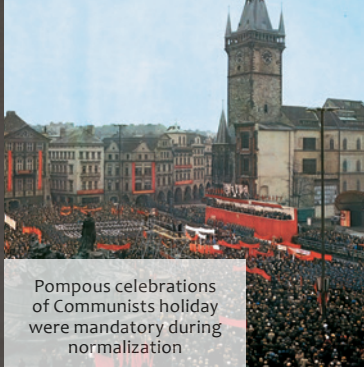


POUČENIE z krízového vývoja v strane a spoločnosti po XIII. zjazde KSČ

Schvábené na plénum zasadnutí
ÚV KSČ v decembri 1970



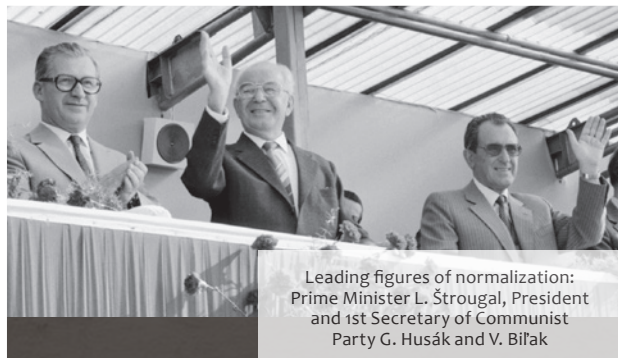
Pompous celebrations of Communists holiday were mandatory during normalization

"I suppose that our non-violent approach and the moral dominance of the Czechoslovak citizens over the aggressor were, and also today are of moral significance. Taking the lapse of time into consideration we may say that our peaceful approach might also have contributed to the collapse of that aggressive bloc."

Alexander Dubček,
'Socialism with a human face' Leader

"The Prague Spring was not an episode, but a ring in the long chain of uprisings, rebellions and attempts for reforms in then Eastern Europe, which all failed with no exception. They built a base for the Soviet socialism collapse, as they demonstrated the system was not able to reform itself."

Jan Pauer, Historian



Leading figures of normalization:
Prime Minister L. Štrougal, President
and 1st Secretary of Communist
Party G. Husák and V. Biřák

and they often started to shoot unarmed citizens, which resulted in casualties.

OCCUPATION IN NUMBERS

- Total strength of invasion troops was **27 divisions**, i.e. **500,000 soldiers**.
- The occupants had numerous military armaments at their disposal: **6,300 tanks; 2,000 cannons and 800 airplanes**.
- During the occupation, **the military actions caused at least 108 civilians to be killed, 37 of them in Slovakia**.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE OCCUPATION

By the occupation armies' invasion and signing of the Moscow Protocol on August 26, 1968, the period of so-called Normalisation was launched. Normalisation brought the exclusion of the process of democratic renewal in the 60s, re-introduction of the censorship and political screening of all citizens, and the regime came back to emphasising the leading role of the Communist Party in society as well as the Marxist-Leninist ideology, and started to apply it. Normalisation was based on repressing

the protests of citizens against the occupation symbolised by the voluntary suicide by self-immolation of the student Jan Palach in January 1969 in Prague. Protests of citizens culminated in mass demonstrations in August 1969, but those were brutally repressed. This was the ultimate and sad end of the Prague Spring, as the violence definitely broke the citizens' resistance, brought resignation and forced conformation with the new regime.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO KNOW MORE?

Recommended websites:

<http://www.upn.gov.sk/august-68/>; www.enrs.eu



THE YEAR 1968 IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

SOCIALISM WITH A HUMAN FACE

In the history of Czechoslovakia, the year 1968 stands for an attempt to create socialism with a human face. It means efforts to make the Communist totalitarian regime 'more human'. The then Communist Party leadership implemented a number of measures for democratisation, which were welcomed and supported by the citizens. That policy was unacceptable for the Soviet Union. On the night of August 20–21, 1968, the invasion troops of the several Warsaw Pact countries invaded Czechoslovakia and remained in the country for following 20 years. Due to the invasion, the democratisation process was stopped.

Spring 1968



Leaders of the democratization process during the May Day procession

August 21, 1968



Occupation armies in Slovak cities



July 29 – August 2, 1968



Alexander Dubček and Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev at Čierna nad Tisou few days before invasion



People likened Soviet occupants to the Nazis



Among the victims of occupation was also young student Danka Košanová

PROCESS OF DEMOCRATIC RENEWAL OF 1968

The easing of the Communist regime in Czechoslovakia had already started in the 60s. The foreign policy development also supported the situation in Czechoslovakia, as the second half of the 60s was characterised by reduced tensions in the relations between democratic and socialist countries. **The reform process of 1968 was the most visible evidence and the new regime type was known as 'socialism with a human face'.** In January Alexander Dubček was appointed the First Secretary of the Communist Party (in those days the most powerful man in the country) and other personnel changes followed within both party and state administration bodies, bringing supporters of the democratic renewal process into position. **In April the Action Programme of the Communist Party was approved, providing legitimacy to the new political regime line,** and democratic tendencies started to clearly be shown in society, e.g. censorship removal, free travel, victims of the Communist terror in the 50s rehabilitation, loosening of pressure over the churches, economic reform, and the establishment of non-communist organisations. **The equal position of Slovakia in the common state was an important part of democratisation measures that succeeded**

ed in the approval of the Law on Federalisation. All of these steps were supported by the citizens and at the same time they strengthened the authority of reform politicians. Especially artists made full use of democratization, shifting the limits of allowed discourse (by the manifest 2000 Words) beyond the Action Programme.

SOVIET UNION REACTION

From the very beginning and not hiding its reservations, the Soviet Union observed the events in Czechoslovakia, which was considered an integral part of its sphere of influence. Leaderships in other Warsaw Pact member states also supported the Soviet reservations, with fears that the reform process might have influence on their countries, too. People from the Central and Eastern Europe countries gladly welcomed development in Czechoslovakia and connected it with a lot of hope for democratization of whole Soviet Bloc. Democratic countries perceived the Czechoslovak attempt for reforms with deliberate feelings of understanding, fully respecting that Czechoslovakia belonged to the Soviet sphere of influence. **In 1968, the Soviets interpreted the situation that Czechoslovakia was gradually advancing to leave the Soviet Bloc.** Seeing that in spite of many forcible warnings and urgent requests

emphasising 'the concerns about the destiny of socialism' and warning against 'danger of the counterrevolution', the situation in Czechoslovakia did not change, **the Soviets decided to reverse the situation through military action.** They did so, although the Czechoslovak leadership had never questioned key Communist principles and the alliance with the Soviet Union.

OCCUPATION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA

The military invasion was launched on the night of August 20–21, 1968. The total strength of invasion from the Warsaw Pact troops was more than 500,000 men and a heavy military armament. **Prior to the invasion, the Soviets provided a 'letter of invitation' signed by dogmatic Czechoslovak Communists (Alois Indra, Drahomír Kolder, Antonín Kapek, Oldřich Švestka and Vasil Bilák).** However, the leading Communist Party and state bodies denounced the military invasion in their declaration and unmasked it as occupation in front of the whole world. This is how it was perceived also by the citizens. In spite of appeals to stay calm and not to resist, unarmed masses of people tried to stop Soviet tanks in many locations. The invasion armies' soldiers were surprised by that spontaneous resistance