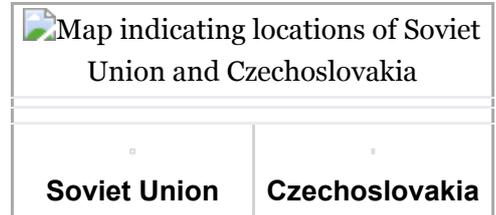


Czechoslovakia–Soviet Union relations

Czechoslovakia–Soviet Union relations refers to the foreign relations between the former states of Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union.

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Changes in interwar relations

At the beginning of the existence of both states, their relationship was bad. There was strong animosity sourcing from the armed conflict between Bolshevik authorities and Czechoslovak Legions and from the following participation of the Legions in the allied intervention against Bolsheviks. Moreover, Karel Kramář, Czechoslovakia's 1st Prime Minister, disliked the Bolshevik regime for personal reasons (his wife came from Russian nobility).

Czechoslovakia recognized the Soviet Union (USSR) *de jure* not until 1934. On May 16, 1935 the Czechoslovak-Soviet Treaty of Alliance was signed between the two states^[1] as the consequence of Soviet alliance with France (which was Czechoslovakia's main ally). At the insistence of the Czechoslovak government, a protocol on the signing of the treaty stipulated that the treaty would go into force only if France gave assistance to the victim of aggression. However, France did not support Czechoslovakia in 1938, having signed the Munich agreement instead.

World War II

After the German occupation of Czechoslovakia and the establishment of the pro-German Slovak state in March 1939, The Soviet Union quickly recognized the new status quo and terminated diplomatic relations with Czech representatives. Shortly after the Munich Agreement, many Czechoslovak Communists gained asylum in the Soviet Union, however hundreds of non-communist refugees were sent to the labor camps.^[2]

However, immediately after the German (and Slovak) attack in June 1941, the Soviet government was the first who recognized the leaders of Czechoslovak resistance in London as an allied government and approved the formation of Czechoslovak armed forces from the refugees. In December 1943, a new Treaty of Alliance (which held for twenty years) was signed in Moscow and the Treaty of Military Cooperation was endorsed the following spring. From September 1944 to May 1945 the Red Army with joined Czechoslovak forces liberated most of the pre-Munich Czechoslovak territory, which culminated in the liberation of its capital, Prague, on May 9. However, the easternmost part of Czechoslovakia, Carpathian Ruthenia, was annexed by the USSR shortly after its liberation (and ceded officially to Soviet Union in 1946).

As a result of the synchronous annexation of the eastern parts of Poland and Romania, the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia gained a common border - for the first time in their history.

Communist regime

After World War II, the Soviet Union enjoyed considerable credit as the Liberator of Czechoslovakia, and had strong influence on Czechoslovak foreign policy and on the rising power of Czechoslovak Communist Party. The non-communist parties in the Czechoslovak government were in an impossible situation; trying to prevent the rise of communism and maintain positive relations with the Soviet Union, which was widely regarded as the only barrier to future German aggression.

After February 1948 Czechoslovakia was firmly set into the Soviet sphere of influence and the motto *Se Sovětským svazem na věčné časy!* (With Soviet Union forever!) represented the essence of the communist's policy. Inevitably, Czechoslovakia became another Soviet satellite and any mark of disloyalty was bitterly suppressed in political trials under supervision of Soviet advisors (e.g. Slánský trial). Czechoslovakia was also a constituent member of many Soviet-led international organisations, most notably the economic organization Comecon (1949-1991) and the military alliance created by the Warsaw Pact (1955–1991).

In following two decades, Czechoslovakia was the most faithful Soviet ally in Central Europe. While the pro-soviet regimes in other states of the Eastern Bloc, such as East Germany, Poland and Hungary underwent a deep crisis after Stalin's death and later Khrushchev's criticism of Stalin, the friendship between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union was undisputed.

The inconsistency of changes in the slow process of deStalinization, led to the call for faster reforms among the people of Czechoslovakia. The old leadership of the Czechoslovak Communist Party was withdrawn in late 1967 and the new communist leader Alexander Dubček accelerated the reform of economical, political and cultural life, as well as the rehabilitation of 1950s-era victims. Though Dubček did not intend anything other than to refresh the regime, many people wanted more radical changes. The Prague Spring in 1968 raised the scepticism and suspicion among leaders of other states of the Eastern Bloc, especially in the Kremlin. The Soviet Union, Poland, and East Germany threatened Dubček in order to get him to not go through with the reforms. The threats from the Soviets increased and eventually lead to the August 1968 military invasion of Czechoslovakia.

After the occupation, the official policy *With Soviet Union forever!* was again introduced, but the reputation of the Soviet Union among the Czechoslovak public was deeply damaged. When Mikhail Gorbachev in 1986 declared the Soviets will no more intervene in the affairs of Czechoslovakia, it was the beginning of the end of the communist regime in Czechoslovakia.

After the collapse of Soviet Union and the later dissolution of Czechoslovakia their relations were replaced by bilateral relations of the succession states.

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