

Features and News from Behind the Iron Curtain

CZECHOSLOVAK WEEKLY

FREE CZECHOSLOVAK PRESS LIMITED

F.C.I.

G.P.O. Reg. No. 140
Managing Editor: J. Josten

Free Central European News Agency Publishers of "Czechoslovak Weekly"
Information Service of Free Czechoslovakia Cables: TRUTHINFO London, W.14
Registered in England No. 541226 VAT registration No. 226 7353 60
4, Holland Road, London, W14 8AZ. Telephone: 603 8252/3 (night 373 9410)

Vol. XXVIII No. 5/6 (1299/1300) * Founded in 1948 * * 26.2.1976

'RUDE PRAVO' ON FRENCH ADMIRAL'S CRITICISM OF HELSINKI

(Prague/FCI) - 'Rude Pravo' commented on the criticism of the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference on Security and Co-operation in 'Resistance Nouvelle' by the French Rear Admiral Antoine Sanguinetti. He says the Final Act poses not a negligible danger because it will lead to moral and then to material disarmament. And it is not necessary to reduce armaments but, on the contrary, to increase them.

THE PURPOSE OF SANGUINETTI'S STATEMENTS, 'Rude Pravo' says, is to block the efforts of peace-loving countries to extend political détente to the military sphere. Forces reluctant to accept peace in Europe or to come to terms with the positive impact of the all-European conference on the atmosphere in the continent are trying to question the genuineness of this development, and - like Adml Sanguinetti - asserting that there is some danger concealed in the Final Act. The Final Act, which the French President also signed in Helsinki, formulates a commitment to refrain from threats of force and calls for the adoption of measures aimed at increasing confidence between European States. The voices of military personalities such as Rear Adml Sanguinetti trying to sow doubts and mistrust in the Final Act are completely at variance with the spirit of the Helsinki conference. (18/RP/RN/FCI)

SWEDEN/CS (S)R: UNDESIRABLE JOURNALISTS

(Stockholm/FCI) - Since the Helsinki agreement was signed, the working chances of Western correspondents in Czechoslovakia have been considerably reduced. This is a declaration made on Swedish television by Mr. Bengt Goeransson who was covering the 7th Congress of the Polish Communist Party in Warsaw.

The withdrawal, without any reason being given of a visa granted a few hours previously, categoric refusal to grant a visa, refusal of entry to the holders of a visa, these are some of the vexations to which several German, American, British and Swiss journalists were subjected during recent months. "Such a negative attitude" - concludes Mr. Goeransson, "isolates Czechoslovakia from the other Eastern countries". One example: 200 journalists from all over the world were in Warsaw at the time to cover the 7th Congress of the Polish Communist Party. (12/IR)

GERMANY/CS (S)R: CHESS PLAYER'S "RISE AND FALL"

(Munich/FCI) - A commentary on Prague radio for abroad, entitled "The Rise and Fall of Mr. Pachmann", stated that this chess player "had been welcomed in the FRG by renegades, opportunists and Right-wingers, receiving the highest accolade when he was accepted into the West Berlin CDU. In reality", the commentary said, "far from being a rise, his career represented a deep moral and human fall: a once-famous chess player now found himself in the company of men like Solzhenitsyn." (15/Mon)

BOOK NOTE: FROLIK'S BOOK IN PAPERBACK

(London/FCI) - As far as we know, something like one hundred FCI readers risked £4.00 (\$10.00) to secure a copy of Josef Frolik's revealing book, "The Frolik Defection". This is now available in paperback for a mere 60p. (\$1.50) plus postage. It contains many hitherto unknown details of the SOVBLOC espionage game and their dirty tricks. These are no longer "games" when they include such elaborate assassination plans as those described in a chapter dealing with the detailed and repeated instructions from the Prague Politburo on how to murder the Editor of FCI...

For 17 years Frolik was a member of the Party apparatus and it is up to him to explain his past for which he partly atoned by his conversion after the Soviet aggression against his country (and his Service). As he says, he became sickened by the intrigues, the exploitation of the Czech people, the in-fighting and the corruption of power, so he broke with the Soviet-controlled regime and made his way to the West. Strangely enough, as a punishment for betraying his old masters, he is in danger of his life too.

But what is really remarkable about the book is the fact that it has the power to open the eyes of the hitherto "uncommitted" or apathetic members of our society, so undermined, penetrated and subverted, where so many in our ranks are still reluctant to act in defence of the way of life we believe in and the freedoms which we should no longer take for granted. This paperback edition is a new weapon in the hands of those in search of a cogent document. (FCI can mail you the book, but please do not order less than three copies. Add postage of about 50p. in the UK or \$1.00 for abroad, and send the cash with your order.) (11/BS)

COUNCIL OF EUROPE - PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY: HELSINKI AND SAKHAROV

(Strasbourg/FCI) - At its latest session, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, issued a written declaration - No. 45, Document No. 3742 - with the following text:

THE UNDERSIGNED MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY,

- 1) Considering that human rights constitute for Europe, whatever her geographical, political or ideological limits, the very basis of her civilisation, founded on intrinsic human values,
- 2) Considering that the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference rightly recognised the pre-eminent place of human rights, understood as a fundamental principle of peaceful relations between European States and also the right of any European to demand that fundamental rights be respected,
- 3) Considering that the eminent scientist Andrei Sakharov, by fighting for respect for human rights in the Soviet Union, but also in other countries, remains faithful to the spirit of the Helsinki Conference and to the letter of the documents in whose signatures it culminated,
- 4) Considering that the recognition for Andrei Sakharov which the award of the Nobel Prize constitutes, gives him the right - which he rightly considers a responsibility - to make his voice heard,
- 5) Considering that account should also be taken in this connection of the entry into application of the two United Nations Covenants on human rights which have already been ratified by the majority of European States, including the Soviet Union,
- 6) Express the hope that Andrei Sakharov will be able to continue his peaceful struggle for the respect of human rights, in accordance with the stipulation of the Helsinki Conference.

Signed: HOFER, REALE, LA COMBE, HUNT, RENDIS, GESSNER, LIEN, ANDRIANOPOULOS, LUPTOWITZ, MABON. (21/R/DOC)

USSR/THE WORLD: GRECHKO'S MILITARY STRATEGY AND A MISSING POINT

(London/Ed) - Commenting on Marshal Grechko's article about the lessons of the Second World War for the present Soviet strategy (See FCI Special Document No. 942 - 3.2.76), FCI provided 23 points (See SD No. 942a) which should be taken into consideration in evaluating the real meaning of contemporary Soviet imperialistic plans. FCI now has been advised that the following fact should have been put on record as well:

(24) GERMAN-SOVIET SECRET PACT was negotiated and signed in Rapallo, on April 16, 1922. Through this pact German militarism received Soviet help to build up a "Black Reichswehr". In practical terms the USSR and its Red Army pledged themselves to train officers and instructors in the use of modern equipment, including weapons, which the Peace Treaty of Versailles forbade the German Republic to possess. In doing so, the Red Army created a basis for German rearmament and for the final Nazi victory over the Weimar regime. Although this "alliance" was abrogated by Hitler, contacts remained and the seeds of World War II had been sown.

USSR has no right to point an accusing finger at Western help for the Weimar regime, which was for peaceful purposes anyway (see point No. 1 SD 942a), having already plotted for some time against the development of democracy there. (Recommended reading: "The Nation Killers" by Robert Conquest, Sphere Library - the book contains many revealing statements by the Soviet authorities.) (28/R.K./L)

USA/CS(S)R/UK: REPORT ON FROLIK'S HEARING IN THE US SENATE (London/FCI) The text of the "Hearing before the Subcommittee to Investigate the Administration of the Internal Security Act of the Committee on the Judiciary, United States Senate", at which Josef Frolik, the one-time Intelligence Agent of the CS(S)R, offered his testimony, has been released for publication. This document of 76 pages including an 8-page Index, protects Frolik's disclosures from libel. He has been able to name scores of people all over the world who have wittingly or unwittingly played a role in Soviet bloc espionage and deception games. In reference to FCI Frolik mentioned a fact which may surprise some and explain a lot to others.

Mr. SHORT ASKED: "Apparently the CS(S)R Intelligence Service had no qualms about planning assassinations as well as in carrying them out. Can you think of other such incidents...?"

Mr. FROLIK: "Yes; between 1958 and 1973 there were three assassination attempts carried out on the Editor of FCI... who is now living in London... In 1973, Mr Josten had dinner with a Czech Agent, Marak, who was playing the role of a Czech exile in Switzerland... A non-traceable drug was put into the meal of Mr. Josten who is still seriously ill and in the care of a team of British specialists..." (FCI will reproduce a number of incidents reported by Frolik which for legal, political and other reasons could not be included in his book "Frolik's Defection" - now in paperback - see special notice 11/31/Ed)

JEWISH LEADER ON THE FENCE

By K. Baum, London

The visit to London at the end of 1975 of Dr. Bedrich Bass, Chairman of the Council of Jewish Religious Communities in Czechoslovakia, aroused considerable interest. It was the first time in many years that a leader of this Jewish community had been permitted to participate, as an observer, in a meeting of the World Jewish Congress. Some Britons of Czech origin had hoped that he would avail himself of the opportunity to discuss with them such issues of closer co-operation as the optimists among them consider were laid open by the 'Third Basket' provisions of the Helsinki conference. They were to be disappointed. The Jewish leader slipped into and out of London as clandestinely as the indiscretions of one of the London Jewish weeklies would allow.

After his return to Prague, the Czechoslovak press and radio ignored Dr. Bass's visit for the best part of two months. Those in the West concerned with the Czech-Jewish scene thought this was all to the good. The ice had, after all, been broken: simultaneously with Dr. Bass, Dr. Rudolf Iltis, Secretary-General of the Council in Prague, had gone to deliver two lectures in Federal Germany. Opportunities for meeting Czech-Jewish leaders at a later date could, therefore, not be discounted.

In the last week of January, however, the Prague establishment had second thoughts on the non-treatment of Dr. Bass's visit. One does not, after all, invest good foreign currency in the capitalist West without obtaining some sort of a return for it. And so, Dr. Bass (whilst his journey was still kept a state secret vis-à-vis his Czech and Slovak compatriots at home) was brought to the microphone to tell all about his London experiences in an interview broadcast to... Austria and Federal Germany.

"REALLY GENEROUS": Where he dealt with the genuine concerns of the Jewish community, Dr. Bass added next to nothing to what had already been published in London of his speech at the WJC. One might, of course, argue whether the assistance provided by the State to the Jewish community is in fact "really generous", considering that the very same State, from 1945 onward, confiscated Jewish assets worth hundreds of millions of pounds sterling from those who left Czechoslovakia before or immediately after World War Two, and from Jewish institutions and organisations. It is also open to question whether the Jewish communities really receive "all they need to develop religious life, preserve synagogues, places of worship, cemeteries, ritual kitchens", when Dr. Bass knows full well that at least nine-tenths of the 1,000 Jewish cemeteries are in a state of total neglect, as are some of the synagogues in use; that there is only one ritual kitchen in Prague, run on official funds; that Jewish educational facilities for the young generation (of whom he spoke in London) are non-existent, which adds substantially to the lack of a rabbi, and that, apart from an occasional memorial publication or meeting, Jewish communities are not allowed to engage in cultural activities, whilst the German minority has its Kulturbund. Overall, the picture of Jewish life in Czechoslovakia, given to the Germans and the Austrians, was too rosy to be in step with the "realism" which Dr. Bass repeatedly invoked.

"NON-POLITICS": All this, however, would appear to be of relative importance if compared with the closing passages of the interview. After stressing that as a religious society, it was not the task of his Council to "engage in political activity", Dr. Bass came out with some unqualified attacks on the "aggressive Zionist forces" in Israel and on Zionism as a "tool of imperialist policy". On behalf of the 7,000 Jews of Czechoslovakia, Dr. Bass also felt it necessary to call for the "support of the Geneva conference on the Middle East, as proposed by the Soviet Union and some other countries".

It is difficult to imagine that all this was laid down carefully by the powers that be before the green light went on in the Prague studio. One is entitled to ask whether it forms part of the "relations of a special kind with Israel" to which Dr. Bass referred in London when speaking of Israel as "the home of many of our friends and relatives". No one in Israel will evaluate this Prague pronouncement at the present juncture as an act of friendship or a proof of especially close relations.

Small communities in Communist countries are in a special position. However, they often tend to overlook that their loyalties are to the country in which they were born and not, basically, to the political regime of the day. Some 12 to 13 million Czechs and Slovaks out of a total population of over fourteen million are outside the Communist Party - but they do not consider themselves less Czech or Slovak for that. In echoing the establishment's line of the day on Israel, Prague's Jewish leader has rendered a disservice to his community and lost most of the goodwill obtained in the West.

TIBET/UK: TIBETAN COMMEMORATION IN LONDON (London/TNA) The Tibet Society of the UK is organising "Tibetan New Year Celebrations and Commemoration of the anniversary of the Lhasa Uprising in 1959" at the Chelsea Town Hall on Saturday 3.4.1976 at 2 p.m. Among those present will be Tibetan Lamas and many other members of the Tibetan Community in UK. Films from Tibet and from Tibetan settlements will be shown; there will be stalls with Tibetan artefacts and refreshments will be served. Prayers will be offered. (29/HH/UC)

WATCHDOG ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN SOVIET-RULED AREAS

By George W. Cornell, New York

(Note: From time to time the telephone rings and we hear the voice of the Reverend Blahoslav Hruby from New York, announcing that he is at Heathrow Airport on his way to some other part of the world. It can be Germany, France, Switzerland, or farther afield in Africa or Asia, wherever the conferences of the World Council of Churches happen to meet. Unfortunately, he is regarded there as an enfant terrible, because whenever double standards are applied or blinkered clerics talk about religious freedom, Rev. Hruby must be on the spot. He pleads, argues and often convinces them on behalf of his unfortunate brethren in the Soviet-controlled orbit with whom he has a special bond and whose problems he understands much better than most, because of his Central-European origins. To-day we combine a report on the further curtailment of religious freedom in the Soviet Union, with a portrait of this leading protagonist of vanishing liberties. JJ.)

A friend in Zurich, Switzerland, through telephone contact with another friend in Moscow, relayed word to the Rev. Blahoslav Hruby in New York that an outspoken, suspended Russian priest had now been fired from his job as a church caretaker.

That the information made its circuitous way at once to the Rev. Mr. Hruby, was typical of the continuous, variously devised vigilance he maintains on the treatment of religion in Communist-ruled countries. It is a unique service, carried on almost single-handedly by a man who personally kept a jump ahead both of Nazi and Communist foes in wartime Europe, broadcast on Free France radio, gathered intelligence for the US Office of Strategic Services and has myriad, closely guarded sources of information across Europe.

"ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, the documents get to me", he says. "Sometimes I don't know all the details of how, and don't want to know because it might jeopardise someone. But we get them".

THE REV. MR. HRUBY, 61, a Czech-born naturalised American and for 14 years editor of the monthly "Religion in Communist-Dominated Areas", has long been a familiar figure at church gatherings, prodding the churches to speak out against instances of Communist repression of faith. - The "implacable cold warrior", some church officials call him. But they recognise his expertise and respect his passion for religious freedom. Last month, his spadework provided the catalyst for drawn-out ferment at the assembly of the World Council of Churches in Nairobi, Kenya - even though he wasn't there. But what was there was a letter from two Russian Orthodox churchmen in Moscow, protesting against religious persecution and urging the World Council to challenge it - a letter that had made its roundabout way to Hruby, been translated from the Russian by his wife, Olga, and relayed to various officials and others at the assembly.

The letter precipitated a landmark action - the global interdenominational body's first outright criticism of religious restrictions in Communist-ruled Eastern Europe and the launching of a plan to keep a regular eye on conditions for religion there.

"I'M HAPPY IT WORKED OUT, even if I wasn't there in person", the Rev. B. Hruby said in an interview. "The churches must help those who are being harassed because of their faith, and they must tell the truth to the world". - It's a cause to which he has devoted himself ever since he was forced to flee Hitler's military occupation of Czechoslovakia and France. Later, after ordination to the Presbyterian ministry in America, he served as an OSS captain in Europe from 1942 to 1947 as the Soviet Union extended its sphere over the east.

"I saw so much under Hitler's dictatorship and what happened under the Communists", he said. "I watched it with my own eyes, and it's still happening. We cannot remain silent. I'm afraid we're under the spell of Munich style appeasement, which betrayed Europe to Hitler, and now people are so much brainwashed by the rhetoric of detente which approves of all Russia's conquests and oppression. To me, it's a fraud.

"BUT THERE STILL IS A SPIRIT OF RESISTANCE in the free world - a resistance to the pressures of the Communist Bloc not only on religious freedom but on political and national freedoms". The Rev. Mr. Hruby, a balding, bespectacled man, works in offices at 475 Riverside Drive in New York, turning out his unusual periodical, packed with snuggled documents, details of religious restrictions, protests and samplings of Soviet anti-religious cartoons and articles.

He carried material about the pleas for religious liberty of Soviet writer Alexander Solzhenitsyn and physicist Andrey Sakharov long before they won Nobel

DEATH OF SIR WILLIAM LAWTHER - LAST OF THE OLD TRADE UNION GIANTS

(London/FCI) -- The death of Sir William Lawther at the age of 87, has saddened many who admired his indomitable spirit, courage and energetic defence of miners' rights on the one hand, and the responsibility of the Trade Unionists towards society in general and freedom in particular, on the other. A self-educated man, he rose from pit boy to President of the National Mineworkers' Union and of the Mineworkers' International Federation. He was at one time Member of Parliament and Chairman of the Trades Union Congress and all the while a powerful enemy of all dictatorships, whether Nazi, Fascist or Communist. Already during the war he made many contacts with Central- and Eastern-European exiles, and was deeply moved by the tragedy of the Czech mining village of Lidice, which was razed to the ground for harbouring Allied parachutists. Its men were shot and its women ended in concentration camps. Sir William, who was then plain Will Lawther, the miners' leader, headed the "Lidice Shall Live" movement and became President of the British-Czechoslovak Friendship League. (See also: FCI's Editor letter in the Daily Telegraph 11.2.76.)

DURING HIS TWO VISITS TO THE USSR he was reinforced in his democratic beliefs, and, true to his character, was among the first who went to Germany after the war to help to lay the foundations of a new democracy by giving advice and practical help to the re-born Trades Union movement. He visited Czechoslovakia too, where he found to his delight serious attempts at reconstruction, both political and economic, so that the 1948 Communist coup was a great shock to him. Democratic exiles who sought refuge in Britain found in him a supporter of great influence. He had his say in bringing about a new Act of Parliament which extended the aid from the Government-sponsored "Czech Refugee Trust Fund" to include victims of Communism as well as victims of Nazism.

In 1949 William Lawther became Sir William. Seldom did a knighthood better benefit a Labour man than this miners' leader who brought honour to his profession as well as vastly improved social conditions and who, together with other TU leaders and champions of Labour, became pillars of democracy, social justice, and thus contributed first to the war effort and then to the postwar recovery. The French made him Chevalier of the Legion of Honour.

(a/hr/PEX)

ONE RESIGNATION IN THE LIFE OF SIR WILLIAM LAWTHER: (London/FCI) - On March 18, 1949, the as yet only slightly-known FCI News Agency, carried its first national scoop. The text was as follows:

"On the tenth anniversary of the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia, Sir William Lawther, President of the National Union of Mineworkers and of the TUC, invited the Editor of FCI to his office and informed him of the contents of a letter he proposed to send to the Secretary of the British-Czechoslovak Friendship League, 20, Pont Street, London, S.W. 1. The letter read:

"Dear Sir, I notice that in your literature you have me as the President of the British-Czechoslovak Friendship League. I beg to give you notice that from now on I wish to be dis-associated from your League in any shape or form.

"I have waited long and patiently to see whether or not anything in relation to the British way of life still permeated the Friendship League, as it did when it was founded. To me, quite frankly, the League has descended to be nothing more than a stooge of the Cominform, and I cannot allow myself to be associated with it along those lines.

"My contact with the Czechoslovaks began in the days when all ahead seemed dark as night, and the League was the source of light in that dark period. It could have been of immense value to both Nations, but I notice of recent months it has become only an apology for all the anti-democratic crimes which have been committed against its original intention.

"Therefore I have no other course than to ask you to take my name from its literature, leaflets and notices.

"I cannot understand how any Britisher can so far forget the tremendous sacrifices which were made by our Czech colleagues in those days when the League was founded, to link them up with many of its members to-day who were associated with the destroyers of Czechoslovakia.

"The future, I believe, for Czechoslovakia, lies in freedom of thought and freedom from fear, but when I read of attacks being made on men who risk their lives in Freedom's cause, then I cannot tolerate or be a party to such conduct." Signed - Will Lawther, President, National Union of Miners.

With a twinkle in his eye he commanded: "Release it to the Press on March 18, on that day I shall be on my way to America..."

The next morning, the FCI Editor went to see Sir William off on the boat train at Waterloo Station where he found him in the company of Arthur Deakin, then Secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union, and Tom Williamson, later Lord Williamson, of the National Union of General and Municipal Workers. He showed them the above-quoted Press Release and they signed it as an expression of their support for Sir William's sentiments. It was a gesture from three TU giants who, one ventures to suggest, would nowadays raise their eyebrows at the association of TU leaders with the Soviet Bloc Shelepins. They would not welcome trips to Moscow, Budapest, Prague, etc., where they shake hands and exchange toasts with the oppressors of the local working class.

(26/JJ)