

London march 11--(rfe special)--following are excerpts from editorials today in the scotsman and the yorkshire post, two leading british provincial daily newspapers.

the scotsman said:-

...publicity is frequently a catalyst in the communist world. there is little in common between the kinds of self-determination practised by the rumanians and by the new rulers of czechoslovakia. president novotny lost power to mr dubcek (and may soon lose even his titular position) because of a conservative refusal to carry on the economic reforms he had cautiously initiated. so far, however, mr dubcek's startling burst of radicalism has been confined to domestic affairs, there is no sign of disagreement with soviet foreign policy. in mr ceausescu's case, the adventurism is confined to external relations, rumania has no democratic debate and is laggard in economic reform.

the success or failure, however, of independent-mindedness in one country of the bloc can influence events elsewhere. therefore much may depend on the outcome of the power struggle in czechoslovakia...the remaining conservatives in the hierarchy are clearly fighting a rearguard defence against the liberals' talk of democratic debate, freer elections and reforms to improve economic efficiency. but already the spark has caught light in poland, where censorship is arousing writers and students to demonstrations. in czechoslovakia similar opposition to censorship proved the prelude to political change. mr gomulka, however, though now a liberal turned conservative, seems secure yet awhile.

the yorkshire post said:

...the ferment in eastern europe is not an unmixed blessing. ironically, the struggle for freedom in the totalitarian countries would soon be nipped in the bud but for the existence of the american-led alliance. for the russians to try to impose their will by force or threat of force as they did at the time of the east german, hungarian and polish revolts, would now be extremely hazardous. but strong-arm action cannot be ruled out. it might well be that, having opened the gates to legitimate protest, the new, more liberal, czech regime will find itself faced with more demands than it dares to try to satisfy. that could lead to a tightening of the screw again, or to anarchy, or to a pro-moscow takeover bid. the russians are extremely worried not only because of the growing nationalism of technically allied governments, and the growing democratic awareness within technically allied communist states, but also because there is a growing freedom movement within the soviet union itself. the temptation in the kremlin to force a return to unity by exaggerating the fear of germany and the so-called +imperialist threat+ must be very strong. it is too early to be sure, therefore, that the democratic stirrings in eastern europe will further the cause of peaceful co-existence and reduce the tensions+++