

**SOVIET POLICY TOWARDS CHANGES IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA,
HUNGARY AND ROMANIA, 1988—90**

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled, "SOVIET POLICY TOWARDS CHANGES IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA, HUNGARY AND ROMANIA, 1988-90", submitted by Reji Thomas, in partial fulfilment of the requirements (of 6 credits out of the total requirement of 24 credits), for the award of the Degree of MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY, is his original work and has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or any other University.

We recommend this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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PREFACE

The disintegration of the socialist system in East Europe is a historic landmark. Equally historic is the withdrawal of traditional Soviet interest in East Europe. Both these events, taken together, certainly shook the world.

Scholars would continue to debate on these developments for all times to come. We have taken up this theme for our study in a specific and well-defined framework, namely Soviet policy towards the changes in Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Romania during the crucial years, 1988-90. Needless to add that these momentous changes in East Europe, in general, and in Central-East Europe, namely Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Romania, in particular, could hardly have taken place without a Soviet role in them. Hence the importance of our study.

The study is divided into five chapters; beginning with a general background of the changes in the Soviet Union, the opening chapter focuses attention on a framework of Soviet policy towards changes in East Europe. The next three chapters examine in sequence the changes in Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Romania and analyse responses and reactions from the Soviet Union that were crucial in Soviet policy towards them. In the final chapter, we take an overview of Soviet policy, spelling out its main features and their possible reasons.

The study is based on published primary and secondary published sources from Moscow and elsewhere in English. A select Bibliography on sources is included here.

I wish to express my heart-felt gratitude to my guide, Professor Zafar Imam, Centre for Soviet & East European Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, without whose valuable help, the completion of this work would not have been possible. I am also indebted to the members of the Faculty for their cooperation and help. I want to acknowledge here the encouragement given by a number of my friends. My thanks also go to the Librarians of the Jawaharlal Nehru University Library, New Delhi, Teen Murti Library, New Delhi, IDSA Library and Sapru House Library, New Delhi, for their kind cooperation in the consultation of various sources.

Finally our study may not be conclusive but, I hope that it has made a beginning of understanding a historic development of our times.

New Delhi

January 5, 1993.


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CHAPTER - I

THE GENERAL BACKGROUND AND THE NEW THINKING ON
EAST EUROPE

THE GENERAL BACKGROUND AND THE NEW THINKING ON EAST EUROPE

Emergence

The eastern part of Europe has been a traditional area of interest for Russia. After the establishment of the Soviet state, in 1917, this historical tradition was not totally forgotten, in spite of the weakness of Soviet-Russia during the inter-war years. However, the close of the Second World War also marked the return of Russia to East Europe, when the victorious Red Army occupied the entire region; and thus started Soviet policy towards East Europe became revitalised particularly after the local communist parties assumed power in the countries of the region.

From Stalin to Brezhnev, Soviet policy towards East Europe went through various phases of development, but Soviet commitments to socialist regimes in the region remained central. It was on the basis of this historical legacy of the past, the Gorbachev leadership undertook the task of restructuring Soviet role in East Europe. Hence Soviet policy towards the changes in East Europe from mid-80's onwards must necessarily be assessed against the background of origin and growth of the Soviet policy towards East Europe. Such an exercise will equip us with a viable historical framework to understand the changes in Soviet policy towards East Europe from the mid-eighties onwards.

We propose to undertake this exercise in sequence of

origin and growth of Soviet foreign policy towards Eastern Europe. For the analysis of the present phase, the evaluation of the past is thus necessary.

The Background

Eastern Europe as a regional entity was a product of the first world war. Before the first world war this region stood as a buffer between the Russian empire on the one side and the Prussian and the Austro-Hungarian empires on the other. With the break-up of all the three empires, the small states of the region were sandwiched between the newly born Soviet Russia and Germany. In fact, the period between the two world wars saw these states passing through various convulsions, but by and large, these were regarded by western powers as a bulwark against Bolshevism. The pattern of the regimes varied from semi-fascist dictatorships in Poland and Hungary and monarchies in Romania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, to liberal democracies in Austria and Czechoslovakia. The rise of Hitler changed the map of Central Europe, with the Nazi occupation of Austria and then Czechoslovakia, while just on the eve of the Second World War the Soviet-German Pact - the pact between Hitler and Stalin - led to the virtual partition of Poland.

But the Eastern part of Europe become a priority

region for the Soviet Union during the second world war. With the Western powers joining hands with the Soviet Union, it led to the redrawing of the map of Europe. The tripartite summit meetings between Russia, Britain and America at Yalta and Postdam gave rise to a new balance of power. The old regimes of Eastern Europe had collapsed along with the defeat of Nazi Germany and these countries were overcome by the victorious Soviet Army as they pushed all the way from the 'Volga to Elbe'.¹ As a result, the entire region came under the direct control of Moscow and the 'Peoples Democracies' were established throughout the Eastern part of Europe. All the countries of Eastern Europe, either directly or indirectly, were earmarked as Moscow's sphere of influence. The nature of Moscow's control was not only confined to the presence of Soviet troops in these countries but also in building the entire state system on communist models. The respective communist parties were given the monopoly of power, but the state and the foreign policies of the fraternal countries were more or less influenced by the USSR.

The onset of the Cold War led to the formation of a military alliance, Warsaw Treaty Organisation (WTO)

1. Alvin Z. Rubinstein, The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union (New York: Random House, 1966); pp. 170-75.

in 1955 and to an economic alliance, the Comecon, or the CMEA in 1949 between the Soviet Union and its eastern neighbours.² The Warsaw Pact and the Comecon provided the strategic and economic links for the Soviet domination. Thus after the Second World War East Europe became an area of political, economic, cultural strategic and ideological priority for the Soviet Union.

Officially, a new type of relations between the USSR and Eastern Europe was claimed. It was based on 'Proletariat internationalism', a principle that made it possible to turn the simple laws of morals and justice into the permanent norms of the relations between peoples and countries. These relations were said to have been characterised by complete equality, respect for independence and sovereignty, fraternal mutual assistance, all embracing cooperation, reciprocal support and consolidation and defence of revolutionary gains achieved by the labour of the people of each socialist country.³

The socialist states have the same kind of economic base, namely public ownership of the means of production, a similar system based on government by the people headed

2. Jagjit Singh Anand, Soviet Union in World Affairs (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1977); p. 17.

3. A Study of Soviet Foreign Policy (Moscow: Progress, 1975); p.39.

by the working class, a common ideology Marxism-Leninism, the common task of defending the socialist achievement from imperialist reactionary intentions and a common goal, the building of socialism and communism. As stressed by Leonid Brezhnev at the 25th CPSU Congress: "The main basis of our close cooperation, its soul, and the guiding, organising force, is the indissoluble, militant alliance of the communist parties of the socialist countries, the identity of the world outlook, their aims and will".⁴

The experience has shown that the establishment and development of fraternal relations between the socialist countries is a complex and a many faceted process. Naturally the socialist development involves the struggle between the new and the old and the settlement of internal contradictions.

The solid foundations for the smoothening of the relations among the socialist states was laid in the 20th CPSU Congress. In its Declaration of October 30, 1956, the Soviet government stressed that it was conforming to the guidelines started by the 20th Congress calling for the utmost development of fraternal relations among the socialist countries and for the strict observance of the Leninist principles in relations with them.

4. L.I. Brezhnev, The Fiftieth Anniversary of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, p. 43.

In the CPSU programme adopted by the 22nd Congress it is noted that "in the world community of the socialist countries none have, or can have any special rights or privileges. This attitude of the CPSU had been of fundamental significance to the shaping of socialist international relations".⁵

In its analysis of the ways and means of strengthening the world socialist system, the 23rd Congress of CPSU (1966) noted that the regular contacts and political consultations of the CPSU Central Committee and the Soviet government with the fraternal parties and governments were a large contribution to the development of relations between socialist countries. A hard and fast guideline of the foreign policy of the Soviet Union towards the socialist bloc was that it would take into account the entire socialist community's experiences.

To quote Andrei Gromyko; "The cause of the fraternal friendship and cooperation with countries of socialism always has held and will hold a special place of priority in the policy of the CPSU and the Soviet state. The Soviet Union is tirelessly strengthening close all round ties with these countries on the basis of the principle of socialist

5. A Study of the Soviet Foreign Policy (Moscow: Progress, 1975); p. 42.

internationalism and is actively participating in economic integration and in the international socialist division of labour. The countries of the socialist community are fruitfully cooperating in all fields of life. Their fraternal alliance finds its embodiment in the Warsaw Treaty Organisation, the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance, in the system of bilateral treaties of friendship cooperation and mutual assistance.⁶

An inestimable contribution was made by the 24th Congress of the CPSU (March-April, 1971) to the further growth of unity and might of the world socialist community. Leonid Brezhnev commented; "We want the world socialist system to be a well knit family of nations, building and defending the new society together and mutually enriching each other with experience and knowledge, a family strong and united, which the people of the world would regard as the prototype of the future world community of free nations".⁷

The things which are discussed above show the theoretical foundations of the Soviet policy towards Eastern Europe. In the words of John F. Browns, Eastern Europe as a regional entity helped the Soviet Union to serve the

6. A.A. Gromyko, Peace Now, Peace for the Future (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1984); p. 271.

7. 24th Congress of the CPSU, pp. 18-9.

following purposes:-

- a) As a Defensive Glacier
- b) As a base for offensive strategy
- c) As a nucleus of an international bloc support in world politics
- d) As a source of ideological and political legitimation
- e) As a source of economic wealth.⁸

The announcement of Marshall plan in 1947 forced Stalin to make peace treaties with all the East European countries by end of the forties. These treaties were of friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance on a long term basis. Since all these mutual treaties were uniform in manner, it regulated Soviet role in all aspects of bilateral relations including defence. It also legally sanctioned the stationing of Soviet troops in these states, against the western threat.

Further, Stalin strengthened the mutual ties between Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union on a collective basis by establishing the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) or COMECON, set up in 1949 with Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Soviet Union as its members. The GDR joined with CMEA in 1950 and the peoples

8. J.F. Brown, Eastern Europe and the Communist Rule (Durham, N.C. Duke Univ. Press, 1988); pp. 30-35.

Republic of Mongolia in 1962. The establishment of CMEA, aimed at the mutual assistance and coordination in the economic development of the fraternal countries.⁹ The Western bloc not only established an economic body (EEC) but also a military body (NATO) against the Soviet bloc. To counter it, the Soviet Union established the Warsaw Treaty Organisation (WTO) in 1955 with Albania, GDR, Romania, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and the Soviet Union as its members. These bilateral pacts and collective alliances formally institutionalised the Soviet-East European relations based on Marxist-leninist ideology, common socialist division of labour, socio-economic formation and mutual concerns. Thus USSR became the leader of the CMEA and the WTO with its economic and military potentials.¹⁰

Stalin died in May 1953. After that, Georgi Malenkov came into power in the Soviet Union. The month of June 1953, saw a workers' rising in Berlin and the protests spread into other cities belonging to the Eastern part of Germany before being controlled by the Soviet troops. Malenkov ruled only for one year, i.e., 1953. In 1953 Nikita

9. Zafar Imam, Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917-1990 (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1990); p. 88.

10. Ibid., pp. 89-90.

Khrushchev came into power in the USSR. Khrushchev tried to put the Soviet-East European relations on a 'Balanced Basis'.

November 1956 saw a revolt in Hungary which was in the nature of a national uprising but this uprising was checked by the Soviet Army and its leader Imre Nagy was executed and he was replaced by Janos Kador. In the same year with, the release of Gomulka from prison on the eve of 20th CPSU Congress of the Soviet Union, liberalisation efforts in Poland started and it served as a beacon for similar movements throughout the bloc. As a counter measure to Polish reform attempts, Gomulka was reinstated as General Secretary of the PUWP and Rukossovski was dismissed, thereby avoiding an intervention.

Further in the beginning of 1968, i.e., in January, Alexander Dubcek replaced Novotny as the head of the Czechoslovak Communist Party (CPCZ) marking the beginning of 'Prague Spring' or the 'Velvet Revolution'. Alexander Dubcek introduced some reforms in Czechoslovakia in April 1968. An action programme for thoroughgoing political and economic reform in Czechoslovakia was promulgated. Moreover, the 'Two Thousand Words' statement by leading intellectuals

12. Karen Dawisha, Eastern Europe, Gorbachev and Reform (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1990); p. 260.

sought greater liberalisation in Czechoslovakia. In June the 'WTO' expressed its concern by sending the 'Warsaw Letter' to Czechoslovakia against excessive liberalisation. A meeting of Soviet and Czech leaders in Cicrna reached a short-lived accord. The Soviet forces intervened in the Czechoslovakian crisis in August 1968. In a major 'PRAVDA' article on the 'International Obligations' of socialist countries the Soviet Union asserted the 'Doctrine of Limited Sovereignty'. Thus they emphasised the wider consciousness of the Czechoslovakian invasion. In October a treaty was signed between the USSR and Czechoslovakia, on the 'temporary' stationing of troops. In an important move, Brezhnev endorsed the concept of limited sovereignty, later called 'Brezhnev Doctrine' at the PUWP's 5th Congress.¹¹

A qualitatively different type of resentment with the socialist order developed in Poland in the early eighties. This was the mass defiance by Polish miners under Lech Walesa. It started with the increased meat prices in Poland. Spur workers protested and protests spreaded to Lubilin. It was followed by wide spread strikes across Poland. In August, eighty thousand workers of the Leninshipyard Gadansk, took over it. An interfactory strike committee demanded the right to form free trade unions, the abolition of censorship, the right to strike. Negotiations took place

11. Ibid., p. 267.

and finally an agreement was reached on the right to strike and right to independent trade unions and it was approved by the PUWP Central Committee. The Soviet Union responded to the situation in Poland saying that the "situation is completely an internal affair" of Poland. In the month of November, the WTO troops concentrated along the Polish border. To avoid military intervention the Warsaw court legalised Solidarity.¹²

These movements of protest have testified to the continuous resistance of East European Nationalism. But with the rise of Solidarity in Poland, the most broadly based challenge to the Soviet Union came in, especially backed by the western bloc and the strong catholic church in Poland. The Soviet-East European relations from 1945-1988 were 'paradoxical' in the sense that there was a lack of clear direction in Moscow's policy towards Eastern Europe and there was no uniform policy as such towards Eastern Europe. Because the nature of socialist regimes varied among the Soviet-bloc countries, it ranged from the dictatorship of Nicolae Ceausescu in Romania and Eirch Hinceker in GDR to the liberal socialist regime of Janos Kador in Hungary,

12. Ibid., pp. 276-7.

minimalist socialist's in Czechoslovakia, Poland and the conservative regimes in Bulgaria and Albania. So it made the Soviet foreign policy makers to follow the 'De-facto' and 'Poly-Centrist' model of socialism in Eastern Europe. Though some sort of autonomy was given to the communist parties and its leaders of Eastern Europe, the USSR never allowed them to utilise that freedom.¹³ Therefore, the Soviet Union intervened in East Berlin in 1953, Hungary in 1956, Czechoslovakia in 1968, and Poland in 1956, 1970 and 1981 in the name of collective security.

In short, in maintaining its bloc policy towards Eastern Europe during 1945-90, the Soviet Union had to choose between 'cohesion' and 'viability'. Cohesion in this context means a situation allowing for some degree of diversity caused by the differing local conditions. There is a general conformity on both domestic and foreign policies, as well as the identity of institutions implementing these policies, both in Soviet Union and its East-European dependencies. Viability can be defined as the degree of confidence, credibility and efficiency in the East European states that would increasingly legitimise communist rule and consequently reduce the Soviet need for a preoccupation with the region.

13. Arvind Gupta, "Evaluation of Gorbachev's East European Policy", Strategic Analysis, vol. 13, no. 6, September 1990; pp. 687-90.

In short, the Soviet policies during this period were aimed at the adjustment of Soviet type of communism to fit local conditions and it will not be objectionable to the dissidents in Eastern Europe and to cope with any crisis would be the responsibility of the local communist parties and the USSR could refrain from direct involvement. But it is a fact that from Stalin to Gorbachev, these leadership changes in the Soviet Union has always been accompanied by some sort of upheavals in Eastern Europe.

By the early 80's, the conditions prevailing in the domestic economic front forced to open a debate in the Soviet Union, approving similar debates throughout the Soviet bloc, namely the Eastern bloc.¹⁴ Mikhail Sergeyvich Gorbachev came into power in the Soviet Union from March 11, 1985 onwards. Soon after coming into power he started to advocate his policy of New Thinking (Glasnost and Perestroika). As a result, there took place drastic and dramatic turns in the domestic and foreign policies of the Soviet Union. Similarly, it had its own reflections in the Soviet policy towards its East European allies. Quite different from the past, Gorbachev opted a policy of 'changes' towards Eastern Europe, for a number of reasons.

14. R.V. Burks, "The Coming Crisis in the Soviet Union", The East European Quarterly, vol. 18, no.1, Spring 1984; pp. 61-2.

By the mid 80's the political and ideological systems of the Eastern Europe had become stiffer in the sense that the ruling circles lost contact with the people. The parties were ruling for themselves and not for the people, and more than that, these communist parties were still run by the 'old guards'. They were not willing for the changes.¹⁵ Moreover, Eastern Europe had already become an economic burden, to the USSR, on the principle of 'cost accounting'. Most East European economies were debt ridden. Their marketing trends showed declining tendencies since they had their major trade with the USSR only. There was large scale unemployment, because the administrative command model of the economy could not do much in this regard. Again Eastern part of Europe could not keep its pace in coping up with the Scientific and Technological Revolution (STR). So the choice was made by Gorbachev to prescribe for Eastern Europe no more than what he thought the Soviet Union needed, Relief not cure.

15. Terry, L. Thompson, Ideology and Policy (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989); p. 45.

Soviet Policy of New Thinking in East Europe:

We shall now examine the 'Novoemyslenie' (New Thinking) policy as applied to Eastern Europe in general. Shortly after coming to power, Gorbachev declared that East Europe would be his 'First Commandment' and this combined with his advocacy of Glasnost and Perestroika, tended to indicate a strong interest in the region indeed. Gorbachev could understand that the social, political and economic systems run by the 'Old Guards' in Eastern Europe could not keep pace with the Soviet Union. Thus as in the Soviet Union, he also opted for structural social, economic and political reforms. Soviet Union emphasised that the East European economies should be made open to keep parity with the Scientific and Technological Revolution (STR) and this openness should be seen in all spheres of the East European societies. It must be seen in all spheres, irrespective of East-West, East-East and North-South considerations.

Further the Soviet policy makers pointed out that the political systems of these countries must be operated by the people, and not the party bureaucrats in the name of people. As a necessary precondition for the socio-economic and political reforms Gorbachev sought pluralism of opinions. For the renewal of socialism and to give a noble and human face to it, Gorbachev declared that the Soviet Union would support the movements, which are reform oriented.

To quote Gorbachev; "No socialist country can successfully and in a healthy rythm make progress without understanding solidarity and mutual beneficial cooperation with the other fraternal countries and without their help".¹⁶

As was done in the Soviet Union, Gorbachev wanted that the foreign policies of the East European countries must be brought under public gaze and these countries should take various groups and organisations into consideration. Here he pointed out the need for elective and executive bodies and its exapnsion, i.e., the multiparty system.

As a new stage and period of socialist reconstruc-
tion, the Soviet Union was willing for regrouping the
existing personnel to promote younger leadership in the
communist parties of East Europe. Gorbachev further states
that; "The socialist world is presently engaged in an active
struggle for revitalising socialism on the basis of its
values. So to launch socialism into a qualitatively new
ability for the sake of creating a society of free
people".¹⁷

16. M.S. Gorbachev, Perestroika: New Thinking for Country and the World (New York: Harper & Row, 1987); p. 165.

17. Gorbachev's statement at the Meeting with Karoly Groz, on July 25, 1989, Summary of the World Broadcast, July 28, 1989.

The Soviet foreign policy-makers emphasised the need for a policy of healthy and mutually beneficial basis with the East European countries. The foreign policy experts also emphasised that the Soviet foreign policy towards East Europe should proceed from the principles of independence, sovereignty, equality of rights, territorial integrity and the freedom of choice of change.

Discarding of Brezhnev Doctrine or the principle of Non-interference was one of the most important new elements in the Soviet foreign policy agenda towards Eastern Europe. This principle was reflected in Gorbachev's declaration that; "Is the respect of the right of nation to decide independently its own fate and freely choose the roads of its social, political and economical development without interference".¹⁸

The principle of non-interference in each other's internal affairs is further clarified from Gorbachev's speech at the UN General Assembly on December 8, 1988; "Let us agree to comply with the demand of the UN charter regarding non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries,

18. Joint Communiqué of WTO, Foreign Ministers Meeting in Warsaw, (February 25-27, 1989), Summary of the World Broadcast, February 29, 1989.

let us guarantee the right of each people to realise its chances and let us cooperate in solving the world problems".¹⁹

The above mentioned declaration directly aimed at the discarding of the Brezhnev's doctrine of 'Limited Sovereignty'. "There can be no justification for any use of force, whether by any military, political alliance against another or within such alliances". From this statement it was clear that the Soviet Union was no longer interested in the internal affairs of its East European fraternal countries. Rather it believed that the belligerent parties should solve their problems through negotiations. As the Soviet Foreign Ministry Spokesman Gennady Garasimov, says; "Every country should decide the issues itself that affect it. The Soviet Union could offer advice and discuss the issues, but the right to decide is not ours. Moscow cannot command anything, it does not say do this and this. Moscow only listens to the experiences".²⁰

The Total Transformation of CMEA and WTO:

The Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA)

19. Speech by M. Gorbachev at the UN General Assembly, Reprints from the Soviet Press , vol. 48, no. 1, January 15, 1989; p. 25.

20. Summary of the World Broadcast, March 9, 1989.

and the Warsaw Treaty Organisation (WTO) are the examples of the institutionalised forms of relations between the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. As had been envisaged in other fields, the Soviet policy makers tried to restructure CMEA and WTO along with the principles of Glasnost and Perestroika. Since the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe had now entered a crucial stage of socialist reconstruction, the institutionalised base of Soviet-East European relations had to change accordingly.

CMEA

As stated earlier, the administrative command model of economic and political development could not work in the complex economic and social environment of the Soviet and East European societies. Since the socialist market was now being sought to be built in cooperation with the world economy and with a view to the world market trends, it marked the beginning of a more active and organic inclusion in the international division of labour. So the Soviet policies were aimed at total reconstruction of economic mechanism of the CMEA with radical reforms and trends towards acceleration. The economic reforms in CMEA were basically aimed at attaining three objectives: (a) The acceleration of socialist construction; (b) Economic reconstruction and implementation; and (c) Working of a plan for the future.²¹

21. The USSR Foreign Ministry; "The USSR's Bilateral Relations: The Socialist Countries of Eastern Europe", International Affairs, no. 1, January 1990; p. 65.

It was felt that the framework of the CMEA needed exceptional measures to bring it into a path of balanced and constant growth. So in the various sessions of the CMEA attended by the Soviet and East European leaders, priority was given to the need of a decisive renewal of the entire CMEA system on mutual cooperation and of the mechanism of multilateral cooperation. Further within the CMEA framework, it aimed at the radical renewal of the Council's operations, of a review of its function and purpose of drafting a new charter to meet the modern and long term experiments of interaction among the CMEA countries.

The coordinated mechanism to modernise the CMEA was aimed at shifting unstable barter to direct commercial links between enterprises, introduction of markets, price reforms, trade links with the west (EEC), identification of the technological areas of cooperation, enhancing of economic mechanism, restructuring of economic and trade laws and resolutions of individual countries.

WTO

As the relics of the Cold War were eliminated, it had an implication upon East Europe and similarly on the WTO. The reduced tension in the East-West relations

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similarly reflected in the 'Bloc Policy' of the USSR towards Eastern Europe. There took place structural changes in the Warsaw Treaty Organisation, with the adaptation of 'Defensive Military Doctrine' in October 1987 on the basis of the principle of 'Reasonable Sufficiency'. One of the questions concerned was the Soviet Union's readiness to withdraw troops stationed in the Warsaw Treaty countries.

Soviet military experts emphasised that; "the USSR should proceed from the principle that all armies in the world should be stationed in their own national territories"²². In the meetings of the Warsaw Treaty member countries, it was further pointed out that importance should be given to Pan-European security rather than the security of the Soviet Union. For that purpose, there took place a number of meetings among the WTO countries and between WTO and NATO, with respect to Arms control and Disarmament. The importance of WTO shifted from being a political-military organisation to a military-political organisation. For the first time, in the history of WTO, equal importance was given to the issues of ecological preservation, environmental protection and protection of human rights with the military matters. In this connection, the signing of IMF Treaty in December

22. WTO: Joint Communique, Warsaw, Summary of the World Broadcast, (London, July 20, 1988).

1987 not only reduced the tension between the capitalist and the communist bloc but also paved the way for smoothening the 'Helsinki Process' for a 'Common European Home'.

The concept of the 'Common European Home' was yet another important element in the Soviet policy initiatives to smoothen the Helsinki Process, and thus giving up the confrontationist policy towards the west. It enabled the Soviet Union to follow a pragmatic and realistic policy towards Eastern Europe. Gorbachev's conception relied on greater economic, political and social interaction amongst the socialist and capitalist states of Europe with the aim of reducing American hegemony and the rigid division of Europe.

To many in Eastern Europe, Gorbachev appeared sincere when he labelled Europe a 'Common Home' and declared that; "Europe's historic chance and the future lies in peaceful cooperation between the states of that continent". This Pan-European element of Gorbachev's outlook was first enunciated at the 27th Party Congress. He says; "We are Europeans, old Russia was united with Europe by Christianity. The history of Russia is an organic part of the great European history. Europe from 'Atlantic to the Urals' is a cultural-historical entity united by common heritage of the Renaissance and

the Enlightenment".²³

In addition to the general concept which lay behind this notion, Gorbachev also had specially reconceptualised the entire notion of European security, bringing it into line with the ideals embodied in the Helsinki Final Act. At the centre of this new view of European security, was an acceptance of detente, disarmament, and peaceful coexistence within Europe as its objectives. Thus Gorbachev emphasised at the 27th Party Congress speech that; "It is important to move forward from the initial phase of detente to a more stable, mature detente, than to the creation of reliable security on the basis of the Helsinki Process and radical cuts in nuclear and conventional arms".

The Soviet leaders have also emphasised new formulations about security which could have a fundamental impact on Soviet-East European relations in the future. Deputy Foreign Minister, Loginov, speaking in Hungary, characterised it as a; "New feature of Soviet foreign policy". In fact, the Soviet leaders now believe that Soviet security could only be guaranteed if "we take into consideration other states' security, the only possible

23. M. Gorbachev, Perestroika: New Thinking for our Country and the World (New York: Harper and Row, 1987); pp. 191-7.

solution to the issues is one that is acceptable to our partners too".²⁴ Seeing this new conceptualisation of Europe and European security, the Hungarian leader George Konard foresaw that; "the possibility of a gradual controlled transformation of the Soviet bloc into a looser community of nations capable of interacting with Western Europe".²⁵ Moreover, Czechoslovakia's Alexander Dubcek described it as, "A new way of thinking about Europe".²⁶

The call by Gorbachev himself for an open appraisal of all periods of Soviet foreign policy has led to a series of debates throughout Eastern Europe, about the subjects (Berlin crisis - 1953, Hungarian uprising, 1956, Prague, Spring, 1968, Polish Upsurges - 1956, 1970 and 1981 that had been previously the sore points in the bilateral relations with Moscow.

Gorbachev himself set the standard in revising the notion from 'Common Roads to Socialism' to 'Many Roads to Socialism'. At the 27th Party Congress he specially emphasised; "unconditional respect in international practice, for the right of every people to choose its paths and forms of development". Gorbachev enunciated the need for

24. Budapest Television Service in Hungary, January 25, 1987; FBIS, Sov, January 30, 1987; pp. cc-3-4.

25. R. Falk & Mary Kaldor, "The Post Fallen Debate", World Policy Journal, vol. 2, no.3, January 1985; p. 461.

26. FBIS-EE 4, January 19, 1988; p. 18.

parties to proceed according to the principles which have at their root; "absolute independence of every socialist state, the independence of each party, the sovereign right to decide the issues facing its country and its responsibility to its nation are the unquestionable principles".²⁷ This view came to be shared by other leaders and top advisors. Speaking in Hungary, in April 1987, Yegor Ligachev, made it clear that; "Every country looks for solutions independently, not as in the past. It is not true that Moscow's conductor's baton, or Moscow's hand in everything. Every nation has a right to its own way".²⁸

The study of real correlations between the interests of the social development on the one hand and the class interests on the other, is of the greatest possible significance in terms of balance of forces between the two systems at the contemporary stage. V.I. Lenin considered that the interests of development of society as a whole superseded those of working class. The result of this formulation has been aggressive both in the Soviet Union

27. M. Gorbachev, Perestroika: A New Thinking for our Country and the World (New York: Harper & Row, 1987); p. 165.

28. Budapest Television Service in Hungarian, April 26, 1987, in Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Daily Report, Eastern Europe (Washington, 1987); April 26, 1987; p. f. 6.

and in Eastern Europe. In both, much more attention as a result has been given to the enhancement of an agenda of social reform encompassing Glasnost, Perestroika, multi-party elections, economic reconstruction and attention to legality and human rights.

After coming into power in March 1985, Gorbachev called several times for building intra-bloc relations on a new basis. To quote Gorbachev; "We gain more from a critical and correct evaluation of our moves and initiatives than from loud applauses for just anything we have done, we do not claim that we are the only ones to know the truth. Truth is sought in a joint quest and effort".²⁹

Soviet leaders have come to recognise that their relations with their East European partners has been based on less full and frank exchanges of views than a ritualistic and formalised rhetoric meant to conceal and suppress differences rather than promote the deepening of relations. This recognition has gone hand in hand with a marked increase both in bilateral and multilateral meetings at all levels and in all spheres with the Soviet admission that

29, M. Gorbachev, Perestroika: A New Thinking for our Country and the World (New York: Harper & Row, 1987); p. 167.

Moscow had no monopoly on the 'best' way to construct socialism. In other words, Moscow had given up political and economic domination over Eastern Europe. The joint communiques at the end of bilateral meetings very often have included references to the need to reject past approaches in intra-bloc relations. For example, at the visit of Gorbachev to Romania in May 1987 in the joint communique, it was stated that, "The CPSU attaches great significance to openness to eliminating areas closed to criticism and overcoming the tendency to make pronouncements for effect, formalism, bureaucratic distortions and methods and management by command and order".

Thus the new premise of the Soviet relations with the fraternal countries of Eastern Europe, as outlined by the Foreign Minister, Edward Shevardnadze was not of an ideology but of mutual interests, mutual benefits and the principle of freedom of choice; and ideology was replaced by pragmatism. In the opinion of a Western East European analyst, Karen Dawisha, Gorbachev's efforts in Eastern Europe have been directed along three lines; (a) Press ostesenska (Reappraisal); (b) Perestroika (Restructuring); and (c) Perevyzhka (Bandaging).³⁰

30. Karen Dawisha, "Soviet Political and Ideological Perceptions towards Eastern Europe", in Aurel Brown (ed.), The Soviet-East European Relations in the Gorbachev Era: The Prospects for Adaptation (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990); p. II.

The crux of Soviet policy towards East Europe has been well put by Zibguiew Brezensky; "Changes are in fact inevitable, the only question is whether these changes will deliberately be facilitated by the powers that are in a position to enhance these processes, or whether it will be inhibited and obstructed and therefore take place through revolutionary upheavals".³¹

In this chapter, we have seen Soviet policy towards East Europe prior to 1985 and how this changed after the coming of Gorbachev into power. From Stalin to Brezhnev, Soviet policy towards Eastern Europe has gone through various phases of development. The Soviet Union was following a policy of 'continuity and change' in its relations to the Eastern partners.

However, from 1985, the Soviet Union began to pursue entirely a new policy based on 'New Thinking' in its foreign policy postulates regarding the Eastern bloc. There took place, what was called a total reversal of Soviet policy from 1985 onwards, towards Eastern Europe. Since the Soviet Union had to cope with the present day world, it had to change and similarly Eastern Europe followed suit.

31. Zbigview Brezensky, "Special Address", problems of Communism, (May-August 1988); p. 70.

Despite the changes which were sweeping across the Soviet Union, East Europe still remained as the first priority area for the Soviet Union depending on the existing political, economic, cultural and ideological relations between Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

Against this historical background, Soviet policy in the East Europe from mid 80's onwards began to take a new turn and these changes in Eastern Europe also coincided with the changes in the Soviet Union. Hence, there was a mutuality of interests. In fact, the changes in East Europe, certainly from mid 50's onwards began to take shape much more quickly than in the Soviet Union. Thus it may be argued that they actually encouraged Perestroika and Glasnost in the Soviet Union. In any case, by 1988, except perhaps Romania, East Europe as a whole was in ferment and poised for changes and thus this process of Perestroika and Glasnost in the Soviet Union began to influence each other. Such an interaction provided a valid rationale for the emergence of Soviet policy towards changes in East Europe.

As the canvass of these changes in East Europe is complex and vast, one has to speak of the Soviet policy to them, than in a selective way for its understanding. Moreover, it was becoming clear that East Europe is no more a homogeneous entity and that the countries of the region have varying interests. On both these counts,

we have chosen to examine Soviet policy to the changes in East Europe in the specific setting of what may be called Central-East Europe, comprising, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Romania. However, it is relevant to point out that much of the features of the Soviet policy to these countries may not be entirely irrelevant for other countries of East Europe.

CHAPTER - II

SOVIET POLICY TOWARDS CHANGES IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA
(1988-1990)

SOVIET POLICY TOWARDS CHANGES IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA, (1988-1990)

Soviet relations with Czechoslovakia has traditionally been steady. The only break was of course the events in 1968, commonly known as the 'Prague Spring'. After 1968, the relations between the two countries certainly acquired a routine character or intra-bloc relationship.

The Czech leadership was rather slow and hesitant in reacting to the signs of changes in the Soviet Union after the Gorbachev leadership took over in March 1985. Initially, the Czech leadership regarded these as strictly Soviet affairs and not directly relevant to Czechoslovakia. A case in point was the 17th Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (CPCZ) held in March 1986; in which no indication was available for reconstructing Czechoslovakia. But as the pace of reforms gained momentum in the Soviet Union after the 27th Congress of the CPSU, the Czech leadership had to respond. Moreover, fast moving developments were taking place in neighbouring Poland and GDR with a direct spill-over effect on Czechoslovakia. However, there was still considerable hesitancy in initiating the actual reforms. The process really began with the Central Committee meeting of the Czech Party held on December 4 and 5, 1986. At the meeting of the Central Committee of the CPCZ, held on December 4 and 5, 1986, Party and State Chief Gustav

Husak said; "The present system of management and planning no longer corresponds to the substantially more complicated and demanding conditions, tasks, and objectives of further development of the national economy. In order to bring the present system of management and planning in line with these complicated and demanding conditions, a restructuring of economic management and party and government is necessary. There is the need to bring the Czechoslovak economic mechanism close to measures being adopted in the Soviet Union."¹

The document on restructuring published in January 1987, contained thirty such principles. At variance with the Hungarian type, the Czechoslovak regime opted for a minimalist approach. The minimalist reformers were motivated by different objectives. The need for a change in the face of overwhelming task and inefficiency, was recognised. The document on the principles of restructuring indicated no change in the political colour of the regime. The principles were above all the regimes response to the need to assimilate Gorbachev's new ideas. Mimicking Gorbachevism without embracing its substance was the precept

1. Vladimir Sobell, "The Ultra Cautious Reformers", Soviet East European Survey, Vojtech Mastny (ed.), (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988); p. 218.

for survival. On January 27, 1987, the Czechoslovakian Prime Minister Lubomir Strougal admitted that; "The long standing problems of our economy are not getting any better, but are in some areas becoming more acute". Strougal announced several emergency measures to prop up the intensification efforts and of 'Normalisation'.

Husak's speech to March Plenum of the Central Committee suggested that the reformist cause was gaining ground. The reform would amount to the most significant intervention in the economic system. Unlike Romania, the Prague normalisers responded realitively promptly to the need to synochronise with the USSR. Their sanctioning of the Soviet line was not just verbal. Czechoslovakia was preparing a blue print for a Soviet style restructuring of its economic mechanism. Being a direct product of the Soviet pressure for normalisation and having found itself in considerable economic difficulty, the regime stood and fell with the Soviet support.²

The need to adopt to the new conditions requested in a certain movement within the regime. The division between the ideologically orthodox and the pragmatic became more open. The official line emanating from Husak was

2. Ollo, Ulc, "Czechoslovakia: Realistic Soialism", Current History, (Philadelphia: vol. 89, no. 551, December 1991); pp. 413-6.

decidedly middle of the road. Its main purpose was to ensure that the regime was not torn apart and maximum continuity was preserved. It was concerned primarily with domestic issues while delegating the internationalist duty.³ Husak never had any difficulty in acknowledging the relevance of Soviet experience and he held that Czechoslovakia would apply the findings of the CC, CPSU January Plenum to its own conditions.

On April 9, 1987, Mikhail Gorbachev arrived in Prague for a working visit. Gorbachev said that he had come to Czechoslovakia at a very interesting time marked by great transformations; "We are also convinced that transformations in all spheres of Soviet life correspond to the interests of other socialist countries, too, as well as to the interests of progress and peace. We understand and regard as close to us, your endeavour to remove shortcomings and to speed up socio-economic developments. We see that in striving to meet the set aims you are proceeding in a creative way and with presurance and that you are revealing the truly unlimited potential of socialism in an overall manner. We shall naturally be glad, if our experience can be in any way useful to fraternal Czechoslovakia". He also added that there was unity of views and

3. Jiri Vanlventa, "Soviet Policy Towards Hungary and Czechoslovakia", Soviet Policy in Eastern Europe, in Sarah Meikle John Tery (ed.) (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1984); pp. 120-23.

action between the parties and that they were striving to achieve identical aims while travelling along identical roads. This visit created a commitment from the CPCZ to a reform that would not differ substantially from Gorbachev's precepts for the USSR. After Gorbachev's visit, necessary ground work was done for reforms. But more and more changes came from 1988 onwards. From 1988 onwards, wide ranging reforms were seen in all strata and spheres of Czechoslovakian society.⁴

In an address to the nation, Milos Jakes said in Prague Radio on January 3, 1988, that with regard to the changes taking place in the socialist countries, the restructuring of society was the only possible way. He met the Soviet Ambassador, Victor Lomakin on January 4, to discuss the topical questions concerning the political and economic cooperation between the two countries. On January 11, Milos Jakes left for a working visit to Moscow, at an invitation of the CPSU Central Committee to inform them about the progress of reform programmes. Again on January 20, Vaclav Stufeu, Chairman of Czechoslovakian Foreign Institute stated that the Czechoslovakia will apply 'New Thinking' on Soviet lines, in its relations with the

4. Paul Marer, "Reforms in the USSR and Eastern Europe: Is there a Link", The Soviet East European Relationship in the Gorbachev Era: The Prospects and Adaptation, in Aurel Braun (ed.), (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990); pp. 91-2.

West. On February 3, Gustav Husak resigned from J.P.C. By the end of that month the Soviet Union started to withdraw missiles from Czechoslovakian territory. On April 20, the Czechoslovakian Ministry resigned to smoothen the acceleration process.

Addressing the May Day rally, Miroslav Stephen, General Secretary of the Prague City's Communist Party said that the most urgent international problem has been indicated by the peaceful foreign policy of the Soviet Union and other countries of the socialist communities, in which Czechoslovakia too plays an active part. Another factual statement came from Lubomir Strougal about the delay of reconstruction process in Czechoslovakia. He admitted that, "the Czechoslovakian government had not started the reform earlier, because of a certain inertia".⁵ But he further added that the Soviet restructuring had played a positive role in clarifying the situation. From this statement, it was clear that the inspiration for Czechoslovakian reforms was derived from the Soviet experience. It was further supported by the Soviet Union with timely statements. For the first time in the Czechoslovakian post war history, the government allowed two candidates in a by-election process in June 1989.

5. Summary of the World Broadcast, May 12, 1988; EE-0149, B/2.

In the joint communique after the visit of Nikolay Ryzhkov to Czechoslovakia, it is stated that the conference decisions were supported by the broad strata of Czechoslovak people and were a source of inspiration to them in their efforts to carry out the complex tasks of socialist reconstruction in their country. Both sides also noted that the changes taking place in the two countries had many things in common despite the specific conditions in each country. Though this communique the Soviet Union was letting the Czechoslovakian government to build socialism in its own way.

Again the Soviet role is further lauded by Aleksander Bubeck, he stated on July 7 that; "every positive step aimed at applying Soviet restructuring to Czechoslovak conditions but that people who for 20 years copied everything from the Soviet Union are now advocating a partial use of Soviet experiences. What was happening in the Soviet Union today was well suited to the Czechoslovakian conditions".⁷

Quite different from the past, Milos Jakes admitted that; "there were serious shortcomings in the fulfilment

6. Summary of the World Broadcast, May 10, 1988; EE-0147, B/1.

7. Summary of the World Broadcast, July 11, 1988; EE-0200, B/1.

of tasks set up by the 17th CPCZ Congress, especially in the economy. Intensification was proceeding slowly. Efficiency in applying source and technology was slow, and impacts of materials and energy and power were still high".⁸ The Czechoslovakian leader stressed the need of Scientific and Technological Revolution in the modern Czechoslovakian society. As a part of monetary reforms, the Federal government of Czechoslovakia approved a single currency exchange rate on 31st August. On September 9, Milos Jakes frankly admitted that; "Significant changes could not be carried out without the active participation of the people and the key thing was not to retreat in the face of difficulties. On the contrary, it was necessary to wage a merciless struggle against inertia, dogmatism, routine, red-tapism, haughtiness corruption and all violations of socialist morality and laws". It shows that Czechoslovakian government was also following the Soviet concept of sharing power with people and not with the party.

On October 12, leadership changes took place in Czechoslovakia, as a part of political reforms, Lubomir Strougal was replaced by Ladislav Adamec who was considered to be more reform-minded and this leadership change was followed with certain ministerial reshufflings. Milos

8. Summary of the World Broadcast, August 26, 1988; EE-0240, B/1.

Jakes had a meeting with Alexander Yakalev on November 14, who was a member of Politbureau and Secretary of CPSU Central Committee. Yakalev explained CPSU's attitude to restructuring and economic reform and emphasised the need to gain the positive experience of rebuilding socialism in friendly countries. Jakes briefed Yakalev on the implementation of CPCZ Central Committee decisions including plans for rapid changes in the intensive development of the national economy. In this connection, he praised the intensity of contracts and the cooperation between Czechoslovakia and the USSR, which he said contributed to mutual acquaintance and utilisation of well tried experiences in the life of the fraternal countries. Here they were aiming at a system of mutual support and mutual growth.

In 1988, certain fundamental changes came into operation especially in the economic and political fields. These changes were fully imitated the Soviet pattern. The reactions to these changes were positive from all quarters of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union wanted Czechoslovakia to change in its own way. Thus the positive support given by the USSR to the reform process, enabled the Czechoslovakian leaders to undertake more radical and fundamental changes.⁹

9. Miroslav Polrevch, "Czechoslovak Revolutions: Origins and Future and Prospects", International Relations (London: vol. 10, no. 2, November 1990); pp. 135-6.

In January 1989, in the new year message to the nation, Gustav Husak further stressed that; "In the conditions of present stage of Scientific and Technological Revolution and the economic and social development linked with it, all socialist countries are looking for new ways. We, in Czechoslovakia, watch the process very attentively, particularly in the Soviet Union".¹⁰ This statement also hinted at the total reconstruction of Czechoslovakian society as was being done in the Soviet society. On January 10, leaders of the constitutional commission met to make a new constitution. Further on January 27, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria announced unilateral arms cuts, to smoothen the Helsinki process. The Soviet Union withdrew from Czechoslovakia, its 1500 soldiers, 192 tanks and 20 combat aircrafts on 3rd February as a part to reduce the tension in the East-west relations. Moreover, on February 16, Czechoslovakian Premier admitted that; "Since the balance of trade was unsettled, no success had been achieved in changing its structure. Moreover, he added that the Soviet Union was ahead in some economic reforms, which was still reflected in mutual contacts".¹¹

10. Summary of the World Broadcast, January 2, 1989; EE-0374, B/4.

11. Summary of the World Broadcast, February 20 1989; EE-0388, B/3.

A symposium took place in Prague on April 18, on 'Common European Home'. Sixty representatives from 23 countries took part in it. The delegates pointed out the necessity of smoothening Helsinki process irrespective of East-west and North-south considerations.¹² On April 3, for more political pluralism, the CPCZ Presidium discussed about general elections and new constitution. It heard and acknowledged a proposal for improving the system of general elections and instructed communists in the governments, with the active involvement of the National Front bodies, political parties and public organisation that a new legal framework must be formed. This decision also agreed with the Soviet principle that the administrative system and its policy must be brought to the public gaze. On July 31, the Federal Government of Czechoslovakia simplified regulations on border zone.

'BERLINER ZEITUNG' came with an article on 3rd August about the Czechoslovakian reconstruction: "Restructuring in Czechoslovakia appears to be based on the experience of other socialist countries, but it is a copy of other models. It aims at a transition from

12. Furina Siklovani, "Gray Zone and the Future of Dissent in Czechoslovakia", Social Research, vol. 57, no.2, Summer 1990; p. 347.

extensive to quantitative, economic growth to intensification. Full use will be made of the advantage of socialism. Its attractiveness will be improved and living standards, but no power will be abandoned to anti-socialist forces".¹³ This comment says that the transition from administrative command model of economy to intensive type of economy is a difficult and complex task. On September 11, the Czechoslovakian Premier had talks with the Soviet Ambassador, and he briefed him about the Czechoslovakian government's future plans and the Czechoslovakian Communist Party paper 'RUDE PRAVO' in its article praised the CPSU's comment on Baltic Republics, saying that it is a serious statement made out of a serious time. It further added that the comment showed the common sense for citizen's responsibility and for maintaining the ideas of internationalism. Further, on September 25, Ladislav Adamec declared that the government was willing to take independent groups into the administration.

But the changes began to take a dramatic and drastic shape with the mid part of November. It started in a series in Czechoslovakia and went beyond control.

13. Summary of the World Broadcast, August 3, 1989; EE-0527, A2/1.

It started with the demonstration against the old communist regime, on 17th November at Prague's Wenceslav Square. This huge demonstration was organised by the students and the intelligentsia. Thousands of people took part in it. Later it became violent, and the police used force against the demonstrators. November 20, 1989 was an important day in the history of post-war Czechoslovakia, since from the very day, demonstrations started in almost all of the major cities in Czechoslovakia for more and more sweeping reforms and for the resignation of the existing regime. On November 20, demonstrations had taken place in the cities of Brno, Ostrava, Bratislava, Olomuc, Liberec. The students called for a week-long strike, one the same day, theatre strikes started in Prague and Bratislava. In many places, these demonstrations and strikes had turned into violence and demonstrators clashed with the police.

The CPCZ Presidium appealed for calm. In an extraordinary session of Czechoslovak government, the government welcomed the proposals, initiatives and comments which accelerated the process of restructuring seeking a political solution for the problems; "But solutions could not be framed in an atmosphere of emotion and anti-socialist manifestations as had been in the case of Prague recently. We are in favour of an honest and upright policy, but we reject provocation, as on

Government-in-Law abiding state can agree to violation of the constitution".¹⁴ The session concluded by appealing to students and artists to help the country through creative and not destructive needs. On November 21, Milos Jakes said that; "Actings of some groups are 'reckless' and which were aiming to influence young people in Prague to force the pace of the change".¹⁵ He appealed to workers, agricultural workers, intelligentsia, young people, all communists and members of the political parties and organisations in the National Front to help in normalising the present situation.

The situation became further worsened when 'Tens of thousands' of citizens gathered again on the Prague's Wenceslav Square on November 22 and the nearby streets shouting slogans and unfurling banners. It was followed by the strikes of workers of universities and colleges. The Media workers protested against the police brutalities, saying that the young people had lost their faith in the regime. To activate the strikes against the government, which was called by the students and the

14. Summary of the World Broadcast, November 21, 1989; EE-0619, B/3.

15. Summary of the World Broadcast, November 22, 1989; EE-0620, B/4.

intelligentsia, the representatives of striking students from Prague, Brno, Ostrava, Hradec, Kralove and Zilinia met in Prague on November 22 for their first joint meeting, in which they established a "Czechoslovak Coordinating and Information Strike Committee of University Students".

During this month, statements from socialist youth organisations, journalist unions, Drama Artists Union and Writers Union came, clarifying their positions regarding the recent upheavals. An extraordinary session of the CPCZ Central Committee was held in Prague on 24th November to hear a request from party leader Milos Jakes on the current political situation in the country. The participants in the discussion stressed the gravity for cadre changes and the formulation of a party action programme. They stressed that unless political and cadre measures were adopted, no reduction in the present tension could be expected in the near future. The resolution called in the relevant bodies to ensure that force was not used to deal with the current social problems as long as the foundations of socialism were not being undermined and expressed regret at the events of 17th November. They emphasised that, friendship, alliance and cooperation with the Soviet Union would continue to be the country's basic guarantee and Czechoslovakia would

remain and form an active member of the WTO and CMEA. This resolution by the Czechoslovakian government was believing in the principle that force cannot be used for solving any problems.¹⁶ On November 25, half a million people took part in the rally at Prague's Letua plain. Vaclav Havel, the leader of Civic Forum and Alexander Dubcek addressed this rally. On November 26, the Civic Forum issued its programme statement, meanwhile strikes were spreading to the other parts of the country.

Alos Indra, the Federal Assembly Chairman, resigned on 27th November. On the same day, some changes had taken place in the CPCZ Central Committee. Civic Forum was invited for talks to form a new government. Milos Jakes declared that he would vote to abolish the leading role of the party. On December 1, some ministerial reshufflings had taken place in the Council meeting and Czechoslovakia liberalised its border regulations with Austria. On December 5, Karel Urbarek and Premier Ladislav Adamec had briefed Mikhail Gorbachev and other CPSU representatives in detail on the current situation in Czechoslovakia and CPCZ's effort to rid the party of

16. Ota, Sik, "What Czechoslovakia expects from Gorbachev", Government and Opposition (London: vol. 25, no. 1, Winter 1990); pp. 6-61.

Conservatism and enter the struggle for Democratic and socialist societies. The two sides in the talks also expressed a firm desire to continue the cooperation between the CPSU and CPCZ on the basis of equality and solidarity. It was also agreed that the relevant state bodies would hold talks on the stationing of Soviet troops in Czechoslovakia, from the view point of ensuring the same security and inviability of frontiers of all European shores.¹⁷ It showed the Soviet readiness for a peaceful transformation.

But political changes came all of a sudden when Ladislav Adamec resigned from Premiership on 7th December, and on the same day, Milos Jakes and Miroslav Stephen were expelled from CPCZ at its Presidium session. Marian Calfa took over as the new Premier and on December 10, new Premier spoke about the government's work methods and outlined its main tasks. Calfa stressed that the economy needed exceptional measures to bring it on to a path of balanced and consistent growth and that much work was also needed in establishing civil rights and freedoms in law. Civic Forum leaders requested the students to call off their strike by mid December.

17. Summary of the World Broadcast, December 7, 1989; EE-0633, B/1.

On December 28, in another credible move, the Federal Assembly proposed Vaclav Havel as the President and Alexander Dubcek as its Chairman. Thus, the year of 1989 was indeed an year of changes for Czechoslovakia and these changes were continuing throughout the year and came to the peak stage during November and December.¹⁸

In his address to the Nation in Czechoslovakian T.V. on January 1, 1990, Vaclav Havel broke with the traditions of the past 40 years by admitting that the country was not prospering. The outdated economy was squandering energy and the state action called itself a state of the various people was humiliating and exploiting the workers. He saw two main tasks ahead, the need for early dignified and free elections and the concern to ensure respect for the interests, the national interest and religious traditions of the two sovereign nations of the Czechs and Slovaks. In January, the Czechoslovakian government further requested the Soviet government for more troops withdrawal. In the reply, Gorbachev stated that it was not just a question

18. M.L. Sondhi, "Czechoslovakia: Changing Agenda", World Focus, (New Delhi: vol. 11, no. 78, July-August 1990); pp. 31-4.

of 70000 troops and their families but all of the 'immense of ammunition' which had struggled over the past 20 years and which could not be moved overnight. In February an agreement was reached between the two countries for the remaining troops withdrawal. The official Text Declaration of the Soviet-Czech Treaty came on February 26, 1990. On May 7, an agreement was reached between Czechoslovakia and EEC for trade and cooperation.

June was an important month for Czechoslovakia since the general elections had taken place and the new government sworn in. Election results were officially announced on June 10, 1990. In the elections the Civic Forum got majority in both of the Chambers of Czechoslovakian Federal Assembly. They got majority in Czech Republic as well as Slovak Republic. In Chamber of People, Civic Forum got majority. They got 53.15 per cent votes in Czech Republic and 32.54 per cent votes in Slovak Republic. In Chamber of Nations also Civic Forum secured majority by getting 49.96 per cent votes in Czech Republic and 37.26 per cent votes in Slovak Republic.¹⁹ On June 13, an agreement was reached between EFTA and Czechoslovakia on trade relations.

19. Gordon Wightman, "Collapse of the Communist Rule in Czechoslovakia and the June 1990 Parliamentary Elections", Parliamentary Affairs, vol. 44, no. 1, 1990; pp. 94-100.

Now we will examine the comments by the Soviet leaders during these changes in this Central-East European country. See Gorbachev's comment; "Setting up the task of sharply developing the country's social and economic development, we at first were playing an emphasis on mutual incentives. It should be developed in such a way that the party could bring into play its creative power as the political vanguard of the society and the Soviets could represent themselves as full fledged representative bodies in accordance with Lenin's notion of their role. It is also necessary to ensure that the activity of all party, state and public organizations officially and citizens be based on a strict observance of legality, that the organic combination of initiative and responsibility be ensured. The creation of the judicial basis for socialist state should crown the reorganisation of the political system".²⁰ By this comment Gorbachev was hinting at the legality and the rearrangement of the principles in the political system. Here he refers to Lenin's notion, because Gorbachev believed that no ruler was able to rule the Soviet Union after Lenin.

20. Summary of the World Broadcast, April 13, 1989; EE-0124, B/3.

On April 18, 1989, in a meeting with Milos Jakes, Gorbachev shared the ideas that; "perhaps the most complex thing in reconstruction is to overcome the inertia of the previous thinking and the habits coming out of the period of stagnation. At the first stage of restructuring, what had dominated was analysis of the past, discussions, the direction in which to conduct matters and how to solve the acute problems which had accumulated".²¹ This transition is complex, since many people used to certain procedures are embarking on the changes with indecision and sometimes even with nervousness. But the changes are virtually to improve essentially all spheres of public activity. This statement indicates that still some inertia is there about the changes in Soviet Union and in order to overcome this, reforms should be carried out with a critical evaluation of the past.

In another significant development in the Czechoslovakian-Soviet relations, the 'IZVESTIYA' had published an article in October 1989, condemned the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 and the Brezhnev Doctrine lay behind it. Saying that August

21. Summary of the World Broadcast, August 20, 1989;
EE--0439, A2/4.

1968 completed the things began in October 1964, with the dismissal of Khrushchev and ended in the four transitional periods when there was a possibility of an alternative development undermined by the positive elements, which had accumulated during post-Stalin decade. But the invasion of Czechoslovakia put a stop to this. The truth about invasion was vitally necessary to us today, along the difficult path of Perestroika. It had to be made clear that violations of international law could not be justified, the state had to stop being repressive, unorthodoxy by force of arms and the Soviet Union will have to overcome its important syndrome of pre-eminence among the socialist states. Thus Gorbachev's statement further underlined the Soviet discarding of the Brezhnev Doctrine and the non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries.

On May 8, 1990, Alexander Dubeck received a congratulatory telegram from Anatolly Lykhanov, Chairman of the USSR Supreme Soviet. Lykhanov expected that the traditional ties of friendship and cooperation between the two countries were a special contribution to strengthen peace and international security and to the construction of a Common European Home.

We can examine how did the Soviet Union react to the election results in Czechoslovakia. We can consider

the comment of Boris Pankin, the Ambassador of Soviet Union to Prague. Pankin dealt in details with Soviet-Czechoslovakian relations. He stressed that; "he wanted to develop and strengthen mutual confidence between both countries as he sees a certain deficit in this field. Bilateral contacts should be built on good neighbourhood and the Slavonic roots of the two states and allied commitments". He welcomed deideologisation of Czechoslovakian-Soviet relations and pointed out that neither Czechoslovakia nor the Soviet Union was attempting to harm or restrict mutual relations deliberately. Thus, Boris Pankin condemned the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 and denied the Soviet involvement in the 1989 November incidents to topple the communist regime in Czechoslovakia. The Soviet Union welcomed every step that would help to strengthen the mutual ties between the two countries.²² In the Federal Assembly session held on 3rd July, it dealt **extensively** with the country's transition to the market economy, the privatisation of the state-enterprises, legal and economic reforms, territorial self-management and environmental concerns.

22. Sharon, L. Milchick, "Czechoslovak's Velvet Revolutions", Current History, (Philadelphia: vol. 89, no. 551, December 1990); pp. 413-6.

A Soviet government statement transmitted by 'TASS' on December 4, 1989, said that the 1968, the Soviet leadership had justified its 'unbalanced and inadequate approach' to the events against the background of East-west confrontation, but in the light of the all facts now known, the Warsaw Treaty armies' entry into Czechoslovakia was unjustified and erroneous. History had shown how important it was to use political means for the solution of any problems and strictly observe the principle of non-interference in internal affairs of other states.²³ Soviet President sent a congratulatory telegram to Vaclav Havel, at his re-election on July 5, in which he hoped, that the joint effort for further development of good neighbourly and mutually advantageous cooperation in the spirit of declaration on the relations between USSR and CSFR will bring benefit to both countries and they will strengthen friendship and will significantly contribute to peace and cooperation on the European continent. From the analysis of this chapter, it is cleared that the Soviet Union initiated the reform process and that the Czechoslovaks were deriving experience from the Soviet examples. It was none other than the Soviet Union which enabled Czechoslovakia for a peaceful transformation.

23. Summary of the World Broadcast, December 6, 1989; SU-0632.

Without the encouragement of the Soviet Union this second 'Prague Spring' or 'Velvet Revolution' would not have been possible.²⁴

In the preceding pages, we have examined how Czechoslovakia was initially slow and hesitant in recognising the need for changes in its set-up, but once it adopted the course by the beginning of 1968, the events moved fast and by the close of 1990, Czechoslovakia also followed the example of other East European countries, particularly Hungary and GDR. By the end of 1990, the process of the systematic end of the socialist system in Czechoslovakia was completed and the country moved towards the stage of transition for a pluralistic democratic system.

We have also pointed out that the Soviet leadership all alone welcomed these changes in Czechoslovakia. In fact, it showed some concern as to why the Czech leadership was slow and hesitant in restructuring the Czechoslovakian society. So much so that the Gorbachev leadership went out of the way to formally apologise to Czechoslovakia for its armed intervention in 1968.

24. Jon Bloomfield, "Prague's Second Spring", Marxism Today, January 1990; pp. 46-9.

Thus we can easily see that the Soviet relations with Czechoslovakia began to transform themselves as the changes in Czechoslovakia themselves developed. Soviet policy towards changes in Czechoslovakia thus adopted more or less the same pattern as was noticeable in case of other countries of Eastern Europe. However, Soviet policy to these changes in Czechoslovakia was also conditioned by the desire of the Gorbachev leadership to continue traditionally close and friendly relations on the principles of non-intervention and equality. Obviously given the situation in the Soviet Union during 1988-90, such a pragmatic policy did appear as the only viable one.

CHAPTER - III

SOVIET POLICY TOWARDS CHANGES IN HUNGARY
(1988-1990)

SOVIET POLICY TOWARDS CHANGES IN HUNGARY, (1988-1990)

Traditionally Hungary has been a trend setter in reforms in East Europe. Way back in 1956, the uprising in Hungary marked the beginning trends for democracy and decentralisation in socialist Hungary. Since then, trends for change and reforms in Hungary continued in some form or the other.

The New Thinking in Soviet foreign policy of the Gorbachev leadership began to provide more scope for the reform movement in Hungary. Moreover, the policy of Perestroika and Glasnost initiated by the Gorbachev leadership in the Soviet Union provided yet another incentive in Hungary. Again, the developments in neighbouring Poland and GDR, particularly during 1988 further encouraged changes in Hungary.

By the beginning of 1988, it was quite clear that Hungary had begun to move away from the socialist system. The changes that occurred during 1988-89, soon took the course of reforms and in the systematic end of the socialist system in Hungary. On the other hand, the year 1990 may be regarded as a transition period marking the beginning of post-socialist Hungary.

We shall now systematically examine these changes

and then we shall attempt at correlating them with Soviet responses. Such an exercise will enable us to understand Soviet policy to the changes in Hungary during the period under the study, 1988-90.

The year 1988, started with the new year message of Karoly Groz to the nation, he addressed; "Changes in the Soviet Union had brought about an entirely new situation in Hungary's relations with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. Policies of Mikhail Gorbachev had facilitated the socialist countries policy of opening up to the outside world".¹ By this new year message, Karoly Groz was emphasising that the openness should be seen not only in the domestic policies but also in foreign policy as well.

On January 7, the Hungarian National Assembly approved the Economic Plan for 1989. The Hungarian plans were aimed at the total reconstruction of the economic mechanism and radical trends towards the acceleration process. The plans envisaged at shifting unstable barter to direct commercial links between enterprises, introduction of markets, price reforms, trade links with the West (EEC).

1. Summary of the World Broadcast, January 4, 1988; EE-0039, B/2, B/3.

Identification of the technological areas of cooperation, enhancing of economic mechanism, restructuring of economic and trade laws and resolutions of individual countries.²

The Hungarian Foreign Minister Gulya Horn declared that only political reforms could provide genuine safeguards and confidence that the objective features do not arbitrarily intervene in the economic process. The Foreign Minister's statement implied that the economic and political reforms should go together, instead they should not collide. Another statement from Joseph Majrai, the Hungarian Deputy Premier said that with the transformation of the Hungary's economy, the framework of the CMEA also must be changed. This comment showed that in the socialist world. Hungary cannot progress unless some necessary changes are brought about in the framework of the collective economic mechanism, i.e. CMEA.

As a boost to the economic changes, the Hungarian news agency, 'NEPSABADSAG' started economic service with its issue from January 8 onwards. In same month, an agreement of disarmament among Hungary, Italy and Finland was reached. It indicated that Hungary was not only aiming changes in internal policies but also in the external policies.

2. Oleg Romy Antsov, "Perestroika in Hungary", International Affairs, no. 9, September 1988; p. 52.

On May 14, the first independent trade union, named the 'Democratic Union of the Scientific Workers' was established. This showed that Hungary was willing to adopt political pluralism. It was more clearly seen in the resignation of Janos Kadar from the post of General Secretary of the HWSP, after serving for 32 years. Karoly Groz replaced him.³ After the leadership changes, Karoly Groz admitted that the bilateral relations between Hungary and Soviet Union had not yet been fulfilled. He added that predictions and forecasts for 1989 and 1990 indicated that there might be problems, problems on whose solutions they had to work jointly for. On August 20, 1988, in an interview with the Hungarian Communist Party paper 'NEPSABADSAG' Matyas Szoureus foresaw Hungary's role as a 'bridge in East-west relations'. This forecast clearly indicated that the foreign policy concepts of Hungary had been totally changed. Because it aimed at cooperation even beyond the socialist bloc. Hungary's changed attitude in the socialist-capitalist relations is further clarified from Hungary's signing of an agreement on 27th September with EEC for the expansion of trade relations for another ten years.⁴ It was felt that the framework of Hungarian

3. Valery Mustov, "The Turning Point", New Times, no.20, 1988; pp. 23-5.

4. Alexi Antonov, "The Aim is an Integrated Market", New Times, no.33, July 1988; pp. 31-2.

economic measures needed exceptional measures to bring it into a path of balanced and constant development. So the priority was given to the need of a decisive renewal of the entire economy on mutual cooperation and of the mechanism of multilateral cooperation. In another significant move in the foreign policy agenda, Hungary started diplomatic relations with Albania on 30th September. Here we see the Hungarian 'Openness'. In the month of October, the Hungarian National Assembly approved two important laws, i.e., the Company Law on 5th October. It permitted foreign companies to operate and invest in Hungary. It is to be considered as a part of the New Economic Mechanism. Further on October 16, the Hungarian National Assembly decided that the Election Law should be publicly debated. It was on the assumption that the government and its functions must be brought into public gaze. Again on September 24, the Hungarian government decided to drop the term 'Scientific Socialism' from Hungarian texts. It was as a part of the Hungarian move to drift away from the traditional socialism.

On November 13, another political party namely 'The Alliance of Free Democrats' was formed in Hungary. In an another significant political development Karoly Groz resigned from the Premiership and he was replaced by Miklos Nemeth, in order to strengthen the 'Acceleration Process'.⁵

5. J.G. Tiwari, "East Europe in Turmoil", Radical Humanist, vol. 53, no. 3, June 1989; p. 29.

Thus, we saw in 1988 that a lot of structural, political, economic and ideological changes had taken place in the Hungarian society. This process of changes more or less vigorously continued in 1989 throughout Hungary. The changes in 1989 started with the approval of the Right to strike by the Hungarian National Assembly. Further with the beginning of 1989, talks were started for the withdrawal of Soviet troops stationed in Hungary. On January 30, the Hungarian Premier Miklos Nemeth declared that as a prelude to reduce Cold War tension, the Hungarian Army would be reduced by about 9 per cent between 1989-91. Not satisfied with these types of reforms, the Hungarian Democratic Forum sent letters to Gorbachev, in February, for more and more sweeping changes. On February 11, yet another political party viz., 'the Hungarian Peoples Party' was formed. Further on February 10 and 11, the extraordinary session of the HWSP took the decision to adopt multiparty system in Hungary. All these show that unless some structural changes are made, the situation would go out of Hungary's control.

On April 13, the 'Christian Democratic Party' (CDP) was formed in Hungary.⁶ Again on September 26, Hungary proposed a new East European Cooperation system. It essentially implied a system based on mutuality of interests and cooperation.

6. Vladimir Gerasimov, "Hungary: Realignment", New Times, no. 17, April 25-May 1, 1989; p. 29.

On October 7, a new political party called, HSP was formed out of a faction of HWSP. With the formation of HSP, the Hungarian changes took a vigorous shape. The HWSP lost the privilege of being the vanguard of the Hungarian society, as many of HWSP leaders left it and joined HSP. In the month of November also, a series of reforms took place as there were reforms in the mass media on 15th November, and the educational system on 19th November and the government abolished the expression 'Kulak' with the educational reforms. Further, on November 27, in the Hungarian Referendum, the people generallyly opted for the presidential system.

The reforms of Hungary continued throughout 1990. With the beginning of 1990, the Hungarian government requested the Soviet Union for the withdrawal of more Soviet troops from Hungary. In April, the most important thing took place in the history of post war Hungary, viz., the Hungarian General Elections. In the official declaration of results, the Hungarian Democratic Forum won with 165 seats. The Alliance of Free Democrats got 92 seats and the Hungarian Socialist Party (HSP) finished last with 33 seats and 8.55 per cent of votes.⁷ The Hungarian Democratic Forum started negotiations to form a government with Jozsef Antall as its leader. By the

7. Bargabus, Kacz, "Political Pluralism in Hungary: The 1990 Elections", Soviet Studies, vol. 43, no. 1, 1991; p. 107.

end of May, more troops were withdrawn from Hungary. On May 9, the Hungarian National Assembly made a draft resolution to withdraw from the Warsaw Treaty Organisation (WTO). In September, Hungary planned for a further cut in the military budget. The result of the Hungarian Referendum came out, in which 85.9 per cent of people supported the direct election of the President, and 14.1 per cent supported the right of the Parliament to choose the President. In the same month Jozsef Antall proposed a 'Central East European Union' and the Hungarian Foreign Minister Gulya Horn noted that the Europe was assuming its national characteristics now. All these comments show us the 'Pan-European elements' in the Hungarian foreign policy.

Now we shall attempt at correlating the Hungarian changes with the Soviet responses. The most important thing to smoothen the Hungarian reform process was the Soviet support. With timely encouragement and statements, the Soviet Union indeed accelerated these reform process. To quote Gorbachev; "the leadership of the CPSU, carefully familiarised itself with the demands of the 13th Party Congress and compared them with our ideas as a way of checking ourselves against our former experience. Of course, the situation is not the same, but there are many similarities in the spirit of theoretical views and

conceptions".⁸

This statement shows that the Soviet Union was drawing upon the experiences of Hungary. It further meant that the Soviet Union would familiarise, study and adapt the Hungarian experience and adjust it to the Soviet conditions. It is further clarified that Nikolay Shishlin, Deputy Head of the Propaganda Department of CPSU. He comments; "Keen interest is natural, as the Hungarian experience attracts attention also beyond the borders. All socialist countries having their own characteristics and solutions to their own problems are a kind of social laboratory. The exchange of experience offer a major help for the leaders of the other socialist countries. Of course, the other course of interest lies in Hungary's growing economic problems. I do not think of the foreign debts, although there are indisputable results. The party congress proved that the Hungarian communists evaluate the situation and face the reality in a consistent way. We will concentrate on practical issues. This will serve the implementation of the decisions of HWSP and CPSU to strengthen the relations within the socialist framework."⁹

8. Text Report of the Gorbachev-Groz Meeting, Current Digest of the Soviet Press (Moscow: August 3, 1988); XL, No. 27, p. 20.

9. Summary of the World Broadcast, June 17, 1989; EE-0233, A2/1.

This comment more or less reflects Gorbachev's opinion, that the Soviet Union was aiming at a 'Give and Take' policy through these changes.

Gennady Gerasimov commented at the decision of Hungarian National Assembly's plan to have multiparty system in Hungary; "The announcement of the adoption of the Resolutions in Hungary on the development of political pluralism has been received with great interest in the Soviet Union. Every country builds socialism in its own way. The CPSU is studying the lessons of the fraternal countries with adventure. It takes overall the things which may be useful for the Soviet Union. We have recently been studying most thoroughly the accessions of Hungarian Comrades. The CPSU has an undoubted interest that the democratisation process should develop actively in the Soviet society and advance further dynamically. This political reform is precisely the kind of mechanism that would support social life, develop openness and guarantee pluralism of views".¹⁰ By this comment the Soviet Union implied that there should be pluralism of opinions and openness in the Hungarian society to make the democratisation process smoother.

In the same month (February 1989), another important comment came from the Soviet academician Oleg

10. Summary of the World Broadcast, February 10, 1989; EE-0393, A2/1.

Bogomolov, he declared; "International problems cannot be solved any more by force and the principle of limited sovereignty called the Western terminology, the 'Brezhnev Doctrine' belongs to the past. At present, there can be no thinking on the basis of the past and in such circumstances, although in the end, the Hungarians are the ones, who must change their own path. It is possible to put forward certain hypotheses".¹¹

Thus, the Soviet Union discarded the 'Brezhnev Doctrine' or the doctrine of 'Limited Sovereignty'. The Soviet Union rejected the use of force in solving international problems, rather they preferred that the belligerent parties should solve their problems through mediations and negotiations.

On March 2, 1989, Miklos Nemeth the Hungarian Premier, arrived in Moscow for a fraternal visit and to inform the Soviets, the reform process which were going on in his country. In reply to Hungarian Premier's comment, Gorbachev added that; "Each ruling communist party fulfills its tasks in accordance with its historic conditions and national values and works out its policy independently. At the same time, there is much common ground in the parties' activities, as they search for ways to top socialism's potential as fully as possible

11. Summary of the World Broadcast, February 24, 1989; EE-0393, A2/1.

in the interest of the people. It can be said that the main thing for all of us is to direct and support on to such and to ensure the conditions necessary to bring out all these creative abilities. The USSR is now at a watershed as the old way of life. Habits and ideas are more fundamentally revised. Economic structures are undergoing radical renewal and a democratic political system is being created to restore power to Soviets or local governing councils".¹² By this comment, Gorbachev hinted that the socialist countries foreign policies must arise from the critical evaluation of the past. Since the ideas and habits of the people have revised radically, the economic structures and the political systems also should change accordingly.

Seeing the developments in Hungary, the Soviet foreign ministry spokesman Gennady Gerasimov commented; "Every country should decide the issues and affect it. The Soviet Union could offer advice and discuss the issues, but the right to decide is not ours • Moscow does not command anything. It does not say do this and this. Moscow only listens to the experiences. Perhaps they can utilise something from our experience. It is also possible that the experience might be negative in

12. Summary of the World Broadcast, June 10, 1989; EE-0399, B/5.

some spheres. Perhaps we shall establish that something should have been done otherwise. This is how our relations take place now-a-days. The relationship is not one of superior-subordinate but of equal partners.¹³

From the above statement, it was clarified that the Soviet Union was no longer interested in the political and economic domination over Eastern Europe. Moreover, the Soviet Union emphasised in its relations with the fraternal countries that each country should develop within its own special framework and from their own experiences. But the Hungarian changes took a dramatic turn with the formation of the Hungarian Socialist Party (HSP) on October 7, 1989. It came into being after the split with the Hungarian Workers' Socialist Party (HWSP).

We can examine, how did the Soviet Premier, Nikolay Ryzhkov react to the formation of HSP. He declared; "The decision to forward Hungarian Socialist Party is a sovereign Hungarian internal affairs which we respect. It is the right of the Hungarian Comrades should decide in what they consider opportune. The development of Hungary and socialism should apparently proceed along the new path. The changes in Eastern Europe originating from Perestroika are under the influence of

13. Bill Lomax, "Hungary from Radicalism to Democracy: The Successful Failure of the Reform Commission", The Impact of Gorbachev: The First Phase, 1985-1990, in D.W. Spring (ed.), (London: Printer Publishers, 1991); pp. 154-5.

great novelties of the Soviet Union."¹⁴ This statement further indicated the Soviet principle of non-interference. It again added that these changes could become a reality only after the advocacy of Perestroika and under the influence and novelties of the USSR.

Gorbachev's comment was more frank, when compared with the Soviet Premier's; "The Socialist Community is necessary, but it must function upon new foundations and new principles". It rejected the view that the changes would jeopardise European balance. He added that the world should develop within a definite post war mechanism but within that framework changes are inevitable for all.¹⁵ Through this statement, the Soviet Union did positively welcome the changes in the Hungarian Communist Party. Here we got the Soviet Union's view that since everything in the socialist system is changing, the vanguard of these changes, i.e., the Communist parties should also change accordingly.

Yet another important milestone in the Hungarian reform process was the Hungarian Party Party Congress in the month of October 1989 and in which many important

14. Summary of the World Broadcast, October 10, 1989; EE-0885, A2/1.

15. Summary of the World Broadcast, October 13, 1989; EE-0586, A2/2.

decisions were taken for the acceleration of changes.

The CPSU Central Committee sent a greeting hoping that; "It is taking place in a difficult time for Hungary and expressing the wish that the delegates will find solutions which are based on the past traditions of the Hungarian Communist and Workers' movement and in the present day understanding of the socialist ideals and the possibilities contained in it. It will correspond in the best possible way to the fundamental interests of the Hungarian people and promote peaceful development and security in Europe. Common basic values of socialism and peace will always foster neighbouring relations between the Soviet Union and Hungarian people".¹⁶

Here it is obtained the 'Pan-European' concepts of the Soviet Union within its broad security framework about Europe. Moreover, Nikolay Shishlin, Deputy Head of the Department of CPSU commented on the Hungarian Party Congress; "The Soviet leadership was aware that the Budapest Congress would take major steps towards renewing the party, its policies and methods. I think the changes should not be a dramatised process. I am confident that the CPSU will maintain relations with all Hungarian parties that strive for good relations and cooperations with the

16. Summary of the World Broadcast, October 7, 1989; EE-0581, A2/1.

CPSU. In any case, I do not think that we will revise our relationship with HSP in any way".¹⁷ Nikolay Shishlin, by his comment welcomed the decision to renew the Hungarian Communist Party and its policies and methods. He further ruled out the notion that the CPSU will not maintain its old relationship with the HSP. This comment necessarily implied that as the Communist parties were the vanguards of the socialist society, in order to make changes in the society, the communist parties also should change accordingly.

Moreover, the Soviet Ambassador to Hungary, Boris Stukalin, reacted to the Hungarian Party Congress, he said; "The Congress is an event of extraordinary importance to Hungary in keeping with the principles of independence and non-interference approved in the relationship between the CPSU and other parties. I do not feel authorised to assess the Congress and the Resolutions it passed".¹⁸ This comment itself aimed that the Soviet Union was no longer interested in the internal affairs its fraternal countries and it further aimed at the complete independence of Hungarian Communist Party.

Yet another important opinion on the Hungarian Party Congress came from the Soviet historian, Roy

17. Summary of the World Broadcast, October 13, 1989; EE-0586, A2/2.

18. Summary of the World Broadcast, October 12, 1989; EE-0585, A2/2.

Medvedev; "The social explosion of the elemental force was quelled by an external force. It is natural that all this had to rise to the surface again, save time and the moment of transformation in the Soviet Union was and outstanding occasion for this. There is the need for powerful change in the political system. HSP can promote this by electing new leaders".¹⁹ The historian's comment shoed us, how did the Soviet Union relate to the reform process in Hungary. It again related these processes to a call over to the representative democracy, their social process and finally to their foreign policy.

On May 15, 1990, the Soviet Foreign Minister, Eduard Shevardnadze, in an interview with 'OGONEK' commented that; "The Soviet Union is interested in a situation in which its neighbours are free, democratic and prosperous states, equally open to East and West and not in a situation in check there is artificially created countries around the USSR out of doubtful and shaky regimes".²⁰ This interview clarified the Soviet Union's views on the Hungarian changes. The Soviet foreign policy in this respect was defined as a bridge in the

19. Summary of the World Broadcast, October 10, 1989; EE-0583, C/15.

20. Summary of the World Broadcast, May 17, 1990; SU-0924, A2/1.

East-West relations. The USSR was no longer interested in the artificially created systems of socialism. Further, they insisted that each country should develop in its own way.

On November 21, 1990, on the Hungarian T.V., Gorbachev commented about Soviet-Hungarian relations; "There is no tension between Soviet Union and Hungary and relations are absolutely normal and good and there are issues to be solved. I also stress the good relationship and further possibility of inter-government talks". Mikhail Gorbachev stressed that the principally important thing was the renewal of HSP in accordance with the crucial decisions of the 28th CPSU Congress. He emphasised the striving of the Soviet communists towards cooperation with the broadest circles in society, with all who are interested in a decision and the dynamic improvement in economic and social situation and the moral and political climate in the country on the basis of democracy, legality and the protection of the rights and interests of the working men. Such cooperation is an essential and reliable road in the consolidation of the society to overcoming all chances of destructive forces and dangerous confrontations.

Gorbachev wished Hungarian comrades and the people of Hungary success in overcoming economic

difficulties and spoke for the development for all that is good and mutually beneficial which has been created by joint efforts in relations with the Soviet Union and Hungary.²¹ Gorbachev pointed out the necessity of applying the 28th CPSU Congress's decisions to the Hungarian conditions. Further, he spoke of the new bases of the foreign policy of the Soviet Union.

Nikolay Shishlin's response to the Hungarian reform process is as follows: "The extensive and intensive reforms in the Hungarian economy, politics and culture will continue in the Soviet Union. Although it is obvious that as a result of changes in Western Europe which has now moved into immediate interest of the Hungarian politicians. The system of relations which has evolved in the past decades makes out only important but imperative that the two countries should cooperate fundamentally".²² This was an important comment regarding the Soviet-Hungarian relations during these changes. This comment was frankly admitting that the Soviet Union drew some positive experiences from Hungarian reforms. The USSR also admitted that the Soviet type of economy no longer interested the Hungarians, as they move closer to Western Europe.

21. Summary of the World Broadcast, November 24, 1990; EE-0622, A2/2.

22. Summary of the World Broadcast, December 3, 1990; EE-0622, A2/1.

From the numerous statements the Soviet leaders to the changes in Hungary, it can be clarified that the Soviet Union was actively supporting these changes. The USSR did not want to interfere in the process of changes in Hungary. Instead, they actively supported it by all possible means. The changes which had taken place in Hungary from 1988-90 in any way did not affect the bilateral and institutionalised relations between Hungary and the Soviet Union. In the light of the 'New Thinking' the USSR insisted that the Hungarian leaders should decide the issues that affect them.²³ All these reactions to the changes in this Central-East European country show that the Soviet Union was aiming at a 'Give and Take' policy in these changes. The comments on these changes by the Soviet leaders express the elements contained in the Soviet policy towards these changes. As had envisaged in their policy, the USSR aimed at a gradual and evolutionary transformation rather than a bloody and violent revolt.²⁴

Our discussion about Hungary brings about some salient features of Soviet policy towards the changes in Hungary during 1988-90. Firstly, during the initial period of 1988, the Soviets welcomed these changes in

23. Ivan Volgeys, "Hungary: Dependency of the Reformed", Soviet East European Survey, in Vojtech Mastinty (ed.) , (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988); p. 245.

24. Istvan, Magcur, "Reforms under Pressure: Hungary", East European Quarterly, vol. 24, no. 1, Spring 1990; pp. 95-6.

Hungary as a logical sequence of Perestroika and Glasnost in their own country, the systematic end of the socialist system in Hungary was not still considered. Secondly, after 1988, when the pace of changes in Hungary gained momentum, it was obvious to the Soviet leadership that the socialist system in Hungary had reached its end, and it was poised to be replaced by a pluralistic democratic system. The Soviets had no option but to welcome it. Thirdly, during 1990 the Soviet Union was deeply engrossed in its domestic problems and as such it took the only viable course of recognising these changes in Hungary and to adjust its bilateral relations with Hungary accordingly. Fourthly, the Soviet Union consistently adopted a non-interventionist policy and refrained from interfering in the internal affairs of Hungary. Finally, the fact that the momentous changes in Hungary came about in a peaceful manner and with popular sanction was particularly welcomed by the socialist leadership as it obviously thought that the Soviet Union should adopt the same path in resolving its own domestic problems.

CHAPTER - IV

SOVIET POLICY TOWARDS CHANGES IN ROMANIA
(1988-1990)

SOVIET POLICY TOWARDS CHANGES IN ROMANIA (1988-1990)

Of all the East European states, Soviet relations with Romania have traditionally been problematic. This was mainly due to inclination of the Romanian leadership to play a kind of non-aligned role in the intra-bloc relationship. However, during the early years of Gorbachev leadership, relations with Romania remained correct, if not warm. Under the influence of Glasnost, Soviet media had to look critically at the absence of any indications of restructuring in Romania.

In fact, when the initial reports of the coup against Ceausescu regime began to filter through, it was generally believed in the west that the Soviet Union might have a hand in the overthrow of the Ceausescu regime. But as Meet Skak points out; "But investigations do not confirm the Moscow conspiracy theory, which also would be surprising in view of the limited Soviet leverage over the internal affairs in Romania".¹

When the coup occurred in Romania during the last week of December, the Congress of Soviets were meeting in Moscow. The speeches made in the Soviet

1. Meet Skak, "The Changing Soviet-East European Relationship", Soviet Foreign Policy in Transition, in Roger Kanet & Others (ed.), (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1992); p. 32.

Parliament clearly indicated that the Soviet Union's sympathies were on the side of the anti-Ceausescu forces.

Gorbachev made an authoritative announcement when he told the Parliament; "the resolute support of the Soviet Union for the just cause of the Romanian people".²

Throughout 1990, it was clear that the Gorbachev leadership saw the changes in Romania as a logical sequence of movement for democracy and openness in the entire East Europe. So Soviet relations with the new leadership of Romania began to take shape during 1990 on the same pattern as with other East European countries. Suffice it to note that the Gorbachev leadership followed a policy of non-intervention towards Romania although it certainly encouraged the internal mechanism of changes in the country. Yet the Soviet support to the developments in Romania particularly during 1989-90 was crucial.

Until the 27th CPSU Congress, Romanian propaganda claimed that the country had long since embarked on modernisation and structural reforms and portrayed Nicoloe Ceausescu as a dynamic, innovative proponent of a thorough restructuring and democratisation process, encompassing all spheres of Romanian society. Ceausescu's prolonged 'New Thinking' of the Romanian style had a tradition in post war Romanian policy. Romania claimed that it had

2. The Telegraph (Calcutta), December 24, 1989.

initiated its own brand of a 'New Economic Financial Mechanism' as far back as 1978.

Speaking about the need to improve and develop socialism, the Romanian Premier emphasised that the basis should be of lessons and experiences peculiar to Romania. Thus Ceausescu was equally categorical in rejecting public enterprises' autonomy on the ground that this endangered the guiding role of the party over the economy. He defended Romania's social and political patterns against outside interference. He boosted himself saying that Romania had already started reform process 20 years ago. All these comments and trends were a categorical rejection of the Soviet model of the renewal of the socialism and stressed that socialism should develop depending on the specific conditions in each countries.

The 27th Party Congress of the CPSU in February 1986 and the CPSU Party Plenum in February 1987 were given only minimal coverage in the Romanian media, because the Soviet reform was not the Romanian leadership's primary concern but the fear of loosing control in the CMEA and in its integration process. In its dealing with crisis-ridden Romania, the Soviet leadership had devised a sophisticated policy. While not wanting to be seen as supporting Ceausescu's domestic and foreign policies, the Soviet leadership did not appear interested in destabilising him to a degree to fan national or even

anti-Soviet feelings among the population.³

However, Soviet propaganda was clearly trying to show the Romanian public as well as the political, technical and cultural elite, that the Soviet Union had turned into a locomotive of progress with the bloc and that increased economic cooperation with Moscow would be beneficial. Soviet propagandists pointed out that the increase in Romanian-Soviet trade in previous years had been a result of Romania's greater readiness to make investments on Soviet soil and boost production cooperation and specialisation with its neighbour to the East. Even greater relief was promised in exchange for Romania's willingness to establish direct links among enterprises and joint-ventures along the lines listed by the Soviet Union. Such arrangements, even if not fully applicable under the existing Romanian leadership might have found more support from a future generation of Romanian leaders as well as among the Romanian people, who had been deeply disappointed with Ceausescu's specific brand of socialism even if it was clear in national colours.

Romania was the last East European country for Gorbachev to visit. Similarly, Ceausescu had been the last party leader from the bloc to go to the Soviet

3. William Zimmerman, "Soviet Relations with Yugoslavia and Romania", Soviet Policy in Eastern Europe, in Sarah Meikle John Terny (ed.), (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1984); p. 148.

Union.⁴ Gorbachev and his wife arrived in Bucharest on May 25, 1987. The speeches delivered at the official dinner gave an unusually clear picture of the differences between them. In his speech, Ceausescu did not say that the Soviet experience was relevant to Romania as it was to the rest of the bloc, or his country need to follow it. He did not pretend that any agreement of identity of views had been reached. He took the typical Romanian position expressing keen interest in cooperation in the fields of mutual interests, while throwing a deaf ear to the pressure for closer CMEA integration. He even went so far as to express disappointment about 'a certain lag in economic exchanges, production cooperation and specialisation'. Although expressing Romanian support for Gorbachev's nuclear disarmament initiatives, his ideas differed somewhat on such issues as conventional disarmament, rules of international conduct, and Romanian-Soviet foreign policy cooperation.⁵

But Gorbachev did not refer directly to the issue of reform, but the future of 'Romanian Model' and and the negative effects of Romania's reluctance to become involved in further CMEA integration were clearly

4. Karen Dawisha, Eastern Europe, Gorbachev and Reform (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1990); p. 179.

5. Annel Ute Gabanyi, "Ceausescu and Gorbachev", Soviet-East European Survey, in Vojtech Mastny (ed.), (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988); p. 312.

implied. In keeping with the Soviet policy towards the other communist countries, Gorbachev pointed to the need for a 'qualitative change in Romanian-Soviet relations'. He clearly rejected Ceausescu's policy of pursuing cooperation pegged to Romanian interests while turning a deaf ear to Soviet Union's overall programmes. Gorbachev further replied that among party organisations, and labour collectiveness as well as in science and ideology, in which greater Romanian cooperation is needed. Gorbachev made it clear the main barrier in the Romanian-Soviet relations was the economy.

In his speeches on the importance of changing the method and style of party work, Gorbachev was clearly implying a comparison with Ceausescu's highly centralised and personalised style of leadership and the absence of discussion and collective inputs in decision making. Further Gorbachev made it unequivocally clear that the Soviet Union viewed the relationship between the economy and social policy differently from the Romanians.

Charles Gati commenting on the state of Romanian-Soviet relations stated; "By so disassociating Romania from Gorbachev's path, Ceausescu has thus signalled both his contempt for what the Soviet Union is doing and his unequivocal opposition to emulating the new Soviet model. Accordingly, chances for Ceausescu's

Romania to return to the Soviet model have further decreased, since Gorbachev's ascension to power. This is so despite that the dramatic expansion of the trade between the two countries since 1984, which reflects Ceausescu's determination to eliminate Romania's hard currency debt".⁶

Prior to 1988, while sweeping reforms were taking place throughout the Eastern bloc, Romania stood firm with its 'specific model of socialism' quite against the Soviet policies of New Thinking. Romania declared that it was following its own way of socialism specific to its conditions. In the new year message to the nation in 1989, Nicolae Ceausescu's emphasis was that each country should not look either and should develop a socialism suiting to its own priorities. The Romanian government celebrated the anniversary of Romanian-Soviet friendship treaty on February 3. On May 10, Andrei Gromyko paid a visit to Romania to discuss the reform process. On May 20, Romania declared that it is interested in trading with the west.

As an official paper of Romanian government the 'SCIENTEIA' rejected the 'Fixed Model' for socialist

6. Paul Maurer, "Reform in USSR and Eastern Europe: Is there a link?", The Soviet-East European Relations in the Gorbachev Era, in Charles Gati, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990); p. 92.

countries. And in June, Romania declared that certain structural changes were taking place in the working class of Romania. For example, the workers share in the total active population increased from about 1.29 million in 1950 to 3 million in 1965 and over 6 million in late 1980s. On June 6, 1988, the CPSU published an article saying that the relations between the socialist countries should be reversed revolutionarily. It added that, though the relations between the socialist countries had progressed substantially, yet some blank spots like economy and old political systems are still existing. The article further says that the relations should be based on equality, non-interference in each others affairs, mutual assistance, mutual advantage, independence and joint responsibility for the historical future of socialism. This article frankly admitted many of the socialist concepts should be remodified, for which Romania was not willing. It will lead automatically to the destruction of foundations between the Soviet Union and Romania. Also the cooperations of political and ideological level will stand at old levels. The article concludes by saying that since the perceptions of Romania have not been changed, these may reflect the creation of a common market and it will have to overcome a host of difficulties unless Romania initiated changes.

As an important announcement on June 23, Romanis's Premier had declared that Romania had solved the 'National Question' by giving 'Equal Rights' to all citizens irrespective of differences. On rural development he noted that in accordance with the progress - already in existence life in the countryside would basically change to bring living educational, health and cultural conditions much closer to those provided in towns. By this statement Nicoloe Ceausescu attempted to stop the international criticism on the treatment of Hungarian minorities in Transylvania. This was still the most important issue in the Romanian-Hungarian relations. Many complaints were heard that the Transylvania population of Hungary was not treated well. he tried to show the world that this population also gets its deserving importance.

Gorbachev made a striking comment on Romania on October 5, 1988. It is as follows; "The people are restructuring. We must build relations in all spheres of our life in a different way from before through Glasnost, Democratisation and the rule of law. We are discussing the active depth of Lenin's formula, "Socialism is a living creation of the masses". Through this comment, Gorbachev was indirectly saying that reforms and changes must be brought out in the Romanian society.

In his opinion, if Romania still continued in its old path and unless changes were made Romanian society would be in more troubles.

As an observation on Gorbachev's comment, Nicolae Ceausescu remarked; "various theses and concepts of building socialism and its prospects are currently being discussed in a number of socialist countries. At the same time, anti-communist circles that seek to destabilise the situation in these countries have stepped up their activities. This situation makes it necessary to give theoretical responses to the questions that have arisen and to the party and the people with a correct understanding of the socio-economic realities and principles of scientific socialism". It rejected the theories of 'Market Economy' and 'Political Pluralism'. From Ceausescu's comment, it was clear that the old guards in power were not willing to alter their course of action. On the other hand, still they gave importance to theoretical aspects of socialism rather than its practical aspects. From October 4 to 6, Romanian Premier paid an official visit to the USSR, and he discussed 'topical questions' in a 'comradely atmosphere' with the Soviet President, Mikhail Gorbachev.

Romania refused to join in an inter-Parliamentary organisation created among the socialist countries.

In an interview with 'AUSTRALIAN' on December 16, the Romanian leader commented on Soviet reforms; "Undoubtedly a longer time may pass before any improvements are made and that is what happened in the Soviet Union, which makes them highly important in the life of each respective country. Their impact on the other socialist countries depends on the activity of each country, of each party of that country. I should like to once again point out that we consider everyone should solve ones own problems independently in line with the realities in the respective society and with its developmental level. In this respect we believe that the measures taken in the Soviet Union will have a great importance for the attainment of targets, which the Soviet Union has got for itself".⁷

The above mentioned statement was the most important statements made by the Romanian leader on Romania's relations with the Soviet Union. It hinted that the Soviet Union should not interfere in the internal affairs of Romania. At the same time, Romania seemed to have forgotten the nation that if socialism fails, the whole socialist community is blamed.

7. Summary of the World Broadcast, December 21, 1988; EE-0340, C1/2.

Here Nicolae Ceausescu ignored one of the important statements of Gorbachev that "No socialist country can successfully and in a healthy rhythm make progress without understanding solidarity and mutual beneficial cooperation with the other fraternal countries".⁸ In 1989, the same situation more or less continued in the Romanian-Soviet relations. It is further specified through an article by 'SCIENTEIA' the Romanian Communist Party Daily, about the need to respect 'socialist legality'.

The first movement of protest came from an organisation named 'Romanian Democratic Action', which was banned in Romania. It sent a statement to the Soviet Union and the west outlining a programme for the post-Ceausescu period. The 26 page document from the group emphasised that Romania cannot isolate itself from the rest of Europe. The country must assume a neutrality based on democracy and thus rebuild its economy. The Romanian nation should decide on the basis of free elections and they were in favour of restructuring monarchy. The document also point out

8. M.S. Gorbachev, Perestroika: New Thinking for our Country and the World (New York: Harper and Row, 1987); p. 165.

that the Soviet, Polish and Hungarian reforms must pave the way for a change of direction in Bucharest".⁹ The document also pointed out that no socialist country cannot stand in its own way, in the present day world, and as the socialist bloc is changing, Romania should also change accordingly. For that they sought the help of the USSR and the West.

As a reply to the statement of Romanian Democratic Action, 'SCIENTEIA' has published comments of the Romanian Communist Party (RCP) on August 28, 1989 on the political changes of Eastern Europe. It says; "Socialism is built in conditions that differ from one country to another and was from one state to another by every party and every people, that are directly and fully responsible for the respective country's economic and social development and the building of socialism".¹¹ This observation again made firm the Romanian position that they were not initiating change on Soviet lines. Again on October 12, Romanian Premier said that Romania would stand firm on socialist principles. Adding that not socialist country has to copy capitalism now, we

9. Summary of the World Broadcast, August 18, 1989; EE-0538, A2/3.

10. Summary of the World Broadcast, August 30, 1989; EE-0548, B/15.

must be firm against any interference from the imperialist circles in the socialist or other countries.¹¹ He made it clear any external interference in the western powers could not weaken the communist regime in Romania.

Seeing the pressures from inside and outside, the Romanian Communist Party (RCP) Political Committee met on November 3 and discussed a number of production shortfalls, and preparations for the coming party Congress and in conclusion decided to propose to the Central Committee that Ion Sirbu be relieved as Secretary of that body in view of their taken up other posts that Ilie Matel and Iosif Szasz be elected in their post.¹² Under state council decrees of the same day, the State Planning Committee and the Ministry of Technical Supply and Control of Fixed assets management are to be viewed into a state committee for planning and technico-material supply. The Chairman of the new body will be Ion Tobu as, who is replaced as foreign minister by Ion Stoian. The RCP political committee also rejected the multiparty system. All these state that in fear of loosing power, Nicoloe Ceausescu was placing his beloved men at the key posts so that in the

11. Summary of the World Broadcast, October 14, 1989; EE-0587.

12. Summary of the World Broadcast, November 6, 1989; EE-0606.

case of peoples upsurge they could work as a team.

However, Romania experienced the last and the only violent revolution in Eastern Europe. The reason for its being the last and for its violence were one and the same - Nicolae Ceausescu. His resistance to change over the years and his order to shoot demonstrators in the Transylvanian city of Timisora in mid December, unleashed national passions of hatred and vengence against him and his family.

The immediate cause of uprising was Ceausescu's decision on December 15 to arrest a protestant minister, Laszlo Tokes, who was the representative of two million Hungarian minorities in Transylvania, in Romania. Tokes sought refuge in his Timisora parish, where his followers surrounded him in order to prevent his arrest. Police agents tried to remove him by force. In the ongoing riots, the forces opened fire on the crowd, killing hundreds and giving rise to a local rebellion. Within hourse the whole of Romania was inflamed,¹³ and on December 17 and 18, several thousand people took part in demonstrations in Timisora, in support of the Transylvanian pastor Laszlo Tokes.

13. Charles, Gati, The Bloc that failed: Soviet East European Relations in Transition (Indiana Polis: Indiana Univ. Press, 1990); p. 183.

In the capital city of Bucharest, Ceausescu made an attempt to mobilise his supporters. At a rally on December 21, 1989, it was interesting that while the Premier was addressing the rally, a mammoth rally took place in the Republic Square. The demonstration became violent and the people clashed with police. In the rally he declared that it was a 'Counter Revolution' and the demonstrations had been organised by the revanchist and imperialist circles and foreign intelligence services.

A Presidential decree on December 22 declared a state of Emergency throughout Romania. All these uprisings and demonstrations were organised by a newly formed 'Committee for Socialist Democracy'. With the Ceausescu family in flight from Bucharest, the Army became disrupted. Ferocious battles were waged in streets, in secret tunnels, in the capital city of the Bucharest and at Radio and Television stations. On Christmas day, Ceausescu and his wife were shown in the T.V. appearing before a military tribunal, which found them guilty after a short-trial and ordered their execution.

After Christmas, the appeals for support were gradually replaced by reports of gradual normalisation. The Council of National Salvation Front met and selected Ion Iliescu as the Romanian Chairman, Umitra Mazila as its

first Deputy Chairman, Petre Roman as the Romanian Premier, Nicolae Militon as the Defence Minister. On December 27, Ion Iliescu and Petre Roman received Soviet Ambassador Y. Tyazh Inlkov, who on behalf of Mikhail Gorbachev conveyed sincere congratulations to Ion Iliescu and assurances of Soviet support on Romania's road to renewal. Congratulations were also conveyed to Premier Petre Roman from Soviet Premier, Nicolay Ryzhkov.

On the same day, Ion Iliescu spoke on telephone to Gorbachev, who wished to express warm feelings of support for Romania's revolutionary transformations. The CMEA head V. Sychov promised sincere cooperation to the Iliescu regime. By the end of December, the country came to normalcy. Changes took place in the Romanian press. The new government decided that the political and state activities should be supervised and prepared a plan for agricultural restructuring. For the first time, the ecological and environmental issues were discussed by the government giving it deserving importance.¹⁴ A further programme was drawn for free trade unions and most importantly the government discussed the plans for the next three months.

14. Trud Giberg, "Romania: Will History Repeat Itself?", Current History (Philadelphia: vol. 89, no. 551, December 1990); pp.409-12.

On December 29, the first meeting of the new government took place. The meeting was chaired by the Premier, Petre Roman and Ion Iliescu delivered a speech. He said that all the unnecessary laws of the Ceausescu regimes were going to be abolished. And he hinted at the reshuffling of the ministry by inducting two more ministers. Seglus Celac, the Romanian Foreign Minister invited the Soviet Foreign Minister for a working visit in his country.

Thus the month of December 1989 was very important in the history of Romania though a violent revolt had taken place to oust Nicolae Ceausescu. An important and frank regret came from Cornlieu Bodgam, who was a spokesman of the Foreign Ministry of Romania noting that toughest barriers had hampered the development of relations with the USSR, because of Ceausescu's fierce opposition to Perestroika and Glasnost on the one hand and the Brezhnev Doctrine on the other. Since both of these had vanished, there was every possibility for peace to develop Romanian-Soviet relations. Thus Romania at the last moment regretted saying that the Soviet style of reforms could have been implemented earlier, thus avoiding a bloody revolt. Now they were willing to cooperate with the Soviet Union on all fronts and to make a peaceful transformation for the attainment of goals set

by the Soviet Union.¹⁵

On January 9, Romania sought the restoration of relations with the USA. Adding fan to fire by the end of January riots had taken place in Transylvania and even unrest were seen amongst the troops. The regime could understand the gravity of the situation. They realised unless some urgent measures are taken, this situation would go worse and they foresaw another possibility of revolt. Romania decided to go for elections in May 1990. There were three parties in the fray. The National Salvation Front led by the former communists headed by Ion Iliescu, the National Liberal Party of Radu and the Christian Democratic Party under Ion Ratu.

On May 20, the elections took place. In the Presidential election Ion Iliescu emerged victorious by securing 83 per cent of votes, Radu got 11 per cent votes and Ion Ratu got 6 per cent votes. In the Romanian Senate the National Salvation Front became the majority party, by securing 66 per cent votes, National Liberal Party got 9.5 per cent votes and the Romanian Ecological Party got 5 per cent votes. The Christian Democratic Party was no where in the picture. So the National

15. Mark Almond, "Romania Since the Revolution", Government and Opposition (London: vol.25, no.4, Autumn 1990); pp. 495-6.

Salvation Front got landslide majority to form the new government. The NSF elected Ion Iliescu as its Chairman, Damitry Mazilvi as the Deputy Chairman, Petre Roman as the Premier and Nicolae Milieu as the Minister of Defence. We will analyse the Soviet responses to the changes in Romania and correlate them with the Soviet policy of new thinking on East Europe.

Moscow World Service (in English) reported on December 21, that the Politbureau member Saykov had said that the current developments in Romania were not expected. In an interview with Radio Moscow he said that Romanians were well aware of the general trend of democratisation and of the Soviet Perestroika and their desire for Perestroika in Romania was understandable. He added that Romania appeared to be unhappy over the continued administrative command methods of their government. He further noted that the Romanian leadership must open a dialogue with the people rather than the use of force to subdue discontent.¹⁶ The Politbureau member's comment indicated that the Soviet principle of non-interference and the rejection of the use of force.

Again on December 21, the Soviet Foreign Minister

16. Summary of the World Broadcast, December 22, 1989; SU-0646.

Eduard Shevardnadze declared that; "I can only express my profound regret. We are categorically opposed to the use of force". This comment also expressed the Soviet view that force cannot be used to solve the internal and external problems of one country. Further on December 20 and 21, 'TASS' reported condemnation from Yugoslavia, Hungary, GDR, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia of the use of violence against the demonstrators in Romania. The 21st December issue of 'IZVESTIYA' noted that, "the offensive silence in Romania about the disturbances deals with a new painful blow to Romania's international prestige".¹⁷ All these above mentioned statements also expressed the Soviet Union's profound sympathy with the Romanian people.

On December 22, 1989, the USSR Congress of Peoples Deputies passed a resolution condemning Nicolae Ceausescu's regime for trying to suppress the popular uprising against the dictatorial regime. The statement said that; "The Congress of Peoples Deputies of the USSR expresses grave concern in connection with the reports about the dramatic events in Romania, which have led to human casualties. This arouses a feeling of profound regret. The Congress further says that this was an urgent need to solve the existing problems peacefully

17. Summary of the World Broadcast, December 22, 1989; SU-0646.

and in the spirit of tolerance, humanism and respect for human rights".¹⁸

The document was adopted by a majority vote of 1809 Deputies; 32 voted against and 65 abstained. The statement was adopted by Mikhail Gorbachev, who chaired the session. Gorbachev said that the information received from the Soviet Embassy in Romania says the situation had deteriorated in the course of last night. Gorbachev's appeal for peace was supported by Alexander Dzasokhov, acting Chairman of the International Affairs Committee of the USSR Supreme Soviet and the other Deputies who took the floor. It was for the first time that in the reversed condition of the congressional work, now in its second session, that a statement against a country has been made. The statement acquires significance as Romania is a member of the WTO and is the only country in the socialist bloc, where democratic reforms have not had any effect.

CPSU Politbureau member, Lev Zaikov was the first top Soviet leader who had said that the events signified lack of respect for other's opinions in that country. He had urged the romanian leadership to enter into a dialogue instead of evading it.¹⁹ Other Deputies had termed the Romanian leadership under Nicolae Ceausescu as 'totalitarian, dictatorial and Stalinist'.

18. Patriot (New Delhi), December 23, 1989.

19. Patriot (New Delhi), December 23, 1989.

The events in Romania were commented on at a briefing on December 22 by a Foreign Ministry spokesman, Perfilyev, 'TASS' reported; "We do not doubt that the Romanian people will display sufficient wisdom, maintaining calm and stability in spite of the dramatic events and that conditions will be created for normal life and new institutions of power formed under normal conditions".²⁰ These opinions further clarified the Soviet demands that the transformation to democracy should be peaceful in Romania.

The Soviet Foreign Ministry called the execution of Nicolae Ceausescu and his wife Elena as an internal affair of Romania. As spokesman Vadim Perifilyev said that the decision had; "profoundly been made taking into account the aspiration and will of the Romanian people".²¹ Further on December 26, the Soviet Premier Nikolay Ryzhkov ruled out Soviet military intervention in Romania but he added that Moscow had mobilised humanitarian aid to Romania.²²

From all these Soviet reactions, we learnt that

20. Summary of the World Broadcast, December 23, 1989; SU-0647.

21. International Herald Tribune (Paris), December 27, 1989.

22. International Herald Tribune (Paris), December 27, 1989.

Gorbachev's handling of Romanian issue was masterly and sophisticated. He had to disassociate the Soviet Union from getting involved in Romanian strife. With his carefully worded formulations he gave every bit of moral encouragement and support to the uprising of the people, indirectly encouraging even the Romanian people to resist the dictator. Simultaneously, Gorbachev resisted various hints by the West to get involved militarily contending that no such request for existence has been made by Romanians themselves. Gorbachev understood perfectly well that if there was any such involvement the Soviet Union would be later accused of manipulating internal politics in Romania.²³

The Soviet Union's reactions to the changes in Romania can be analysed from the speech made by Gorbachev on East Europe at the 28th CPSU Congress held in June 1990. He declared; "The new political thinking has helped us to see in a different way and to evaluate the world around us in a realistic manner and it has freed us from a confrontational approach in our foreign policy. How shall we build relations with the East European countries today and tomorrow? As good neighbours, which not only geography but history have also made us especially after the war history continued must that is

23. Times of India (New Delhi), December 21, 1989.

really good and valuable. That the USSR played a decisive role in the liberation of these countries from fascism and later helped them many times remained in the memory of peoples and cannot but affect the further development of our relations. What is more and this is the main thing, we have common political and economic interests. They bring us closer together in our relations and in our common movement towards a **peaceful** Europe and a Common Home. The finest relations are those which are built on voluntariness, reciprocity, respect and cooperation".²⁴

The immediate successors of the traditional government, who appeared to be transitional figures would be expected to shed Ceausescu's legacy and indeed lead Romania in accordance with the Soviet policies of reconstruction. In the case of Czechoslovakia and Hungary, the rulers themselves made these changes possible. As an exception, the people of Romania had to force the regime for changes through a violent uprising.²⁵ However, if the Soviet Union's support was not there, the Romanian transformation would not have been possible.

24. Summary of the World Broadcast, July 4, 1990; SU-0807, Cl/1.

25. Vladimir Tishi Anneune, "1989 Revolution and Romania's Future", Problems of Communism (Washington, vol. 40, no.1-2, April-June, 1991);pp. 55-9.

Here again one finds that Soviet policy towards changes in Romania certainly acted as a catalyst. Without this, opposition to the Ceausescu regime would not have gained momentum. But the bloody uprising in Romania was certainly not to the liking of the Gorbachev leadership. In fact, the use of violence in bringing about crucial changes in Romania, hereby ending the socialist system in the country was in itself an exception to the pattern of the peaceful changes through mass support in other regions of Eastern Europe. However, the Soviet leadership had no option but to accept the violent nature of changes in Romania. The fact that Soviet relations with post-Ceausescu Romania during 1990 were not as cordial as in case of other East European countries, could be explained against the background of the dislike of the Gorbachev leadership of the use of force in Romania.

CHAPTER - V

AN OVERVIEW

AN OVERVIEW

During 1988-90, the countries of East Europe went through historic changes. These changes led to the terminal-end of their socialist system and to the beginning of a new chapter in their history. It may well be argued that these changes were, in fact, a series of crises in the whole socialist system and thus they logically brought about the collapse of the system. However, there can be no two arguments that the collapse of the socialist system in East Europe was an unprecedented event in the contemporary history of Europe; with wide ranging consequences. The unusual character of these changes was emphasised by the fact that they were brought about with the notable exception of Romania, through peaceful means and with popular approval.

No country in the world was more affected by these changes in East Europe than the Soviet Union. As we have examined in the opening chapter of our study, the region of East Europe was of a special significance for the Soviet Union. This was primarily because of the fact that the countries of East Europe had more or less similar kind of socio-economic systems as the Soviet Union had. There was a basic feature of their national make-up which is broadly characterised by the term

"European Socialist System".

The changes in East Europe gradually loosened the traditional intra-bloc relations among these European socialist states, as well as such multilateral institutions like the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) and the Warsaw Treaty Organisation (WTO). By the end of 1990, the very character of international politics in Europe had become totally transformed from the earlier one. A distinct possibility of a Common European Home did certainly emerge.

Soviet policy to these changes began to develop in keeping with their pace and speed, against the background of more or less similar changes in the Soviet Union itself. As pointed out earlier, we have focused attention in our study on the developments in these countries of Central-East Europe namely, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Romania.

At this stage, let us attempt identifying the salient features of Soviet policy towards changes during 1988-90, in these countries. It may be pointed out here, although these features were specific in these countries, they were certainly applicable to the

other countries of East Europe as well in a generalised form.

The most striking feature of the reformed Soviet policy to these changes was that it totally changed from the earlier ones. The Soviet Union, not only allowed these changes to occur without any effort of suppressing it, through the use of force or otherwise, as it had done earlier, but it also encouraged and applauded them. Even the terminal-end of the socialist system in Eastern Europe by the end of 1990 was accepted by the Soviet leadership willingly and warmly. In fact, the Gorbachev leadership found a lot of common ground for satisfaction on the terminal-end of the socialist system in these countries, as it was itself leading the Soviet Union to such a momentous development which came later by the end of 1991.

We may now attempt at spelling out some other salient features of Soviet policy to these changes. As analysed in the preceding pages, these may be summarised as under.

The first feature of Soviet policy towards these changes was that the Soviet Union wanted to make sure that these transformations in Hungary and Czechoslovakia were peaceful, though in Romania, it turned bloody.

The second was that, unlike the earlier situations, the Soviet Union did not interfere in the sweeping changes in these three Central-East European countries. It stood firmly on the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of another country and it rejected the idea of the use of force. The third feature in Soviet policy towards these changes should be assessed in the general background of the Pan-European concepts of the Soviet leadership. It was because, Gorbachev stressed that the need of the hour was to make political dialogue between the two halves of Europe and they need not have conflicting interests. This perception of a 'Common European Home' is often seen as a reaction to the on-going changes in the Central-East European region. The USSR needed more domestic democratisation in these countries for smoothening the Helsinki process.

The fourth feature was that inspite of critical voices from the West and its media, Soviet policy towards these changes remained calm and passive. As the crucial reform process gained momentum in Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Romania, the USSR showed respect for the social option of its neighbours. Its reactions to these changes in these Central-East European

countries were balanced and mature. Indeed, the Soviet perceptions of the changes taking place in Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Romania are seen as passive, as the Soviet pull-out from these countries neglected its material and intellectual investments there.

Yet another important feature of Soviet policy towards these changes may be noted that the Soviet Union gave up the 'superior-subordinate relations' in its foreign policy conduct towards Eastern Europe, instead it opted for a relationship based on equality and mutuality of interests. Such unusual flexibility was seen in Soviet approaches as novel. Besides, it followed such a policy also from a critical evaluation of the past. The Soviet Union thus opted a policy of 'Many Roads to Socialism' instead of 'Common Roads to Socialism'. This was further characterised by equality, respect for independence, fraternal mutual assistance, all-embracing cooperation, territorial integrity and reciprocal support towards these changes.

Soviet policies further facilitated these socialist countries to open up to the outside world. Therefore, the Soviet Union sought 'Openness' and pluralism of Opinions', denunciation of formalism, and

the absolute independence of East European Communist Parties.

Moreover, Soviet policies were also influenced by the interior motive of creating a congenial environment for the success of Perestroika in the Soviet Union.

Further, the Soviet responses to these changes in these Central-East European countries signified that each socialist country should develop within the system specific to its own conditions. This radical change in the foreign policy of the Soviet Union ensured absolute independence of East Europe and the people of the region.

Finally, it is relevant to understand some possible reasons understanding Soviet policy, as explained above.

By the late eighties, it was obvious that the Gorbachev leadership had prepared itself for the withdrawal of its traditional interest in East Europe. The most important reason was economic. With the growing economic crises in the Soviet Union, the Soviet Union would not have maintained its economic commitments to the entire region. More importantly, it was finding

it difficult to understand the defence and security of East Europe through the Warsaw Treaty Organisation (WTO), and by other means.

The other was the compulsion of Perestroika and Glasnost in the Soviet Union. The Soviet leadership could not have ignored the popular upsurge against the communist system in Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Romania, if it wanted to make Glasnost and Perestroika successful in the Soviet Union. In other words, Glasnost and Perestroika in the Soviet Union played a determining role in the withdrawal of the traditional Soviet interest in Central-East European countries, viz. Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Romania, in particular and in East Europe, in general.

Besides, the pressure of the West on the Soviet Union for leaving East Europe alone had certainly mounted. The Soviet Union could have acted otherwise only at the cost of its policy of friendship and accommodation with the West. Obviously, the Gorbachev leadership was not ready to pay such a heavy price.

Finally, there was also the hope that once Soviet relations with these countries of East Europe were

put on the principles of non-interference and mutual interest, thus getting out of old intra-bloc constraints, Soviet interests would continue to derive benefits on a mutual basis. For, after all, the Soviet Union continued to regard East Europe as vital, from the point of view of its economic interests and defense needs. The Soviet Union certainly did not want to forget East Europe completely.

All these factors appeared to act and react in the making of Soviet policy towards the changes in Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Romania and this should be taken as interrelated and not in isolation.

Soviet withdrawal from East Europe is certainly historic. More so, as it was staged, peacefully through bilateral agreements. Soviet policy towards these changes played a vital role in changing the face of Europe and in transforming international politics of our times. However, it remains to be seen, whether it will prove beneficial for all concerned.

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APPENDIX

I. CHRONOLOGY OF THE CHANGES IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA (1988-1990).

17th C.P.C.Z. Conference, March 1986

1988

January

- 20 - Vaclav Stufeu, Chairman of the Czechoslovakian Foreign Institute, declares that Czechoslovakia is going to follow 'New Thinking' in its relations with the West.
- 31 - Soviet Union promises for further missile's withdrawal.

February

- 3 - Gustav Husak, resigns from J.P.C.
- 25 - Soviet Union starts Missiles withdrawal from Czechoslovakia.

April

- 20 - Czechoslovakian Ministry resigns to smoothen the reform process.

June

- 10 - For the first time in the Czechoslovakia's post Second World War period, two candidates are allowed to contest in the Bi-elections.

July

- 1 - Bohuslav Chnoupel, Czechoslovakian Foreign Minister proposes 'Trust Zone' initiative.

August

- 31 - Government approves single currency exchange rates.

October

- 12 - Changes take place in the Czechoslovakian Party leadership.
Lubomir Storgal is replaced by Ladislav Adamec.

1989January

- 27 - Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria announces unilateral arms cut.

March

- 2 - Imprisonment of Vaclav Havel.

April

- 2 - Prague Symposium on 'Common European Home'.
3 - Czechoslovakian Party paper 'RUDE PRAVO' published an article about the freedom of choosing the commodities.
3 - CPCZ-Presidium proposes general elections and political parties.

September

- 25 - Ladislav Adamec comments that the government is willing to take independent groups into administration.
26 - Czechoslovakia preparations for a European Ecology Conference in Sofia.

November

- 17 - Students rally at Prague's Wenceslav Square, it clashed with the police.
20 - Beginning of the country-wide agitations.
- Appeal from CPCZ Presidium.
- Students call for indefinite strikes.

November

- 20 - Theatre strikes starts in Prague and Bratislava.
- Wenceslav Square demonstrations and again clashed with police.
- 21 - Indefinite strikes in Universities and Colleges.
- 23 - Milos Jakes resigns from Defense post.
- 23 - Aleksander Dubeck and Vaclav Havel speaks at Bratislav rally.
- 24 - 'Czechoslovaks Coordinating Information Strike Committee' is formed.
- The extra ordinary session of the CPCZ, Central Committee begins to hear the statement from Milos Jakes on the recent events.
- 25 - Karel Urbanerk takes charge as the new General Secretary of the CPCZ.
- 26 - Civic Forum issues its programme statement.
- 27 - Czechoslovak Federal Assembly Chairman, Alos Indra resigns.
- 28 - Talks starts between the leaders of government and Civic Forum for the formation of the new government.

December

- 1 - Czechoslovakia liberalises its border laws with Austria.
- 7 - Ladislav Adamec resigned from Premiership and he is replaced by Marian Calfa.
- 13 - Civic Forum calls for the resignation of Ministry.
- 15 - Vaclav Havel meets the leaders of the students and the intelligentsia.

28 - Czechoslovakian Federal Assembly proposes Vaclav Havel,
as its President and Aleksander Dubeck as its Chairman.

1990

January

15 - Czechoslovakian request for the Soviet withdrawal.

February

26 - The official Text Declaration of Czechoslovak-Soviet
relations.

March

26 - Government proposes to drop 'Socialist' from country's
name.

April

9 - Ministerial reshufflings.

May

7 - Agreement between Czechoslovakia and EEC, for smoothening
trade relations.

12 - Anti-Communist demonstrations in Prague.

June

10 - Official results of the Czechoslovakian elections

Chamber of People

Civic Forum - 53.15% in Czech Republic.

Civic Forum - 32.54% in Slovak Republic.

Chamber of Nation

Civic Forum - 49.96% in Czech Republic.

Civic Forum - 37.28% in Slovak Republic.

27 - New government of the Civic Forum sworn in.

July

31 - Czechoslovakia establishes diplomatic relations with
NATO.

September

10 - Czechoslovak Defense Minister announces that his
country will not take part in future exercises of
the WTO.

II. CHRONOLOGY OF THE CHANGES IN HUNGARY (1988-1990).

13th Congress of the Hungarian Workers Socialist Party

May 20-28, 1986.

1988

January

- 1 - Hungarian Premier Karoly Gorz's New Year Message about the necessity of changes.
- 7 - Hungary prepares 'New Economic' plan for 1989.
- 8 - Hungarian News Agency, 'NEPSABADSAG' starts economic service.
- 19 - Inauguration of the first stock exchange in Hungary.
- An agreement of disarmament among Hungary, Italy and Finland.

May

- 14 - Democratic Union of the Scientific Workers is established.
- 24 - Janos Kadar resigned as the General Secretary of the HWSP and Karoly Gorz replaced him.

August

- 23 - Miners started strike in Mecsk.

September

- 1 - Hungarian National Bank offers visa credit cards.
- 3 - Hungarian Democratic Forum is formed.
- 27 - An agreement is reached between Hungary and EEC for the expansion of trade ties for 10 years.
- 30 - Hungary starts diplomatic relations with Albania.

October

- 5 - Hungarian Assembly approves Company Law.
- 16 - Hungarian Assembly decides that the new Election Law should be publicly debated.

24 - Government decides to drop 'Scientific Socialism' from Hungarian Texts.

November

13 - The Alliance of Free Democrats formed.

24 - Karoly Gorz's resignation and Miklos Nemeth as the new Hungarian Premier.

1989

January

5 - Hungarian Assembly approves a draft legislation on the right to strike.

25 - Army level talks starts on the Soviet troops withdrawal.

30 - Hungarian Premier declares that the Hungarian Army would be reduced 9% between 1989-91.

31 - 22 Army units of the Soviet Union are withdrawn.

February

10 - Hungarian Democratic Forum sends letters to Gorbachev for more structural changes.

11 - Formation of the Hungarian Peoples Party.

10 & 11 - The extra ordinary session of the HWSP took the decision to adopt multiparty system in Hungary.

April

13 - Christian Democratic Party is formed.

September

26 - Hungary proposed a new East European Cooperative System.

October

- 7 - Formation of the Hungarian Socialist Party (HSP) out of the HWSP.

November

- 7 - The government abolishes the expression, 'Kulak'.
- 15 - Reforms in Mass Media.
- 18 - Formation of the Hungarian Green Party.
- 19 - Reforms in Educational system.
- 27 - In the Hungarian Referendum, the people generally opts for Presidential system.

1990

January

- 19 - Hungary formally requests for further troops withdrawal.

April

- 14 - In the first Hungarian general elections, the Hungarian Democratic Forum won with 165 seats, the Alliance of Free Democrats got 92 seats and the Hungarian Socialist Party finished last with 33 seats. The new government is formed under Jozsef Antall.

III. CHRONOLOGY OF THE CHANGES IN ROMANIA (1988-1990).1988May

20 - Romania discloses its 'Special interests' to trade with the West.

18 - Romania Communist Party (RCP) paper 'SCIENTEIA' rejects 'Fixed Model' for socialist countries.

June

11 - Changes in the structure of Romanian working class.

July

24 - RCP Executive Committee declares that Romania has successfully solved its 'National Question'.

November

21 - Joint Romanian-EEC meeting for mutual ties.

- Ministerial reshufflings take place by Mid-November.
Ion Radu takes charge as the Deputy Premier.

December

1 - National Assembly approves Economic Plan and Budget for 1989.

1989March

17 - 'SCIENTEIA' on the need to respect the 'Socialist Legality'

August

- 16 - A Banned Political Organisation, "Romanian Democratic Action" sends its statement to USSR and West for the change of Ceausecsu regime.

November

- 3 - Romanian paper rejects multiparty system in Romania.
- Romanian Premier states each country should develop and follow, the socialist system suiting to its own specific conditions.
- 15 - Demonstrations take place outside the Romanian Embassies of Berlin, Warsaw and Budapest for the toppling of the Romanian regime.
- 21 - Opening of the RCP Congress.

December

- 17 - Arrest of the Transylvanian Pastor, Lazlo, Takes place.
- 18 - Demonstrations throughout Romania for the release of the protestant Pastor.
- 22 - Through a Presidential Decree, Nicolae Ceausescu declares emergency in Romania.
- 24 - Ceausecsu tries to mobilise support.
- 25 - Execution of Ceausecsu and his wife by the Military Tribunal.
- 26 - Meeting of the Council of National Salvation, and Ion Iliescu is selected as the Romanian Chairman, Umitra Mazila, as the first Deputy Chairman, Petre Roman as the Premier, and Nicolae Militon as the Defense Minister.

December

29 - Decrees by the new government on political and state activities and on agricultural restructuring.

1990January

9 - Romania seeks to restore the relations with the USA.
20-25 - Riots in Transylvania.

February

19 - Revolt on the Romanian troops.

May

20 - Romanian Elections: In the Presidential elections, Ion Iliescu (National Salvation Front) got the majority votes of 83%, Radu (National Liberation Party) got 11% votes and Ion Radu of the Christian Democratic Party got only 6% votes.

In the Assembly the National Salvation Front got 66% votes, National Liberal Party got 10% and the Romanian Ecological Party got 5% votes.

The National Salvation Front got single majority to form the government. The NSF, elected Ion Iliescu as its Chairman, Damitry Maziliv as the Deputy Chairman, Petre Roman as Premier, and Nicolae Mileu as the Minister of Defense.



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