were involved, had an unfair advantage over him." Moreover, Kalvoda states that the "Masaryk legend" and "the cult of his personality" were cultivated not only by his "uncritical" admirers (one must wonder if writer Karel Čapek was such an uncritical admirer) but also by Masaryk himself, aided by Beneš, Štefánik and others.

Kalvoda's interpretation will undoubtedly be viewed as controversial and provoke lively debates among historiographers and other interested parties. But the book's controversial nature does not diminish the fact that it represents a significant contribution to the history of Europe in general and of World War I and the subsequent rearrangement of Central and Eastern Europe in particular.

A plausible explanation for the author's evident dislike of Masaryk is the close tie that existed between the latter and Beneš, his protegé. In the book's concluding paragraph, for example, Kalvoda points to Beneš' role in guiding Czechoslovakia toward a Soviet orientation following World War II by attempting to create a bridge between East and West, only to have the bridge collapse and be rebuilt as a Soviet bridgehead in Europe. Kalvoda, in essence, places Czechoslovakia's current fate at the feet of Beneš and, indirectly perhaps, at those of Masaryk, among others.

He concludes his book with the admonition that the Czechs and Slovaks, because of their respective histories and traditions, belong "to the center of Europe," and should take full advantage of that fact. "When Soviet rule comes to an end—and this will happen one day—" Kalvoda states with conviction, "the Czechs and Slovaks should cooperate with the other small nations in the area and find a federal solution to the problem that is common to all of them: they are too weak to stand alone between the solid masses of Germans and Russians."

That is sound advice, for the statement certainly is true. But after reading the words and digesting their meaning, one is left with the disquieting question of whether a historian's wishful thinking, as honorable, sincere and righteous as it may seem, should serve as a guide for unraveling and interpreting the past.

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Detente has always posed the East German government some awkward problems. The advantages are obvious. The GDR was given the diplomatic recognition for which it had longed for many years and in 1973 the country was accepted to full membership of the United Nations. The material ad-
vantages were enormous, particularly as their economic ties with West Germany afforded them easy access to the European Common Market. Such economic and diplomatic successes greatly enhanced the GDR's status with the other socialist states. But there were also serious difficulties to be overcome. In the early years of the republic the leadership lacked the authority and the legitimacy to risk getting too close to the West. Even today Erich Honecker insists that a certain distance has to be maintained to guard against the contaminating influence of East Germany's capitalist cousins. The policy of Abgrenzung is explained in terms of there being a dialectical relationship between detente and the class struggle. In other words the GDR is eager to profit from detente, and anxious that the legitimacy of the state and the regime should not thereby be called into question.

It would seem that the Hallstein doctrine, by which the Bonn government threatened to break off diplomatic relations with any state which recognized the GDR, not only damaged the East Germans economically but even called into question the foundations of the state. Some of these problems were overcome by building the Berlin wall, which gradually was seen less as a prison wall than as a symbol, however ambiguous, of the GDR's sovereignty, particularly when the Soviets began to back away from their demands for a German peace treaty. For the first few years after the wall was built there was a far greater degree of cultural freedom than ever before, and the wall ended the endless agonizing about whether or not to leave for the West. The economic reforms of the NES, soon to become the model for other socialist states, loosened up the economy and achieved impressive results. East Germans decided to make the best of the limited possibilities that remained and, until the cultural crackdown in 1965, enjoyed the benefits of a steadily improving economy and a more varied and vigorous cultural life.

The coalition government in Bonn of 1966 in effect dropped the Hallstein doctrine and decided to pursue a more active policy towards Eastern Europe. In the same year the West German Social Democrats (SPD) made a direct approach to the East German Communist Party (SED). The Czech crisis of 1968 interrupted this process and the East German leader Walter Ulbricht was strongly in favor of intervention in Czechoslovakia. For the next two years Ulbricht pursued his hard line policy, but the momentum of detente could no longer be halted. Willy Brandt, who became chancellor in September 1969, promptly offered to normalize relations with the GDR and the East Germans were more or less forced to take up this offer, vainly hoping that Bonn was not too serious about it. At the same time Moscow, largely for economic reasons, wanted to improve relation with the Federal Republic and got increasingly impatient with the East Germans for dragging their feet. The East Germans frantically tried to inoculate themselves from the noxious effects of the dialogue with their policy of Abgrenzung, but dutifully continued the talks.