

IT IS JUST BECAUSE THE MILITARY ACTION WHICH HAS BEEN TAKEN CONFLICTS WITH THE PRINCIPLES ON WHICH RELATIONS BETWEEN COMMUNIST PARTIES AND SOCIALIST GOVERNMENTS SHOULD BE BASED THAT IT MUST BE QUESTIONED BY COMMUNISTS.

THE ARGUMENTS ADVANCED IN THE STATEMENTS WHICH HAVE BEEN ISSUED TO TRY TO JUSTIFY WHAT HAS HAPPENED RAISE MORE QUESTIONS THAN THEY ANSWER IN THE MINDS OF MANY WHO ARE SINCERE FRIENDS OF THE SOVIET UNION.

IT HAS BEEN ARGUED, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT THE CZECHOSLOVAK LEADERS WERE HNOT CARRYING OUT THE AGREEMENT REACHED AT BRATISLAVA.

IN THAT CASE, WHAT WAS TO PREVENT A NEW APPROACH TO THEM, FURTHER DISCUSSIONS, AND POSSIBLY A REAE E E RECALL OF THE BRATISLAVA CONFERENCE ?

IT HAS ALSO BEEN STATED THAT IT WAS ONLY A MINORITY OF THE PRESIDIUM OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK COMMUNIST PARTY WHICH OPPOSED THE CARRYING OUT OF THE BRATISLAVA AGREEMENT, WHILE THE MAJORITY WERE FOR ITS IMPLEMENTATION.

IN THAT CASE, WHAT WAS TO STOP THE VIEWS OF THE MAJORITY FROM PREVAILING ? AND WHY HAVE THE MAJORITY NOT NOW COME FORWARD TO DECLARE THEIR POSITION ?

MILITARY INTERVENTION FROM OUTSIDE, WITH THE INTENTION OF REMOVING SOME OF THE MAIN LEADERS OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK PARTY LESS THAN THREE WEEKS BEFORE A PARTY CONGRESS, IS AN ACTION WHICH COMPLETELY CONRADICTS THE RIGHTS OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK COMMUNISTS TO DECIDE THEIR OWN POLICY AND LEADERSHIP.

EVERY COMMUNIST -- AND GREAT NUMBERS OF NON-COMMUNISTS -- CONSIDER THAT THE CONCERN OF THE SOVIET UNION AND OTHER SOCIALIST COUNTRIES ABOUT THE SECURITY OF THE SOCIALIST CAMP IS FULLY JUSTIFIED.

THE SOVIET PEOPLE SUFFERED TERRIBLY AT THE HANDS OF THE NAZIS. THEY MADE GREAT SACRIFICES IN LIBERATING CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES FROM FASCISM.

BUT THE EVIDENCE WHICH HAS BEEN PRODUCED TO SHOW THAT THE CZECHOSLOVAK COMMUNISTS HAD CREATED AN URGENT DANGER OF THE COUNTRY LEAVING THE WARSAW PACT, AND OF BEING CONTROLLED BY IMPERIALISM, IS EXTREMELY UNCONVINCING.

THE SUCCESSFUL CARRYING THROUGH OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK PARTYS ACTION PROGRAMME, THE STRENGTHENING OF SOCIALIST DEMOCRACY, AND THE REINFORCEMENT OF VOLUNTARY COOPERATION BETWEEN A SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST CZECHSOLOVAKIA AND THE OTHER WARSAW PACT COUNTRIES, WERE AND ARE THE WAYS TO MEET IMPERIALIST THREATS AND DANGERS FROM OUTSIDE AND INSIDE CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

IT IS STILL NOT TOO LATE TO CHANGE THINGS FOR THE BETTER, RESTORE THE RIGHTS OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK GOVERNMENT AND THE ELECTED LEADERSHIP OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY, AND WITHDRAW THE TROOPS""

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1050/68 AUG 23 N17