

ROLE ON MASARYK DENIED BY SOVIET

It Denounces Charge Aides
Killed Czech Official

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MOSCOW, May 7—After three weeks of silence on the issue, the Soviet Union assailed today Czechoslovakia and Western newspapers for suggestions that Soviet police agents murdered Foreign Minister Jan Masaryk in Prague 20 years ago.

The Soviet Union, in an officially authorized statement by Tass, the official press agency, declared that Dr. Masaryk was "known to have committed suicide in 1948."

Moscow charged that the issue of Dr. Masaryk's death had been raised to "stir up anti-Soviet moods" in Czechoslovakia.

The statement was made public while the new Czechoslovak Foreign Minister, Jiri Hajek, was meeting with Premier Aleksei N. Kosygin and Foreign Minister Andrei A. Gromyko.

It came two days after Alexander Dubcek, the Czechoslovak Communist party chief, and three other leaders of the reformist regime in Prague flew home after a hurried trip here for consultation with the Soviet leadership on the liberalization under way in Czechoslovakia and related economic issues.

Cause for Soviet Concern

The revival in Prague of old suspicions that Russians murdered Dr. Masaryk after the Communist take-over of the government is believed to have alarmed Moscow because of its potential effect of turning Czechoslovak sentiment against the Soviet Union.

The issue was raised April 16 in Rude Pravo, the Czechoslovak Communist party organ. The paper suggested that the Foreign Minister might have been murdered by "gorillas" of Lavrenti P. Beria, the chief of the Soviet secret police who was executed after the death of Stalin in 1953.

Rude Pravo urged that the Soviet Government cooperate in an investigation of the affair.

Dr. Masaryk was found dead under a window of his apartment in the Foreign Ministry building. He was the son of Thomas G. Masaryk, the founder and first President of the Czechoslovak Republic after World War I.

Moscow's anger over the suggestions of Soviet implication in the death is believed to have come under discussion during the Kremlin meeting last Saturday between the Czechoslovak and Soviet leaders.

Observers here doubted that the strongly worded denial would have been made public today without indications from the Prague leaders that an investigation currently under way was certain to rule that Dr. Masaryk's death was suicide.

Charge on Mikoyan Factor

The Soviet Government also is thought to be agitated over charges made public in Prague at the end of April that Anastas I. Mikoyan, a semi-retired member of the party's Politburo, passed on Stalin's instructions ordering a purge of Czechoslovak officials in 1952.

The harsh tone of Moscow's statement today was regarded here as a veiled warning that restraint must be applied by the new Czechoslovak regime to prevent a stirring up of old grievances and suspicions likely to damage relations between the two countries.

Charging that "hostile propaganda" was behind the discussion of possible Soviet implication in Dr. Masaryk's death, the Moscow statement declared: "Tass is authorized to state most firmly that these reports are lies from beginning to end. Those who circulate them have quite a definite aim in view—to try, if only by this provocative way, to sow distrust between two friendly states, the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia."

"By spreading these slanderous reports, the enemies of socialist Czechoslovakia clearly hope to stir up anti-Soviet moods among politically unstable people."

A Czechoslovak who was Dr. Masaryk's secretary at the time of his death expressed the conviction last month that the Foreign Minister had committed suicide in a state of depression.