

Czech Party Paper Links Death Of Masaryk to Beria 'Gorillas'

17 APR 68 By RICHARD EDER

Special to The New York Times

PRAGUE, April 16 — The Czechoslovak Communist party newspaper, Rude Pravo, suggested today for the first time that Soviet agents might have been responsible for the death of Foreign Minister Jan Masaryk in 1948.

In what has become a series of increasingly sharp press comments about the Soviet Union and other Eastern European neighbors of Czechoslovakia, Rude Pravo gave official, if hedged, support to the theory not only that Dr. Masaryk had been murdered but that it might have been the Soviet secret police, under Lavrenti P. Beria, who ordered and carried out the killing.

The Czechoslovak party newspaper raised the question of what role "Beria's gorillas"

might have played in the Masaryk case. It expressed the hope that "our Soviet friends" would provide assistance in the inquiry into the circumstances of the Foreign Minister's death.

In another aspect of liberalization, Bishop Frantisek Tomasek, acting leader of Czechoslovakia's Roman Catholics, said that a representative of the Vatican would come to Prague to discuss church questions with the Government.

Praising the current reforms, Bishop Tomasek said the Czechoslovak Government was restoring freedom not only for men but for the "word of God."

The press campaign against Czechoslovakia's allies that developed here over the weekend

Continued on Page 11, Column 1

CZECHS LINK BERIA TO MASARYK CASE

Continued From Page 1, Col. 8

stopped short of criticizing the present rulers of the Soviet Union, but it clearly outlined the effect Soviet domination had in Czechoslovakia over the last 20 years.

The reasons for the campaign are a matter of speculation, but it is noted that it comes right after a meeting of the Soviet party's Central Committee that discussed developments in Czechoslovakia critically. The extent of the campaign is shown by a number of comments printed in Czechoslovak newspapers today.

Pravda, the Slovak newspaper, said in an editorial that Czechoslovakia had been insufficiently consulted in the preparations of the Soviet bloc's military and economic alliances and would submit proposals for their modification.

"We do not aspire to be the messiahs of socialism," it said. "But we wish neither to be the drummer nor the first violinist, nor to sing in unison. Czechoslovak foreign policy will play in polyphony, according to its own score."

Prace, the trade-union paper, said a high Czechoslovak security official told a political prisoner in the nineteen-fifties that two Soviet agents, a Major General Lichachev and a Colonel Kamarov, were responsible for the investigation.

"You must know we have to do what our real rulers wish," the Czechoslovak official was quoted as having said.

The newspaper Vecerni Praha reported that a group of Czechoslovak students who wanted to visit Poland had been turned back at the border point of Petrovice although the Polish Consulate had assured them they could go. "Who is going to reimburse them for their expenses?" the newspaper demanded.

The most important example is the front-page article today in Rude Pravo written by its former correspondent in Washington, Jiri Hochmann.

Praised as Honest Man

Mr. Hochmann began by praising Mr. Masaryk as a man who, though he did not understand the developments of 1948, when the Communists took over, was "honest and serious" and possessed moral qualities that could have helped the regime avoid some of the vices into which it fell.

Although the suicide theory is possible, Mr. Hochmann wrote, "the suspicions remain and new evidence is being uncovered."

The suspicion remained, he said that "it was a case of political murder involving Maj. Franz Schramm, an officer of state security, possibly involving Beria's gang."

"This cannot be taken lightly because the scandalous role Beria's gang played during the pogrom against leading officials of the Czechoslovak party is also generally known," Mr. Hochmann continued, alluding to the purges of Rudolf Slansky, the party secretary, and other officials in the early nineteen-fifties.

Mr. Hochmann wrote that "the near future will show the activities of Beria's gorillas in the Slansky purge and that it was important to see what role they played in the Masaryk case."

"We believe that our Soviet friends will give us every possible legal aid," he added.

It was not clear whether this was an indication that Moscow had in fact agreed to cooperate or whether it was simply a challenge to it to do so.

Having laid out the question of Soviet responsibility, Mr. Hochmann suggested the alternative theory that the Central Intelligence Agency might have eliminated Dr. Masaryk for its own reasons. But this hypothesis was placed deep in the article and expounded with little emphasis compared with the first theory.

The significant thing was not that the C.I.A. should be named in the Communist newspaper but that the Soviet security service should be.