

The Third International Conference on the Series:

REVOLUTION ACCOMPLISHED. COMMUNISTS IN POWER

Communist Parties in the Soviet Bloc in 1956 – 1968. From destalinization to economic reforms

Preliminary Date (depend on COVID-19 pandemic): September 2021

Place: Bratislava

Organisers: Nation's Memory Institute; Institute of National Remembrance; Committee of National Remembrance; Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes

With the support of European Network Remembrance and Solidarity

The aim of the international scientific conference The Communist Parties in the Soviet Bloc 1956 – 1968. From destalinization to economic reforms is to analyse the activities and development of individual communist parties in the former Soviet bloc since the XX. Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in 1956 until the violent suppression of the reform process in Czechoslovakia in August 1968.

Developments in the Soviet bloc and in the individual communist parties after 1956 were most influenced by the XX Congress of the CPSU and, in particular, the secret speech of the First Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee Nikita S. Khrushchev, in which he criticized Stalin's crimes. With this speech he started the process of the so-called destalinization, which brought strong destabilizing impulses to the Soviet bloc countries and even questioned their very existence. Polarization occurred not only in the society but also in the Communist parties themselves. Personnel changes caused by the natural generational exchange of the party functionaries, but also by the return of the persecuted Communists to high party functions, gradually internally divided the Communist parties into the dogmatic and reform wings. In some Soviet bloc countries, Khrushchev's destalinization eventually resulted in a reform process which initially sought to cope only with the Stalinist legacy, but at the end it led to questioning the communist regime as such. This process occurred already in 1956 in Hungary and Poland. However, the suppression of the Hungarian Revolution set limits to these reforms and effectively completed the first stage of the destalinization. Its

continuation started in 1961 by the XXII Congress of the CPSU and was mainly marked by the necessary economic reforms, which had to slow down the lagging of the Soviet bloc behind the West. At the end of the Khrushchev period, the cohesion of the Soviet bloc was no longer ensured by the direct control or the presence of Soviet advisers, but by seeking to integrate it through economic and commercial impulses and by defining a wider area for self-activity. After the changes in power in the Soviet Union and the accession of Leonid I. Brezhnev as the first secretary of the CPSU Central Committee in 1964, the process of destalinization stopped. The general framework for the functioning of the Soviet bloc was finally defined by the so-called Brezhnev's doctrine with its bloc integrity and the preservation of certain systemic features such as the leading role of the Communist Party and loyalty to Moscow. The symbolic point behind the development in the Soviet bloc after 1956 was finally the Czechoslovak reform experiment, which culminated in 1968 and addressed the fundamental question: Is the Soviet-type communism reformable? The search for an answer to this question was eventually interrupted by the Warsaw Pact troops who occupied Czechoslovakia in August 1968. The period of changes, reforms and attempts has definitely come to an end, and the internal conditions in individual Soviet bloc countries and their communist parties have gradually stabilized.

The event will focus on the following topics:

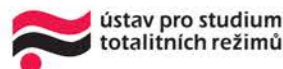
- XX and XXII Congress of the CPSU and the issue of destalinization of the Soviet bloc;
- The specifics of destalinization in the countries of the Soviet bloc and their influence on the internal development of the communist parties - dogmatism vs. reformism;
- Cooperation of the Communist Parties after the official termination of the activities of Kominforma, respectively Informbyro;
- Reaction of the Communist Party to the Hungarian Revolution of 1956;
- Communist parties and crises of the 1960s - Berlin and Cuba
- Power Changes in the USSR (1964) and impact of the Brezhnev's doctrine on development in the communist parties
- Communist parties and the resolution of the economic crises of 1960s.

The outcome of the conference will be a reviewed collective monograph. The title and abstract of your paper (max. 2,400 characters), as well as a brief professional curriculum vitae, including the current workplace, should be sent before 30 April 2021 to the e-mail address:

bratislav.kincok@upn.gov.sk or by post to:

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