

# Czech invasion 'mistaken step'

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Susan Viets in Budapest

**W**ITH the 21st anniversary of the Prague Spring approaching, a central committee member of the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party yesterday publicly condemned the Hungarian-backed Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia for the first time.

The head of the party's international relations committee, Mr Imre Szokai, said that the intervention was "a mistaken step" and that "the Brezhnev doctrine, which limited sovereignty in Eastern Europe, should now be replaced by a new doctrine of non-intervention in the Warsaw Pact."

These comments appeared in a front page article in the party daily, *Nepszabadsag*, but are not official party policy.

Mr Szokai has touched on a highly controversial issue at a time when Hungary is already facing strained relations with one of its eastern bloc allies, the German Democratic Republic, over the refugee issue.

The Czech Communist Party

daily, *Rude Pravo*, stated last month, "we have no reason to re-assess 1968." Criticism from outside will certainly not be welcome.

Poland's Senate condemned the 1968 invasion yesterday as a violation of the country's right to self-determination. The Senate, 98 of whose 100 members belong to the Solidarity movement, passed a unanimous resolution which was the first such statement adopted by an Eastern European legislative chamber since the invasion.

Hungarian opposition groups have long been pressing the government to apologise for its role in the Prague Spring. In 1968, two Hungarian army divisions were sent into Slovakia as part of the invasion.

Mr Szokai has seized the initiative and forced what is an issue of sharp debate within the party into the public arena.

He has used a technique similar to that of the praesidium member, Mr Imre Pozsgay. Last winter Mr Pozsgay sparked a central committee session by calling the 1956 events in Hungary a "popular uprising," not a "counter revolution."

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