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The Skies that Bind:
The Evolution of Civil Aviation in Communist Europe
and the Role of International Agreements

by:

Sean Nicklin

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fulfillment of the requirements for the MA degree in History

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Abstract

The Skies that Bind: The Evolution of Civil Aviation in Communist Europe and the Role of International Agreements

Sean Nicklin

Prof. Eda Kranakis

2009

This thesis examines the development of civil aviation in Communist Europe from 1945 to 1970, focusing on political, legal, economic, and technological factors. Most of that region fell into the orbit of the Soviet Union, which provided aircraft, and encouraged isolation from the West in aviation matters. This isolation was compounded by the United States, which enacted a policy of Containment against Communist nations that enacted restrictions applying to aircraft and access to airspace. This limited the growth of Communist airlines and fostered interdependence within the Soviet sphere. Connections between East and West began to grow by the mid-1950s as restrictions were reduced, opening a market for air travel. The formation of air links and growing tourist travel indicated a current for European unity even during the height of the conflict, suggesting that the end of the Cold War started far earlier than the fall of the Berlin Wall.

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Introduction

The focus of this thesis is on the development of civil aviation in the nations of Communist Europe during the early and middle Cold War era, 1945-70. The early stages of the Cold War were a time of great change in Eastern Europe. The Second World War radically altered politics, technology, and many facets of society. Among the most significant changes was the new dominance of Communist Parties throughout the region. Most of the countries had experienced a devastating occupation under the Nazi regime. The arrival of the Soviet Union's military pulled the region into a new sphere of influence centred on Moscow. The countries that fell into the Soviet sphere became far more susceptible to a Communist coup, or soon witnessed their government elect a permanent Communist government. Yet the nature of this new order was different in each nation. The particular interests of one country did not necessarily match those of any other simply because of its political alignment, and the countries remained competitors even as they became partners. The Soviet Union, however, was a special case among them and emerged as a leader due to its preponderance of military and industrial might.

Civil aviation became one of the most sensitive issues, technological or otherwise, that was affected by European Cold War politics. It was a relatively simple matter for one country to close airspace to the airlines of another country or restrict trade for political reasons. It was a public way of transmitting a message to a country and its citizens that there was a fundamental problem with the relationship they shared. For this reason, the Iron Curtain was perhaps most clearly visible in the skies.

Many countries were interested in operating an airline of their own in order to build national prestige and support their independence. Very few countries were

actually able to manufacture aircraft on a scale large enough to supply an airline in the aftermath of the Second World War, however. Eastern European nations were often forced to look abroad for assistance to develop the air infrastructure necessary to create and sustain an airline.

The United States was in a central position from which it could either help or hinder the development of civil aviation in Eastern Europe. It was able to produce large numbers of high-quality aircraft and spare parts, as well as offer expert training in all aspects of the operation and maintenance of a successful air infrastructure. Good trade relations with the United States could therefore provide a nation's airline with a substantial boost in its capabilities. Furthermore, the United States controlled a large portion of Germany as part of the occupying forces after the Second World War, including the rights for passage through the airspace above. That airspace occupied some of the most direct routes between East and West Europe, which would be highly valuable for an East European airline.

Of particular importance, the United States began to weigh potential agreements with Communist countries with respect to the aims and principles of a broad policy of Containment. George Kennan first put forward this theory anonymously in his so-called 'X Article', "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," published in *Foreign Affairs* in 1947. Kennan was director of the government's new Policy Planning Staff, mandated to create long-term plans for American foreign policy objectives, and he had expertise on Soviet relations. Yet Kennan did not write the article in an official capacity. Indeed, it was written anonymously so as not to serve as official American policy, nor was it

comprehensive or truly representative of American policy goals of the date.¹ Kennan's authorship of the piece was something of an open secret, however,² and the 'X Article' served an important role in American policy. Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger claimed that, through the article, Kennan came "as close to authoring the diplomatic doctrine of his era as any diplomat in our history."³

Kennan's article included a number of assumptions regarding Soviet thought. It suggested that the Kremlin's goal was to extend Communism globally but that it was in no hurry to do so. Kennan pointed to the methodical manner in which Soviet-led Communism would spread. The Kremlin would seek "to make sure that it has filled every nook and cranny available to it in the basin of world power. [...] The main thing is that there should always be pressure, unceasing constant pressure, toward the desired goal."⁴ In order to counter this expansion, an equally substantial strategy would have to stand opposed to it.

Kennan suggested that "the main element of any United States policy toward the Soviet Union must be that of a long-term, patient but firm and vigilant Containment of Russian expansive tendencies."⁵ Of particular note is a passage that states:

"[The United States must embark] with reasonable confidence upon a policy of firm Containment, designed to confront the Russians with unalterable counter-force at every point where they show signs of encroaching upon the interests of a peaceful and stable world."⁶

¹ John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982) p. 25-6.

² Gati, *Caging the Bear*, p. 9-24.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁴ George Kennan (writing as 'X'), "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," *Foreign Affairs* 25 (July 1947), p. 574-5.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 575.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 581.

Such action would be the best defence Soviet antagonism, which was assumed to be a continuing threat:

“[The United States] must continue to expect that Soviet policies will reflect no abstract love of peace and stability, no real faith in the possibility of a permanent happy coexistence of the Socialist and capitalist worlds, but rather a cautious, persistent pressure towards the disruption and weakening of all rival influence and rival power.”⁷

When applied on a practical level, Containment sought to limit all arenas of growth within the Soviet sphere, from political expansion to economic development. It entailed cutting off access of a wide array of war-potential materials and services between Eastern Europe and the West. The American government coordinated this policy with its allies in Western Europe in order to check the Communist nations in the Eastern Bloc.

This thesis will demonstrate that Containment had profound effects on civil aviation in Eastern Europe, serving to isolate that region from the West while simultaneously tying it closer together. Much of Cold War history to date has ignored the practical application and consequences Containment, especially with respect to civil aviation.⁸ Yet civil aviation had major importance for foreign relations issues, including trade, high technology potential, regional mobility, security, even espionage. Civil aviation also serves as a unique illustration of the process and complexity of attempting to apply such a policy, and to the intended and unintended consequences it could have.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 580-1.

⁸ Containment is treated briefly if at all in some important works relevant to this era. Tony Judt's *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (London: William Heinemann, 2005) barely makes mention of the policy, and all references to George Kennan make no mention of his 'X Article'. Even books concerning aviation in Communist Europe ignore the effects of Containment, such as Hugh Macdonald's *Aeroflot: Soviet Air Transport Since 1923* (London: Putnam, 1975) and *Russian Aviation and Air Power in the Twentieth Century*, edited by Robin Higham, John T. Greenwood, and Von Hardesty (London: Frank Cass, 1998).

A study of the practical application of Containment policy also demonstrates the gaps and rifts in the Iron Curtain and in the application of the policy itself.

Containment was not always applied uniformly, in part because the Communist nations were not a single monolithic entity: each had its own priorities and aspirations. And in spite of the dominant position of the Soviet Union within the Communist world, it did not entirely control its satellites, particularly in civil aviation matters. Yugoslavia's decision to turn against the dominance of the Soviet Union and strike its own path, for example, had consequences in the sphere of civil aviation relations with the West. And on the Western side, neutral states like Austria, Finland, and Sweden also affected the application of Containment policy, sometimes counteracting U.S. objectives.

Applying Containment policy also took time and considerable political effort. The U.S. government did not immediately begin applying this policy in the postwar period. States like Czechoslovakia that had bought aircraft from U.S. suppliers prior to World War II attempted to reinstitute aviation trade and travel relationships in the postwar period, and the tendency among many Western states and companies was to accommodate this trend. But by 1947 to 1948, U.S. policy began to harden, drastically reshaping air relations between the two regions for decades, in a way that echoed and reinforced political polarization. The United States directly pressured its European allies to cooperate in implement its policy in the civil aviation sphere. Who received help, and from whom, came to be determined to a large degree by the alignment each country had with respect to the superpowers. Aid was often provided or withheld based on whether it might affect the larger balance of power between the two sides.

Applying Containment policy was also a complex process. In the sphere of civil aviation, political polarization and the application of Containment policies can be traced relative to international aviation organizations, bilateral air agreements, aircraft and equipment, and airline development. The key international civil aviation organizations, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the International Air Transport Association (IATA), were dominated by Western nations after the Second World War. ICAO set many standards for aviation safety and legal practices between nations, and served as a guarantor for most bilateral air agreements, while IATA regulated rates for airfares, and standardizes practices between airlines. Most but not all of the Communist European nations refrained from joining these organizations until the 1960s. The thesis examines the manner in which each country in Eastern Europe approached these international organizations, and how these relationships evolved between 1945 and 1970.

Beyond membership in international aviation organizations, bilateral air agreements are a precondition for civil aviation relations between countries. Good relations can lead to air agreements that permit regular flights between the countries. Among ICAO and IATA member states, bilateral civil aviation agreements generally fit within the larger multilateral structures of cooperation established under the auspices of the ICAO and IATA. When states were not members of these organizations, as was the case with many Eastern European states in the period 1945-1970, bilateral civil aviation agreements were more complex and difficult to achieve, because they must arrange many practical technical and economic matters (e.g. radio communication frequencies, meteorological information, ticket pricing) that are otherwise covered within ICAO/IATA agreements. The thesis examines the bilateral air agreements that emerged

involving East European states in the 1945-1970 period, and the factors that shaped their development.

Agreements to purchase aircraft and other equipment and services needed for civil aviation were also a key facet of Cold War polarization and the application of Containment policy. Because only large nations in the early post-war period had the capacity for aircraft construction, most countries' airlines, including all of the airlines of Eastern Europe outside of the USSR, were dependant on materials provided by one of a few countries that had aircraft manufacturing capacity or surplus resources in both aircraft and spare parts, and most importantly the Soviet Union and the United States. The United States was particularly concerned with the spread of technologies it had developed that might offer an advantage to its competitors, especially in Communist Europe. American aircraft could boost the capacity of the fleets of those countries, which would hurt the competitiveness of American airlines. There was also the risk that the Soviet Union would simply copy the technology used in the American planes and close any technological advantage the Americans had, with potential military as well as economic consequences. The thesis accordingly explores the trade in aircraft and equipment involving Eastern European airlines, and how this was progressively affected by Containment policy. It also examines the effect of growing polarization on the development on the Soviet aircraft industry.

Finally, polarization and the evolution of Containment policy was evident in the growth of national airlines. Each country in Eastern Europe, except Albania, had an airline of its own by 1948. National pride was a tremendous incentive to the development of Eastern Europe airlines and to continuing efforts to expand their global reach, both within and beyond the Communist sphere. The thesis examines the

emergence and growth of the airlines of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, showing both the growth of the Iron Curtain in the sky and the ways in which this barrier was progressively overcome.

Desire for travel and tourism were important factors in this regard. The tourism sector in the Communist world was relatively undeveloped when civil aviation began to emerge as an efficient means of international travel in the 1950s. It had to be intentionally developed in order to encourage private citizens to travel on Communist airlines. Yet complicating the desire to attract tourists, travel restrictions sometimes limited the number of foreign visitors to a country, even limiting the number of visitors between two Communist nations. While the most restrictive of these were in effect, there were relatively few foreign visitors flying between the East and West except on official business. Yet a market for such travel began to emerge that transcended the political divides. A key example is ethnic travel, whereby a visitor of a particular ethnicity wished to fly to his or her ethnic homeland.

Through analysis of the many facets shaping the growth of civil aviation in Eastern Europe and its links with the West, this thesis traces both the progressive implementation of Containment policy, and the content and reach of the Iron Curtain in the civil aviation sphere. It shows that Containment policy had some contradictory implications. As the countries that eventually became members of the Soviet-led Eastern Bloc were increasingly forced to turn to the Soviet Union for civil aviation aid, they were drawn more firmly into the Soviet orbit, and they moreover provided a growing market that supported Soviet aeronautical industry development. This had the effect of creating a more tightly-bound grouping of the aviation programs within Communist

Europe than previously existed, and which would last for years to come, undercutting the objectives of Containment policy.

Yet the thesis also shows that that the Iron Curtain had many gaps and dimensions of permeability, which moreover increased over time. Despite periods of serious political distress, relations between East Europe and the West improved gradually, and became a steady trend beginning in the mid-1950s, presaging the end of the Cold War. Tourism and the desire for international travel were among the forces that ultimately overrode the divisions between East and West. Through their desire for travel, the people of Eastern Europe demonstrated that they did not wish to remain isolated from the West. Indeed, the case of civil aviation suggests that that there was always an underlying current favoring East-West European integration during the Cold War, and that the decline of the Cold War was a more gradual process than is often assumed, with clear roots going back to the 1950s, when some of the first real, and largely permanent, cooperation between the two rival camps emerged.

* * *

Despite the importance of civil aviation in Cold War politics, and in both the rise and fall of the Iron Curtain, the literature on this topic remains fragmented, diffuse, and often sketchy and incomplete. A number of monographs and articles on civil aviation in Eastern Europe are quite informative and help form elements of an analysis of flight in that era. They cover matters such as international air agreements, international organizations, aviation standards, major airlines, tourism, the Cold War, Containment, and the relationship of each of the superpowers towards the satellite states. This thesis will serve to tie together the widely disparate strands of these studies and supplement them with materials taken from unpublished U.S. government documents and other

available primary sources (including newspapers) to provide a rounded view of civil aviation in Eastern Europe and between East and West Europe in the early Cold War era. This study therefore provides a more thorough understanding of how civil aviation in Eastern Europe evolved than other sources individually.

The Cold War itself has been widely covered. Some of the best introductory overviews include John Lewis Gaddis' *The Cold War: A New History*,⁹ and Martin Walker's *The Cold War: A History*.¹⁰ Gaddis's history builds upon his earlier works, especially *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War*¹¹ and *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History*.¹² *The Cold War: The United States and the Soviet Union, 1917-1991*, by Ronald E. Powaski,¹³ is also helpful as a guide to the relationship between the superpowers throughout the existence of the Soviet Union. A study of this relationship with respect to technology, a field relevant to civil aviation, can be found in *Cold War Kitchen: Americanization, Technology, and European Users* edited by Ruth Oldenziel and Karin Zachmann.¹⁴ Many elements of technological policy within the United States and Soviet Union are examined in that study, which illustrate the highly divergent approach of the two nations and the ramifications this had on technological development during the 1940s and 1950s. A more specific historical study of aviation during the Cold War can be found in *Cold War at 30,000 Feet: the Anglo-American*

⁹ John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History* (Penguin, 2006).

¹⁰ Martin Walker, *The Cold War: A History* (Holt, 1995).

¹¹ John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War* (Columbia University Press, 2000).

¹² John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (Oxford University Press, 1998).

¹³ Ronald E. Powaski, *The Cold War: The United States and the Soviet Union, 1917-1991* (Oxford University Press, 1998).

¹⁴ Ruth Oldenziel and Karin Zachmann, eds. *Cold War Kitchen: Americanization, Technology, and European Users* (MIT Press, 2009).

Fight for Aviation Supremacy by Jeffrey A. Engel.¹⁵ This book explores the relationship between the United States and Britain with respect to the production of aircraft as well as how each nation approached sales of aircraft with Communist states from the 1940s to the 1970s. These studies are all quite illuminating in their respective fields but do little to tie together the disparate elements of civil aviation during the early Cold War in Eastern Europe.

An equally important area of study in this thesis is the American policy of Containment. Beyond Kennan's original article, an important place to start is *Caging the Bear: Containment and the Cold War*, edited by Charles Gati.¹⁶ This work contains a piece written by Kennan 25 years later that is highly critical of how Containment was realized, as well as several other essays by leading historians and policymakers from the 1970s that thoroughly assesses how Containment was implemented. A recent general overview is John Lewis Gaddis' *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy during the Cold War*.¹⁷ A more specific example of Containment in practice is found in *Western 'Containment' Policies in the Cold War: The Yugoslav Case, 1948-53* by Beatrice Heuser.¹⁸ This monograph examines the change in the relationship between the Western nations and Yugoslavia from the split between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia to the death of Stalin, making it an important case study in how Containment was applied. Containment is central to understanding civil aviation during the Cold War in Eastern Europe since there was virtually no aspect

¹⁵ Jeffrey A. Engel, *Cold War at 30,000 Feet: the Anglo-American Fight for Aviation Supremacy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007).

¹⁶ Charles Gati, ed. *Caging the Bear: Containment and the Cold War* (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1974).

¹⁷ John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy during the Cold War* (Oxford University Press, 2005).

¹⁸ Beatrice Heuser, *Western 'Containment' Policies in the Cold War: The Yugoslav Case, 1948-53* (New York: Routledge, 1989).

that was unaffected by it. This thesis investigates many specific cases of its application with respect to civil aviation.

Literature on U.S. export controls is also important to understand the practical application of Containment policy in the sphere of civil aviation. Some useful works relating to American controls over exports of technology include: Gary K. Bertsch, *Controlling East-West Trade and Technology Transfer: Power, Politics, and Policies*;¹⁹ Beverly Crawford and Stefanie Lenway, “Decision Modes and International Regime Change: Western Collaboration on East-West Trade,”;²⁰ Michael Mastanduno, *Economic Containment: CoCom and the Politics of East-West Trade*;²¹ Michael Mastanduno, “Trade as a Strategic Weapon: American and Alliance Export Control Policy in the Early Postwar Period.”²²

Monographs on civil aviation are also crucial resources for building a complete understanding of how Eastern Europe built its air fleets. *Russian Aviation and Air Power in the Twentieth Century*, edited by Robin Higham, John T. Greenwood, and Von Hardesty,²³ is a good introduction to the creation of aircraft in the Soviet Union. The Soviet air industry is examined in detail as is the Soviet airline, Aeroflot. *Dictatorship of the Air: Aviation Culture and the Fate of Modern Russia* by Scott W. Palmer²⁴ also serves as an introduction to how aviation shaped the mindset of Soviet citizens and

¹⁹ Gary K. Bertsch, *Controlling East-West Trade and Technology Transfer: Power, Politics, and Policies* (Duke University Press, 1988).

²⁰ Beverly Crawford and Stefanie Lenway. “Decision Modes and International Regime Change: Western Collaboration on East-West Trade,” *World Politics* 37, No. 3 (April 1985), p. 375-402.

²¹ Michael Mastanduno, *Economic Containment: CoCom and the Politics of East-West Trade* (Cornell University Press, 1992).

²² Michael Mastanduno, “Trade as a Strategic Weapon: American and Alliance Export Control Policy in the Early Postwar Period,” *International Organization* 42, No. 1 (Winter 1988), p. 121-150.

²³ Robin Higham, John T. Greenwood, and Von Hardesty, eds. *Russian Aviation and Air Power in the Twentieth Century* (London: Frank Cass, 1998).

²⁴ Scott Wayne Palmer, *Dictatorship of the Air: Aviation Culture and the Fate of Modern Russia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

leaders prior to the Second World War, which makes this work helpful for rounding out an understanding of how aviation was perceived by the people of Eastern Europe. A very important work on the growth of civil aviation is *A History of the World's Airlines*, by R.E.G. Davies.²⁵ This work, a survey of the major airlines from around the globe up to the early 1960s, is a very helpful guide to becoming acquainted with the most important aspects of airline operations the world over, including those of Eastern Europe. These and other works do not address the issues surrounding the growth and development of civil air capabilities from a political and economic aspect in Eastern Europe as a whole, however.

Some other useful monographs on issues surrounding civil aviation cover diverse topics. The legal aspects of civil aviation are complementary to this thesis and worth exploring. *The Politics of International Air Transport* by Betsy Gidwitz²⁶ provides an excellent overview of the political influences on civil air travel, such as the national goals and objectives for creating a prosperous domestic air system. Her work covers many facets of aviation throughout the world during the twentieth century, including in Eastern Europe. *Bilateral Air Agreements of Socialist Countries and International Law: A Comparative Study* by Dumitra Popescu²⁷ is also a good guide with which to build an understanding of this subject. Popescu's book is a contemporary legal examination of the air agreements of several countries in Communist Europe. The political aspect of aviation is explored in *International Airlines and Politics: A Study in Adaptation to*

²⁵ R.E.G. Davies, *A History of the World's Airlines* (New York: AMS Press Inc., 1983).

²⁶ Betsy Gidwitz, *The Politics of International Air Transport* (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1980).

²⁷ Dumitra Popescu, *Bilateral Air Agreements of Socialist Countries and International Law: A Comparative Study* (Master's Thesis: McGill University, 1970).

Change, by Robert L. Thornton.²⁸ Many aspects of aviation, such as tourism, geography, aircraft technology and more are covered with respect to the political effects the Cold War had on their development. Tourism, a major driving force behind the growth of civil aviation, is covered in *Tourism and Economic Development in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union*, edited by Derek R Hall.²⁹ Air travel receives a large amount of coverage in this work and the different applications of civil aviation with respect to tourism within Eastern Europe are worth noting for the diversity they reveal within the region. The political, legal, and touristic aspects of air travel are all highly important in gaining an understanding of how it evolved: this thesis makes use of each of these elements to form a complete picture of civil aviation during the early years of the Cold War.

The major body of primary source material for this study consists of diplomatic memos and correspondence of American ambassadors, Chargés d’Affairès, and other American embassy officials posted in Eastern Europe. Many of those documents are accessible to researchers, and they include important information on virtually every country with which the United States had foreign relations. They often detail the policies of the United States with respect to trade and politics, including dialogue with members of East European governments. They also include a considerable amount of speculation voiced by those same public officials, which provides insights into the mindset of the politicians that shape and guide American Cold War policies.

²⁸ Robert L. Thornton, *International Airline and Politics: A Study in Adaptation to Change* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1970).

²⁹ Derek R. Hall, ed. *Tourism and Economic Development in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union* (Toronto: Halsted Press, 1991).

The thesis is divided into four chapters. Chapter one deals with international organizations, specifically ICAO and IATA, as well as bilateral air agreements that were struck with the nations of Communist Europe. Chapter two investigates the relationship between Cold War politics and trade with respect to the growth of civil air fleets in Eastern Europe. It also looks at how aircraft technology developed in the region and compares it to technological developments in the United States and Western Europe at the same time. Chapter three examines the principal airlines of Communist Europe: Aeroflot, the Soviet airline, and CSA, the Czechoslovakian airline, and makes note of the effects of the policy of Containment on airlines in the region. Chapter four complements chapter three by noting how the smaller airlines in Eastern Europe developed. This chapter also makes note of the effect that tourism had on the growth of airlines from the 1950s to the 1970s.

Chapter 1

International Organizations and Agreements and the Effects of Containment in Communist Europe

Civil aviation in Eastern Europe did not develop in a vacuum: there were a number of international and even worldwide elements that affected its evolution. The years that followed the Second World War witnessed a massive resurgence of civil aviation, which had been drastically curtailed during the war. This resurgence included a steadily increasing number of international flights by the airlines of many countries, which necessitated ever more international cooperation in order for each country to cope with increasing air traffic in a safe and legal manner. To understand the effects of these elements on aviation in the region, it is necessary to examine how those nations responded to key international aviation issues. These issues include international air agreements, international aviation organizations, and the political and economic effects of the Cold War.

Cold War tensions affected the growth of international organizations concerned with civil aviation, notably the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the International Air Transport Association (IATA), and each organization likewise shaped civil aviation in that region. The ICAO, set up in 1944 at the Chicago Convention, was created explicitly to deal with the facilitation of international civil aviation, including issues such as standards pertaining to safety, navigational aids, and meteorology. The IATA, the principal international commercial airline organization, regulates a number of matters not handled by ICAO such as airfares and standardizing flight practices. Yet due to political differences, most of the countries and airlines of Eastern Europe refrained from joining the ICAO and IATA for years. Among other factors, this

situation was responsible for slowing the expansion of Communist airlines and their links with Western nations and meant that many detailed standards and issues had to be made explicit in bilateral air agreements.

As with air agreements, the manner in which a nation approaches international organizations reflects the larger political landscape relative to that nation. The Communist countries of Eastern Europe tended to avoid international aviation organizations such as the ICAO and the IATA. Neither organization was widely accepted in the region until the 1960s. The reluctance of Communist Bloc nations to embrace these organizations stemmed from fears about the dominant role of Western nations in setting standards within these organizations that might conflict with Communist preferences. Differences emerged that had to be compensated for when Communist airlines flew to ICAO member nations or interacted with IATA airlines. The standards that these organizations established enhanced safety and minimized the complexity of international civil aviation, yet the Communist nations were not able to participate in establishing and regulating these standards until they joined the organizations. The fact that each nation eventually joined is worth noting since it demonstrates the path of change in the relationship between East and West.

Bilateral air agreements are central to international civil aviation: they set the groundwork for air travel between nations. They define the rights and responsibilities for each of the nations that are party to the agreement in order to ensure that each nation does not violate the safety or sovereignty of the other nation. An examination of the air agreements that were struck by Communist nations indicates a number of things, such as how the government of that country perceived other nations. The degree to which a nation respected an air agreement can be an indication of the relations between two or

more nations: in spite of an agreement allowing regular flights along air corridors to West Berlin, the Soviet Union regularly harassed American, British, and French flights travelling along the corridor. Air agreements can thus serve as a microcosm of the Cold War as a whole. Further, the details of the agreements indicate the priorities for the countries involved, such as equal and reciprocal rights of access for the national airline of each party.

It is somewhat ironic that the nations of Eastern Europe established bilateral air agreements prior to joining ICAO, which is the opposite of how many Western nations proceeded. The format for air agreements of ICAO member states was largely established by the Bermuda Agreement between the United States and Britain in 1946, which worked within the structure of the Chicago Convention and the ICAO. Eastern European air agreements, established outside the ICAO and Chicago Convention framework, had to accommodate for this by including extra provisions until each nation eventually joined ICAO. Each of these legal and political aspects are important in gaining a full understanding of the major influences on civil aviation in Communist Europe during the early years of the Cold War. International organizations and air agreements shaped aviation in a number of ways. The nature of these effects changed over time, reflecting the transformation of the political relationship between the two sides of the Cold War.

1.1 The International Civil Aviation Organization

In the early years of the century there were relatively few international flights but the planes could not travel far without landing to refuel. Air agreements had to be made with all nations that lay across a long-distance route. Safety was a serious matter in the

early years of aviation, particularly since flights had to contend with weather rather than travel above it, and there was significant complexity in the international system. As larger aircraft became more common and carried more passengers beyond national borders more often, it became even more important to ensure that regulations for safe flight were standardized internationally. Navigational aids and meteorological information had to be easily identifiable by aircraft pilots as they traveled across the world. Many new issues arose, such as the noise from planes over populated areas and the environmental effects of its engines. Regulating these issues and improving aviation became the concern of governments all over the world.³⁰ After the Second World War, coordinating such efforts effectively on a worldwide scale rested with ICAO and IATA.

The relationship between the Soviet Union and the ICAO was unusual. ICAO was the successor organization to the International Commission for Air Navigation (ICAN), which was created by the Aeronautical Commission at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 to regulate issues pertaining to air traffic. ICAN, operating under the auspices of the League of Nations as a result of the Treaty of Paris, introduced a number of regulations pertaining to operating standards for civil aviation intended to improve safety and efficiency. These included coordinating radio communications and avionics between nations among other factors concerning aviation. ICAN was superseded by the ICAO in 1947 since the League of Nations was defunct after the

³⁰ Edmund Wilhelm Faller, *Germany and International Civil Aviation: A Policy-Oriented Historical Study* (Master's Thesis: McGill University, 1965), p. 20-2.

Second World War.³¹ The Soviet Union had not joined ICAN but at first appeared interested in taking part in its successor organization.³²

As one of the largest and most powerful countries in the world after the war, the Soviet Union would have held a central position in the organization from the beginning. The Soviet Union was invited to the Chicago Conference in 1944, which was called to establish a new treaty to regulate international traffic, producing the ICAO. (One of the ICAO's major functions was to develop and oversee technical modifications to the annexes of the Chicago Convention over time, pertaining to issues such as meteorology and air navigation.) Had it attended the conference, the Soviet Union would have been one of the founding members of ICAO. It even sent delegates to attend but, once they were nearly there, the Soviet government called them back. The official reason for the recall and the Soviet abstention from ICAO was that the Soviet government objected to the participation of Switzerland, Spain, and Portugal at the conference. Those nations had pro-fascist governments or policies that the Soviet Union could not abide, especially during the continuing war.³³

Gidwitz suspected that it was more likely that the Soviet Union had ulterior motives for its objection to attending the Chicago Conference. She believed that the Soviet government feared the influence the United States would have in drafting a new Convention regarding civil aviation. America had the largest number of planes by the time the Convention was signed in 1944 as well as the greatest capacity for aircraft construction at that time, which could have afforded it more weight in the conference

³¹ International Organization Foundation, "International Commission for Air Navigation", *International Organization* 1, no. 2 (June 1947), p. 383-4.

³² Camille Allaz, *History of Air Cargo and Airmail from the 18th Century* (London: Christopher Foyle Publishing Limited, 2005), p. 55.

³³ Betsy Gidwitz, *The Politics of International Air Transport* (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1980), p. 46-7.

and in the ICAO for years to come. The Convention would regulate many aspects of civil air travel, making it very important for the Soviet Union not to enter into an agreement that could harm its interests in such a significant way. This might have relegated the Soviet Union to a less powerful role than it would have wished, while giving legitimacy to American plans if and when the ICAO passed them. Soviet leadership would not have wished to take part in an organization that could have worked against its interests so easily.³⁴

In spite of the influential Soviet position over its satellites, it did not totally dictate the choices they made. Each Communist nation eventually joined ICAO and IATA. Some nations that later became satellites had joined early on, such as Czechoslovakia prior to the Communist takeover. Czechoslovakia had been a member of ICAN during the Interwar era and in 1944 it attended the Chicago Conference that created ICAO, becoming a founding member of the new organization. It was ratified as a member on March 1, 1947, after the Communist government had come to power but before the revolution that cemented their power. Czechoslovakia remained a member throughout the Cold War.³⁵ Poland likewise had been a member of ICAN since its inception in 1919³⁶ and remained involved until the Second World War, joining ICAO at the Chicago Convention.

In spite of the fact that all of the Communist nations of Europe eventually joined ICAO, there was no single motive that moved each of them to do so. The Eastern Bloc nations had their individual reasons and chose to join independently of the timetable of

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 47-8.

³⁵ Dumitra Popescu, *Bilateral Air Agreements of Socialist Countries and International Law: A Comparative Study* (Master's Thesis: McGill University, 1970), p. 44-5.

³⁶ *Flight International*, "The International Air Convention," p. 490, May 6, 1920.

the Soviet Union. Ideology and pragmatism combined to guide each nation in its choice. Czechoslovakia and Poland had attended the Chicago Conference and were charter members of ICAO, but they were not Communist nations at the time in 1944. They nevertheless found that it was not worth abandoning the organization even when they had disputes with the Western nations that occupied important positions there. Others simply wished to improve their air links with the West at a time of thawing relations and a better competitive position, including the Soviet Union. In retrospect, the Soviet government would have been surrendering little sovereignty at all to the new organization. There would also have been little additional legitimacy lent to American aviation ambitions had the Soviets joined at the beginning. This was far from a certainty at the time and the Soviet government acted in what it felt was its own best interest.

The Chicago Conference saw several competing ideas for shaping the post-war world, even without the input of the Soviet Union. The United States and Britain championed opposing camps: America wanted a free and unregulated air market, while the British backed the creation of a central organization that would regulate air traffic. The majority of the nations present at the Conference feared the American model for much the same reasons as the Soviet Union: America could out-compete any country if competition were largely unregulated. The Bermuda Agreement, the bilateral air agreement between the United States and Britain struck in 1946 within the framework of ICAO, proved decisive as to which model would prevail. The agreement explicitly accepting a minimum amount of regulation in order for the success of air travel between the two signing parties.³⁷

³⁷ *New York Times*, "World-Wide Air Travel," p. 28, April 19, 1946.

The Bermuda Agreement marked a shift in the American position as it finally conceded that some restrictions on air policy could be allowed. This restriction specifically placed a limit on the number of flights under the so-called Fifth Freedom of the Air, which allows an airline from one nation to fly passengers from a second nation to yet another nation. In exchange, the British permitted a largely unrestricted number of flights to and from the United States. This removed all restrictions on the Third and Fourth Freedoms of the Air between the two nations, which permit an airline to fly passengers to and from another nation respectively. This meant the United States could carry as many passengers to and from Britain as it wished. The Bermuda Agreement designated the then-provisional ICAO to ensure that neither party excessively exceeded a reasonable number of flights, thereby undercutting the business of the other nation. The role of ICAO as a guarantor of the air agreement marked a crucial change in how direct air agreements between nations were made from that time forward. Whereas air deals between two nations concerned only those two parties, the ICAO tied together the agreements in a broader international framework.³⁸

Members of ICAO used the Bermuda Agreement as a model for their own bilateral agreements from that time forward. It simplified the process of creating an air agreement while ensuring that both parties received a fair chance at building a market for their airline. Nations that were not party to ICAO could not take advantage of this, since there was no alternative guarantor party. Most members of the Eastern Bloc in particular therefore had to devise air agreements that followed the principles of the Bermuda Agreement without relying on the same mechanisms. The result was that

³⁸ Nawal K. Taneja, *The Commercial Airline Industry: Managerial Practices and Regulatory Policies*, (Toronto: D.C. Heath and Company, 1976), p. 258-61.

agreements with non-ICAO nations had to explicitly state many of the details that were included in Bermuda Agreement-type documents. ICAO membership streamlined the air agreement process significantly and was a benefit for those members of Eastern Europe that were a party to it earlier than the others. The bilateral air agreements of Communist nations are explored in section 1.3 below.

In contrast to the Soviet leadership that feared the large American influence in the organization, Czechoslovakia's Communists had few qualms with ICAO. Perhaps they were less ideologically bound to resist Western-dominated organizations, as ICAO was at the time. Czechoslovakia, as well as Poland had been members of ICAN since its founding in 1919, so their history with the organization may have swayed the two countries in favour of accepting the new group.³⁹ What is more pertinent is that this demonstrated that the Soviet leadership had clear priorities with respect to allowing its satellites freedom to join in international actions.

John Bruins, the American Aviation Charge d'Affairès in Czechoslovakia, noted that the Czechoslovakian government and Ministry of Transport both clearly wanted to be part of ICAO. This was inferred from their adherence to the Chicago Convention and in their desire to retain the provisional ICAO standards after the March 1, 1947 ratification. It is also worth noting that CSA and the Ministry of Transport were not one and the same since CSA was bound by its charter to operate on 'capitalistic principles of profit and loss'. Bruins suggested that CSA may have had considerable autonomy, though this could not be confirmed since no finances were open for US observation.⁴⁰

³⁹ *Flight International*, "The International Air Convention," p. 490, May 6, 1920.

⁴⁰ John H. Bruins to the Secretary of State, "A-196, March 27, 1947, 860F.796/3-2747," March 27, 1947, *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, 1945-1949*, reel 15, p. 216-7.

In June of 1947, merely three months after the Czechoslovakian government ratified the ICAO charter, the Marshall Plan was opened to all nations of Europe if they would attend a conference in Paris and submit to several American conditions. The money would be given to any nation that was willing to open its finances to international inspection: a condition the Soviets could not abide. The Czechoslovakians, and other East European nations, had a definite interest in obtaining the money for reconstruction. The Soviet Union was fearful of the risks this posed for its closed economy and of American economic penetration of Europe. As a result, it pressed the governments of its satellites to refrain from attending the Paris conference.⁴¹

Czechoslovakia, along with the other nations of Eastern Europe, did not take part in the Marshall Plan. The potential risk to Soviet dominance in its sphere by an American-dominated program of that magnitude could simply not be tolerated. ICAO, in contrast, was non-intrusive with respect to national sovereignty and had no effect on the operations of a country beyond civil aviation, which may have allowed it to be less unpalatable for the Soviet Union. The Soviets did not overtly press the Czechoslovakian government to back away from its commitment at the Chicago Conference. The fact that Czechoslovakia ratified its accession of the ICAO charter in 1947, after a Communist government came to power and in spite of the stated Soviet objections, are an indication that it was not totally subject to Soviet whims and was at least partially free to pursue its own interests. (However, in this case, the Soviet Union may simply not have consolidated its authority over Czechoslovakia by that time, a year prior to the Communist coup of the Czechoslovakian government that cemented their power.)

⁴¹ Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (London: William Heinemann, 2005), p. 92.

Czechoslovakia's move to join ICAO served pragmatic interests, since Western Europe presented a large number of profitable destinations for CSA, such as Paris and Amsterdam. CSA would be well served by reducing the potential for problems with flights to those places. Regardless, Czechoslovakia was not the only nation in the Communist sphere to join ICAO.

Poland also joined ICAO as a founding member. This opened the door to a situation that illustrated some of the fears that the Soviet Union had regarding the organization, yet simultaneously showed how they were not serious concerns. On July 29, 1946, the American Armed Forces Division informed Robert Murphy at the Berlin Embassy of an upsetting situation. The Polish government was demanding that permission be given prior to all unscheduled civil flights by American aircraft through Polish airspace. The Armed Forces Division argued that this was unacceptable and contrary to the then-Provisional ICAO charter. It was suggested by the Division that the State Department ought to object to this on the grounds that the charter was being violated.⁴² Had this course of action been pursued it would not have proven effective: ICAO provides a nation with absolute sovereignty over its airspace, which suggests that the Division had misinterpreted this aspect of the charter. Ms. E.H. Finch of the State Department elaborated on this, citing Article 5, Paragraph 1 of the charter, which allowed any nation to request special permission for international overflights due to safety issues. This effectively undermined the Armed Forces Division's argument regardless of the status of the charter at the time. She went further, stating that although

⁴² Robert Murphy to the Secretary of State, "1818, July 29, 8 p.m., 860C.7961/7-2946," July 29, 1946, *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Poland, 1945-1949*, reel 17, p. 849.

Poland had signed the Chicago Convention, it was not yet in effect.⁴³ Secretary of State Dean Acheson defused the situation by restating that the charter was not in effect at that time and that its provisions were not yet enforceable as a result.⁴⁴

It is worth noting that, in spite of the Soviet displeasure with ICAO on a political level, there were many similarities between the standards and practices of Eastern Bloc nations and those of the ICAO. A document from the American embassy in Prague noted that there were only a few (unspecified) differences in the practices among the Eastern Bloc in 1948 and that they were otherwise largely identical.⁴⁵ By 1973, after the nations of the region had joined ICAO, they began to adjust their air traffic control and avionics systems to match those of the Western nations. The United States offered technical assistance for the changes that would be necessary to bring them in line with those of the ICAO. The systems that had been in before were nearly identical to those in use in ICAO countries, except that the technology was often older or less sophisticated.⁴⁶ This may be tacit Communist recognition of the fact that the management of an airline, whether run commercially or by the state, must follow certain practices in order to be safe and effective. They also obeyed the conditions of the Warsaw Convention, which set the standards regulating liability for the transport of people and goods. Matters of political ideology would be difficult to insert into some facets of civil aviation since so many aviation practices are obvious and practical.

⁴³ E.H. Finch to Mr. Walstrom, "FW 860C.7961/7-2946," July 29, 1946, *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Poland, 1945-1949*, reel 17, p. 850.

⁴⁴ Dean Acheson to USPOLAD in Berlin, "1642, 860C.7961/7-2946," July 29, 1946, *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Poland, 1945-1949*, reel 17, p. 851.

⁴⁵ Laurence A. Steinhardt to the Secretary of State, "NO: 994, June 22, 4 p.m., 860F.79600/6-2248," June 22, 1948, *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, 1945-1949*, reel 15, p. 331.

⁴⁶ Philip J. Klass, "Soviet ATC Plans Closely Match FAA's," *Aviation Week & Space Technology*, November 24, 1975, p. 19-20.

There was little in the Communist world that compared to the ICAO in terms of international cooperation on aviation matters. Perhaps the only significant example of such an organization was the Berlin Agreement, organized by the Soviet Union. It was signed in 1965 by most of the nations in the Soviet sphere. It called for some joint aviation programs with respect to maintenance, commercial, and financial matters between participating members. This included cooperation on maintenance for the airlines that were a party to the agreement when they operated outside the Eastern Bloc itself, with parts available at certain airports. Financial matters were processed by an agency set up by the agreement. Citizens of countries that were party to the agreement received highly favourable rate reductions on travel. In the opinion of Gidwitz, this may have been guided directly by the governments involved or even Comecon: “[...] it seems unlikely that these airlines could implement such a policy without substantial input from other agencies.”⁴⁷

The details of the agreement show that this organization had a small scope with no clear goal of expansion beyond Eastern Europe. It existed solely for the purpose of limited material and financial cooperation between its members and was perhaps the largest international civil aviation group created exclusively by Communist nations. It did not truly compete with ICAO in any obvious capacity as seen by the absence of standards or regulations affected by the Berlin Agreement. Due to the widespread use of Soviet-made aircraft in the region, this group appears to have simply been designed to cooperatively serve an existing need for better aircraft service.

In spite of joint air programs in the Soviet Bloc, many of the Communist nations moved to join ICAO not long after the Berlin Agreement was signed. Romania joined in

⁴⁷ Gidwitz, *The Politics of International Air Transport*, p. 100.

1965, literally the same year as the Berlin Agreement, which suggests that the two organizations were almost certainly not in competition with one another. This was nevertheless far later than the date Czechoslovakia and Poland joined (1944).⁴⁸ Romania joined at a time when tensions between the Eastern Bloc and the West were far less pronounced than in previous years. Bulgaria and Hungary became members as well, joining in 1967 and 1969, respectively.⁴⁹ The era of good, or at least better, relations did not have a definite beginning. There were a growing number of economic ties between East and West during the 1960s that served to reduce tensions somewhat. In spite of a lack of trade with respect to sensitive materials, such factors as tourism from the West to Eastern destinations became a significant source of revenue for East European nations.⁵⁰ Hostilities were toned down but not eliminated: the United States fought in Vietnam during that era, and the Soviet Union invaded Czechoslovakia, both to maintain their respective Cold War positions. In his book *Caging the Bear: Containment and the Cold War*, Charles Gati wrote: “[...] this was not the era of cooperation *or* competition *or* confrontation; it was the era of all three at the same time.”⁵¹ His assessment explains the apparent contradiction in the actions of the superpowers: they were all diplomatic tools used to bargain from a position of strength.

Strength may have been a contributing factor with respect to the decision of the Soviet Union to join ICAO. Soviet civil aviation was far more capable by the 1960s than it had been in the recent past. Increasing its role at ICAO from observer to full

⁴⁸ International Civil Aviation Organization, “Annual Report of the Council to the Assembly for 1970,” *Supporting Documentation for the Eighteenth Session of the Assembly* (March 1971), p. 168.

⁴⁹ Popescu, *Bilateral Air Agreements of Socialist Countries and International Law*, p. 44-5.

⁵⁰ Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), p. 282.

⁵¹ Charles Gati, ed. *Caging the Bear: Containment and the Cold War* (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1974), p. xvi-xx.

member would have been less risky in the eyes of Soviet leadership as a result. ICAO had existed for long enough that it was clearly not an imperialistic tool of the United States. There was also the possibility that, through the auspices of ICAO, the situation for Soviet civil aviation might have been improved: as a member of ICAO, the Soviets would be involved in resolving the issue of hijackings, which had become a serious problem by the late 1960s. Aeroflot flights were among the highest-profile hijackings at that time. The *New York Times* noted that the price of hijackings had superseded the main reason for abstaining: the cost of replacing equipment to the same standard used in ICAO member nations was previously too high. The potential benefit of effectively dealing with hijackings was crucial in overcoming that objection.⁵²

With the Soviet application to join ICAO the issue of whether Aeroflot should join IATA emerged as well. Mere months before the Soviet decision, Robert Thornton had speculated on that. Aeroflot would be among the most powerful airlines if it should compete internationally, therefore the Soviet Union would move quickly to join ICAO and IATA if it believed this was in its best interests. Aeroflot itself would not necessarily move to join IATA right away, in Thornton's estimation.⁵³ The Soviet Union petitioned to join ICAO and was admitted on November 14, 1970,⁵⁴ although Aeroflot did not join IATA until 1989,⁵⁵ as Thornton had predicted.

Détente meant that it was less politically difficult for the Communist nations to make agreements that made economic sense in spite of political differences. The

⁵² *New York Times*, "Soviet Will Join I.C.A.O. on Nov. 14," p. 94, October 21, 1970.

⁵³ Robert L. Thornton, *International Airline and Politics: A Study in Adaptation to Change* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1970), p. 152-3.

⁵⁴ Aeroflot, "Chronicle of Events – 1970-1978," http://www.aeroflot.ru/ENG/about.aspx?ob_no=7667&d_no=7692.

⁵⁵ Aeroflot, "Chronicle of Events – 1980-1989," http://www.aeroflot.ru/ENG/about.aspx?ob_no=7667&d_no=7688.

changes of this era were not limited to the political rivalry between East and West.

Several satellites joined ICAO in the late 1960s: Romania in 1965, Bulgaria in 1967, and Hungary in 1969, all prior to the Soviet Union. This suggests that they were not strictly bound to follow the Soviet lead including in matters of aviation.⁵⁶

As if to underscore that very point, there was an exception to the Eastern Bloc movement to join ICAO. The German Democratic Republic remained outside of the aviation organization until after the fall of the Berlin Wall when previous objections to its status as a divided state were no longer sufficient to keep it out. It joined only in 1990, just prior to the reunification of Germany but after it was known that reunification would take place, which helped with the integration of the East German air fleet into a unified German fleet.⁵⁷ Interflug, as the national carrier for the Communist German state, joined IATA at the same time, just as Lufthansa purchased a major stake in the company. This closer relationship between the two airlines eased the transition into IATA.⁵⁸ The long-lasting resistance to the international organizations, in spite of the fact that this isolated it even from its Communist neighbours, can only serve to show that the Soviet Union allowed its satellite states great freedom in determining their own approach to civil aviation.

As the majority of the Soviet sphere was looking towards ICAO, however, other Communist states moved towards the organization at their own pace. Those that broke from the Soviet example entirely joined at different times for various reasons. The People's Republic of China replaced Taiwan as a member in 1974, four years after the

⁵⁶ International Civil Aviation Organization, "Annual Report of the Council to the Assembly for 1970," *Supporting Documentation for the Eighteenth Session of the Assembly* (March 1971), p. 168.

⁵⁷ *Flight International*, "Who Needs Air Shows?" p. 120-30, September 5-11, 1990.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 120-30.

Soviet Union became an ICAO member. This was three years after the People's Republic had replaced Taiwan in the United Nations, with which the ICAO was affiliated.⁵⁹

Albania, a nation that had broken from the Soviet sphere as well, remained out of ICAO far longer than most Communist nations. There was little need for it to join even by that time since there was literally no civil aviation conducted in Albania. The army managed all flights in the country until 1989 on its transport fleet, which served as the national carrier for Albania.⁶⁰ Two years later that situation had not changed. Even after Communism collapsed, the army still assumed the role normally held by civil aviation, although it would be assumed by civilian organizations in 1991.⁶¹ Albania finally moved to join ICAO in 1990, nearly simultaneous to the German Democratic Republic.⁶²

Once the political circumstances began to change drastically, the Albanian government recognized that it would have to become more involved with the Western European nations and international organizations. Until that point it had been highly restrictive with the air rights over its territory, denying all other airlines passage through its airspace, until circumstances forced its hand. Albania made a quick and thorough about-face with respect to aviation organizations as well. Within months of its move towards the West, it hoped to join IATA and the European air traffic control system.⁶³

⁵⁹ Christer Jönsson, "Sphere of Flying: The Politics of International Aviation," *International Organization* 35, no. 2 (Spring 1981), p. 295-6.

⁶⁰ *Flight International*, "World's Air Forces 1989," p. 38, 29 November – 5 December, 1989.

⁶¹ *Flight International*, "World's Air Forces 1991," p. 34, 27 November – 3 December, 1991.

⁶² International Civil Aviation Organization, "Annual Report of the Council to the Assembly for 1970," p. 168.

⁶³ *Flight International*, "Albania to open airspace test," p. 5, 18-24 July, 1990.

1.2 The International Air Transport Association

As with ICAO, IATA had a limited relationship with Communist airlines prior to the 1960s. IATA serves an important role with respect to coordinating and maintaining standards of operation between airlines and governments. Airlines control the normal operations of their flights but must rely on infrastructure that they do not control or develop. This infrastructure includes a wide range of things such as navigational aids, communications, meteorological services, and other facilities. These are often provided for use by governments without fully understanding the needs and requirements of airlines. Cooperation is therefore necessary between airlines as well as between airlines and governments, which is often handled through IATA, although ICAO also handles many of these issues, in close interaction with IATA.⁶⁴

The modern IATA is the successor organization to the pre-Second World War International Air Traffic Association, founded in 1919 by six airlines that operated in Europe. Prior to the outbreak of the war the Association included over thirty members, including most of the airlines in Europe and several others from around the world. It regulated fewer aspects of aviation than IATA today, but its goal was the same: to make travel more efficient and safe for passengers. It standardized such things as forms and tickets for international air travel as well as safety on the planes themselves, even assisting in the development of the Warsaw Convention of 1929 that regulated the liability of airlines with respect to the transportation of people and cargo. The organization had been suspended during the war but the need for a replacement led to

⁶⁴ J.W.S. Brancker, *IATA and What It Does* (Leyden : A. W. Sijthoff, 1977), p. 2.

the IATA being founded with an extended set of responsibilities, such as the regulation of airfares, in 1945.⁶⁵

Although the airlines of Communist Europe were not party to IATA until the 1960s or later, several nations had been part of the International Air Traffic Association. Both Czechoslovakia's airline, CSA,⁶⁶ and Poland's airline, LOT,⁶⁷ had been members of the latter organization since 1929 and 1930, respectively. This suggests that their absence from IATA for the first two decades after it emerged following the Second World War was due more to the change in their political leadership than to a fundamental disagreement about the nature of the organization. They appeared to follow the lead of the Soviet Union, which did not join that organization and remained out of IATA until 1989,⁶⁸ although by that time the other nations had joined IATA. Prior to this, many East European airlines were members of the Berlin Agreement Carriers Association, which performed many of the same functions of IATA but was simply a separate group for the region. There was some cooperation between the two organizations to ensure a minimum of redundant services.⁶⁹

The most relevant issue with respect to the Communist absence from IATA in the early years of the Cold War was the lack of established standards. Communications and avionics are among the most important things IATA standardizes, which are handled in cooperation with ICAO since the two have similar interests in standardizing such matters. Without compatibility across borders, flights might have to use different radio

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 6-12.

⁶⁶ CSA Czech Airlines, *History*, http://www.csa.cz/en/portal/company/about_us/history.htm

⁶⁷ Polish Airlines LOT, *History, 1930-1939*,
http://www.lot.com/Info/EN/asp/Content__History_List.aspx

⁶⁸ Aeroflot Russian Airlines, *Chronicle of Events – 1980-1989*,
http://www.aeroflot.ru/ENG/about.aspx?ob_no=7667&d_no=7688

⁶⁹ Brancker, *IATA and What It Does*, p. 93.

equipment in each country they overfly for communications. Clear and easy communication, including a common language, is also important for maintaining safety. Navigational aids must also be usable for all flights in a country, so the technology must be compatible. Cost must be taken into account for some systems as well since not all nations can afford the most sophisticated equipment.⁷⁰

The IATA has made efforts to ensure that its members follow similar standards, without which foreign flights, which may follow other standards, can run into trouble. As non-IATA members, the Communist countries lacked common standards with their IATA counterparts. ICAO standards operated in a complimentary fashion to IATA: ICAO regulates such standards as navigational aids, air infrastructure, and international transit controls, whereas IATA regulates airfares, devises safety protocols, and minimizing environmental damage. Those agreements therefore had to have provisions pertaining to safety, radio communication frequencies, and other technical matters spelled out in air agreements beforehand. A route agreement between the Soviet Union and United States in 1966 had to include just such security and operational regulations.⁷¹ The agreement also included other unusual details that were dealt with under Bermuda Agreement-type air agreements and would have been unnecessary had both countries been party to ICAO. The details of flight frequency thus had to be explicitly stated, as well as the airline that could operate the route for each country.⁷²

Perhaps what ultimately drove each Communist nation to participate in ICAO and other civil aviation organizations was recognition of the value that being a member

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 25-7.

⁷¹ Jacqueline Dutheil de la Rochère, *La Politique des États-Unis en matière d'aviation civile internationale* (Doctorate Thesis: Université de Paris, 1971), p. 145-7.

⁷² Taneja, *The Commercial Airline Industry*, p. 8.

of the international aviation community brought. East Germany did not join until it was about to be reunited with West Germany, due to the fact that it could not do so as part of a divided state. Albania recognized that its isolation would not serve it well in a less-polarized world. Both nations found that they would need to deal with the West in civil aviation matters.

1.3 International Agreements

International bilateral agreements define the rights and restrictions that allow a flight from one country into another. Such rules were enshrined as early as the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, which was tasked with resolving the challenges surrounding a lasting peace in the aftermath of the First World War. The Conference recognized the principle that every country has sole sovereignty over its airspace, and created the International Commission for Air Navigation, which settled technical issues between nations on aviation matters. This predominantly European organization established many of the fundamental rules of international flight.⁷³ Each country has a right to close its airspace to foreign flights, and no other state may claim the right to overfly under international customary law. Each country, further, has the right to designate corridors of flight for reasons of safety or military security. A country has nearly absolute say over the conditions it may set upon aircraft that wish to use its airspace. The Chicago Convention, which set down the basic structure for international civil aviation following World War Two, and established the ICAO, also includes these rights, enshrining them

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 257-8.

as internationally recognized air law among nations party to the ICAO and organized in the format of the Bermuda Agreement.⁷⁴

A fundamental difference exists between nations that are party to ICAO and those that are not with respect to air agreements: the former are bound by Chicago Convention technical annexes and the latter are not. Air agreements that are struck with a nation that is party to ICAO therefore must agree with the technical framework of Convention and its annexes. Nations that are not party to ICAO would therefore have to accept the preconditions of the Convention with respect to agreements with an ICAO member state. Only agreements between two non-ICAO nations would it be possible to ignore the conditions of the Convention. Most air agreements in Communist Europe were struck with non-ICAO members first, which was due in part to the political nature of the agreements: with few exceptions, air agreements in the region were made with another Communist nation. The details of how these agreements changed over time reflect the evolving relationship between Communist and ICAO member states as well as the changing political and legal views of the agreements within the Communist nations.

International agreements form the legal foundation of flight between countries. By convention they are as binding as treaties but not all Communist countries treated them in the same manner. In its Communist era, the Romanian Constitution stated that its Grand National Assembly had the power to agree to and break treaties that affected internal laws. This power did not extend to bilateral air agreements, since they had no affect on internal laws. Such air agreements were approved by the Council of

⁷⁴ Popescu, *Bilateral Air Agreements of Socialist Countries and International Law*, p. 25-7.

Ministers.⁷⁵ Article 14 of the Soviet Constitution, however, stated that treaties and international agreements were to be treated identically. The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet and the Council of Ministers were to handle all such international dealings.⁷⁶ The Soviet Union would then immediately apply the tenets of the agreements. If a treaty or convention to which the Soviet Union was a party set up rules not yet contained in Soviet civil legislation, the treaty rules were applied.⁷⁷ Regardless of the process of ratification, the nations of Communist Europe respected the rules established in their air agreements.

An important factor in deciding to establish air links between two nations was the relationship they shared. Many of the Communist nations of Europe sought to build air links with their political brethren first; except in Czechoslovakia and a small number in Poland, air agreements between Eastern Europe and Western nations came later. Romania set up an air agreement with Czechoslovakia after the Czech Communist Party won a large percentage of votes in the 1946 election and formed the government. Bulgaria and Yugoslavia established similar agreements with Czechoslovakia in 1947. The Soviet Union likewise had early agreements with Czechoslovakia and Poland in 1946. Except for Czechoslovakia, none of the Communist nations looked to formalize an agreement with a Western nation until much later.⁷⁸

Beginning in 1955, the Communist nations of Europe finally moved towards striking new air agreements with Western nations. Several factors contributed to the timing of this move such as an easing of political tensions between East and West

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 62-3.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 62-3.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

following the death of Stalin in 1953. Soviet officials also may have hoped to win a propaganda boost by extending the reach of their airline with the addition of air routes around the globe. A more practical reason was believed to be the technological advances in aviation technology in the Eastern Bloc. It was only by this time that aircraft produced in the East were finally becoming competitive with Western-made planes. According to Betsy Gidwitz in *The Politics of International Air Transport* “Soviet postwar international civil air service to Western countries was inaugurated only in the late 1950s, when the USSR was able to produce aircraft deemed competitive with Western models [...]”.⁷⁹ Prior to 1955, there was a considerable technological disparity between the aircraft of their airlines, which came almost entirely from the Soviet Union, and those of the Western airlines. Western planes were faster and could accommodate more passengers, putting the Communist airlines at a disadvantage. Once it was possible for Eastern Bloc airlines to more effectively compete with their Western counterparts, air agreements were struck more readily.⁸⁰

Not all air agreements were truly official: sometimes air agreements were less formal, agreed to by members of the governments involved out of convenience and simply became convention. This allowed the countries involved to benefit from a willingness to cooperate while avoiding potential political obstacles, such as the Containment policy of the Western nations. They were not common in the late 1940s and early 1950s, preceding the formal agreements that were to come in the mid-1950s, but on several occasions it suited a Western nation to allow such an agreement. Henry Ramsey, Second Secretary of the American Embassy in Warsaw, made note of such an

⁷⁹ Gidwitz, *The Politics of International Air Transport*, p. 22-3.

⁸⁰ Popescu, *Bilateral Air Agreements of Socialist Countries and International Law*, p. 82.

arrangement on March 3, 1949. He called attention to how the British, using their position on the Civil Aviation Board in Germany, had given the Polish airline LOT 'tacit' permission to overfly West Germany. This allowed LOT to fly to Western Europe directly, without requiring a detour that would have been costly in terms of fuel and time. LOT was already flying two commercial trips per week to Paris and was planning a route to Brussels at that time, so maintaining direct access to Western Europe without a costly detour through Scandinavia was important. In return, Britain received the right to fly an air courier route into Warsaw twice weekly. This was not a formal agreement but more of a mutual understanding between the nations.⁸¹

The rights enshrined in the international air agreement system theoretically allow even small nations with little political power to protect their airspace. The situation does not perfectly protect the interests of all parties: powerful nations can strongly influence an air agreement with a smaller nation through various tactics. A quote from an IATA document acknowledges that no nation is forced to accept unfair and preferential agreements, yet states may be pressured to give concessions.⁸² There are numerous means by which a stronger nation could do such a thing: economic pressure through tariffs or an embargo, the threat of military encroachment, or simply overwhelming competition by the stronger nation. Since air agreements exist between two sovereign nations there is little legal recourse for any nation that receives an unfair deal. Even strong nations may encounter difficulty ensuring the rights of an air agreement with another strong nation.

⁸¹ Henry C. Ramsey to the Secretary of State, "Polish Airlines Summer Timetable," March 3, 1949, *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Poland, 1945-1949*, reel 17, p. 800-1.

⁸² Baldev Raj Nayar. "Regimes, Power, and International Aviation," *International Organization* 49, no. 1 (Winter, 1995), p. 159.

The rights surrounding air corridors, for example, have been a serious issue. Perhaps no test of an air agreement was more remarkable than that of the Berlin Airlift of 1948-9. West Berlin, under the control of American, British, and French forces, was geographically isolated from West Germany within Soviet-controlled East Germany. Only a few designated ground and air routes were open to Western traffic into the city. As the result of escalating tensions between the Soviets and Western nations in 1948, the ground routes to Berlin were closed to all Western traffic. The air corridors alone remained open, in part since Stalin did not believe that the West could keep Berlin supplied with enough food and other resources to keep it functioning by air alone.

During the Airlift, the Soviets harassed Western planes traveling to Berlin by several means. These included shining spotlights at the cockpits, flying balloons near the routes, and other measures designed to stop short of outright attack, violating the spirit but not the letter of unrestricted travel through air corridors. In spite of the Soviet efforts, the airlift was a success. Permanent recognition of Western control over West Berlin soon followed, as did the permanent establishment of three air corridors to Berlin that would be open to Western traffic, each 20 miles wide. The operation of Berlin flights was considered important by the West for many reasons. It served commercial needs, confirmed ties between West Berlin and the Federal Republic of Germany, and maintained a framework for another airlift if it would be needed. The Soviets had tried to get the Western nations to surrender their rights to West Berlin to no avail, forcing the Soviets to acknowledge the Western right to safe passage on designated corridors.⁸³

Air agreements were not always held in absolute trust by both parties. Air corridors, especially the Berlin corridors, were sometimes tested in order to determine

⁸³ Gidwitz, *The Politics of International Air Transport*, p. 185-8.

whether they would be defended. From early February to late March, 1962, the Soviets apparently sought to interrupt air access to Berlin along the corridors. Flights were regularly harassed by Soviet aircraft and there were attempts at jamming radar. Unusually, the Soviet air force went so far as to request permission to use Berlin corridor airspace for military exercises, which was rejected. The harassments only ended after U.S. Secretary of State Dean Rusk, and the British Foreign Secretary, the Earl of Home, demanded from the Soviet Foreign Minister, Andrei A. Gromyko, to end the disruptions. The disruptions subsided but did not totally end: a Soviet fighter jet intercepted and followed an American transport plane in July, 1962, in spite of the fact that the flight had been registered in advance.⁸⁴

In more peaceful times, designated air corridors permitted foreign airlines to operate in Communist countries without jeopardizing national security. This issue came to the forefront when Japan sought to fly a route to Moscow in the 1960s. Siberia lay in the path of the most direct route to Moscow, but it was a strategic territory that the Soviet Union was loath to open to foreigners for security reasons. A route from Tokyo to Moscow would have to overfly the territory since it would not be economical to detour around such a large region. The Japanese had interests in a Siberian route for future European destinations as well: a future route between Tokyo and London would take a quarter less time if it were to use Siberian airspace, dropping from seventeen hours to twelve and a half. It was very much in the best interests of Japanese Airlines to secure such a corridor.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ *New York Times*, "Russians Harass Flight to Berlin," p. 2, July 18, 1962.

⁸⁵ *New York Times*, "Soviet and Japan Near Air Treaty," p. 70, October 18, 1965.

1.3.1 Airlines and Air Agreements in the Soviet Union

The Soviet approach to competition for air routes was ostensibly rooted in Communist thinking. Under Soviet guidelines any foreign nation allowed to use a given Soviet airspace corridor would only be allowed as many flights as the second nation provided in return. Unlimited competition would have favoured the richest and most industrially capable countries, at the expense of the less-developed.⁸⁶ Many countries supported some level of competitive regulation, in much the same vein as Soviet thinking, although for different reasons, such as limited air capabilities, poor geographic location, or simple poverty. Even the United States sometimes supported limitations on free competition: Japan Air Lines was denied the right to fly into New York City until 1965, when an air agreement allowed American planes into Osaka in return. By the 1960s, it was typical for every country to require some level of equality in the number of routes it granted to a counterpart country.⁸⁷ This is not to say that the Soviet principle of equality became the norm but rather that, in this case, the Soviet Union stood in the same position as many other nations of the world.

It is important to note that the Soviet Union was less concerned with equality with respect to aviation than it was with the American edge over Communist nations. In the aftermath of the Second World War, the United States had a preponderance of air power, both military and commercial, as well as a large industrial base. Soviet leadership believed that the Americans would press that advantage to entrench their dominance in the field of aviation. The Soviet response was to avoid international agreements and organizations that they perceived to favour America, such as the ICAO,

⁸⁶ Popescu, *Bilateral Air Agreements of Socialist Countries and International Law*, p. 146-7.

⁸⁷ Taneja, *The Commercial Airline Industry*, p. 260-2.

on the assumption that Soviet participation would both legitimate and aid American aviation ambitions.⁸⁸ The Soviet government believed at the time that joining an organization such as the ICAO would represent unacceptable support for Western political agendas, regardless of how much the Soviet Union may have approved of elements of the organization's mission. Refusing to take part in such groups could be taken as a sign of Soviet independence from a Western civil aviation program and all the associated political trappings.

American suspicions of Soviet plans in its satellite countries were extensive, since many of their regular operations were at least partially under Soviet influence. On August 17, 1945, just as the war was concluded, the American ambassador in Moscow, William Averell Harriman, wrote of his concerns regarding Soviet use of civil aviation agreements. The Soviet Union had provided planes to Poland for Polish use, and Poland had the right to fly to the United States if America were allowed to fly planes into Poland. The Polish had no interest in flying such a route, in his opinion, but this did not preclude the possibility of the Soviet Union using that agreement to fly the Polish planes into the United States. This would risk the loss of what he considered to be "the only inducement we have to obtain landing rights for American planes in the Soviet Union."⁸⁹

The logic of this statement appears dubious. The United States was in a strong position with respect to the aviation capabilities of the Soviet Union at that time. Agreements between the two countries could be struck over any number of issues. Fears of Soviet agents flying Polish aircraft into the United States scuttling an agreement were

⁸⁸ Gidwitz, *The Politics of International Air Transport*, p. 47-8.

⁸⁹ W. Avarell Harriman to the Secretary of State, "2937, August 17, 1 p.m., 860C.79662/8-1745," *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Poland, 1945-1949*, reel 17, p. 994-5.

probably not well founded in reality. It would not be possible for Polish aircraft to reach the United States for years after that time and even then such flights would have had only a small impact. What is surprising about this situation is that it was voiced by such a significant figure. This suggests that there may have been some real fear of this possibility in the American administration. Obtaining landing rights in the Soviet Union was a highly sought-after prize: any means of obtaining it would be of great value to the United States government so likewise, any risk of losing it was to be avoided at all costs. The Department of State still sought leverage with which to reach an air agreement with the Soviet Union in 1947. The value in maintaining good relations and a trade partnership with the Soviet Union demonstrates that very thing in the sale of Lockheed Constellation planes:

With respect to the matter of the Constellation aircraft, the Joint Chiefs of Staff are of the opinion that there are no overriding objections on the grounds of military security to the sale of 50 to 100 Constellation aircraft to the USSR in the absence of a bilateral civil aviation agreement or other suitable quid pro quo. Nevertheless, security considerations require that exhaustive efforts be made to penetrate the 'iron curtain'. In this connection, it is considered that the bargaining value of the Constellations should be used for whatever it may be worth. The most gain would accrue to the United States if the sale of the Constellations could be made contingent upon one or all of the following stipulations, listed in order of preference:

- a. Conclusion of a satisfactory civil air agreement with Russia.
- b. Instruction of Russian air and ground crews to be accomplished in Russia by American personnel.

These views being considered by Air Coordinating Committee as part of its study US aviation policy towards USSR and satellite states.⁹⁰

Talks between the Soviet Union and the United States for an air agreement continued for many years. By 1959, both sides still expressed interest in an agreement yet many obstacles remained. Each side claimed the other was responsible for slowing

⁹⁰ The Department of State to the American Embassy in Moscow, "Control # 1349, 861.796102/1-247," January 2, 1947, *Confidential U.S. State Department Central Files. The Soviet Union: Internal Affairs, 1945-1949*, reel 33, p. 272-3.

the process over various issues, according to a *New York Times* article, although it did not elaborate on the issues that prevented the acceptance of the deal. It may be reasonable to assume that the Soviet issues were often similar to those of the Americans, except that they approached them from the opposite side of the argument. The United States had difficulty with establishing the terms of the agreement since, as the Soviet Union was not a member of ICAO, many basic safety factors and regulations had to be laid down in detail. IATA also established basic airfare rates with the approval of the governments of the countries that were party to the agreement. Without IATA membership, Aeroflot could conceivably charge far less than an American airline running the same route. The American and Soviet governments therefore had to agree to set fares bilaterally. Finally, an air agreement would have to provide enough economic incentive for American airlines to agree to offer regular flights to the Soviet Union. Soviet restrictions on visas and other necessary documentation dovetailed with a relative lack of tourist facilities in the 1950s. This combination would have likely dissuaded many potential tourists from the United States from visiting the country.⁹¹

American airlines sought some reasonable guarantee that they would be allowed a safe and economically viable route upon the conclusion of an air agreement between the United States and Soviet Union. Aeroflot could run the route simply for prestige since, as a fully-government-owned enterprise, profit was not an overriding concern. Yet profit was the primary concern for its American counterparts.

Other political issues interfered with the establishment of an air agreement between the Soviet Union and United States. The two nations were close to settling on

⁹¹ *New York Times*, "Soviet Official Expects Accord on Airline Flights to New York and Moscow," p. 41, September 27, 1959.

the terms of an agreement until the Berlin Crisis of 1961. The Crisis concerned control over Berlin: Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev insisted that the city ought to be demilitarized and placed under East German jurisdiction, yet the United States, France, and Britain refused to surrender control of their sectors of the city. Tensions lasted from June to October and resulted in the building of the Berlin Wall built by the Soviet Union. As a result of the situation, relations between the superpowers took a radical turn for the worse, scuttling plans for any agreement for several years.⁹²

Air agreements were struck far more readily between the Soviet Union and its satellites. Political disputes between Moscow and the satellite governments were far less common than between the governments of Eastern and Western nations in the late 1940s and early 1950s. During that era, CSA received the assistance of the Soviet Union to establish a route to the People's Republic of China. Any route between Czechoslovakia and China would have been far lengthier without making use of Soviet airspace and therefore far more expensive to operate. Many other nations faced this situation as well. The direct route between Europe and the Far East sat astride the bulk of Soviet territory, with detours that avoided their airspace taking hours longer. Any airline that could not use Soviet airspace would therefore be forced along one of several lengthier routes.

Even Czechoslovakia had trouble getting the right to overfly the USSR, which appears to have reflected Soviet doubts about that country's dedication to the Communist cause. In 1947, before the Communists seized control of the Czechoslovakian government, CSA management was only partially staffed by loyal Communists, according to John Bruins, the American Aviation Chargé d'Affaires in

⁹² *New York Times*, "State Department's Air Official Opposes More Atlantic Routes," p. 31, August 24, 1963.

Czechoslovakia. And at that time CSA was not allowed use Soviet airspace. Furthermore, it experienced significant trouble in obtaining rights to overfly Soviet-occupied territory in Hungary, Romania, and Germany. John H. Bruins stated his belief that there was a direct correlation between the denial of air rights and adherence to Communist rule, if not outright submission to Soviet dominance.⁹³

There is no direct evidence to substantiate Bruins' claim, yet the opening of not just Soviet-occupied airspace but airspace over the Soviet Union itself to CSA some five years later lends some credence to the theory. There was no other obvious reason why the Soviet Union would have relented on this point by that particular time. Czechoslovakia was several years past its conversion to Communism by that point and Communist control was firmly entrenched. The Soviet leadership must have felt that it stood to gain far more than it was at risk of losing in the deal.

The People's Republic of China had concerns with other nations flying over their airspace similar to those of the Soviet Union. They had refused the right for any nation to travel through their airspace, including other Communist states, until they granted permission to CSA. As noted above, Soviet assistance was necessary to make the route viable, and was duly granted. The American embassy in Prague noted on May 28, 1952 that CSA was to be the first non-Chinese airline to serve China.⁹⁴

By assisting the Czechoslovakians with the China route, the Soviets were acting in their own interest. The Soviet government could use CSA flights to ferry their own diplomats to China without needing to use Aeroflot. Allowing the Soviet national

⁹³ John H. Bruins to the Secretary of State, "A-196, March 27, 1947, 860F.796/3-2747," March 27, 1947, from *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, 1945-1949*, reel 15, p. 216-7.

⁹⁴ Foreign Service Despatch from the American Embassy in Prague to the Department of State, "Czechoslovak State Airlines to Fly Prague-Peking Route," May 28, 1952, from *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, 1950-1954*, reel 15, p. 10.

carrier into China, with its poorly developed air capabilities, might have been too large a concession for China to accept. Aeroflot could have out-competed any Chinese airline of the day, and even years after that time it could not match the abilities of the Soviet Union in sheer volume of air capabilities. By as late as 1980, the national airline of China, the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC), which had a monopoly on domestic Chinese flights, flew to only about 100 destinations.⁹⁵ As a smaller nation with a smaller airline, Czechoslovakia would not truly be able to compete with Chinese domestic traffic, which may have been more acceptable to the Chinese government.

Czechoslovakia had therefore won a significant victory for its airline. It was allowed exclusive rights to fly through the fastest route to Eastern Asia in spite of Soviet concerns about strict sovereignty over its airspace. This marked a significant change in the policy of the Soviet Union, which had been totally restrictive in allowing any foreign flights into its territory since the Second World War. Soviet fears of espionage and reconnaissance over their land had been a serious concern prior to 1952, when this change was made, even with respect to its allies. It was only a first step in opening Soviet airspace to foreign airlines: CSA would simply transit through the Soviet Union without serving the country itself.⁹⁶ It took several more years before Soviet permission allowed foreign airlines to serve the Soviet Union itself.

Air agreements with the Soviet Union did not permit regular commercial travel to Soviet destinations by foreign airlines between 1944 and 1955. It was in the latter year, for the first time in over a decade, that the Polish airline LOT was allowed to fly

⁹⁵ Gidwitz, *The Politics of International Air Transport*, p. 65.

⁹⁶ David Bruce (Acting Secretary of State) to the American Embassy in Prague, "A-163, May 30, 1952, 949.5200/5-3052," May 30, 1952, from *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, 1950-1954*, reel 14, p. 427.

into Moscow. This was followed soon after by the Czechoslovakian airline CSA. Yusta, the joint-stock airline operated by both Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, had been given permission to fly there earlier, but never did before it was dissolved in 1949.⁹⁷ The first Western nation allowed to fly to the Soviet Union was Finland: its national airline, Finnair, began flights to Moscow in 1956.⁹⁸ This was a significant step for relations with the West in the realm of civil aviation. It marked the beginning of an era of greater trust and travel between the Eastern and Western world.

Yet Western airlines had to face detours around Soviet airspace for much longer than their Communist-based counterparts. Britain wanted to overfly the Soviet Union and China to reach Hong Kong by a more direct route. Such a route would have reaped significant savings in time.⁹⁹ Talks were opened with the Soviet government in 1958 but Britain was not able to secure the rights to overfly the Soviet territory. As a result, British aircraft had to fly over the North Pole to Anchorage, Alaska, before turning towards Japan. It was not until the late 1960s that the route was finally opened, by which time the Soviet Union must have realized the potential profit that could be made from the route. Advances in Soviet technology, specifically the development of the Il-62, meant that the Soviet government believed that it would be able to compete with the Western aircraft that would be used on the route.¹⁰⁰ Eventually the rationale for denying Western penetration of Soviet airspace underwent a notable shift: national security became secondary to economic competition.

⁹⁷ *New York Times*, "Finnair to Set Up Moscow Service," p. 70, November 16, 1955.

⁹⁸ Hugh Macdonald, *Aeroflot: Soviet Air Transport Since 1923* (London: Putnam, 1975), p. 56-7.

⁹⁹ *New York Times*, "Finnair to Set Up Moscow Service," p. 70, November 16, 1955.

¹⁰⁰ Gidwitz, *The Politics of International Air Transport*, p. 183.

Even before the Soviet Union reached air agreements with some major Western nations, they had begun to establish agreements with developing nations. By the 1960s, Aeroflot had many routes into parts of Asia and Africa. It sought to establish links with nations that offered potential benefits for the Soviet Union beyond merely providing economically viable routes. The motivation for such uneconomical expansion was at least in part to establish a Soviet presence in those countries.¹⁰¹ In Gidwitz' interpretation: "The Soviet carrier maintains commercially nonviable service to many developing countries; political presence and espionage activity are probably the most important factors in sustaining these routes."¹⁰² In fact, the Soviet Union established links with any nation that it could during the 1960s. It already had links with its satellites by the 1940s and early 1950s and sought to expand beyond its sphere at that time. Agreements were struck with Finland, Sweden, Denmark, and Afghanistan in the mid-1950s, while Britain and France sought to settle their own agreements by the late-1950s,¹⁰³ India in 1958,¹⁰⁴ Cuba¹⁰⁵ and Ghana in 1962,¹⁰⁶ Pakistan in 1963,¹⁰⁷ and Rwanda in 1973.¹⁰⁸ The expansion of Soviet service appears to be in a logical direction, gradually moving outwards rather than targeting small nations that might be vulnerable to Soviet rule, as Gidwitz suggests.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 55-6.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 146.

¹⁰³ *New York Times*, "Aviation: Aeroflot," p. X29, August 4, 1957.

¹⁰⁴ *New York Times*, "India, Soviet Sign Air Service Pact," p. 63, June 3, 1958.

¹⁰⁵ *United Nations Treaty Series*, "CUBA AND UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS: Agreement relating to air services (with annexes)," Volume 706, Registration number 10123, 5 January, 1970.

¹⁰⁶ *United Nations Treaty Series*, "GHANA AND UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS: Air Transport Agreement (with table of routes and annexes)," Volume 498, Registration number 7277, 8 June, 1964.

¹⁰⁷ *New York Times*, "Soviet and Pakistan Sign Airline Accord," p. 16, October 8, 1963.

¹⁰⁸ *United Nations Treaty Series*, "UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS AND RWANDA: Air Transport Agreement (with annexes)," Volume 990, Registration number 14477, 23 December, 1975.

In 1966, the Soviet Union finally allowed Japan to use the trans-Siberian air corridor it needed to shorten its flights to Moscow and further European destinations. The agreement limited the Japanese airline to a 20 kilometre wide corridor over Siberia, creating a route 7,600 kilometres in length between the capitals of the two nations. The corridor agreement was not without potential problems. Only two cities were designated along the corridor for detours in case of emergency on the route, at Novosibirsk and Khabarovsk. If an emergency were to occur at some point between the two cities there was no designated landing strip permitted for the aircraft. The desire to preserve the security of Siberia was given a higher priority than the safety of the passengers on such flights.¹⁰⁹

Japan had proved to the Soviet Union that there was value in allowing foreign airlines into their airspace, and soon after Japan had led the way, other countries were allowed to operate deep in Soviet territory. By 1970, Air France and British European Airways were granted permission to travel through Siberian airspace.¹¹⁰ The Dutch airline KLM also received permission from the Soviet government to begin flights in 1970, along with the Scandinavian airline SAS.¹¹¹

Conclusion

In spite of the post-war Soviet tendency to reject international aviation organizations such as ICAO and IATA, the initial reason for that rejection was eventually overcome. The post-war weakness in Soviet civil aviation meant that they

¹⁰⁹ Dutheil de la Rochère, *La Politique des États-Unis en matière d'aviation civile internationale*, p. 142.

¹¹⁰ *New York Times*, "Foreign Airlines to Get Siberian Route," p. 89, December 5, 1969.

¹¹¹ *New York Times*, "Trans-Siberian Air Route Draws Bids," p. S17, December 28, 1969.

would have been put into a poor bargaining position in any international aviation discussions, especially compared to their great rival, the United States. This finally changed as aircraft manufacturing capabilities in the Soviet Union became far more advanced and Soviet aircraft became true rivals for their Western counterparts. Aeroflot took advantage of this to become one of the largest and most prolific airlines in the world.

The attitudes of the Soviet Union were important in shaping and guiding those of the satellite states. As the largest and most powerful of the Communist nations, whatever course of action it chose could set the precedent for 'proper' Communist behaviour. It could also use its influence to encourage satellite states to follow its will. Melvin Croan described the relationship between the Soviet Union and the German Democratic Republic in the context of that influence. He suggested that there was a desire within the Soviet government to consolidate Soviet control over other Communist nations when possible.¹¹² This extended into civil aviation matters. Satellite nations purchased Soviet aircraft and equipment, used Soviet standards and practices rather than those of the Western nations, and like the Soviet Union, often avoided participating in international organizations such as ICAO and IATA in the early years of the Cold War. They also struck air agreements with care to ensure that the rights of each nation were respected and that both would be able to benefit from flights. By the 1950s and 1960s, as the relations between East and West gradually improved, it was no longer a serious problem for a Western nation to deal with Communist countries on aviation matters. And as ICAO and IATA were increasingly perceived as a necessary step in gaining a

¹¹² Melvin Croan, *Integration and Self-Assertion: The Relationship Between East Germany and the Soviet Union (and Eastern Europe)* (Madison: University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1975), p. 23-5.

wider range of international connections for their national airlines, both the Soviet Union and the satellite states decided to join these increasingly global organizations.

The United States nevertheless perceived Soviet expansion as a threat. It acted to stymie the growth of Aeroflot and other Communist country airlines on routes into countries where it was possible that the main purpose was to increase Communist influence. The American government actively pressured some countries not to conclude flight agreements with Soviet Bloc nations. In 1966, the United States expressed its displeasure towards Japan as it struck the trans-Siberian air corridor agreement with the Soviet Union, but was unable to stop it.¹¹³ The risk for political penetration from that air route was not as serious as with smaller countries. The fact that America was willing to act on a low-risk case shows how seriously it took the issue regardless of the validity of its fears. By 1971, Aeroflot and CSA had established routes to most of the developing world.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Dutheil de la Rochère, *La Politique des États-Unis en matière d'aviation civile internationale*, p. 102-4.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 102-4.

Chapter 2

Aircraft Construction and Trade: The Capabilities and Limitations of Building a Civil Air Fleet in Communist European Nations

In the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, no problem was more acute for civil aviation in Eastern Europe than the absence of aircraft. Resources that could be used for war purposes such as aircraft had been taken by the Nazis or destroyed during the conflict. Except for the Soviet Union, no country in the region possessed planes in commercially viable numbers, especially planes that could be converted to civilian purposes. Likewise, with little remaining industrial capacity, those countries were unable to produce aircraft of their own. In spite of these obstacles, there was a strong and widespread desire in each country to build a fleet of aircraft that would allow for civil flight, rooted in national prestige. There was therefore a strong impetus to acquire aircraft by any reasonable means: trade was the main method in the early years of the Cold War, followed by a gradual increase in aircraft manufacturing in several satellite nations.

Every nation in Eastern Europe had a particular interest in American aircraft. American planes were known in the region for their high quality. Several airlines in the region had even used American aircraft on their airlines prior to the war and had been impressed enough to seek out new models to replace those that had been lost. Yet the relationship between those nations and the United States had changed for the worse, to the detriment of their air fleets. Under its Containment policy, the American government sought to restrict trade with any nation in the orbit of Moscow. This extended especially to technologies with war potential, including aircraft. The East European nations in the Soviet Bloc therefore had to seek aircraft from other sources,

mainly the Soviet Union itself, until the importance of Containment began to decline in the 1960s.

The military and civil flight capabilities of the Soviet Union increased greatly in the aftermath of the Second World War. Its aircraft manufacturing industry had been crucial to the war effort and had received substantial government support. This gave a substantial boost to the number of aircraft on hand at the conclusion of the war and allowed large-scale aircraft production to continue into peacetime. In addition to the domestically built aircraft, the United States had provided numerous planes for the Soviet war effort through Lend-Lease. Many of these were converted for civilian use. A State Department report from August 1946 noted this situation, concluding that the Soviet airline, Aeroflot, benefited greatly from these resources:

“[...] Aeroflot is in a strong position, having been augmented by transport craft furnished under the Lend-Lease program, in addition to its planes of domestic manufacture. A high percentage of those Lend-Lease planes must have survived the war, since they were exposed to relatively fewer hazards than other types of planes.”¹¹⁵

It is important to understand the sheer number of aircraft that the Soviet Union was producing at that time. A report in SAS News commented on Soviet civil aviation and provided numbers on aircraft production, stating that: “[t]he productive capacity of the aircraft industry in 1946 is estimated at 40,000 aircraft per year, triple that of 1940, all of Soviet design.”¹¹⁶ This number would remain steady for several years at least. Up to 42,000 planes were built in the Soviet Union in 1949, many of which became part of

¹¹⁵ Louise Luke for the Department of State to the Officer in Charge of the American Mission, Moscow, “Soviet Civil Aviation in the Second Quarter of 1946,” August 6, 1946, p. 13, from *Confidential U.S. State Department Central Files. The Soviet Union: Internal Affairs, 1945-1949*, reel 33, p. 189.

¹¹⁶ Francis L. Spalding to the Secretary of State, “Comment on Russian Civil Aviation and on Article in AMERICAN AVIATION in SAS NEWS”, April 24, 1947, from *Confidential U.S. State Department Central Files. The Soviet Union: Internal Affairs, 1945-1949*, reel 33, p. 204-7.

Aeroflot's fleet. In contrast, only about 120 planes were added to all commercial airlines in the United States during that same time. Although Soviet aircraft production could potentially improve the relative strength of Soviet aviation internationally, the primary advantage in the early postwar years pertained to internal travel. The planes were typically used to transport passengers and commercial goods within Soviet airspace, with only a small fraction of flights used beyond the Soviet border. This helped alleviate the pressure on the Trans-Siberian Railway as the major means to travel across the country.¹¹⁷

The United States government was concerned about what was being done with the planes it had provided to the Soviet Union. One case that illustrates the issue occurred when J.H. Humpstone of the Glenn L. Martin Company contacted the State Department in January, 1946. He was requesting permission to sell his company's Model 202 Commercial Transport Airplane to the Soviet Union.¹¹⁸ This prompted a discussion within the State Department concerning the sale and the inherent problems with providing aircraft to the Soviet Union. The main concern was that many Lend-Lease planes provided to the Soviet Union were ending up in Soviet satellite states without American permission. This violated the conditions of the offer: the Soviet Union was not supposed to be selling aircraft to other states for its own financial or political gain. A discussion by F.G. Jarvis within the State Department noted that, although this was not proper conduct on the part of the Soviets, it was not a straightforward process to simply cut off all commercial contact by American companies with the Soviet Union:

¹¹⁷ *New York Times*, "Soviet Air Power Reported Growing," p. 55, March 5, 1950.

¹¹⁸ J.H. Humpstone to Frederick Exton, "861.796/1-446," January 4, 1946, from *Confidential U.S. State Department Central Files. The Soviet Union: Internal Affairs, 1945-1949*, reel 33, p. 162.

“If we cannot stop Soviet diversion of Lend-Lease DC-3's to monopolistic airlines in Rumania and Hungary, I do not perceive how the Department can object to the sale of new equipment by American manufacturers. The matter of the diversion of Lend-Lease equipment I assume will be discussed with the Russians in the very near future in connection with the loan negotiations and Lend-Lease settlement.”¹¹⁹

The State Department continued to follow the issue as aviation equipment deals persisted. In late 1946, the Soviet Union sought fifty surplus ignition harnesses for Wright 3350 aircraft engines through the Foreign Liquidation Commission (FLC), an organization set up to sell off surplus military equipment in Europe. The FLC approached the State Department, believing that it might object to the sale, although it was only valued at about \$5,000. The principle behind this sale is closely tied to that of aircraft in general: if aircraft were allowed to be sold to a country, then spare parts for those aircraft should be allowed as well. In this particular case the point was rendered moot since surplus equipment had classified parts removed and was of no security risk. The deal was therefore approved by the State Department.¹²⁰

Even with many of its aircraft going to its own airline, the Soviet Union provided some aircraft to its satellites. Leland Harrison, the Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States in Bern, wrote that the Soviet Union had gone out of its way to offer aircraft to those nations. On March 16, 1947, Harrison wrote to the State Department:

“To meet unfulfilled [Soviet] commitments under [its] air agreements with satellite countries, Soviet authorities [are] reliably reported to have decided recently to give

¹¹⁹ F.G. Jarvis to Mr. Durbrow, “861.796/1-446,” March 1, 1946, from *Confidential U.S. State Department Central Files. The Soviet Union: Internal Affairs, 1945-1949*, reel 33, p. 163.

¹²⁰ Mr. McGinnis to Mr. Merchant and Mr. Walstrom, “Sale of Surplus Aeronautical Equipment to the USSR,” October 31, 1946, from *Confidential U.S. State Department Central Files. The Soviet Union: Internal Affairs, 1945-1949*, reel 33, p. 194.

priority for delivery of aircraft and equipment to satellite airlines even at [the] expense [of] Soviet domestic needs.”¹²¹

The satellite nations often turned to the Soviet Union for such aircraft after earlier agreements with Western nations broke down and prospects of future agreements dimmed. Czechoslovakia, for example, had been in talks with the Netherlands for four-engine planes prior to the Communist takeover of the government in February, 1948. By April of that year, in light of the new political situation, the Dutch government no longer wished to honour such an arrangement and turned it down. The Czechoslovakian government then turned to the Soviet Union to provide the planes for its airline.¹²²

2.1 Czechoslovakia

Czechoslovakia's infrastructure was badly damaged by the war, including civil air capabilities. The Nazi occupation had depleted their resources, leaving very little for the country to use to rebuild CSA, the Czechoslovakian airline. The Allies therefore decided to intervene in order to restore some of its pre-war civil air fleet. Britain provided two Anson aircraft to the Czechoslovakian civil aviation sector in the immediate aftermath of the war. This agreement continued an earlier cooperation that had been established between Czechoslovakia and Britain in the sphere of aviation. In particular, Czechoslovakian air crews had trained with the Royal Air Force in Britain during the war and continued to do so afterwards. The Soviet Union also offered the use of some of their aircraft to Czechoslovakia. Each of the principal Allied nations was

¹²¹ Leland Harrison to the Secretary of State, “Aviation Division from Deak,” March 16, 1947, from *Confidential U.S. State Department Central Files. The Soviet Union: Internal Affairs, 1945-1949*, reel 33, p. 199.

¹²² Laurence A. Steinhardt to the Secretary of State, “A-343, April 20, 1948, 861.796102/4-2048,” April 20, 1948, from *Confidential U.S. State Department Central Files. The Soviet Union: Internal Affairs, 1945-1949*, reel 33, p. 277.

willing to offer some material assistance to the Czechoslovakians at that time, prior to the political changes that would harm their relations.¹²³

To that end, on August 29, 1945, William Clayton, the Assistant Secretary to the American Embassy in London, noted that Czechoslovakia was in need of aviation fuel. It had only a small fleet since the war had only been concluded in Europe for three months and rebuilding their air capacity would take some time. Clayton suggested that a relatively small quantity of fuel, perhaps a few thousand gallons, could be spared by the United States Air Force in Europe for Czechoslovakian use. This would offer great help for the Czechoslovakians at little cost for the Americans while also currying their favour in matters of American air interest.¹²⁴

The fact that Americans were considering such an offer suggests that Czechoslovakia was seen as a potential ally to be aided rather than merely a competitor, as would be the case in the years that would follow. The Czechoslovakians apparently felt comfortable with American dealings as well; a memo from Lawrence A. Steinhardt, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the American embassy in 1947 claimed that the Czechoslovakians were seeking to purchase American planes. The memo also claimed that the Czechoslovakians would finance the planes through a loan by the United States, despite a lack of open support for such a loan by the embassy. Without a loan, the purchase would still have been sought through some other means. The planes were needed to meet an expected need for trans-Atlantic capabilities for the

¹²³ Laurence A. Steinhardt to the Secretary of State, translation of "Eight Months of Air Transport" first published in *Rozlet*, April 15, 1946, *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, 1945-1949*, reel 15, p. 166-9.

¹²⁴ William L. Clayton to the Secretary of State, "860F.796/8-2945," August 29, 1945, *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, 1945-1949*, reel 15, p. 164-5.

‘Sokol Celebration’, a semi-nationalistic Czech gymnastic festival, the following summer.¹²⁵

Despite these links to the United States and Western Europe, Czechoslovakia relied heavily on the Soviet Union for the development of its aviation infrastructure after the war. The Red Army provided the first transport aircraft as well as air crews to serve Czechoslovakian aviation needs in the absence of any air capabilities of their own. Although the British loaned Czechoslovakia several aircraft, their contribution was not as substantial in the long-term as that of the Soviet Union. The association between the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia became far more important after the Western nations were no longer willing to offer their assistance, once the Communists came to power in 1948.¹²⁶

There were fears associated with dealing with Czechoslovakia even prior to the seizure of power. In 1947, the Czechoslovakians sought to buy several planes from the British, according to Colonel R.M. Thoroughman of the 7707th European Command Intelligence Center of the US Army. He explained the situation as follows:

“In 1947 the Czech Ministry of National Defense attempted to buy two jet planes of the Meteor type. Anticipating delivery, they earmarked one machine for dismantling, and one for test flights, to enable aircraft engineers and flying personnel to become acquainted with the modern jet planes. This plan did not materialize, because the British Ministry of Foreign Trade refused to allow the sale.”¹²⁷

¹²⁵ Laurence A. Steinhardt to the Secretary of State, “NO: 893, July 15, 1 p.m., 860F.796102/7-1547,” *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, 1945-1949*, reel 15, p.421.

¹²⁶ Laurence A. Steinhardt to the Secretary of State, translation of “Eight Months of Air Transport” first published in *Rozlet*, April 15, 1946, *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, 1945-1949*, reel 15, p. 166-9.

¹²⁷ Col. R.M. Thoroughman to the United States High Commissioner for Germany (Corrigan) to the State Department, Mr. Travers, and the embassy at Prague, “Curtailed of Aircraft Production in Czechoslovakia,” June 29, 1949, *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, 1945-1949*, reel 15, p. 300-3.

The refusal probably had both trade and security dimensions. Competition with other nations was a serious concern in the case of new technology. Had the Czechoslovakians dismantled a plane and learned how to build copies, they would have had no need to purchase any more from Britain and could have even sold the copies or plans to others. There would also have been security concerns about diffusing a strategic high-tech innovation. The British evidently felt they had less gain than to lose from, leading to a political decision to end the deal.

The British put their own political interests foremost in their dealings with Czechoslovakia and did not wish to lend assistance to any member of the Communist sphere. The relationship between Britain and Czechoslovakia was therefore entirely different after the 1948 Communist takeover of the Czechoslovakian government. An example of the change can be noted with talks held with the Czechoslovakians to allow CSA planes permission to fly into British Commonwealth territories around the world. The British had come to an agreement prior to the Communist takeover but had not formally approved the deal. Once it came up for approval, the British stalled ratification. CSA flights through British-occupied Germany were allowed to continue as before, as well as diplomatic flights to London, since the Czechoslovakians had not broken any rules of the agreement covering those routes. The meaning of the message was clear: the British would honour existing agreements but would not deal with Communist nations readily, at least at that early stage of the Cold War.¹²⁸

The British were not the only ones among the Western nations who had misgivings about assisting the Czechoslovakians after the Communists came to power.

¹²⁸ Lewis W. Douglas to the Secretary of State, "NO: 2671, June 17, 1 p.m.," June 17, 1948, *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, 1945-1949*, reel 15, p. 260.

The Americans were likewise unhappy with the situation, fearful of the expansion of the Soviet sphere of influence. As a consequence, they made efforts to stymie the growth of the Czechoslovakian air fleet. This included restricting the use of planes that had been produced in the West. The American government believed that the Czechoslovakians might pass along Western aviation technology to the Soviet Union, or at least use the aircraft to compete with the West for a larger share of global passenger traffic.

This restriction was tested when the Czechoslovakian government sought to acquire several Canadian aircraft. Czechoslovakia began negotiations with Canadair, a Canadian aircraft manufacturer, for the purchase of several aircraft to serve the Czechoslovakian airline before the Communist takeover in 1948. The American government feared that the Czechoslovakians would give one of the planes to the Soviet Union to be copied.¹²⁹ As part of their aviation policy relative to Soviet satellite states, the Americans did not wish to turn over any material that could be used to give assistance to a nation in the Soviet sphere. The State Department acted quickly to halt the deal once the Communists took over the Czechoslovakian government. Andrew B. Foster, Assistant Chief of the Division of British Commonwealth Affairs of the Department of State, held talks with C.D. Howe, the Canadian Transport Minister in early March, 1948, one month after the coup. Howe talked with the president of Canadair and attempted to persuade the company to suspend its talks with Czechoslovakia in spite of Canadair's continued interest in doing business with the

¹²⁹ Gallman (American embassy in London) to the Secretary of State, "NO: 993, March 11, 5 p.m.," March 11, 1948, *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, 1945-1949*, reel 15, p. 255.

country.¹³⁰ Canadair soon acquiesced to the wishes of the Canadian government and cancelled the deal.¹³¹

Czechoslovakia looked to the Soviet Union for aircraft to compensate for those lost by the halting of the Canadair deal. On January 8, 1949, just months after Canadair had cancelled the delivery, Czechoslovakia purchased Il-12 aircraft through the Czechoslovak-Soviet Union Trade Agreement.¹³² This case illustrates a fundamental problem with Containment policy. As repugnant as the United States felt about dealing with countries in the Soviet sphere, isolating them served only to push them more deeply into the Soviet fold. Moscow gained influence with its satellite by providing aircraft once the West declined to do so. The risk of Western technologies falling into Soviet hands and being exploited against Western interests had to be weighed against the political damage that would ensue by shutting out those countries entirely. It was a difficult calculation but was important in establishing a consistent and firm policy with respect to dealings with the United States and its allies on the one hand and the Soviet Union and its satellites on the other.

2.2 Yugoslavia

Post-war aid from the Soviet Union to its satellites began to replace aid that had been provided by Western nations and included aircraft. This aid was not merely a

¹³⁰ From name unknown at Canadian Embassy in Washington to Andrew B. Foster, Esq., "860F.796102/3-2248," March 22, 1948, *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, 1945-1949*, reel 15, p. 422.

¹³¹ R.A. Thayer to Mr. Barringer, "Re: Letter from Admiral Smith to Mr. Lister dated August 16, 1948 on the subject of 4-engine aircraft for Czechoslovakia," August 23, 1948, *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, 1945-1949*, reel 15, p. 271-2.

¹³² Joseph E. Jacobs to the Secretary of State, "A-36, January 11, 1949, 860F.796102/1-1149," January 11, 1949, *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, 1945-1949*, reel 15, p. 434.

substitute for failed deals with the West. Soviet aviation assistance to Yugoslavia, for example, began soon after the end of the Second World War. This was before the 1947 Yusta agreement¹³³ that created a joint-stock company between the two nations, which required the Soviet Union to provide aircraft for regular operations. Yugoslavia did not have many aircraft at its disposal after the war but it quickly came into possession of fifteen Douglas DC-3 C-47 model planes, as Secretary of State Dean Acheson discovered in May, 1946. None had been assigned to Yugoslavia as part of Lend-Lease, and Acheson asked for verification of where the planes originated.¹³⁴ Harold Shantz, the Chargé d'Affaires at the American embassy in Belgrade, investigated and found that at least one of the DC-3 C-47 aircraft had in fact been built in the United States. Two others had been provided by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, the UN branch in charge of aiding the recovery of regions that had suffered under occupation during the war. The rest were, in Shantz's opinion, made in the Soviet Union under license from Douglas, which would have violated the Soviet contract not to sell the planes to foreign nations.¹³⁵ As it is unlikely that Yugoslavia could have acquired so many of the aircraft in such a short time by any other means, Soviet assistance appears probable. If true, the Soviet Union was offering substantial material aid to building the civil air fleets of its satellites at its own expense.

¹³³ Yusta was an airline operated jointly by the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia that lasted from 1947-1949, ostensibly created to improve civil air capabilities in Yugoslavia through direct Soviet assistance. This included the transfer of a number of aircraft and spare parts to Yugoslavia from the Soviet Union, as well as skilled air crews and other technical assistants. See Chapter 3 for further details.

¹³⁴ Dean Acheson (Secretary of State) to the American Embassy in Belgrade, "568, 860H.796/5-246," May 2, 1946, *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Yugoslavia, 1945-1949*, reel 17, p. 44.

¹³⁵ Harold Shantz (Charge d'Affaires at American Embassy in Belgrade) to the Secretary of State, "4015, 860H.796/5-646," May 6, 1946, *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Yugoslavia, 1945-1949*, reel 17, p. 46.

The relationship between Yugoslavia and the West was nearly the polar opposite of that between Yugoslavia and the Cominform, a group of Communist nations founded in 1947, which at that time included the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Yugoslavia. The United States government was unwilling to promote any trade with Yugoslavia, particularly with respect to war-potential materials. The concern was not that Yugoslavia itself was a serious risk but that its association with the Soviet Union could be a problem. Materials provided to Yugoslavia might have ended up under Soviet control due to their close bond. T.A. Hickok, the Chargé d'Affaires in Belgrade, noted that Yusta had formed a strong connection between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia that would be hard to break. If the American government wished to establish a trade relationship with Yugoslavia that could replace the Soviet Union it would have to focus on the potential benefits. These might include such things as aircraft or ground equipment, increased tourist numbers, increased remittances, as well as some unstated concessions by the United States that would presumably give Yugoslavia a competitive advantage in turning its back on its ally. Hickok did not believe that any such incentives would be an effective way to sever or even limit the connection between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union. The aid the Soviet Union had offered had already been too substantial to simply be forgotten, in his estimation.¹³⁶

As Hickok had suggested, the United States was clearly not willing to totally abandon the idea of working with Yugoslavia. This was far more difficult while it was under Soviet sway, but it could be made palatable provided that the United States set the

¹³⁶ Hickok (at the American Embassy in Belgrade) to the Secretary of State, "NO: 309, March 27, 9 a.m., 860H.796/3-2747," March 27, 1947, *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Yugoslavia, 1945-1949*, reel 17, p. 54.

terms of the arrangement. If Yugoslavia were to initiate any deal at that time on its own terms, the American government reflexively would not approve. This was illustrated well when a man from the Purchasing Commission of the Yugoslavian government approached E.L. McGinnis, a member of the Foreign Liquidation Commission (FLC) in Europe. The FLC was in charge of selling surplus military equipment under American supervision, such as trucks and other war-potential materials.¹³⁷ Through their auspices, the Yugoslavian government had hoped to buy three C-47 aircraft, eight Pratt & Whitney engines, and spare parts for the planes. McGinnis wanted to know the State Department's reaction to this development and how to proceed. McGinnis believed the State Department's answer would certainly be a 'no' and went on to say “[...] FLC should not sell any of this equipment to the Yugoslavs for reasons with which *all of us are painfully aware.*”¹³⁸ (Emphasis mine) McGinnis' statement illustrated the status of American-Yugoslavian relations well. He immediately recognized that the United States had little interest in any dealings with a Soviet satellite state. It would take a drastic change in the Soviet-Yugoslavian relationship to make the American government re-evaluate its position with respect to Yugoslavia.

Even more mundane issues, such as repairs, were affected by the American attitude towards the satellites. There was a brief flurry of diplomatic correspondence when several Yugoslavian aircraft came to the Netherlands for maintenance work. Herman Baruch, the American ambassador, wrote from The Hague on April 23, 1948, noting that the Dutch aircraft manufacturer Fokker was working on five Yugoslavian

¹³⁷ *New York Times*, “9 Army Surplus Centers: Disposal Sites for Salable Goods Set Up in Europe,” p. 3, November 28, 1945.

¹³⁸ E.L. McGinnis to Mr. Farrelly and Mr. Merchant, “860H.796/2-2647,” February 26, 1947, *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Yugoslavia, 1945-1949*, reel 17, p. 53.

aircraft. Fokker was willing to halt its work on the condition that Fiat and Scottish Aviation were also held to that condition, since they were the only other West European companies capable of that work.¹³⁹

Secretary of State Marshall responded quickly. He replied to Baruch, asking him to tell Fokker to buy time until the Department could receive replies from the Italians and Scottish. He suggested that Fokker ought to refer the Yugoslavians to a Presidential Proclamation issued on April 15, 1948, which classified, in his words: “all aircraft, parts and components therefore as implements of war and are subject to export license in US.”¹⁴⁰ He further elaborated his views on the matter of aviation work with satellites as follows:

“Not only does [the] US look with disfavor on [the] sale of aircraft and spare parts to satellites, but on major overhaul [work] of planes as well. [The] Dep[artmen]t concurs [that the] combined efforts [of the] US, UK, Dutch and Italians should close aircraft overhaul facilities [in] Western Europe to satellites and prove mutually beneficial to all.”¹⁴¹

The Soviet-Yugoslavian split of 1948, which saw the personal rivalry between Stalin and Tito turn the Cominform against Yugoslavia, offered the United States, and the West at large, an opportunity to win better relations with the former satellite. It was additionally an opportunity to roll back the Soviet sphere and the United States seized the chance. George F. Kennan's Policy Planning Staff, the think-tank within the State Department that created the Containment policy, suggested that supporting Tito could

¹³⁹ Baruch (no first name given) at The Hague to the Secretary of State, “NO: 246, April 23, 6 p.m.,” April 23, 1948, *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Yugoslavia, 1945-1949*, reel 17, p. 84.

¹⁴⁰ George Marshall (Secretary of State) to the American Embassy in The Hague, “164 RE EMBTEL 246, APR 23 860H.796/4-2348,” April 23, 1948, *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Yugoslavia, 1945-1949*, reel 17, p. 86.

¹⁴¹ George Marshall (Secretary of State) to the American Embassy in London, “1590, 860H.796/4-2348,” April 23, 1948, *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Yugoslavia, 1945-1949*, reel 17, p. 85.

show other Communist nations that it was possible to be successful yet not follow Moscow. The United States in particular was interested in having Yugoslavia follow this path; Britain was more interested in assuring that it would not lose more from such an arrangement than it could afford. The British were hesitant about propping up a government that it did not approve of in any form.¹⁴²

American Secretary of State Dean Acheson believed that any aid that could strengthen a sovereign Yugoslavia would ultimately benefit the policy of Containment. The Tito regime that ran Yugoslavia practiced a much more nationalistic Communism that did not seek international revolution, focusing instead on internal development. Titoism, as Americans called the Yugoslavian system, was not considered to be a 'good' system. The Tito regime had committed many atrocities, such as political killings, of which the United States disapproved. It had the sole advantage of being more palatable than the hegemonic Communism that had created the Cominform run out of Moscow. This meant that Communism itself would have to be supported in some form in order to weaken Soviet power. Acheson recognized the value in this and proceeded to involve the United States in Yugoslavia.¹⁴³

The Soviet-Yugoslavian split resulted also resulted in the end of cooperation between the two nations on matters of civil aviation. Yusta had been a symbol for that cooperation and consequently became a casualty of the split, since there would be no more Soviet aid directed towards Yugoslavia. The Yusta treaty was therefore dissolved in 1949 and its assets totally bought out by the Yugoslavian government. The months

¹⁴² Beatrice Heuser, *Western 'Containment' Policies in the Cold War: The Yugoslav Case, 1948-53* (New York: Routledge, 1989), p. 81-2.

¹⁴³ John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 67-8.

following the dissolution of Yusta saw the United States replace the Soviet Union as a partner for the development of Yugoslavian civil aviation. The American Departments of State, Defense, and Commerce created a plan to assist the Tito regime by building up its infrastructure in the absence of Soviet support. They sought to provide the Yugoslavians some 'war-potential' equipment, specifically aviation equipment, spare parts, used motors, and even a quantity of entire civil aircraft. This action marked the first time such goods would be offered to a Communist Eastern European nation after the war.¹⁴⁴

It took less than three years from the split between Yugoslavia and the Cominform for the Western nations to see real strategic value in a strong Yugoslavia. This strength would have to include economic and military capabilities and aviation was an obvious way to improve both. There were many ways that the Western nations offered assistance to Yugoslavia, including training and direct material aid, though additional offers were to become more substantial than the first tentative steps. Reports had emerged by 1951 that America would lend assistance to the Communist nation by training Yugoslavian pilots, and also that Britain and America both might offer military aircraft for their air force.¹⁴⁵

Military aid, including aircraft, had the advantage of being a highly visible form of assistance to Yugoslavia. Most satellite countries had few aircraft of their own and had virtually no ability to manufacture more. New aircraft were not easily obtained from abroad by the satellites either. In spite of a few planes provided by the Soviet

¹⁴⁴ *New York Times*, "U.S. Eases Barriers to Spur Civil Aviation in Yugoslavia: Partly Lifts Its Curb on Shipments of 'War-Potential' Materials to Eastern Europe – Will Weigh More Belgrade Requests," p. 1, November 4, 1949.

¹⁴⁵ *Flight International*, "Aircraft for Yugoslavia," p. 307, 16 March, 1951.

Union, it was rare for most of the satellites to receive more than a small number in the first years after the war had ended.¹⁴⁶ Providing aircraft therefore fit well with the Containment policy of the United States and was widely approved of within several departments of the government. Yugoslavia would, in their minds, serve to show other satellite nations that there were benefits to turning their backs on the Soviet Union. Both Acheson and the Joint Chiefs of Staff stated their preference for any government that did not answer to Moscow. This opinion was not universal: the issue was raised by a member of the State Department as to whether allowing the Soviet sphere to expand too far might have a greater detrimental effect on the unity of the Eastern Bloc.¹⁴⁷ In fact, the Soviet Union acted to purge its satellites of suspected 'Titoist' forces soon after the split.¹⁴⁸

The effectiveness of offering aircraft to Yugoslavia as a means of pulling the satellites out of their Soviet orbit was questionable. The material benefit, substantial as it may have been, was only a small aspect of the aid that was offered. On its own it likely would not convince a nation with a potentially hostile leadership to radically realign itself. Yugoslavia, however, was able to make use of the aircraft and did position itself more closely to the West, although it stopped far short of forming an alliance, preferring to remain neutral. The country was willing to accept any assistance in bolstering what were then quite limited defences. The American offer of military aircraft was affirmed in 1952 when several hundred fighters were shipped to Yugoslavia from Western nations, according to the aviation newspaper *Flight International*.¹⁴⁹ The

¹⁴⁶ *New York Times*, "Soviet Crews May Fly to New York As Russia Controls Czech Aviation: U.S. Is Receptive to Bilateral Agreements With Countries of Eastern Europe," p. 5, June 19, 1948.

¹⁴⁷ Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, p. 102.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 85-6.

¹⁴⁹ *Flight International*, "Arming Yugoslavia," p. 344, 28 March, 1952.

spirit of cooperation between the two nations was highly visible in the field of aviation. This assistance extended beyond merely military aviation due to the level of Yugoslavia's civil air capabilities at the time.

Yugoslavia's civil aviation situation remained poor into the 1950s after the collapse of Yusta. In October, 1952, Oliver M. Marcy, the US Army Attaché in Athens, Greece, wrote of his estimate on the status of the civil air capabilities of Yugoslavia. He felt that only with assistance from a Marshall Plan grant could any progress be made since, in his opinion, there was virtually no non-military aviation in the nation at the time. Only the military had the resources to fly in Yugoslavia and would, at least temporarily, have to serve civil air needs. The Marshall Plan money would be supplemented with American assistance for personnel and maintenance on the aircraft. Ultimately, he predicted that Yugoslavia would be able to take over finance and personnel provisions in time, but Americans might still be required for maintenance.¹⁵⁰

The predictions of Oliver Marcy were further elaborated in this statement, in which his estimates go beyond merely aiding the Yugoslavians but suggest that there was at least some consideration of Yugoslavia as an ally and partner to the Americans:

“While the Yugoslavs are definitely interested in the promotion of civil aviation, civil air is currently in an embryonic stage, and I suspect that the best approach to the Yugoslavs will be on a purely military basis. [...], the Yugoslavs are to receive jet planes, and in connection with other programs relating to Yugoslavia it would seem most appropriate to request Yugoslav cooperation in the program for upper air weather observation on a purely military basis.”¹⁵¹

This may appear to be a relatively limited partnership but, since it occurred in October, 1952, it marked a significant development for relations between the West and

¹⁵⁰ Oliver M. Marcy (American Army Attaché in Athens) to John Hill, “Proposed expanded program for upper air weather observation: Yugoslavia,” October 8, 1952, *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Yugoslavia, 1950-1954*, reel 23, p. 581-2.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 581-2.

Communist nations. The Cold War atmosphere had made substantial relations with Communist nations difficult for Western nations and such a relationship would have been nearly unthinkable just a few years before. Yugoslavia and the United States were undertaking an enterprise that would be mutually beneficial and serve as an early indication of the relationship that would endure in the years to come.

While Yugoslavia was being given such favourable offers of goods and materials, the United States added Latin America and the People's Republic of China to the list of nations with which it would not trade items that could be used for war. A *New York Times* article made the fears of the American government explicit. An unnamed Latin American country had reshipped carbon black, a component used to make military tires, to an unspecified European nation. The American government believed that the European country might transfer or resell the carbon black to the Soviet Union. The resale of such goods to the Soviet Union and its satellites by third-party nations was a serious concern to the Americans. Any advantage given to the Eastern Bloc could have made competition more difficult for the United States and its allies. Yugoslavia alone in the Communist world had been deemed a reasonable and safe partner for the sale of strategic goods.¹⁵²

2.3 Poland

As with many of the other nations of Eastern Europe, Poland had a difficult time in developing its civil air capabilities after the Second World War. It lacked the industry to manufacture aircraft and therefore sought foreign planes as soon as it was able to

¹⁵² *New York Times*, "U.S. Tightens Bans on Strategic Goods Diverted to Soviet," p. 1, November 5, 1949.

acquire them. Its airports were also in extremely poor condition, since many had been damaged during the war and needed to be rebuilt. Aircraft crews were also rare in Poland in the early post-war days. As with Czechoslovakia, Poland turned to the Soviet Union for assistance for months, taking advantage of the many pilots and air crews that the Soviets could provide.¹⁵³

The Soviet Union was not the only country that Poland sought out for aid to develop its air program in the early post-war days. In January, 1945, even before the war had concluded, a representative of the Polish civil aviation program, Mr. Milewski, stated his hope that Poland would be able to send up to 10 specialists to the United States to learn of new aviation developments. The purpose would be to learn of all aspects of civil aviation: the specialists would observe aircraft manufacturing plants owned by Lockheed and Wright, visit Idlewild airport under construction and LaGuardia to learn of modern airport operation, and a maintenance course with TWA.¹⁵⁴

There was clearly some optimism among the Polish leadership that a relationship with the West, in particular with the United States, would be fruitful for Poland's aviation ambitions. On September 26, 1945, Arthur Bliss Lane, the American ambassador to Warsaw, noted an article in the Polish magazine *Kurier Codzienny*. It stated the intention of the Polish government to rebuild the airport across the Vistula River from Warsaw to allow large American planes to land and not bypass Poland, since it would be a natural stopping point on a route across Europe. The desire to attract

¹⁵³ Arthur Bliss Lane to the Secretary of State, "Transmitting Translation of Article from the Local Press Relative to the Development of Air Transportation by the Polish Airlines," February 10, 1947, *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Poland, 1945-1949*, reel 17, p. 762-4.

¹⁵⁴ Joe D. Walstrom, internal memo of the American Embassy in Warsaw, "Training of Polish aviation personnel in the U.S.," January 5, 1945, *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Poland, 1945-1949*, reel 17, p. 725.

American aircraft in particular demonstrates the interest in good relations with the United States, which Lane felt reflected the views of the Polish government.¹⁵⁵

The Polish government also recognized the value of Western aircraft. American planes in particular were ideally going to form the core of LOT, the Polish airline, since the planes had a good track record during the pre-war experiences of the airline. Lane further noted the past good relations between Poland and the American companies Lockheed and Douglas: a relationship that had been built on the quality of their planes.¹⁵⁶ Poland wished to acquire more of the high-quality American aircraft quickly. The American aircraft companies were not approached: Poland found that it could get the planes through a third party. The Soviet Union was willing to give Poland twenty Douglas planes in August, 1945, and a deal was soon struck between the two nations. The licenses for the planes were traded for coal shipments organized by LOT, which meant that the aircraft were bartered rather than sold.¹⁵⁷ Selling the planes was not allowed under the conditions for the licenses. Douglas permitted the Soviet Union to manufacture the planes for its own use, not for foreign sale.¹⁵⁸ By trading the coal directly for the aircraft licenses, the arrangement may have been designed explicitly to avoid breaking the no-sale clause.

The issue of legal aircraft sales to Poland did not halt the development of the civil air growth in Poland over the following years. That growth was marked by a

¹⁵⁵ Arthur Bliss Lane to the Secretary of State, "Transmitting Newspaper Article Regarding Air Transportation and Communication," September 26, 1945, *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Poland, 1945-1949*, reel 17, p. 753.

¹⁵⁶ Arthur Bliss Lane to the Secretary of State, "Transmitting Letters Addressed by Polish Air Line "LOT" to Lockheed and Douglas Aircraft Corporations," August 28, 1945, *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Poland, 1945-1949*, reel 17, p. 740-3.

¹⁵⁷ Arthur Bliss Lane to the Secretary of State, "104, 860C.796/8-1945," August 19, 1945, *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Poland, 1945-1949*, reel 17, p. 735.

¹⁵⁸ E.L. Freers at the Department of State to the American Embassy in Moscow, "1616, 860C.796/7-1645," July 16, 1945, *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Poland, 1945-1949*, reel 17, p. 733.

development that would cause concern for the American Department of State: some planes purchased by Poland were being shipped out of the country. Arthur Lane, the American ambassador in Warsaw, claimed to have heard this from Rej Dule, the Polish aviation authority. Lane reported that Dule told him that the six best of the ten C-47 Douglas planes that Poland had acquired as surplus in 1946 were given to the Soviet Union. This was somewhat ironic since the Soviet Union had provided a number of aircraft to Poland in the recent past. The difference here was that the planes Poland had turned over to the Soviets were the newest and highest quality, with the most recent advances in aviation technology. This allowed Soviet aeronautical engineers to study and more effectively copy the latest American innovations. This also effectively put all Polish aircraft at the disposal of the Soviet Union, in the opinion of Lane.¹⁵⁹ This was precisely the fear of the United States government: American planes were ending up in Soviet hands to be examined and copied for the benefit of America's adversaries.

From 1946 to 1948 the relations between the United States and the Soviet Union were declining and the Cold War was becoming palpable. American fears of shipping aircraft to Poland could only increase in the aftermath of the Communist takeover of the Polish government in 1947 on top of the larger political reality. Ironically, the new Communist government did not realize that the new situation would present a problem for an aircraft deal in the era of Containment. In late January of 1948, the Polish ambassador to Washington requested two planes from the Americans for training

¹⁵⁹ Arthur Bliss Lane to the Secretary of State, "644, May 4, 11 a.m., 860C.796/5-446," May 4, 1946, *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Poland, 1945-1949*, reel 17, p. 759.

civilian pilots.¹⁶⁰ But the Americans were no longer willing to trade any war-potential material to a member of what had become the Soviet Bloc. There was far less hope in the American government of pulling a country out of the Soviet orbit with good trade relations by that time. By providing aircraft to Poland the United States would simply strengthen an adversary.

2.4 Aircraft Construction Post-1950

The Soviet Union continued to dominate aircraft production in the Eastern Bloc for years after the beginning of the Cold War. Once more restricted trade patterns between East and West were established under Containment, there was effectively no other source for aircraft. Eventually, other nations in the Communist sphere began to develop an ability to produce some aircraft of their own. They lacked the resources of the Soviet Union, especially its large industrial base, so they did not threaten the dominance of Soviet aircraft within their airline fleets.

Several satellite states developed a capacity for building aircraft of their own by the 1960s. Czechoslovakia built a number of smaller models, which were mainly for training purposes; it lacked the industrial resources necessary to build larger aircraft. In addition to this, a drastic change emerged in the aviation relations between East and West. Poland began to build planes and parts under license from Western companies. This was in spite of years of pre-existing aversion by Western nations towards allowing a Communist nation access to any aviation technology. The models included aircraft from Piper Sienna and engine parts from Pratt & Whitney. In addition to Poland,

¹⁶⁰ Polish Ambassador to the United States to the Secretary of State, "No. 544/1/48, 860C.796102/1-3048," January 30, 1948, *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Poland, 1945-1949*, reel 17, p. 911.

Romania had an agreement in 1968 with the Britten-Norman Company of England to manufacture several models of its aircraft. Gidwitz believed that this was a manifestation of the Romanian tendency to 'buck the trend' in the Soviet sphere. In her words: "The Romanians, apparently, are as eager to assert their independence from the Soviet Union in aircraft manufacture as in other fields."¹⁶¹

2.5 Technology

The technological edge of the United States over the Soviet Union was clearly visible when civil aircraft were compared. Soviet planes regularly posted poorer performance numbers than comparable ones produced by American companies and even those made in some West European nations such as Britain and France. They were often heavier and their engines were less powerful, thus requiring far more fuel than a Western plane for a flight of equal length. Soviet-made planes also had a poor reputation for reliability and quality. They required much more frequent maintenance at a higher cost, maintenance which could only be performed in the Soviet Union. These factors made the planes far less desirable for any foreign nation that could choose a Western plane and impeded growth of a market for Soviet-built planes. A major cause of these difficulties was the lack of competition and innovation that plagued Soviet research and development.

Several Soviet aircraft were of a sufficient quality to keep the Communist airlines competitive even if the planes were more expensive to operate. Some of the aircraft built in the 1950s and 1960s were good enough to rival their Western equivalent

¹⁶¹ Betsy Gidwitz, *The Politics of International Air Transport* (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1980), p. 202-3.

models. The Soviet-built Tu-104, for example, was the first jet airline in regular airline service. It boasted a relatively high travel speed and could therefore accommodate more passengers in a given time than other planes, by running additional routes.¹⁶² The Il-18 was likewise a boon to Soviet civil aviation, due to its long range and good performance record.¹⁶³ These two aircraft are specifically noted for the benefits they brought to air travel in the Soviet Union, by serving to tie the Soviet sphere together with reasonable quality and affordable air service.¹⁶⁴ These are the exceptions among civil aircraft in the Soviet Union since most others posted far less impressive statistics.

The Americans retained a technological edge through the 1970s, As Betsy Gidwitz noted in 1980 in *The Politics of International Air Transport*:

“Soviet engine technology does not meet Western standards. Their engines are considered inefficient, consuming vast amounts of fuel, and mechanically unreliable. Soviet industry has been unable to produce large high bypass ratio fan jet engines. From time to time, the Soviets have implicitly acknowledged their inadequacies by attempting to purchase small numbers of Rolls Royce RB 211 and General Electric CF6 powerplants, but the British and U.S. governments have forced suspension of relevant negotiations. On several occasions, with a variety of equipment, the Soviets have purchased small quantities, sometimes a single unit, of advanced Western products which they subsequently reproduce illegally for their own needs.”¹⁶⁵

By copying aircraft components, the Soviets effectively demonstrated that they were less capable of producing quality aircraft than their Western counterparts. The Soviet Union had, however, gone beyond merely 'implicitly acknowledging' the inferiority of their aviation technology. On several occasions, entire aircraft programs were spied upon and, to some degree, copied. In 1965, an Aeroflot manager was expelled from France on charges of industrial espionage. The target was the Concorde

¹⁶² Macdonald, *Aeroflot*, p. 222-4.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 217-8.

¹⁶⁴ Robin Higham, John T. Greenwood, Von Hardesty, eds. *Russian Aviation and Air Power in the Twentieth Century* (London: Frank Cass, 1998), p. 257-8.

¹⁶⁵ Gidwitz, *The Politics of International Air Transport* p. 201.

program to produce a supersonic aircraft, which the Soviet Union was also working towards at that time. In Gidwitz's opinion: “[n]o other country or civil airline has been so implicated in involvement in espionage under the cover of civil aviation.”¹⁶⁶

As a result of the disadvantages listed above, Soviet models of aircraft were used infrequently in Western Europe and throughout the Third World when compared to equivalent Western models. While some major Soviet aircraft models were copied from or based on Western models, the Western aircraft manufacturers kept ahead technologically through innovation and original thinking. Several satellite states purchased Western planes when they were able to do so, as restrictions to such purchases fell in the 1950s and 1960s. The Soviet Union could have used the years prior to the end of those restrictions to build a reputation for its aircraft in what was a captive market, yet it did not totally succeed. Soviet aircraft manufacturing was by no means a failure, since many of its planes were still purchased by the satellites after that point, in spite of the Western aircraft purchased. Robert Thornton speculated that this meant that the Soviet Union lacked a truly competitive aviation product in some fields.¹⁶⁷

Within the Soviet sphere, such technical problems were not a serious cause for concern with respect to aircraft sales. Only goods made by the Soviet aviation industry could be used within the Soviet Union, while several of the more compliant satellites would typically prefer to use Soviet materials. Gidwitz stated that “[o]nly in the Soviet Union and its most subservient satellite and client states is there no competition between aircraft manufacturers; the Soviet industry has a captive market.”¹⁶⁸ Problems emerged

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 34-5.

¹⁶⁷ Robert L. Thornton, *International Airline and Politics: A Study in Adaptation to Change* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1970), p. 144-5.

¹⁶⁸ Gidwitz, *The Politics of International Air Transport*, p. 193.

for the trade of Soviet aircraft when it had to compete with Western-built models, which avoided some of the technical limitations such as fuel consumption. One particular issue that arose was not concerned with quality, however: major overhauls of Soviet aircraft could only be performed in the Soviet Union. A nation considering whether to purchase Soviet planes had to rely on the goodwill and expertise of Soviet industry as long as they wished to use them. Given potential political volatility, this could become a serious detriment to such deals.¹⁶⁹

For all of these reasons, the market for Soviet aircraft remained limited. Among the many airlines worldwide that belonged to IATA in 1966 (which did not include the Soviet Union or most of its satellites), very few had Soviet-made airliners. Only 2.7% of the 3,468 aircraft in IATA's registry were made in the Soviet Union. This placed it behind the Netherlands as the fifth-largest producer of commercial aircraft. In contrast, the United States manufactured 72.5% of IATA-registered planes. In addition to this, the United States and Britain were the only nations making four-engine aircraft at the time, further limiting the Soviet aircraft-manufacturing market position.¹⁷⁰

Under those circumstances, there was only a market for the aircraft among countries that, for political reasons, were compelled to purchase them. Elaborating on this situation, Gidwitz explained the problems of the Soviet aircraft industry:

“The Ministry of Aircraft Production organizes, administers, and conducts the production of all aircraft in the Soviet Union. Aeroflot and the airlines of most party-states constitute a captive market for its output. Although they have tried to export their civil aircraft to the international market since the 1960's, the Soviets have been able to achieve significant sales only to countries dependent on the USSR – to other countries in Comecon (Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, a USSR-

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹⁷⁰ Thornton, *International Airline and Politics*, p. 94.

imposed version of the Common Market for the Soviet bloc) and client states among developing countries.”¹⁷¹

Even the more prestigious aircraft in the Soviet fleet had serious technical problems. The Tu-144, the Soviet supersonic aircraft designed to compete with the Concorde, was a poor quality plane in many respects. The Concorde itself was a problematic aircraft: it was expensive and faced numerous technical issues. The Tu-144 posted even worse performance numbers than its Western counterpart. Its high level of fuel consumption limited the Tu-144 to flights half as long as the Concorde was capable of. It also had issues with excessive noise, which was a problem over populated areas, and a weak safety record. Soviet technicians developing the plane had gone so far as to take the humiliating step of publicly asking the Concorde development team for technical assistance.¹⁷² Supersonic aircraft must cope with technical issues beyond those of typical civil aircraft, requiring creative solutions and high levels of quality control. The additional problems encountered by the Soviet Tu-144 compared to the Concorde underscore the disadvantages of the Soviet system of technological development, especially with respect to civil aviation.

2.6 Conclusion

The aircraft used for civil aviation in the Communist nations of Europe were selected largely as a result of the relationship with the Soviet Union and the United States. The American fear of having its aircraft falling under Soviet control was a driving factor. Planes that had been provided to Soviet satellites ended up in the Soviet Union on several occasions. In order to control this, the American government felt that

¹⁷¹ Gidwitz, *The Politics of International Air Transport*, p. 200.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 205-6.

there was no alternative but to prevent all aircraft trade with the Soviet satellite states. When it was possible to use trade to American advantage, the American government sought to do so. Yugoslavia gave the United States just such a chance to show that there were significant advantages for a satellite to turn its back on the Soviet Union, yet this was not met with the level of success that was hoped. The aircraft the United States had provided helped Yugoslavia but were not enough to pull apart the Soviet Bloc.

Czechoslovakia and Poland, by remaining within the Soviet sphere, had to endure the full hardships of Containment with respect to their air fleets. They could only get aircraft from the Soviet Union, which was willing to fill the void left by the American market. The Soviets were able to use their strong position in aircraft production to boost their own supply of planes while providing some to its satellites at a reasonable cost to itself. This had the effect of retaining a market for its aircraft when political reasons were the only serious reason for other nations to purchase them. Except for the Il-18 and Tu-104, Soviet aircraft were not of particularly good quality, which was becoming clear especially by the 1960s, as shown in the case of the Tu-144. The disparity between the quality of Soviet planes and those made in the West was a constant problem for the Soviet Union, one that it was not able to totally correct.

Chapter 3

The Growth and Development of Civil Aviation and Airlines in Communist

Europe: Aeroflot and CSA

Great differences existed between the size and capabilities of the airlines of Communist Europe. Aeroflot, the Soviet airline, was by far the largest in terms of aircraft in its fleet as well as total passengers and total annual distance flown. The airlines of the satellite states, while smaller, varied in size and range of destinations: Czechoslovakia's airline, CSA, maintained routes to Western Europe throughout the Cold War and flew to dozens of nations around the world by the 1960s, whereas Hungary's airline, Malev, had only a few planes and maintained routes to a handful of destinations. To some degree each Communist airline relied on assistance from other Communist nations in order to grow. The political situation in the late-1940s and early-1950s, particularly American-led Containment policy, limited the expansion of those airlines into territories controlled by Western nations. An examination of Aeroflot and CSA, the two largest airlines in Communist Europe during the early Cold War era, demonstrates how each airline responded to the challenges of growth under such restrictions as well as how successful airlines could emerge within the Communist world.

3.1 The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

The Soviet airline, Aeroflot, held an important place in the Communist world. It had the largest air fleet and the most extensive system of routes. This was due in part to its monopolistic domination of civil aviation in the Soviet Union. All non-military Soviet aviation was folded into Aeroflot by government decree as of February 25, 1932,

including all domestic and international routes. This did not include the jointly-operated German-Soviet airline Deruluft, which had been operating since 1922, since it was not totally under the jurisdiction of the Soviet Union. That airline continued to operate until 1937 when increasing tensions between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union strained relations beyond the point where it was politically acceptable to operate the company. A solely Soviet owned airline, Dobrolet, was founded in 1923 and quickly grew to include a great deal of air transport in the Soviet Union. Aeroflot effectively grew out of Dobrolet.¹⁷³ The only exception to this was flights run by foreign airlines into the Soviet Union, once air agreements were established in the 1950s. Aeroflot itself was owned by the government and controlled through the Ministry of Civil Aviation. This allowed the Soviet government a great deal of direct influence over the growth and development of its civil aviation.¹⁷⁴

The Soviet government was well aware of the potential for Aeroflot to serve the needs of the country. It began to implement its plans for internal expansion soon after the Second World War concluded. A very large number of aircraft that had been used in the war were freed from military service and converted to civilian purposes to boost the ranks of the Aeroflot fleet. Those planes could then be used to increase the number and frequency of routes that Aeroflot would be able to fly. The government planned routes to link Moscow with the capitals of the constituent republics of the Soviet Union and other major cities.¹⁷⁵ A report prepared for the Department of State titled 'Soviet Civil Aviation in the Second Quarter of 1946' summarized the major plans:

¹⁷³ Myron J. Smith, Jr. *The Airline Bibliography: The Salem College Guide to Sources on Commercial Aviation. Volume II: Airliners and Foreign Air Transport* (West Cornwall: Locust Hill Press, 1988), p. 284-5.

¹⁷⁴ Hugh Macdonald, *Aeroflot: Soviet Air Transport Since 1923* (London: Putnam, 1975), p. 31.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

All official information released during the first half of 1946 indicates that the Soviet Civil Air Fleet, unlike many other branches of the national economy, is in a much stronger position now than at the outbreak of the war. The length of airlines is greater than ever before. Engine inventory was built up during the war period to ten times its former size. Passenger and freight traffic are at a new high. Civilian airmail service was resumed at mid-year of 1946. In the ambitious program announced for 1946-1950, the total transport volume is to be increased ten times.¹⁷⁶

Much of the Soviet Union was very poorly connected in the 1940s, whether by air routes or by ground connections, and it was not immediately clear how well the plan to connect the far reaches of the Soviet countryside was proceeding. The American Consul General in Vladivostok, O. Edmund Clubb, noted diverging reports from Soviet agencies as to whether there was in fact service to the Far East of Soviet territory on April 26, 1945. He noted that Intourist, the Soviet travel agency, reported that “there exists no civil aviation in the (Soviet) Far East for transport of passengers and freight.” He contrasted this to a report from an article from the Soviet newspaper *Tikhookeanskaya Zvezda* from several months earlier, which claimed that there were already several lines running. Clubb believed that this could have simply been differing interpretations of the extremely limited number of flights to the east. The distance reportedly flown could be explained by just one round-trip flight each month between Moscow and Khabarovsk.¹⁷⁷ Later in 1945, Intourist informed Clubb of an update to air service to the Far East. Service from Khabarovsk to Moscow began that July. The route was not fast: it was scheduled to take three days with stopovers at Nerchinsk and

¹⁷⁶ Louise Luke for the Department of State to the Officer in Charge of the American Mission, Moscow, “Soviet Civil Aviation in the Second Quarter of 1946,” August 6, 1946, p. 1, from *Confidential U.S. State Department Central Files. The Soviet Union: Internal Affairs, 1945-1949*, reel 33, p. 177.

¹⁷⁷ O. Edmund Clubb to the Secretary of State, “Civil Aviation in Soviet Far East,” April 26, 1945, from *Confidential U.S. State Department Central Files. The Soviet Union: Internal Affairs, 1945-1949*, reel 33, p. 157-8.

Novosibirsk. In spite of the creation of the route, there was still no immediate provision for regular service. Flights were only announced with several days notice.¹⁷⁸

The most extreme parts of the Soviet Union sometimes took even longer to be reached by regular air service. While Khabarovsk was connected to Moscow in 1945, it was only on October 9, 1947, that service from Vladivostok to Moscow began, linking that strategic city with the capital. This was according to an ad in the newspaper *Krasneye Znamya* noted by John M. McSweeney.¹⁷⁹ Vladivostok was an important city for the Soviet Union since it was the country's only major port on the Pacific Ocean and one of their few year-round ice-free ports. It had taken Aeroflot over two years since the end of the war to connect it with regular service, which suggests that the expansion to more isolated and less populous regions of the country would have taken even longer.

The Aviation Research Institute, a think-tank based in Washington, DC, released some unofficial but reportedly accurate information on the status of Soviet civil aviation in 1949. The prospects for the growth of Aeroflot were considered to be substantial, with no serious obstacles to expansion noted. The only problem for the global dominance of Soviet aviation was that the United States was ahead in the aviation race at that time. The report also attempted to quantify the American advantage, stating that "...in some respects commercial aviation in the Soviet Union is about where American air transport was in the middle Nineteen Thirties."¹⁸⁰ A comparison of traffic levels between the two nations reinforces this estimate. In 1946, over one million passengers

¹⁷⁸ O. Edmund Clubb to the Secretary of State, "Civil Aviation in Soviet Far East," July 18, 1945, from *Confidential U.S. State Department Central Files. The Soviet Union: Internal Affairs, 1945-1949*, reel 33, p. 161.

¹⁷⁹ John M. McSweeney to Elbridge Durbrow, Esquire, "Transmittal Vladivostok Despatch on Aviation," October 9, 1947, from *Confidential U.S. State Department Central Files. The Soviet Union: Internal Affairs, 1945-1949*, reel 33, p. 218-9.

¹⁸⁰ *New York Times*, "Aviation: Soviet Routes: Commercial Flying in U.S.S.R. Likened to U.S. Service Fifteen Years Ago," p. X18, February 6, 1949.

traveled with Soviet airlines out of a population of 170 million, whereas seven years earlier, in 1939, over two million traveled on American airlines out of a population of 130 million, a significantly higher proportion. It was expected, however, that Soviet aviation would expand rapidly and that by 1950 over five million would be flying on Soviet airlines.¹⁸¹

The Soviet Union had priorities for the development of its aviation program that took precedence over international growth. While the airlines of the United States were expanding their routes internationally, the aviation capabilities of the Soviet Union lagged far behind, including domestic service. Its large interior was loosely linked, due in part to the country's vast size. In the absence of air travel, rapid transit over long distances was generally not possible. The government therefore sought to use aviation to improve links within its own borders. It began to do so in earnest in the 1950s by creating links among major cities throughout the country.¹⁸²

The Soviet Union did not halt the development of Aeroflot's international aviation capabilities while expanding its internal connections. It struck agreements with many of its satellites in the years after World War Two. It is worth noting that some of the agreements were not published, including several Soviet agreements with Romania, and even some agreements between Soviet satellites and Western nations, such as that between Romania and Belgium, were not made public. The details of those agreements

¹⁸¹ Louise Luke for the Department of State to the Officer in Charge of the American Mission, Moscow, "Soviet Civil Aviation in the Second Quarter of 1946," August 6, 1946, p. 10, from *Confidential U.S. State Department Central Files. The Soviet Union: Internal Affairs, 1945-1949*, reel 33, p. 186.

¹⁸² Christer Jönsson, "Sphere of Flying: The Politics of International Aviation," *International Organization* 35, no. 2 (Spring 1981), p. p. 295.

can be deduced to some degree by comparing contemporary agreements in similar situations.¹⁸³

An estimate made in 1946 by the Department of State indicated that the total length of all Aeroflot routes was planned to be 175,000 km by 1950, up from 100,000 km in 1940.¹⁸⁴ An article in the *New York Times* noted that this objective was not met, estimating a lower total distance. Aeroflot's route mileage across the Soviet Union and Europe was only about 50,000 miles (80,000 km), according to a 1950 study by the Committee for Study of European Questions, an American think-tank.¹⁸⁵ It is difficult to confirm the accuracy of the numbers, since there was room for interpretation as to whether a route was considered regular service, as noted by the Khabarovsk flights. In any event, by 1950 Aeroflot had recovered from wartime losses and appears to have expanded beyond pre-war routes.

The Soviet Union approached civil aviation in a similar manner to other nations in a comparable position. It had an industrial economy, yet was in a weaker position than the United States with respect to aviation. Most airlines were at least partially owned by their governments and were therefore sometimes subject to political interests above economic ones. For example, Britain and France both encouraged the development of their airlines in a direction that primarily served to connect and interconnect their former colonies, which built or reinforced political rather than simply economic links. Developing nations created flag carriers as a means of building national

¹⁸³ Dumitra Popescu, *Bilateral Air Agreements of Socialist Countries and International Law: A Comparative Study* (Master's Thesis: McGill University, 1970), p. 77.

¹⁸⁴ Louise Luke for the Department of State to the Officer in Charge of the American Mission, Moscow, "Soviet Civil Aviation in the Second Quarter of 1946," August 6, 1946, p. 1, from *Confidential U.S. State Department Central Files. The Soviet Union: Internal Affairs, 1945-1949*, reel 33, p. 177.

¹⁸⁵ *New York Times*, "Soviet Air Power Reported Growing: Rapid Expansion of Aeroflot to Link Communist Sphere Described by Committee," p. 55, March 5, 1950.

prestige. Virtually all countries, except the United States, directly subsidized their airlines and provided tax breaks for them. It is worth bearing in mind that the United States more than compensated for this, however, through research and development spending in aerospace technology and military contracts.¹⁸⁶ In addition to such subsidies, the Soviet government actively assisted the rise in popularity of aviation among its populace. Ticket prices for Aeroflot were artificially lowered at least until the late 1950s, as a means of easing the burden on the limited highway and rail systems. Officially, the lowered airfare did not make Aeroflot unprofitable, although profit was no doubt less of a concern for the USSR's state-run airline than for airlines in capitalist countries.¹⁸⁷ Yet what most differentiated Aeroflot from other airlines was not any of these qualities, but rather the role that the military played in its operations.

Although it was reputedly a model of commercial success, Betsy Gidwitz noted that: “[t]he administration and management of the Soviet Ministry of Civil Aviation and of Aeroflot are drawn from high-ranking military personnel.” She attributed this fact to the lack of the country's non-military people with air experience, since any capable person had been used in the military for the war effort. Long after the end of the Second World War, into the 1960s and 1970s, Aeroflot was still staffed primarily with military people. This remained the fact despite the existence of a growing number of qualified mid-level civilians capable of filling leading roles at the airline.¹⁸⁸ It was also a consequence of the history of Aeroflot: prior to 1948, the airline was under the

¹⁸⁶ Nawal K. Taneja, *The Commercial Airline Industry: Managerial Practices and Regulatory Policies*, (Toronto: D.C. Heath and Company, 1976), p. 282-5.

¹⁸⁷ *New York Times*, “Soviet Advances in Civil Aviation: U.S. Air Expert Predicts Moscow Will Be World Leader in Five Years,” p. S12, November 30, 1958.

¹⁸⁸ Betsy Gidwitz, *The Politics of International Air Transport* (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1980), p. 26-7.

management of the Ministry of Defence and had close ties to the air force. Aeroflot was not able to quickly shake this legacy.¹⁸⁹

Military men leading Aeroflot did not permanently bind it to the armed forces but they did not necessarily serve the best interests of running a profitable airline. In fact, the arrangement served in part to provide a backup for the Soviet military air fleet. In his book *Aeroflot: Soviet Air Transport Since 1923*, Hugh Macdonald described the situation:

As a transport reserve for the Soviet Tactical Air Force, Aeroflot is an important factor. The numerically vast fleet of jet and propeller-turbine aircraft can be called upon in a national emergency to provide the Tactical Air Force with an outstanding airlift potential.¹⁹⁰

Aeroflot has, perhaps indirectly, served in just such a military exercise. During the Prague Spring uprising in Czechoslovakia in 1968, the Soviet Union used the Aeroflot name as an integral part of its invasion. Planes claiming to be Aeroflot tourist aircraft requested permission to land on several strategic Czechoslovakian airfields due to low fuel. Upon landing, the planes unloaded their passengers, made up of Soviet Special Forces, and took over the airfields. This operation paved the way for additional forces to quickly land and establish control over the country. Some of the aircraft may not have been Aeroflot planes, but the military background of Aeroflot managers and pilots would not have made a transition from civil flights to military invasion difficult.¹⁹¹

Aeroflot served many purposes beyond merely transporting people and goods. Beginning almost immediately after the Second World War, its aircraft were used in roles for which other nations used specialized companies and organizations. Any

¹⁸⁹ Macdonald, *Aeroflot*, p. 32.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

¹⁹¹ Gidwitz, *The Politics of International Air Transport*, p. 28.

government agency with a need for aircraft could hire Aeroflot for a needed service, as could industries, agricultural enterprises, and other groups.¹⁹² Among these roles were things as diverse as crop dusting, iceberg spotting, forest patrols and fire fighting, oil and gas field support, and medical evacuations.¹⁹³

In spite of the widespread use of aircraft in the Soviet Union, air safety was quite poor in parts of the country, especially during the winter months. Safe practices and effective regulations had not been fully implemented by 1947. Leland Harrison, the American ambassador in Bern, Switzerland, wrote on this situation. He had received word from the Aviation Division on the status of Soviet aviation and reported, among his findings, that:

[...] heavy losses in life and equipment [have been] suffered in winter months by [the] Soviet Military and Civil Aviation [which has] rendered Soviet authorities concerned [and] more conscious of [the] inadequacy on (sic) their navigational aids and facilities and more interested in acquiring [the] necessary equipment.¹⁹⁴

Domestic issues were only some of the concerns that had to be dealt with by the Soviet government. Air agreements between the Soviet Union and other nations had to be developed in order for Aeroflot to expand beyond Soviet airspace, which often entailed reciprocal rights that would allow the other country to fly into the Soviet Union. Yet events in the political arena hampered the expansion of civil aviation between East and West after the first links were formed in the post-Second World War era with Finland, Denmark, and Sweden.

The Soviet Union established its first civil aviation agreements with countries outside the Eastern Bloc in the mid-1950s, beginning with Finland, Denmark, Sweden,

¹⁹² Macdonald, *Aeroflot*, p. 31.

¹⁹³ Gidwitz, *The Politics of International Air Transport*, p. 6.

¹⁹⁴ Leland Harrison to the Secretary of State, "Aviation Division from Deak," March 16, 1947, from *Confidential U.S. State Department Central Files. The Soviet Union: Internal Affairs, 1945-1949*, reel 33, p. 199.

and Afghanistan. Finnair began flights to the Soviet Union in February 1956.

Analogous talks with the United States, Britain, and France began in the early 1950s, but were interrupted by world events, specifically the Hungarian Revolution and the Suez Crisis, both of which heightened political tension and further polarized the world. Any good feeling that may have existed towards Britain and France from the Soviets was at least temporarily quashed in the Suez. Western condemnation of the Soviet response to the Hungarians likewise soured the mood between the Eastern and Western camps. As early as the next year, however, the talks were back on with all three parties.¹⁹⁵ The Soviet leadership may have recognized the benefits of building up a strong international aviation network in spite of political differences. For Aeroflot to become a truly global airline, it would eventually have to fly to all the major capitals of Europe in spite of disagreements over policy.

In the opinion of Sir Hudson Fysh, the head of Qantas in 1958, global expansion was ultimately the goal of Aeroflot. In his estimation, the only thing that had prevented the Soviet airline from already achieving such expansion was that they lacked the necessary technology at the time. The most advanced airline in the Soviet civil aviation reserve in 1958 was the Tu-104, which was considered to be a capable aircraft. It was not considered a true rival for the American Boeing 707 or the British Comet 4 but was nevertheless noted for its achievements in building Soviet capacity and for the technological edge that it gave to Aeroflot.¹⁹⁶ The Tu-104, introduced in 1955 to the Aeroflot fleet, was the first jet aircraft to remain in regular service in any airline (The Comet 4 jet had been introduced in 1952 but was removed from service in 1954 because

¹⁹⁵ *New York Times*, "Aviation: Aeroflot," p. X29, August 4, 1957.

¹⁹⁶ *New York Times*, "Russian Jet Flights To West Predicted By Airline Official," p. 57, November 24, 1958.

of technical problems). In spite of the speed advantage of the Tu-104, it lacked the same lifting capacity as other planes of similar construction and used more fuel, adding to the cost of operation and reducing the range of operation. Yet it could move a large number of people more quickly than was possible before.¹⁹⁷ Other aircraft introduced in the 1950s and 1960s proved to be extremely capable planes and improved the overall standing of Soviet civil aviation. The Il-18 introduced in 1957, a turboprop airliner with a very long range of flight that was later widely exported, was made in far greater numbers than Western models in the same category, such as the Bristol Britannia, the Vickers Vanguard, and the Lockheed Electra.¹⁹⁸

Wayne W. Parrish, the editor and publisher of *American Aviation Magazine*, concurred with Fysh in his own assessment of the potential for Soviet growth. Parrish noted that in the few years leading up to 1958, Soviet civil aviation had improved from a state where it was believed to be twenty years behind the West to a point where it was among the major aviation powers, although it still lagged behind the West in some respects. By 1963, he predicted that the Soviet Union would be “the biggest aviation nation in the world.”¹⁹⁹ The new aircraft that were joining the Aeroflot fleet were boosting the number of passengers that could be carried as well as lengthening the distance they could travel. When coupled with the extension of routes beyond the Soviet Union, Aeroflot was clearly becoming a major global air power.

An interesting side note in the Soviet approach to civil aviation was the near-silence that existed with respect to incidents that risked harming the reputation of Aeroflot. The *New York Times* made a note of this in a report on an Aeroflot crash in

¹⁹⁷ Macdonald, *Aeroflot*, p. 222-4.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 217-8.

¹⁹⁹ *New York Times*, “Soviet Advances in Civil Aviation,” p. S12, November 30, 1958.

Copenhagen in 1957. Soviet plane crashes were “not considered ‘news’ under Soviet journalistic practice” and were rarely reported by sources in the Soviet Union when they affected only Soviet citizens. To reinforce this point, the article referred to three crashes that had been reported over the previous two years: all the publicized accidents involved foreign passengers.²⁰⁰ Parrish noted this as well: “There have been two fatal crashes of the TU-104A, only one of which the Russians were forced to admit because of the deaths of prominent foreigners. There is no doubt these two accidents have given airline officials much concern, because at least one of the crashes is quite a mystery.”²⁰¹

The Soviet government could not hide the fact that foreign visitors had died on plane crashes. Yet the practice of treating a plane crash as an un-newsworthy event when it involved only Soviet citizens suggests that the Soviet Union preferred not to disclose negative press about its air services.

3.2 Czechoslovakia

Czechoslovakia’s airline, CSA, was perhaps the second most prominent in Communist Europe after Aeroflot. Founded in 1923, CSA had flown across Europe prior to the Second World War. Under Nazi occupation it was absorbed by Lufthansa, so after the end of hostilities CSA was forced to begin again with few resources. Czechoslovakia benefitted from its relationship with both the Western nations and the Soviet Union, acquiring aircraft from both in the early years of the Cold War.²⁰² The Czechoslovakian case was different from most of the other East European nations in that the Red Army had departed from its soil almost immediately after the end of the Second

²⁰⁰ *New York Times*, “Russian Airliner Crashes, Kills 23,” p. 3, August 16, 1957.

²⁰¹ *New York Times*, “Soviet Advances in Civil Aviation,” p. S12, November 30, 1958.

²⁰² Smith, *The Airline Bibliography*, p. 278-9.

World War, by November, 1945. There was already a great deal of sympathy for the Soviet Union in the government prior to the end of the war. The Czechoslovakian President of the then government-in-exile Edvard Beneš spoke warmly of Stalin and looked to a strong Soviet Union as a protector for his country.²⁰³

The development of Czechoslovakia's civil aviation during the Cold War era was likewise different from that of the other Communist states. As noted in Chapter One, it had joined the ICAO at its founding in 1944 and remained a member throughout the Cold War. More importantly, the country had struck air agreements with the Western nations from early on in the Cold War that were far more extensive than any other Eastern European nation. It struck agreements with the United States, Switzerland, and France in 1946, the Netherlands and Sweden in 1948 (after the Communist coup), and Finland in 1950. The other Communist nations only began to seriously engage with air travel to the West by 1955-6 as their own technological developments allowed them a more favourable competitive position than was previously available to them.²⁰⁴

The Communist takeover in Czechoslovakia was fast but not unexpected. The Communist Party had won 38% of the vote in the parliamentary elections of May, 1946, giving them a large but not dominant position.²⁰⁵ It became part of a coalition government that gave the Communists a great deal of influence but not outright power.²⁰⁶ That is not to say that the Communist Party did not have ambitions of seizing control of the country. Hal Foust, a reporter for the Chicago Tribune Press Service, wrote of his perception of the situation on February 3, 1948, mere days before the

²⁰³ Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (London: William Heinemann, 2005), p. 137-9.

²⁰⁴ Popescu, *Bilateral Air Agreements of Socialist Countries and International Law*, p. 82.

²⁰⁵ Judt, *Postwar*, p. 79.

²⁰⁶ Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), p. 259.

Communist coup. He felt that the Communists had been given disproportionate power with respect to their parliamentary strength after the previous election. In his estimation, they stood to gain more without another election than with one.²⁰⁷

Smaller nations had similar misgivings about dealing with the Communist Czechoslovakian government. The government of Greece, which had recently fought against its own Communists in a civil war, had been in talks to establish a permanent air transport agreement with Czechoslovakia. By late February 1948, soon after the Communist takeover of the Czechoslovakian government, the talks were put on hold indefinitely. All flights by CSA in Greece continued to operate on the basis of temporary operating rights only.²⁰⁸ The talks were ultimately abandoned by November 5, 1948, when the Greek government proved unwilling to strike an agreement with the Communist government. The Greeks apparently acted without coercion from the United States or Britain on this matter, which suggests that they had their own misgivings about dealing with a Communist regime.²⁰⁹ In light of the Greek government's own experience with Communist forces, this appears to be quite probable.

After the Communist coup in Czechoslovakia, the United States began to consider treating Czechoslovakia much as it did the other satellite states. The Communist government did not make it easy for foreign airlines to operate. Restrictions increased, and the potential for profit on the route to Prague was small to begin with.

²⁰⁷ Memo from Hal Foust (Chicago Tribune Press Service) to Mr. Carter, "860F.796/2-348," February 3, 1948, from *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, 1945-1949*, reel 15, p. 247.

²⁰⁸ Karl Rankin to the Secretary of State, "Curren to Aviation Division," February 27, 1948, from *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, 1945-1949*, reel 15, p. 513.

²⁰⁹ Henry F. Grady to the Secretary of State, "NO: 2232, November 5, noon, 860F. 79668/11-548," November 5, 1948, from *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, 1945-1949*, reel 15, p. 514.

The Scandinavian airline SAS, for example, had trouble making a profit on this route, and by September, 1951, stopped its weekly flights into Czechoslovakia.²¹⁰ The reason stated was that Czechoslovakia had been monopolizing both goods and passenger traffic. Over a year later, in November, 1952, SAS considered resuming service to Prague. This came in association with an offer from the Czechoslovakian government for SAS to fly a Prague-Rome route with guaranteed freight and passenger business to sweeten the pot.²¹¹

The hijacking of three planes from Czechoslovakia to West Germany in March, 1950 further strained relations between Czechoslovakia and Western nations, with further fallout in the sphere of commercial aviation. Several months after this incident, British and American airlines decided to terminate their services to Prague. In a monthly update on September 1, 1950, regarding Czechoslovakian affairs, Ellis O. Briggs wrote, suggesting that this termination of services should serve as a stimulus for a general change of Western political policy towards Czechoslovakia, which would amount to an extension of American Containment policy:

The decision of Pan American Airways to terminate its [Prague] service and a similar decision on the part of British European Airways, reported to have been agreed upon in principal, should open the way for reconsideration of Western aviation policy towards this country which presently constitutes an exception to the general policy applied to Soviet orbit countries. The General Manager for Pan American, Mr. Frank Swayze, departed in July. As far as the Embassy is informed, the definite termination date has not been fixed, nor has Pan American notified the Czech Government of its intention to terminate its service.²¹²

²¹⁰ Ellis O. Briggs to the Secretary of State, "NO: 255, September 27, noon, 949.5257A/9-2751," September 27, 1951, from *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, 1950-1954*, reel 14, p. 712.

²¹¹ Christopher A. Squire to the Secretary of State, "Operations of Scandinavian Air Lines and Czechoslovak Air Lines," November 28, 1952, from *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, 1950-1954*, reel 14, p. 715.

²¹² Ellis O. Briggs to the Department of State, "Political and Economic Developments in Czechoslovakia During July 1950," p. 4, September 1, 1950, from *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, 1950-1954*, reel 1, p. 659.

In truth, there were financial as well as political reasons for terminating the Prague service, because Western airlines could rarely profit from a route linking Eastern Europe with the West. The problem was explained in the following passage from James E. Webb, the acting Secretary of State, to the American embassy in Rome:

“[The] General purpose [of] our agreed policy is [to] limit satellite air operations, as, on balance, satellites generally have more to gain therefrom than do Western nations. True opportunity for free travel does not exist between satellites and [the] West, and limitations imposed by Czechs contributed to light traffic through Praha [Prague] which led to [the] recent PAA [Pan American Airways] termination [of] service there. [The] [e]conomies of airline operation [for] Praha service are, therefore, placed on [a] very shaky foundation.”²¹³

CSA was the main airline among the nations in the Soviet sphere that operated beyond the Iron Curtain at that time. Its operations were considered beneficial to the Soviet Union and its allies, at the expense of Western ambitions. In the embassy’s opinion, the Soviet Bloc as a whole had the most to lose from this termination.²¹⁴

The American government could not prevent Soviet-centric Communism from gaining ground in Europe without the assistance of its wartime allies, as the Italian example suggests. The European allies were far closer and more involved with the countries in the Soviet sphere and, fortunately for the United States, generally shared the American views on Containment. Cooperation was crucial for the success of Containment: if the economic and political barriers that restricted a Soviet satellite nation could be easily circumvented then the policy would be a failure. Civil aviation proved to be a viable field for just such cooperation. Trade for aircraft and spare parts

²¹³ James E. Webb to the American Embassy in Rome, “Control #8074, 949.5265/9-1850,” September 18, 1950, *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, 1950-1954*, reel 14, p. 1188-90.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 1188-90.

could be cut off. Air routes could be restricted with relative ease and at little cost to Western nations, in the estimation of the American embassy in Rome above.²¹⁵ France was among the countries to follow the principles of Containment in just such a manner. The French maintained only limited aviation relations with Communist Europe, following the Containment policy of the United States closely. In 1950, France had approved air agreements with Czechoslovakia and Poland alone out of the entire Soviet Bloc. The flights were permitted on the basis of strict reciprocity: on each route an equal number of flights had to be flown by the French airline and that of its Communist counterpart. Even that much contact was tolerated only since it was continuation of aviation links that existed prior to the Communist takeovers in those nations. While no clear pretext for simply terminating the routes was perceived, there was no intent to build any additional links with nations that followed the Soviet lead.²¹⁶

In contrast to the Western point of view, Communist nations had an interest in continuing service to the West for a number of non-economic reasons. An unspecified source in Czechoslovakia enumerated the specific advantages that the Soviet Bloc as a whole obtained through flights to the West by CSA, the Czechoslovakian airline, to the American embassy in Prague. Espionage ranked as the most important gain from air links with the West. Trade and exporting ranked seventh-most important at the bottom of the list, with travel and tourism not mentioned at all. The remaining five, in descending order of importance, included: an alternate means of transporting Soviet

²¹⁵ This estimate is not totally accurate: the flights between Rome and Prague that were discontinued by Pan American in 1950 were replaced by SAS in 1952, which demonstrates the weakness of Containment: it could not regulate neutral nations. The Scandinavian Airline was beyond direct American influence and therefore it was not totally possible for the United States to restrict East European airlines in this way.

²¹⁶ Rupert A. Lloyd, Jr. to the Department of State, "Satellite Aviation Policy: Transmittal of Note From French Foreign Office," June 30, 1950, *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, 1950-1954*, reel 14, p. 633-7.

agents without visas to West Europe (in case Aeroflot planes were halted in the American sector of Germany); CSA conducting reconnaissance using pilots that had received intelligence training; distribution of propaganda, which was mainly aimed at France (recordings of French political press conferences and French parliamentary debates were transported to Czechoslovakia and broadcast back to France with pro-Communist comments added); a preference that Communist couriers travel on Soviet-orbit registry; and CSA planes could evade Western export controls (which was becoming a less important factor by 1951 due to better Western controls that did not overlook CSA planes as often as before).²¹⁷ The document apparently expressed the beliefs of Americans with respect to Communist nations in general, since no criticism of the statements the source had made appeared, with the list of reasons passed along directly to the Department of State.

The paramount concern for the United States and its European allies, from 1947 until the mid-1950s, was the limitation of civil aviation from the Soviet sphere into Western Europe and the rest of the world by any reasonable means. The effectiveness of this policy is difficult to judge but some of its side-effects are more apparent. The Soviet satellites were forced to turn towards the Soviet Union for aircraft, equipment, and training for aircrews and mechanics. The aviation infrastructure of Eastern Europe became tied closely together with the Soviet Union at the centre. The walls put up by the West would come down gradually, in a different era.

On one particular occasion, civil aviation decisively worsened relations between a Communist nation and the West. The Civil Aviation Board (CAB) was a part of the

²¹⁷ Alexander Schnee to the Department of State, "Importance to Czechoslovak Government of Czechoslovak Airline Flight to West," October 3, 1951, *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, 1950-1954*, reel 14, p. 625-6.

Tripartite Commission that officially represented the American, British, and French authorities in occupied Western Germany under a unified command. In February, 1950, CAB permitted Czechoslovakia regular flights over American-occupied German territory for a period of 12 months. The only significant condition, which was not abnormal under those circumstances, was that CAB would oversee and grant permission to flights from Czechoslovakia through its airspace.²¹⁸

The condition was directly challenged when hundreds of members of the Czechoslovakian Communist Party requested permission to travel to Britain for a congress in Sheffield, England. Permission was requested for a total of eighteen overflights and was initially granted but subsequently refused without a reason given.²¹⁹ On November 14, 1950, Czechoslovakia decided to ignore this denial and fly the planes anyway. In so doing, it greatly exceeded the agreed number of flights it was permitted to run over West Germany. The nature of the flights was provocative but they were merely transporting members of the British and Belgian Communist parties to Czechoslovakia for a scheduled meeting. There was no suspicion by the CAB that the aircraft were being used for any other purpose. The key issue was the magnitude of the violation of the existing air agreement for overflights of American-controlled Germany. Ten Czechoslovakian planes overflew the territory a total of 27 times without obtaining proper clearance from the American authorities. Furthermore, no forewarning of any kind was given to the CAB.²²⁰

²¹⁸ Milton M. Turner to the Department of State, "Czechoslovak and Polish Airlines Overflight Authorization," February 7, 1950, from *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, 1950-1954*, reel 14, p. 719.

²¹⁹ *New York Times*, "Britain Bars Mass Flight To Sheffield Congress," p. 16, November 10, 1950.

²²⁰ John J. McCloy to the Secretary of State, "NO: 4096, November 15, 6 p.m., 949.5200/11-1550," November 15, 1950, from *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, 1950-1954*, reel 14, p. 365.

The United States regarded this as a provocative action: the Department of State felt there was no way that such an action could be attributed to a simple misunderstanding. Within a day, the Department of State responded to the unauthorized overflights by taking measures to punish Czechoslovakia. It advised the Tripartite Commission to indefinitely suspend all future overflights by Czechoslovakian aircraft pending official justification for the overflights.²²¹ On November 21, 1950, the Department of State informed the High Command in Germany that all CSA flights to Rome and Zurich were to be cancelled until Czechoslovakia explained the reason for the mass overflights a week before.²²²

The Czechoslovakian government's reply regarding the overflights was received on November 29, 1950. It claimed that none of the occupying powers in Germany had stated that extra flights on designated corridors required extra clearance of any kind. The American Air Attaché in Prague had, since 1948, said that no diplomatic clearance was needed on normal lines, according the Czech Foreign Office. Also cited was a case in September 21, 1950, when Pan American flew in a special flight without the American embassy asking for diplomatic clearance from Czechoslovakia. It rejected the wording of the embassy to the government, which accused it of deliberately breaking convention, and claimed it had only acted within its right.²²³

²²¹ Dean Acheson (Secretary of State) responding to John J. McCloy, "NIACT 3694, 949.5200/11-1550," November 15, 1950, from *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, 1950-1954*, reel 14, p. 366-7.

²²² Dean Acheson to the High Commission in Germany in Frankfort, "PRIORITY NIACT, Control 7613, 949.5262A/11-2150," November 21, 1950, from *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, 1950-1954*, reel 14, p. 848-9.

²²³ Thompson (at the American Embassy in Prague) to the Secretary of State, "NO: 333, November 29, 949.5262A/11-2950," November 29, 1950, from *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, 1950-1954*, reel 14, p. 862-4.

Within a month, this resulted in all CSA flights into the American Zone of Germany being restricted to a single corridor linking Prague with Frankfurt.²²⁴ The Czechoslovakian government was upset by the American response. Czechoslovakia responded to this restriction by banning all private flights used by Western embassies. The American embassy was directly informed that they were permitted to fly to and from Czechoslovakia provided they restricted themselves to commercial flights.²²⁵

The situation was not soon resolved and the associated problems of this situation spread beyond the relations strictly between the United States and Czechoslovakia. Czechoslovakia eventually suffered from poorer relations with France as the deteriorating situation continued. The Czechoslovakian government approached the French government in 1952 for Fifth Freedom rights in French airspace and was reportedly to be refused. In a further step, terminal traffic rights for CSA on a Paris-Prague route were to be refused as well. These actions on the part of the French government were directly attributed to solidarity with the United States.²²⁶ The Americans had provided the French with a just cause to support Containment against the Czechoslovakians: the imprisonment of French nationals in Czechoslovakia. The French government was not willing to aid that country at a time when French citizens were being held for political reasons.²²⁷

Indirect pressure from the Western nations was also brought to bear against the airlines of the Communist nations when possible. This was the case in 1952 when Esso, the primary fuel supplier to Czechoslovakian airline CSA, cancelled its business

²²⁴ *New York Times*, "Czech Airliners Curbed," p. 2, December 16, 1950.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

²²⁶ James C. Dunn to the Secretary of State, "NO: 6119, April 4, 8 p.m., 949.5200/4-452," April 4, 1952, from *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, 1950-1954*, reel 14, p. 417.

²²⁷ This is discussed more fully in the section on tourism in chapter 4.

dealings. Two years earlier in 1950, Czechoslovakia had been denied the right to overfly the American zone of West Germany amid escalating tensions between the two nations. A detour north through Scandinavia was therefore required for CSA flights between Prague and Western Europe. Even there, the United States was able to put pressure on CSA through legitimate means. On January 7, 1952, Esso asked the State Department for its approval to renew a contract to supply aviation fuel to CSA in Finland, Sweden and Denmark, for which CSA would service Esso customers in Prague. The Department felt that, due to the political climate between the two nations, it should discourage the renewal.²²⁸ This strategy was not without potential consequences for the United States and its allies. The overall fuel shipments to Prague were to be drastically reduced. Such an artificial fuel shortage would limit the available fuel for all airlines in Prague, including Western airlines that would use the affected airports. Contingency arrangements were ordered to alleviate potential problems with this plan as necessary.²²⁹

The cancellation of the Esso contract was seen as a logical step in America's Containment policy. If Czechoslovakia would have trouble getting another fuel supply this would seriously weaken the competitiveness of CSA with respect to its Western rivals. Simply limiting the available fuel in Copenhagen in 1952 to 1951 levels was believed to be enough to severely restrict CSA from flying beyond Scandinavia into

²²⁸ Dean Acheson to the American Embassies in Bern, Brussels, Copenhagen, the Hague, Helsinki, Prague, and Stockholm, "02243, XR 849.3932, 949.525/1-752," January 7, 1952, *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, 1950-1954*, reel 14, p. 588.

²²⁹ Dean Acheson to 'American Diplomatic Officers' in Bern, Brussels, Copenhagen, the Hague, Helsinki, Prague, and Stockholm, "Control 3113, Jan. 29, 1952, 5:25 p.m., 949.525/1-2952," January 29, 1952, *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, 1950-1954*, reel 14, p. 597.

Western Europe.²³⁰ The American government believed that it could also serve to weaken ties between the West and Czechoslovakia by limiting the contact they shared. This was a concern among the State Department: several unspecified West European nations were believed to be unwilling to remain fully committed to Containment. CSA regularly flew to a number of countries in West Europe, such as France, the Netherlands, and Belgium. Severing air links to the Eastern Bloc could increase Czechoslovakia's isolation from the West and reinforce American Containment objectives.²³¹

The plan to limit aviation fuel to CSA was only partially successful. The Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, a rival British fuel corporation, moved to fill the void left by Esso just as the Esso contract ended on March 31, 1952. The fuel would be provided from American sources, which gave the government a great deal of leverage over the situation.²³² This did not in any event provide as much support as CSA required: tight supply issues kept Anglo-Iranian from providing more than a small quantity of fuel to CSA.²³³ The State Department believed that, in spite of its assistance to CSA, Anglo-Iranian would soon cease fuel deliveries, most likely due to the limited fuel supply that existed. If it did not do so, the Department planned to approach the company and

²³⁰ Eugenie Anderson to the Secretary of State, "NO: 511, January 16, 6 p.m., 949.525/1-1652," January 16, 1952, *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, 1950-1954*, reel 14, p. 593.

²³¹ Ellis O. Briggs to the Secretary of State, "NO: 524, January 10, 3 p.m., 949.525/1-1052," January 10, 1952, *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, 1950-1954*, reel 14, p. 589.

²³² Dean Acheson to the American Embassy in London, "A-1509, March 31, 1952, 949.525/3-3152," March 31, 1952, *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, 1950-1954*, reel 14, p. 603.

²³³ Walter S. Gifford to the Secretary of State, "NO: 5321, May 22, 4 p.m., 949.525/5-2252," May 22, 1952, *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, 1950-1954*, reel 14, p. 604.

request that it decrease fuel deliveries, and if it did not comply the Secretary of State claimed that he would put a stop to it.²³⁴

All major Western fuel companies had stopped serving CSA by mid-1952 yet it still received fuel somehow. A circular was sent out by the State Department to several American embassies to determine how CSA was receiving fuel in several North and Central European cities.²³⁵ In Stockholm, none of the normally designated fuel companies were delivering anything to CSA. It was not known how the deliveries were made at first.²³⁶ By 1954, it was determined that fuel was delivered to CSA in Stockholm by Lemnells Express & Akeri Aktiebolag, a large and well-known company in the area, which delivered the fuel legally.²³⁷ It was beyond the ability of the United States government to totally prevent fuel deliveries through legal means. This did not mean that CSA was able to function at full capacity; the company suffered poorer connections with Western Europe as a result. The normally profitable routes to Paris and Amsterdam were already more expensive to operate due to the detour CSA was forced to take around American-occupied Germany. The situation was different in Eastern Europe where Czechoslovakia's Soviet allies held sway.

Soviet assistance to CSA soon filled the void left by the Western fuel companies in several cities. The American embassy in Berlin reported that CSA landed in the

²³⁴ Dean Acheson to the American Embassy in London, "05116, 949.525/5-2252," May 22, 1952, *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, 1950-1954*, reel 14, p. 605.

²³⁵ John Foster Dulles to the American Embassies in Berlin, Copenhagen, Helsinki, Stockholm, and Vienna, "07594, 949.525/11-2553," November 25, 1953, *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, 1950-1954*, reel 14, p. 610.

²³⁶ DuWayne G. Clark to the Department of State, "Provision of Aviation Gasoline to Czech Airline, CSA," July 23, 1952, *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, 1950-1954*, reel 14, p. 608-9.

²³⁷ DuWayne G. Clark to the Secretary of State, "Provision of Aviation Gasoline to Czeck [sic] Airline CSA," January 7, 1954, *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, 1950-1954*, reel 14, p. 620-1.

Soviet sector of Berlin. It therefore did not rely on Western fuel companies. The embassy speculated that CSA may have even been receiving fuel from the Red Air Force.²³⁸ The Vienna embassy reported that, as in Berlin, CSA operated in the Soviet-controlled airport at Bad Voeslau and did not rely on Western fuel. CSA probably got fuel from Orop, a Soviet oil distribution company.²³⁹ Considering the advantages that CSA offered for the entire Communist sphere, it was in the Soviet's best interests to keep the airline running.

Czechoslovakia was able to expand its operations in non-Western nations more easily than Western ones since it did not face such political obstacles. The Soviet Union actively assisted the expansion of CSA when reasonably possible. When CSA began to fly to Austria it proved that very thing; the Soviet Union had control over a quarter of the country, which allowed for their influence in Austrian affairs. This influence included the development of Austrian civil aviation. CSA was allowed to operate into Austria while no domestic Austrian airline was allowed to fly at all at that time.

CSA began flights to Austria in December, 1950, with favourable assistance from Soviet forces. Ironically, while the Soviets allowed CSA access to some of its Austrian facilities, it did not deliver some of the aircraft it had promised for CSA use by that time for that particular service. The Soviet-built Il-12 planes that were originally planned were only available after the first month of operation while CSA was forced to

²³⁸ Cecil B. Lyon to the Secretary of State, "NO: 594, November 27, 7 p.m., 949.525/11-2753," November 27, 1953, *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, 1950-1954*, reel 14, p. 612.

²³⁹ Llewellyn E. Thompson, Jr. to the Secretary of State, "NO: 1439, December 3, 11 p.m., 949.525/12-353," December 3, 1953, *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, 1950-1954*, reel 14, p. 613.

use American-made DC-3's instead.²⁴⁰ Soviet assistance to the Czechoslovakian airline soon increased significantly in Austria. CSA had to rely on outdated or poor quality navigational aids when flying over Soviet-controlled Austria, which prompted an effort to improve the conditions for civil aviation. Navigational aids, including high frequency radio beacons, were installed by the Soviets near Bad Voeslau and Deutsch-Wagram.²⁴¹

Conclusion

American Containment policy severely restricted the growth of civil aviation links between East and West Europe from the late-1940s to the mid-1950s. Restrictions against foreign airlines within the Communist nations were also a significant obstacle for the growth of strong connections between East Europe and the West. Communist governments actively prevented Western airlines from obtaining profitable access to their nations by various means. Their national airlines sometimes cut their rates in order to boost their competitiveness. This added cost made it harder for foreign flights to fill planes to and from those nations. The governments of the region discouraged their citizens from flying on foreign airlines by limiting the number of flights by foreign airlines and even scheduled those flights at odd hours to make them less appealing for potential customers. The United States government did not intervene directly to dissuade Western airlines from flying to such East European destinations. Those airlines recognized that there was little value in maintaining service to most of that region as a result of those restrictions and reduced or totally cancelled travel there.

²⁴⁰ Ben H. Thibodeaux (writing for the High Commissioner) to the Department of State, "Satellite Civil Aviation in Austria," March 22, 1951, from *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, 1950-1954*, reel 14, p. 1151-2.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 1151-2.

East European airlines faced different challenges when travelling to the West. Containment was widely enforced throughout Western Europe due to American pressure towards its allies, as was demonstrated when the British-based Anglo-Iranian Oil Company was singled out as a potential target for direct political intervention. Severe limitations were also placed on the frequency of flights from airlines based in Communist nations to Western Europe. Other Western nations such as France, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Switzerland were all swayed by Containment and acted to restrict some facets of travel between their countries and Communist airlines. When coupled with to the limits Western airlines were experiencing there was very little passenger traffic between the Communist nations and Western nations during that era. Some of the neutral countries such as Austria, Sweden, and Finland were more difficult to sway by direct American pressure and so continued to offer support for Communist-based airlines. A Swedish fuel company even served CSA when the United States was trying to restrict fuel to the Communist airline.

The evolution of airlines within Communist Europe also took on very different appearances due in part to the effects of Containment as well as their relationship with the Soviet Union. Aeroflot, the Soviet airline, grew rapidly in the post-war era with the extensive resources of Soviet industry behind it, becoming the largest airline by several measures by the 1960s. The other satellites remained close to the Soviet Union and received varying degrees of assistance from it. Czechoslovakia's airline CSA recovered from its post-war position rapidly with that aid and struck air agreements with many other nations, achieving a global reach by the 1960s.

Chapter 4

The Growth and Development of Civil Aviation and Airlines in Communist

Europe: Smaller Airlines and the Effects of Tourism on Air Travel

The operation and development of the airlines in Eastern Europe differed in significant ways. Aeroflot, CSA, and the Polish airline LOT had all existed prior to the beginning of the Cold War. Both CSA and LOT suspended their air service during the Second World War but resumed afterwards under the same company name. The other nations in Communist Europe—Yugoslavia, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Romania—either did not have an airline prior to the Second World War or were unable to resume airline operations due to limited resources. In these cases, the Soviet Union made use of its substantial aircraft capacity and provided planes to them. The planes were transferred and operated through companies owned in equal shares by the Soviet Union and the recipient country. These so-called joint-stock companies, set up in the late 1940s, were also designed to help the recipient countries build up their air infrastructures with Soviet assistance. The results were less than effective: the joint-stock companies were all dissolved by the 1950s for political as well as technical reasons. The smaller airlines clearly illustrate the shortcomings of civil aviation in Eastern Europe that are not as visible in the larger airlines, as well as the political relationship between the Soviet Union and its satellites during the early Cold War.

The regular operations of the airlines in Communist Europe also experienced a radical change in the latter 1950s. Travel and tourism became popular reasons for air travel and boosted ridership to and from Eastern Europe on all regional airlines. Regional aviation cooperation began to coalesce within Eastern and Western Europe,

and sometimes between Eastern and Western Europe, in various forms, to tackle such issues as air traffic control as well as the growing problem of hijackings.

4.1 Yugoslavia

The development of a Yugoslavian airline was not easy for the Balkan nation. The first airline set up in the country, Aeroput, was created in 1927 but its services were suspended as a result of the 1941 invasion of the country during the Second World War. In the spring of 1946 services were resumed under the name Yugoslovenski Aero Transport (JAT), which took over civil aviation operations from the military. Just one year later another airline, Yusta, was set up in Yugoslavia in cooperation with the Soviet Union.²⁴² Yugoslavia experienced a brief period of close cooperation and good relations with the Soviet Union in the period immediately after World War Two. This cooperation extended to the formation of joint-stock companies for water and air transport. What makes Yugoslavia a special case among Communist European nations was its relationship with the Soviet Union, which quickly turned negative. This had serious repercussions for the growth of civil aviation in Yugoslavia.

Yusta was the primary airline for Yugoslavia after it was founded. This was in part due to the backing of the Soviet Union. It was funded and managed equally by both nations, according to a mutual agreement. The agreement was set to endure for 30 years from the date of its signing on February 4, 1947.²⁴³ The Yugoslavian government ostensibly had seniority within the governing body of Yusta: the position of chair was

²⁴² Myron J. Smith, Jr. *The Airline Bibliography: The Salem College Guide to Sources on Commercial Aviation. Volume II: Airliners and Foreign Air Transport* (West Cornwall: Locust Hill Press, 1988), p. 280.

²⁴³ United Nations Treaty Series, "Yugoslavia and Union of Soviet Socialist Republics: Agreement (with annexes) concerning the establishment of a Yugoslav-Soviet Civil Aviation Company," Volume 130, Registration number 1731, 9 May, 1952.

always to go to a Yugoslavian. Yugoslavia also had the option to buy out the Soviet share of the company after the 30 years expired.²⁴⁴ These details may have helped make the agreement more acceptable to the Yugoslavians since it actually gave the Soviet Union significant influence over Yugoslavian civil aviation.

The Yusta deal provided Yugoslavia with aircraft that had previously been in short supply in that country. With a supply of aircraft at its disposal, the Yugoslavian government began to plan for a number of potential applications of its air fleet beyond merely civilian transport. Mere months after the Yusta agreement, Cavendish Cannon, the American Ambassador to Yugoslavia, noted several reports that had come to his attention, suggesting that Yugoslavia was becoming, in his words, “aviation conscious.” For example, aircraft were to be used by the Committee for National Health to fly children infected with whooping cough at altitudes over 3,500 meters in the hope that this would improve their condition. Extinguishing forest fires and aerial surveys of Yugoslavian territory were also suggested in the reports as potential uses for aircraft.²⁴⁵

Yusta began operations quickly, running a route between Belgrade, the Yugoslavian capital, and Prague, the Czechoslovakian capital, within months of its foundation. The airport in Prague began to receive Yusta flights on June 4, 1947, as noted by the American embassy in Prague.²⁴⁶ The Yugoslavian government was excited at the prospect of aviation and implemented a number of additional services to the general population. It served as a carrier for air mail, which would be delivered at no

²⁴⁴ *New York Times*, “Civil Air Accord Signed,” p. 12, June 25, 1947.

²⁴⁵ Cavendish W. Cannon to the Secretary of State, “A-339, August 27, 1947, 860H.796/8-2747,” from *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Yugoslavia, 1945-1949*, reel 17, p. 64.

²⁴⁶ John M. Cabot to the Secretary of State, “NO: 618, June 9, 8 a.m., 860F.79660H/6-947,” June 9, 1947, from *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, 1945-1949*, reel 15, p. 473.

extra postage charge. This service was executed in an unusual fashion: some towns that were too small for regular aircraft stops had mail delivered by parachute drops. Another benefit of the airline service was that remote locations, such as Southern Macedonia and Montenegro would receive newspapers in just 24 hours, half the time it took without planes. As an additional benefit from the faster service, the burden on the telephone system would supposedly be lessened, although this was more difficult to prove.²⁴⁷

In spite of the new opportunities that had come into being, the regular operations of Yusta were relatively limited. Out of a total of 27,240 air passengers in Yugoslavia in 1947,²⁴⁸ Yusta carried only about 6,300 passengers and 77 tons of freight. Furthermore, it did so with a total fleet of six planes that had to be used on all of the routes it flew. This number increased to over 14,100 passengers in 1948.²⁴⁹ The numbers were perhaps less significant than may be apparent. It should be kept in mind that Yugoslavia had very little capability to fly at all in the aftermath of the war. Without the Soviet aircraft that formed the basis of the airline, Yugoslavia may not otherwise have been able to carry some or all of those passengers.

With civil aviation growing in Yugoslavia by 1947 due to Soviet assistance, the Yugoslavian government reassigned control over aviation to a different department. Cabot noted that aviation authority was transferred from the Ministry of War to the Ministry of Communication, according to reports in the press in Belgrade on March 30, 1947. He further found that, in addition to Yusta, the press had not reported how this would affect the solely Yugoslavian-managed airline JAT. Cabot did not know how this

²⁴⁷ William Leonhart (writing for the American Ambassador to Belgrade) to the Secretary of State, "Introduction of Domestic Air Mail Service to Yugoslavia," April 5, 1948, from *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Yugoslavia, 1945-1949*, reel 16, p. 1098-9.

²⁴⁸ Cavendish W. Cannon to the Secretary of State, "860H.796/1-1448," from *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Yugoslavia, 1945-1949*, reel 17, p. 68.

²⁴⁹ Hugh Macdonald, *Aeroflot: Soviet Air Transport Since 1923* (London: Putnam, 1975), p. 67.

would affect the growth and division of air routes in Yugoslavia. Both airlines would effectively be in competition with one another for the same domestic service and possibly international runs as well.²⁵⁰

The American Ambassador to Belgrade, Cavendish W. Cannon, noted an article from *Tanjug*, a Yugoslavian news agency, from September 6, 1947, on the growth of air service in Yugoslavia. It stated that each of Yugoslavia's constituent republic capitals was linked by air service to Belgrade and to each other. Of particular note was that Yugoslavia was now capable of flying through the winter, whereas before it had to shut down its routes. The article did not state which airline flew the various routes, be it JAT or Yusta, but Cannon did not consider the distinction to be significant. He rationalized this by saying: "The element of control granted to the Soviet [Union] by the establishment of a mixed aviation company in Yugoslavia is doubtless sufficient to carry over into the management of the earlier domestic company JAT."²⁵¹

Cannon's belief that JAT and Yusta were interchangeable was far from the truth. The aircraft provided by the Soviet Union coupled with the material support of the Yugoslavians appeared, to outside observers, to be an effective, workable program. The reality of the situation proved far different. An article from the Yugoslavian newspaper *Borba*, published on October 30, 1949, brought to light some of the grievances Yugoslavia had with the joint-stock company.

According to the *Borba* article, Yusta would receive Soviet backing for the most profitable routes, leaving the national airline JAT to serve only the least viable. Aircraft

²⁵⁰ John M. Cabot to the Secretary of State, "348, April 5, 10 a.m., 860H.796/4-547," April 5, 1947, from *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Yugoslavia, 1945-1949*, reel 17, p. 55.

²⁵¹ Cavendish W. Cannon to the Secretary of State, "Civil Aviation Developments," September 9, 1947, from *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Yugoslavia, 1945-1949*, reel 17, p. 65-6.

provided to Yusta by the Soviet Union were often older models, while newer planes were given to more prestigious Communist airlines such as CSA in Czechoslovakia. Compounding this, aircraft sold to Yugoslavia were often valued above the world market price. The cost for the construction of Yugoslavian air infrastructure was often vastly underestimated: an airport that the Soviet Union had budgeted at 71 million dinars was in fact closer to a billion dinars. Under the terms of the Yusta agreement the expense for such enterprises was borne by the Yugoslavian government, yet it was the Soviet government that ultimately decided whether to proceed with construction. These are merely a few of the charges laid against the Soviet Union in the article.²⁵²

If even half of the complaints levelled in the article were accurate, the Soviet Union was acting in an exploitive manner towards Yugoslavia in particular and its satellites in general. Judging from the number of confirmed routes run by Yusta internationally compared with the absence of JAT in the same arena, it appears that there is some legitimacy in the charges of favouritism shown to the Soviet-backed airline. The Yugoslavian government would not have intentionally kept its national airline from flying at least a modest percentage of the profitable international routes. This suggests that the Soviet Union pressed Yugoslavia to encourage the growth of Yusta at the expense of JAT.

Some members of the United States government clearly believed the allegations were legitimate. Donald Heath, the Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in Sofia, Bulgaria, referred to Yusta in just such a manner. This reference came in a reference to Tabso, the joint-stock air company run by the Soviet Union and Bulgaria.

²⁵² Robert Borden Reams to the Secretary of State, "A-681, November 4, 1949, 860H.796/11-449," November 4, 1949, from *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Yugoslavia, 1945-1949*, reel 17, p. 104-6.

Heath wrote to the Department of State on December 9, 1949, that since little could be learned directly regarding Tabso, that such descriptions of Yusta as made by the *Borba* article accurately described Tabso as well. He believed they were analogous, exploitive Soviet enterprises.²⁵³

Yugoslavia was the first nation in the Communist sphere to turn its back on the Soviet Union. It was a special case among the Communist nations, since it had not relied on the Red Army to fight off the Nazis during World War Two, but instead on local partisan forces under the command of Tito. The Yugoslavians, as a result, did not feel that they owed any undue allegiance to the Soviets for their freedom, and came to resent the influence that the Soviets sought over Yugoslavia. A number of factors drove the two nations apart: Yugoslavian frustration with attempted Soviet interference in their economic development, Soviet attempts to set up an espionage network to monitor Yugoslavia, and a general resentment at Soviet efforts to integrate the military of Yugoslavia in a subordinate role to a centrally controlled Moscow-run alliance, among others.²⁵⁴

On June 28, 1948, the rivalry between Josef Broz Tito, the president of Yugoslavia, and Joseph Stalin, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, reached its breaking point. Stalin had intended to make use of the Cominform to coordinate Soviet influence over the Communist sphere.²⁵⁵ Tito did not ascribe to the vision of a highly-centralized Communist world, believing that the Cominform should

²⁵³ Donald R. Heath to the Secretary of State, "A-457, December 9, 1949, 860H.796/12-949," from *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Yugoslavia, 1945-1949*, reel 17, p. 107.

²⁵⁴ Beatrice Heuser, *Western 'Containment' Policies in the Cold War: The Yugoslav Case, 1948-53* (New York: Routledge, 1989), p. 20-2.

²⁵⁵ Roy Macridis. "Stalinism and the Meaning of Titoism," *World Politics* 4, no. 2 (Jan 1952), p. 230.

be simply a loose forum for cooperation of Communist nations. He struck security agreements with other regional nations in 1947, which ran counter to Stalin's plans.²⁵⁶ Yugoslavian assistance to Greek Communists in the Greek Civil War further distanced the two leaders. Stalin feared American retribution for involvement in the conflict and was upset that Tito might provoke a response from the West.²⁵⁷ These factors culminated in the split that turned the two nations against one another. The remaining Cominform nations followed the lead of the Soviet Union and cut off most of their relations with Yugoslavia as well.

The breakdown of Soviet-Yugoslav relations translated quickly into the field of aviation. By June, 1949, the formal dissolution of Yusta was made public. The announcement was effectively a formality by that time. It had service running on only two lines: Belgrade to Tirana through Bucharest, and Belgrade to Moscow through Budapest and Lwow.²⁵⁸ The official abrogation of the Yusta treaty was performed in Belgrade on August 31, 1949, and coincided with the dissolution of Yuspad, a similar joint-stock company that controlled shipping and barge traffic. That act formally ended all significant economic association between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia for years to come.²⁵⁹

Yugoslavia became openly critical of Soviet behaviour in the aftermath of the split. This extended to the manner in which the Soviet Union operated the Yugoslavian joint-stock companies after their liquidation. Dr. Josa Vilfan, the Yugoslavian ambassador to

²⁵⁶ Vojtech Mastny, "Stalin and the Militarization of the Cold War," *International Security* 9 no. 3 (Winter 1984-1985), p. 112-4.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

²⁵⁸ *New York Times*, "Belgrade Asks End Of Soviet Concerns," p. 1, June 11, 1949.

²⁵⁹ United Nations Treaty Series, "Yugoslavia and Union of Soviet Socialist Republics: Protocol (with annexes) concerning the liquidation of the USSR-Yugoslav Danube Steamship Joint-Stock Company Juspad and the USSR-Yugoslav Civil Aviation Joint-Stock Company Justa," Volume 116, Registration number 1580, 27 November, 1951.

India, spoke at the United Nations in October, 1949, claiming that the Soviet Union exploited its satellite nations. He specifically referred to Romania, where he stated that: “these [joint-stock] companies control all key branches of the country.” Dr. Vilfan even accused the Soviet Union of turning against the principles of the state-controlled economy: “Trade in the Soviet bloc, he said, is carried on the basis of world capitalist prices and ‘the superiority of capitalist monopoly has been replaced by the monopolistic position of the more developed Socialist country.’”²⁶⁰

The Soviet Bloc likewise turned against Yugoslavia quickly, isolating it any way it could. The Cominform nations, including the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, and Romania, placed sanctions on trade with Yugoslavia. This action cut its trade with Eastern Bloc countries to less than a third of its previous level, causing its external debt to drastically increase.²⁶¹ The air links that had been established between Yugoslavia and the other nations of Eastern Europe were among the casualties. By early 1950, the Cominform nations had “drastically reduced” the number of flights to and from Yugoslavia, with all links terminated by March of that year. The air agreements between the Cominform and Yugoslavia were either dissolved or, in the case of Romania and Poland, never implemented.²⁶²

While the Cominform nations were shunning Yugoslavia and denying air routes to their nations and abrogating air agreements, the West stepped in to fill the void. Yugoslavia occupied a strategically useful route for airlines seeking to travel between parts of Western Europe and the Near East, such as Greece and Turkey. Pan American

²⁶⁰ *New York Times*, “Yugoslav Brands Russia Exploiter,” p. 4, October 8, 1949.

²⁶¹ Beatrice Heuser. *Western 'Containment' Policies in the Cold War: The Yugoslav Case, 1948-53* (New York: Routledge, 1989), p. 81.

²⁶² *Flight International*, “Yugoslav Reorientation,” p.198, 9 February, 1950.

quickly sought to take advantage of this shortened route and ran a test flight into Belgrade in early 1950. Once the details of the new route had been worked through, there were plans on shortening the route between Vienna and Istanbul. The route had previously avoided Yugoslavia and this change would drastically cut down on the flight time.²⁶³

The Cominform nations did not permanently shun Yugoslavia. After the death of Stalin in 1953, a gradual easing of tensions eventually led to a normalization of relations and eventually trade with their former partner was reopened. This quickly translated into the civil aviation relations with the Soviet Union, the country that had previously been the most antagonistic towards Yugoslavia. An aviation agreement was struck in 1955 that allowed JAT the right to fly to Moscow in return for reciprocal rights for Aeroflot into Yugoslavian airspace.²⁶⁴ JAT was not able to make use of the rights for some time since it lacked the resources but the route would soon be in service.²⁶⁵ JAT was also a beneficiary of this improved state of affairs in other ways. Prior to 1956, only American aircraft were being used on all the routes that JAT flew. With eased restrictions it was able to purchase six Il-14 planes from the Soviet Union.²⁶⁶

By 1959 Belgrade had become a stop for several airlines from both sides of the Iron Curtain. The British and Swiss had routes that stopped at the Yugoslavian capital's airport, as did the Soviets, Hungarians, Romanians, Poles, Bulgarians, and Czechoslovakians. But for all the traffic that landed in Belgrade, more than twelve times that amount simply overflew the city. The Yugoslavian government was so

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 198.

²⁶⁴ *New York Times*, "Soviet and Yugoslavia Map Direct Air Traffic," p. 4, September 4, 1955.

²⁶⁵ *New York Times*, "Finnair to Set Up Moscow Service," p. 70, November 16, 1955.

²⁶⁶ *New York Times*, "Yugoslavs Buy Soviet Planes," p. 2, October 9, 1956.

enamoured with the prospect of Belgrade becoming a hub for air traffic that it decided to build a large, modern airport, which might even challenge Rome for air traffic through Southern Europe. This was unlikely since some airlines were sceptical about stopping in a relatively poor country. According to an article in *The New York Times* “From the standpoint of the [airline] companies, the biggest drawback to adding Belgrade to their schedules would be the lack of potential traffic among the Yugoslavs. Few of them have money to fly to foreign countries.”²⁶⁷ This early example proved that it was possible for a country to be able to deal with both the United States and Soviet Union.

In spite of the status of Yugoslavia as a Communist nation, it had proven that it was willing and able to deal with the Western nations on a pragmatic basis. One consequence of this was that it accepted the value of international organizations such as ICAO. The Soviet Union did not wish its satellites to join the organization and had proven that there were consequences for considering going against its will in such matters. No pressure or coercion was put on Yugoslavia to apply and it did not risk punishment by remaining out of the organization. The decision to join was made based strictly on its own assessment of the advantages and costs of doing so. Yugoslavia joined ICAO in 1960, becoming the first nation in the Communist world to voluntarily join after it had converted its political system.²⁶⁸ Poland and Czechoslovakia, which had both joined in 1944, remained members after they had become Communist states, but no other Communist state was to join until Romania did so in 1965.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁷ *New York Times*, “Belgrade Builds Modern Airport,” p. 30, September 7, 1959.

²⁶⁸ International Civil Aviation Organization, “Annual Report of the Council to the Assembly for 1970,” *Supporting Documentation for the Eighteenth Session of the Assembly* (March 1971), p. 165.

²⁶⁹ International Civil Aviation Organization, “Annual Report of the Council to the Assembly for 1965,” *Supporting Documentation for the Eighteenth Session of the Assembly* (April 1966), p. 46.

4.2 Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, East Germany, and Beyond

The airlines of other nations of Eastern Europe, except Poland and East Germany, also received assistance from the Soviet Union in the early post-war years via the establishment of joint-stock air companies, similar to the case of Yugoslavia. These joint-stock companies were not large or well-equipped and did not last long before the country that had partnered with the Soviet Union bought out the other half. They demonstrate that the satellite countries perceived limited value in the joint ventures for the development of their civil aviation. This suggests that the Soviet Union used the companies as political and economic inroads into the satellites rather than simply as a means of improving those countries. Yugoslavia had believed this was the case but such fears were not openly voiced in the other countries with such companies.

Without having to follow the route of a joint-stock company in partnership with the Soviet Union, the Polish were able to create a large and successful airline in LOT, the national carrier, with flights to many countries across Europe by the 1950s. Poland's national carrier was originally founded in 1921 under the name Aerotarg, which was renamed LOT by 1929. LOT became a member of IATA in 1931 and flew to a number of nations across Europe during the 1930s. With the outbreak of war in 1939 the airline halted operations, finally resuming flights in 1944 and international flights in 1946.²⁷⁰ The regular operations of LOT returned to pre-war levels slowly but steadily, with some assistance from the Soviet Union.

In order to rebuild the airline, the Polish government first sought to acquire aircraft from the United States. Prior to the war, LOT had used American planes, which proved

²⁷⁰ Smith, *The Airline Bibliography*, p. 280-1.

to be reliable and of high quality, and LOT's administration believed that their fleet would be well served by continuing to use American-built aircraft. Yet, as a Communist nation, Poland found that it was no longer in the same position to receive assistance from the United States as before. The American Containment policy meant that Poland could not expect any aid in war-potential materials such as aircraft. Containment extended to all dealings between America and its allies with Communist nations. Yet in spite of the potential restrictions on many aspects of civil aviation, Poland never stopped flying to West European nations. In fact, it was allowed greater freedom than Czechoslovakia's CSA to fly to the West. This was due, in part, to the fewer restrictions placed upon it by the West. It was also due to the fact that its government was more accommodating than Czechoslovakia's with respect to maintaining connections with Western nations.²⁷¹

John Carter Vincent elaborated the risks to American and Western interests that would ensue from becoming too accommodating toward airlines of Soviet satellite states. The situation came just as Yugoslavia was breaking away from the Soviet sphere. As noted, Yugoslavia was quickly welcomed into the Western fold and given privileged access to Western airspace, among other benefits. This could serve as an excellent example for the satellites, but only if the same benefits were not freely given away to any Communist nation. Vincent summarized his views in the following passage:

The psychological effect of our policy of calculated risk, whether in the field of civil aviation or otherwise, would be considerably weakened and would indeed be nullified if we extend to other satellites (in this instance the Poles) which continue

²⁷¹ Betsy Gidwitz. *The Politics of International Air Transport* (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1980), p. 54.

abject servility to Moscow, the same treatment as we are prepared to extend to Yugoslavia.²⁷²

Some of the other changes to civil aviation in Poland after the Communist government came to power were relatively minor but reflected the new political alignment. Claude Hall, the Second Secretary of the American Embassy in Warsaw, noted that the Polish Department of Civil Aviation had begun to use Soviet meteorological codes effective January 1, 1950. These were slightly different from those developed in Washington in 1947 for the same purpose, which Poland had used prior to that date. Hall believed that this change was due to the close collaboration between weather services in Poland and other East European nations, which were using the Soviet system.²⁷³

The meteorological system reflected the break that was opening up between Eastern European nations and the West. Alignments were fundamentally shifting on many levels, including civil aviation. Political expedience alone pushed the Polish government to use Soviet weather metrics. The example of meteorology illustrates the relative increase in interaction between members of the Eastern Bloc and the diminution of connections with the West at that time.

Reciprocal overflight rights were a contentious issue between the Eastern Bloc and the West. Some nations attempted to take advantage of a temporarily unfair arrangement in the short term to obtain a route that might prove advantageous later. Smaller nations with more limited aviation capabilities were able to make better use of

²⁷² John Carter Vincent to the Secretary of State, "No. A-566, September 12, 1949, 860C.79600/9-1249," September 12, 1949, from *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Poland, 1945-1949*, reel 17, p. 839-40.

²⁷³ Claude H. Hall, Jr., to the Secretary of State, "Transmittal of Notice to Airmen, No. (A-12) W3 of December 17, 1949," December 23, 1949, from *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Poland, 1945-1949*, reel 17, p. 905-9.

such arrangements since this could allow them to establish better ties with future destination countries. The cost, when dealing with nations on opposite sides of the Iron Curtain, was that this risked undermining the American Containment policy towards satellites of the Soviet Union. A case involving Poland and Belgium illustrates this principle.

Belgium struck an air agreement with Poland in March of 1949 allowing one flight per week between the two nations.²⁷⁴ It took several months for the details of the routes between the nations to be finalized but when the final arrangement was decided in June of 1949, there was a problem. The Belgian airline, Sabena, lacked the aircraft it needed to make the flights to Warsaw but was anticipating the delivery of American-made Condors for that purpose in the following months. LOT alone would operate that route until the Condors were delivered.²⁷⁵ This was acceptable to both parties involved since it would not be a permanent condition. In the opinion of more hawkish members of the American government, however, this situation was quite the opposite. John Vincent, the American ambassador in Bern, felt strongly about overflight rights in dealing with Soviet satellites. In his opinion, Belgium had acted recklessly by allowing Poland to overfly its airspace. Sabena was not able to fly the route to Warsaw and was therefore not receiving reciprocal overflight rights from Poland. This risked the Containment

²⁷⁴ Henry C. Ramsay to the Secretary of State, "Polish Airlines Summer Timetable," March 3, 1949, from *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Poland, 1945-1949*, reel 17, p. 800-1.

²⁷⁵ Waldemar J. Gallman to the Secretary of State, "NO: 921, June 21, 5 p.m., 860C.796/6-2149," June 21, 1949, from *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Poland, 1945-1949*, reel 17, p. 814.

policy that was being enforced by the United States and its West European allies with respect to the other satellites.²⁷⁶

Hungary, like Romania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, had a joint-stock air company set up to encourage domestic civil aviation. The Hungarian airline, Maszovlet, was established in March, 1946, and began operations on October 15 of that year. The airline served an important role in Hungary: surface conditions were insufficient to permit good communications between parts of the country, so air service was the only way to ensure that messages could rapidly reach their destination. As with the other such joint-stock companies, Maszovlet was eventually dissolved, and in 1954 the Soviet share of the company was transferred to Hungary. The airline was renamed Malev and would become the national airline for Hungary.²⁷⁷

As with Austria, each part of the divided Germany was punished for its actions in the war. Eastern Germany (which became the German Democratic Republic) was under Soviet occupation after 1945. It was not permitted any air capabilities of its own after the war for fear that it might use the aircraft against the Allies. By 1955, the former Allies had backed away from that stance enough to permit the two new German nations airlines of their own. Each one created a line under the Lufthansa name, which had been the German airline prior to the conclusion of the war. The East German airline was forced to change its name to Interflug in 1959 after the West German airline sued for sole rights to the name. Interflug, more so than the airlines of the other satellites, was under clear Soviet dominance. It was not permitted to fly to West European destinations

²⁷⁶ John Carter Vincent to the Secretary of State, "No. A-566, September 12, 1949, 860C.79600/9-1249," September 12, 1949, from *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Poland, 1945-1949*, reel 17, p. 839-40.

²⁷⁷ Macdonald, *Aeroflot*, p. 66-7.

in its earlier years of operation.²⁷⁸ As if to underscore the Soviet control over the airline, Interflug had crews composed entirely of Soviet citizens until 1957. Not surprisingly, its first international service was to Moscow, beginning in 1955.²⁷⁹

For the Soviet Union, there was a strategic value in directly improving the air capabilities of its satellites. Doing so allowed for stronger ties between the Soviet Union and the satellite country, and increased the overall competitive ability of the Communist world with respect to the West. Joint-stock companies required Soviet input in many facets of civil aviation, effectively removing civil aviation from the sovereign control of the satellite country.

Soviet aircraft were often provided to the joint-stock companies in order to boost their initial capabilities, with the rest drawn from any source within the country. Romania had a joint-stock aviation company imposed upon it within months of the conclusion of the war in Europe. The airline, Tars, was founded in 1946 to restore the air service that had been offered by Lares prior to the Second World War.²⁸⁰ A letter to the Department of State from the American Legation in Bucharest noted the following details on the Soviet-Romanian company:

[...] it appears that Rumania will be obliged to furnish existing airport facilities, ground equipment and personnel. This may include approximately 16 Lares [Romanian airline] planes of assorted models and the President of Lares expects the Russians to supply the new company 15 transport planes of the Douglas model they are licensed to manufacture.

One source reports a conflict between the Rumanian Air and Communications Ministries over the latter's desire to control all airport ground installations and to secure a monopoly for all Rumanian airports for the proposed new joint company called Taos [Tars]. [...]

²⁷⁸ Gidwitz, *The Politics of International Air Transport*, p. 53-4.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

²⁸⁰ Smith, *The Airline Bibliography*, p. 284.

With no other alternative in view steps are being taken to liquidate Lares that are expected to be completed within a few weeks.²⁸¹

These details suggest that, while Romania was contributing a considerable amount of resources to the new airline, Tars was a means for the Soviet Union to gain influence over civil aviation in Romania.

Tars was not profitable initially and received Romanian and Soviet government subsidies for the first several years. The subsidies totalled fifty million lei in 1948, or about a third of one million dollars. The equivalent of over one million dollars was also appropriated to modernize the equipment at the Bucharest airport. Rudolf E.

Schoenfeld, the American Envoy Extraordinary in Bucharest, believed that: “[t]hese actions appear to indicate continued Soviet interest in development of Rumanian civil aviation, probably for strategic reasons.”²⁸² Romania bought out the Soviet half of the company in 1954 and renamed the company Tarom.²⁸³

Bulgaria had an experience similar to that of Romania. The Soviet Union set up a joint-stock airline company with Bulgaria in 1949 under the name of Tabso. This airline took over the service that had been set up by the Bulgarian airline BVS, which had itself only been in operations for two years. The new airline was neither popular nor successful. It operated as a joint-stock company for only five years, and as with Tars in Romania, the Soviet Union sold its half to Bulgaria in 1954.²⁸⁴ All of the joint-stock companies were bought out within at most two years after the death of Stalin. This may

²⁸¹ Melbourne (writing from Bucharest) wrote to the Department of State, “515, August 2, 9 a.m., 861.79671/8-245,” August 2, 1945, from *Confidential U.S. State Department Central Files. The Soviet Union: Internal Affairs, 1945-1949*, reel 33, p. 373-4.

²⁸² Rudolf E. Schoenfeld to the Department of State, “A-321, August 31, 1948, 861.79671/8-3148,” August 31, 1948, from *Confidential U.S. State Department Central Files. The Soviet Union: Internal Affairs, 1945-1949*, reel 33, p. 377.

²⁸³ Smith, *The Airline Bibliography*, p. 284.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 278.

be simply coincidence but it could also be a sign of the more general loosening of Soviet control over the satellites during that era.

Western opinions of joint-stock air companies were generally negative. A *New York Times* article stated that, according to several unnamed 'Western air experts' at an ICAO meeting in 1948, the Soviet Union had no interest in building up the air capabilities of the satellite states. The joint-stock companies of Romania, Yugoslavia, and Hungary had a total of 44 Soviet-built planes between all three nations, and Bulgaria had none as of the time of the writing. This was despite the substantial aircraft manufacturing capabilities of the Soviet Union. Furthermore, only about half of the aircraft were in an adequate, flight-ready state of repair at any given time due to the poor quality of the aircraft.²⁸⁵ No reason was suggested as to why, in the opinion of the Western experts, the Soviets might have given only partial support to the countries with joint-stock companies. Motive aside, this case demonstrated the lack of genuine support the satellites received in their civil air programs.

The Soviet Union influenced civil aviation matters beyond merely its satellites. Austria was unable to make direct use of the improvements installed near Bad Voeslau and Deutsch-Wagram for some time. Austria lacked all air capabilities; a situation that would last for several years longer. There was a brief Soviet interest in setting up a joint-stock airline with Austria, as stated by John G. Erhardt, the Minister at the American Legation in Vienna. It was abandoned mainly since Austria, unlike the satellites, was not entirely under Soviet influence. In his memo, Erhardt outlined the following reasons for the lack of development:

²⁸⁵ *New York Times*, "Soviet Crews May Fly to New York As Russia Controls Czech Aviation," p. 5, June 19, 1948.

[...] there has been no indication that any concrete measures have been taken for the organization of a joint aviation company under Soviet domination, such as has been done in Hungary and Rumania. On the contrary, it would appear from the vigorous Soviet objections to the establishment of a Civil Aviation Department in the Austrian Government, as reported in the Legation's Despatch No. 2236 of December 23, 1946, that the Soviets do not consider such action feasible so long as Austria remains an occupied country with the Allied Commission exercising supreme authority.²⁸⁶

The Soviet Union was able to exercise such influence since it was only one among the occupying powers in Austria after World War Two. Annexed to Germany during the war, Austria was treated by the Allies as a defeated nation and suffered punitive restrictions that extended to aviation. This treatment was deliberate: although the ultimate blame for Nazi atrocities during the war was put solely on Germany, one in ten Austrians had been a member of the Nazi party and Austrians were overrepresented in the SS and as concentration camp guards.²⁸⁷

It was fear of Austrian enthusiasm for Nazism that drove the agenda of the Allies as occupiers. The Allies denied Austria the right to create an airline of its own on the grounds that it could convert its aircraft from civilian to military purposes. As long as Austria was a potential belligerent against any of the Allies in a future conflict, it made little sense for it to be allowed total freedom. The Soviet government had sought a guarantee that Austria would not become belligerent once again in the event the Red Army was withdrawn. This condition was finally met when the Austrian State Treaty was signed, ten years after the conclusion of the Second World War, pledging Austria to permanent neutrality.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁶ John G. Erhardt in reply to the Secretary of State, "Soviet Interest in the Establishment of a Soviet-Austrian Airline," January 10, 1947, from *Confidential U.S. State Department Central Files. The Soviet Union: Internal Affairs, 1945-1949*, reel 33, p. 329.

²⁸⁷ Tony Judt. *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (London: William Heinemann, 2005), p. 52-3.

²⁸⁸ Gidwitz, *The Politics of International Air Transport*, p. 53.

The Austrian government did not have absolute freedom from the influence of the Red Army even in spite of its absence. Soviet troops remained across the Eastern border with the other satellites after 1955, indirectly serving as a guarantor for Austrian neutrality. That nearby presence effectively removed the need for an occupying army and, in addition to the State Treaty, forced Austria down a peaceful path.²⁸⁹ At this time, East and West Germany were allowed to resume regular civil flights, marking an overall easing of restrictions against the aggressor nations from the Second World War. West Germany also entered NATO in 1955, marking a drastic change in the political perceptions of the former defeated powers in Europe. It was therefore in 1955 that the Allies lifted restrictions on Austrian civil aviation as well, after the fears of the Soviet Union, which had been the most concerned, had been assuaged.²⁹⁰ In contrast, the Soviet Union had 20 military divisions still in East Germany in 1975. This was useful for establishing discipline within the Soviet sphere as well as projecting power and influence westward. Melvin Croan noted that East German citizens did not see their presence as a negative factor. He suggested that it was perceived as reflecting Soviet interest in them.²⁹¹

Austria was a nation where the Soviet Union had acted outside its immediate sphere to influence the development of civil aviation. This came as a consequence of existing Soviet policies, both within Austria and with respect to the satellites. The Soviet Union wished to improve the capabilities of its satellite nations in any way it could. In Austria, it was able to use the early absence of a domestic civil air service to the benefit of one of

²⁸⁹ Judt, *Postwar*, p. 261-2.

²⁹⁰ Gidwitz, *The Politics of International Air Transport*, p. 53.

²⁹¹ Melvin Croan, *Integration and Self-Assertion: The Relationship Between East Germany and the Soviet Union (and Eastern Europe)* (Madison: University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1975), p. 96-7.

its satellites. Austrian airfields, which were used almost exclusively by the airlines of the nations occupying the country, were provided to extend the reach of Czechoslovakia's air fleet beginning in 1950. These changes served to improve the overall aviation situation within Austria, both by advancing the technology available for air traffic tracking and by increasing the traffic into Austria. It is therefore ironic that from 1950 to 1955 Austria was not able to take advantage of this with an airline of its own.

4.3 Tourism

One of the most important driving forces for civil aviation is travel and tourism. Unfortunately for the airlines of Eastern Europe, there were extensive barriers to travel to the region from outside. Air service in the 1950s was often too restrictive in the Communist nations for Western air carriers to compete. They could not expect to run a route to those destinations on a regular basis and expect a profitable return. The demand among Americans for air travel to Communist Europe was also not sufficient to maintain routes to those destinations: in 1950, Pan American was forced to terminate its weekly service to Prague due to a lack of passengers for that route.²⁹²

Potential visitors to Soviet Bloc nations had concerns beyond government restrictions. Travelers from the West were sometimes accused of spying by the government of their host country. Such was the case of Robert A. Vogeler, an American who was an executive with the International Telephone and Telegraph Company in Hungary. The United States government responded to his arrest with a travel ban to Hungary, effective December 20, 1949. This situation was not resolved quickly: his

²⁹² *New York Times*, "Flights to Prague Suspended," p. 3, September 9, 1950.

release came in April, 1951, over a year after his imprisonment, which would be a serious deterrent for any potential visitor. The travel ban was lifted by May 1, 1951.²⁹³

Soon after, the United States issued a travel ban for all American citizens to Czechoslovakia. The official reason was that it was not safe for Americans to visit the country. The case of William Oatis, an American journalist arrested in Prague, was specifically cited as an example of the danger of travel.²⁹⁴ Oatis had been charged with “activities hostile to the state,” “gathering and disseminating information considered secret by Czechoslovakia,” and “spreading malicious information regarding the Czechoslovak state through illegal news organs, for which purpose he misused Czechoslovak citizens.” These terms were considered so broad that a Reuters correspondent claimed that the government could interpret them however it chose.²⁹⁵

The American government believed that its citizens would not be safe unless it proved to the Czechoslovakian government that there would be consequences for detaining Americans. Several measures were taken as a result, including a trade embargo and travel ban against Czechoslovakia. Punitive measures were taken against Czechoslovakia's airline as well. CSA was denied overflight rights through the airspace of the American occupation zone of West Germany, an issue that had previously been tied to CSA overflights of West Germany without proper clearance.²⁹⁶

Travel restrictions were soon extended to all Eastern Bloc nations. By May, 1952, the United States government no longer believed it was safe for Americans to travel into any nation in the Soviet sphere. Once again, the case of William Oatis was raised as a

²⁹³ *New York Times*, “U.S. Bans Travel to Czechoslovakia, Calls Conditions There Hazardous,” p. 1, June 3, 1951.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

²⁹⁵ *New York Times*, “A.P. Bureau Jailed By Prague,” p. 1, April 27, 1951.

²⁹⁶ *New York Times*, “U.S. Hails Release of Oatis; May Lift Curbs on Czechs,” p. 1, May 17, 1953.

possible reason for the development: no American citizen would be considered safe in the Communist countries of Europe. Only a few visits were to be permitted, provided that the State Department was first informed of the visit. The purpose of the restriction was primarily to limit 'sneak' visits and those who did not necessarily know the risks to travel.²⁹⁷

It was not until 1953 that Oatis was released from confinement in Czechoslovakia. Unfortunately for the Czechoslovakian government and CSA, the CAB policy of withholding overflight permission for West Germany had become greater than securing the release of just one man. The French government had become involved since French support was required to maintain the action, but there were two French nationals being held in Czechoslovakia by that time. With Oatis free, the French pressed the United States not to give in and permit French citizens to be held. The overflight issue was tied to the larger issue of the safety of all Western travellers, not simply Americans.²⁹⁸ The American government agreed with the French government that all Western foreign national prisoners must be released before overflights were once again allowed. Finally, in 1954, Czechoslovakia relented and released the French prisoners. With this development, it was possible for a return to normal overflight permission to finally be restored between Czechoslovakia and the CAB.²⁹⁹ Arranging the rights for Czechoslovakia to resume overflights of West Germany did not come quickly. In spite

²⁹⁷ *New York Times*, "U.S. Forbids Travel to All Soviet Bloc Without Consent," p. 1, May 2, 1952.

²⁹⁸ Douglas Dillon to the Department of State, "Relaxation of Sanctions against Czechoslovakia – (Oatis release)," May 22, 1953, from *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, 1950-1954*, reel 14, p. 1126-7.

²⁹⁹ John Foster Dulles (Secretary of State) to the High Commission in Germany, "Reference London's DESP 4220, Prague's DESP 3, Bonn's 137, 138, 949.5240/7-1454," July 14, 1954, from *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, 1950-1954*, reel 14, p. 580-2.

of the release of its Western prisoners, Czechoslovakia was still waiting on permission for several months afterwards, into late 1954.³⁰⁰

These restrictions significantly reduced the number of Americans and West Europeans who might be willing and able to travel into the Eastern Bloc. American air carriers had previously found it difficult to justify the costs of flights into those nations; by the time those restrictions were in place, there would hardly be any economic rationale for those routes at all. Only diplomats and employees of American companies still operating in those countries would regularly fly those routes.

Some restrictions applied to the airlines themselves within Communist countries as well. Most Eastern Bloc nations required that their own national air carriers be the sole ticket vendors for all foreign flights leaving their country. For example, Pan American would have to refer an American visiting Moscow to the Aeroflot desk. The Aeroflot desk could then encourage the American to change their flight plans, referring them instead to an Aeroflot flight. It would have been even more difficult for a citizen of an Eastern Bloc country to fly on a foreign airline: they would not have been exposed to the options, either through advertisement promotions or fair competition for business. Foreign carriers could also have flights bumped to less convenient times or terminal locations or have other restrictions. As a result, all the Communist countries saw foreign carriers leave their countries with fewer passengers than they entered.³⁰¹ Such restrictions cut in to the profit margins on foreign airlines enough to often discourage regular service except for prestige purposes.

³⁰⁰ James B. Conant to the Secretary of State, "NO: 1221, October 25, 7 p.m., 949.5262A/10-2554," October 25, 1954, from *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, 1950-1954*, reel 14, p. 1133.

³⁰¹ Gidwitz, *The Politics of International Air Transport*, p. 141.

By the mid-1960s, Cold War tensions had less day-to-day impact on the general population, or at least curiosity of the other and economic growth and stability had begun to get the better of fear. With the relative tranquility between East and West many people began considering travel to the nations that had been on the other side. Tourist travel between even the Soviet Union and the United States began. Westerners in general, and Americans in particular, had an interest in the Soviet Union as a travel destination, claimed Robert Thornton. As an example of this, Thornton pointed to the vast number of visitors to the Soviet pavilion at the Expo '67 in Montreal, which ranked second only to Canada, the host nation. Thornton believed this interest stemmed from a curiosity in foreign cultures, especially that of “the attraction of the unique or the different,” which could translate into a demand for tourist travel. In his estimation, the interest had simply not been properly exploited by the airlines and no significant market for tourism into the Soviet Union had yet been realized.³⁰²

The Soviet Union had a growing interest in attracting foreign tourists. Soviet leadership had initial fears of allowing foreign visitors into its land, which took time to overcome. Once it began opening its borders to tourism in 1956,³⁰³ the number of visitors gradually rose. In 1956, half a million foreigners traveled to see the Soviet Union, increasing to four-and-a-half million in 1977. Although over half of those visits came from other Communist nations, nearly two million came from capitalist countries.³⁰⁴

³⁰² Robert L. Thornton, *International Airline and Politics: A Study in Adaptation to Change* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1970), p. 57-8.

³⁰³ Peter Grothe, *Attitude Change of American Tourists in the Soviet Union* (Washington: George Washington University, 1969), p. 11-2.

³⁰⁴ H.G. Trend, “Tourism: A Profitable Business for the Soviet Union,” *Radio Free Europe Research* RAD Background Report/206 (22 September 1978), p. 2-4.

Americans were not able to make use of the air routes established in much of Eastern Europe through the early 1950s. A Western-imposed travel ban was in effect for most of the Communist nations of Europe in response to Westerners being arrested for political reasons. By 1955 those restrictions were lifted for most countries and they could be freely visited by Americans, provided that they were able to obtain a travel visa from each country they planned on visiting.³⁰⁵

There is no widely accepted number for American tourists to the Soviet Union during the 1950s and 1960s. According to an article by Robert Hotz, American travel to the Soviet Union was poised to decline from a peak of 15,000 in 1964, though he wrote this in 1966.³⁰⁶ The Department of State produced their numbers from information provided by those who were planning a foreign trip, therefore not including those who decided after their departure to visit the Soviet Union. Their statistics show that visits were constantly on the increase throughout the 1960s yet by 1966 there were still only some 20,000 Americans making the trip out of a total 14.7 million Americans traveling abroad.³⁰⁷

Official Soviet numbers were based on visas issued by the Soviet government. Since the visas had to be issued upon entry to the country they could potentially provide much more accurate information than State Department statistics, as long as the Soviet Union did not deliberately falsify the data for political reasons. However, in his examination of American tourism into the Soviet Union, *Attitude Change of American Tourists in the Soviet Union*, Peter Grothe speculated that the Soviet government could have done just that. He did not go into detail as to what purpose there may have been

³⁰⁵ *New York Times*, "Touring Russia," p. X25, November 13, 1955.

³⁰⁶ Thornton, *International Airline and Politics*, p. 57-8.

³⁰⁷ Grothe, *Attitude Change of American Tourists in the Soviet Union*, p. 11-2.

for this. He may have merely been stating the possibility for the sake of clarity. In any event, the Soviet data show a steady annual increase of American visitors from about 2,500 in 1956 to 30,000 in 1966.³⁰⁸

Even the highest estimates show that American tourism to the Soviet Union was simply not significant into the 1960s by several measures. This comparison includes travel from the United States to other nations and travel from other nations to the Soviet Union. For example, Communist nations in Europe were estimated to account for about half of the annual total of 1.75 million tourists visiting the Soviet Union. Americans were not even allowed to travel to the Soviet Union prior to 1956, although Cold War tensions at that time might have kept tourists away regardless. In comparison, there were even fewer Soviet citizens willing to visit the United States. In 1965, there were a mere 114 Soviets who made the trip.³⁰⁹

Grothe did not wish to overstate the significance of his data. He clearly indicated that he did not have the statistics to compare his information against other countries. His interpretation of his data regarding the tourists is nevertheless quite interesting. The American visitors tended to be highly educated, wealthy, and older than average. The vast majority were teachers, students, professionals, and businessmen: fewer than 10% of American tourists were not part of one of those groups. His data further suggested that this may not have been mere coincidence: those who visited the Soviet Union did so in order to learn about it and experience Soviet society rather than see the sights.³¹⁰ A later study undertaken just prior to the fall of the Soviet Union confirmed that this was an important factor: many people travelled for the purpose of seeing a truly different

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 11-2.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 27-8.

culture or crossing a traditionally closed border. Among those visiting the Soviet Union from the West, the most important reason for the trip was simply to say that they had been there.³¹¹

Even far later, in 1977, when the peaceful days of Détente saw closer relations between the superpowers, there were still only about 17,000 Soviet visitors to America, compared to 92,000 Americans who made the trip to the Soviet Union.³¹² As a driving force behind an increase in civil air traffic between the Soviet Union and the United States, tourism was simply not important enough to matter much.

Travel by Soviet citizens abroad was far more common within other Communist nations, especially in the Eastern Bloc. In 1975, describing the trends in that tourist travel, Hugh Macdonald noted the following:

Foreign travel by Soviet citizens is still restricted, although, understandably perhaps, less so in the case of visits to countries of the Eastern bloc. Soviet citizens normally travel in groups, using Aeroflot's and its East European pool partners' scheduled services, but Aeroflot's services are usually used when they travel to other countries.³¹³

Each nation in the Communist world approached tourism with differing goals in mind. For example, Albania was a popular tourist destination for the citizens of Communist nations. It boasted a scenic seaside coast and warm climate that attracted Soviet investment in hotels and other tourist appointments. The Albanian government felt that, in spite of the tourist potential of the country, developing their industrial capabilities would better serve their needs. As a result, Albania made little effort to

³¹¹ Dallen J. Timothy, *Tourism and Political Boundaries*, (New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 54-6.

³¹² Trend, "Tourism: A Profitable Business for the Soviet Union," p. 3.

³¹³ Macdonald, *Aeroflot*, p. 197-8.

develop tourism. No airfields were built to accommodate air traffic, limiting visitors primarily to ground and sea routes, with their infrastructures often in poor repair.³¹⁴

Since the end of the war, Albania had developed a habit of regarding foreign nations as potential invaders, with good reason. It had been invaded by Italy in the early stage of the Second World War, and the Greek Civil War immediately afterwards risked involving Albania. Albania reacted desperately: just after the Second World War had ended it began to cover its airfields with grids of small wooden posts. The posts were designed to deter aircraft from landing, although other official reasons were to prevent access to mined areas and, strangely, to grow beans. American officials questioned their effectiveness against military aircraft since, even though the posts were small, they could have damaged civil aircraft that drifted on the runway.³¹⁵ Actions of this nature suggest that the Albanian government had little interest in potential benefits from tourism. Fears of foreign invasion weighed too heavily on their minds to allow safe access for civil aircraft, harming the potential for tourism.

Even within the Eastern Bloc, tourist travel showed considerable variation. Travel between two given countries was often unbalanced because each country imposed different restrictions on the tourists. Restrictions on travel were not uncommon for security reasons. For example, agreements between Czechoslovakia and the German Democratic Republic allowed many German tourists to visit Czechoslovakia. This was in spite of the fact that Czechoslovakians lacked the right to visit East Germany unrestrictedly. After the 1968 Prague Spring uprising, the security risk of having

³¹⁴ Derek R. Hall, ed. *Tourism and Economic Development in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union*, (Toronto: Halsted Press, 1991), p. 261-2.

³¹⁵ Alexander Kirk to the Secretary of State, "875.796/8-3145," August 31, 1945, from *Records of the U.S. Department of State relating to the internal affairs of Albania, 1945-1949*, reel 3, p. 742.

Czechoslovakians in German territory was believed to be a threat that demanded restriction.³¹⁶ When two Communist nations opened their borders more fully, however, the resulting traffic could often prove substantial. East Germany and Poland lifted passport and currency restrictions between their two nations in 1972 and saw inter-country tourist traffic rise from 734,000 to over 16 million in just one year.³¹⁷ There was a considerable impulse to travel amongst the people of the Easter Bloc, which was quickly realized when it was freely permitted. In the absence of open borders, tourism suffered, and it would be more difficult for airlines to take advantage of potential streams of traffic.

Although the Communists took control of Czechoslovakia before any major tourist visits from the United States, the Czechoslovakian government had acknowledged a market for air capabilities to meet tourist needs. There was a natural link between the people of Czechoslovakia and their relatives living in America, which the Czechoslovakian government recognized. The potential of air travel to meet the demand for tourism was apparently important to Czechoslovakia, as was connecting to the United States in particular. This occurred in spite of the relative absence of assistance from the United States (especially when contrasted to the aid that the British and Soviet Union offered at the time).

Travel between the West and many of the Communist nations could have come in far greater volume immediately after the establishment of air routes between those nations. Ethnic traffic and tourism was a major source of air travel for some nations. Italy's national carrier, Alitalia took advantage of the Italian diaspora by targeting

³¹⁶ Croan, *Integration and Self-Assertion*, p. 109-10.

³¹⁷ Timothy, *Tourism and Political Boundaries*, p. 121.

Italians abroad. It focused on travel between areas of heavy Italian settlement and Italy itself. Aeroflot, however, was not able to benefit from this trend. Most former Soviet citizens were opposed to the Communist regime and did not wish to return or visit, especially on the national carrier. Poles and Czechoslovakians living abroad, however, had a different view. According to travel agents specializing in ethnic tourism, they saw flights on the national carriers of their homelands as support for their people rather than their oppressive government.³¹⁸

The reverse of this, that is to say people visiting their ethnic diaspora relatives, was less common among the Communist countries. In Poland, many wished to visit their brethren and in 1956 the government allowed some freedom for its people to travel abroad. This came with the caveat that they could only travel if they could prove they were invited. Few could afford the cost of airfare but once this condition was met it was a simple matter to leave the country for a visit abroad.³¹⁹ Jan Krzywicki, the president of Poland's national airline LOT, realized the potential for such ethnic traffic. In 1960 alone, he noted that over twenty thousand Poles living in North America traveled to Poland and ten thousand Polish citizens visited North America. LOT lacked planes capable of flying a route to North America at that time, preventing it from taking advantage of that traffic. Krzywicki believed it was necessary to acquire such planes. Over six million Poles lived in North America at that time, which meant that there existed a significant potential market for air travel on such routes. Poland sought the

³¹⁸ Gidwitz, *The Politics of International Air Transport*, p. 162-3.

³¹⁹ Hall, *Tourism and Economic Development in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union*, p. 107.

planes in both the East and West although political issues needed to be resolved first in order to open a direct route between Poland and the United States and Canada.³²⁰

Tourism relied on air travel to varying degrees and for a variety of reasons. In Bulgaria, government planning spurred the tourist industry, beginning in 1969. The scope of the development was extensive and included the creation of winter tourism, spas, seaside resorts, and building the corresponding infrastructure such as roads and hotels. At that time, ground transportation for long trips was in poor condition and could not easily accommodate travelers seeking a relaxing voyage. The majority of the roads lacked a hard surface and a third of the rail lines were still using steam-powered locomotives. In contrast to this, Sofia, the Bulgarian capital, was linked to the major capitals of Europe by air. For those able to afford such a trip, flying into Bulgaria would be a more pleasant trip.³²¹ Yet only about one in ten visitors to Bulgaria flew to the country by 1985, with ground transportation remaining the dominant means of entering the country.³²² This may indicate that visitors to Bulgaria came primarily from other Communist nations, as in earlier years. It would not be as difficult a trip by road or rail from a country that bordered a Communist country. Citizens of bordering Communist states would also be far more likely not to fly due to the high cost of air travel and their lower relative incomes.

If for no other reason than geography, visitors from the Western world had to fly to the Soviet Union due to time constraints for such a trip. Hugh Macdonald noted that there was an additional factor that would force foreigners to use Soviet airlines when visiting:

³²⁰ *New York Times*, "Poland's Airline Seeks U.S. Flights," p. S15, December 3, 1961.

³²¹ Hall, *Tourism and Economic Development in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union*, p. 225.

³²² *Ibid.*, p. 232.

Foreign tourists travel within the USSR mostly by regular or charter flights of Aeroflot. There are some journeys on which foreign tourists are allowed to travel only by air, one of them being Moscow-Tashkent; equally, there are some cities served by Aeroflot, which are open to foreign visitors, to which they are not permitted to fly.³²³

Americans in particular had to fly at least part of the way. Due in part to the relatively poor tourist numbers, few American airlines saw any value in routes to the Soviet Union. After a year of flying to Moscow from New York, Pan American, the largest American airline at that time, claimed it was satisfied with the returns it was receiving. Yet Aeroflot benefited far more from the route, receiving two-thirds more passengers, undercutting the profitability for Pan Am. The Soviet Union was far more interested in maintaining the route than the United States or the American airline: tourism brought in hard currency.³²⁴ Even as late as 1980, Pan American could not economically justify its route into Moscow. Only by running to Moscow as a spur on a route through Western Europe first could Pan American recoup some of the losses.³²⁵ Furthermore, restrictions on the operations of foreign airlines made it difficult to turn a profit on any route into the Soviet Union regardless of the popularity of the route.³²⁶

Both Pan American and the United States government recognized that a route to Moscow would not be profitable. The creation of the air route was backed by the American government mainly as a means for fostering better relations between the two countries. Gidwitz also believed that the Americans intended the route to serve as a

³²³ Macdonald, *Aeroflot*, p. 197-8.

³²⁴ *New York Times*, "Aeroflot Leads on Moscow Run, But Pan Am Is Satisfied, Too," p. 66, July 7, 1969.

³²⁵ Gidwitz, *The Politics of International Air Transport*, p. 17.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 146-7.

firsthand showcase of the advantages of American technology over that of the Soviet Union.³²⁷

Technology alone was not responsible for negatively affecting Aeroflot's potential business. Thornton wrote that there were reports of severely poor customer service.³²⁸ This was in spite of the deliberate intention of the Soviet Union to provide pleasant air service to all its customers as early as 1946. In the report to the State Department 'Soviet Civil Aviation in the Second Quarter of 1946,' it was noted that:

The necessity of providing travel comfort is frequently stressed in the press, and in his survey of the approaching summer season Major-General of Aviation Timashev promised new conveniences of plane equipment, better bus service to air terminals, and greater ease of procuring tickets. Increasing mention is being made of improvement in airport passenger facilities, as at Baku, where extensive repairs have recently been made.³²⁹

Thornton did not interpret the later difficulties as a symptom of a serious problem. Businesses such as airlines thrive on good customer service. The Soviet Union was no exception to this as noted in the above passage. He pointed to the speed at which Aeroflot had expanded its operations, which had been among the fastest in the world in the 1960s. The problems Aeroflot experienced with customer service were therefore, he believed, due to the rapid growth of the airline rather than to some inherent flaw in the Soviet system.³³⁰

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 23-4.

³²⁸ Thornton, *International Airline and Politics*, p. 144-5.

³²⁹ Louise Luke for the Department of State to the Officer in Charge of the American Mission, Moscow, "Soviet Civil Aviation in the Second Quarter of 1946," August 6, 1946, p. 12, from *Confidential U.S. State Department Central Files. The Soviet Union: Internal Affairs, 1945-1949*, reel 33, p. 188

³³⁰ Thornton, *International Airline and Politics*, p. 144-5.

Conclusion

The competing influences of the Soviet Union and United States largely shaped the growth and development of civil aviation in Eastern Europe. This was evident in the restrictions imposed on the airlines of the region by the superpowers, primarily the United States. The case of Yugoslavia clearly shows that the United States and its West European allies could have substantially improved the air capabilities and range of air routes available to other East European nations. The smaller nations also suffered as a result of their isolation from the West and the utter dominance of the Soviet Union in devising their air companies in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

Yugoslavia's airline, JAT, formed strong ties with Western nations after the Soviet-Yugoslavian split. Direct aviation assistance from the United States and Britain replaced aid from the Soviet Union, especially after the joint-stock airline Yusta was dissolved. The other satellites remained close to the Soviet Union and received varying degrees of assistance from it. Poland's LOT airline began to build a fleet that was able to offer good service, though it required more direct assistance from the Soviet Union than Czechoslovakia. Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania all required even more aid than Poland and adopted joint-stock air companies, which were all bought out within two years of the death of Stalin. Their airlines remained relatively small with a limited number of destinations and aircraft in their fleets. East Germany, only allowed to operate an airline, Interflug after 1955, operated largely under Soviet guidance and did not attain the same prominence as Lufthansa, its West German counterpart. By 1970 each of those airlines had made connections with Western Europe to varying degrees, due in part to the value of tourism.

Tourism was stifled by numerous restrictions for over a decade after the end of the Second World War. By the 1960s, as the restrictions were reduced, tourism provided a market for air travel that proved lucrative for many Communist airlines. Poland was able to build on the natural links between its ethnic diaspora to create profitable routes to North America. Other Communist countries were able to exploit the curiosity of Westerners to attract visitors on to their airlines. The value of tourism varied by country but by 1970 there was a proven market among the Communist airlines for service to the West. This shows that the divisions that had existed between East and West were finally overcome with respect to civil aviation, at least with respect to travel.

Conclusion

The changes experienced in East European civil aviation between 1945 and 1970 were substantial. Several nations that had virtually no capacity to operate an airline in the aftermath of the Second World War, such as Czechoslovakia and Poland, witnessed their airlines become regional if not global competitors, with routes stretching across the world. Aeroflot, the Soviet airline, expanded its post-war service from somewhat limited domestic operations into a major international carrier that could compete against the biggest airlines around the world. Even the smallest Communist European countries were able to operate some civil air services by 1970, except for Albania due to its isolationist regime.

What made Eastern Europe perhaps most distinct with respect to civil aviation was that it was the front line of the Cold War. The rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union, and the American policy of Containment, shaped virtually every aspect of aviation. Containment policy guided American and West European actions in Eastern Europe to a great extent. The Americans provided aircraft to nations that had governments that were not close to the Soviet Union regardless of their political makeup.

The case of Yugoslavia is an excellent example of the pragmatism of the American approach to Containment in this respect. The distance that opened between Yugoslavia and the Cominform nations provided an opening for the West to show that there was value in turning away from the Soviet Union and civil aviation was a clear means of demonstrating that value. Aid was selectively withheld from countries in the Soviet sphere and showered on Yugoslavia by Western nations between 1948 and the 1950s.

This did not have a great effect on the ties between the Soviet Union and its satellites but did demonstrate the perceived value of civil aviation by all parties involved.

If the United States had been less concerned with respect to its aircraft and aviation technology falling into Soviet hands, the trade between East and West in aviation materials would have been more substantial. The United States believed those concerns to be too great to ignore, with consequences for the entire Soviet Bloc. The effects were not entirely negative for aviation in Communist Europe: Soviet civil aviation was able to grow at a faster rate due to the lack of Western competition in its sphere. In most cases the pressure that was put on America's allies in Europe harmed the potential for aviation in Communist Europe. The planes from Communist nations were often not able to turn to the West for things as simple as maintenance and spare parts in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Any aid that could be provided to those countries was intentionally withheld, which served to push the countries of the Soviet Bloc more closely together for mutual support.

Not all of the negative effects on civil aviation in Communist Europe were the result of actions undertaken by the United States and its allies. Restrictions placed upon Western airlines operating in Eastern Europe were severe and made it very difficult to run a profitable route into that region. This lessened incentive for travel between East and West: without the possibility for adequate revenues for Western airlines on routes across the Iron Curtain, it was far easier to simply cut off travel to the region altogether. Further, since Westerners were sometimes arrested for political reasons (as in the case of William Oatis and the French nationals detained in Czechoslovakia), there was a general tendency to look askance at unnecessary travel across the Iron Curtain.

An important turning point in civil aviation relations between East and West may have been the same as that for the Cold War as a whole: the death of Stalin. After 1953, the Soviet Union and its satellites began to seek renewed ties with the West, as witnessed by the growing number of air agreements struck between the regions. Improvements in aviation technology that emerged in the 1950s in the Soviet Union also encouraged this new trend. The disparity of Soviet air technology with that of the West had been cited as a reason for the unwillingness to permit travel by Western airlines into the East, since they would have outclassed equivalent Soviet aircraft. As their fleets became more competitive technologically, the Soviet Union and its satellites, which typically used Soviet aircraft, were far more receptive to flying in direct competition with Western airlines.

Soviet aviation technology had certain drawbacks; their aircraft in this era had a reputation for lower reliability than Western planes in the same class and greater fuel consumption due to greater weight and lower thrust. The planes remained 'competitive' only in nations that chose to purchase them for political reasons, namely the Soviet Union itself and some of the satellite states. Their airlines had to sacrifice some profitability out of political necessity: Western aircraft were difficult if not impossible to obtain due to the restrictions of Western Containment.

Perhaps the biggest factor that helped to build links between civil aviation the East and West was tourism. There had always been a demand for travel between the Soviet Bloc and the West but political factors frequently halted this. By the latter 1950s, as travel was becoming more common once more, the airlines of both East and West were able to reap the benefits of that travel. Eastern airlines, such as Poland's LOT, were able to serve their diasporas abroad and build a large international market. Western airlines

were willing to travel to the region once again as that market emerged. By the 1960s, millions of people were crossing the Iron Curtain by plane on a regular basis. The worst fears of the other side, both those of the Soviet Union and the United States, became more muted. Espionage and enemy infiltration were treated as more manageable concerns by that time, to the benefit of the airlines.

Civil aviation also serves as a window into the Cold War throughout that era. Tentative air links between East and West were halted with rising tensions in the late 1940s, as the Iron Curtain divided Europe. The limitation of trade with respect to aircraft and the tightening of air relations within Eastern Europe mirror the closer political relationship between the Communist nations of the region. The gradual easing of tensions after the mid-1950s after the death of Stalin likewise witnessed an increase in air agreements and flights between East and West. That era of improved relations was never checked by a subsequent end to the growth of air links until the end of the Cold War, with some individual exceptions. It would have been a simple matter for a Communist country to cut air relations with the West yet the rarity of this indicates that there was a movement to continue building links rather than to put up new walls. This suggests that the end of the Cold War did not simply begin with the fall of Communism between 1989 and 1991 but had roots stemming back as far as the 1950s, marked by greater cooperation in practical matters like air travel between nations from both East and West.

The movement of Communist European nations towards ICAO in the 1960s marked a momentous shift in the political relationship between that region and the Western world. Although civil aviation relations had been improving since the 1950s, joining the ICAO marked a significant change in Communist Europe's perception of the

West and organizations dominated by the West. By joining ICAO, the Eastern Bloc nations demonstrated that they did not fear a formal partnership between the countries that were ostensibly their rivals. At a time when there were few if any formal links between East and West, the ICAO served as a bridge between those two groups.

Civil aviation in Eastern Europe had truly passed a watershed by 1970. There existed practically no air travel to speak of within any of the countries of the region at the end of the Second World War, except in the Soviet Union. In spite of the challenges that those countries had to overcome, they all managed to build an airline with international reach. The largest of them, Aeroflot, CSA, and LOT had global reach by 1970. The Cold War had a huge impact on the development of each of those airlines, putting up barriers to travel in many cases and halting trade in some cases. The United States played a central part in all of this, as did the Soviet Union. Each one acted to aid the satellite states at some point and turned against one or more over time. What was ultimately of concern was the balance of power politically in the world: civil aviation was an unfortunate victim of this struggle. Civil aviation in the Communist nations of Europe, influenced by the growing availability, reach, and desirability of air travel, nevertheless overcame all of those obstacles to finally achieve a level of international success and in the process became integrated within a single set of global regulatory treaties and institutions.

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