

directly controlled and ruled by the federal party organs. The same principle has been applied to many other political, social and professional organizations, unions and associations.

### Slovak domination

No wonder the Czechs feel bitter. The following joke reflects their mood: What is the composition of the population in the Czech republic? First, the Slovak representatives in federal organs. Second, the Soviet troops "temporarily" present in the country. Third, hundreds of thousands of East German tourists. And finally, the Czech minority.

If we add to this that Mr. Husak himself is a Slovak, that the supervisor of the Czech ideology, art and culture is Mr. Bilak, a Ukrainian; that many of the large Czech firms (for instance, the department stores) are managed from Bratislava — then we can better understand the recent rise of Czech nationalism that does not contribute to the political stability of the system. Some Czech politicians — among them the ambitious President of the Federal Assembly, Mr. Indra — are reportedly trying to make political use of Czech nationalism by attempting to undermine Mr. Husak's position. In addition, the elderly President Svoboda is fatally ill. When he dies or resigns, the complex and sensitive problem of distribution of the top four federal offices among the Czechs and the Slovaks might cause an inter-party fight for power. A leading Czech politician proposing to pardon the purged reformers could win popularity and turn Mr. Husak's normalization into a real one.

There is yet a more serious political problem. Since 1969, Czechoslovakia has been consistently sovietized. Because the regime derives its power not from the nation but from Moscow, it is, unlike other East European regimes, unable to resist the continuous Soviet pressures aimed at the gradual incorporation of Eastern Europe into the Soviet economic and political empire. Czechoslovak-Soviet relations are intended to serve as a pattern for the relations between the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe as a whole. While the subservience of the Czechoslovak estab-

lishment to the Kremlin is more and more disliked by some East European capitals, the fear of a possible "estonization" of Czechoslovakia is growing, not only among some Czech dissenters but even among some moderates within the establishment.

Despite this most pessimistic alternative, some brighter alternatives are still open. In a sense, contemporary Czechoslovakia is unique among the European nations. In Hungary and Poland, the political systems are incomparably more relaxed and tolerant. In Romania, there is a degree of independence of the U.S.S.R. In East Germany and Bulgaria, the purge of some 500,000 Communists would be inconceivable. In Yugoslavia, most of those recently purged were deprived of neither professional self-realization nor civil rights. Dictatorial regimes came to an end in Portugal and Greece and the Spanish system is becoming more relaxed. It is an anachronism to keep the Czechoslovak culture oppressed, its best talents silenced, its most capable people robbed of basic civil and human rights. This situation cannot be called normal even by the standards of authoritarian regimes. It must be considered yet less normal in the context of East-West *détente* and normalization of inter-European relations. Should the *détente* continue, the present Czechoslovak regime *might* become dysfunctional for its Soviet sponsors. There are some recent indications from Prague that the Kremlin might be open to a more appropriate normalization of the Czechoslovak situation. Soviet representatives unofficially and individually approached several dozen leading Czechoslovak reformers, asking them, among other things, if they would be willing to forget the invasion and go back into politics, whether they thought Mr. Husak could survive another political switch, and under what circumstances the nation would be likely to discontinue its passive political resistance. It remains to be seen what this careful diplomatic probing actually meant.

While a new Prague Spring is out of the question in the foreseeable future, a wide range of alternatives is open. It depends more on Moscow than on Prague which ones will take place.

Dr. G. A. Arbatov, Head of the Soviet Institute for United States and Canadian Studies, visited Canada in January 1975, lunched with the Prime Minister and met with leaders of business, politics and education. On his return, TASS quoted him as saying that his welcome signified "that Canada is greatly interested in developing good-neighbourly relations with the Soviet

Union in various fields — policy and economy, science and culture". "The Soviet Union, too, is giving great attention to organizing serious research work to study the policy, economy and culture of Canada," the quotation went on. "Our Institute . . . (has) started a serious study of Canadian problems."

*Leading reformers approached to return to politics*