

Warsaw Pact deploys in Czechoslovakia

by Luba George

In the first week of September, the combined forces of the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Poland, East Germany, Hungary, and Bulgaria launched maneuvers in Czechoslovakia, code-named "Shield-84." West German observers are calling them "the most important of all Warsaw Pact maneuvers." On Aug. 16, East bloc news agencies announced that the maneuvers would officially involve 60,000 troops, deployed across the length of Czechoslovakia, which borders on West Germany and Austria.

"Not since 1968 has there been such concentration of Warsaw Pact troops," wrote the West Berlin daily, *Tagespiegel*. That, of course, was the year Soviet-led Warsaw Pact forces invaded Czechoslovakia. The exercises will involve troop units of the First Army of the Czech armed forces as the main contingent, and one "Central Group" division of Soviet forces stationed in Czechoslovakia since 1968. (Six Soviet divisions comprise the "Central Group" of the Soviet forces.) The Polish People's Army will provide ground and airborne units. Units from two Hungarian divisions will participate, as well as the East German and Bulgarian Armed Forces. Romania is sending only "staff" units to the exercises.

High mobilization

Shield-84 coincides with NATO's Autumn Forge exercises, meaning that the forces of each side will face each other in a state of high mobilization throughout September.

Soviet Defense Minister Dmitrii Ustinov personally arrived in Prague on Aug. 28 for preliminaries. In a speech at a rally of 100,000 gathered for the 40th anniversary of anti-fascist uprisings in Slovakia, Ustinov denounced West Germany in the harshest terms to date. The Soviet press has been attacking West German "revanchist and militarist circles" for some time now, charging that such "circles" intend to "re-establish a united German state within the old 1937 borders." The added significance of Ustinov's diatribe, broadcast widely throughout the East bloc, is not only that it comes directly from a senior, uniformed member of the Politburo on the eve of the Warsaw Pact's "biggest and most important" maneuvers. The speech also contained the direct, official charge that *the West German government itself* is deliberately "fomenting revanchism and militarism," rather than "reac-

tionary circles" and the like. On the eve of the first anniversary of the KAL massacre, Ustinov has signalled a new phase in Moscow's strategy of *Schrecklichkeit* (strategic terror).

Invasion option open

Tagesspiegel reported on Aug. 28 that on Sunday, Aug. 26, Czechoslovak TV showed film clips of Polish tanks entering the country. On Friday, Aug. 24, Hungarian tanks were shown rolling in for the exercises. Citing military experts, the daily said that the "premature" arrival of the troops for the maneuvers, officially to start Sept. 4, takes on added significance, since they follow the "biggest ever" Soviet military exercises (conducted in June-July of this year), which tested the Soviet capability for a blitzkrieg into West Germany.

Czechoslovakia also borders on Austria. On Aug. 27, *Pravda* accused Bonn of carrying out an "economic *Anschluss*" (annexation) of Austria—evoking the image of Hitler's annexation of Austria in 1938! Never mind that high-ranking economic delegations from Warsaw Pact members Hungary and East Germany were in Austria this summer to finalize long-term economic deals. *Pravda* accused West Germany of "causing unemployment and serious damage to Austria's industry" because West German businesses are "swamping Austria with exports" and "infiltrating its economy . . . taking over hundreds of local companies . . . a quiet economic *Anschluss*."

The Soviets have regularly invoked the Potsdam accords of 1945, giving them the right to intervene in Germany in the event of a "revival of Nazism." By invoking Hitler's 1938 *Anschluss*, the Kremlin is now preparing the way for a future Soviet *demarche* to Bonn that would "charge" violation of the 1955 state treaty which ended the Allied four-power occupation and established Austria as a neutral country—a "legal" pretext for the occupation of Austria.

Soviet military moves, over and above the large-scale publicized maneuvers, have been constant and ubiquitous:

- On Aug. 4, according to the Swedish government, a Soviet jet pursued a Swedish civilian airliner over Gotland, the Baltic Sea island where Sweden's major military base is located—as if to remind the world of the KAL 007 massacre one year ago (see *Northern Flank*). This is the kind of harassment to which they earlier subjected civilian air traffic in the corridors leading to Berlin.

- On Aug. 14, a Soviet submarine became entangled in the nets of a British fishing trawler in the English channel—not the usual passageway for the Soviet fleet going into the Atlantic.

- On Aug. 15, the Soviet ship *Semyon Chelyushkin* was spotted 60 miles from the mouth of the Columbia River in Washington state, near where Trident submarines are built.

- On Aug. 26, the London *Sunday Express* reported the sighting of a Soviet submarine one mile off Scialia, Italy, near a NATO radar base. On that day, too, the U.S.S.R.'s newest battle cruiser, the *Frunze*, sailed through the Danish straits into the North Atlantic.