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## SOVIET PEOPLE QUESTION INTERVENTION IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

The USSR's intervention in Czechoslovakia appears to have had a broad impact on the Soviet population. Reactions have varied, but the regime's inability to justify its policy in cogent and consistent terms has led many people to feel uncertain about their leaders' actions.

The liberal intelligentsia have been the most critical of

the invasion. Many liberals viewed the Czechoslovak example of reform as the future hope of Communism. Nationally minded elements among the Ukrainians, Balts, and other Western-oriented minorities, believing that their own hopes for greater independence from Moscow hinged on the success of the Czechoslovak experiment, have undoubtedly been similarly discouraged. Already bearing the

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brunt of an ideological crackdown begun last spring, however, these groups have made only weak attempts to demonstrate their disapproval. When they have done so, authorities have responded quickly with arrests and trials that effectively kept the protest movement from growing.

There is some evidence of support for the intervention, especially within the USSR's working class. Propaganda themes on the West German menace, the danger of losing Czechoslovakia to the West, and the Czechoslovak's ingratitude for Soviet sacrifices have found a response among some elements of the Soviet population.

Many people nevertheless are confused by shifts in the official line. One group of workers in Moscow, for example, would not believe that Dubcek--portrayed by Pravda after the invasion as a traitor--was taking part in the Kremlin talks until they were shown a favorable new reference to him in Pravda. During a month's travel around the Soviet Union, a British journalist found not one person who appeared convinced by the regime's propaganda. The average Russian was able to recognize that the Soviet press was not giving the full story. Similarly, an American studying in Moscow found Soviet students ill-informed and, in their confusion, suspicious that their gov-

ernment was guilty of something reprehensible.

Popular skepticism is probably reinforced by the jamming of foreign broadcasts in Russian, which was abruptly resumed after the invasion. The jamming has not been entirely effective, however, and even the Soviet news media have been forced to report some of the Czechoslovak people's opposition to the invasion. Thus, those who are observant have been able to learn about conditions in Czechoslovakia as well as the criticism voiced by Yugoslavia, Rumania, and the Western Communist parties.

The seeming inconsistencies of Soviet actions and the lack of any clear, high-level exposition of policy are probably the greatest causes of popular unease. No top Soviet leader has given a major address, published or unpublished, on Czechoslovakia since July. The newspapers indicate the leadership's concern by calling repeatedly for improved indoctrination of party members and the masses, but do not define a specific line. Although meetings organized from the Central Committee to the factory level gave unanimous approval to Brezhnev's April report and to the Bratislava agreement, there has been no such elaborate ritual to endorse the invasion or the subsequent Moscow agreement.

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