care taken by the Czechoslovak authorities in the provision of nursery facilities, which amply bears out Hilda Scott's observations referred to earlier. A certain Mary Sullivan, for instance, a London wood worker who visited Czechoslovakia with a trade union delegation for two weeks in 1953 mentions being shown around several new nurseries. She was most impressed that "the welfare for the children is a high priority" and that "nurseries are everywhere" around the country. Indeed, she goes on, "nursery accommodation is unlimited [in Czechoslovakia]. As one nursery is filled, another is provided." She also had the opportunity to speak to several Czechoslovak women and learnt from one that her wage was four crowns an

[624] LANGER Jo, *Convictions: My Life with a Good Communist*, London, Granta 2011, pp. 169–170 (IDEM, *Žila jsem s oddaným komunistou,* Prague, Prostor 2017).
[625] Of course, long before Henri Matisse gave Picasso his famous dove, the "dove of peace" had a distinguished lineage not just in Biblical imagery but in left-wing folklore. Not least, "Joe Hill's last song, written before his execution [by a Utah firing squad on 19 November 1915], was an anti-war song, 'dedicated to the dove of peace'" (STAVIS Barrie, *The Man Who Never Died*, New York, Haven Press 1954, p. 90).
[626] LANGER Jo, *Convictions*, pp. 169-70.
[627] But then perhaps the authorities had taken to heart George Bernard Shaw's adage in his (1944) *Everybody's Political What's What?*, chapter 30: "A government which robs Peter to pay Paul can always depend on the support of Paul."

hour whereas she paid only two crowns a day for her child in day-care.[628] Such facilities, and at such low cost, would have been little more than a pipe-dream for British mothers at the time.

In the booklet, *We Saw Czechoslovakia* (1951), a housewife by the name of Erna Jenkins, was also very pleasantly surprised at the children's facilities: "The first nursery which I visited was a pleasant three-storied building. Up to eight weeks previously it had been a police station, it was being reconstructed, but one floor was already occupied by children from two to five years of age. The children sang their little songs for us, and we watched them playing their games and eating their meals."[629] Wildred Page, an agricultural worker in the same travelling group as Mary Sullivan, wrote that the delegation visited several schools and that all of them were "well-designed, with particular emphasis on ventilation and plenty of sun, physical culture playing an important part of the child's education."[630]

But happy, smiling children were to be found not only in nurseries, kindergartens and schools. The 406 British tourists who arrived in Czechoslovakia in 1950 with Progressive Tours were very impressed by the *Dětský dům* [Children's House] on Prague's fashionable *Na Příkopě* street. Here, uniquely, was "a large, modern store, catering entirely for children, and packed with everything a child could possibly need, or eat."[631] Later, in 1956, the Australian communist journalist, Rex Chiplin, probably also visited the *Dětský dům* or met somebody who had. In *Over the Wall*, a book about his travels published the following year, Chiplin claimed that children's clothing was "absurdly cheap in Czechoslovakia" since the state's policy was to "practically give it away."[632]

A report by a Scottish miners' delegation which came to Czechoslovakia in 1951 noted that they had the "privilege" to visit the largest "Pioneer Children's Palace" in Prague[633] and

[628] SULLIVAN Mary, Nursery Accommodation Unlimited, in *Czechoslovakia through British Eyes,* 1953, p. 4.
[629] *We Saw Czechoslovakia,* unpaged, chapter Something to Sing about.
[630] PAGE Wildred, New Life in the Countryside, in *Czechoslovakia through British Eyes,* p. 6.
[631] *We Saw Czechoslovakia,* unpaged, chapter Prague.
[632] CHIPLIN Rex, *Over the Wall*, p. 6.
[633] For more information on the delegation of Scottish miners, see: NACR, fund the International Department of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, 100/3, sv. 204, a.j. 715, Letter by Peter Kerrigan of the Communist Party of Great Britain to Bedřich Geminder, 26 January 1951. Another Scottish miners' delegation visited Czechoslovakia in 1949; see: TNA, FO 371/77248, Czechoslovakia: Weekly Information Summary prepared by the British Embassy in Prague for the period 7 to 13 September 1949.

were very taken by the fact that "[…] there were separate classrooms providing facilities on the following subjects – sculpture, first aid, aviation, engineering, mining, electricity, joinery, printing, mathematics, physics, films, photography, painting, science, radio, and biology. There was also a library, refreshment room, exhibition room and music room."[634] Ron Walker, a traveller from Middlesex, commented on the sport and recreational facilities for children and young people in Czechoslovakia: "this is where I really had to open my eyes. The gymnasiums were marvellous, the equipment super. Marvellous shower and Turkish and other types of bath and to finish off your training, a sun treatment room. This pattern seemed general throughout the country […]."[635]

Eleanor Wheeler relates that during a holiday she took in an ancient castle on the River Lužnice near Tábor that had been taken over by the Academy of Sciences, one old lady told the attendant that the bath house facilities "were better in the Piestany spa." The attendant replied, "Well, the rich rich used to go there, the poor rich came here. But we give you good treatment."[636] It was a similar story with the English-speaking visitors to the country itself. All got good treatment but for the rich-rich, in Party terms, there was something over and above the standard fare of factories, state farms, mines, Lidice, and so on.[637] When the Canadian communist leader, Tim Buck, came to Czechoslovakia in March 1950, for instance, he visited a nursery school in Hloubětín in Prague and was likewise taken to a collective farm, the JZD (*Jednotné zemědělské družstvo*) Dolany near Náchod in eastern Bohemia.[638] But he was also

[634] *Scottish Miners' Delegation to Czechoslovakia,* p. 22. For the range of free facilities available at the Vinohrady Pioneer House, see: UWSC, Eleanor Wheeler Papers 1947–1957, Accession No. 1625–001, Letter of Eleanor Wheeler dated 27 April 1957.
[635] WALKER Ron, Belief in the Youth Pays Goods Dividends, in *Czechoslovakia through British Eyes,* p. 7.
[636] UWSC, Eleanor Wheeler Papers 1947–1957, Accession No. 1625–001, Letter of Eleanor Wheeler dated 6 September 1955.
[637] NACR, fund the International Department of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, 100/3, sv. 25, a.j. 91, Report on the stay of Comrade John Clyde Henry, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Australia, 21 April 1953.
[638] "The Canadian Communist Party [CPC] followed Stalin's line dutifully. Although parts of Europe's Rebirth, a book published in 1947 by Tim Buck, general secretary of the CPC from 1929 until 1962, were clearly out of line with Stalin and Zhdanov's position by the time it appeared, his book of 1948, The Truth about Canada, was pure Cominform. It was translated into Russian in 1950" (BLACK J. L. The Stalinist Image of Canada: The Cominform and Soviet Press, 1947–1955, *Labour/Le Travail*, Vol. 21 (Spring/Printemps 1988, pp. 153–171, here p. 156). In Prague for the 1947 World Youth Festival, the budding Canadian journalist Ed Parker "met a South African newspaperman [Harry Bloom a.k.a. Walter Storm, no doubt], a celebrated Communist writer, regularly published in *New Masses*, New York. We hit it off from the start. He invited me to his home in the country where I met a number of Czech intellectuals. One, a young

privileged with a trip to Špinderlův Mlýn in the Krkonoše Mountains to experience for himself the facilities the working-class now had at its disposal. Naturally enough, while in the mountain town he had the opportunity to talk to representatives of ROH [Revolutionary Trade Union Movement, the organization responsible for workers' welfare], who could fill him in on what remained to be accomplished. After that, it was back to Prague to meet the Party hierarchy, *Rudé Právo* journalists, and fellow-Canadian comrades living in the city, before continuing his European trip.[639] He would return two months later, in May 1950, to fulfil his dream of seeing Gottwaldov with his own eyes[640] and further visits would follow in 1958 and 1959.[641]

Ultra-modern hospitals with dedicated healthcare staff were high on the sightseers' travel agenda.[642] To underscore the Health Ministry's desire to keep abreast with the most advanced innovations in the field, British doctors were invited to give a series of lectures on medical topics to their Czechoslovak counterparts. In an article published in the Czechoslovak daily *Lidové noviny*, the doctors are reported to have manifested unconcealed pleasure at the fact that what they had seen in Czechoslovakia differed considerably from their preconceptions, which had been influenced by the unfavourable attitude of the British press.[643]

Major construction projects, such as the Slapy Dam about 30 kilometres south of Prague, were in the same category. Concomitantly with on-the-ground inspections, scholarly gatherings, of a piece with the Conference of Scientific Workers that took place at Dobříš in

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reporter woman, eyed me suspiciously and divined that I might be a hostile agent. This was the first time I had been confronted with such a suspicious attitude. The suspicious woman asked me who Tim Buck was and I said I didn't know. Preposterous. A Canadian would not have to be a Communist to know who Tim Buck was. Buck was a founder and the long-time leader of the Canadian Communist party and a legend in left-wing circles. The lady was testing me" (PARKER Ed, *I Didn't Come Here To Stay*, Toronto, Natural Heritage/Natural History 1993, p. 165).

[639] NACR, fund the International Department of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, 100/3, sv. 103, a.j. 331, Report on the stay of Tim Buck in Prague, 21 March 1950.

[640] *Ibid.*

[641] NACR, fund the International Department of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, 100/3, sv. 103, a.j. 331, Report on Tim Buck's transit through Czechoslovakia, 4 February 1958; *Ibid.,* Report for Comrade Hendrych, 24 February 1959.

[642] In 1955, for example, Peter Nicholas, a shop steward at the Rover Tyseley factory in Birmingham, "visited Czechoslovakia as part of a workers' delegation and was impressed by the Czech health service and by what he perceived as genuine popular enthusiasm for the government" (GILDART Keith – HOWELL David, *Dictionary of Labour Biography,* Vol. XIII, p. 280).

[643] TNA, FO 371/71265, Czechoslovakia: Weekly Information Summary prepared by the British Embassy in Prague for the period 3 to 9 November 1948; *Ibid.,* FO 371/77247, Czechoslovakia: Weekly Information Summary prepared by the British Embassy in Prague for the period 7 to 15 April 1949.

1948 under the chairmanship of Frédéric Joliot-Curie and J. D. Bernal, or the high-profile visit by representatives of the British Chemical Industry Association, were especially favoured.[644] Organizers of domestic professional conventions would also invite foreign observers to attend. The Scottish miners had a place of honour reserved for them at the 1951 Czechoslovak miners' conference. A similar tribute was paid to Fred Pateman, a correspondent with the British *Daily Worker*, at the Congress of Czech and Slovak journalists in 1948 together with the Labour MP Stephen Swingler, who also served as Secretary of the British-Czechoslovak Friendship League at the time.[645] On his departure from Prague, Swingler is reported to have said that "he took away the impression that the people [in Czechoslovakia] were standing firmly behind the present regime."[646] No doubt Whitehall would have looked askance at the words but they would have been music to the ears of the Czechoslovak escort bidding Swingler farewell.

Clearly, the game was worth the candle but it was carthorse work. The guests had to be taken care of throughout their stay. The daytime excursions would be followed by a full evening's line-up of receptions, dinners, concerts, folk recitals and theatre performances. "Each evening there was a programme of entertainment which catered for all tastes – dancing, film shows, sing-songs, and, of course, the famous Czech beer. Some of the leading Czech singers, actors, dancers and choirs came to perform for us, including the Czech National String Quartet, a folk-dance ensemble and the world-famous Skupa Puppet Theatre."[647] Elgin Neish wrote home enraptured by what had been laid on for his group of trade unionists: "The night before last I saw a Czechoslovak opera (the first opera I had ever seen in my life) and tonight we saw

[644] *Ibid.,* FO 371/71265, Czechoslovakia: Weekly Information Summary prepared by the British Embassy in Prague for the period 24 to 30 September 1948.
[645] *Ibid.,* FO 371/71265, Czechoslovakia: Weekly Information Summary prepared by the British Embassy in Prague for the period 22 October to 2 November 1948. "Swingler, while at New College, Oxford, had joined the Young Communist League, and later the CPGB itself. Oxford was a significant breeding ground for Communist sympathies. However, by no means should this be seen as a life-long association. Many young politicised people joined the radical left, only to 'grow out of it', or more equally grow disillusioned with the slavish support for Soviet policy and the prescribed role of the Communist International. The Swingler family were all left-wingers, his father was a friend of the 'Red Dean' Hewlett Johnson, the communist Dean of Canterbury, who would attend dinner parties and deliver a pro-Soviet sermon to the avid audience. Stephen's brother, Randall, was a lifelong Communist Party member and celebrated poet. Therefore, that influence constantly surrounded him" (LILLEKER Darren G., *Against the Cold War: The History and Political Traditions of Pro-Sovietism in the British Labour Party, 1945–1989*, London, I. B. Tauris 2014, p. 121).
[646] TNA, FO 371/71265, Czechoslovakia: Weekly Information Summary prepared by the British Embassy in Prague for the period 3 to 9 November 1948.
[647] *We Saw Czechoslovakia,* unpaged, chapter Our Hosts.

two wonderful pictures. One was a puppet picture, a satire on two well known Hollywood actors, and the other, the most beautiful Technicolor picture I have ever seen called 'Tomorrow We Dance,' which dealt with Czechoslovak folk songs and dances, and ended with the most beautiful scenes from the World Youth Festival in Berlin."[648]

On his 1950 visit, as well as meeting the translator of his book on the working-class movement in *Canada: The Communist Viewpoint* Neish's fellow-Canadian, Tim Buck, was treated to a night at the opera, too. In the case of the "tribune of the [Canadian] people who embodies and expresses the struggles of the working people from sea to sea,"[649] it would probably have been one or other of the two most famous Czech operas, *Prodaná nevěsta* [The Bartered Bride] and *Rusalka*. With regard to the book itself, Buck's "record as a solid and reliable unionist […] wasn't adequate to the requirements of the Buck personality cult, so he made himself a revolutionary leader retroactively. His historical writings, as a result, provide useful insights into the mind of the man who eventually took over the CPC, but they are completely unreliable as history."[650]

HAPPY AS LARRY ON THE COLLECTIVE FARM AND A WORKERS' PARADISE

A visit to a collective farm, as Jo Langer pointed out, was a compulsory stop on the tourist trail and although the hens may not have been cackling Marx, their owners would or at least a barrage of facts and figures from the Five Year Plan. As in the Soviet Union, the need to convince the generally city-dwelling sightseers of the success and advantages of collectivized agriculture was paramount. In the case of Rex Chiplin, there was no question of doubt. The farm he was taken to had been collectivized because the old owner would not comply with government policy. Would Rex Chiplin like to meet the former proprietor in person? "'He's

[648] Letter by Elgin "Scotty" Neish of September 1952, in ISITT Benjamin, Fellow Traveller, p. 113.
[649] At least this is what Stanley Ryerson, editor of the *World Marxist Review* in Prague, claimed. KEALEY Gregory S., *Workers and Canadian History*, Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press 1995, p. 54.
[650] ANGUS Ian, *Canadian Bolsheviks: The Early Years of the Communist Party of Canada*, Montreal, Vanguard Publications 1981, p. 312.

working in the kitchen now," said the Chairman of the State Farm. "He was, too," confirmed Chiplin, "and he's happy as larry, with no worries and no regrets."[651]

Another group of Progressive Tours holidaymakers in 1950 "were so impressed by our visit to the farm that many of us volunteered to spend a day helping to get in the harvest."[652] Members of a church delegation visiting Czechoslovakia the same year were taken to a farm that had, supposedly, been collectivized a mere 18 months before. As well as the fields and farmhouses, they were shown graphs and tables of the rising productivity. However, they found the information given them by an "old bearded peasant" more to the point: "You can look at the charts all you want, and very interesting. I don't doubt," the old man is alleged to have said. "But we can see our beet-fields and they are very interesting too because they have got better crops now. And it's the same with our cattle – we're getting better herds, although it's so early after collectivisation. And they promise to be better yet."[653]

To walk across the factory floor and see at first-hand a truly modern manufacturing plant in operation was a must for most of the visitors. No backstreet sweatshops or dark satanic mills were in evidence here. That the industrial town of Gottwaldov [Zlín] "[had] to be seen to be believed" was the universal opinion. All the factories were "air-conditioned, clean and roomy" with "machines of modern design with moving parts well-guarded for safety." Nothing was spared when it came to the welfare of the workers. There were "clinics with doctors, nurses and dentists in attendance and nurseries where working mothers can leave their babies and young children under school age, gymnasia, and canteens with food at modest prices. There are

[651] CHIPLIN Rex, *Over the Wall,* p. 8.
[652] *We Saw Czechoslovakia,* unpaged, chapter Something to Sing about.
[653] PHM, CP/CENT/ORG/01, box 7–11, Visit to Czechoslovakia: The Report of British Clergymen Who Attended Christian and Peace Conferences and Festivals in Czechoslovakia on July 1, 2, 3 and 4 1950, p. 29. Against that one could mention the visit Ken Marks made to a collective farm in 1949: "I also spoke to an elderly female farm worker through an interpreter. I asked my usual questions about comparison between life under the new government and how it was under the old. Her first answer was that she was worse off under the new. I asked her to tell me more. She gave a very long answer, which the interpreter refused to translate. When I pressed him he said, obviously untruthfully, that she was worse off now because she had a toothache!" (MARKS Ken, *In Off the Red*, p. 169.)

recreation rooms or club-houses in all workshops, with well-stocked libraries. Young workers use these for meetings, singing and dancing and choir practice."[654]

Jim Manderston summed up his trade union deputation visit by stating that "[Gottwaldov] is a dream of socialist construction come true, and now safely in the hands of the workers."[655] The church delegation that had been so affected by their visit to the collective farm were equally struck by what they saw in Gottwaldov.[656] When Joan Littlewood's Theatre Workshop had passed through the town less than two years earlier, Howard Goorney "wanted to be dropped off at the Bata factory in the hope of acquiring a pair of shoes without coupons" but doubtless pressed for time they "couldn't stop." At Olomouc, however, the actors "were invited to a chocolate factory, and Howard cheered up." The former owner of the factory met them at the gate. "I am now the Workers' Representative," he said, adding magnanimously, "It doesn't matter what I am called so long as we still make beautiful chocolates."[657] Included on Willie Gallacher's factory round was a bakery that Gallacher described as an up-to-date plant with modern equipment that truly impressed him.[658]

Even more captivated was the Australian-born International Longshore and Warehouse Union leader, Harry Bridges, a former member of the Industrial Workers of the World (the Wobblies), who had become a naturalized American citizen in 1945 and successfully foiled through the courts the various subsequent attempts made to deport him.[659] During his tour of Czechoslovakia, Bridges had visited the TOV plant in Čelakovice among others. This is how

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[654] KELLY Dick, Their Health Services Staggered Me, in *Czechoslovakia through British Eyes,* p. 2; MANDERSTON Jim, A Dream of Socialist Construction Comes True at Gottwaldov, in *Ibid,,* p. 3; CUTHBERT William, An Industrious, Happy People, in *Ibid.,* p. 6; BEATSON Frank, Factory Conditions Are First-Class, in *Ibid.,* p. 7.

[655] MANDERSTON Jim, A Dream of Socialist Construction Comes True at Gottwaldov, in *Ibid.,* p. 3.

[656] PHM, CP/CENT/ORG/01, box 7–11, Visit to Czechoslovakia: The Report of British Clergymen Who Attended Christian and Peace Conferences and Festivals in Czechoslovakia on July 1, 2, 3 and 4 1950, p. 5.

[657] LITTLEWOOD, Joan *Joan's Book*, p. 354.

[658] PHM, CP/IND/GALL/03/11, Report prepared by William Gallacher, M.P., autumn 1948.

[659] As a young mariner sailing the seven seas, Bridges was brought into personal contact with cultures that differed markedly from his own and its dominant political ideology. Such encounters would have made him "more receptive to alternative interpretations of the world" and more critical of old shibboleths. His first voyage to England, for instance, came as a resounding shock: "I took a trip that gave me a look at India and another at Suez, and what I saw there didn't line up with what my father had told me about the dear old British. Then I got 'home' and saw London. It was the filthiest, most unhealthy place I ever had seen. And the people in the slums were worse than the natives in India and Port Said – dirty, nasty, no good. So this, I say, is British democracy […]" (KIMELDORF Howard, *Reds or Rackets? The Making of Radical and Conservative Unions on the Waterfront*, Berkeley, University of California Press 1988, pp. 21–22).

he described working conditions at one large Czechoslovak tool-making plant to the House Un-American Committee in April 1959: "Then I noticed drifting down the alleyways, the aisles between the various machines, first of all I saw one woman walking down, a man with a couple pint pots of beer in his hands, and then over on the other side I saw a man walking down with a couple pint pots of beer and a couple of hot dogs in his hands." Bridges went on: "The general pace of the whole plant was pretty leisurely, I would say, with quite a few of the workers sitting at the machines and most everyone of them reading a book." "Workers' paradise?" muttered Republican Congressman Gordon H. Scherer derisively.[660]

While the focus of factory worker delegations was primarily on conditions in Czechoslovak manufacturing plants, miners were taken down modern mines and allowed to compare them with the situation in their home country. The 1951 deputation of Scottish miners, for instance, visited the Barbora Colliery in Ostrava and also a miners' rehabilitation centre in the Jeseníky Mountains. This was certainly far removed from anything they were accustomed to back home.[661] Said one British miner named Dick Kelly: "At an old mine I visited […] I found modern machinery installed on a scale which surprised me. […] On the surface I found modern pithead baths and a sun-ray treatment room, a large canteen where full-scale meals were being served and the inevitable health centre." He went on: "I should say that Czechoslovak welfare facilities are rather more than a young lad in a mining village in our country could expect and that his health is definitely better cared for. Holidays are three weeks for the first five years, four weeks up to fifteen years and five weeks thereafter. In addition, there are six one-day holidays in the year, all on full pay. […] Miners have special facilities for

[660] United States Government Printing Office, Hearings before the Committee on Un-American Activities House of Representatives Eighty-Sixth Congress First Session, 21 April 1959, pp. 701–702, available online at: https://books.google.cz/books?id=P9MJAAAAIAAJ&pg=PA702&lpg=PA702&dq=%22the+aisles+between+the+various+machines%22&source=bl&ots=InhsQT4SM3&sig=2xYsRdInVZby7jBv709h1TcAxws&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjn3ZeL3tvUAhUGIpoKHXQKARMQ6AEIITAA#v=onepage&q=%22the%20aisles%20between%20the%20various%20machines%22&f=false (accessed 12 June 2017). Frank Hardy's visit to a factory in Russia is in the same league: "The factory was generally cleaner, the air fresher than in most factories of a similar kind I have seen in Australia. There were even flowers growing in pots and boxes between the machines and along the window ledges" (HARDY Frank, *Journey into the Future*, pp. 134–135).

[661] *Scottish Miners' Delegation to Czechoslovakia,* pp. 7–9 and 13.

attending rest-homes and recreation centres."[662] Of course, a trip down the pits was not the prerogative of miners. The team of Christian churchmen headed by Hewlett Johnson in 1950 was taken to a mine near Kladno, as was the ex-miner himself, Willie Gallacher, when he visited Czechoslovakia two years earlier.[663]

"In recognition of their arduous job and their importance to the economy," wrote Hilda Scott, "miners not only received the highest pay, but had the longest holidays and the best recreation facilities, and were eligible for pension at an earlier age than other workers. Steel workers were almost on a par with miners."[664] Eleanor Wheeler was in the enviable position of having a son in each of the two callings. This was indeed a feather in her cap, or rather two, and she was proud of the fact.[665] Ostrava, the steel and mining centre, she wrote, "was formerly the under-privileged section of the country, the subject of some heartrending poetry by Petr Bezruč, and now the has-beens consider it the over-privileged part of the country. With boys in that branch of industry we can say that anyone who envies the steel workers and the miners can go and join up."[666] Like young Toby and Frank Wheeler, many did. The recruiting campaign had

[662] KELLY Dick, Their Health Services Staggered Me, in *Czechoslovakia through British Eyes,* p. 2.
[663] PHM, CP/CENT/ORG/01, box 7–11, Visit to Czechoslovakia: The Report of British Clergymen Who Attended Christian and Peace Conferences and Festivals in Czechoslovakia on July 1, 2, 3 and 4 1950, p. 5; PHM, CP/IND/GALL/03/11, Report written by William Gallacher, MP, in September 1948.
[664] SCOTT Hilda, *Does Socialism Liberate Women?*, p. 95.
[665] "With a son in the mines and one in the mills I also feel strongly about characters who make a dubious living and sympathize with attempts to crack down on them" (UWSC, Eleanor Wheeler Papers 1947–1957, Eleanor Wheeler Papers 1947–1957, Accession No. 1625–001, Letter of Eleanor Wheeler dated 23 October 1957). In terms of privileges crowed Eleanor Wheeler, "we mere intellectuals are not up to the miners and other top workers. A miner said to me in Ostrava, 'Nowadays anyone can buy his wife a fur coat. They are only 5,000 crowns (about $ 700). We like to watch the play of emotions when we repeat this anecdote to some unreconstructed 'gentleman' or 'lady' – we always add that if someone wants to earn that kind of money all he has to do is go into the mines" (*Ibid.,* Letter of Eleanor Wheeler dated 4 August 1954). Eleanor Wheeler's attitude is broadly in line with the "traditions of strong vocational training, which lessened Czech workers' desire to embark upon higher education," and, in contrast to the Polish Communist Party, "to the unmatched anti-intellectualism of the more popular Czech Communist Party" (CONNELLY John, The Foundations of Diversity: Communist Higher Education Policies in Eastern Europe, 1945–1955, in MACRAKIS Kristie – HOFFMANN Dieter (eds.), *Science Under Socialism: East Germany in Comparative Perspective*, Harvard, Harvard University Press 1999, p. 137).
[666] UWSC, Eleanor Wheeler Papers 1947–1957, Accession No. 1625–001, Letter of Eleanor Wheeler dated 17 November 1954. See also: Ian Milner's Introduction to his translation of Petr Bezruč's *Silesian Songs*, in BEZRUČ Petr, *Silesian Songs* (trans. Ian Milner), Prague, Artia 1966, pp. 7–12. At a 1948 Pentecost parade marking the anniversary of the 1945 Prague Uprising, Edith Pargeter was filled with admiration for "the 'blue army' of railwaymen, and the gorgeous black and gilt groups of the uniformed miners, sporting their full regalia, with high round caps, shining badges and tossing plumes like hussars" (PARGETER Edith, *The Coast of Bohemia*, p. 21). But that soon stopped. In addition: "The 'Bolshevik Saturday' holiday won by the Czech miners between the wars was lost by them after the Communists gained power. The Minister of the Interior, Nosek, told the Central Committee of the Mineworkers' Union that 'the five-day week which was the miners'

been vigorous. On 6 July 1950, for instance, "the Ministry of Posts issued a post card propagating mining. The design represents three boys and below the legend *'Hornictví – povolání správných chlapců'* [Mining – the vocation of real boys]."[667] In Britain at the same time, as mentioned earlier, boys could do their compulsory national service down the pits instead of in the military. For most, this was a case of six of one and half a dozen of the other but the mining option was hardly likely to appeal to any outside the mining community itself.[668]

A lot of attention was devoted to the question of providing suitable transport for the visitors. Jim Manderston wrote that "[…] the Czechoslovak trade union leaders used every means to move us from one point to another, to say nothing of a bus, always at our disposal," although this latter he adds humorously, "had shattering effects on our bone structure."[669] Another contented group of British holidaymakers noted that "[we] certainly had our fill, and with many varied enjoyments of which many of us had never even dreamed. […] Coaches were laid on to take us from the hotels to the splendid swimming pools which well-deserved its name of 'Riviera.'"[670] Elgin Neish, for his part, wrote that he and the other ten members of his Canadian trade union delegation received regal treatment. Among other things, they were "[…] supplied with a guide and two buses at our disposal to take us to Lidice and also on tours of the wonderful, beautiful city of Prague."[671]

revolutionary achievement during the First Republic is today a counter-revolutionary demand'" (HODGKINSON Harry, *Doubletalk,* p. 55).

[667] KOVARIK Frank J. (ed.), *The Czechoslovak Specialist: Official Monthly Publication of the Czechoslovak Philatelic Society of North America*, Vol. XII, No. 9 (November 1950), p. 110.

[668] The situation in Czechoslovakia was rather different. "The Army had stepped up its assistance to the Czechoslovak national economy and special units of politically unreliable conscripts had been formed who did their military service in 1950-1954 in 'auxiliary technical battalions.' They performing [*sic*] hard labour in coal-mines and on building sites" (BÍLEK Jiří – KOLLER Martin, The Czechoslovak Army as Part of the Soviet Bloc, in *The Czech Contribution to Peace and War in Europe: From the Hussite Wars to NATO Membership*, Prague, Evropský Literární Klub 2002, p. 221).

[669] MANDERSTON Jim, A Dream of Socialist Construction Comes True at Gottwaldov, in *Czechoslovakia through British Eyes,* p. 3.

[670] *We Saw Czechoslovakia,* unpaged, chapter Our Hosts.

[671] Letter by Elgin "Scotty" Neish of September 1952, in ISITT Benjamin, Fellow Travellerp. 113.

VIGILANT INTERPRETERS AND IDEOLOGICAL MOUTHPIECES

In the USSR, we are told, "all interpreters were secret workers for the NKVD,"[672] and, presumably, its successors. Suborning of the interpreter-cum-guide would have been routine in Czechoslovakia, too, and, in any case, recruitment would have been based as much on political reliability as linguistic skills or desirable personality traits. At her job interview, Jo Langer may have stressed her knowledge of languages and her familiarity with the ways of foreigners, having spent the war years in the US. This was all well and good but the decisive factor in whether she was given the job or not would have been her political credibility. She herself would have been very much aware of this and would have made sure that she kept to the straight and narrow as far as Party dogma was concerned in whatever questions or answers she voiced. Any private reservations she might have felt would have remained strictly private.

The work would be quite demanding at times, Langer's interlocutor would probably have emphasized with a meaningful look, but they would be at her elbow at all times. Above all, the foreign guests were to get the impression that having her around to explain and translate and iron out any problems that might arise was to their advantage, that she was a facilitator and not in any sense a stool-pigeon, to use a variant of her own ornithological term for the visitors. Willie Gallacher unintentionally summed up the role quite well when he remarked that on his arrival in Prague in the autumn of 1948, "an interpreter was given in charge of us with instructions to arrange a programme of what we wanted to do and see."[673] It was important to create the feeling among visitors that the planned itinerary was a flexible arrangement and could be changed to accommodate the specific wishes of groups or individuals. All that was necessary was that the guide-cum-interpreter be informed of preferences in advance. Gallacher cites the case of a metal worker and trade union activist in his delegation who expressed a desire to see an engineering works the following day. The interpreter saw no problem with that. However, instead of the promised destination, they were taken to a bakery. But that was accepted good-humouredly, along with the generous slices of strudel fresh from the oven no doubt. Gallacher

[672] BECK F. – GODIN W., *Russian Purge and the Extraction of Confession*, New York, The Viking Press 1951, p. 166 (originally published in German).
[673] PHM, CP/IND/GALL/03/11, Report written by William Gallacher, MP, in September 1948.

recalls that Bill was not at all disappointed: "I told you I was a metal worker and that I would like to see a mining area. You fix up a bakery; who told you my father was a baker?"[674]

For those sightseers higher up the ladder in Party terms, a good match between guest and guide was essential. When the Soviet eulogist, Rex Chiplin, came to Czechoslovakia in June 1956, no suitable person from *Rudé právo* was available to fit the bill at the time so it was decided that a redactor from the Czech Press Agency (ČTK) would take charge of him as a substitute.[675] As noted earlier, Eleanor Wheeler also served as a "barker," her word for the job of tour guide, for foreign delegations from time to time, and probably much more often informally.[676] When it came to Progressive Tours holidaymakers, it was decided that groups comprising 30 to 40 holidaymakers would each have a designated commentator to elucidate political and cultural matters along with an interpreter. All personnel entrusted with the task of managing travellers were expected to have organizational skills, be "politically mature," and be "carefully selected, thoroughly screened and instructed."[677]

"As a matter of policy," wrote Denis Hill of his IUS colleagues and himself, "none of us registered with the British embassy on arrival in Prague. We were all very hostile to the British authorities and we knew perfectly well that they would be equally so towards us."[678] However, from time to time needs must and those visitors who, for one reason or another, had to call to the British Embassy building in Malá Strana might be accompanied by their guide. Arthur Horner, the NUM General Secretary mentioned earlier, and one of the co-founders of the CPGB, was a frequent visitor to Prague during the early Cold War years,[679] and indeed

[674] *Ibid.*
[675] NACR, fund the International Department of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, 100/3, sv. 25, a.j. 91, Report dated 30 May 1956.
[676] UWSC, Eleanor Wheeler Papers 1947–1957, Accession No. 1625–001, Letter of Eleanor Wheeler dated 20 July 1952.
[677] NACR, fund the International Department of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, 100/3, sv. 204, a.j. 715, Organisation of the holidays, undated, probably late 1950 or early 1951.
[678] HILL Denis, *Seeing Red, Being Green*, p. 292. Peter Waterman put it thus: "There existed amongst the foreign Communists some unarticulated belief that we were not so much citizens of the UK as soldiers in the army of international socialist revolution" (WATERMAN Peter, *From Coldwar Communism to the Global Emancipatory Movement*, unpaged).
[679] See for example: TNA, FO 371/71265, Czechoslovakia: Weekly Information Summary prepared by the British Embassy in Prague for the period 10 to 16 September 1948.

before,[680] and had the ear of high-ranking Party functionaries, such as the Czechoslovak Prime Minister, and former militant trade unionist himself, Antonín Zápotocký.[681] When the union leader from South Wales returned to Prague in 1950 to thrash out arrangements for British miners to spend holidays in Czechoslovakia, he also had to discuss the matter with officials at the British Embassy. In his record of the meeting, the British Ambassador at the time, Pierson Dixon, noted that Horner was escorted by "a Czech Mata Hari type" and "female watch-dog" whom he introduced as "Eva." The Ambassador seems to have had no great opinion of Horner himself either. In his report, Dixon states that Horner met the Czech Prime Minister, Antonín Zápotocký, along with Minister of the Interior, Václav Nosek, and the Minister of Social Welfare, Evžen Erban, but he was "pretty sure he [Horner] was rather sore that more of the Czech hierarchy had not seen him. He complained that he had not been able to get to Gottwald […]."[682] Dixon also mentions that when Horner appeared at the door of the Embassy with his minder he was clearly the worse for drink and had more of the same while talking over the proposed holidays in Czechoslovakia for British miners and "progressives" with Embassy staff.

[680] The General Secretary of the NUM must not be confused with his namesake the Australian political cartoonist, Arthur Horner, of Colonel Pewter fame, who lived in Prague in 1947.
[681] TNA, FO 371/71265, Czechoslovakia: Weekly Information Summary prepared by the British Embassy in Prague for the period 1 to 7 October 1948.
[682] *Ibid.,* FO 371/86316, Report from Pierson Dixon, the British Ambassador in Czechoslovakia, to Hector McNeil, MP, 4 February 1950.

PAYBACK

FRATERNAL DELEGATES GET THEIR DUES

A key event in the life of the devoted communist was the annual Party Congress. The faithful would come in droves to hear the set speeches, or to use George Orwell's phraseology, "the prefabricated phrases bolted together like the pieces of a child's Meccano set,"[683] from the rostrum. Invitations would be sent, too, to the Party élite abroad and would be taken up with gusto. Thus the 9th Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia which took place in Prague in May 1949 was graced with the presence of Richard Dixon who, together with General Secretary Lance Sharkey, was one of the leading lights of the Australian Communist Party.[684] Sharkey and his wife's own chance came two years later,[685] while another member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Australia, Jack Miles, attended the 10th Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in 1954.[686] All would listen soporifically to the hackneyed jargon, in an incomprehensible language to boot, sometimes meaningless even in the translation provided, and, taking their cue from those in neighbouring seats, in tandem with the mechanized words and phrases and pauses from the podium, applaud mechanically but enthusiastically at the appropriate junctures, feverishly so at each and every mention of the name Stalin, while their thoughts no doubt slipped inexorably to heaped plates of succulent Prague ham washed down with schooners of cold, frothy Pilsner beer.[687]

But the opportunity for the Australian cadres to visit Prague was not limited to the annual Party congress. Jim Healy, for instance, the dynamic head of the Australian Waterside Workers Federation, was in the Czechoslovak capital in 1951 and again in 1957. Healy, in truth, was no stranger to the communist transformation of society. In 1934 he had gone on a union-

[683] ORWELL George, The Prevention of Literature (first published in 1946), in *Books v. Cigarettes*, p. 33.
[684] NACR, fund the International Department of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, 100/3, sv. 25, a.j. 91, Letter from General Secretary Lance Sharkey, Central Committee of the Communist Party of Australia, to the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (for the attention of comrade Slánský) dated 13 April 1949.
[685] *Ibid.,* Report of B. Sobotka, 7 August 1952.
[686] *Ibid.,* Notes for the Information Department, 17 December 1954.
[687] Talleyrand's dictum that speech was given to man to conceal his thoughts, *La parole a été donné à l'homme pour déguiser sa pensée*, makes the perhaps unwarranted assumption that there are always actual thoughts to conceal.

sponsored study trip to the Soviet Union and been deeply impressed by what he saw. As for the Soviet Water Transport Union, Healy was little short of flabbergasted: "It had two hundred and ninety libraries ashore and two thousand five hundred afloat with five million books."[688] This was indeed far removed from what the Australian stevedore had access to. As guests of the Czechoslovaks, Healy and his wife, who worked for the "Australian progressive movement," had to pay for nothing. The Healys did the usual sightseeing round and, to mix business with pleasure, Healy had the chance to discuss with Czechoslovak officials the problems the Australian Communist Party were confronting back home. Amply illustrating the truth of the maxim concerning not biting the hand that feeds, Healy also appeared on Czechoslovak radio to give his impressions of the communist state for listeners abroad.[689] As was the case with his observations on Russia almost two decades earlier, he did not let the side down. Indeed, the impact he made was so favourable that there were plans afoot to invite him for a return visit in 1961, but that was not to be, owing to his death the same year. All in all, the Australian union leaders, not to mince matters, did not fare badly when it came to sampling the best Czechoslovakia had to offer. John Hadge King, the General Secretary of the Australian Miners' Union, and Francis Henry Cockerill, the Union Secretary, were invited for two weeks in 1953, while George Goss of the Amalgamated Metal Workers Union arrived for his lot in 1957.[690]

Prague, too, was the setting for an unusual gathering of Australian communist luminaries in May 1956. What occupied the minds of those present on this occasion, we are told, was the possibility that Ian Milner might be exposed as an agent, so "Australia's leading communist identities converged on Prague to discuss the problem."[691] This time it was the

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[688] HEALY J – SCOTT B, *Red Cargo: Impressions of the Soviet Union*, Sydney, Friends of the Soviet Union 1934. See also: MARKEY Ray – SVENSEN Stuart, Healy, James (Jim) (1898–1961), in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. 14 (1996), available online at: http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/healy-james-jim-10470 (accessed 6 June 2017); and WALKER Andrew Gordon, *Pursuing the Radical Objective. Discourse, Ideology and the Text: A Study of the Archive of the Australian Waterside Workers' Federation*, Victoria University of Technology, Master of Arts Thesis (2002), available online at: http://vuir.vu.edu.au/33021/1/PURSUING%20THE%20RADICAL%20OBJECTIVE.%20DISCOURSE%2C%20IDEOLOGY%20AND%20THE%20TEXT%20A%20STUDY%20OF%20THE%20ARCHIVE%20OF%20THE%20AUSTRALIAN%20WATERSIDE%20WORKERS%27%20FEDERATION%20-%20Andrew%20Gordon%20Walker.pdf (accessed 6 June 2017).

[689] HRUBY Peter, *Dangerous Dreamers*, pp. 217–219.

[690] *Ibid.*

[691] CAMPBELL Andrew A, Dr H. V. Evatt – Part II: The Question of Loyalty, in *National Observer*, No. 76 (Autumn 2008), pp. 33–55, here p. 52, available online at:

Soviet agent Rex Chiplin who made the trip along with Jim Hill's older brother Ted, at the behest of Lance Sharkey. But, "the most intriguing visitor was the leader of Her Majesty's Opposition, Dr H. V. Evatt, who arrived in Prague with his wife, at the invitation of the Czechoslovak Government, all expenses paid, at a cost of 30,000 crowns."[692]

Canada featured at the Party congresses in Czechoslovakia, too. John Boyd, or to give him his original name, Iwan Bojczuk, who was also in Prague for the peace conference, represented the Canadian communists at the 9th Czechoslovak Party Congress in the summer of 1949. Bojczuk had changed his name legally to John Boyd eight years earlier "at the suggestion of the Party leaders, as did many other active Ukrainian party members,"[693] but clearly at this stage he was still Iwan Bojczuk for inter-Party communication and possibly travel purposes.[694] In August 1967, John Boyd would return to Prague to begin a new life as Canadian Party representative on the editorial board of the *World Marxist Review*, and be an eye-witness to the crushing of the Prague Spring the following year, which also crushed, as a sort of collateral damage, any illusions he had about the brave new world of Soviet communism.[695]

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http://www.nationalobserver.net/pdf/evatt_part2_natobs76.pdf (accessed 6 November 2010). Not surprisingly, Campbell's information is based on Peter Hrubý's findings. See also: MANNE Robert, *The Petrov Affair: Politics and Espionage*, Oxford, Pergamon 1987, p. 186. H. V. Evatt served as President of the United Nations General Assembly in 1948-49 and as leader of the Australian Labor Party from 1951 to 1960. In his capacity as judge in the Australian High Court, he found in favour of the old Party warhorse, Egon Erwin Kisch, after he had been refused permission to disembark from the cruise liner RMS *Straithaird* in November 1934, on the grounds that no substantiating reason had been specified on the exclusion order.

[692] CAMPBELL Andrew A, Dr H. V. Evatt – Part II: The Question of Loyalty, p. 52.

[693] BOYD John, *A Noble Cause Betrayed,* p. 13. On one occasion in 1940, the then John Boychuk, at the time secretary-treasurer of the Ukrainian Labour Farmer Temple Association (ULFTA), was arrested by Canadian security. "Since the name on his identity papers was written according to the Polish transcription (Iwan Bojczuk) the police thought that he was not the man who was on their list and so they let him go" (KRAWCHUK Peter, *Interned Without Cause: The Internment of Canadian Anti-fascists During World War Two*, available online at: http://www.socialisthistory.ca/Docs/CPC/WW2/IWC02.htm (accessed 4 June 2017)).

[694] NACR, fund the International Department of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, 100/3, sv. 103, a.j. 331, Letter from the General Secretary of the Canadian Labour Progressive Party, Tim Buck, to Bedřich Geminder, dated 21 April 1949; more information can also be found in *Ibid.,* sv. 204, a.j. 715. Adopting a new name was a common occurrence with Party members. The American communist, Sol Regenstreif, who took the name John Gates, wrote: "There was no compelling reason to change the name except that it was the thing to do in those days. Had not Lenin and Stalin and countless other revolutionaries changed their names? It was not only people with foreign-sounding names who changed them to more 'native' ones; those with perfectly simple names also made the change. This was not to hide anything but to symbolize a change in a way of life" (GATES John, *The Story of an American Communist*, New York, Thomas Nelson and Sons 1958, pp. 26–27).

[695] The *World Marxist Review* had initially been launched in 1947 as *For Lasting Peace and People's Democracy*. This then became *Problems of Peace and Socialism*, with editorial offices in Prague, "but its various editions were printed in different countries. The English edition was called *World Marxist Review* and was printed in Canada" (BOYD John, *A Noble Cause Betrayed*, p. 25).

The 9th Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia called for "the intensification of the class struggle in the villages,"[696] and, along with Iwan Bojczuk a.k.a. John Boyd, Harry Pollitt and John Gollan of the British Communist Party, who were also in the hall,[697] would have applauded the resolution.[698] Of course British Party members were not subject to the same travel restrictions as their US comrades, who were prevented by an intransigent Washington from being present at the gathering to add their meed of praise for the motion,[699] but, despite the travel ban, the major figures in the CPUSA would have been known personally in Prague, too.

The hard-line Stalinist and General Secretary of the CPUSA since 1945, William Z. Foster, for example, had visited the city in 1947 and held discussions with Klement Gottwald.[700] Another member of the American Politburo, the Ukrainian-born Irving Potash, was a frequent visitor to Prague after his deportation from the US in 1955. In her memoirs of life in Prague in the 1950s, Ann [Chapman] Kimmage, whose communist parents had fled New York to Mexico in 1950 and thence, a few months later, to Czechoslovakia where they adopted new names and identities, recalls that Potash was a frequent and popular visitor to their apartment in the Kobylisy district of Prague before he grew tired of living separated from his American wife,

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[696] SKVARNA Dusan – BARTL Julius et al., *Slovak History: Chronology and Lexicon*, Illinois, Bolchazi-Carducci 2000, p. 207.

[697] NACR, fund the International Department of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, 100/3, sv. 204, a.j. 715, Letter from Harry Pollitt to Rudolf Slánský, 31 March 1949.

[698] So, too, would a weaver named Anna Vacková who added 24 spindles to the 36 she was already tending and said that "she had done this because she had been inspired by the Ninth Communist Party Congress" (SCHMIDT Dana Adams, *Anatomy of a Satellite*, p. 377). The figures for Anna Vacková given by Schmidt's mortal enemy, Jiří ŽÁK, in *Exkomunikace, zázraky, sabotáže*, pp. 24 and 26, are higher but in any case Vacková would have been exceptional. There were attempts in Czechoslovakia "to imitate Soviet experience in 'socialist competition' and in the Stakhanovite movement," but outside mining they had little effect (MYANT M. R., *Socialism and Democracy in Czechoslovakia 1945–1948*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1981, p. 77).

[699] It was not all plain sailing for the British communists and their sympathizers either. Clement Attlee had launched his own "'witch-hunt,' expelling 'fellow-travelling' MPs [such as Konni Zilliacus] from the Labour Party, supporting an employers' and trades union prohibition of 'red' left-wingers, and, in imitation of the US legislature, introducing in March 1948 a catch-all Act which banned communists from being employed by the state in positions of national security" (CHAMBERS Colin, *The Story of Unity Theatre*, p. 301). At the same time, the Labour Party "banned individuals from attending conferences of an extreme left-wing complexion and, in the 1950s, pursued a rigorous policy of expulsions of individuals involved in such organizations" (DEFTY Andrew, *Britain, America and Anti-Communist Propaganda, 1945–1958: The Information Research Department*, London, Routledge 2007, p. 204). See also: GWINNETT Giselle, Attlee, Bevin, and Political Warfare: Labour's Secret Anti-Communist Campaign in Europe, 1948–51, *The International History Review*, Vol. 39, No. 3 (2017), pp. 426–449.

[700] STAROBIN Joseph R., *American Communism in Crisis, 1943–1957,* Harvard, Harvard University Press 1972, p. 155. Foster had been a fraternal delegate in London at the conference of Communist Parties of British Empire countries, followed by the CPGB congress, before going on to mainland Europe.

children, and grandchildren, and returned to the US illegally in 1957 and another stint in prison.[701]

At the same time, the authorities were aware that all that glisters is not gold and it was not uncommon for functionaries in Prague to seek confirmation of the Party credentials of some prospective delegates from his or her Party colleagues. On the other hand, if the proposed trip was being made by someone considered to be in the top-notch bracket, the Party leaders at home often asked their Czechoslovak counterparts to provide all requisite assistance. For example, when Professor J. B. S. Haldane from University College London was scheduled to give a series of lectures in Czechoslovakia in April 1949, Harry Pollitt, the General Secretary of the British Communist Party, asked Rudolf Slánský, the Czechoslovak General Secretary, if he could ensure that all Haldane's requests be fulfilled, whatever they might be.[702]

HARRY POLLITT AND OTHERS

Pollitt himself did not do too badly either. Perhaps it comes as no surprise but one of the senior figures in the Progressive Tours travel agency was none other than Mrs Harry Pollitt. The Pollitts knew the ropes when it came to Czechoslovakia. Compared to the Communist Parties of other nations, the Czechoslovak Party had sound financial resources and were not skimping in largesse. This enabled them to invite the doyens of the international movement not just to attend congresses and conferences but to spend all-expenses-paid holidays in the country as

[701] KIMMAGE Ann, *An Un-American Childhood*, pp. 125–129; ANHALT Diana, *A Gathering of Fugitives*, pp. 48–50; ABT John J, *Advocate and Activist*, pp. 213–215. Before moving to Kobylisy, the Chapmans had stayed at the Zlatá Husa Hotel on Wenceslas Square.

[702] NACR, fund the International Department of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, 100/3, sv. 204, a.j. 715, Harry Pollitt to Rudolf Slánský 25 March 1949. Although Haldane would leave the Party the following year, he had given good service. Apart from the kudos of having such a renowned name among the Party faithful, Pollitt would have remembered Haldane's articles in the *Daily Worker*. Most were on popular science but not all. In an article for the newspaper on 19 December 1944, for instance, under the headline, *Firewatchers Should Keep Stalin's Birthday*, Haldane maintained that the birthday of the Soviet leader should be honoured, although, he hastened to add, it should not "supersede Christmas." Perhaps Pollitt had more than a mere inkling, too, that while Haldane "was working in the Admiralty's submarine experimental station at Haslar [on the south coast of England], researching into deep diving techniques, [he] was supplying details of the programs to the CPGB, who were passing it on to the GRU [Soviet Military Intelligence] in London" (WRIGHT Peter, *Spycatcher*, p. 236). Haldane also deserves a footnote in Czechoslovak history. In 1938, he published a scientific paper entitled *Science and the Future of Warfare*, "which launched the military career of the Colorado potato beetle" (LOCKWOOD Jeffrey A., *Six-Legged Soldiers*, p. 130).

well and there were few shrinking violets when it came to taking them up on their offer. Nor was this the exclusive preserve of the bigwigs in the Party. There was room for foot-soldiers, too. In 1953, for example, a certain Mr and Mrs Tuke from Halifax, two British activists, enjoyed an all-inclusive holiday in the Czech mountains as a reward for their involvement in the peace campaign in Yorkshire, as the *BPC* [British Peace Committee] *Newsletter* informed its readership.[703]

Pollitt, whose autobiography had been translated into Czech – "It looks very well done, and I hope it has a very good sale in your country"[704] – and who "enjoyed his pint as much as the next man,"[705] had no worries about getting his share of the hand-outs. But this was Czechoslovakia and there was a lot more on offer than a few pints of bitter in the local and a pot of jellied eels or a smoked cod and chips at closing-time. A letter of his from August 1949, for example, shows Pollitt undergoing a regimen of baths and massage in the Jeseníky Mountains in north-east Moravia and deriving all the salutary benefits of the famous Priessnitz spa method devised by the hydrotherapist Vincencz Priessnitz in the early 18th century[706]: "There my masseuse gently sits me down. I disrobe and enter the bath, very cold, which appropriately enough is for the heart. I lay in this for 15 minutes feeling like Scott must have done in the Antarctic. Only my head, suitably covered with an ice-cold cap, is allowed to peep out of the top of the bath in which I am by this time firmly encased, almost as if the coffin lid was being screwed down. […] When these delicate preliminaries are duly accomplished, my masseuse smiles and says, 'I wish you an agreeable bath, Mr Pollitt,' and then leaves me for what seems eternity." Pollitt goes on to exclaim that after such a bath, he felt like "jump[ing]

[703] PHM, CP/CENT/PEA/01/06, Guests of the Czech People, *BPC Newsletter,* 3 July 1953.
[704] NACR, fund the International Department of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, 100/3, sv. 204, a.j. 715, Harry Pollitt to Hana Glaserová, 22 June 1951. POLLITT Harry, *Ve službách anglického lidu* [In the service of the English people], Prague, Svoboda 1951. Pollitt's autobiography, *Serving My Time: An Apprenticeship to Politics*, was first published in London in 1940 by Lawrence and Wishart and was reprinted in 1950; other translations of Pollitt's works in Czechoslovakia included: *Za mír, blahobyt a socialismus! Zpráva výkonného výboru, přednesená gen. tajemníkem ÚV Komunistické strany Velké Britannie Harry Pollittem na 24. sjezdu strany* [For peace, welfare and socialism! The report of the executive committee presented by the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Great Britain, Harry Pollitt, at the 24th congress of the Party], Prague, ÚV KSČ, 1956.
[705] MORGAN Kevin, *Harry Pollitt*, Manchester, Manchester University Press 1993, p. 5.
[706] NACR, fund the International Department of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, 100/3, sv. 204, a.j. 715, Letter from Harry Pollitt to Hana Glaserová from the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, 27 July 1949.

over the mountains, hop, skip and jump, and [doing] everything they do in the Russian ballet."[707] No doubt there was more hopping and skipping when this "true son of the British working class"[708] learnt that the Czechoslovak state would not only cover all the expenses connected with his stay in the Jeseníky Mountains but would give him an allowance of 10,000 Czechoslovak crowns into the bargain.[709]

Harry Pollitt's son, Brian, revealed that the time he himself spent in Czechoslovakia "helped to nullify, the hostilities of a British environment in which my father was often vilified and in which I, in consequence, was sometimes abused."[710] In the summers of 1950 and 1951, while his father rested and recuperated in Czechoslovak state sanatoria once again, the young Brian Pollitt spent several weeks at the home of the Communist Party Regional Committee Secretary in Brno, Otto Šling. "Uncle Otto" as the boy called him, and his English wife Marian, were family friends of the Pollitts' since Šling's exile in London during the Second World War. At the time of Šling's trial, Harry Pollitt, his son says, visited the Soviet Embassy in London "to press his view that Šling could not possibly have been the British intelligence agent he was alleged to be, but his testimony was evidently ignored."[711] Be that as it may, in 1951, a year before the trial took place, Pollitt sent a letter to Bedřich Geminder, Head of the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, and, as it transpired, himself a marked man, in which he gave some details of his and his son's stay in Czechoslovakia in 1949. Šling took the two to a lake the name of which Pollitt did not remember, "[…] but I do remember that on getting there we went to a house and sunbathing outside was [Marie] Švermová. Šling brought us [Pollitt and his son] back to Prague and Švermová as well. I should imagine this house was one of the places that they used for their anti-Party activity."[712] Whatever sinister goings-on the elder Pollitt may have imagined, his son

[707] PHM, CP/IND/POLL/08/61, Letter by Harry Pollitt dated 15 August 1949.
[708] MATKOVSKY N. V., *A True Son of the British Working Class (Harry Pollitt)*, Moscow, Progress Publishers 1972.
[709] NACR, fund the International Department of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, 100/3, sv. 204, a.j. 715, Glaserová to Frank, 1 August 1949.
[710] COHEN Phil, *Children of the Revolution*, London, Lawrence and Wishart 1997, pp. 110–111.
[711] *Ibid.,* p. 108.
[712] NACR, fund the International Department of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, 100/3, sv. 204, a.j. 715, Harry Pollitt to Bedřich Geminder, 27 March 1951. On 29 January 1954, seven other alleged accomplices of Rudolf Slánský were tried in Prague. "The only non-Jewish defendant, Marie

Brian remembers being treated "rather like a crown prince" during his time with the Šlings. He "fished trout, shot deer" and was introduced to Klement Gottwald, the Czechoslovak President at the time.[713]

The health of other British Party members clearly exercised the minds of communist officials in Prague, too. Fraternal help was no idle phrase. In 1948, for instance, Rudolf Slánský sent an invitation to the Communist Party in London affirming that 12 British comrades who were sick were welcome to have treatment at Czechoslovak spas.[714] Three years later, more British comrades were pressed to avail of the medical services available at the Czech sanatoria in Jáchymov and Františkovy Lázně, with the added stipulation that not only would all expenses incurred be defrayed by the Czechoslovak state but each partaker would also receive an allowance of 3,000 Czechoslovak crowns.[715]

In 1949, Pollitt requested the Czechoslovak authorities for help in the case of Jack Brent, a Canadian-born, Scottish veteran from the Spanish Civil War who had been seriously wounded at the Battle of Jarama in 1937, and for other members of the CPGB.[716] Pollitt's appeal was successful.[717] Also on record is a letter sent to the authorities in Prague thanking them for their generosity by one British recipient of Czechoslovak medical care: "The most suitable treatment

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Švermová, the widow of the national hero Jan Šverma, was described as the mistress of the Jewish 'traitor' Otto Šling, who had been executed in the Slansky trial. She received a life sentence" (*American Jewish Year Book,* Vol. 56 (1955), p. 416, available online at: http://www.ajcarchives.org/main.php?GroupingId=10089 (accessed 27 May 2010). Marie Švermová's brother, Karel Šváb, was another high-ranking Party functionary who was hanged along with Rudolf Slánský. For more information on the Slánský trial, see for example: KAPLAN Karel, *Československo v letech 1948–1953: Část 2. Zakladatelské období komunistického režimu* [Czechoslovakia in the years 1948–1953: Part 2. The founding period of the communist regime], Prague, Státní pedagogické nakladatelství 1991; IDEM, *Gottwaldovi muži* [Gottwald's men], Prague – Litomyšl, Paseka 2004; IDEM, *Kronika komunistického Československa: Klement Gottwald a Rudolf Slánský* [The chronicle of communist Czechoslovakia: Klement Gottwald and Rudolf Slánský], Brno, Barrister & Principal 2009.

[713] COHEN Phil, *Children of the Revolution*, pp. 110–111. A few years later "when a communist journalist came home from Czechoslovakia and went to see [Harry] Pollitt to tell him what he knew about the show trials, Pollitt looked heavily out of his office window for a long time, and then said: 'My advice to you is to forget all about it'" (BECKETT Francis, *Stalin's British Victims: The Story of Rosa Rust*, Stroud, The History Press 2004, p. 148).

[714] NACR, fund the International Department of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, 100/3, sv. 204, a.j. 715, Letter from Harry Pollit to Bedřich Geminder dated 22 July 1948.

[715] *Ibid.,* Report for Bedřich Geminder, 4 January 1951.

[716] NACR, fund the International Department of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, 100/3, sv. 204, a.j. 715, Letter from Harry Pollitt to Rudolf Slánský, 8 September 1949; *Ibid.,* Letter from Harry Pollitt to Bedřich Geminder, 25 September 1950.

[717] See: Who was Jack Brent? *The Galloway Gazette*, 1 May 2012. Jack Brent, whose real name was George (Geordie) Dickie, died in 1951 aged 39. For more information, see: HARRISON Stanley, *Good to Be Alive: The Story of Jack Brent*, London, Lawrence and Wishart 1954.

I could ever imagine is offered to me in this country. No one would provide so warmly and constructively but the Czech Communist Party. My gratefulness to you, comrades, and my natural and moral duties to the people's democracies as well will always guide me and illuminate the road in my efforts for the confident service of the working peoples."[718]

As we have seen, the grounds for officially-sponsored visits to Czechoslovakia were various. The invitees, particularly in the case of the top brass within the Party, those whose track record proved their loyalty and commitment over the decades, might be fraternal delegates to Party congresses.[719] They might be medical tourists allowed the privilege of sharing in the health and curative resources of the Czechoslovak state.[720] Alternatively, they might simply be

[718] NACR, fund the International Department of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, 100/3, sv. 204, a.j. 715, N. A. Trimikliniotis to the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, 12 February 1950.

[719] Harry Pollitt's true-blue pedigree, for instance, despite some dithering at the Nazi-Soviet Pact, stretched back a long way. In May 1920, "London dockers," as a Soviet publication puts it, "headed by one of the founders of the Communist Party of Great Britain Harry Pollitt, refused to load the *Jolly George* with arms and ammunition for the whiteguard Polish Army" (BORISOVA Y. S. et al, *Outline History of the Soviet Working Class*, Moscow, Progress Publishers 1973, p. 63).

[720] Prague might also be a transit point on the way to hospitalization in the USSR. "The Soviet government provided medical care for top-level American communist functionaries at their best hospitals," wrote Ann [Chapman] Kimmage, describing a visit by the blind African-American communist, Henry Winston, to their Prague home in the early 1960s on his way to the Soviet Union for treatment. Winston suffered a brain tumour while in the Terre Haute Federal Penitentiary in Indiana. The governor of the prison refused to take the matter seriously until it was too late and Winston became blind as a result (KIMMAGE Ann, *An Un-American Childhood*, pp. 131–132; also ABT John, *Advocate and Activist*, pp. 233–234). Medical neglect was not the only hazard communists faced in North American prisons. Tim Buck claimed that while incarcerated at Kingston Penitentiary in Ontario in 1932, "an attempt was made on his life by guards who clustered on the tier below his and shot up into his cell" (HOWARD Victor, *"We Were the Salt of the Earth!" A Narrative of the On-to-Ottawa Trek and the Regina Riot*, Saskatchewan, University of Regina 1985, p. 33). This was later admitted officially. See also the discussion of the play *Eight Men Speak*, based on the trial of Buck along with seven other Canadian Communist Party leaders and the attempted murder of Buck while in prison in KHOURI Malek, *Filming Politics: Communism and the Portrayal of the Working Class at the National Film Board of Canada, 1939–46*, Calgary, University of Calgary Press 2007, pp. 69–71. Violence from other inmates was also a daily threat. In Saint-Vincent-de-Paul prison in Montreal, a convicted killer from the Ukraine by the name of John Boyko took an instant dislike to the jailed MP, Fred Rose, and his prisoner friend, Nick Tedesco, and stabbed Tedesco in the back with a chisel because "he would rather hang than live with communists" (BRAWN Dale, *Practically Perfect: Killers Who Got Away with Murder … for a While*, Toronto, Dundurn Press 2013, p. 72; see also: WEISBORD Merrily, *The Strangest Dream*, p. 168). Across the border in the US, William Remington was murdered in Lewisburg Penitentiary in Pennsylvania in 1954, in the words of a former cellmate, "because he was a Communist" (MAY Gary, *Un-American Activities: The Trials of William Remington*, p. 312). While serving his prison sentence, the war hero and communist, Bob Thompson, "was set upon by a fellow prisoner, a Croatian fascist, who beat in his skull with a lead pipe, causing permanent injury" (ABT John J., *Advocate and Activist*, p. 219). What went on in American prisons was simply a reflection of the anti-communism in the wider society. Stock phrases such as "Iron Curtain," "Bamboo Curtain," in the aftermath of the communist victory in China in 1949, "Soviet satellites," and "Soviet Bloc" shaped mental schemata in the US and were "a useful tool in helping to establish clear binary differences between the communist and democratic regimes" (SHAW Tony, *British Cinema and the Cold War*, p. 65), although few had any clear idea of what the words actually meant. Basically, the opprobrious term "Red" was whatever it was wanted to be. As one writer put it: "Communist, Communist, Communist, and nobody in America had

rewarded with an all-inclusive holiday for a job well done in their home country or, not to put too fine a point on it, for toeing the Party line. Foreign comrades could also be chosen for field trips to Czechoslovakia to see for themselves the progress being made in areas such as production, health care, construction, facilities for workers and children, and the emancipation of women.[721] In 1949, E. V. Elliot, the General Secretary of the Australian Seamen's Union and a member of the Central Committee of the Australian Communist Party was invited to spend a week in Czechoslovakia in order to learn about life in the communist state.[722] A further example to hand is that of five more Australian communists given a 10-day stay in 1959 in order to carry out a thorough examination of socialism in practice, all of course without charge and with added allowances and presents to take home.[723]

In addition, as we have seen, specially favoured guests had prizes or academic honours bestowed on them, often depicted, as in the case of Willie Gallacher, as rewards for their "service to democracy and friendship between the peoples."[724] While they were in Prague,

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the least idea of what the hell a Communist was. What do they do, what do they say, what do they look like? When they're together, do they talk Russian, Chinese, Yiddish, Esperanto? Do they build bombs? Nobody knew, which is why it was so easy to exploit the menace […]" (ROTH Philip, *I Married a Communist*, New York, Vintage Books 1999, p. 305). Medical treatment in the USSR of course was for all high-profile communists, irrespective of nationality. The one-time editor of the *Daily Worker*, Political Commissar for the British Battalion of the International Brigade in the Spanish Civil War, and convicted Soviet spy, Dave Springhall, for instance, was treated for throat cancer in a Moscow hospital where he died on 2 September 1953. Henry Winston would also die in a Moscow hospital in 1986.

[721] For example, NACR, fund the International Department of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, 100/3, sv. 204, a.j. 715, Memo for Comrade Hendrych, 21 May 1959. In terms of entrenched male attitudes to the role of women in family life, despite the enlightened legislation, Czechoslovakia was not so very different from Western societies in general. The American sociologist, Hilda Scott, who had lived in Czechoslovakia since 1950, wrote: "No one who has followed the painful efforts to modernize socialist housework over the past three decades can fail to be struck by the way this is inevitably presented as 'the debt we owe our women,' as though women were responsible for all the wash that is dirtied and were the sole beneficiaries of clean windows and floors and ate all the potatoes that are lugged home. This convention is so convenient to men that they can hardly be expected to be anxious for a change" (SCOTT Hilda, *Does Socialism Liberate Women?* pp. 197–198). Hilda Scott was the wife of Herbert Lass, Director of the Prague branch of the Co-operative for American Remittances to Europe (CARE) after the war. The Czechoslovak government terminated the programme in July 1950 as part of its campaign to remove Western agencies from the country. Herbert Lass had, in the meantime, resigned his position because, as Prague Radio reported, he could not "deliver American packages while the Americans are dropping bombs in Korea" (*The Paris News*, August 3 1950). For more information on Herbert Lass, see also: Relief Agency, CARE, Closes Its Prague Office, *Chicago Daily Tribune,* 30 July 1950; Prague Relief Aide Said to Assail US: Herbert Lass, CARE Director, Closes Office. Czechs Quote Him on America, *New York Times,* 2 August 1950; CARE Agent Quits, Hitting Korea War, Prague Reports, *Washington Post,* 3 August 1950; Lass Repeats His Attack: Ex-Official of CARE Says US Tries to Export Economic Ills, *New York Times,* 3 August 1950.

[722] HRUBY, Peter, *Dangerous Dreamers*, pp. 152–153.

[723] *Ibid.,* p. 236.

[724] PHM, CP/IND/GALL/03/11, Report written by William Gallacher, MP, in September 1948.

"Nothing too good for Comrade Gallacher and his wife" was the order of the day and this would have struck a responsive chord in all the Party faithful back home.[725] To give substance to the fine words, Gallacher was presented with a "lovely-cut glass bowl" for his birthday.[726] At the time of the funeral of Edvard Beneš, Gallacher and his delegation, who had been rewarded with a trip to Slovakia, flew to Košice by government plane along with Antonín Zápotocký and, a few days later, Gallacher travelled with the Hungarian communist leader, Mátyás Rákosi, to Budapest in the presidential plane.[727] The Dean of Canterbury, for his part, could match that. On a visit to China in 1964, the Johnsons flew from Canton to Nanchang in Chou-en-lai's own plane and thence on to Hangzhou [Hangchow].[728]

More ego-boosting came when books by those earmarked for VIP treatment were translated into Czech, again in line with Soviet practice. The Stalin Prize-winning playwright, Konstantin Simonov, had "recommended using this feature more often in foreign propaganda especially in order to win the favour of non-communist authors."[729] When it came to communist writers though, "nothing was too good," as Gallacher phrased it. While Czech translations of Gallacher's own books, most notably his autobiography, *Revolt on the Clyde,* which was taken

[725] *Ibid.*
[726] *Ibid.*
[727] *Ibid.* For more information on Gallacher's visit, see also: TNA, FO 371/71265, Czechoslovakia: Weekly Information Summary prepared by the British Embassy in Prague for the period 10 to 16 September 1948.
[728] University of Kent Special Collections, available online at: https://www.kent.ac.uk/library/specialcollections/other/hewlett-johnson/biography.html (accessed 15 July 2016). For Johnson's "special invitation from the Czechoslovakian Government to visit their country" and the equally "special non-stop plane provided," see: JOHNSON Hewlett, *Searching for Light*, London, Michael Joseph 1968, p. 242.
[729] RUPPRECHT Tobias, *Soviet Internationalism after Stalin: Interaction and Exchange between the USSR and Latin America during the Cold War*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 2015, p. 146. Whether Simonov would have approved translating such books into Czech as well as Russian, however, is another matter. Mistrust was endemic in Moscow but seems to have been particularly acute when it came to the Czechs, at least in literary circles. In his play, *Under the Chestnut Trees of Prague*, Simonov warns the Red Army soldiers who have finally taken control of the Czechoslovak capital: "So you rode through the city, you saw people walking in the streets; these people seem to be more or less the same and everybody wears more or less the same hats, more or less the same glasses and gloves. But behind which glasses are hidden the eyes of a Fascist? Under which hat is the head secretly thinking about how everything could be turned back? In which gloves are the hands which would like to strangle us all with pleasure? All this you have not seen?" (MEAD Margaret, *Soviet Attitudes Toward Authority: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Problems of Soviet Character*, New York, McGraw-Hill 1951, p. 68; for information on Margaret MEAD, see: MANDLER Peter, *Return from the Natives: How Margaret Mead Won the Second World War and Lost the Cold War,* New Haven – London, Yale University Press 2013). This is very much in line with what another Stalin Prize-winning author whom we referred to earlier, Alexander Gonchar, wrote in his novel *Golden Prague* about Czechoslovakia: "once the war's over, the imperialist sharks will be back at their old game" (GONCHAR Alexander, *Golden Prague*, p. 196).

in hand by the Czech Trade Union Publishing House,[730] were promoted, so, too, were those of his friends.[731] Before Howard Fast's fall from grace following his reaction to Khrushchev's criticism of Stalin in 1956, translations of his works "were prominently displayed on the tables and in the windows of numerous bookshops" in Prague.[732] Paul Robeson's apologia, *Here I Stand*, was translated and published in Prague shortly after its publication in London in 1958, while his two earlier booklets, *The Negro People and the Soviet Union* and *Forge Negro-Labour Unity for Peace and Jobs*, were also brought out in Czech translation in 1951.[733]

Three months after Paul Robeson's visit to Czechoslovakia in 1949, it was announced to the world that a historical hotel in Karlovy Vary had been re-named after him.[734] The fact that this high-minded gesture would be appreciated by progressive visitors to the town and, as an added bonus, would also serve to irritate the American establishment, who would hardly be likely to pay a similar tribute to Robeson or indeed any African American at the time for that matter, probably played a part in the decision by the municipal authorities, as well.[735]

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[730] NACR, fund the International Department of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, 100/3, sv. 204, a.j. 715, Letter of Hana Glaserová to William Gallacher, MP, 14 October 1949.

[731] Charles Poulsen's 1946 novel, *English Episode*, with an introduction by William Gallacher, was translated into Czech and published in Prague. Although the comrade from East London had to wait some considerable time for his royalties, "he finally received £400, which made it possible for him to buy a house" (POULSEN Charles, *Whitechapel Spring: Poems and Stories*, (ed. Charles Hobday), Belfast, Lapwing Publications 2005, p. 49).

[732] SORIN Gerald, *Howard Fast*, p. 455. "Visiting Eastern Europe in 1948, John Gunther was 'fascinated' by 'the attention paid in Czechoslovakia, as in several of the other satellites,' to Fast's 'literary merits […]. One would have thought that Fast was the only writer in the United States" (HOBERMAN J., *The Red Atlantis*: *Communist Culture in the Absence of Communism*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press 1998, p. 289; see also: GUNTHER John, *Behind the Curtain*, p. 229). For the full, lengthy list of Howard Fast books translated into Czech, see: TŮMOVÁ Jiřina (ed.), *American Literature in Czechoslovakia 1945–1965*, Prague, Czechoslovak PEN Klub 1966, pp. 25–28. Following Fast's renunciation of communism, however, "party leaders leaped on him like a pack of wolves and began that particular brand of character assassination which the communist movement has always reserved for defectors from its ranks" (GATES John, *The Story of an American Communist*, p. 169). Stephen Pollak had a similar experience after he had distanced himself from the Party: "Worse than our former Czech friends were the British Communists in Prague, who treated me as though I had suddenly been found to be suffering from a highly obnoxious and contagious disease" (POLLAK Stephen, *Strange Land Behind Me*, p. 327). The British economist and Labour Party leader, Harold Laski, noted two decades earlier that: "Communists have a special genius for general invective on, it appears, the principle that if enough mud is thrown, some is bound to stick" (LASKI Harold J., *Communism*, London, Thornton Butterworth 1927, p. 208).

[733] Robeson's *Here I Stand* (London, Dennis Dobson 1958) was published as *Zde je mé misto* (Prague, SNPL 1958), while *The Negro People and the Soviet Union* (New York, New Century Publishers 1950) and *Forge Negro-Labour Unity for Peace and Jobs* (New York, Harlem Trade Union Council 1950) were translated into Czech and printed jointly as *Boj černochů za svobodu a mír* [The fight of African Americans for freedom] (Prague, Orbis 1951).

[734] Historical Carlsbad Spa Hotel Named for Robeson, *Afro-American,* 15 October 1949.

[735] This was certainly the case with the re-naming of the Hotel Sylva in the nearby spa resort of Mariánské Lázně as the *Hotel of the Rosenberg Couple* after Julius and Ethel Rosenberg had been executed at the Sing Sing Correctional Facility in New York on 19 June 1953 (BUSEK Vratislav – SPULBER Nicholas (eds.),

INCREASING THE CREDIT BALANCE

"Morality," wrote Hewlett Johnson in a Foreword to Dyson Carter's *Russia's Secret Weapon*, "is based upon the underlying truth of human beings and human actions."[736] In language similar to that he had used to expound the marvels of the Soviet Union in the 1930s, Johnson celebrated Czechoslovakia's sloughing off of the sin and immorality characteristic of the earlier era: "Adultery, vice, prostitution and alcoholism, symptoms of capitalist moral decay, rapidly decrease. Prostitution will soon be gone. No economic need tempts Czechoslovak women to sell their honour."[737]

Czechoslovakia, p. 121). According to the Soviet spymaster, Pavel Sudoplatov, "the Rosenbergs were never more than minor couriers" (SUDOPLATOV Pavel, *Special Tasks*, London, Little, Brown and Company 1994, p. 177). See also p. 216: "It was clear from the very beginning that the cause had acquired a political character far out of proportion to their actual role as spies. More important than their spying activities was that the Rosenbergs served as a symbol in support of communism and the Soviet Union. Their bravery to the end served our cause, because they became the centre of a worldwide Communist propaganda campaign." (For more information on the Rosenberg case, see for example: CLUNE Lori, *Executing the Rosenbergs: Death and Diplomacy in a Cold War World,* Oxford – New York, Oxford University Press 2016.) In many respects the campaign to save the Rosenbergs was almost a re-run of that orchestrated by Willi Münzenberg to save the two Italian-born immigrants to America, Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, in the 1920s. The fact that Sacco and Vanzetti were not Bolsheviks was of no account. The case looked promising, not because it could be won, being foreigners and anarchists to boot, Sacco and Vanzetti had the cards stacked against them in the US, but rather in terms of its propaganda value. As one government official involved in the case remarked at the time, "It doesn't make any difference whether they are guilty of the crime; they are anarchists and wops and ought to be hung, on general principles" (MAY Gary, *Un-American Activities*, p. 269). Marches, protests, vigils, petitions, resolutions, violent demonstrations, all the paraphernalia of a press and radio campaign were set in motion throughout America and Europe, as they would be again for the Rosenbergs, culminating on the night of 22 August 1927, when the two Italians were finally electrocuted at Charleston Prison, the first official use of the "electric chair," for a murder committed seven years earlier. But just how effective the agitation for Sacco and Vanzetti was in terms of winning the sympathy of the ordinary man- or woman-in-the-street is another matter. The American journalist Heywood Broun who took part in the campaign, and lost his column on the editorial page of *The World* as a result, wrote: "I felt and feel that the most tragic factor of the Sacco-Vanzetti case is the general apathy. In ten minutes' time I will guarantee to fetch from the streets of New York one hundred persons who have never heard of the case and thousands who have not the slightest idea what it is all about" (BROUN Heywood, *Collected Edition of Heywood Broun*, p. 209). The same consideration might well apply to the Rosenbergs. Perhaps Stefan Zweig's cautionary response to a suppliant for his intercession with Mussolini to obtain the release of her husband, who had helped carry the coffin of the murdered Socialist leader Giacomo Matteotti in 1924, from an Italian Fascist prison should be borne in mind here, too: "I reminded her that national pride alone would prevent a country from permitting its justice to be corrected from abroad and that the European protest in the case of Sacco and Vanzetti had operated badly rather than favourably in America" (ZWEIG Stefan, *The World of Yesterday*, p. 261).

[736] JOHNSON Hewlett, Foreword to CARTER Dyson, *Russia's Secret Weapon*, London, Major A. S. Hooper 1943, p. 4. Dyson Carter, it may be remembered, was the man who could eat his dinner off the streets and footpaths of Moscow and Kiev they were so clean.

[737] JOHNSON Hewlett, *Eastern Europe in the Socialist World*, pp. 136–137.

Economic need would hardly have been a factor in the deanery at Canterbury either and yet honour got short shrift.[738] "Pritt and company have learned nothing and forgotten nothing," said a commentator referring to D. N. Pritt's reaction to Imre Nagy's execution in Budapest in 1958.[739] Hewlett Johnson would have ranked high in that company, but then perhaps there was nothing for them to learn. The same set of premises with which Pritt and company had approached the trial of Zinoviev and Kamenev and found "that the case was genuine, the trial fair, and the accused as guilty as they themselves said," applied also in subsequent hearings.[740] Although not present at the trial of Karl Radek and Georgy Piatakov in January 1937, Pritt tells us he "read Press reports in London, and formed a similar view,"[741] as he would of the trials of Nikolai Bukharin, László Rajk, Rudolf Slánský, and Imre Nagy, even though this last affair was held in camera, as well as of the long litany of non-Party defendants who heard death sentences pronounced against them in Soviet Bloc courtrooms. All were guilty as charged. Indeed, when it came to dealing with domestic opposition, Pritt advocated that the Communist Party should adopt the same coercive measures as they would in wartime: "It is essential for them, if they are to retain power and achieve their objects, to deal with their native enemies without kid gloves, as most of the world had to deal with its hostile elements during the war itself."[742]

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[738] A rather telling incident occurred with the grammar school adjacent to the deanery at Canterbury in September 1937. Johnson "annexed part of what had hitherto been regarded as King's School land in order to enlarge the deanery garden and extend the buffer between himself and the noise of the pupils." The headmaster, John Shirley, was furious at the Red Dean's unilateral action: "You were the man who would do anything for anybody, who cared nothing for comforts and wealth. Then all of a sudden you say you will add to your garden so that your peace may not be injured." Johnson dismissed the complaint. He had no time to be "worrying over small matters when so great things were at stake in the world" (BUTLER John, *The Red Dean of Canterbury*, pp. 66–67). A small matter indeed, and yet it was precisely this small matter of *Lebensraum*, at someone else's expense, that was about to plunge the world into the abyss of the Second World War.

[739] "I say Nagy was a guilty man," was Pritt's pronouncement (FRYER Peter, *Hungarian Tragedy and Other Writings on the 1956 Hungarian Revolution*, New York, Beekman Books 2001, p. 171).

[740] PRITT D. N., Introduction to COLLARD Dudley, *Soviet Justice and the Trial of Radek and Others*, London, Victor Gollancz 1937, p. 7.

[741] *Ibid.* In his account of the trial, Barrister-at-Law Dudley Collard does not mince words. For instance, he describes I. A. Knyazev as "a cold-blooded monster" whose "speciality was train wrecking." Knyazev "worked under the orders of Livshitz, Assistant Commissar for Railways, and the Japanese secret service […]. He gave specific instructions for the organization of collisions, involving, if possible, loss of life, in order to 'create bitterness against the Government, and give the public the impression that the Government are to blame'" (COLLARD Dudley, *Soviet Justice and the Trial of Radek and Others*, pp. 67–68).

[742] PRITT D. N., *Star-Spangled Shadow*, p. 84. See also: PRITT D. N., *Spies and Informers in the Witness-Box*. When Robert Edwards was researching his history of the Russo-Finnish War of 1939, he had occasion

As Chairman of the "Joint Committee for Soviet Aid" during the war, and with Pritt's wife, Molly, as Vice-Chairman, the Dean of Canterbury had "collected enormous sums of money and sent some very valuable supplies to the USSR."[743] Both Pritt and Johnson had built up an immense fund of goodwill in the Soviet world.[744] Now Johnson would add to that fund, and diversify his investments a little, by his unconditional support for the communist authorities in Prague. With his glib use of such palaver as the "bitter enemies of socialism," the "reactionary forces" and the "exploiting classes," his depiction of the Czechoslovak show trials, which he saw as just and inevitable, was a mere carbon copy of what was being promulgated by communist officialdom. His explanation of the Communist Party coming to power in February 1948 was more of the same: "Fearful of the approaching elections the reactionaries prepared for an open provocation, sabotage and armed plot"; "[a]n armed plot discovered among members of the Slovak Democratic Party was exposed and nipped in the bud"; "[a]rrests of army and security officers [before the takeover] had revealed further plots, suggesting that the National Socialists were preparing for a coup d'état"; "[a]ll had been in line with the consistent Czech desire always to march within the line of legal enactment and in the steady consistent development of her traditional way. Here, in this vast achievement of the common

to read D. N. Pritt's book on the subject, *Must the War Spread?* and, in his own words, "felt in need of a bath afterwards" (EDWARDS Robert, *White Death: Russia's War on Finland 1939–40,* London, Phoenix 2007, p. 301).

[743] PRITT D. N., *The Autobiography of D. N. Pritt: Part one*, pp. 290–291.

[744] This would increase still more in 1949 when Johnson was called as a defence witness to rebut the claims made by the Soviet defector, Victor Kravchenko, about conditions in the Soviet penal camps, and the sordid reality of totalitarian life, in his book, *I Chose Freedom*, published in 1947 and written with the help of the ex-communist journalist, Eugene Lyons, mentioned earlier. Stung by the charge that the work had been cobbled together by the US Office of Strategic Services, Kravchenko brought a defamation suit against the Paris communist weekly, *Les Lettres Français*. Aided by first-hand corroboration of his allegations by former *gulag* inmates, most notably Willi Münzenberg's sister-in-law the ex-Comintern agent, Margarete Buber-Neumann, who had survived two years in Karaganda before being handed over to the Gestapo at Brest-Litovsk by the NKVD to spend another five years at Ravensbrück concentration camp, where she befriended Milena Jesenská before her death, Kravchenko won his case. So, too, incidentally, did the French author David Rousset two years later when he likewise was accused by the same newspaper of slandering the USSR. Hewlett Johnson was one of the "peace camp" representatives who readily took the stand to testify against the former inmates of the death camps and to assert that the Soviet Union was the best of all possible worlds. As well as having translations of his books into Russian printed wholesale in the USSR, Stalin's debt to the dean was repaid in 1951 when Johnson, along with Frédéric Joliot-Curie, was among the first to be awarded a Stalin Peace Prize of a gold medal and a convertible sum of 100,000 roubles. J. D. Bernal got his in 1953 and Hromádka's turn came in 1958, although as a result of Khrushchev's denunciation in 1956, Stalin had fallen into disfavour and the gift had been renamed the Lenin Peace Prize.

man was the completion of the great movement started long ago by men like Jan Hus, Comenius and hosts of other pioneers."[745]

Singled out for particular praise was the new Czechoslovak constitution of May 1948. Few would argue that the enshrinement of equality for women constitutionally was not a major step forward but it must be remembered that work on preparing the new constitution had been underway for some considerable time before the communist seizure of power. "[…] the change was so great under the new Constitution," wrote the dean, "that in many respects a woman's freedom in Czechoslovakia transcended that of England and the West. A socialist country like Czechoslovakia, for example, is economically able to help womanhood in ways impracticable in capitalist countries, giving complete equality to women despite all physical disabilities."[746] There is no distortion of truth here and, as Zdeněk Kühn has pointed out, the "Czechoslovak courts repeatedly invoked the provisions of the new Constitution in order to emphasize the equal status of women."[747]

On the other hand, constitutional guarantees were of little or no account when cited as a defence in a criminal hearing. In 1949, for instance, the Czechoslovak Supreme Court in the case of a "priest who refused to administer last rites to an old woman because of her membership in the Communist Party […] rebuffed the defendant's defence that, in so doing, he had exercised his own right to religious freedom: 'The Constitution of May 9 [1948] guarantees religious freedom to everybody; however, that cannot mean that this freedom might be used to undermine [the regime of people's democracy].'"[748] The condemned priest would shuffle into line alongside the other prisoners convicted to hard labour, while the dean, emphasizing his direct, personal experience on the subject would seek to refute what was being printed in the mainstream Western press about Czechoslovakia, first by using the rhetorical subterfuge of hyperbole and the red herring to cloud the issue, and then by categorically denying, that any

[745] JOHNSON Hewlett, *Eastern Europe in the Socialist World*, pp. 122–124.
[746] *Ibid.,* p. 261.
[747] KÜHN Zdeněk, *The Judiciary in Central and Eastern Europe: Mechanical Jurisprudence in Transformation?*, Boston, Martinus Nijhoff 2011, p. 100. To give a practical example, "after the 1948 Constitution entered into force, it was no longer entirely up to the husband to decide where to establish the marital home; therefore, a wife's refusal to live in the house of her husband's parents did not constitute grounds for seeking a divorce" (*Ibid*).
[748] KÜHN Zdeněk, *The Judiciary in Central and Eastern Europe*, p. 101.

conflict existed between the temporal and the spiritual in peace camp countries: "Stories like nuns forced to work in coal mines, suggestive of violent hostility between the mass of religious people and the state. Does such hostility exist? Emphatically not."[749] As with the 1936 Constitution in the Soviet Union, which also found favour with the dean, the statute-book in Czechoslovakia was a flexible entity. It was the unwritten rules that mattered and in a communist state "people realize quickly what they are and what they are not permitted to do."[750]

The South African communist journalist Harry Bloom (a.k.a. Walter Storm) was in Prague with his wife Beryl at the time of the 1948 coup. His account of the event, *The People's Victory in Czechoslovakia*, has an introduction by a certain John Stuart who praises Bloom's objectivity in contrast to that of fellow-reporters: "Unlike the mass of western correspondents who descended on Prague, Storm has gone below the surface of things. Many newspapermen came expecting to find a nickelodeon melodrama with barricades, guillotines, and sabre-swinging horsemen. When they did not find it, they invented it. I was able to see for myself how American and British journalists sucked up the gossip in the cafes and sent it home as the truth."[751] Indeed, "[t]he Western press has let loose a barrage of hatred and distortion against the Czechoslovak people such as has seldom been known before. It is necessary to answer all the absurd and violent slanders, to pose simple truths in the belief that they will endure longer and penetrate further lies."[752]

There was no crisis, and certainly nothing provoked by the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. Given its large membership and the high prestige the Party enjoyed among workers, farmers, and ordinary citizens, Bloom-Storm asserted, no such spur to action had been necessary. As for the presence in Prague of the Soviet diplomat, Valerian Zorin, this was completely coincidental. He was there only to supervise the Soviet grain delivery to Czechoslovakia, a matter that had been done and dusted the previous year.[753] The death in

[749] JOHNSON Hewlett, *Eastern Europe in the Socialist World,* pp. 143–144.
[750] DJILAS Milovan, *The New Class*, London, Unwin Books 1966, p. 73.
[751] STORM Walter, *The People's Victory in Czechoslovakia*, Forward by John Stuart, 1948, p. 3.
[752] STORM Walter – STORM Beryl, *We Meet the Czechoslovaks,* p. 5.
[753] Compare, for example, SMETANA Vít, Ani vojna, ani mír: *Československo a střední Evropa v sedmi dramatech na prahu druhé světové a studené války* [Neither war, nor peace: Czechoslovakia and Central Europe in seven dramas on the threshold of the Second World War and the Cold War], Prague, Nakladatelství Lidové noviny 2016; IDEM, Concessions or Conviction? Czechoslovakia's Road to the Cold War and the Soviet Bloc, in

March of the Czechoslovak Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jan Masaryk, was, according to Bloom-Storm, exploited by the "Russophobes" in the West and he appealed to ordinary Americans (and any other readers of his book) to avoid judgements based on what was written by the "frenzied, profit-obsessed men in deadly fear of social change or economic progress" in the capitalist press. He pointed out that the Czechoslovaks only wanted to build a peaceful life without poverty and unemployment, and Western governments were wrong to treat Czechoslovakia as a "nation of criminals" simply because the country was run by the Communist Party.[754]

"Are Czech people happy," asked Rex Chiplin theatrically, as he reflected on his visit to Czechoslovakia. "Would you be if you were guaranteed employment, had no fear of debt through sickness, had all the food you could eat, had every form of cultural entertainment at cheap prices, had practically free holidays in internationally famous beauty spots, were well clad and had the prospect of an even better life as the years went on? Well, that's Czechoslovakia today."[755]

As the Gershwin song says, "Who could ask for anything more?" But after such flights of fancy, what sparkling eyes, what culinary delights would greet Rex Chiplin and Pritt and company when next they turned up in the Czechoslovak capital.

KRAMER Mark, SMETANA Vít (eds.), *Imposing, Maintaining, and Tearing Open the Iron Curtain: The Cold War and East-Central Europe, 1945–1989,* Lanham Boulder New York – Toronto – Plymouth – Toronto, Lexington Books 2014, pp. 55–86. Miklós Nyárádi, Hungarian Minister of Finance from 1947 until his defection in November 1948, had this to say on the subject: "I remember the disastrous crop failures following the drought of 1947. Hungary had suffered terribly, Czechoslovakia even more. In fact, our crops were so bad that year that we were unable to fulfill our reparations to both Russia and Czechoslovakia, as only thirty thousand tons of wheat were available for export. But at Russia's insistence we cancelled our reparations to Czechoslovakia and shipped the entire thirty thousand tons to Russia. A month later this same wheat was benevolently sold by the Soviet Union to hungry Czechoslovakia at well above the market price, while in Prague Communist Premier Klement Gottwald extolled the generosity of the 'great Soviet ally' to famished Czechs" (NYARADI Nicholas, *My Ringside Seat in Moscow*, New York, Thomas Y. Crowell 1952, p. 256).

[754] STORM Walter, *The People's Victory in Czechoslovakia*, pp. 5, 7, 9 and 60–61.

[755] CHIPLIN Rex, *Over the Wall,* pp. 7–8.

ALL ABOARD THE CZECHOSLOVAK GOODIES SPECIAL: THE DINING-CAR WILL OPEN SHORTLY

The gravy train would not run by unnoticed. In the 2002 edition of *How Not To Say What You Mean. A Dictionary of Euphemisms*, there is the following entry:

"**Travel expenses:** bribes or money claimed dishonestly – Paid for trips which were not made, or for first class when you rode second: [Will] Owen, a former miner, had been recruited during a 1957 visit to Czechoslovakia and had been supplied with his 'travel expenses.' Thereafter he received regular cash payments from the Czechs. (N. West, 1982 – Owen, a British Member of Parliament, was named by the defector [Josef] Frolik as being in the pay of the Communists. Nobody was more surprised than the accused when he was later acquitted of charges of spying)."[756]

Will Owen, who was a Labour MP for Morpeth in northeast England, was recruited by the Czechoslovak security services in 1954 under the code-name LEE but "known informally as 'Greedy Bastard.' For £ 500 every month and free vacations in Czechoslovakia, for 15 years he gave the Czech security services top-secret data about the British army and Britain's contributions to NATO. The information was based partly on what he learned as a member of the House of Commons Defence Estimates Committee."[757]

How exceptional was Will Owen among British Labour politicians? In the 12 November 1974 issue of *The Times*, the much-admired journalist and broadcaster, Bernard Levin, had an article entitled, *Pulling Strings for the Czech Puppets*, in which he claimed that there was no shortage of "parliamentary freeloaders, who want nothing to interfere with their hopes of

[756] HOLDER R W, *How Not to Say What You Mean: A Dictionary of Euphemisms*, Oxford – New York, Oxford University Press 2002, p. 412.

[757] TRAHAIR Richard C. S., *Encyclopedia of Cold War Espionage, Spies and Secret Operations*, Connecticut, Greenwood Press 2004, p. 252. Trahair goes on: "Owen's espionage was discovered after the defection of Joseph Frolik (c. 1925–) [1928–1989] in the summer of 1969. Frolik said Owen had passed on a vast array of valuable information on military matters. Owen resigned in April 1970. He had large sums in his bank account, paid no taxes on them, and had to admit he had lied about the amounts and their source. He was tried in May 1970, and, to his surprise, was acquitted because the information against him was hearsay and it could not be otherwise proved that he had actually transmitted secrets." Frolik maintained that all Owen "was concerned with was hard cash and anything else he could pick up which might feather his nest. In spite of the obvious danger, he was always demanding free holidays in Czechoslovakia so that he might save the expense of having to pay for his vacation himself" (FROLIK Josef, *The Frolik Defection*, pp. 96–97).

sipping Czech beer next summer in a café on the banks of the Vltava."[758] Clearly, nothing had changed in the two intervening decades. Will Owen started work at an early age as a miner. In the course of time, by sheer hard work, determination, and luck he ended up as a Labour backbencher in the House of Commons. As a member of the Defence Estimates Committee, Owen did have something tangible to offer his Czechoslovak handlers but the bulk of the Labour freeloaders would have had no access to any such privileged information and belonged more to Lenin's "useful idiots" category. In a letter to Ian Milner in 1965, Hugh MacDiarmid says he enjoyed a recent holiday in East Berlin immensely, particularly meeting Milner's Australian friend, the novelist Frank Hardy, with whom he "discovered a (largely alcoholic) affinity," but, he goes on, "I had to sing for my supper, of course."[759] Like MacDiarmid, the Labour smell-feasts, too, would sing for their supper, and never be short of a good word for their erstwhile hosts, and, hopefully, would be back again on Easy Street in Prague in the not too distant future.

Comrades from the Communist Party, on the other hand, who also played a good knife and fork along with the Marxist jargon, comprised a sub-category of the "useful idiots," those whom Bukharin had once called the "obedient idiots."[760] They were the delegates and functionaries who, along with the cadres and *apparatchiks*, "streamed out from London [and other capitals] to Prague and there found the red carpet laid down for them."[761] To be sure, "it was all very exciting for them."[762] They were mixing with the high and mighty. Old Party faithful shaft horses like the *Daily Worker* editor, William Rust, and CPGB General Secretary, Harry Pollitt, "told of being garlanded with flowers, taken around in great chauffeur-driven cars, fêted, wined and dined."[763] "Oh, the top people live off the top of the larder," says the

[758] FROLIK Josef, *The Frolik Defection*, p. 98. See also: Hansard, House of Lords Debate, 19 November 1974, Vol. 881, cc1106–1107.
[759] Letter from Hugh MacDiarmid to Ian Milner dated 1 June 1965, in MACDIARMID Hugh, *New Selected Letters*, p. 407.
[760] CAUTE David, *The Left in Europe since 1789*, New York, McGraw-Hill 1966, p. 119.
[761] HYDE Douglas*, I Believed*, p. 208.
[762] *Ibid.*
[763] *Ibid.* In his 1965 novel *The Young Visitors*, John Wain, one of the so-called "Angry Young Men" generation of English writers, has his main character say: "I remembered the Gas Board. Six years of it, from seventeen to twenty-three, before I woke up to the possibilities of the social-rebel circuit. Llewellyn had opened my eyes. Meeting him in the pub that night, with Joe and Elsie. He was just off to Georgia. Tiflis or somewhere. A holiday on the Black Sea, in his own private *dacha*. He told us all about it. He could go there

undercover police agent in a 1955 American comedy on the devious workings of Czechoslovak communists.[764] The English-speaking cadres, and camp followers such as Will Owen and the Dean of Canterbury, would make sure that they kept their seats at the table with the best of them.

Then, to refresh the pleasant memories, there was the "practice of CP political committee members receiving bottles of spirits from Soviet and East European embassies at Christmas."[765] The camp followers were not left out in the cold either. Indeed in keeping with the old proverb to make hay while the sun shines, Will Owen "went as far as pocketing as many cigars as possible whenever he came to the [Czechoslovak] Embassy for a party."[766] But accidents will happen. In 1949, Pavel Kavan, then Czechoslovak chargé d'affaires in London, raised Cain about one particular untoward event. The presents that had been prepared for comrades Harry Pollitt and John Gollan were ruined, as cakes, bottles of alcohol, and books, everything was stuffed pell-mell into the same box. The bottles broke, the cake was squashed, and in the ensuing mess all the books were destroyed.[767]

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for as long as he liked, and it didn't cost him a penny. The sea was warm and azure, the mountains were green. There was ripe fruit, free sunshine and the girls were on holiday too, ready to let their hair down but good. And he had the best of everything. 'They honour a Socialist poet,' he kept saying. A Socialist pig's arse. Write a few lines every morning denouncing the capitalists, keep your Party subscriptions up to date and above all lie yourself blue in the face every time the Russians did anything that needed explaining away, like Hungary or Cuba. And you were in. No work, no problems, nothing but fat royalties and holidays on the Black Sea. And there was I in the Gas Board offices. That was the night I took the decision: joined the Party the next morning. Not that I was being insincere. I remember distinctly saying to myself, 'If Communism means that free spirits like me don't have to work for the Gas Board, then Communism is the right system for the human race.' And I meant it, too. And I've stuck to it" (WAIN John, *The Young Visitors*, London, Macmillan 1965, pp. 143–144). Wain mentions Georgia but it could equally well be Czechoslovakia or any other country within the Soviet orbit.

[764] LINDSAY Howard – CROUSE Russell, *The Great Sebastians*, New York, Random House 1956, p. 76.

[765] COHEN Phil, *Children of the Revolution*, p. 86. When it was suggested in an internal CPGB report in 1979 that this practice be discontinued, the then General Secretary of the British Communist Party, Reuben Falber, "went absolutely apoplectic." *Ibid.*

[766] FROLIK Josef, *The Frolik Defection*, p. 97. As part of his job with the International Union of Students in Prague in the mid-1950s, Denis Hill had to settle the hotel bills of students taking part in a seminar that had been moved from Copenhagen to Prague because of visa restrictions. He found that many of the delegates "not only ordered meals on room service, which was fair enough, if rather expensive, but also cartons of cigarettes, crates of spirits, etc." (HILL Denis, *Seeing Red, Being Green*, p. 273).

[767] NACR, fund the International Department of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, 100/3, sv. 204, a.j. 715, Note written by Pavel Kavan, 30 July 1949. Pavel Kavan was a star witness at the Slánský trial, especially in regard to the alleged funnelling of information between Konni Zilliacus and Bedřich Geminder. At a subsequent trial in May 1953, along with Slansky's brother, Richard, and two former Czechoslovak ambassadors, Eduard Goldstücker to Israel, and the Spanish Civil War veteran, Karel Kufek, to Turkey, he received a long prison sentence. Kavan's English wife, Rosemary, whom he met and married in London during the war years, gives a graphic and moving account of trying to bring up a family in 1950s

THEY SWALLOWED WHAT THEY WERE EXPECTED TO SWALLOW

During their trips to Czechoslovakia, after a satisfying day touring the selected sights and with their stomachs replete, it was all too easy for the visitor to retire to bed content and to stifle with a glib phrase or a yawn any intimation they or a companion might have concerning persecution, low productivity, the lack and poor quality of consumer goods, censorship, and the like. Few had any desire to look a gift horse in the mouth. Those who would like to probe a little deeper were simply fobbed off with one excuse or another. Eleanor Wheeler was incensed when at a film preview in Prague in 1955, the Irish-Canadian correspondent for the *New York Times,* Sydney Gruson, had the temerity to say to "the very nice young woman from the press office, 'Oh, I have lots of places I'd like to go. I'd give you a long list but you'd get bored saying 'no' and I'd get bored listening."[768] A Miss Hewson on a British-Czechoslovak Friendship League delegation visit to Prague in July 1948 mentioned that it was difficult "to get in touch with the ordinary people" since her group "were escorted on officially arranged visits by car and to receptions from early morning till late in the evening, when we were taken back to the hotel to sleep. We asked Mr. [Frank] Hampl [Czech secretary of the League, who would be expelled from Britain shortly after his return] if some of us could go off on our own, but Mr. Hampl and Dr [Barnett] Stross decided that we should remain with the party."[769] It was easier to go along

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Czechoslovakia while her outcast husband withered in prison (KAVAN Rosemary, *Love and Freedom*). The French historian Tony Judt, drew attention to the manner in which women, as opposed to men, particularly radical Parisian intellectua men, wrote about their experience of communism. He noted how "Jo Langer and Heda Kovaly [widow of the executed Dr Rudolf Margolius, Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade] were utterly mystified at the attitude of Western thinkers and found nothing to say to them. For these women, communism had demystified itself in the act of assuming power, whereas for writers in Paris its very assumption of power was sufficient proof of its transhistorical claim. Heda Kovaly, Rosemary Kavan, Marian Slingova, Edith Bone, and hundreds of others experienced communism as a daily lie; [Emmanuel] Mounier, [Jean-Paul] Sartre, and their generation suffered it at a distance as a fascinating dilemma" (JUDT Tony, *Past Imperfect*, pp. 137–138). See also KOVALY Heda Margolius*, Prague Farewell*, London, Victor Gollancz 1988; MARGOLIUS Ivan, *Reflections of Prague: Journeys through the 20th Century*, London, John Wiley 2006; ŠLINGOVÁ Marian, *Truth Will Prevail*, London, Merlin Press 1968. The Hungarian-British communist, Edith Bone [Edit Hajós], had been a correspondent for the British *Daily Worker* in Budapest before she was arrested and condemned to fifteen years imprisonment in 1949 on the charge of being a British spy. She served seven before being released by students during the 1956 Hungarian Uprising. See: BONE Edith, *Seven Years Solitary*, London, Hamish Hamilton 1957.

[768] UWSC, Eleanor Wheeler Papers 1947–1957, Accession No. 1625–001, Letter of Eleanor Wheeler dated 24 November 1955.

[769] JOSTEN Josef, *Oh My Country*, p. 233. This of course was very much in line with the practice developed by *Intourist* in the USSR in the 1930s of "loading visitors down with notoriously long schedules that also served to prevent wandering around" (DAVID-FOX Michael, *Showcasing the Great Experiment*, p. 178). For information on Hampl's expulsion from Britain for "passing, either wittingly or unwittingly, a letter, as a result of which 'extremely valuable information prejudicial to Britain' got into the hands of another,

with arrangements and eschew any show of independence altogether, particularly when it came to politics. The young Canadian reporter, Ed Parker, recalls that when asked by "an English lady, Ruth, an expatriate working on staff for Radio Prague," to give his impressions of Czechoslovakia on air, for a fee, he did so gladly but made a point of "avoiding" politics and "guffed up stories about beer gardens, theatres and the old town of Prague."[770]

Miss Hewson reached the conclusion that "circumstances make it impossible for an official visitor to get a real picture of present conditions [in Czechoslovakia]. I could only have got that by living among the people as one of themselves."[771] When criticism did come, it tended to be from the long-term residents, usually after they had returned home. Unlike the holidaymakers and delegations flitting from one superlative to another, they would have had first-hand experience of the reality of life in Czechoslovakia – indeed would have had their noses rubbed in it, so to speak – and of the Czechs and Slovaks in person. The June 1953 currency reform, following the pattern of similar measures in the USSR in December 1947,[772] affected foreigners resident in the country and natives alike and was, understandably, carped about.[773] As well as describing how the monetary reform impacted on him personally,[774] Morton Nadler spoke about "the myth of 'full employment.' People were paid to stand around

unnamed Power," see: *The Courier-Mail* (Brisbane), 22 July 1948. For the singular appropriateness of the phrase "caught red-handed" when applied to Hampl, see Lord Vansittart's address to the British House of Lords on 9 March 1949. In the same speech, Vansittart mentions "the case of Mr. Gillan, who was Professor of English at Prague and Olomouc Universities. All of a sudden he and his wife and child were thrown out of Czechoslovakia, neck and crop. His only crime was that he had been popularising English literature and therefore English in Czechoslovakia, and the Communists were determined to get rid of him." Vansittart thought "sending a couple of Czechs to join Mr. Hampl" might be in order (Hansard, House of Lords Debate, 9 March 1949, Vol. 161, cc226–56).

[770] PARKER Ed*, I Didn't Come Here to Stay*, p. 165. The English lady who commissioned Parker for his impressions of Prague was no doubt Ruth Shepperd, the English announcer for Radio Prague. Working alongside Ruth Shepperd was Harry Evans, a "member of the British Communist Party, who was broadcasting to England on Czech Trade Union affairs" (POLLAK Stephen, *Strange Land Behind Me*, pp. 305–306).

[771] JOSTEN Josef, *Oh My Country*, p. 233.

[772] See, for instance: PARKER Ralph, *Moscow Correspondent*, London, Frederick Muller 1949, pp. 80–83.

[773] See: NORMAN-KOVANDA Ivy, *Tapestry from Suffolk to Prague*, p. 199; USDIN Steven T, *Engineering Communism*, p. 170. See also: LANGER Jo, *Convictions*, p. 108. For Radio Free Europe commentary on the lead-up to the reform, see: COOK Blanche Wiesen, *The Declassified Eisenhower*, p. 129. For the disturbances in Plzeň that followed, see: ULČ Otto, *The Judge in a Communist State* pp. 117–121. Eleanor Wheeler, on the other hand, thought the reform a welcome move, one that meant that the Czechoslovak economy was "altogether healthier and sounder now as basis for progress" (UWSC, Eleanor Wheeler Papers 1947–1957, Accession No. 1625–001, Letter of Eleanor Wheeler dated 31 May 1953; see also letters of 2 June 1953, and 4 June 1953.

[774] NADLER Morton, *No Regrets*, pp. 8, 19, 20–21.

and do next to nothing."[775] Such negative comments, predictably, carried little weight with Eleanor Wheeler though when she was writing home from Czechoslovakia: "The fact that Socialism does not move along on ball bearings came as a shock to some Americans-away-from-home. Some seem to want their money back."[776] But of course there could have been more behind her praise than what we see at first glimpse.

The most frequently voiced complaint, however, concerned bureaucracy. Ivy Norman-Kovanda declared that "there were only two places in Prague, a city of a million people, where one could get documents copied, legally verified and then translated, waiting for hours in queues and fitting in with office-opening hours, two or three times a week."[777] Even the stoical Wheelers were at their wits' end at times trying to cope: "Even simple problems, such as the ordering of a part to repair a machine, became bogged down in paperwork," wrote George Wheeler later,[778] while an exasperated Eleanor Wheeler maintained that a gentleman, in the same queue as her at a post-office window manned by an official munching his ten o'clock

[775] *Ibid.,* p. 29: The Institute, p. 13. Alternatively, they might be walking around duplicating work. What the young American engineer, Zara Witkin, wrote about purchasing an item in Moscow in the early 1930s would be all too familiar to the bothered young English-speaking housewife in Prague or Brno or Bratislava in the 1950s as she filed from one queue to another within the same shop: "The Soviet sales 'system' in stores is an interesting example of unshakable bureaucracy. To buy an article, one must first stand in line and indicate the article desired. Then one is obliged to get into another line to pay for the purchase. Finally a third line is entered to receive one's purchases, which are already wrapped" (WITKIN Zara, *An American Engineer in Stalin's Russia: The Memoirs of Zara Witkin, 1932–1934*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1991, p. 61). There was no point getting ruffled. As the wife of Ralph Barnes, correspondent for the *Herald Tribune*, pointed out at the time, "No one here gives a whoop whether you buy or not" (MAHONEY Barbara S., *Dispatches and Dictators*, p. 93), and queuing like eating or sleeping was simply a fact of life. It was no different in 1950s Czechoslovakia. Matters were simplified by the fact that when items were actually available for purchase, "unlike a department store in Britain there was only one of everything – one style of pen, one brand of toothpaste, a single type of soap, and all very simply packaged" (SAYLE Alexei, *Stalin Ate My Homework*, p. 144). Like her Soviet counterpart, too, a permanent fixture in the Czechoslovak housewife's pocket would have been the "*avoski* – string bags – which the Soviet citizen is never without, in the hope of coming across the miraculous appearance of some goods in the shops" (HELLER Mikhail, *Cogs in the Wheel: The Formation of Soviet Man*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf 1988, p. 161).
[776] UWSC, Eleanor Wheeler Papers 1947–1957, Accession No. 1625–001, Letter of Eleanor Wheeler dated 15 October 1956; see also: *Ibid.,* letters of Eleanor Wheeler dated 7 November 1949, 6 September 1951, 22 October 1951, 19 July 1952, 8 October 1956, and 23 October 1957.
[777] NORMAN-KOVANDA Ivy, *Tapestry from Suffolk to Prague*, p. 363.
[778] WHEELER George Shaw, *The Human Face of Socialism*, p. 64. The struggle blighted the lives of non-citizen and citizen alike: "Encouraged by the predilection of the Party for control, the bureaucrats stuck their nose into many private affairs. A mother could not name her child as she wished unless by happy chance she wanted to give it only one name, and that name conformed to a 'suggested' list. I do not know the reason for this restriction (which incidentally causes endless confusion in the telephone directory). It seems to me that a mother could give a middle name to her child with no great harm to socialism. But the reason that you can name your pedigreed dog Maxim, but not Maximilian, is that Maximilian is too long to go in the space in the dog book! Such petty domineering may just seem ridiculous, but small and large irritations, repeated over and over, add up to a full-fledged annoyance and alienation" (*Ibid.,* pp. 113–114).

snack, commented, "'You say bureaucracy is a hangover from the Austro-Hungarian monarchy? Hell! we Czechs invented bureaucracy for the Austrians.'"[779]

A Brisbane violinist named Gloria Foley was in Prague as a student of the composer and conductor, Rafael Kubelík, during the coup of February 1948 and spent two years under the communist regime. On her return to Australia, she had this to say about the holidaymakers: "Some of the visitors from the West were sincere, but uncritical folk. They swallowed what they were expected to swallow, accepted the explanations they were given, saw what they were expected to see. But there were some who clearly were opportunists. One visiting clergyman was lauding the Czech regime. I asked him why he thought it was so good. His answer amazed me with its frankness 'Where else would an official give me £ stg.15 spending money as I stepped from the aeroplane?' he said. 'Where else would they pay all expenses, lay on lashings of entertainment?' The clergyman had been to a conference of the front movement, and had been on innumerable conducted tours. He did not speak a word of Czech. He said he had not sought contact with any Czechs other than delegates to the conference, and those to whom he had been introduced. He said he was going back home to tell the truth about the 'people's republic.'"[780]

Overshooting the mark perhaps, but, in any case, Gloria Foley was not going to get away with that. The backlash from the infuriated Australian comrades was not slow in coming. Stephen Murray-Smith found her articles "a farrago of nonsense," while Jack Hutson, a senior Party member who had been working as a correspondent in Prague at the same time as Foley lived there, claimed that neither he nor any of the other Australians resident in the city had ever set eyes on her because her social life was confined to "embassy circles."[781] A similar charge was made by Ken Gott against another Australian who criticized the Czechoslovak government,

[779] UWSC, Eleanor Wheeler Papers 1947–1957, Accession No. 1625–001, Letter of Eleanor Wheeler dated 17 January 1955. But possibly Eleanor Wheeler was right. One is reminded of the exasperated cry of the Czech poet and patriot, Josef Machar, from his Viennese prison in 1916 that "the Austrian state was suffering from hypertrophy of officialdom" (MACHAR J. S., *The Jail: Experiences in 1916*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell 1922, p. 139). But as in the writings of Machar's contemporary and the exegete of bureaucracy *par excellence*, Franz Kafka, perhaps traces of both races are discernible. In any event, the Czechoslovak Communist Party donned the mantle of bureaucracy and wore it – with a vengeance.
[780] FOLEY Gloria, The Iron Curtain Is Very Real, *The Courier-Mail* (Brisbane), 5 June 1951, p. 2.
[781] MCLAREN John, *Free Radicals,* pp. 103–104. See also: HRUBY Peter *Dangerous Dreamers*, pp. 151–152.

Max Nicholson, whom Gott condemned as "absolutely bloody reactionary," content to use "the fag-ends of the lies he's heard from the dispossessed and the grouchers and the reactionaries who have formed his sole company practically since he's been here."[782]

How did the ordinary Czechs and Slovaks, getting on with their lives as best they could under the circumstances, feel about it all? In a thinly-disguised autobiographical novel about his life in Prague in the late 1950s, another young Australian idealist, Kevin Hartshorne, has a Czech worker address the narrator: "'Why did you come to Czechoslovakia?' asked the man with the bent nose and stooped shoulders as though I must have been either a spy or a fool. 'I decided our life was wrong and wanted to experience yours.' 'Well I think you'd better hurry on back to where you came from!'"[783]

"Between the romantic image of the communist conjured by the intellectuals and the grubby reality of the sectarian party lay a vast gulf."[784] As the years rolled by and with them one disillusionment following on the heels of another, unlike the visitors, few of the romantics who had come to live in Czechoslovakia with such high hopes and dreams after the 1948 coup kept the faith. Apart from many of the British war brides and others tied by family commitments or financial constraints, most who could went home. As Martha Dodd added in a postscript to a letter she wrote in November 1969 to Elmina Rizo-Rangabe, daughter of the Greek Ambassador to Germany in the 1930s: "We all grow up, don't we?"[785]

[782] MCLAREN John, *Free Radicals*, p. 80.
[783] HARTSHORNE Kevin, *Czechoslovakia from the New World*, London, Macgibbon and Kee 1964, p. 71.
[784] BELL Daniel, *Marxian Socialism in the United States*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press 1967, p. 138.
[785] Library of Congress, Martha Dodd Papers, ID No. MSS80875, Letter by Martha Dodd to Elmina Rizo-Rangabe dated 19 November 1969. Among the war brides who remained in communist Czechoslovakia can be found a deep understanding of what they had experienced and endured: "Then on thinking more deeply about life, today about Plato's Republic, yesterday about Jan Hus, tomorrow perhaps Comenius, there are always a few sincere people fighting and living for the 'Truth will Prevail' idea. And others more powerful, trampling it into the ground. Then one finds oneself questioning: 'What does revolution achieve in the long run?' and answering: 'No more than would otherwise evolve, given time.' And for whom, and is it all worthwhile? I have come to the conclusion that it is not" (NORMAN-KOVANDA Ivy, *Tapestry from Suffolk to Prague*, p. 318).

PEACE REVISITED

In the 1952 May Day parade in Moscow, the million or so marchers who tramped past the stand, ahead of the deadly weaponry trundling along behind, followed banners that read "Stalin is Peace!"[786] Peace is a malleable construct. Thirteen years earlier Hitler had declared "that the Nuremberg Party Rally of 1939 would be given the title of 'Peace Rally.'"[787] Just as the appellative "Trotsky," later joined by "Tito," signified all things evil,[788] the word "Peace" was the obverse, an elastic, all-inclusive term to encompass whatever the Kremlin considered good. From the Czechoslovak and Polish rejection of the Marshall Plan on Stalin's instructions in June 1947 to the 1948–1949 Soviet blockade of Berlin to Russian scientists detonating their first atomic bomb in 1949 to the Rosenberg couple awaiting execution in their cells at the Sing Sing Correctional Facility,[789] all connoted Peace, and defiance of the warmongering West, and

[786] SALISBURY Harrison, *Moscow Journal*, p. 253.

[787] HENDERSON Sir Nevile, *Failure of a Mission: Berlin 1937–1939*, London, Hodder and Stoughton 1940, p. 186. The comment of the bellicose Götz von Berlichingen in Goethe's (1773) play of the same name might be appropriate: "Peace and quiet! Without a doubt! Every bird of prey likes to digest its spoils in peace."

[788] As a term of abuse, "Trotsky" topped the demonology but it was usually coupled with some preceding adjective. "There is, for example, the ANARCHO-TROTSKYITE. Thus [Karol] Bacilek, the Czechoslovak Minister of State Control, called for stronger 'State discipline' in an article in *Tvorba*, quoted by Bratislava Radio on 14 January 1952. Leading State and economic officials, he said, appeared to think they could disregard instructions issued by their superiors. 'We cannot afford to ignore such anarcho-Trotskyite tendencies.' In this context, the Trotskyism consists in setting personal judgment above one's orders; the anarchism in hindering the function of the State machine. HITLERO-TROTSKYITES appeared in France in May 1947. They were the Renault workers who struck unofficially when the Communists were still in the Government. When the Communists took over leadership of the strike and left the Government this term of abuse was forgotten" (HODGKINSON Harry, *Doubletalk,* p. 132).

[789] Given that the Rosenbergs had been pronounced guilty in March 1951, at the height of the Korean War, and that the crusade to save their lives was only rolled out in earnest some twenty or so months later may have been to deflect attention from the anti-Semitism of the Slánský trial which ran in Prague from 20–27 November 1952, but it may also have been, as a former Comintern colleague of Willi Münzenberg, the psychologist and novelist, Manès Sperber, claimed, because the Party was unsure whether the Rosenbergs "would not weaken and put their affairs in other hands than those of [defence attorney] Mr Bloch" (SPERBER Manès, *The Achilles Heel*, London, Andre Deutsch 1959, p. 102). The reference to Mr Bloch is to Emanuel Hirsch Bloch, the attorney and CPUSA member who defended the Rosenbergs and took care of their two young sons while the case was before the courts. The two boys were later adopted by Abel and Anne Meeropol, best known for the anti-lynching song *Strange Fruit*, which Billie Holiday recorded in 1939. Ann [Chapman] Kimmage remembered overhearing her mother proposing to adopt the Rosenberg children and bring them to Czechoslovakia. "It might be easier for them to grow up here, away from the anticommunist hostility that is raging in the States." The Party, however, turned down the suggestion (KIMMAGE Ann, *An Un-American Childhood*, p. 117). On the other hand, although the senior leadership in the Soviet intelligence services "knew the Rosenbergs were guilty," there "was a genuine sense of outrage and shock at the execution of agents whose activities, though important, were minor compared with those of others, such as the atom spies Theodore Hall, who was never prosecuted, and Klaus Fuchs, who received a jail sentence and was ultimately released in a prisoner exchange" (USDIN Steven T., *Engineering Communism*, p. 166). Credit where credit is due of course but the following report might also be cited: "A former French Embassy clerk in Czechoslovakia was sentenced to twenty-five years in prison on 27 December 1950, for spying on

all could line up resolutely in a united phalanx. At the head would stand Stalin and, as in the megalith belatedly but symbolically erected to the dead leader in 1955 to tower over the River Vltava and the city of Prague like a colossus, all, workers, soldiers, peasants, would fall in behind.[790]

The English-speaking visitors to Czechoslovakia, and some of the longer-term residents, did Trojan work in the peace field. Articles were written for left-wing newspapers and journals such as the *Bulletin of the World Council of Peace*, the *BPC* [British Peace Committee] *Newsletter*, those catering for the youth movement, such as *World Youth*, and *Challenge, Young America's Voice for Peace, Jobs, Freedom*, or more general publications, including *The New Central European Observer*. The overwhelming Czechoslovak desire for peace was a theme delegations and holidaymakers invariably brought home with them and it featured prominently in what talks and lectures they gave on their return: "The message we were given at every meeting, which we addressed (and there were many), was to tell the working people of our country that the Czech people, the Trade Unions and the Government are concerned about world peace and determined to prevent war. They are building their new economy and laying the basis of socialism. By doing this they are striking a mighty blow for world peace and assisting the working class all over the world and particularly those in capitalist countries who have yet to achieve working class power."[791]

The commitment to world peace by visitors to Czechoslovakia would serve as a clarion call to the sluggish and complacent among their fellow countrymen and women. Joan Littlewood recalls that "each member of the company promised to do all in their power to further the cause of peace and friendship" when they returned home.[792] The words of the Reverend Alan Ecclestone were even more encouraging: "Without doubt the most important

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Czechoslovakia's uranium mines and trying to smuggle samples of ore out of the country. Gervais Garcette was convicted of giving nine pounds of uranium ore and reports on Czech uranium production to French military attaché Georges Helliot. Two Czechs, Gustav Maran and Oldrich Adamek, who were his accomplices, were sentenced to death and twenty years, respectively" (*Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, February 1951).

[790] This 15-metre-tall "monstrous monument was unveiled to him" in May 1955 a full two years after the dictator's death "in commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the 'liberation' of Prague by the Soviet army" (PARROTT Cecil, *The Serpent and the Nightingale*, London, Faber & Faber 1977, pp. 140–141).

[791] *Scottish Miners' Delegation to Czechoslovakia,* p. 23.

[792] LITTLEWOOD Joan, *Joan's Book*, p. 359.

thing is that we should cooperate in the question of world peace. […] But what stands out here and what answers a question so often asked of our people at home – 'Ah, but you should do this behind the Iron Curtain' – is that every single person is filled with the desire to help on the cause of world peace. And indeed, what we have seen here is the foundation of it. It ties with everything that we have come across in the lives, plans, projects of the Czechoslovak people, as we have encountered them. They are here, most of all, concerned to build, and building requires an atmosphere of peace – a foundation of peace. They are concerned with human values, and human values will never flourish but in an atmosphere of peace; and when they speak of peace they mean peace. They are anxious to give all that they can to make that peace permanent for human values in the world that lies ahead of us."[793]

Like a dog worrying a bone, the word Peace was tossed hither and thither. No incongruity was seen in the fact that Peace was very often couched in martial terms. Thus Willie Gallacher could give his booklet, published by the Communist Party in London in 1949, the oxymoronic name, "The Communists Fight for Peace,"[794] while W. E. B. Du Bois had no hesitation titling the story of his 83rd birthday, "In Battle for Peace," although first prize in this regard would probably go to the Czech writer, František Kubka, who quoted "with approval (*Prague Radio*, 17 January 1951) a miner's remark that 'we will batter the warmongers to death with peace."[795] Inevitably, people in the West grew tired of hearing peace drummed into their ears day and night. "America's enduring concern throughout the early 1950s was that the communist peace offensive was designed to deepen apathy in Western Europe," wrote the Italian-American historian, Alessandro Brogi.[796] The Soviet strategy of attrition had paid off.

As always the jovial Dean of Canterbury was at his post and ready for the fray: The "[w]ar clouds are lower," he declaimed poetically. "Challenge confronts us. The will to peace or the will to war is the choice. […] May Picasso's dove of peace wing its journey to many

[793] *We Saw Czechoslovakia,* unpaged, chapter One Word on All Lips.
[794] PHM, CP/IND/GALL/03/10, William Gallacher, MP, for West Fife, "The Communists Fight for Peace," in Parliamentary Debate on Germany and Eastern Europe, 23 March 1949.
[795] HODGKINSON Harry, *Doubletalk*, p. 95.
[796] BROGI Alessandro, *Confronting America: The Cold War between the United States and the Communists in France and Italy*, Westport, The University of North Carolina Press 2014, p. 138.

homes and many lands."[797] However, by this stage, in the words of the Marxist folk-singer and lecturer in atomic physics at University College London, John Hasted, one of the leading peace campaigners at the time, peace had become "a dirty word."[798]

[797] PHM, CP/CENT/ORG/01, box 7–11, Visit to Czechoslovakia: The Report of British Clergymen Who Attended Christian and Peace Conferences and Festivals in Czechoslovakia on July 1, 2, 3 and 4 1950, pp. 1 and 2.

[798] "Nowadays it is hard to remember what a dirty word PEACE was at that time" (HASTED John, *Alternative Memoirs*, Itchenor (West Sussex), Greengates Press 1992, p. 108). Following the success of the first World Youth Festival in Prague in 1947 and the succeeding festival in Budapest two years later, John Hasted formed the London Youth Choir in preparation for the Third World Youth Festival in East Berlin in August 1951. Hasted and half of the choir travelled on the legendary Polish ship *Batory*, (*Ibid.,* p. 113.), while the remainder travelled across the continent by rail. But their route meant confronting the American army in the US zone of Austria who tried to turn them back. Despite some initial wavering by the "sopranos and altos," the "whole British contingent stood their ground" (*Ibid*.) and were "taken under armed guard to Innsbruck" (CHAMBERS Colin, *The Story of Unity Theatre*, p. 322). "Communist propaganda made the most of that incident. On 15 August the *Daily Worker* carried a full page about it, with several photographs of blood-stained delegates and of American soldiers with fixed bayonets" (KOTEK Joël, *Students and the Cold War*, pp. 194–195). A second attempt to reach Berlin was also blocked by the US military, this time at Saalfelden and the travellers were "forced back to Innsbruck" (CHAMBERS Colin, *The Story of Unity Theatre*, p. 322). Opinion in Britain was divided on the issue. On the one hand, "the Labour Party Executive declared that participation in the [Berlin] Festival was incompatible with party membership" (KOTEK Joël, *Students and the Cold War*, p. 193), while "the British tabloids were paranoid: 'Parents Beware: Communism Wants Your Children" (FRAME Pete, *The Restless Generation*, p. 109). On the other, "a protest campaign was mounted that ended with the delegates finally getting to Berlin, suitably late and harassed" (CHAMBERS Colin, *The Story of Unity Theatre*, p. 322).

CONCLUSION: THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

"One thing was certain, that the *white* kitten had had nothing to do with it – it was the *black* kitten's fault entirely," Alice thought to herself while curled up in a corner of the great arm-chair.[799] The world was in a perilous state and as far as the general run of visitors to Czechoslovakia, such as those brought by Progressive Tours, was concerned, it was abundantly clear who was not to blame. When they had peered in the mirror at home, reflected back had been their own world view, their opinions, beliefs, and prejudices, contoured by time and background. But, like Alice, they had ventured behind the looking glass. They would see the truth for themselves, confront reality in person, but what they saw was what they had travelled with. There was no serious effort to sift truth from illusion, no determined endeavour to grapple with what might lie beneath the smooth surface, behind the lip homage to equality and fraternity rolling forever off the tongues of those they met, or to find out what the huge posters plastered on the walls might be covering up. The road they followed offered no blinding insight, no sudden jolt out of the familiar, no hint that nothing was quite as it seemed. Like Alice, the fellow-travellers played the game they were accustomed to when they passed through the mirror to see life behind the Iron Curtain.

"To think about events realistically," wrote Aldous Huxley, "in terms of multiple causations, is hard and emotionally unrewarding. How much easier, how much more agreeable to trace each effect to a single and, if possible, a personal cause! To the illusion of understanding will be joined, in this case, the pleasure of hero worship, if the circumstances are favourable, and the equal, or even greater pleasure, if they should be unfavourable, of persecuting a scapegoat."[800]

Like Alice and her kittens, it was all a question of black and white. Everything they saw and heard confirmed the visitors in their Manichean, Zhdanovian mind-set, a fixed image of warmongers in battle with the proponents of peace. Communing with their reflection in the mirror while shaving or powdering their noses in the *en suite* bathroom of the deluxe

[799] CARROLL Lewis, Through the Looking Glass, in *The Complete Illustrated Works of Lewis Carroll*, p. 123.
[800] HUXLEY Aldous, *The Devils of Loudun*, p. 29.

accommodation laid on for them, they could be well-satisfied with their journey behind the Curtain, tiptop in every respect. As far as creature comforts were concerned, there was nothing more they could ask for and, in terms of the larger picture, it was clear that the working-class had assumed power in Czechoslovakia and elsewhere in the Soviet Bloc. They could see the results and the progress being made for themselves. The citizens were happy. It was all a far cry from the spectre of the Great Depression and the ever-recurring colonial, imperialist wars that formed the backdrop to their own lives. It was a far cry, too, from media reports back home about persecution, witch-hunts, crowds camped in front of shoe-shops, and thuggish police demanding identity papers at every street corner. They saw none of that. But what they did see everywhere they went in this lovely land was an overwhelming desire for "peace, peace, peace." Unlike Britain and the other English-speaking countries – "well, apart from the Channel Islands but they're a different kettle of fish and in any case they're half-French" – the Czechs had first-hand experience of Nazi invasion and occupation and it was only proper that connivers with the warmongering West seeking to re-inflict the ordeal should face the stern justice of the People's Court.

But the families and friends of those alleged connivers could have told them of another aspect of life behind the looking-glass, one that seemed to have totally eluded the smug composure of the travellers as they galumphed their merry way across the Czechoslovak landscape. They could have spoken of the Jabberwock with "the jaws that bite, the claws that catch."[801] They could have quoted their fifteenth-century Hussite king, Jiří z Poděbrady, when he declared to all the known world that "the cult of peace is unthinkable without justice […] because peace is born of justice and is upheld by it."[802] But marshalled from pillar to post, from post to pillar throughout their stay by well-primed guide-cum-interpreters, there was little chance of that. It was nothing but smiles and good nature all around and the only topic for

[801] CARROLL Lewis, *Through the Looking Glass*, p. 134.
[802] *The Universal Peace Organization of King George of Bohemia: A Fifteenth Century Plan for World Peace 1462/1464*, Prague, Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, 1964, p. 85.

serious debate that arose among the bands of sightseers was whether waiters and cloakroom attendants should be tipped in a people's democracy.[803]

Yet while most disinterested observers would probably have accorded the same space on their bookshelves to Rex Chiplin, say, with his blatant untruths or Hewlett Johnson with his patent half-truths, that they would to Lewis Carroll or Carlo Collodi, or to fictitious voyages such as those of Sindbad, Gulliver or the Baron Munchhausen, the accounts by the holidaymakers from Progressive Tours belong to a different category. It is of course the duty of historians to keep in mind how one's own background and convictions influence one's reading of the past. Historians should strive, as it were, to put themselves in the shoes of those whom they write about and to understand the context in which they acted.[804] However shallow some of their traveller tales may seem to us today with the benefit of hindsight,[805] it is clear that the writers did not consciously set out to deceive their readership. Neither can they be dismissed as mere time-servers. They may have had, to borrow a phrase from the Italian novelist and disillusioned communist, Ignazio Silone, "the fool's part in the comedy in which they were called to participate,"[806] but they were not fools, however foolish or naïve some of their judgements may at times seem from our contemporary perspective. They simply did not have the broad sweep of knowledge we take for granted. Nevertheless, there is no avoiding the charge that, like the puppet Pinocchio, they were often too ready to believe everything they heard and to place too much credence on appearances.

Visitors such as Rex Chiplin and the Dean of Canterbury slip neatly into the second set in Emma Goldman's tripartite taxonomy of visitors to the Soviet Union which we looked at earlier, that of journalists and adventurers, the penny-a-liners and eager apologists for the

[803] Likewise among the official delegations, there was no great desire to face up to realities. *Carpe diem*, as Horace wrote, Enjoy the day. Every man for himself and the Devil take the hindmost. On his first visit to Prague in 1952, Desmond Donnelly mentions a disagreement that occurred between fellow delegates over dinner at the Alcron Hotel: "In the whole evening the only note that jarred was an argument, a few seats away, between two of our British party about whether or not there were prison camps in Russia. I heard one of our party denying the existence of any such thing in the Soviet Union. For a moment the situation looked ugly. Then someone proposed a toast which put an end to the argument" (DONNELLY Desmond, *The March Wind*, p. 22).
[804] FULBROOK Mary, *Historical Theory,* p. 56.
[805] Not all by any means; the deeply-felt admiration for the advances in child-care facilities and medical entitlements, for instance, would be cases in point.
[806] SILONE Ignazio, The End of a Concordat, in STEINBERG Julien, *Verdict of Three Decades*, p. 421.

regime, but not so the Progressive Tours' holidaymakers and their kind. Rather they belong to a fourth category that officially came into being with the creation of the Soviet *Intourist* Travel Agency in 1929, almost a decade after Emma Goldman had made her classification. The Soviet model, along with the other hospitality techniques developed in the USSR, was then adopted and adapted to match Czechoslovak circumstances.

Emma Goldman's first group of travellers to Russia, the "earnest idealists," became long-term residents and so cannot be numbered among visitors as such. Most, according to Goldman, grew bitterly disappointed with their new life but were confronted with often insurmountable difficulties, even death, in their attempts to leave the USSR. Their counterparts who journeyed to the newly-born people's democracy of Czechoslovakia likewise became disenchanted with communism in time but they could at least go home, even if this meant, in the case of Australians such as Stephen Murray-Smith and Ken Gott, facing whatever penalties and passport tribulations awaited them there. For many of the Americans, like Martha Dodd and Alfred Stern, however, a return to the US would mean FBI interrogation and possible indictment for espionage and was reluctantly discounted.[807] With regard to Lucille Giscombe, the Canadian, her country no longer wanted her back.

[807] It was not until 1979 that the case against the Sterns was finally dropped by the US authorities, since the chief witnesses who would have been called to testify against the couple were dead. However, at that stage, considering their age and financial situation, they decided to live out their remaining years in Czechoslovakia. This was despite the fact that after all her time in Prague, Martha Dodd knew "only 3 kinds of Czech expressions! ano, nyet and was kann mann machen," as she claimed jokingly in a letter to Stefan Heym, the German, and Czechoslovak, novelist. Library of Congress, Martha Dodd Papers, ID No. MSS80875, Letter by Martha Dodd to Stefan Heym dated 31 August 1971. Stefan Heym and his first wife, the American founder of Seven Seas Publishers in East Berlin, Gertrude Gelbin, had been close friends of the Sterns and frequent visitors to Prague. In fact it was in Prague, where he had fled to escape the Nazi rise to power in Germany in 1933, that the then nineteen-year-old Helmut Flieg had adopted the name Stefan Heym before moving to the US to continue his education (WALD Alan M., *Trinity of Passion: The Literary Left and the Antifascist Crusade*, Raleigh, The University of North Carolina Press 2014, pp. 195–196). Gertrude Gelbin hoped that by circulating "'progressive' English-language literature 'throughout the world in all countries [...]. Seven Seas would counteract 'capitalist propaganda advanced through American and British paperbacks'" (KIRKPATRICK Peter – DIXON Robert, *Republics of Letters: Literary Communities in Australia*, Sydney, Sydney University Press 2012, pp. 116–117; see also: MOORE Nicole – SPITTEL Christina, *Australian Literature in the German Democratic Republic: Reading Through the Iron Curtain*, London – New York, Anthem Press 2016, pp. 15–17). Gelbin was succeeded at *Seven Seas* by Kathryn Weatherly, whose husband, the African American baritone, Aubrey Pankey, had arrived in Prague in 1953 after being expelled from France for, it seems, taking part in a protest against the Rosenbergs' execution, but would soon move to East Germany.

Emma Goldman's third and largest category were the delegates and members of one commission or another who, she tells us, "infested" Russia after the 1917 Revolution. Rather than avail of the opportunity "to see things as they were […] they preferred to side with the Government" and then go home "to misrepresent and to lie deliberately in behalf of the Bolsheviki […]."[808] As we have seen, those functionaries and flunkeys who attended the various Party and Peace gatherings in Czechoslovakia, the trade union delegates, student representatives, and clerical do-gooders, were no different. The worst effect of tourism, said Jaroslav Toms, District Party Secretary of Karlovy Vary, in 1971, "is the importation of petty bourgeois illusions and ideas."[809] There was little fear of that in the early Cold War years, however. "The Prague coup of February 1948 closed the sole potential breach in the wall of satellite states that Moscow had constructed in Eastern Europe. From then on, as Western observers realized, the Iron Curtain was to be clamped down tight."[810] Watchtowers and barbed wire guarded all Czechoslovak borders, east and west, and even the fraternal delegations from other states in the Soviet bloc that were "whisked through our country were neither representative nor communicative."[811] This insulation, and probably mutual incomprehension as well, is captured in a report by a British Workers' Delegation on their visit to the USSR in 1950 which transited through Prague: "We were received in Prague by representatives of the Czechoslovakian Trade Union movement, who gave us excellent hospitality overnight (in a hotel that had been taken for use by trade unionists on holiday), and made us honorary members of the Czech trade unions. Next day we took Soviet planes. Our first stop was Lvov, where we had our first taste of Soviet hospitality. We were entertained to lunch by the Lvov Trades Council and before we left for Moscow we linked hands and gave them 'Auld Lang Syne.'"[812]

It was of little consequence whether delegates were card-carrying Party members or not. A good time would be had by those chosen for the trip and they could "be relied upon to come back [to their home country] with the same excited enthusiasm for the state of affairs they were

[808] GOLDMAN Emma, Travelling Salesmen of the Revolution, p. 117.
[809] ULČ Otto, *Politics in Czechoslovakia*, San Francisco, W. H. Freeman 1974, p. 123.
[810] SELVERSTONE Marc J., *Constructing the Monolith: The United States, Great Britain, and International Communism, 1945–1950*, Harvard, Harvard University Press 2009, p. 118.
[811] ULČ Otto, *The Judge in a Communist State,* p. 296.
[812] British Workers' Delegation to the USSR, Watford (Herts.), Farleigh Press 1950, p. 6.

privileged to examine in their seven days' stay in Rumania, or Poland, or Czechoslovakia."[813] Whether the venue was a Party gathering or a peace congress or a visit to the Bat'a shoe factory in Gottwaldov, the hospitality techniques developed in the USSR in the 1920s and 1930s had been turned to good account in Czechoslovakia and the organizers running the show could be pleased with their handiwork as they watched the "enthusiastic visitors […] carrying under their arms heaps of beautifully printed booklets with magnificent photographs and cheerful statistics. They would go back to their homelands in the West and tell everybody how wonderful life was in the workers' paradise."[814] For the visitors themselves, the phrase "red carpet" had taken on a whole new meaning and, understandably, many were sad to board the departing plane or train and become "just ordinary people again – though admittedly ordinary people who were loaded down with Bohemian glass, dolls and folklorique woven things."[815] But reassurance would come from the smiling, hand-shaking guide as he bade them farewell: "We always welcome our *friends* back."[816]

[813] DARKE Bob, *Cockney Communist*, p. 165.
[814] WECHSBERG Joseph, *The Self-Betrayed*, London, Victor Gollancz 1955, p. 261.
[815] SAYLE Alexei, *Stalin Ate My Homework*, p. 81.
[816] DONNELLY Desmond, *The March Wind*, p. 100.

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