

Czechoslovakia: Prague has indicated it will seek to trade more in the world market and loosen its economic ties with Communist states.

According to the Prague press, Foreign Trade Minister Vales on 17 April characterized the practical results of CEMA as minimal and stated that he was not optimistic about its future. He confirmed that Czechoslovakia has inquired unofficially about credits from the West, and is preparing for greater participation in the world market. He indicated that the state will maintain its monopoly in foreign trade, but that considerations of the world market, rather than those of the Communist area alone, would play a greater role.

Support for Vales' views have come from CEMA Deputy Secretary Karol Martinka, a Czechoslovak, who stated that only a small portion of trade among CEMA countries results from planned specialization and cooperation. Moreover, the Czech staffs of two CEMA bodies have petitioned the party for greater Czechoslovak participation in the "world economy," the policy now endorsed by Vales.

The publicity accorded the criticism of CEMA may be an effort to spell out the position Prague will take at the economic summit agreed to at the Dresden meeting in March. As yet no date has been set for this "summit." The USSR and other CEMA members continue to voice the standard theme that Communist economic relationships should develop within the CEMA framework, although most members have expressed dissatisfaction with the organization.

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20 Apr 68

6

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