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**Perception of the Soviet Heritage in Czech Republic**

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## **Declaration**

I declare that I wrote this Master`s thesis on my own (under the supervision of the head supervisor of the Master`s thesis and stated all employed sources and literature.

In Hradec Kralove, 7.03.2017

Signature:

**Annotation:**

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This work provides basic historic and social questions about political, economic and cultural life, according Soviet policy insight the system and its propaganda methods, used to incorporate Czechoslovakia into one system of Warsaw Block. We used Soviet and Russian sources to investigate the question deeply and properly.

**Key words:** USSR, Warsaw Block, methods of propaganda, cultural policy, Czechoslovakia, communist party, collective mind, Homo Soveticus, 1960-1985, private vs collective.

## Content

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>I. Political situation in 1945-1985.....</b>	<b>7</b>
1. The new balance of forces in Europe: from Potsdam to the Paris Conference.....	10
2. Economic and Political Changes 1953-1964.....	17
3. Foreign Policy during Khrushchev`s Detent.....	22
4. Political conservatism and economic reform.....	27
5. Conservative tendencies and reforming collapse.....	36
6. Difficulties in industrial sector.....	40
<b>II. Changes in social life.....</b>	<b>43</b>
1. Demographical changes.....	46
2. Urbanization.....	53
3. Urban „microworld“ and informal structures.....	59
4. Homo soveticus.....	72
<b>III. The Czechs and their Communism, Past and Present.....</b>	<b>77</b>
1. Comparative perspective.....	81
2. The Politics of Decommunization.....	90
3. The Rewriting of Modern History to Smooth It`s Consequence.....	98
<b>IV. Sociological Quiz.....</b>	<b>105</b>
<b>Conclusion.....</b>	<b>131</b>
<b>List of employed literature.....</b>	<b>133</b>

## Introduction

In my Master's thesis we research the problem of "sovietization" in Czechoslovakia during late 1950-ies up to the collapse of the USSR. I have chosen this topic because during my first year of study program in Czech Republic, I noticed some impacts of Soviet presence even in modern society, culture and life. The most interested part for me is cultural and mental influence, which changed the fate of the whole country, its cultural background, which can be seen in architecture forms, literal directivity, visual arts. In historical perspective, the topic of cultural policy in the USSR presented deeply and fulfill, but fragmentary. Scientific and popular literature gives us a profound knowledge about particular personalities in soviet period, about esthetical phenomena – avant-garde, formalism, futurism, etc.

In this thesis, I want to sum-up the problems of soviet policy, social life and culture to answer the basic question – how this historic and cultural background, input into Czechoslovakian reality, shoot out in modern reality. We need to merge deeply in all spheres of this period to investigate the problem and soviet society, as the realm of radical engineering and experimentation in cultural sphere, will help us in our research. Political overturn didn't create a utopian realm, but revealed the necessity of wide and strict cultural policy in all levels – from elementary behaviorist human norms up to the elite culture spheres. Class and political contradictions spread to the cultural sphere and created "cultural front". Mayakovski's poetry symbolized the atmosphere of cultural policy creation. Here in my thesis, I am going to illustrate some phenomena with the examples of classic Russian and Czech literature.

This rude and insistent intervention into culture and all human spheres became a real historic incident, and should be analyzed and investigated. The reference to the cultural policy gives us an opportunity to convert our research and investigate such conceptions as "mentality", "mythology", "homo sovieticus", etc. We should think about the cause-effect interaction, weigh and evaluate the success or failure of the various approaches used in the cultural sphere. We also add that similar problems became the object of the close attention in the modern Western research environment (it is enough to name the later works of Michel Foucault). At the same time, the very uniqueness of Soviet experiments in the field of cultural policy excludes simple borrowing of ready analytical and methodological tools, requires their constant empirical verification and correction.

We - along with classical historical and cultural approaches - sought to actively resort to the disciplined certainty of historical semantics, the methods of institutional and organizational

analysis. Our strategy is also to move from private cases to generalizations, and not to impose general theories or tendentious concepts on factual material.

Soviet cultural policy is, however, not only and not so much an object of historical and scientific interest. Twenty years after the collapse of the Soviet state, we can clearly assess the social viability of the institutions that have emerged in our society, both thanks to and contrary to Soviet cultural policy, as well as the consequences of the scrapping and decay of some of them.

Constantly faced with a range of topical expert problems in this field, we note that our perception of the present and possible further strategies is inseparable from the historical understanding of the genealogy of the existing state of affairs, the evaluation of historical experience, which is an inalienable fact of our history, and hence of our future.

## **Political situation in 1965-1985**

In this part, we analyze the political situation in the empire under the name of the USSR, and how its political mechanisms within the system took root in the satellites.

The Soviet Union, triumphantly completing the march through postwar-Europe, through diplomatic manipulation of Joseph Stalin and the Soviet leadership, gained influence and power over the territory of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire. Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, part of Germany were involved in the orbit of the influence of a huge geopolitical force. The process of incorporation of these „vassals“ of the Kremlin was not instantaneous. In Czechoslovakia, the Communist Party had to work hard, which would draw the country into total dependence from the metropoly. Prior to the memorable February of 1948, the Communist Party, with varying success, cast other political forces from the political horizon, while with the help of the National Front and with Moscow support, Czechoslovakia became one of the members of the communist world. All efforts of Edward Benes to preserve the independence of a small country in the center of Europe failed.

In his famous essay, Czech classic Milan Kundera described the unbearable severity of the existence of a small country that found itself alone in front of a huge all-consuming „monster“, painted in red and bearing the scarlet flag of the liberation of all working people. It was the tragedy of all small countries, but the homeland of Kundera is the embodiment of the destiny of the countries of Central Europe, which found themselves between a hammer and an anvil of two superpowers. Czechoslovakia (the territory of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia) was under the rule of the Habsburgs and the Romanovs, while the First World War gave a chance for independence. Studying the history of the Czech lands, you involuntarily feel compassion for this land, which spent the entire 19th century searching for self-identification markers, reviving historical myths and realities, recalling the Hussite wars and collecting masterpieces of folklore. The end of the war gave hope for the realization of all the ideas accumulated in the previous century, but the Munich arrangements drove the first nails into the coffin about the Czechoslovak dream. The war time drove a wedge between the Czechs and Slovaks, who supported the Nazis, but the Red Army was only a mirage, which only formally brought liberation. Stalin firmly decided to incorporate these territories for the successful advancement of his global geopolitical mission. The efforts of the Social Democrats were in vain, the Communists led by Clement Gottwald successfully carried out a coup that brought with it a standard set of Stalinist „Sovietization.“ In order to understand and penetrate deeply into the processes that took place in Czechoslovakia, we suggest to analyze carefully the main mechanisms of the Soviet system during Brezhnev's „stagnation“ and before the beginning of perestroika and glasnost, which formed the political

landscape of Czechoslovakia and had far-reaching consequences for the whole life of the country.

The following part will give a detailed idea of the political situation within the metropolis and the satellite, provide comprehensive information about what was happening and what were the consequences of those or other events on the modern Czech Republic.

The political life of the USSR in the post-war years was marked not only by ideological tightening, which sought the restoration of control over society, but also by the slippage of power structures to specific forms that demonstrated the abandonment of certain Leninist norms and appeals to its heritage and the apparent continuity with practice (cleansing) and political Coercion (especially with regard to the key issue of the renewal and rotation of Party cadres) of the 1930s.

In the postwar years, Stalin tried to consolidate the foundation of his power with the help of an ultranationalist ideology, the rejection of the traditional principles established by Lenin for the functioning of party bodies and the unlimited development of the cult of the Supreme Leader, who became marshal, generalissimo and chairman of the Council of Ministers.

It was then, that the „cult of personality“ reached its apogee. In each settlement, a monument to Stalin was being built. The celebration in December 1949 of the seventieth anniversary of the leader allowed the cult of personality to pass all conceivable boundaries. For weeks, the newspapers listed thousands of gifts sent to Stalin as a token of appreciation from all over the world. Thousands of messages, full of boundless worship and admiration, flocked to the Great Man. The higher ecclesiastical hierarchs publicly assured him of their deepest gratitude and the fact that they offer ardent prayers, experiencing the unparalleled wisdom and greatness with which he rules the Motherland.

Despite the whole chorus of glorification and slavish assurances of loyalty, this man has never been so lonely. Isolated because of his suspicion from everyone, avoiding ceremonies and receptions, knowing about the life of the country only by the decorated pictures of official reports, the aging Stalin spent most of the time at his dacha in Kuntsevo, where he came for a few hours to the Kremlin. At the dacha, he summoned the old members of the party leadership, forcing them, according to Khrushchev's recollections, to drink on any occasion for nights without exhaustion. Stressing the significance of these feasts, Stalin's contemporaries of that period note his rare ability to confuse the cards and, using his favorite tactics, to shoot among themselves his probable successors, instructing them to solve the most puzzling problems, then, having risen above specific personalities and disagreements, to assume the role of Arbitrator and

continue to consolidate the political system in which the Leninist traditions played an increasingly less important role, that is, Stalinism.

A radical break with the Leninist legacy was carried out at several levels:

- At the level of symbols, which was expressed in the re-creation of civil and military ranks, which were abolished by Lenin, since they embodied, in his opinion, a traditional state (in 1946 the people's commissars became "ministers"); In notable renaming, designed to signify the transition to a new stage in the historical development of the people and state (the Workers and Peasants Red Army was renamed the Soviet Armed Forces, and the Bolshevik Party in 1952 became the Communist Party of the Soviet Union-the CPSU).
- At the theoretical level, there was a covert criticism of the Leninist concept of the party. Thus, in a speech delivered on February 9, 1946, Stalin stated that the only difference between Communists and non-Party people is that the former are party members, while the latter are not.
- At a deeper level of real implementation of power, the break with Leninism was expressed in the consistent ignorance of the party's governing bodies: thirteen and a half years, from March 1939 to October 1952 congresses were not held and five and a half years from February 1947 to October 1952, Plenums of the Central Committee. Even the Politburo (10 members and 4 candidate members) was almost never assembled because of Stalin's practice of small commissions (completely illegal from the standpoint of the Charter) with vague powers: the Commission of Five, the Commission of Six, engaged in principle foreign Affairs, but also some issues of domestic policy, the Commission of the Seven. As a rule, Stalin preferred to accept members of the Politburo individually or in small groups on issues related to the "specialty" of each. Tortured by an acute spy mania, Stalin invariably excluded from these meetings, especially in the last years of his life, some members of the Politburo suspected of switching to the service of a foreign power. This happened with Voroshilov, suspected in cooperation with Intelligence Service (but not arrested, which clearly speaks about the real motives of this so-called opal); Then, after the XIX Congress of the Party, - with Molotov and Mikoyan. Khrushchev left striking tales of episodic meetings of the Politburo, where the most important decisions, for example the fifth five-year plan, were taken without any discussion for a few minutes by participants who were panicking at the thought that they could express a point of view that would spoil the mood of the Leader.

Meanwhile, Stalin did everything to concentrate power in the structures created by him, not controlled by the leading party institutions elected in 1939. The role of his personal Secretariat and the special sector of the Secretariat of the Central Committee under the leadership of

Poskrebyshev apparently grew steadily, concluding in the supervision of the entire Secretariat of the Central Committee - the real center for decision-making and monitoring of their implementation. Each of Stalin's main comrades in the post-war years (Malenkov, Zhdanov and Khrushchev) occupied one of the four posts of Party Central Committee secretaries at one time or another.

With those - very sketchy - knowledge about the mechanism of decision-making at the highest level that we have, it is impossible to give an exhaustive answer to the question of real power in the post-war USSR. Was Stalin really the autocrat described by Khrushchev and Djilas? Or the minority leader in the Politburo, surrounded by rival groups that arose in anticipation of the imminent division of the inheritance and whose positions reflected the real trends in the choice of decisions on key issues of the moment? These two hypotheses do not exclude each other. They make it possible to assess the complexity and sophistication of Stalin's political game, which was able to just as reliably assimilate the higher military leaders covered with the glory of the Victory, as well as to take advantage of the rivalry and ambitions of their political colleagues, thus diverting attention from social contradictions and centrifugal ideological tendencies.

Here, the "inner" situation described. However, what about foreign policy and postwar Europe?

### **The new balance of forces in Europe: from Potsdam to the Paris Conference.**

Shortly after the Yalta Conference, the West was placed by the Soviet side in front of several *fait accompli*: in Poland "Poles from London" received only minor ministerial portfolios in the "coalition government"; The elections envisaged by the decisions of the conference were not held. In Romania, King Mihai was forced to create a government dominated by Communists. In Czechoslovakia, Benes, after his visit to Moscow in March 1945, had to include several Communists in the government.

At the Potsdam Conference held July 17 - August 2, 1945, the Western participants gave way to the joint pressure of the USSR and Poland and agreed that the Polish-German border would pass through the Oder-Neisse line. The question of reparations was also resolved in favor of the USSR, which was given the right to export not only everything it wants from its occupation zone, but also to take a quarter of the equipment in the western zones. The United States and Britain were surprised to discover the appearance of the new Soviet requirements: the revision of the Montreux Convention on the regime of the Black Sea straits; The return of the USSR to the

Kara and Ardahan districts, bordering on Soviet Armenia and retiring in 1921 to Turkey; Obtaining a naval base in Dedeagach on the Aegean Sea.

The London meeting of foreign ministers of the five member countries of the UN Security Council in September 1945, revealed new sources of tension between the USSR and the West. Western countries have informed the Soviet Union that they will not sign peace treaties with Romania and Bulgaria before holding free elections there. The Soviet side interpreted this position as a rejection of the agreements concluded with Churchill in October 1944 on spheres of influence in Eastern Europe. In addition, the USSR demonstrated at the meeting the newly acquired "complex of a great power", demanding the exclusion of China and France from all negotiations on peace treaties and granting a protectorate over Tripolitania in order to ensure its presence in the Mediterranean Sea, as befits a great power. After three weeks of negotiations, the USSR and the Western participants forced to state their disagreement on most issues and agreed to meet again in Moscow in December.

In Moscow, the foreign ministers of the three great powers reached a compromise on the issue of Bulgaria and Romania after the USSR agreed to hold new elections there, thereby implicitly acknowledging that the previous ones, which gave the "domestic fronts" a majority of 90%, were falsified. The Soviet Union also agreed to the participation of "small countries" in the Peace Conference, which was to be held in Paris in the summer of 1946.

Nevertheless, a few weeks later, Soviet diplomacy confirmed its intention to solve major international problems only with the USA (it is indicative that since late 1945 the contacts between Stalin and Attlee, who replaced Churchill as prime minister of Britain, have become increasingly episodic). In February 1946, Molotov, in particular, said that the USSR is one of the two largest countries in the world and no international issue can be resolved without its participation.

Keeping its adherence to the policy of sharing spheres of influence opposed to the American project of collective security, which gave the United Nations a central place in the settlement of conflicts, the USSR tried to consolidate its positions in Iran, since up to this point the policy of obtaining "security pledges" was bearing fruit.

The Paris conferences of April 1946 and the Peace Conference held in the French capital from July 29 to October 15, 1946, were mainly devoted to the settlement of the German problem. They did not lead to any rapprochement between Western and Soviet positions, with the exception of the issue of reparations. Meanwhile, US Secretary of State Byrnes announced in Stuttgart that, in the opinion of the US government, the time has come to transfer responsibility

to the German people for the conduct of their own affairs, to give Germany the opportunity to gain independence in the economic field. Byrnes, further, even stated that the "Big Three" did not assume any final obligations in Potsdam on the eastern border of Germany. For its part, the Soviet Union began active "denazification" of its occupation zone, agrarian reform, the nationalization of industrial enterprises and the creation of mixed Soviet-German enterprises that worked exclusively on the USSR. Although the USSR has consistently reaffirmed its commitment to the reunification of democratized and demilitarized Germany, the growing inconsistency of political and economic structures in the Western and Soviet occupation zones has made this idea increasingly illusory.

After the failure of the Peace Conference, relations between the Western countries and the USSR worsened further because of the direct assistance rendered by Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Albania in the zone of Soviet influence, to the communist partisan movement in Greece. The US reacted energetically to this by sending an impressive naval armada to the eastern sector of the Mediterranean. Truman's determination, supported by Paris and London and relying on the American atomic monopoly, had the same effect as the UK's tough position on the Iran issue. In the final analysis, the Greek and Turkish crises played a role in the history of the Cold War that far surpassed the rates that were made by the conflicting parties. In fact, they served as a direct source of the Truman Doctrine, which was the first step toward formalizing American commitments towards Europe, to the creation of NATO.

Trying to resolve the problems, not solved by the Peace Conference, a new meeting of foreign ministers gathered in Moscow on March 10, 1947, on the eve of Truman's presentation of his doctrine of economic assistance to "free peoples, who resist attempts at enslavement by an armed minority or external pressure." (Turkey and Greece were the first to receive American assistance.) In Moscow, the discussion turned on several fundamental issues of the German problem. Molotov rejected the American proposal to conclude a treaty on the neutrality of Germany. General Marshall, whom Truman had just placed at the head of the State Department, rejected a new Soviet request for reparations. America, he said, is against the policy of turning Germany into a "shelter for the poor in the center of Europe". The parties did not reach agreement on the question of the state structure of the future Germany. From the failure of the Moscow conference, the Americans made for themselves an indisputable conclusion about the need to the immediately link the Western occupation zones with Western European countries with economic and even political agreements. On June 5, Marshall presented at Harvard the main directions of the economic plan, designed to "help Europeans regain economic health, without which neither stability nor peace is possible." In July, a conference held in Paris, open to

all countries, including the USSR. Quite unexpectedly for everyone on June 26, Molotov arrived in the French capital at the head of the delegation, whose membership and rank gave food for optimistic forecasts. However, three days later the Soviet representatives expressed their fundamental disagreement with the American project: they agreed to bilateral assistance without preconditions and control, but objected to a collective enterprise that could cast doubt on the USSR's exceptional influence in Eastern Europe and increase Western Europe's resistance-to-resistance. At the same time, they tried to reduce the psychological effect produced by Marshall's proposal by comparing the enormous needs of post-war Europe and the limited capabilities of the United States. Eventually on July 2, Molotov interrupted the talks, saying that European countries "losing control" would lose their economic and national independence in order to meet the "needs and desires of some great powers". Meanwhile, some Eastern European countries, including Poland and Czechoslovakia, accepted an invitation to participate in an international conference, convened on July 12 in Paris to discuss the Marshall Plan.

However, a few days later, under the pressure of the USSR, Poland and then Czechoslovakia announced that they would not be represented in Paris. In Czechoslovakia, the Communists have already controlled, in addition to the post of chairman of the Council of Ministers, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and National Defense, and could seize all power in the state. In addition, public opinion in the country after Munich, trusted the Slavic elder brother more than Western democracies. On July 10, the Czechoslovak government explained that his participation in the conference could be interpreted "as an act directed against the USSR." On July 11, Romania, Hungary, Albania and Finland also announced their refusal. Thus, it is in July 1947 that the split of Europe should be dated: on the one hand, the US customers, on the other, the satellites of the Soviet Union.

The deterioration of the international climate continued throughout 1947, marked by the increasingly noticeable pulling of the Eastern European countries into the USSR's orbit. In 1947, the design of the "people's democracy" regimes entered its second phase: after the interlude of "coalition governments" (1945 - 1946), power passed to the Communists. In Romania in December, King Mihai abdicated in favor of the People's Republic. In Bulgaria, where the former head of the Comintern Dimitrov, after returning from the USSR, created in November 1946 a government with a communist majority, in the summer of 1947 a Constitution adopted, copied from the Soviet one. At the end of August, the leader of the Bulgarian peasants' party, N. Petkov, the hero of the anti-fascist Resistance, was executed. In Poland, the coalition government formed in 1945, resigned after the elections in January 1947; the communist leader Berut became the president of the republic, and Gomulka was the general secretary of the Communist Party.

The elections in Hungary (August 1947), skillfully conducted by the Communist-Minister of the Interior, L. Raik, culminated in the defeat of the Peasant Party. The Communists decided that 22% of the votes, which made them the first party in the country, gave them the right to seize all the key posts in the government, which they did. Only Czechoslovakia, although yielding to Soviet pressure on the question of the Marshall plan, continued to resist the establishment by the Communists of its complete control over the state.

The next phase of the formation of the blocs took place at the end of September 1947, when representatives of the six Communist parties of Eastern Europe and the two most powerful Western European Communist Parties (France and Italy) gathered at the initiative of the USSR in the castle of Szklarska Poreba (Poland), in order to create the COMINFORM. In the West, the news of the creation of the COMINFORM perceived as the revival of the Comintern.

Nevertheless, the Soviet bloc looked like an impressive monolith, and the birth of the COMINFORM was a declaration of a war for Western civilization. Incidentally, it was in this way that the statement published at the end of the meeting and repeating the main theses of Zhdanov's report represented the international situation. According to him, two camps formed in the world: on the one hand, an imperialist and anti-democratic camp, on the other, an anti-imperialist and democratic camp, whose main goal is to weaken imperialism, strengthen democracy and eliminate the remnants of fascism. The statement sharply criticized those socialist leaders who "Concealed the predatory nature of imperialist policy under the guise of socialist phraseology". The theory of the "two camps" buried the attempts of Benes and Masaryk to maintain good relations with both. Parliamentary elections in Czechoslovakia held in May 1948. Everyone was waiting for the Communists to retreat, where a significant part of public opinion blamed the heavy food crisis. Aware of the threat looming over them, the Communists tried to strengthen their dominance in the trade unions, the army and the police. At the beginning of February 1948, the Minister of the Interior, communist Nozek, appointed several Communists to higher positions in state security. In protest and wishing to force the government to hold early elections, 12 moderate ministers resigned. The chairman of the Council of Ministers, Communist Gottwald, appealed for help, after agreeing this step with the USSR Deputy Foreign Minister Zorin, who was then in Prague, to the armed workers' militia, whose speech secured the final victory of the Communists. On July 7, Prime Minister Gottwald was summoned to Moscow. He was explained that one of the conditions for providing assistance from the US is the absence of representatives of Communist parties in government structures. The decision on the participation of the Czechoslovak group in the Paris discussion of the "Marshall Plan" was annulled.

The early Communist regime in Czechoslovakia was characterised by quite fierce oppression. As for instance Čestmír Císař, the long-term communist party official and a reformist Education secretary in the 1960`s testifies in his recent memoir, the moderate „social democratic” tendencies in the ruling communist party were quickly overruled. The early 1950s were marked by political show trials, executions, shrill political propaganda and tens of thousands of people ending up, unjustly, in communist labor camps, for political reasons.

Nevertheless, there were a considerable number of (mostly young) people, who, having been disappointed by the abandonment of Czechoslovakia by the Western democracies in 1938 at Munich, and having been polarized by Nazi oppression during the Second World War, came to see the world in black and white and enthusiastically embraced the utopian vision of the communist „Brave New World “. These young people included for instance writer Milan Kundera (who was 19 at the time of the communist takeover), the ideologue of the 1968 Prague Spring and Mikhail Gorbachev`s fellow student in Moscow in the 1950s Zdeněk Mlynář and some other, major Czech writers (Pavel Kohout, Ludvík Vaculík, Arnošt Lustig). (These young people, who would have been about 10 at the end of the 1930s, during the demise of democratic Czechoslovakia, never experienced life as grown-ups in a fully-fledged democracy.)

As can be seen from literature, dealing with the 1950`s (Josef Škvorecký, Mirákl), some other sections of society (certainly most of the intellectuals) were in denial towards the ruling Stalinist regime, following its antics with bemusement, trying to avoid being harmed by the regime and attempting to live as normal a life as possible under the given circumstances.

It is not known what the attitudes of the working classes to the regime were at this time. Again, judging from literature, some ordinary people were quite critical of the communist regime while others enjoyed the social welfare which the system offered.

One thing is important, to state, however, about the period of 1948 – 1968. This was the time when the Czechs and Slovaks were still resilient towards the communist system. Large numbers of the population were still thoroughly familiar with normal democratic practice which they had experienced in democratic Czechoslovakia in 1918-1938, a regime with which they fully identified themselves with.

Thus the situation in the early years of the communist regime in Czechoslovakia was as follows:

1. There was a group of young, pro-communist enthusiasts who had not experienced the interwar democratic regime.

2. The bulk of the nation was probably in denial towards the communist regime, knowing full well the advantages of a fully-fledged democratic regime.

3. There were obviously some opportunists who collaborated with the regime; there were also some people who enjoyed the welfare benefits provided by the communist system.

It can, then, be said with a high level of probability that there was relatively little hypocrisy towards the communist regime in the 1950`s. Some (young) people enthusiastically supported it, most of the population was probably in denial towards it.

In February 1948, most of the ministerial portfolios in Czechoslovakia were received by representatives of the Communist Party. The country somehow turned upside down, but this coup occurred quite legitimate. There was no forcible seizure of power, there was no shooting and there were no heroic victims. There were not even any violations of constitutional rights. Moreover, the newly appointed communist ministers brought, as it should be, the oath to President Benes and proceeded to carry out their duties. The country bitterly mourned, some rallies and strikes took place, some words were uttered, someone's indignant public fists drove the air a little and life went on as usual.

On June 7, 1948, Communist Prime Minister Clement Gottwald was elected President of Czechoslovakia. And his comrade-in-chief, Antonin Zapototsky, took his place. On February 25, Benes yielded to the pressure of the street, giving the Communists all-important posts in the government, with the exception of the portfolio of the Minister of Foreign Affairs left behind by Y. Masarik (but he committed suicide on March 10). Communists won the elections on May 30 on a single list. On June 8, Benes resigned. Although the "Prague operation" did not make any significant changes to the current geopolitical situation, it received a huge resonance in the world. On March 5, 1948, General Clay sent a telegram from Berlin, very characteristic of the alarming situation that prevailed at the time: "For several weeks now I feel that there are latent changes in the Soviet position that make me think that a war can break out with dramatic suddenness ". The US Central Intelligence Agency took ten days to prepare a report for Truman with a conclusion about the impossibility of a war in the next 60 days.

However, life changed after all. The Communist dominant diligently squeezed out of the political life of the country all the dissident and somehow competing with the HRC.

There were repressions, arrests and demonstration courts. In the minds of ordinary Czechoslovak citizens, a communist way of thinking was introduced. In addition, he also received in-depth respect for the socialist system of values. Everything that was not nationalized

from May 1945 to February 1948, began to nationalize now. As the “Cold War” gained momentum, the communists of Czechoslovakia, with the full support of the “Big Brother”, relatively easily and bloodlessly strengthened their power.

In 1953 the presidential insurrections of Gottwald went to Zapototsky, and then from Zapototsky to Antonin Novotny. The latter, incidentally, in 1960 announced the completion of the construction of socialism in Czechoslovakia, in connection with which, the country had a new name - Czechoslovakia.

We briefly observed the political transformation within the metropolis of the times of Joseph Stalin. As we can see, all the structural forces thrown into the reorganization of the post-war space in favor of the USSR. Czechoslovakia for several years became a satellite of the communist world and became the conductor for Stalin's ideas on the reorganization of the system within the country. We will not focus on the details of this period; in return, we suggest observing the situation of Khrushchev's era and comparing the two historical periods.

#### **Economic and Political Changes 1953-1964.**

Khrushchev, who was very concerned about the situation in agriculture and the enormous problems of this industry, insisted on the need for priority assistance to the village, understanding the importance of the normal supply of citizens. This policy presupposed a significant increase in government procurement prices for the output of collective farms on the verge of ruin; Rapid expansion of cultivated areas, which was the only way to ensure high growth rates of agricultural production. The development of virgin lands was to become not only a cheap way to immediately increase production, but also a weighty argument - due to the need to increase the fleet of agricultural machines and tractors that this plan required - in favor of subordinating this program to significant sectors of heavy industry, Malenkov's guardianship. Defending this policy, Khrushchev got the opportunity to present himself as a defender of the interests of the majority of the population and at the same time to begin a maneuver, aimed at weakening his main political opponent.

At the plenum of the Central Committee held in January 1955, Khrushchev used all his eloquence to show the advantages of cultivating corn, which he regarded as the key to solving the acute forage problem. For two years, 18 million hectares of maize were sown, - often in areas that were not suitable for this crop. Already then, for the implementation of a particular fetish project, disorderly actions and hasty mobilization began to be used, evidencing the invariability of voluntarist methods of managing the economy.

Relying on the first encouraging results of reforms in agriculture (agricultural production increased by 25% in three years); Khrushchev tried to stimulate social activity, aimed at revealing the “inexhaustible productivity reserves” of Soviet workers and overcoming the internal difficulties of the economic project. This project based on three difficulties, which need to be combined: increase the level of consumption, high rates of economic growth and the direction of large-scale investments in heavy industry, always considered as the basis for further development of the national economy. Both Malenkov and Khrushchev saw the need to reform social ties. For the first, the refusal of coercion as a principle of organization of public relations, which required the rationalization of existing political mechanisms, a cautious transfer of power to lower levels of the administrative apparatus, an increase in the role of directors of enterprises and economic personnel, and recognition of the importance of their technical and professional competence. These regulations exclude any interference or participation of the masses. On the contrary, Khrushchev proposed a more dynamic and innovative populist approach, recognizing a certain ability of the broad masses to initiate and influence the development of events. Realizing that the depth of reform determined only by the degree of management's fear of a severe social crisis, Khrushchev encouraged the demands of the population that gave rise to this fear. At the same time, he tried to awaken the social activity among the masses stating, for example, the following: "We have a lot of such people who do not carry a party ticket in their pocket, but with all their substance, their selfless labor for the benefit of society express Bolshevik partisanship". However, unlike the Stalinist calls for “little people”, for “simple workers”, Khrushchev's policy addressed to “all citizens” did not contain any explicit indication of a public “enemy” or disregard for “legal” methods of control and management. Khrushchev's populism did not foreshadow new purges, being only one of the facets of the policy of the First Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, who tried to create two pillars at the same time. One in the population, representing himself as a leader, caring about raising living standards, people, and bringing them back into political life and the other in the leadership and cadre of the party, asserting itself as the only leader, capable of warding off the threat of the social crisis through reforming social relations.

This populist policy assumed the activation not only of the party, but also of other public organizations (primarily trade unions), the rejection of the most brutal forms of coercion, the withdrawal of labor relations from the sphere of criminal law. All these measures were supposed to muffle social conflicts in enterprises and collective farms, stimulate the initiative and productivity of workers.

Quite clearly new trends in public consciousness were manifested at the 11th Congress of Trade Unions (June 7 - 14, 1954), the first after the end of the war. In the speeches at the congress, trade union leaders were reproached for never defending the worker's interests, they did not fight against the excessive difference in wages arbitrarily appointed by the directors of enterprises, against the practice of illegal dismissals at the behest of the administration, against disregard for safety technology. Having stated the deep disappointment of the working people in the trade unions, the congress urged the latter to exercise vigilance in protecting the rights of the working people. Among the planned changes in the foreground were ordering the norms of production, strengthening oversight of overtime work and monitoring material incentives, because in the area of the distribution of housing, decisions were most often made on the basis of personal sympathies and antipathies. In the commissions created to improve the work of enterprises and institutions, representatives of the administration and specialists merged. However, the difficulties encountered by the trade unions in the implementation of their new role proved to be very significant (as evidenced by the very increase in the number of newly created structures), and the criticism of the trade union leadership for unsatisfactory protection of the interests of workers continued until the late 1950s.

After Stalin's death in 1953, Czechoslovak society remained fairly immobile for several years to come. There was almost no movement towards liberalization in Czechoslovakia in 1956 (the exception being some bold speeches by poets Jaroslav Seifert and František Hrubín at the 1956 Writers' Congress). Nevertheless, in otherwise fairly Stalinist films (see the musical *Music from Mars*, 1954!) there appeared first signs of unorthodox support for civic activity and grassroots democracy. The publication of Josef Škvorecký's demythologizing novel *The Cowards* in 1958 spelled out the end of „socialist realism“, a literary writing method which had turned belle's letters into a propaganda instrument for the communist party. Following the publication and the banning of *The Cowards* in 1958, the regime orchestrated a clampdown against reformists in the literary and cultural circles, but a movement for freedom nevertheless fully asserted itself from about 1963. The five year-period 1963-1968 was unique.

De-Stalinization had a late start in Czechoslovakia. The KSC leadership virtually ignored the Soviet thaw announced by Nikita Khrushchev in 1956 at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. In Czechoslovakia that April, at the Second Writers' Congress, several authors criticized acts of political repression and attempted to gain control of the writers' congress. The writers' rebellion was suppressed, however, and the conservatives retained control. Students in Prague and Bratislava demonstrated on May Day of 1956, demanding freedom of speech and access to the Western press. The Novotny regime condemned

these activities and introduced a policy of neo-Stalinism. The 1958 KSC Party congress formalized the continuation of Stalinism. In the early 1960s, the Czechoslovak economy became severely stagnated. The industrial growth rate was the lowest in Eastern Europe. Food imports strained the balance of payments. Pressures both from Moscow and from within the party precipitated a reform movement. In 1963 reform-minded Communist intellectuals produced a proliferation of critical articles. Criticism of economic planning merged with more generalized protests against KSC bureaucratic control and ideological conformity. The KSC leadership responded. The purge trials of 1949-54 were reviewed, for example, and some of those purged were rehabilitated. Some hardliners were removed from top levels of government and replaced by younger, more liberal communists. Jozef Lemert replaced Prime Minister Vilam Siroky. The KSC organized committees to review economic policy. In 1965 the party approved the New Economic Model, which had been drafted under the direction of economist and theoretician Ota Sik. The program called for a second, intensive stage of economic development, emphasizing technological and managerial improvements. Central planning would be limited to overall production and investment indexes as well as price and wage guidelines. Management personnel would be involved in decision making. Production would be market oriented and geared toward profitability. Prices would respond to supply and demand. Wage differentials would be introduced. The KSC "Theses" of December 1965 presented the party response to the call for political reform. Democratic centralism was redefined, placing a stronger emphasis on democracy. The leading role of the KSC was reaffirmed but limited. In consequence, the National Assembly was promised increased legislative responsibility. The Slovak executive (Board of Commissioners) and legislature (Slovak National Council) were assured that they could assist the central government in program planning and assume responsibility for program implementation in Slovakia. The regional, district, and local national committees were to be permitted a degree of autonomy. The KSC agreed to refrain from superseding the authority of economic and social organizations. Party control in cultural policy, however, was reaffirmed. January 1967 was the date for full implementation of the reform program. Novotny and his supporters hesitated, introducing amendments to reinforce central control. Pressure from the reformists was stepped up. Slovaks pressed for federalization. Economists called for complete enterprise autonomy and economic responsiveness to the market mechanism. The Fourth Writers' Congress Czechoslovakia: A Country Study adopted a resolution calling for rehabilitation of the Czechoslovak literary tradition and the establishment of free contact with Western culture. The Novotny regime responded with repressive measures. At the October 30-31 meeting of the KSC Central Committee, Alexander Dubcek, a moderate reformer, challenged Novotny. As university students in Prague demonstrated in support of the liberals, Novotny

appealed to Moscow for assistance. On December 8, Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev arrived in Prague but did not support Novotny. On January 5, 1968, the Central Committee elected Dubcek to replace Novotny as first secretary of the KSC. Novotny's fall from KSC leadership precipitated initiatives to oust Stalinists from all levels of government, from mass associations, e. g., the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement and the Czechoslovak Union of Youth, and from local party organs. On March 22, 1968, Novotny resigned from the presidency and was succeeded by General Ludvik Svoboda.

There was a precedent, the 19<sup>th</sup> century „Czech National Revival“. When no political activity was possible for the Czechs who lived in the Austrian police state during the Chancellor Metternich era in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, they devoted themselves to literary and cultural effort in the Czech language, which the Austrians could not understand. As a result, by 1848, the year of the democratic revolutions in Europe, the Czechs had emerged as a mature, aware, modern political nation.

The Czechs and Slovaks used the arts to push for freedom also in the 1960`s. The impetus for the freedom movement was the feeling of guilt felt by the young communist enthusiasts from the early 1950s. Former young Stalinist supporters of communism (Milan Kundera, Pavel Kohout, Ludvík Vaculík, Zdeněk Mlynář) now felt ashamed that they had been duped by the communist system in the 1950s – they had not been able to bring about a beautiful Utopia, but had helped to subjugate their nation to Russia, a foreign imperialist power. These individuals, now in the mid or late thirties, were at this time in positions of power. They set out to liberalise the system. Mostly, they did this by supporting the creation of highly sophisticated, authentic, works of art. These works of art, which were often strongly critical of the communist state, were fully financed by the state.

Three things are important about this truly exceptional chapter in modern European history:

1. It would be wrong to assume that the Czech/Slovak writers and artists produced anticommunist propaganda. Czech culture from this period is extremely important exactly because it is anti-ideological. Czech/Slovak artists knew full well that the regime was violating reality by subjecting it to a primitive, lifeless ideological interpretation. They fought this enslavement by producing authentic, anti-ideological images of reality: „This is what life really is. See how much more convincing it is when compared to the nonsense, spouted out by ideological apparatchiks“.
2. As the mid-1960`s was still not a period of total freedom, the communist authorities could not be criticised openly. The media was muzzled – political criticism was indirect and was expressed in the arts, in a roundabout way. Thus two things happened: (a) In their frustration, the

population was led to works of art which under normal circumstances, ordinary people would not be interested in. (b) In works of art, people learnt to look for hidden criticism of the regime. They learnt to read between the lines. They really used the metaphorical meaning of art. This was very good for art itself – since art thrives on ambiguity.

3. Many of these „subversive“ works of art worked simultaneously on two different levels. They were accessible and fun – they were part of popular entertainment – and yet, they also often functioned on a very sophisticated level of high art. There were many examples of this work in cinema, literature, pop-music and theatre. Thus a unique public arena atmosphere came into being in Czechoslovakia in the mid-1960`s. The „cultural“ drive for freedom was extremely successful during the 1960s, especially since it used entertainment and thus it fully mastered the public arena in Czechoslovakia. It culminated in the Prague Spring of 1968, a period some six months of total media freedom when Stalinist abuses and political oppression were openly discussed on radio and TV and torturers were confronted on live TV with their victims. As far as can be judged, the Czechoslovak public passionately supported these reforms and when they ended due to a Soviet-led invasion in August 1968, the public still strongly supported its communist, reformist leadership. Since, during this six month period, the media assumed its proper role under the conditions of freedom, the role of the arts became somewhat secondary.

Speaking about economic transformations, we could not avoid mentioning foreign policy and its impact on the whole Eastern Block.

### **Foreign Policy during Khrushchev`s Detent.**

Theoretical differences in the assessment of the development of the USSR were, as usual, specifically political reflection, primarily in the field of international relations and foreign policy of the USSR, in which, after Stalin's death, two strategies opposed. The first of them, defended by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Molotov, was recognizing the need for a “pause” in the “cold war”, proceeded from the premise that the general course of the Soviet foreign policy, based on the idea of an uninterrupted and inevitable struggle between the blocs, should remain the same. The USSR, on which the foundations of socialism were only laid, remained vulnerable, even in spite of the successful testing the hydrogen bomb in the summer of 1953. Hence the need for more assertion of the leading role of the USSR in the socialist camp than ever before. The second strategy, supported by Khrushchev and Mikoyan, proceeded from more optimistic assessments, insisting on a favorable balance of forces, and promised greater independence for the countries of the socialist camp. Also to recognize the possibility of peaceful coexistence of the two blocs, as well as the "zone of Peace". The existence of these two strategies during the

struggle for power within the top leadership of the USSR, explains the uncertain, incoherent, trial and error actions of Soviet diplomacy, which saw both the dead ends of the Cold War and the need to seek new means of maneuvering in the international arena.

In 1953 - 1956 years, Soviet foreign policy was marked by the gradual establishment of new relations with the two socialist countries - China and Yugoslavia, the experience of seeking detente in relations with the West and reassessing the notions of the neutrality of the third world. The new Soviet leaders were aware that Stalin's death had deprived the socialist camp of a charismatic leader and threatened to cause a deep crisis in their leadership.

The main issue of relations between East and West was rearmament of Germany. The Western projects for the creation of a European defense community, that assumed the joint command of the European armies and which Western Germany was integrated in, especially worried about Moscow, which feared that in these new European armed forces, the Federative Republic would take a dominant position. Thus not only East Germany, but also Poland and (to a lesser extent) Czechoslovakia - two states, whose western borders were closed to the Federal Republic of Germany, refused to recognize as definitive. Although due to France's opposition and to Moscow's overall relief, the plans of the European defensive community were not implemented, the Paris agreements of October 1954 cemented the inclusion of West Germany into the NATO military organization. To discuss the situation, a meeting of representatives of the European socialist countries was convened in Moscow. The speech, presented at the meeting, was directed against the continuation of detente, and called for a collective rebuff in case of ratification of the Paris agreements. In May 1955, a new meeting held in Warsaw, which considered the establishment of the Warsaw Treaty Organization. In the meantime, Malenkov was removed from his posts and the influence of Molotov in the ruling group was greatly weakened, where Khrushchev and the supporters of detente now dominated.

Their efforts to create the Warsaw Pact were accompanied by precautions that should clearly show the USSR's reluctance to intensify tensions between East and West. From the same considerations, in order to create favorable conditions for possible negotiations on the German question, the inclusion of East Germany in the system of joint command was delayed. The pact was a response deemed necessary, but rather restrained in tone and content. Although militarily, the creation of the Pact did not noticeably change the balance of forces in Europe. It facilitated the institutionalization of relations between the USSR and the Eastern European countries, which previously relied solely on Stalin's undeniable authority and bilateral agreements, and for a long time legalized the presence of Soviet troops in Eastern Europe.

On May 5, 1955, the day after the conclusion of the Warsaw pact, the USSR, the United States, Great Britain and France signed an agreement with Austria. The USSR agreed to withdraw its troops from Austria in exchange for some minor concessions. In response to Austria's commitment to respect the strictest neutrality, the UN and the Council of Europe adopted it. This treaty has become an important stage in easing the tension between East and West. However, the failure of the summit meeting-the first meeting of such magnitude after Potsdam, which Khrushchev gathered in Geneva in July 1955 (Molotov, Zhukov and Bulganin also included in the Soviet delegation), Eisenhower, Eden and Foran, showed that a universal and lasting agreement between the two camps was still unattainable. At the same time, this meeting left behind the "spirit of Geneva", calling for closer and regular contacts and leaving the door open for negotiations. The visit to Moscow in September 1955 of Chancellor Adenauer, during which diplomatic relations were established between the Soviet Union and the Federal Republic of Germany, strengthened this mentality, characterized by pragmatism and not accompanied by new theoretical constructions that were to be formulated only at the 20th Congress of the CPSU.

Below, we are going to overview the voluntarist tendencies in foreign policy during 1960-ies.

The actions taken by Khrushchev in foreign policy played a decisive role in legitimizing the position of the leader of the first rank. Foreign visits significantly strengthened Khrushchev's position in the struggle within the leadership on the eve of the 20th Congress of the CPSU. Since the 20th Congress, the tendency of Soviet leaders to bring their foreign policy more in line with the new realities of the modern world has become evident. Approached by Khrushchev in those years, Mikoyan complained that most Soviet theoreticians are content to "repeat and paraphrase old quotations and formulations" and cannot offer anything new in their studies of the modern world. Immediately after the 20th Congress, the Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO) was established at the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, which initiated new approaches, especially in the study of third world countries, and enjoyed the special disposition of Khrushchev and his entourage. In the same period, in April 1956, the Cominform was disbanded, ceasing to be an effective instrument of foreign policy.

During 1956 - 1964 years, Khrushchev sharply stepped up the foreign policy, giving it "voluntarist" character. Three main closely related problems determined the content of foreign efforts during Khrushchev period: relationship with the West and split inside "Socialist camp", which faced with double crisis, and finally entering the international arena "national-democratic" third world countries, on the development of which, the Soviet Union was trying to exert its influence.

Since 1957, when the Soviet Union completed the creation of intercontinental missiles, launched the first satellites, thereby overtaking the United States (only for a time and then only in the field of ballistics), Khrushchev's optimism received a new impetus. The Soviet leader could now afford to brave the threat of massive retaliation to the United States, if they decide on a nuclear attack. If at the Twentieth Congress, he maintained that the Soviet Union was strong enough to persuade imperialism to refrain from war against it, now he believed that the Soviet Union had the means to dissuade the United States from "exporting counterrevolution." Under these conditions, and if the social processes in each country developed as prescribed by Marxist determinism, the victory of socialism in the world would be assured in the near future. Various factors (especially the process of decolonization) made it possible to talk about the irreversibility of the movement of humankind towards socialism, which the Soviet Union was called upon to inspire and accelerate, activating its policy in the third world.

In Khrushchev's dialectics, economic competition and peaceful coexistence went hand in hand, relying on the frontiers reached by the Soviet Union. The dynamism of Soviet society, reinforced at the XXI Congress of the Party by the theory of the transition from socialism to communism, would guarantee the peaceful coexistence of various countries. In turn, it should provide favorable conditions for the economic prosperity of the Soviet Union, allowing reducing military spending on some conventional weapons and channel funds to other sectors of the economy. An ever-strengthening economy would allow economic assistance to the third world, strengthening its independence and reducing the "sphere of influence of imperialism".

The policy adopted in relation to the West implied first full recognition of the results of the Second World War and the gains of the socialist camp. In this aspect, the main concern of the Soviet leadership was Berlin, whose status constantly questioned the position of the GDR as a state. An open city, a showcase of the West in the heart of the GDR, West Berlin was, in the words of V. Ulbricht, a "cancer" that had eaten the western border of the socialist camp. In November 1958, the Soviet government appealed to the Western powers with a proposal to review the status of Berlin, which was to become a free and demilitarized city. The Soviet Union provided the West with a six-month period for negotiations with the GDR, after which the USSR would sign a separate peace treaty with this country, giving it full control over East Berlin, which would put West Berlin in a quandary. To conduct negotiations on the German problem, Khrushchev expressed the wish to convene a conference of four "great powers". Having received a rejection from the West, who did not want to accept his proposal, Khrushchev agreed to postpone the deadlines set by him, hoping to achieve the desired meeting. An agreement was reached after Khrushchev's visit to the United States in September 1959. On August 5, 1961, the

Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Pact called on the GDR to take measures against the "subversive activities" of West Berlin (in fact, primarily against the mass emigration of East Germans). On August 19, the government of the German Democratic Republic erected the famous "wall" in Berlin; violating the quadripartite Potsdam Treaty, which guaranteed free movement around the city. It seemed that the times of the "cold war" had returned. In September, the Soviet Union severed the agreement with the United States on a moratorium on nuclear testing in the atmosphere and produced a series of powerful explosions. At the beginning of October, the United States informed the Soviet Union of the photographic evidence on the fact that it had a much smaller number of missiles than expected, and that the United States was very highly superior in this area. After that, the opportunities of the Soviet Union to "exhort" were much smaller. Apparently, it is for this reason that Khrushchev let the critical situation down on the brakes; coming from the rostrum of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Congress with a public statement that the deadline (December 31, 1961) established for the settlement of the Berlin status is not final.

Simultaneously with this main conflict, serial conflicts in the heart of the socialist camp in 1963 – 1964 arose. Confrontation between the USSR and Romania was established. Its immediate cause was the Soviet plan for coordinating the national economies of Eastern Europe in the framework of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance. Up to the death of Stalin, the existence of this organization was largely of a formal nature. After the Soviet Union, the GDR and Czechoslovakia stayed for the acceleration and deepening of the process of economic specialization, Romania, which feared that it would be asked to concentrate primarily on agriculture, was against. Economic integration has become one of the means of combating centrifugal trends. The plans of the Soviet and Romanian leaders came into irreconcilable contradiction, since the Romanians were determined to continue the policy of industrialization, which, it seemed, had already brought some results. Caught under pressure from the Soviet side, the Romanian leadership softened its criticism of China and Albania. Realizing that the continued pressure on Romania on the hands of the Chinese, Khrushchev revised his positions, and at the CMEA session on July 24 - 26, 1963 in Moscow, and Romania's demands were met.

Soviet policy toward the Third World also did not bring the expected results by 1964. At the same time, it contributed to the development by the Institute of the World Economy and International Relations of new political approaches that reflected trends towards greater moderation and gradualness in relation to the set goals. The International Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties (November-December 1960) approved the concept proposed by the Soviet side "the state of people's democracy." The independent states of the third world assigned to this type were assigned a decisive role during the "third phase of the general crisis of

the capitalist system". In fact, despite all the efforts of Soviet diplomacy, neither the United Arab Republic (which received a loan from the USSR of \$ 100 million for the construction of the Aswan Dam, and at the same time continued to persecute the Communists), nor Iraq (where the revolution ended with British influence, without, however, leading to the establishment of the Soviet one), nor the Congo (in defense of the integrity of which, Khrushchev addressed the UN in September 1960, having caused a scandal by tapping his boot on the table during the speech) did not join the clan of states named "People's democracy." Khrushchev's voluntarism, unable to offer these countries an attractive development model, led them into a dead end.

### **Political conservatism and economic reform**

Undoubtedly, Khrushchev's resignation meant abandoning the energetic implementation of reforms, and in this sense, it could show a success of conservative forces. The agreement in Khrushchev's detached group of leaders was based on the need to preserve the collective power and control of the supreme party bodies behind all aspects of society, and put an end to Khrushchev's "reform", which created instability in party cadres, and ensure the normal functioning of political and state structures. This quest for stability and balance was accompanied by the search for appropriate effective measures; it was necessary to find solutions that would stabilize the administrative system, fragmented by the struggle for power between the sectoral and territorial authorities, and improve the control over the cadres. The consensus on the basis of conservative political values within the leadership did not allow him to refuse at least some of the changes that were made in the mid-1950s, primarily from the line to improve the standard of living (an alternative to which could only be a return to terror as Method of government) and from maintaining high rates of development. These two tasks could not be carried out without economic reforms, and it eliminated the instability that was constantly generated by these reforms and it was necessary to implement a personnel policy, that affirmed stability (primarily in the highest echelons of power), giving party cadres confidence in their significance, in their future and contributing to the advancement of a new change of party workers.

Since December 1964 regional, regional and district committees have been restored. The new leadership was, further, to solve the difficult question: who should be put at the head of the reunited organizations? Choosing among Khrushchev's retired apparatchiks, the new leadership risked hampering the advancement of the "recruits" and leaving themselves without a loyal encirclement. The Party elite skillfully maneuvered, for a number of years, gradually replacing the local cadres who came in the Khrushchev period, in order to give a move to "young" (born in the 1920s) and functionaries that are more "competent". They were provided with a place in

administrative-economic bodies or a transfer to the capital's ministry, sometimes even a place in the embassy abroad. The staff renewal campaign largely was also due to the constant expansion of the Central Committee: the number of its members and candidates was increased from 300 in 1966 to 420 or more. The composition of Party leaders on the ground (which always constituted the nucleus of the army of party members) finally reached the stability they dreamed of under Stalin rule. Everyone was provided with the opportunity to plan the development of his career. The central authorities supervised the local recruitment. All these processes favored the establishment of relations of personal devotion and the establishment of a system of values in which loyalty to the patron prevailed over competence and "ideological consistency". In this sense, the 70's. were called the apogee of "nepotism" and a kind of "Soviet feudalism", against which Stalin, and after him Khrushchev, the first - with state terror, the second - by legal means, fought tirelessly. At the same time personal devotion as the main mean of achieving stability was hardly compatible with the improvement of the system itself, implying sanctions against incompetent cadres, as well as with the system of technocratic values generated by economic reform.

The reform began in 1965 with the implementation of a new administrative centralization, the abolition of economic councils and the restoration of the central industrial ministries, liquidated by Khrushchev. Large state committees (Goskomtsen, Gossnab and the State Committee for Science and Technology) were also established. At the same time, enterprises received some autonomy. What was called "self-financing" in Soviet terminology, did not, however, imply either the rehabilitation of market relations or the transition to the "socialist market" preached by Czech and Hungarian economists, and even less meant self-government along the Yugoslav pattern.

In order to stimulate the adoption of "inflated" plans, it was decided to increase premiums in the event of an overfulfillment of plans. This assumed that on each enterprise would be more freedom to handle the five-year plan. On the contrary, the higher authorities could not change the plan during its implementation, except in special cases. In this sense, the reform was an attempt to provide broader opportunities to those responsible persons, who made decisions in the sphere of the national economy. This matched by the growing importance of the five-year plan at the expense of an effectively executed annual, which was a change in the situation that developed in the 1930s. Views on planning as the setting of priorities, when the plan itself was subjected to endless changes.

The incentive funds, which replaced those that were formerly managed by the director, were divided into three parts: a material incentive fund, the distribution of which was controlled by the

general meeting of the collective, a social welfare fund, designed primarily for housing construction, and a self-financing fund for the needs of production development.

The practice of implementing the reform showed, that problems related to the nature of economic indicators and “departmental”, remained unresolved. New indicators were introduced with difficulty. The incentive funds were not able to stimulate the workforce: the workers' bonuses assigned to the workers averaged only 3% of the salary, which was not enough to provoke interest in improving production efficiency; as for the fund for social needs, its use was hampered by the fact that the plan did not provide for the provision of construction materials. Finally, self-financing funds could not be effectively used because of poor coordination between scientific research and industry (from the development to the production of the first test sample and the mastery of mass production took an average of six to eight years).

The main reason for the constant disruptions in the economy remained “departmentalism” - a long-standing phenomenon, which was often written with regret in the press. This “disease” arose in the 30-ies because of the approval of the principle of vertical subordination in the system of ministerial planning and management. Closed “to Moscow” hierarchical pyramids, directly controlled enterprises and organizations scattered throughout the Soviet Union and its satellites. Each subordinate body interacted only with the authority, that stood directly above it in the same ministry. There was practically no serious direct connection between neighboring enterprises and organizations, if they belonged to different ministries. It was the lack of horizontal links, that caused many difficulties that have survived to this day in Russia and other post-communist countries.

From the first steps of the reform, it became clear that it was a set of disparate and contradictory measures. The creation of Gosstab also contradicted the proclaimed independence of enterprises, which, as before, could not freely choose the supplier and consumer. Even in the case of “direct ties” between long-standing partners, the conclusion of contracts with them was approved at the top. The hiccup caused by administrative delays and the unavailability of suppliers, who were accustomed to setting their own laws in the “sellers' market” led to the fact, that the supply was not provided and was of poor quality, and therefore the output of the products remained irregular, due to the constant downtime and emergency work.

The contradictions of the reforms reflected the profound differences between Brezhnev's supporters of limited decentralization, while maintaining the role of the politico-administrative system in the functioning of the economy and unite around Kosygin as adherents of partial market reforms were ready to trust the economic regulators by themselves to some extent.

To these rapidly emerging contradictions between political conservatism and the main principle of economic reform, which presupposed the priority of technocratic values, other discrepancies were imposed, concerning the pace and depth of reform and the contradictory approach to the decisive problem of the distribution of power. Below we will see with the help of Czechoslovakian experience, what these political changes after Khrushchev meant.

Dubcek carried the reform movement a step further in the direction of liberalism. After Novotny's fall, censorship was lifted. The media-press, radio, and television-were mobilized for reformist propaganda purposes. The movement to democratize socialism in Czechoslovakia, formerly confined largely to the party intelligentsia, acquired a new, popular dynamism in the spring of 1968. In April the KSC Presidium adopted the Action Program that had been drafted by a coalition headed by Dubcek and made up of reformers, moderates, centrists, and conservatives. The program proposed a "new model of socialism," profoundly "democratic" and "national," that is, adapted to Czechoslovak conditions. The National Front and the electoral system were to be democratized, and Czechoslovakia was to be federalized. Freedom of assembly and expression would be guaranteed in constitutional law. The New Economic Model was to be implemented. The Action Program also reaffirmed the Czechoslovak alliance with the Soviet Union and other socialist states. The reform movement, which rejected Stalinism as the road to communism, remained committed to communism as a goal. The Action Program stipulated that reform must proceed under KSC direction. In subsequent months, however, popular pressure mounted to implement reforms forthwith. Radical elements found expression: anti-Soviet polemics appeared in the press; the Social Democrats began to form a separate party; new unaffiliated political clubs were created. Party conservatives urged the implementation of repressive measures, but Dubcek counseled moderation. Historical Setting and reemphasized KSC leadership. In May he announced that the Fourteenth Party Congress would convene in an early session September 9. The congress would incorporate the Action Program into the party statutes, draft a federalization law, and elect a new (presumably more liberal) Central Committee. On June 27, Ludvik Vaculik, a lifelong communist and a candidate member of the Central Committee, published a manifesto entitled "Two Thousand Words." The manifesto expressed concern about conservative elements within the KSC and "foreign" forces as well. (Warsaw Pact maneuvers were held in Czechoslovakia in late June.) It called on the "people" to take the initiative in implementing the reform program. Dubcek, the party Presidium, the National Front, and the cabinet sharply denounced the manifesto. The Soviet leadership was alarmed. In mid-July a Warsaw Pact conference was held without Czechoslovak "participation". The Warsaw Pact nations drafted a letter to the KSC leadership referring to the manifesto as an

“organizational and political platform of counterrevolution.” Pact members demanded the reinstitution of censorship, the banning of new political parties and clubs, and the repression of “rightist” forces within the party. The Warsaw Pact nations declared the defense of Czechoslovakia's socialist gains to be not only the task of Czechoslovakia but also the mutual task of all Warsaw Pact countries. The KSC rejected the Warsaw Pact ultimatum, and Dubcek requested bilateral talks with the Soviet Union.

Soviet leader Brezhnev hesitated to intervene militarily in Czechoslovakia. Dubcek's Action Program proposed a “new model of socialism” – “democratic” and “national.” Significantly, however, Dubcek did not challenge Czechoslovak commitment to the Warsaw Pact. In the early spring of 1968, the Soviet leadership adopted a wait-and-see attitude. By midsummer, however, two camps had formed: advocates and opponents of military intervention. The pro-interventionist coalition viewed the situation in Czechoslovakia as “counterrevolutionary” and favored the defeat of Dubcek and his supporters. This coalition was headed by the Ukrainian party leader Pyotr Shelest and included communist bureaucrats from Belorussia and from the non-Russian national republics of the western part of the Soviet Union (the Baltic republics). The coalition members feared the awakening of nationalism within their respective republics and the influence of the Ukrainian Czechoslovakia: A Country Study minority in Czechoslovakia on Ukrainians in the Soviet Union. Bureaucrats responsible for political stability in Soviet cities and for the ideological supervision of the intellectual community also favored a military solution. Within the Warsaw Pact, only the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) and Poland were strongly interventionist. Walter Ulbricht and Wladyslaw Gomulka - party leaders of East Germany and Poland, respectively-viewed liberalism as threatening to their own positions. The Soviet Union agreed to bilateral talks with Czechoslovakia to be held in July at Cierna nad Tisou, Slovakia. At the meeting Dubcek defended the program of the reformist wing of the KSC while pledging commitment to the Warsaw Pact and Comecon. The KSC leadership, however, was divided. Vigorous reformers Josef Smrkovsky, Aldrich Cernik, and Frantisek Kriegel supported Dubcek. Conservatives - Vasil Bil'ak, Drahomir Kolder, and Aldrich Svestka - adopted an anti-reformist stance. Brezhnev decided on compromise. The KSC delegates reaffirmed their loyalty to the Warsaw Pact and promised to curb “antisocialist” tendencies, prevent the revival of the Czechoslovak Social Democratic Party, and control the press more effectively. The Soviets agreed to withdraw their troops (stationed in Czechoslovakia since the June maneuvers) and permit the September 9 party congress. On August 3, representatives from the Soviet Union, East Germany, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Czechoslovakia met in Bratislava and signed the Bratislava Declaration. The declaration affirmed unshakable fidelity to

Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism and declared an implacable struggle against “bourgeois” ideology and all “antisocialist” forces. The Soviet Union expressed its intention to intervene in a Warsaw Pact country if a “bourgeois” system—a pluralist system of several political parties—was ever established. After the Bratislava conference, Soviet troops left Czechoslovak territory but remained along Czechoslovak borders. Dubcek made no attempt to mobilize the Czechoslovak army to resist an invasion. The KSC party congress remained scheduled for September 9. In the week following the Bratislava conference, it became an open secret in Prague that most of Dubcek's opponents would be removed from the Central Committee. The Prague municipal party organization prepared and circulated a blacklist. The anti-reformist coalition could hope to stay in power only with Soviet assistance. KSC anti-reformists, therefore, made efforts to convince the Soviets that the danger of political instability and counterrevolution did indeed exist. They used the Kaspar Report, prepared by the Central Committee's Information Department, headed by Historical Setting Jan Kaspar, to achieve this end. The report provided an extensive review of the general political situation in Czechoslovakia as it might relate to the forthcoming party congress. It predicted that a stable Central Committee and a firm leadership could not necessarily be expected as the outcome of the congress. The report was received by the party Presidium on August 12. Two Presidium members, Kolder and Alois Indra, were instructed to evaluate the report for the August 20 meeting of the Presidium. Kolder and Indra viewed the Kaspar Report with alarm and, some observers think, communicated their conclusions to the Soviet ambassador, Stepan V. Chervonenko. These actions are thought to have precipitated the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia. As the KSC Presidium convened on August 20, the anti-reformists planned to make a bid for power, pointing to the imminent danger of counterrevolution. Kolder and Indra presented a resolution declaring a state of emergency and calling for fraternal assistance. The resolution was never voted on: Warsaw Pact troops entered Czechoslovakia that same day. KSC conservatives had misinformed Moscow regarding the strength of the reform movement. The KSC Presidium met during the night of August 20-21; it rejected the option of armed resistance but condemned the invasion. Two-thirds of the KSC Central Committee opposed the Soviet intervention. A KSC party congress, convened secretly on August 22, passed a resolution affirming its loyalty to Dubcek's Action Program and denouncing the Soviet aggression. President Svoboda repeatedly resisted Soviet pressure to form a new government under Indra. The Czechoslovak population was virtually unanimous in its repudiation of the Soviet action. In compliance with Svoboda's caution against acts that might provoke violence, they avoided mass demonstrations and strikes but observed a symbolic one-hour general work stoppage on August 23. Popular opposition was expressed in numerous spontaneous acts of nonviolent resistance. In Prague and other cities throughout the republic,

Czechs and Slovaks greeted Warsaw Pact soldiers with arguments and reproaches. Every form of assistance, including the provision of food and water, was denied the invaders. Signs, placards, and graffiti drawn on walls and pavements denounced the invaders, the Soviet leaders, and suspected collaborators. Pictures of Dubcek and Svoboda appeared everywhere. The generalized resistance caused the Soviet Union to abandon its original plan to oust Dubcek. The KSC leader, who had been arrested on the night of August 20, was taken to Moscow for negotiations. The outcome was the Brezhnev Doctrine of limited sovereignty, which provided for the strengthening of the KSC, strict Czechoslovakia: A Country Study party control of the media, and the suppression of the Czechoslovak Social Democratic Party. It was agreed that Dubcek would remain in office and that a program of moderate reform would continue.

Let us take a look, what happened during Brezhnev`s regime in Czechoslovakia. Dubcek remained in office only until April 1969. Anti-Soviet demonstrations, following Czechoslovakia's victory over the Soviet team in the World Ice Hockey Championships in March, precipitated Soviet pressures for a KSC Presidium reorganization. Gustav Husak (a centrist) was named first secretary (title changed to general secretary in 1971). Only centrists and the conservatives led by Bil'ak continued in the Presidium. A program of "normalization" - the restoration of continuity with the pre-reform period-was initiated. Normalization entailed thoroughgoing political repression and the return to ideological conformity. A new purge cleansed the Czechoslovak leadership of all reformist elements. Of the 115 members of the KSC Central Committee, 54 were replaced. Reformists were removed from regional, district, and local party branches in the Czech lands and, to a lesser extent, in Slovakia. KSC party membership, which had been close to 1.7 million in January 1968, was reduced by about 500,000. Top levels of government and the leadership of social organizations were purged. Publishing houses and film studios were placed under new direction. Censorship was strictly imposed, and a campaign of militant atheism was organized. Czechoslovakia had been federalized under the Constitutional Law of Federation of October 27, 1968. The newly created Federal Assembly, which replaced the National Assembly, was to work in close cooperation with the Czech National Council and the Slovak National Council. The Husak regime amended the law in January 1971. Although federalism was retained in form, central authority was effectively restored. In May 1970, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union signed the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance, which incorporated the principle of limited sovereignty. Soviet troops remained stationed in Czechoslovakia, and the Czechoslovak armed forces worked in close cooperation with the Warsaw Pact command. Soviet advisers supervised the functioning of the Ministry of Interior and the security apparatus. Czechoslovak leaders and propagandists, led by Bil'ak,

became the most ardent advocates of proletarian internationalism. The purges of the first half of 1970 eliminated the reformists Historical Setting within the party organization. In the fall of 1970, the ex-communist intelligentsia organized the Socialist Movement of Czechoslovak Citizens, a protest movement dedicated to the goals of 1968. Forty-seven leaders of the movement were arrested and tried in the summer of 1972. Organized protest was effectively stilled.

In May 1971, party chief Husak announced at the official Fourteenth Party Congress-the 1968 Fourteenth Party Congress had been abrogated-that "normalization" had been completed and that all that remained was for the party to consolidate its gains. Husak's policy was to maintain a rigid status quo; for the next fifteen years' key personnel of the party and government remained the same. In 1975 Husak added the position of president to his post as party chief. He and other party leaders faced the task of rebuilding general party membership after the purges of 1969-71. By 1983 membership had returned to 1.6 million, about the same as in 1960. In preserving the status quo, the Husak regime required conformity and obedience in all aspects of life. Culture suffered greatly from this straitjacket on independent thought, as did the humanities, social sciences, and ultimately the pure sciences. Art had to adhere to a rigid socialist realist formula. Soviet examples were held up for emulation. During the 1970s and 1980s, many of Czechoslovakia's most creative individuals were silenced, imprisoned, or sent into exile. Some found expression for their art through samizdat. Those artists, poets, and writers who were officially sanctioned were, for the most part, undistinguished. The award of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1984 to Jaroslav Seifert - a poet identified with reformism and not favored by the Husak regime was a bright spot in an otherwise bleak cultural scene. In addition to applying repression, Husak also tried to obtain acquiescence to his rule by providing an improved standard of living. He returned Czechoslovakia to an orthodox command economy with a heavy emphasis on central planning and continued to extend industrialization. For a while the policy seemed successful because, despite the lack of investment in new technologies, there was an increase in industrial output. The government encouraged consumerism and materialism and took a tolerant attitude toward a slack work ethic and a growing black-market second economy. In the early 1970s, there was a steady increase in the standard of living; it seemed that the improved economy might mitigate political and cultural oppression and give the government a modicum of legitimacy. By the mid-1970s, consumerism failed as a palliative for political oppression. The government could not sustain an indefinite expansion without coming to grips with limitations inherent in a command economy. The oil crisis of 1973-74 further exacerbated the economic decline. Materialism, encouraged by a corrupt regime, also produced cynicism, greed, nepotism,

corruption, and a lack of work discipline. Whatever elements of a social contract the government tried to establish with Czechoslovak society crumbled with the decline in living standards of the mid-1970s. Czechoslovakia was to have neither freedom nor prosperity. Another feature of Husak's rule was a continued dependence on the Soviet Union. As of the mid-1980s, Husak had not yet achieved a balance between what could be perceived as Czechoslovak national interest and Soviet dictate. In foreign policy, Czechoslovakia parroted every utterance of the Soviet position. Frequent contacts between the Soviet and Czechoslovak communist parties and governments made certain that the Soviet position on any issue was both understood and followed. The Soviets continued to exert control over Czechoslovak internal affairs, including oversight of the police and security apparatus. Five Soviet ground divisions and two air divisions had become a permanent fixture, while the Czechoslovak military was further integrated into the Warsaw Pact. In the 1980s, approximately 50 percent of Czechoslovakia's foreign trade was with the Soviet Union, and almost 80 percent was with communist countries. There were constant exhortations about further cooperation and integration between the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia in industry, science, technology, consumer goods, and agriculture. Deriving its legitimacy from Moscow, the Husak regime remained a slavish imitator of political, cultural, and economic trends emanating from Moscow. After an interregnum of several months, a period of renewed political oppression began. The Russian imperial overlords of Czechoslovakia realized that intellectuals and people in the arts had managed, by their sustained cultural effort, almost to dismantle communism in that country. What inevitably had to follow was a direct assault on the Czech intellectual classes. The „dangerous” intellectual elite of the country needed to be neutralized.

The Neo-Stalinist 1970`s and the 1980`s were not as murderous as the Stalinist 1950`s, but in many respects this period was much more destructive than the period of early, rampant Stalinism. The reasons for this was that the renewed oppression from 1970 onwards coincided with a major demographic change. People who had had experience of life under interwar Czechoslovak democracy would have left the stage around 1970. Those who were left were only individuals who had ever only experienced the communist system. Thus the population was now much less immune to political oppression.

Thus, Czechoslovak society in the 1970`s and the 1980`s lost its resilience to the occupation regime. A disturbing, although as yet unreflect development occurred. Although most Czechs and Slovaks appeared to have enthusiastically supported the democratic reforms of the 1960`s and especially the 1968 Prague Spring, within the matter of months – undoubtedly also as a

result of fierce purges and the presence of the Soviet army of occupation – most Czechs now quite enthusiastically embraced the new imperial regime.

The Czechs and Slovaks seemed to have just as enthusiastically adapted themselves to the perhaps most claustrophobic and the most emasculating political regime during the whole of the twentieth century. It was as though they had concluded: „We will always be slaves and the only way of surviving is to do what our masters want of us”. Needless to say that such an attitude is just as self-destructive as the dangerous campaign of violent struggle for freedom.

In the 1970`s and the 1980`s, a Czech intellectual had two choices: to conform to communist propaganda and relinquish all attempts at original, independent thought, thus submitting to emasculation and enforced silence, or to defy the totalitarian authorities, and become a non-person. Either way the lines of communication between the intellectual 'head' of the nation and its 'body', the ordinary people, were blocked. Without the head as a guiding force, the decapitated body of the Czech nation blindly and aimlessly stumbled off track into a dead end, being tempted materially, even under the cloak of communist ideology, towards various consumerist vices. In the 1970s and 1980s, people had to abdicate their adulthood. They filled their lives instead with various displacement activities. This time, no one believed communist ideology, because its falseness had been exposed in the 1960s – but people pretended to support it out of opportunism.

Some time ago, a debate in the Observer newspaper defined the British working class lifestyle by the concepts of diffidence, self-restraint (which includes lack of open debate) and conformity to superimposed rules. The debate associated British middle class lifestyle with the concepts of choice and freedom, open discussion and highly valued education. The life of most of Czech society seems undoubtedly still guided by the principle of constraint. Czech people are still used to deferring to regulations imposed from above, just as in totalitarian times. From the times of communism, they are also used to lack of open debate. This leads one reluctantly to the conclusion that communism in Czechoslovakia succeeded in turning most of society into proletarians. This seems to be a natural consequence of the rule of mediocrity and the elimination of spontaneous, independent thought processes in an attempt to impose artificial controls on reality. In the 1970`s and 1980`s, most Czechs willingly turned themselves into children – giving up their grown-up choices. They seem to have accepted the view of the Russian colonizers that the subjugation would last „forever“

### **Conservative tendencies and reforming collapse**

The stable and welded ruling elite, also rapidly decrepit - a kind of "oligarchy of old people" - was held in power, as has already been shown, thanks to agreement in the main goal: the desire to institutionalize power relations, to protect the interests of bureaucratic structures and to retain the collective leadership, concentrated in a single human symbol. An important role in this was played by the continuous and all paralyzing compromise between the difficult-to-comprehend common attitudes and the equally contradictory practice both in the center and in the localities. Political conservatism or economic reform, the stability of cadres or the nomination of new generations of functionaries, personal devotion or competence, strict administration or the assumption of market elements, priority of heavy and defense industry or light, „party“ or technocratic values, the leading role of the party or the activity of the „masses“ in public organizations more or less reliably controlled - all these fundamental problems, the decision of which presupposed choice, were never brought to the end and because of the fear of breaking the consensus.

This approach led to the inhibition and then to the failure of many attempts at reform, stemming from a desire to solve problems, without affecting the causes of their emergence: centralization, bureaucracy of government bodies, established in the 1930-ies due to the voluntarism.

At the same time, a closer look reveals the obvious growth of „conservative“ policy and „conservative“ trends. Undoubtedly, in the years 1972-1976 there was a transition from „enlightened conservatism“ to „convulsive“, in the words of J. Sapir. Indeed, it was during the period from the end of 1972 to the end of 1973 that Brezhnev's priorities in the economy - heavy industry, defense, agriculture, and the development of Siberia, finally prevailed over the trends of 1965-1972, when Kosygin's influence focused on the development of light industry. Little by little, the speeches of technocrats and reformers, who spoke under the banners of the „scientific and technological revolution“ were replaced by speeches saturated with „party spirit“ and patriotic spirit, demanding that the workers mobilize all forces, increase activity, strengthen control, strengthen labor discipline and patriotism, to revive the Stakhanov movement and at the same time contain almost undisguised threats against „guilty of laxity.“

These unconditionally reactionary speeches were openly calling for a mythologized past. Approved in February 1976 by the 25th Congress of the CPSU, the tenth five-year plan (1976-1980), in spite of the opposition in some of Kosygin's statements, approved the turn that began in late 1972. The main efforts were directed to the development of the defense industry, energy, agriculture and Siberia. The priority task was, taking into account the favorable situation in the world energy production, to find surplus energy carriers and export raw materials as soon as

possible and as much as possible and to eliminate the need for reforms aimed at improving the quality of products and intensifying production. As a result, the country was able to use, starting in 1972 - 1973 gg. Relaxation of tension and warming in international relations, widely imported cars produced in the West (for example, from 1972 to 1976, imports of Western equipment quadrupled). Mass procurement of foreign equipment to increase production efficiency was considered by the country's leadership as an alternative to actual reform and changes in public relations. Large investments in agriculture, the launching of inflationary processes in combination with the new administrative centralization of the economy, with the strengthening of control have become the „easy path“ along which the decrepit ruling elite has gone, refusing, or rather being unable to solve the problems of economic restructuring, and also from fear of breaking the balance of power of bureaucratic structures.

Under these conditions, the continuously reform could not take a purely cosmetic character. This was the creation of new structures in an unsuccessful attempt to rationalize the management of enterprises - very scattered, poorly coordinated and entirely dependent on inefficient vertical structures. They did not bring the desired results and attempts to balance the unevenness of economic development, often determined by external circumstances, such as supply disruptions or anomalies in wholesale prices. Nevertheless, neither pricing, nor general production management, nor sales of products were provided to the enterprises themselves. On the contrary, the resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU and the Council of Ministers of the USSR issued in July 1979 only strengthened the custody of the central bodies. „The spirit of 1965“ was already forgotten, even if the new document was considered as a „refinement“ of the program adopted in 1965.

„Grandiose“ innovations, presented in the decree as „fundamental“, consisted in the introduction of new standards, which should now guide enterprises. It was a project of global standardization of enterprise management that went beyond a reasonable framework, which should allow to include all their production, commercial and financial activities in a system of strictly defined norms and rules. The implementation of the resolution presupposed the establishment and subsequent monitoring of the observance of a huge number of production and financial standards: reserves by types of raw materials, use of raw materials per unit of output (more than 200 thousand types!), use of equipment, energy consumption, etc. Particular attention was paid to the main category of standards that pertained to labor costs, and therefore, wages per unit of output, and allowed to calculate the coefficient of „normative-clean products“, replacing the discredited indicator of „gross output“. The introduction of the new indicator further complicated the establishment of wholesale prices appointed by the center. From now on, each

product was assigned two prices: the usual wholesale price and „normative“. These measures caused a terrible confusion, resulting in a general recount of all intrastate payments, which lasted the whole of 1982, but did not bring anything to the solution of the main tasks: improving the management of enterprises and increasing labor productivity.

Shifts to the best were, in principle, achieved thanks to another innovation of the decree of July 12, 1979, which consisted in the propagation and implementation of the „brigade method“, called „Zlobin's method“ by the name of the builder, who became famous for its implementation. The idea was simple: a group of workers undertook to perform the work assigned to a certain number, usually ahead of the „normative“ period, not allowing marriage and increasing the cost of work. The team distributed the work and its payment at its discretion. In some enterprises, the introduction of this method (first applied at the Shchekinsky Chemical Combine near Tula) increased labor productivity, increased wages and reduced labor turnover. In higher instances, a new form of labor organization was given great importance. This led to the adoption in 1983 of the „Labor Law“. By the end of 1983, there were 1.5 million brigades in the country, uniting 17 million workers, but only 12% of them worked on the basis of internal self-government. Nevertheless, there were two significant problems that cast doubt on the success of this „innovation“:

- indecisiveness of enterprise directors, deciding whether to dismiss workers. The lack of detailed information on the general situation with the workforce (as before, the recruitment of workers most often occurred directly at the gate), the tendency to reduce its inflow, encouraged most of the directors of enterprises to maintain a reserve of labor to cope with the difficulties due to the irregularity of enterprises work;
- the contradiction between the principle of differentiated remuneration of labor, which played an important role in the brigade contract, and has become firmly entrenched in social life and people's consciousness. To earn the brigade-expected salary, took a lot of effort, while the usual salary was automatically.

The choice of easy solutions, the preference for conservative measures, the rejection of radical changes, the inhibition, and then the failure of an incessantly emasculated reform, none of which has ever received a unanimous assessment in the leadership of the party-all this caused the creeping of the Soviet economy into crisis, to the full Manifested from the second half of the 70-ies. It became an undeniable and irrefutable fact recognized by the leaders, who came to power in 1985, the most important reason that caused the need for deep „perestroika“ proclaimed by the new revolution.

## **Difficulties in industrial sector**

The refusal to solve structural problems in industry played a decisive role in the real crisis of Soviet industry, which began in the mid-1970s. A number of symptoms evidenced the crisis: a sharp drop in the rates of industrial growth, labor productivity (against the background of a deteriorating demographic situation), and a decline in returns on investment, an increase in unfinished construction, a decrease in consumption.

The current situation was the result of various long-term trends and specific economic policy and it was precisely observed from the mid-1970s. This situation acquired an increasingly conservative, even reactionary content.

Among long-term trends, an important role was played by:

- An unfavorable demographic situation, primarily due to a decrease in the proportion of the able-bodied population. Since 1975, it has already become impossible to support economic growth by any means, resorting, as before, to the mass attraction of a new labor force. The economy stumbled upon a demographic barrier, and now its growth rate was determined by the growth of labor productivity (the rate of which was constantly decreasing). In these conditions, the government decided to go “bypass”, which consisted in mass import of foreign technology in the hope of quickly raising labor productivity. This direction attracted leadership more than the reform of the organization of labor, from which only slow and expected results could be expected;
- the depletion of the traditional raw materials base and the constant shift of the extractive industry, primarily the fuel and energy complex, to the east, which led to an increase in the prime cost of raw materials, and also aggravated the situation with transport - another serious problem in the USSR;
- Physical deterioration and moral aging of equipment and fixed assets;
- An increase in the share of military expenditures directly reflected in the development of civilian production;
- the crisis of the organization of labor, marked by the inhibition and failure of the incessantly reshaped reform, as well as the conservative deviation of the policy of the ruling elite, which some regarded as “neo-Stalinism.”

Undoubtedly, the last factor was decisive in the crisis that had arisen, as in 1983 Academician T. Zaslavskaya pointed out in her famous “Novosibirsk report”. According to T. Zaslavskaya

and her employees, the cause of the crisis was rooted in the inability of the existing system to ensure the effective use of human resources and the intellectual potential of society. The System remained essentially the same as it was in the 1930s, despite Stalin's death reform: excessive centralization, directive planning, and lack of market pricing and organization of the use of resources, control of all methods of material incentives for worker's center, restriction or simply prohibition of all types of individual labor activity of the population in production, services, trade. This hid the fundamental flaw of the system as a whole: workers could count only on activities in the public sector, any personal initiative was considered illegal and related to a shadow economy that was not officially recognized, no matter how economically useful it was.

The public sector was, moreover, completely unreceptive to the individual creative initiative of the working people. Theoretically, any initiative was welcomed, but various forms of workers' participation in enterprise management have always faced limited rights of enterprises themselves: how to participate in management, if the only thing that is allowed is to "overtake the plan"? The brigade experiment was based on the assumption of extremely limited self-management by a tiny segment of the overall production process, but even at this level, the initiative's manifestation depended entirely on the funds allocated to the brigade. Thus, if it was supposed that workers should act directly in the public interest, then in any personal position and responsibility in this respect they were denied. Those who "worked" well, at best, received "bonuses", which at the same time depended less and less on real results, individual or collective. They were charged automatically, which reduced their stimulating role to zero. Equally important in undermining material interest was the constant shortage of goods, making it senseless to strive for higher earnings. The dizzying growth of savings in savings banks was a convincing evidence of the impossibility for the vast majority of the population to satisfy their needs.

These contradictions, T. Zaslavskaya concluded, were not something new. However, even if the existing system was tolerated - economically and socially - in the 1930s and 1940s, even in the 1950s, when workers and employees were subject to military discipline, and the peasants were driven into collective farms, deprived of their passports and the right to move to the city, then in the 70 - 80's, because of the profound changes that have occurred in the society itself, it has become intolerable.

Academician Zaslavskaya did not leave a choice: the crisis caused primarily by the failure of the system of labor organization introduced in the 1930s. In addition, since then it has been preserved in the main and for the most part, it was necessary to allow a private initiative, defining the optimal, from the point of view of society, sphere of its application. As for the

prospects for the public sector, the most radical economists, headed by Academician A. Aganbegyan, who ran the journal *Eco*, predicted in 1982-1984 the possibility of three options for reform. The first option was a kind of “stabilization” program in the economy: it was planned to achieve improvement without fundamental changes - for example, expanding the rights of enterprises, developing direct links between them and creating intersectoral projects. The second option was a “moderate” reform, because of which most of the line ministries would be reduced. Finally, the third option was a “radical” reform with the abolition of all “economic” ministries. The competence of the State Planning Committee would be limited solely to the planning of macroeconomic relationships; enterprises would have the broadest autonomy in management. In fact, the last version implied an economic model of the Hungarian type.

## **Changes in social life**

An analysis or even a short retelling of all social phenomena in the USSR and the Warsaw Bloc cannot be squeezed into one work. The theme of social change in this study will be presented by an analysis of the main social groups in socialist Czechoslovakia, demographic changes, informal structures that shook the system from within and the processes of urbanization. The information will have two layers - an introductory one, where basic data on the social structure in the metropolis will be presented, and more practical - where it will be directly related to Czechoslovakia. But first, we should glance at Czechoslovakian society in itself.

Czechoslovakia, of all the East European countries, entered the postwar era with a relatively balanced social structure and an equitable distribution of resources. Despite some poverty, overall it was a country of relatively well-off workers, small-scale producers, farmers, and a substantial middle class. Nearly half the populace was in the middle-income bracket. Ironically, perhaps, it was balanced and relatively prosperous Czechoslovakia that carried nationalization and income redistribution further than any other East European country. By the mid-1960s, the complaint was that leveling had gone too far. The lowest-paid 40 percent of the population accounted for 60 percent of national income. Earning differentials between blue-collar and white-collar workers were lower than in any other country in Eastern Europe. Further, equitable income distribution was combined in the late 1970s with relative prosperity. Along with East Germany and Hungary, Czechoslovakia enjoyed one of the highest standards of living of any of the Warsaw Pact countries through the 1980s. The matter of social groups and the differences among them has been a delicate one for those in power in Czechoslovakia. In the Marxist scheme, classes are defined in terms of their relation to the means of production. Industrial production has demanded a more differentiated labor force than the Marxist notion of "one class owning and working the means of production" foresaw. "From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs" proved an inadequate principle for distributing socialist wealth. Even in Czechoslovakia, where the party's pursuit of socialist equality was thorough, the "classless" society turned out to be highly diverse. In the mid-1980s, Czechoslovak censuses divided the population into several occupational groups: workers, other employees, members of various cooperatives (principally agricultural cooperatives), small farmers, self-employed tradesmen and professionals, and capitalists. Of these categories, "other employees" was the most diverse, encompassing everyone from low-level clerical workers to cabinet ministers. "Workers" were those whose jobs were primarily manual and industrial. There was the time-hallowed distinction between workers (manual or low-level clerical employees), agricultural employees, and the intelligentsia (whose work is primarily mental and requires more education).

In 1984 workers made up about one-half of the economically active population and were beneficiaries of policies geared toward maintaining the people's standard of living. According to many observers, Czechoslovakia's internal stability rested on an unspoken bargain between workers and the ruling KSC: The Society and Its Environment security in return for acquiescence to continued Soviet domination. Given the persistent economic problems the regime faced, it was a delicate balance. Much of working-class life reflected the regime's efforts to increase labor productivity without precipitating major labor unrest. Virtually full employment did not make the task easier. In 1984 nearly half the population worked. Some 85 percent of working age women were employed (not including those on maternity leave), and there were almost 141,000 full-time university students. Working age for women was from fifteen through fifty-four, and for men it was from fifteen through fifty-nine. The proportion of pensioners who had returned to work rose from 12 percent in 1966 to 23 percent in 1983. By the end of the 1970s, the labor shortage was extreme enough for officials to call for greater efforts to employ "internal reserves" of labor, i.e., the partially disabled (of whom nearly one-third were already employed), full-time students, and farmers (during agricultural off-seasons). "Voluntary" brigades of students and apprentices supplied agricultural (harvest) and other labor during summer months. In Czechoslovakia, as in other socialist countries, virtually full employment often disguises underemployment. Large numbers of people work in positions below their qualifications. This is the result of different factors: some people are reluctant to move to other parts of the country to find work; politically and ideologically "objectionable" people must often turn to menial work; and politically "correct" people hold jobs for which they are not fully qualified. At many enterprises, instead of streamlining operations and dismissing employees whose job performance is unsatisfactory, managers merely shift workers to other positions or juggle employment statistics. The party's compulsion to avoid labor unrest, enterprise managers' need to meet (or at least approach) production quotas, and a pervasive shortage of labor define the social dynamics of the workplace. Workers have relatively secure employment and income but lack sufficient consumer goods to absorb their income (the rate of saving is extremely high). Nor do workers have a substantive role in organizing work; economic reformer during the 1960s, characterized the Czechoslovak worker as "alienated from the production process, from the fruits of labor, and from the management of industrial enterprises." Workers' complaints have changed over the years as labor has become more scarce. In the 1950s real wages declined, resulting in periodic work stoppages. The 1953 currency reform sparked protests and demonstrations in major industrial centers that were little short of riots. Throughout the decade, party leaders complained about workers' "trade unionist" and "anarcho-syndicalist" attitudes and their "take what you can" mentality. Those arrested in the 1953 demonstrations were denounced as

“bourgeois elements dressed up in overalls.” During the Prague Spring, workers organized to support demands for political liberalization and more representative trade unions. By the late 1970s, forced overtime had become the workers' most insistent complaint, followed by poor working conditions. These complaints were coupled with steadfast opposition to linking wages with gains in productivity. Workers most frequently called for compliance with the labor code, which limited compulsory overtime (the maximum workweek was supposed to be forty-six hours) and provided for work safety regulations. One solution to the labor shortage was foreign manpower. For a long time, Poles provided the largest percentage of foreign manpower. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, however, the proportion of Vietnamese workers grew rapidly. By the end of 1982, there were approximately 26,000 Vietnamese workers in Czechoslovakia, about 0.3 percent of the total manual work force, including apprentices. Reasons given for the rapid expansion of the Vietnamese contingent ranged from the Czechoslovak government's interest in training qualified labor for a friendly socialist country, to repayment of Vietnamese war debt, to the labor surplus in Vietnam. Problems arose as the number of Vietnamese increased drastically and as a program of merely hard work replaced what was to have been a program for training the Vietnamese in work skills. Other foreigners who worked in Czechoslovakia came from Cuba, Laos, the Mongolian People's Republic, and Hungary. Poles and Hungarians generally worked in their respective border areas. Most women in Czechoslovakia work, a reflection in part of the labor shortage and in part of the socialist belief that employment for women is the answer to inequality between the sexes. Although women in Czechoslovakia have had a long history of employment (they were over one-third of the labor force in 1930), the postwar surge in female employment has been truly dramatic. Four-fifths of the workers who entered the labor force from 1948 through 1975 were women. By the end of 1976, about 87 percent of working age women had jobs; in 1984 about 90 percent of women in their reproductive years were in the labor force. In 1983 women remained concentrated in the traditional fields of female employment. In retail sales they represented 75 percent of all employees; in mass communications, 65 percent; in health care, 80 percent; and in social work, 87 percent. These differences persisted despite concerted efforts to improve women's educational status and in spite of the wide range of protective legislation covering women workers. Women's salaries have lagged behind those of men throughout the socialist era. As late as 1986, women's earnings averaged two thirds of those of men. In December 1986, one-fifth of all employed mothers earned less than Kc 1,500 per month, while the average salary for all workers at that time was given as Kc 2,800 per month. Only 6 to 7 percent of middle and upper management positions were held by women. A number of factors account for this continuing inequality. Traditional sexual stereotypes have persisted, socialist rhetoric notwithstanding. Women faced handicaps in the workplace because of their

traditional role in child rearing (what regime apologists have dubbed “woman's triple role” of mother-worker-citizen). Czechoslovakia offered ample maternity leave, and women did not lose job seniority by taking it. Nonetheless, employers anticipated that women not only would be absent from work to have children but also would bear the primary responsibility for child care within their families. (In contrast, officialdom has made no mention of man's triple role of father-worker-citizen.) Women's anticipated but unpredictable absence from the workplace influenced employers' allocation of jobs. Women themselves frequently complained about the dual demands of home and work forced upon them. Czechoslovakia's underdeveloped service sector, the general lack of convenience items, limited child-care facilities, and the traditional division of labor within the family all complicated working women's lives in the 1980s. (Men maintained the traditional view that housework and child rearing are “women's work” and often refused to help.) Employed women spent four to eight hours each day on household duties, above and beyond their time at work.

### **Demographical Changes**

“While Brezhnev was dozing, his country was going through a real social revolution,” wrote M. Walker in 1986 in a work devoted to the analysis of the birth of perestroika. Indeed, over two decades, from 1965 to 1985, profound changes took place in whole Soviet society, which transformed both the forms of functioning of the economy and the content of relations between society and power. The important factor we should mention – the average age of the Politburo members. At that time for more than two decades the composition of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee the CPSU - the highest state-party leadership – remained almost unchanged. As well as other signs of an authoritative discourse, portraits and names of members and candidates for members of the Politburo constantly reproduced in the press, propaganda materials, performances from the stands. The entire list of names, one by one, in decreasing order of importance, from the general Secretary to the most recent candidate to the Politburo. Most people, except for the first persons of the state, in portraits hanging in many places, with specific names, too, were associated with labor. These names and faces were important not everyone in itself, but in the form of a single, standard list, functioning as a standard statement of authoritative discourse. Its importance consisted in the unity and immutability of the form of the entire list, and not in the ascertaining sense of specific names (which a portrait of what name it corresponds to, what kind of person it is).

Also the speeches of members and candidates for members of the Politburo, which were broadcast on television and printed in newspapers - first and foremost, a single, ritually reproduced form of authoritative discourse was of primary importance, and to a much lesser

degree of ascertaining the meaning. That is why speeches that were not uttered clearly - and by that time the speech of the aging Brezhnev, suffering from severe atherosclerosis of the cerebral vessels, became less and less legible, had the same effect as speeches that were pronounced clearly and legibly. The most important part of such speeches was the very fact of their utterance and general repetition.

The average age of members and candidates for members of the Politburo increased during the period of late socialism from 55 years in 1966 to 70 in the early 1980s, with the age of the leading group, the same group that Soviet people knew better and whose opinions were more often encountered, began to approach eighty. It was not for nothing that this time was later called the “period of gerontocracy”. The biopolitical reflection of the Lefort paradox was manifested, for example, in the widespread reaction to Brezhnev's death in 1982. Although it has long been obvious to everyone that he is old and unwell, his death caught most of the Soviet citizens by surprise.

In the early 1980s, the death of high-ranking officials from the party-state leadership suddenly turned into an unusually frequent phenomenon of everyday life. For slightly more than three years, from January 1982 to March 1985, on average every six months one member or candidate member of the Politburo died. However, this epidemic of deaths did not mean the collapse of authoritative discourse in general. On the contrary, according to the principles of this discourse, the notion of the death of high-ranking people quickly restored the standardized, rationed ritual form of authoritarian discourse designed to convey the meaning of its eternity and immutability, even describing the end of specific political biographies. Reports on the death of high-ranking officials in the press and at mourning meetings about labor and educational collectives were formulated in standard phrases and formulas; In television programs the same mourning sounded music and identical mourning ceremonies from Red Square; The streets were decorated with the same mourning symbols, flags, portraits. Nekroaesthetics, now an integral part of authoritative discourse, has undergone the same normalization of forms as other elements of this discourse. This normalization meant that in mourning rituals and utterances the emphasis shifted from the biological death of a person to political stability and the invariance of the entire symbolic regime.

In the early 1980s, the mass rituals of the funeral of party leaders, constantly broadcast and described in the authoritative language in the media, played the same role in everyday reality, revealing the spatiotemporal breaks and paradoxes of the Soviet symbolic regime. The ironic necroaesthetics, which by then was a part of everyday communication, focused precisely on these gaps and paradoxes.

We have already mentioned a very significant change that had a major impact on the economy: a reduction in the influx of new labor to the national economy due to a 25% drop in the birth rate and a 15% increase in mortality over the period from 1960 to the late 1970s. This was accompanied by a change in the structure of employment of workers in favor of the service sector at the expense of agriculture. In the long term, the most severe consequences were associated with a widening gap in the rate of population growth by region. Therefore, during this whole period the non-Slav population increased significantly faster. In general, the Muslim population, which in 1959 had 22.5 million people (Alternatively, 10.7% of the total number), to 1979 increased to 42 million people, which was already 16%. It should be noted that Islamic culture continues to strongly influence some Soviet people, even if their national identity is primarily determined by belonging to a particular ethnic group, and then by the rootedness of Muslim traditions. It was also important, however, that over the decades, the Muslim “elite” grew into the social system of Soviet society by moving up the hierarchical ladders, mastering the Russian language (the census of 1979 showed, for example, that the young generation of the Central Asian republics should know Russian as a prerequisite for a successful career), as well as some kind of solidarity with the outside world, which contrasts with the ethnic contradictions that remained acute, and in recent times has strengthened.

In the section devoted only to the Czech Republic, we will consider the various factors that have influenced the present state of demography and whose roots lie in the socialist past. Consider changes in relation to marriage and changes in the basic values of the Czech individual.

Czech demographic vital statistics reveal that changes in fertility, marriage and mortality patterns are as profound as those which occurred in the Western countries in the 1970s and 1980s. Thus, the main thesis is that the demographic phenomenon witnessed in the Czech Republic is in fact a second demographic transition (SDT) started in the mid-1990s. Its causes – as in the West – can be attributed to deep changes in the value preferences of the new age cohorts. While in the Western countries it was the cohorts born in the 1950s and 1960s who were the bearers of the SDT, in the Czech Republic it is the cohorts born in the mid-1970s and early 1980s.

Further we traced how the change in values shook the system and resulted in demographic problems and changes in the demographics of the now independent Czech Republic.

The concept of ‘values’ belongs among concepts that are used quite often in the social sciences, but as well as many of the other concepts it lacks a universally accepted definition. For the purposes of our research it is sufficient to use the same simple concept of a value as is

proposed by Van Deth. We assume here that individual behavior is determined by motives and intentions which are shaped by values and value orientations. Individuals' values themselves are influenced by the social environment in which they live, especially during their formative years. Values are perceived by Van Deth and Scarbroug has "conceptions of the desirable which are not directly observable but are evident in moral discourse and relevant to the formulation of attitudes". Among the attitudes, a process of patterning takes place. Meaningful patterns of attitudes are called 'value orientations' by Van Deth and Scarbrough. By means of measuring them we can identify the intentions of human behaviour – and not only that. Hechter, Ranger-Moore, Jasso and Horne maintain that values do matter, and they even suggest that "values can be incorporated into explanations of macrosocial phenomena".

Values are constructed and deconstructed, cultures and social groups influence individual behavior, but at the same time individual value preferences and corresponding behaviour do influence group values. The pace of value change has become faster in contemporary modern societies due to the pervasive influence of mass communication and mass media – the media bring contents of behaviour to large segments of society, thus allowing for greater homogenization of attitudes and value patterns and for a more rapid formation of mental cohorts. Values are guides of behaviour, including demographic behaviour. Political and economic changes in the Czech Republic have brought about new concepts of the role of individuals in society, of their rights and obligations, and of individual goals and aspirations. Many of them have had a profound impact on demographic behaviour, especially on the establishment of new marriages and on fertility.

The Czech Republic, as well as the other countries of the former socialist block, used to be characterized by a unique extensive population regime which differed to a great deal from that established in modern democratic societies. The adjective 'high' was typical for this regime: high marriage rate, high abortion rate, high birth-rate (often realized at the very beginning of one's reproductive period), high divorce rate and high mortality rate. It can be maintained, we believe, that this state had a general and complex cause, and that was the very existence of totalitarian socialism. The Czech Republic, which from a demographic perspective used to belong to a regime west of the Hajnal's line prior to the totalitarian era, shifted gradually toward the Eastern European regime after February 1948. The mechanism of this shift is apparent. The deeply rooted mechanisms of socialism caused the family to assume a crucial position in the life of an individual, given the social capital (connections) it provided. Socialism, despite being governed by 'the avant-garde force of the working class' and its 'vanguard – the Communist party' who were supposed to guide it to a new modernity, represented in fact a steep regression

back to traditional society, where the decisive role pertained less to an individual and an individual's performance than to family networks, clientele and patrons who facilitated the barter trade of services and commodities. Since every single newly born person used to become the property of the communist state from his/her school-days, there was little leeway for free and independent existence. Boredom was the rule in Czechoslovakia and thus the only authentic act left at the discretion of young people was entering into marriage and giving birth to some two or three children. And so they did. This practice did not change until the outset of the social transformation in the early 1990s when the boredom was (hopefully) over once for all, and the process of establishing a new state and rebuilding capitalism was initiated. It is no coincidence that we have been recording sharp changes in demographic trends since the early 1990s. The communist government used to determine young people's life paths, for example, by shamelessly imposing a quota on the number of children who were to attend vocational schools after having completed elementary education. Access to secondary schools was limited, quota on admission to grammar schools were very low. The ratio was strict: 60% must have attended vocational schools, 40% other secondary schools.

Marriage changes: The Czech marriage pattern has shifted from Hajnal's Eastern European marriage regime to the Western one. Why has the marriage rate dropped so suddenly? As expressed in my central thesis, the answer must be sought in a value shift. A very important structural factor appears significant for Czech demographic behaviour: the establishment of a democratic, liberal and permissive society has made individualized and free decision-making possible. Large segments of the Czech adult population – especially the young ones – have become persuaded that they have a great deal of control over their lives. The importance of individual development is stressed by the majority of population. A great many young Czechs thus find themselves with the power to decide their own fate. In addition to the newly opened broad opportunities for exercising one's natural desire for authenticity, this caused the act of entering into marriage and starting a family – formerly the only act of authenticity – to lose its exclusivity. Therefore, marriage ceased to be attractive for a significant part of young Czechs. A certain part of society (approximately 20% in the youngest age groups of the adult population) even considers marriage an obsolete institution. An original explanation scheme of the theory of behaviour in the marriage market and of the rise of unmarried cohabitation – which in many countries accounts for the decrease in the marriage rate – was proposed by Garry Becker. Let us summarize his main points. Becker grounded his explanation in the economic exchange theory. He started from the assumption that marriage is in fact a business transaction for men and women – they marry because both of them gain more by establishing a marriage (making

business) than by remaining single (not trading). In order to maximize profit from marriage, a partner with complementary qualities and skills is usually sought in the marriage market. However, this mechanism changed in the 1970s. Becker suggests that in a situation when women's participation in the labour market is on the increase, and so are their earnings and economic independence, the overall gain associated with marriage decreases. It follows that people have become rather reluctant to seek a match (a business transaction) and it takes them longer to find one. Becker thus believes the growing economic participation and independence of women to be the key factors that lead to postponing marriage (and help to undermine the stability of marriage). According to Westoff, a situation in which it no longer holds that women offer childbearing and household service to a husband in exchange for protection and economic status (derived from the husband's status), marriage loses its rationale. Also, Oppenheimer applied the exchange theory to explain new kinds of bonds. She maintains that their rise is related less to the conditions in the labor market than those in the marriage market. Women's higher education, higher employment rate and growing financial independence have pushed up the norm of a match's quality and have altered the image of a minimally acceptable match. From this perspective, it is possible, according to Oppenheimer, to perceive the protracted dating period and unmarried cohabitation as an expression of more selective matching. All these mechanisms obviously could hardly work in the era of egalitarian real socialism. Firstly, there was no real labour market, because getting a job as well as positions within the occupational structure were determined by a number of non-market factors (one of the most important being the loyalty to communist rulers). Secondly, setting up a family relatively early in the course of life – with the least delay possible – was a reasonable coping strategy.

The transformation of attitudes towards marriage and childbearing is certain to reflect what Caldwell calls "westernization", that is, the fact that owing to global communication, Western ideas and behavioral patterns diffuse internationally. Global communication networks entered the Czech Republic after 1990 and their contents introduced and/or reinforced patterns of late marriages, unmarried cohabitation and out of-wedlock childbearing. In this respect, the Czech Republic has become a "Westernized European" country characterized by corresponding demographic behaviour in the course of the 1990s.

In the late 1999, 120,234 persons in the 20-24 age group out of the total of 889,266 persons of this age were unemployed. In the 25-29 age group it was 63,563 persons out of the total of 825,430. Of all persons aged 20-24 years 14% were unemployed and of those aged 25-29 it was 8%. However, these figures cannot be regarded as equal to the unemployment rate since the absolute figures include students and women on maternity leave. If their number was known and

was deducted from the total of persons in the given age groups, the proportion of the unemployed would increase. New perception of how a young person should handle his/her life – this new social construction of reality, the newly formulated pattern is rather contagious and mental cohorts of this kind are becoming larger and larger. The fact that the contemporary young generation prefers exploring life and providing for oneself over getting married at a low age can be perceived as an expression of their new responsibility regarding their own life and – after all – the life of their as yet unborn children.

Obviously, not all young people postpone marriage and not all young people postpone childbearing. True saying that two models of procreative behaviour continue to mingle in this country: an older one, established in the past and fading away with the generation of ‘older’ women, and a new one, resembling the Western one, introduced by the strong generation born at the turn of the 1960s and 1970s and in the first half of the 1970s. Demographic development proves right her proposition that the older model is fading away, and the new one is gaining in its force.

Desire for success, which naturally includes advancement within the social hierarchy, belongs among the strongest motivations of human activity. As ‘to be successful’ means ‘to be much better than the others’ in something, pursuit of success implies competition and triumph. Real socialism blocked natural paths towards success and social mobility based on knowledge, skills, performance and luck. These paths have reopened for the current young generation and it is absolutely understandable that they have been exploring them to the fullest with vehemence peculiar to young age. Postponing conception and lowering the number of children is only a logical consequence of such exploration.

Young Czech women used to be acquiesced since the 1950s to the prospect of both being employed and bringing up children at the same time in a certain phase of their life cycle. Socialism with its extensive economic system was in need of great numbers of working people. In the early 1950s, women became a stable component of the work force. The socialist regime did its best to make women not only work but also bear children – the future soldiers and work force ready to protect and build up communism.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, the family and motherhood were rather a destiny than a rational choice under socialism. However, already then there existed a perceived conflict between motherhood, employment and household work which was further reinforced by the fact that there was basically no service sector in Czech society. Women tried to minimize the conflict by having children soon after getting married and with short intervals between individual births – according to the strategy ‘to do away with childbearing as soon as possible and be done with it once for all’. There was one more reason why the establishment

found it convenient that young people used to hurry with entering into marriage and starting families: nothing is better for a totalitarian regime than to prevent spontaneous and revolting political activity which is natural for young people by having them be responsible for a partner and children.

Proceeding from the above information, it can be concluded that the socialist model strongly influenced the demography of Czechoslovakia in a positive way, since ideological attitudes in every way contributed to the formation of a new cell of society. Soviet propaganda products in every possible way exploited the images of a strong and united family, as builders of socialism and those who would create new cogs for the functioning of the system. It is important to note that the woman did not represent a purely guardian of the home, the woman was a builder of communism and worked on a par with men (as opposed to the image of an ideal woman in Nazi propaganda). After 1989, the sprouts of Westernization penetrated into Czechoslovakia, influencing the values and attitudes of citizens. One cannot speak of a sudden attack of Western culture and values, for Czechoslovakia, unlike the USSR, was not under the total iron curtain, and the cultural influence of the West freely penetrated the country through musical groups, literature and fashion trends. The very ideology had within it the sprouts of feminism, which actively grew in the conditions of a market economy and the transition period of the 1990s. The consequences of this are outlined above, and the consequences are a decrease in the birth rate, late marriages, the primacy of civil marriage over legally formalized. All these factors somehow have a basis that lies in the communist past of the country.

### **Urbanization**

USSR: Other important social changes, “fundamental,” as M. Levin defined, are connected with urbanization and its inevitable consequence in the form of an increase in the general level of education. If in 1939 there were 56 million Soviet citizens living in the cities, then in the early 1980s, there were more than 180 million citizens in the cities. Statistics showed an increase in the number of cities of all categories, with large centers occupying a special place in this process: in 20 years, the number of cities with a population exceeding 1 million people grew from three to 23; they became home to more than a quarter of the Soviet population. Thus, in the period from the early 60's to the mid-80, more than 35 million people migrated to the city.

This new urban society, M. Levin believes, was primarily a new labor force. Until the end of the 50's the overwhelming majority of the urban population (about 70%) was employed in industry, construction and transport. In most cases, the types of work performed did not require high qualifications and were quite up to yesterday's peasants, who, as workers, continued to

engage in manual labor, only the “assimilated” peasantry of the working class, but had very few true masters. It should also be noted that in 1956, 69% of factory directors and 33% of chief engineers of enterprises were “practitioners” who had primary or incomplete secondary education. In the 60's and 70's the social structure of the city has changed greatly, has become more complex and differentiated professionally. In the early 80's “specialists”, who received higher or specialized secondary education accounted for 40% of the urban population. According to the latest data, among 35.5 million “specialists”, 13.5 million have a higher education and more than 18 million have secondary specialized education.

By the mid-80s, more than 5 million students were enrolled in higher education institutions, listening to the courses of a half-million army of teachers. Thus, the increase in the professional and educational levels, which began in the 30s, in just two or three last decades, led to a radical change in the very concept of “intelligentsia.” Yesterday the former elite, the intelligentsia turned into a huge mass of people, uniting numerous social groups and categories: engineers, administrative and management personnel, scientists, artists, teachers, politicians. Soviet sociologists L. Gordon and V. Komarovskiy singled out three generations, who in the late 1970s were active urban population: people born around 1910, entered the labor life in the 30-ies. In addition, mastered professional skills in the 50's; their sons, born in the 1930s, who began their labor path in the 1950s. Moreover, reached their best professional level by the 70th; their grandchildren, born in the 50's and started active working life in the 70's. From generation to generation, fewer people worked with their hands and more than a third of each generation climbed a few steps up the social and professional ladder.

This approach allows for a better understanding of the relationship between generations and the conflicts that accompany their shift. The first generation implemented the industrialization of the country. These are people engaged in heavy physical labor, workers of a traditional type, many of whom were peasants. Even reaching up to the 50-ies the top of their career, 80% of them remained on physical work. The second generation had great opportunities for advancement. It was the first generation, whose representatives in industry were more than in agriculture. As for the third generation, the number of employees in the spheres of services and information and the proportion of workers in unskilled manual labor has decreased even more. From the very beginning of their career, twice as many representatives of this generation perform intellectual work. They lived in a different social environment, their abilities to achieve a better position through education were very broad, at the same time, the existing position in the economy and production relations no longer satisfy them. According to Gordon and Komarovskiy, there was a contradiction between the emerging socio-professional structure,

adequate to the needs of the scientific and technological revolution, and the system of production relations established in the past technological era, and the state did its best to retain the former in the framework of the latter.

In the absence of this reform, a significant increase in the level of education and professionalism could not but lead to a social crisis. Its manifestations from the second half of the 1970`s, were the general discontent with its work of young specialists, who received a good education and high professional training, an unhealthy “socio-psychological climate” (if you use the Soviet expression) in many workplaces, the use of engineers and scientists, forced to perform the work of technicians and maintenance personnel because of the lack of the latter, and the nomination of responsible “gray”, incompetent people.

Czechoslovakia: The urban tradition in the Czech lands dates from approximately the ninth century A.D., and the growth of towns centered on princely castles and bishops' seats. Artisan and trading activities were a subsidiary part of these urban settlements. Trading, in fact, defined the spread of secondary towns across the countryside, each roughly a day's journey from the next along major trade routes. Prague grew up around Hradcany Castle, having the dual advantage of being both bishopric and princely seat from about the ninth century. By the fourteenth century, it was a major continental city with 40,000 to 50,000 inhabitants, a university (Charles University, one of Europe's first), and an administrative seat of the Holy Roman Empire. After the defeat of the Bohemian nobles in the Battle of White Mountain in 1620, Prague and the other cities of the Czech lands languished until the nineteenth century. Slovakia, as a result of its agrarian nature and Hungarian rule, remained a region of small towns scattered amid farming villages and Hungarian estates. During the nineteenth century, there was a surge of migration and urbanization in both the Czech lands and Slovakia. Much of this was linked to nineteenth-century Europe's tremendous population increase and the spread of the railroads. Czech and Slovak urbanization proceeded apace; the proportion of the population living in towns of more than 2,000 grew from 18 percent to 45 percent between 1843 and 1910. The rate of increase in major industrial centers was spectacular: between 1828 and 1910, Prague's population grew by a factor of nearly seven, Plzeni's by over thirteen. In 1910 Ostrava had 167 times the population it had a century before. This pattern of urbanization persisted through the First Republic, although at a lower rate.

Urbanization and migration patterns have altered significantly in the socialist era. A desire to balance population and industrial distribution dictated urban policy from the 1950s through the 1980s. Since World War II, such historically predominant urban centers as Prague and Brno have not been the official, preferred choices for continued growth. Despite consistent efforts to

relocate city bound workers away from the traditional destinations of rural emigrants, in the 1980s the six largest cities (all major urban centers in the early twentieth century) nevertheless accounted for over 40 percent of the population living in cities of over 20,000. Beyond this, however, there was relatively little concentration; 50 percent of the population lived in settlements of fewer than 10,000. The landscape was one of small, dispersed settlements, small cities, scattered towns, and cooperative farm centers. Rural-urban migration decreased in the 1970s, apparently less because of balanced population distribution than because commuting matched workers with industrial employment. Excluding intra city commuting, between one-third and one-half of all workers commuted during the 1980s. A substantial portion of these were long-distance, weekly, or monthly commuters. In the planner's view, commuting had replaced migration; it had the considerable advantage of lessening the burdens of expanding industrialization on urban services. From the worker's perspective, however, commuting was most often a matter of involuntarily deferred migration. Scarce urban housing was the principal constraint on the potential migrant, though one year's rural commuter could still become the next year's city dweller. Commuting has placed heavy demands on the commuter's time and on public transit, which has meant a substantial outlay for both railroad and roadway passenger service. One can gauge the effect of commuting on the working populace by considering that most Czechoslovak factories begin operation at 6:00 A.M. and most offices between 7:00 and 8:00 A.M.

Planners continued to make efforts to remedy the longstanding housing shortage in rural and urban regions alike. Since statistics did not always provide a comparison between the numbers of households and existing housing units, the housing deficit remained difficult to gauge. A comparison of the number of marriages annually and construction of new housing units between 1960 and 1975 shows that construction exceeded marriages only in 1975. The deficit was most acute in the 1960s, when an average of 7 housing units was built for every 10 marriages; in 1985 the ratio rose to an average of 8.8 units per 10 marriages. This approximation underestimated the housing deficit: it ignored divorces, the number of extended families living together who would have preferred separate housing, and the decay of old housing. Even waiting lists underestimated how inadequate housing was in the 1980s. Separate housing for single adults had such a low priority with planners that single adults found it difficult even to get on a housing list. One of the factors contributing to the housing shortage was the low construction rate of rental housing. Major reasons for this were high inflation, high construction costs, and low (heavily subsidized) rents. In 1985 the average building cost for apartments rose to Kc 2,523 per square meter, and the average monthly rent-for the seventh consecutive year-was Kc 358. Construction of

individual homes peaked in 1977 at 40,107 and decreased to 29,608 in 1985. Building a home privately was possible, but acquiring labor and materials was difficult and sometimes risky; it often meant borrowing machinery illegally or paying bribes for materials. Despite substantial gains in the 1970s, Czechoslovakia entered the 1980s with a housing shortage that was likely to take years to remedy. In 1986 the government announced a slight cutback in new housing construction for the 1986-90 housing plan, further aggravating the situation.

In the 1980s, Czechoslovakia had a comprehensive and universal system of social security under which everyone was entitled to free medical care and medicine, in theory at least. National health planning emphasized preventive medicine. Factory and local health care centers, first aid stations, and a variety of medical clinics supplemented hospitals and other inpatient institutions. The ratio of physicians to inhabitants has improved steadily, climbing from 1 per 745 in 1954 to 1 per 278 in 1985, although there were Czechoslovakia: A Country Study shortages of doctors in rural areas. The shift in the distribution of health resources in the 1960s and 1970s was dramatic; facilities were improved, and the number of health care personnel in Slovakia and rural areas increased in general. Despite the improvements, there still remained serious problems in the health-care sector. About 40 percent of all the medical equipment was obsolete, facilities were outdated and in short supply, the bureaucracy was excessive, bribery was widespread (if not the rule), and many urgently needed medications were available only on the black market. Spas in Czechoslovakia were part of the health care system. In 1985 more than 460,000 people (5 percent of whom were children) stayed at the 35 spas in the Czech lands and 23 spas in Slovakia. Many spas had been in existence for centuries, such as Bardejov (since the thirteenth century) in Slovakia and Karlovy Vary (Karlsbad) in the Czech lands. Many of them specialized in the care and treatment of particular kinds of ailments. All had either mineral or hot springs, and some also offered mud treatments. In bygone days, the spas were frequented by European royalty and the wealthy, but now they are open to all, including foreign tourists (who made up 10 percent of the patients in 1985). A number of people visited spas on vouchers provided by their trade unions. In 1984 life expectancy in Czechoslovakia was sixty-seven years for men and seventy-five years for women. In 1950 women's life expectancy was approximately 4.6 years longer than men's; by 1983 this difference had increased to nearly 7.5 years. Infant mortality stood at 10.5 per 1,000 live births in 1984, down from 15.6 per 1,000 in 1975. As with medical care, the gap in life expectancy between the Czech lands and Slovakia was narrowed during this period. In 1985 slightly more than one-quarter of the Czechoslovak population received some kind of pension; the elderly, the disabled, widows, and orphans were all entitled to assistance. Social security benefits (primarily retirement and disability) were equal for all wage earners. The average

pension was less than Kes1,000 per month (workers received an average pension of about Kc 1,130, cooperative farmers about Kc 880, and independent farmers about Kc 720; this put pensioners among the lowest income earners. A substantial minority of the retired (23 percent) again took up employment to supplement their pensions. Women workers had a full complement of maternity and childcare benefits. Maternity leave (at 90 percent of full pay) was twenty-six weeks in the 1980s; an additional nine weeks were available for single mothers or for months having multiple births. Employers could not deny a woman's request for an additional year of Karlovy Vary (Karlsbad) Courtesy Eugene C. Robertson unpaid leave for child rearing (without loss of job seniority). A system of child allowances and maternity grants also assisted women who took unpaid leave. Women were allowed three days of annual leave in case of illness within the family. There were substantial family allowances, in addition to direct grants, to single parents or families with handicapped children. An unmarried mother, widow, or divorced mother could not be fired if she had a child under three years of age; if she had children between three and fifteen years of age, her employer had to find her another job before dismissing her. Nursery facilities for younger children were in very short supply; in 1984 they could accommodate less than 10 percent of children under five years of age. Beyond the sheer lack of space, nurseries were poorly distributed and were often concentrated in older centers rather than in new housing developments where young families were likely to reside. Kindergartens were in better supply, and a much higher percentage of children between the ages of three and six years attended these schools. High employment of women and inadequate services contributed to the decline in Czechoslovakia's birthrate in the 1960s. Live births during the decade averaged 16 per 1,000 inhabitants, a significant drop from the 1950s. By 1968 the fertility rate was 2 percent (in comparison with 3 percent in the 1950s); at this rate the population would not Czechoslovakia: A Country Study replace itself. In the Czech lands, the population growth rate stood at its 1930s low; in Catholic Slovakia, it was the lowest on record. The government adopted a variety of explicitly pronatalist policies in the 1970s. Family allowances increased, especially for second and third children. By 1973 a family with three children received roughly one-third the average worker's salary in allowances. Birth grants doubled so that they were the equivalent of two to four weeks of family income. Low-interest loans to newlyweds were designed so that a portion of the principal was canceled with the birth of each child. All told, the financial incentives were substantial. In addition, couples with children had priority on apartment waiting lists and were entitled to larger living quarters, no small inducement in the face of Czechoslovakia's chronic housing shortage. Pronatalist policies appear to have had a strong influence on population growth during the 1970s. The birthrate climbed from its 1968 low (14.9 per 1,000 inhabitants) to a peak of 19.9 per), 000 inhabitants in 1974-one of the highest rates among industrial nations.

Perhaps a quarter of this increase reflected the increase in the number of women of child-bearing age in the 1970s. After 1974, however, the birthrate steadily declined, falling to 14.5 by 1985. Figures indicated that a trend toward one-child families was emerging. The message seemed to be that after one decade the government's aid program was ineffective. A major factor influencing the birthrate was the abortion rate. The number of abortions fluctuated between the 1950s and 1980s, dropping in the early 1960s and the early 1970s. In 1985 there were reportedly 144,712 abortions, or 39 abortions per 100 pregnancies (33.5 per 100 in the Slovak Socialist Republic and 42.1 per 100 in the Czech Socialist Republic). It has been suggested that abortion has remained one of the most favored means of birth control, despite the risks involved. A 1986 change in the abortion law (eliminating the panel needed to approve a request for an abortion) suggested that the regime was giving up in its efforts to reverse at least this aspect of the adverse demographic trends.

### **Urban „microworld“ and informal structures, forms of protest**

One of the significant consequences of the development of urbanization sociologist O. Yanitsky considers the emergence of “urban micro spaces”. From his point of view, “the development of the scientific and technological revolution and urbanization is based and inextricably linked with the principle of activity, personal initiative, and communication of individuals as individuals.”

Not limited to various forms of social life in small groups: family, friends, various circles, the development of “urban micro space” quickly led to the emergence of a network of informal associations, which began to play an important role in shaping public opinion in the proper sense of the word. For a long time, the existence of informal associations was denied both by Soviet political science and Western sovietology, based on the principles of ideological determinism, which excludes the possibility of any spontaneous social processes. In practice, however, the importance of public opinion has been recognized, albeit implicitly, since the early 1960s, when Khrushchev's educational reform project met with such broad resistance from influential sections of the population that it had to be abandoned.

In the 70's and 80's the development of the urban subculture, the increase in the general level of education gave rise to a much more complex social structure, characterized by a whole gamut of “informal entities”, “micro space” and corners of “self-government” with its social base, culture and “counterculture”, researchers and scientists, youth groups, professional and inter-professional associations. This “informal” life little by little forced to listen to your opinion and your demands. The testicle (or experimental field) for these first spontaneous manifestations of

public opinion was most often served by cultural life. In this sense, V.Vysotsky's example (who died in 1980 at the age of 42 years) is an illustrative example, which has become a genuine social phenomenon that has allowed to come to the surface not only in parallel to culture, but also in informal associations that embraced a much wider mass of people than traditional mugs intellectuals. The attitude of the authorities towards the singer was hostile (only one of his records was published during his lifetime), since his songs, contrary to the general tendency, addressed to the people and speaking the language of the people of the song, exposed the flaws of the system. Vysotsky became the representative for all the marginalized and deprived layers of Soviet society; he was listened to by tens of millions of people of all social groups, secretly multiplying millions of tapes. He had the opportunity to speak only in places that were provided to him by "informal associations", before the public, without any advertising knowing about the concert in advance. On the day of his funeral, tens of thousands of people gathered in front of the Taganka Theater, of which he was an actor. This was a spontaneous demonstration, the most significant in the Soviet capital after the funeral of Joffe in 1927.

Was the phenomenon a testimony of birth of a real civil society? This hypothesis was expressed, in particular, by M.Levin, who believes that "by civil society we mean a set of structures and institutions that either exist and operate independently of the state, or come out of it independently developing their own point of view on private or general importance, and then they try to convince their members that they are right. These social associations are not necessarily in opposition to the state, they are, as it were, a counterbalance to officially recognized state institutions and enjoy some autonomy.

Independent tendencies and informal groups also appeared in the heart of the bureaucracy of the Soviet state. Public attitudes penetrated state and party institutions and the concept of civil society, circulating in the very heart of the bastion of statehood - in the broad layers of officials, up to the party apparatus and political leaders - openly challenges the ideas that have developed about the Soviet state. However, this new concept is applicable only to a new situation."

The state fought with these no formal structures and tried to bury them in anyway. The most important form of suppressing was state youth and adult organizations. Below we will compare these forms and their activity with dissent movement.

One of the main tasks of the Komsomol activity, according to the stated (literal) sense of utterances in an authoritative language, was the creation of a special community of Soviet youth united by a communist consciousness. It cannot be said that this task was not carried out at all. A special community of Soviet youth was really created, but it was not based on a single

communist consciousness, but something else. Despite the fact that there were differences between different people from this community, of course, they all had something in common that made them similar, united in a common circle, made “their own”. In the diaries of that time and the memories of him, it is precisely the term that is often encountered in describing the contexts associated with ideological institutions, rituals and rhetoric.

In the period of late socialism, in contexts dominated by ideological institutions and an authoritative language, the term has acquired a special meaning. It consisted in the name of a special community of people, which self-organized in relation to authoritative discourse, being the result of this discourse. However, this community of people, on the one hand, was different from what was called “Soviet youth with a communist worldview” on authoritative discourse, and on the other hand, differed from the dissident community formed on the principle of the opposite of authoritative discourse. For example, Katherine Wanner writes that the terms “within and on” and “nash” in the late Soviet context were used to describe the community of ordinary Soviet people who opposed themselves to the repressive Soviet state. According to Wanner, “their” or “ours” were formed thanks to “the general feeling of oppression on the part of the state apparatus for all”, thanks to which everyone “was bound by the common experience of confronting them - enemies, authorities, its institutions.” Another researcher, Dale Pesmen, speaks of the same, albeit in somewhat different terms: in the Soviet context, the phrase “one's own man” meant that “with this person one could speak openly, without fear that your words will be used against you.” Such a picture of Soviet society simplifies reality, reproducing the already familiar stereotype of binary socialism, according to which social relations in the Soviet Union seem to be reduced only to the relations of oppression and resistance or the direction of some against others. In addition, in this description the border between one's own and another's people looks too fixed and unchanged - here we are all, and there they are - the state. In fact, as noted above, this border moved, could often change, being distributed differently in different contexts and covering different spaces and different subjects. Sometimes it changed in the process of communication.

In the context of socialism, the system of state relations pervaded everything public space from top to bottom, reproduced on each level anew, having a multi-level hierarchy (nesting hierarchy), like matryoshkas. That is, the same subjects could turn out to be in some or in other communities. It's no secret that any boss, salesman, watchman or janitor reproduced at his level, in his official context, a model of relations characteristic of state institutions. At the same time, outside this service context, this institutional model of relations changed instantly, and the “watchman” turned out to be a “normal person” or “his” here. Such a system of institutional

relations does not allow us to consider the Soviet system according to the binary scheme of state-society opposition. Similarly, their communities do not fit into this scheme.

In reality, the attitude toward authoritative discourse among different people could be more or less “activist” or “dissident”. Nevertheless, for our analysis, these simplified types are convenient, because for most people, similar to the heroes of this chapter, they served as reference points, in relation to which they defined themselves, “their” and “normal people.” Although the attitude of activists towards authoritative discourse may seem straightforward the opposite of the attitude of dissidents to this discourse, in reality they had much in common. Ideal “activists” and “dissidents” perceived authoritative discourse literally - that is, as a true description of reality (as activists believed) or a deceptive description of reality (as dissidents believed). “Activists” sincerely believed in an authoritative version of socialism, called on people to be more conscious, tried to raise the spirit of enthusiasm and diligence, wrote letters to newspapers and district committees about the violation of the law by officials and so on. Among representatives of the younger generation, these activists met so rare that when confronted with them, many were unsure: who are they sincere and principled people, naive simpletons or cynical careerists?

The “ideal” dissident interpreted authoritative discourse literally, that is, as a false image of reality. The well-known dissident writers did call on fellow citizens to seek the truth and reveal the official lie. Alexander Solzhenitsyn called for “living not according to lies” (1974), and Vaclav Havel – “living in truth” (1986). However, most of the Soviet people in the period of late socialism, before perestroika, not only knew almost nothing about dissidents, but did not relate to the authoritative discourse of the party as to the description of reality, which should be interpreted literally, just as a false description of reality. It is for this reason that many perceived the “dissident” as something abstract, to which the attitude was not so much negative as disinterested. Nancy Rice in her book quotes the words of a woman who in 1985 (before perestroika) in a conversation with her stated with frank enthusiasm and from all Soviet people, that she had heard something about Academician Sakharov, but does not know the details, because he simply “does not exist for us”. This woman certainly did not read Sakharov's speeches and did not know anything about his political position. She only heard that the Soviet press criticizes him for “anti-Soviet activities”. Her remark reflects the widespread attitude in the Soviet masses of those years towards “dissidence” as a phenomenon. However, only a few years later, in the years of perestroika, when the Soviet discursive regime underwent powerful changes and authoritative discourse changed dramatically, Sakharov's moral position suddenly began to be widely perceived as something extremely important, and he quickly turned the moral

reference point of the era in the eyes of not only those who respected him before, but primarily those who used to treat him without any interest.

Recalling the period before the beginning of perestroika, the poet Joseph Brodsky also wrote that, in his opinion, most Soviet citizens in those years perceived dissidents as something unimportant, not worthy of attention. Brodsky spoke in this regard in response to the statement of Vaclav Havel, who already in the 1990s wrote that citizens of socialist countries avoided dissidents because of fear of the state, and also because of shame, they felt for their own fear. Brodsky did not agree with Havel - in his opinion, the main reason why people avoided dissidents was not fear. "Given the visible stability of the system," dissidents were simply "discarded by most people," Brodsky said. They were perceived as "a good example of what not to do", and therefore, as a "source of considerable moral comfort", like a sick person is perceived by a "healthy majority". Despite the fact that Brodsky, like Havel, was practically not published during the Soviet era, was persecuted by the state and eventually expelled from the USSR, he nonetheless did not identify himself with the position of Havel. Those whom Brodsky called "by a healthy majority" - that is, most of the Soviet citizens - in our examples we called (and they called each other) "normal people" and "our own". It was to these people that the desire to expose the "official lie" was unfamiliar not because they believed in the literal meaning of official propaganda, but because they did not perceive it as truth or as a lie.

Among the representatives of the younger generation in the period of late socialism, personal acquaintance with these dissidents was as rare as acquaintance with these activists. Little more often it was possible to meet people who were critical of the Soviet system and from time to time spoke in the appropriate way in the circle of close friends, but at the same time they were not active in dissident circles and activities were not engaged. There were also those, who at times expressed themselves critically not only in a narrow circle of close friends, but even at work, among colleagues. From the point of view of the majority of "normal people", such personalities were not only strange, but also potentially dangerous, because they jeopardized "normal life" as such.

However, the way "dissidents" and "activists" were perceived by "normal people" in pre-perestroika years is important not as such, but as a symptom of the latter's attitude to the Soviet system, which once again shows that this relationship cannot be reduced to either resistance or to conformism. This relationship was based on a different logic, consisting in a constant internal transformation of the system without its direct support or direct counteraction to it. Another form of protest was "inner immigration". This metaphor, however, should not be interpreted too literally as a complete withdrawal from Soviet reality or the "Soviet regime" into autonomous,

isolated areas of freedom and authenticity. This interpretation of “internal emigration” does not describe the real situation in which these communities existed, but only contributes to the creation of a myth of their supposedly complete independence from the state. In reality, of course, “internal emigration” differed from emigration proper precisely because it could be practiced through the active use of opportunities (financial, legal, technical, ideological, cultural, etc.) that were provided by the state itself. At the same time, in the communities of internal emigration many cultural parameters and meanings of the Soviet world were shifted and reinterpreted. The metaphor of internal emigration is inapplicable to other, less extreme and more widespread examples of existence outside - when the subject was actively involved in some activity of the Soviet system and engaged in it with great interest, while ignoring the majority of authoritative statements of the system (as an example of physicist-theoreticians). For its analysis, we need a concept that is broader than “internal emigration” and is able to describe the way of life of its various publics, from those who went into deep “inner emigration”, to those who were more or less actively involved in different Practices, meanings and institutions of the Soviet system.

The meaning of existence outside the system - both inside and outside - can be illustrated by the phrase “out of sight”. It implies that an object is here, we know about its presence, but it is hidden from our view (by other objects, by its miniaturality or by the focus of our attention on the other). The subjective state outside the system also implies the fallout from the field of view of the system or, more precisely, its “visibility mode” (or “visible mode”). Such a person, continuing to exist within the system, may not follow its symbolic, legal, linguistic or other parameters (act incomprehensible to others, speak a language incomprehensible to them, do not delve into the meaning of the facts of the surrounding reality, interpret what is happening to him alone in an understandable manner and so on). The thesis lies in the fact that under the conditions of late socialism, the relationship between the majority of subjects and publics and the state was built, to a lesser or greater extent, precisely for this food principle. Moreover, this attitude was not limited to an “alternative” way of existence - on the contrary, this attitude became the central principle of the existence and reproduction of the entire late Soviet system as such. Although this attitude of the subject to the system is not an attitude of resistance to the state, it gradually changed the system, making the state potentially fragile and ready (under certain conditions) to an unexpected collapse, because the state-party apparatus was not able to fully recognize, understand, and, therefore, to control this attitude.

Through the 1970s and 1980s, the regime's emphasis on obedience, conformity, and the preservation of the status quo was challenged by individuals and organized groups aspiring to

independent thinking and activity. Although only a few such activities could be deemed political by Western standards, the regime viewed any independent action, no matter how innocuous, as a defiance of the party's control over all aspects of Czechoslovak life. The regime's response to such activity was harassment, persecution, and, in some instances, imprisonment. The first organized opposition emerged under the umbrella of Charter 77. On January 6, 1977, a manifesto called Charter 77 appeared in West German newspapers. The document was immediately translated and reprinted throughout the world. The original manifesto reportedly was signed by 243 persons; among them were artists, former public officials, and other prominent figures, such as Zdenek Mlynar, secretary of the KSC Central Committee in 1968; Vaclav Slavik, a Central Committee member in 1968; and Vaculik, author of "Two Thousand Words." Charter 77 defined itself as "a loose, informal, and open community of people" concerned with the protection of civil and human rights. It denied oppositional intent and based its defense of rights on legally binding international documents signed by the Czechoslovak government and on guarantees of civil rights contained in the Czechoslovak Constitution. In the context of international detente, Czechoslovakia had signed the United Nations Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights and the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in 1968. In 1975 these were ratified by the Federal Assembly, which, according to the Constitution of 1960, is the highest legislative organization. The Helsinki Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe's Final Act (also known as the Helsinki Accords), signed by Czechoslovakia in 1975, also included guarantees of human rights. The Charter 77 group declared its objectives to be the following: to draw attention to individual cases of human rights infringements; to suggest remedies; to make general proposals to strengthen rights and freedoms and the mechanisms designed to protect them; and to act as intermediary in situations of conflict. The Charter had over 800 signatures by the end of 1977, including workers and youth; by 1985 nearly 1,200 Czechoslovaks had signed the Charter. The Husak regime, which claimed that all rights derive from the state and that international covenants are subject to the internal jurisdiction of the state, responded with fury to the Charter. The text was never published in the official media. Signatories were arrested and interrogated; dismissal from employment often followed. The Czechoslovak press launched vicious attacks against the Charter. The public was mobilized to sign either individual condemnations or various forms of "anti-Charters." Closely associated with Charter 77, the Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Persecuted was formed in 1978 with the specific goal of documenting individual cases of government persecution and human rights violations. Between 1978 and 1984, VaNS issued 409 communiqués concerning individuals persecuted or harassed. On a larger scale, independent activity was expressed through underground writing and publishing. Because of the decentralized Czechoslovakia: A Country Study nature of underground writing, it is difficult to

estimate its extent or impact. Some observers state that hundreds of books, journals, essays, and short stories were published and distributed. In the mid-1980s, several samizdat publishing houses were in operation. The best known was Edice petlice (Padlock Editions), which had published more than 250 volumes. There were a number of clandestine religious publishing houses that published journals in photocopy or printed form. The production and distribution of underground literature was difficult. In most cases, manuscripts had to be typed and retyped without the aid of modern publishing equipment. Publication and distribution were also dangerous. Mere possession of samizdat materials could be the basis for harassment, loss of employment, and arrest and imprisonment. Independent activity also extended to music. The regime was particularly concerned about the impact of Western popular music on Czechoslovak youth. The persecution of rock musicians and their fans led a number of musicians to sign Charter 77. In the forefront of the struggle for independent music was the Jazz Section of the Union of Musicians. Initially organized to promote jazz, in the late 1970s it became a protector of various kinds of nonconformist music. The widely popular Jazz Section had a membership of approximately 7,000 and received no official funds. It published music and promoted concerts and festivals. The regime condemned the Jazz Section for spreading "unacceptable views" among the youth and moved against its leadership. In March 1985, the Jazz Section was dissolved under a 1968 statute banning "counterrevolutionary activities." The Jazz Section continued to operate, however, and in 1986 the government arrested the members of its steering committee. Because religion offered possibilities for thought and activities independent of the state, it too was severely restricted and controlled. Clergymen were required to be licensed. In attempting to manipulate the number and kind of clergy, the state even sponsored a pro-regime organization of Catholic priests, the Czechoslovak Association of Catholic Clergy (more commonly known as *Pacem in Terris*). Nevertheless, there was religious opposition, including a lively Catholic samizdat. In the 1980s, Frantisek Cardinal Tomasek, Czechoslovakia's primate, adopted a more independent stand. In 1984 he invited the pope to come to Czechoslovakia for the 1,100th anniversary of the death of Methodius, the missionary to the Slavs. The pope accepted, but the trip was blocked by the government. The cardinal's invitation and the pope's acceptance were widely circulated in samizdat. A petition requesting the Historical Setting government to permit the papal visit had 17,000 signatories. The Catholic Church did have a massive commemoration of the 1,100th anniversary in 1985. At Velehrad (the site of Methodius's tomb) more than 150,000 pilgrims attended a commemorative mass, and another 100,000 came to a ceremony at Levoca (in eastern Slovakia). Unlike in Poland, dissent, opposition to the government, and independent activity were limited in Czechoslovakia to a fairly small segment of the populace. Even the dissenters saw scant prospect for fundamental

reforms. In this sense, the Husak regime was successful in preserving the status quo in “normalized” Czechoslovakia. The selection of Mikhail Gorbachev as general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on March 11, 1985, presented the Husak regime with a new and unexpected challenge to the status quo. Soon after assuming office, Gorbachev began a policy of “restructuring” (perestroika) the Soviet economy and advocated “openness” (glasnost) in the discussion of economic, social, and, to some extent, political questions. Up to this time, the Husak regime had dutifully adopted the programs and slogans that had emanated from Moscow. But, for a government wholly dedicated to the preservation of the status quo, subjects such as “openness,” economic “restructuring,” and “reform” had been taboo. Czechoslovakia's future course would depend, to a large extent, on the Husak regime's response to the Gorbachev program.

In this situation, slow, but unstoppable growth of protest manifestations was inevitable. Outside the country, special attention was drawn to the phenomenon of dissidence - the most radical, conspicuous and courageous expression of disagreement. The symbol of dissident movement was a speech on August 25, 1968 against the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia, held on Red Square. It involved eight people: a student T. Baeva, a linguist K. Babitsky, a philologist L. Bogoraz, a poet V. Delone, a worker V. Dremlyuga, a physicist P. Litvinov, an art critic V. Fainberg and a poet N. Gorbachevskaya. However, there were other, less frank forms of disagreement that made it possible to avoid administrative and even criminal prosecution: participation in nature protection societies or religious heritage, the creation of various kinds of appeals to „future generations. The poet and bard Y. Kim wrote recently in connection with his last, successfully performed „Moscow Cuisines“, in which he mentioned, that Brezhnev's time will remain in the memory of the Moscow intellectuals as years spent in the kitchen, behind conversations about „how to remake the world“. Another kind of „kitchens“, even of a different level, was the University of Tartu, the department of Professor V. Yadov at the Leningrad University, the Institute of Economics of the Siberian Branch of the Academy of Sciences and other places, official and unofficial, where jokes about the squalor of life and about the Secretary General's stuttering born alternated disputes, in which the future was anticipated.

In the late 60-ies the main trends of dissidents were united in the Democratic Movement with a very fuzzy structure, representing three „ideologies“ that arose in the post-Stalin period and were rather the programs of action „genuine Marxism-Leninism“, presented, in particular, by Roy and Zhores Medvedev; liberalism in the face of Andrei Sakharov, „Christian ideology“, defended Solzhenitsyn. The first idea of the program was that Stalin perverted ideology of Marxism-Leninism and the „return to basics“ would improve society; the second program was

considered a possible evolution towards Western-style democracy, while maintaining public ownership, the third proposed values of Christian morality as the basis of society and, following the tradition of Slavophiles stressed the specificity of Russia. The „democratic movement“ was nevertheless very small and numbered only a few hundred adherents from among the intelligentsia. However, thanks to the activities of two eminent personalities who became some kind of symbols – A. Solzhenitsyn and A. Sakharov - dissidence, hardly noticeable and isolated in its own country, was recognized abroad a few years (1967 - 1973). The issue of human rights in the Soviet Union has become an international problem of the first magnitude for many years determined the unattractive image of the Soviet Union in the world (indicative hours to a large extent began in 1973, the activities of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe has been devoted to this issue).

In a country in which any power, whether collective at the lowest level, bureaucratic at the middle or despotic at the top, has always remained hostile to the free expression of opinions that run counter to the established attitudes and against the very nature of this power, moreover, in conditions of repression, dissidence as an expression of radical opposition and an alternative political concept that defended the rights of the individual before the sovereign, could not cover the broad strata of society. Different forms of dissatisfaction and dissatisfaction manifested themselves in Soviet reality in different ways. In this sense, the working environment is indicative. Two attempts were made by an independent trade union (first engineer Klebanov, at the end of 1977, then participants of the human rights movement, who organized the SMOT - Free Inter-Professional Workers' Union) failed and did not gather more than a few hundred people in their ranks. The strike movement, still very small, was no longer, however, an exceptional form of action; In 1975 - 1985, according to various sources, there were about 60 major strikes. Discontent of the workers was manifested mainly in passive and hidden forms, which had spread widely since the 1930s: low labor productivity, „turnover“, absenteeism, poor quality of products, and growing alcoholism. The same can be said about the numerous associations that enjoyed some autonomy and advocated socio-economic changes, as mentioned above. Both in the political sphere and outside it, in the field of culture, in some social sciences, discussions began, various activities arose, which, if not frankly „dissident“, at least, testified to obvious discrepancies with the official recognized norms and values. Among the manifestations of this kind of disagreement, the most significant were:

- The protest of a large part of the youth attracted by samples of Western culture (in particular, „pop“ - and then „rock“ music);

- ecological campaigns (conducted under the leadership of Zalygin against the pollution of Lake Baikal, as well as against the rotation of Siberian rivers in Central Asia);
- criticism of economic degradation by young „technocrats“, who often worked in prestigious scientific teams remote from the center (for example, in Siberia);
- the creation of works of non-conformist character in all areas of intellectual and artistic creativity (and who were waiting for their time in drawers of writing desks or in the workshops of their authors).

All these directions and forms of protest will be recognized and blossomed during the period of „glasnost“.

Below, I will present a translation of the interviews of Soviet intellectuals about their daily life, their attitude to the state, dissidents and their overcoming the daily routine.

#### **G. Reznik, lawyer, 1938 - ...**

**About abstractionism and communism party:** “I did not become a Komsomol member by pure chance: I was accepted not individually, and I was at competitions. Moreover, when I became an investigator in the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Kazakhstan, they decided to recommend me to the party. The secretary of the party organization invited me to talk. He said: “Genry Markovich, you are such an active, outstanding sportsman, it's time to enter the party.” I answer: “Thank you, great, but I cannot.” “Why?” In addition, I said, “I think that it is not worthy. I cannot be insincere before the party and frankly confess to you: I like abstract painting.” You cannot imagine the horror that was shown in his eyes. Indeed, recently Khrushchev organized a pogrom of the exhibition of contemporary art in the Manege. I continued: “I understand that this is not good, but I cannot do anything with myself!” I strained my knowledge poor: Picasso, the “blue” period, and the “pink” period. So I got rid of membership in the CPSU.”

**About book`s influence:** “When I returned to Moscow to graduate school, fate brought me with critically thinking people, who knew all about this country: with writer Boris Balter, poet Naum Korzhavin, lawyer Inga Mikhailovskaya. And of course, already was samizdat, Milovan Djilas – “New class”. In the lists of anti-Soviet literature, this book was in the first place, because the author was the second person of the Yugoslav Communist Party, Tito's deputy. The second book is “Technology of Power” by Avtorkhanov. Moreover, after these books I have already comprehended the price of the Soviet regime. Then there was the year 1968, which finally formed Genry Reznik – as anti-Soviet person.”

## **Y. Mamleev, philosopher, writer, dissident, 1931-2015**

**About forbidden literature:** “The general range of humanitarian problems was discussed, first of all prohibitions - from Orthodox theology to the mystical teachings of the East. There was such a strange period when in the Lenin Library suddenly access to mystical literature of a different order opened. All that you want was there! Because the management decided that such knowledge can be interested for historians. They thought that the Soviet youth had already been so reformed in the spirit of atheism-materialism that no one would be interested in this, and opened the archives. They began to read, they began to fall into freedom, but not for long, maybe for three or four years, and then realized, they were of keen interest, and were banned.”

**About worktime:** “Very interesting contact was with so-called ordinary people. I went to the factory, talked with them. They talked about life, about some experiences of their own, about football, about sports, about children. Alcohol occupied, of course, a huge place in their life. There were a lot of beer stalls, beer barrels stood on the street. However, it is interesting that they worked well. I was just surprised when sometimes I came to the kitchen factories at the factory: they were very high quality and equipped well. There was a very good meal there. Delicious. Meat all the time. Every day they ate meat. Soups, borscht - all this was for a pittance. I noticed that a bottle of vodka always appeared from under the floor somewhere in the lunch break, they drank 100 grams and went to the second shift. Nevertheless, they worked! Of course, with this way of life, labor productivity was not class, unlike the space or military industry, where everything was at the highest level.”

**About dissidents:** “We did not argue about politics as dissidents. It seemed to us that fighting with the authorities is the same as fighting an earthquake. Eventually, any power, any civilization ends and another begins. But it is not worth fighting. Do not interfere with the work of the Lord God. What have begun - necessarily ends. The end will inevitably happen, and when - is no longer in our power. But then many thought that the Soviet government was forever, and believed that it was necessary to leave, that they would not let them breathe. Meanwhile, the days of Soviet power were already numbered. We must admit that in the Soviet Union there was a lot of positive aspects and people in the majority were decent and honest, often immersed in the life of the culture. The main disadvantages were the dominance of one ideology, which had already outlived itself, and in the absence of the necessary reforms that would give the political life greater adequacy. Of course, the reforms were necessary, but they had to be carried out without destructive and fatal consequences.”

## **L. Yuzefovich, writer, historian, 1947 - ...**

**About a tie as a social marker:** “The welfare of the family could be judged by the pioneer tie. There were satin ties, and there were silk. Silk - light red. It is shown in films about the Soviet Union, but children of wealthy parents or the neatest girls wore this tie usually. Most of the children's ties were satin, darker. They could not be tied with a neat knot; the knot always frowned a little. Our family was considered wealthy, my father was the head of the barrel shop, but I refused to wear a silk tie. The boys considered this shameful. In general, to wear new beautiful things was a shame, because it was a shame to be rich. It was honorable to come from a proletarian family, but financially, of course, the son of the shop manager was better than the son of a turner or fabric worker. However, their difference in income and lifestyle was not too great. My mother, being a doctor, an eye surgeon, was washing the houses in a trough, and rinsing in the river. I helped her. On Sunday evenings, women from different social strata were rinsing clothes; it was a kind of women's club.”

#### **E. Uralova, actor, 1940 - ...**

**About everyday life:** “I lived in Leningrad in a working family. Dad worked at the factory. Politics were not discussed at home, but the tension was still felt: dad was Jewish. So what is a thaw? I recognized this word when I arrived in Moscow. I moved in 1965, when a young man died, for whom I was going to get married, and I could not stay in Leningrad any more. In Moscow, I met with Wizbor and here I heard about thaw. While I stayed in Leningrad at the Theater Institute, other problems hammered my head. A whole day of rehearsals, a library, theaters, movies. I still had to work, because I studied at the evening faculty. I worked as a janitor, laboratory assistant. In the forensic laboratory we did sections, studied them under a microscope - that was interesting! I really liked it and I was even invited to go to study at the Medical Institute.”

**About Stalin`s death:** “I remembered how Stalin died. I was given a chance to learn and read a poem in his honor on the school radio, and I was very proud of it. And at the last moment my speech was canceled. I think it was because of my last name - Treytman. I was very worried. At school, all because of death sobbed. My parents did not cry at home. They were silent, pursed their lips. I also remembered, then when Stalin died, I thought: “Horror! What about slogans?” It bothered me the most. How are we going to shout now, “the great Malenkov”? But it's ugly, does not sound. “Great Stalin! Leader and teacher Stalin!” - that`s great. Idiotic absolute experience. Simply in Leningrad, the children were, I think, much naive, simpler, and maybe dumber in the political sense.”

**About Thaw:** “At home we did not discuss politics, so I did not hear about congress. It passed me by. In what year was it? In 1956? A-ah, this is the year when I played in the school drama circle. When I arrived in Moscow, I heard a “thaw, thaw”. Usually they talked about it in the kitchens, whispering. However, for a short time I heard this word: after 1968, it disappeared from everyday life. When the tanks entered Czechoslovakia, everyone began to fear again, afraid of marginal books. Did not talk, did not meet. And the thaw ended.”

## **Homo Soveticus**

*Comrade Stalin is almost 60 years lies in a grave, but his relentless Michurin activity on the breeding of the Homo Soveticus still bears fruits*

It is believed that the concept of „Homo soveticus“ has spread in the scientific and popular literature due to the same social and psychological novel (1982) of the Russian Soviet philosopher, logician and satirical writer Alexander Zinoviev (1922-2006). Zinoviev worked in Moscow State University as head of the department of logic, professor. He was invited to numerous foreign conferences, but he did not go for one. After the publication of the book „Yawning heights“ in 1976, where in an ironic form described the social life in the Soviet Union, the author was deprived of all ranks, military awards for participation in the Great Patriotic War and expelled from work, offering to go to jail, or to emigrate. Zinoviev chose emigration. In August 6, 1978 with his family moved to Munich, where he worked as a professor at the university.

„Homo soveticus“ do not adhere to a clear position, they do not defend their opinion, they are unstable, and in relation to things that happen to them or around them, then, in their opinion, it „just happens ...“, „time was so ...“, „the system should ...“ Quite often, people belonging to this category do not have a sense of responsibility for what they do. The Soviet man has not learned to control himself, but constantly takes the lead of others, not having obtained the desired result, looks for the cause not in itself, but looks for various „pests“, „enemies“, „Jews“... People in this category primarily try to find faults with other people, thereby exposing their own.

The basis for „homo soveticus“ was to be an ideal communistic type of personality, but the paradox is that the reality of the totalitarian regime created such a type of person that radically differed from the communist ideals. But the main characteristic feature of „homo soveticus“ was the splitting of the personality into several components, when a person thinks one thing, says another, and does or intends to do something quite different. Conformism, that is adaptation, passive perception of the existing order of things, lack of autonomy in society, fear of conflicts

and the need for making own decisions, lack of commitment to risk, distrust of the new, hostility to change, intolerance of other opinions and behavior different from one's own.

According to the historian Andrei Zubov, Homo Sovieticus was the result of a deep negative selection: “The best, the most honest and cultured were killed or deprived by prisons to create a family and raise children, and the worst, those who set about creating a new person, or those, who silently agreed with the new authorities, could „multiply and multiply“. One of the decisive factors in the formation of Homo Sovieticus was the abolition of private property in the USSR. In the opinion of the American historian, the researcher of Russia Richard Pipes, private property is the prerequisite of a free society, only a person with property works meaningfully, he is a responsible citizen and protects democratic institutions that, in turn, protect his property.

But, perhaps, it is worth looking into a more ancient history, at least in the 16th century, when Ivan the Terrible built a centralized state, strengthened the foundations of serfdom, subordinated Novgorod and Pskov to the Moscow Principality and thereby destroyed the sprouts of democracy that existed there. Centuries of serfdom, peasant communal consciousness, the cult of supreme power, supported by Orthodoxy, turned Russia into a convenient testing ground for the Soviet experiment.

Two decades after the abolition of Soviet power in Russia, the „sovok“ is alive and largely continues to shape the life of post-communist Russia, although it has mutated. As the writer Vladimir Sorokin noted, „mentality remained Soviet, but already knows what quality is.“ This category forms the backbone of the Russian electorate: the consciousness of people brought up in the conditions of state paternalism is most vulnerable to manipulation, and therefore the rhetoric of the incumbent authorities, especially in the pre-election period, is mainly addressed to them.

Vladimir Putin acts as a social behaviorist, at the right moment stimulating the necessary parts of the archaic public consciousness Homo Sovieticus: reanimated the melody of the Stalinist anthem, declared the collapse of the USSR the main event of the 20th century, delivered aggressive anti-Western speech at the Munich security conference, etc. „Putin presses on Soviet mythology in our mind, plays on nostalgia for the power in which the people lived most of their lives,“ says Ulyanovsk activist of the „Other Russia“ Konstantin Troshin. The teacher of the Ulyanovsk State Technical University Konstantin Gorshkov suggests that the Soviets of modern power verticals, inherited from the Soviet structures their worst features: extreme bureaucratization, corruption, lack of will in everything that does not concern filling their own pockets.

Of course, Homo Sovieticus is heterogeneous: the outgoing „generation of winners“ in the Great Patriotic War is different from the „children of war“, and those from the „lost generation“ that grew up in the years of stagnation. The generation of stagnation today ends work. These are not old yet pensioners and represent the „bottom“ mass of Homo Sovieticus, believes Gorshkov.

The director of the analytical Levada Center, sociologist Lev Gudkov, explains the renaissance of Homo Sovieticus in Russia in that, with external changes in power, its structure remained the same: „As in the heyday of communism, power is not controlled by society ... The social system is determined by dependent courts, politicized by the police and censorship in mass media“.

Head of the Department of Philosophy of the Ulyanovsk State University, Doctor of Philosophy Valentin Bazhanov recalls that one of the features of Homo Sovieticus is the fear of superiors, and states that in the 2000s this fear returned in Russia. Bazhanov refuses to consider the 1990's as „dashing“: yes, it was difficult, there was chaos, he says, but there was relative freedom. When Putin came to power, the „soviet“ tradition of doublethinking and servility returned.

Explaining the mechanism of reproduction of Homo Sovieticus, Professor Bazhanov proposes a socio-psychological version based on Jung's archetypes: „Such structures latently exist in the public unconscious and under certain conditions they manifest themselves. In this case, the conditions that showed the archetype of Homo Sovieticus are political economy, and they are set by the actions of the vertical power that we have at the moment.“ Thus, the authoritarian organization of power restored to life the worst features archetypally laid in the nation.

Independent researcher Lyudmila Novikova in the great article „Mechanisms of psychological protection of a person in conditions of a totalitarian regime“ explains the origin of the „Soviet man“ from the point of view of a psychologist. „A totalitarian environment affects everyone,“ she writes. - A person is forced to adapt to it, because in a rigid totalitarian atmosphere there is no choice. Adapting, he himself changes through time.“ The author gives a detailed classification of the „protective mechanisms of the psyche“ that a person includes to ease the pressure of the system or even just to survive physically in it, but find a moral justification for his adaptation. It is curious that authoritarian power exploits the same mechanisms with the aim of manipulating the consciousness of citizens, including today. For example, in accordance with the mechanism of „rationalization“ and „moralization,“ instead of demanding the release of political prisoners, it is possible, like Stalin's, to reassure ourselves that

„we do not have innocent people“, or to say how Vladimir Putin speaks about Khodorkovsky: „A thief should sit in jail“.

The defensive mechanism - „displacement“ allows you to send dissatisfaction with the regime to search for external and internal enemies: „NATO approaches our borders...There are those inside the country who spy from foreign embassies“ (from Putin's speech at a meeting with his supporters in November 2007).

The mechanism of „idealization“: „Dear and Beloved Comrade Stalin“, „The outstanding figure of the communist movement, the great continuer of Lenin is Leonid Brezhnev“, „My idol is Putin. He is a Chechen, he is also Russian. And he gave us everything on this earth“ (from an interview with Ramzan Kadyrov to Ogonek magazine, September 6, 2011). Novikov describes 14 mechanisms of this type, the action of which is illustrated by examples from both the Soviet past and contemporary Russian life. This suggests that Homo Sovieticus either reintroduced mental protective mechanisms into everyday practice, or never refused them.

Sociologist Lev Gudkov offers a „territorial-economic“ explanation for the reproduction of Homo Sovieticus. In large cities, the market economy is more visible, and dependence on power is weaker, political consciousness here is more mobile. But two-thirds of Russia's population lives in the countryside and in small towns. „It is in this zone of depression and poverty that a Soviet man is reproduced. In large cities, the potential represented by supporters of reforms is accumulating, but it is suppressed by the conservative periphery,“ says Gudkov.

The archaic, authoritarian structure of Russian power, the lack or underdevelopment of democratic institutions do not provide a basis for political and technological modernization of Russia. When there is nothing to lean on in the present, apart from oil and gas, one has to look for ideological support in the past. The government regularly appeals to the achievements of the past as an ideological pillar of future development.

Young people, who never lived in the USSR, learn about it from Soviet films and from stories of parents, grandfathers and grandmothers. Here the cultural mechanism of the translation of Homo Sovieticus is included: the pomaded image of the Soviets, broadcast by the authorities, and supported by family legends. According to the poll of the Levada Center, 60 percent of the children took stories from their relatives, that morality in Soviet times was still better than now.

Sociologist Elena Omelchenko adds that young people react to the expansion of the consumer culture space with anti-capitalist sentiments, embodying them in the aesthetics of the Soviet past: „As soon as glamor and majorism arise, young people grow in the mood of injustice and

dishonesty, protest against the organization of the world in which a rigid life inequality. As a symbol of protest, young people use some Soviet symbols.“

„Sovok“ - this is an automatic member of the „party TV“, but the Internet audience has been competing with the TV audience. „In the wake of the new generation nostalgic for the Soviet system, two human flows come, conventionally liberal and conventionally left: the first are the same „angry citizens“, the „creative class“, the second is the young leftists and nationalists who set themselves independent ideological tasks, without looking back On the USSR.

The model of social claims is extremely common in analyzes of Eastern European socialist systems. Her version is contained, for example, in the well-known book by Slava Zhizek "The Sublime Object Ideology", where this model is used to analyze how works Communist ideology of the socialist state. Earlier, in 1978, a similar model for describing the subject of the socialist. The state was used by a Czech dissident writer Zizek. Especially see the chapter „How Marx invented the symptom“. Zizek is developing a model of a pretentious plot, proposed by Sloterdijk. Vaclav Havel in the famous article „Power is powerless“. According to Havel, most citizens are socialists and Czechoslovakia lived „in lies“: publicly they behaved as if official ideological slogans and statements of the party. The expression of the truth, in which they believe, being in their personal life, about themselves, considering them a lie. Pretending behavior, Havel wrote, gave opportunity for Czechoslovak citizens to protect their privacy from interference and avoid the problems associated with this interference. Havel condemned this public pretense, considering it a manifestation of the immoral conformism with power.

In all these examples, the subject is in fact divided in two - into a public mask of pretense and a private true self. This approach has some advantage over previous theories of ideology, since it shows that for successful functioning ideology is not necessary for the subject to perceive ideological representation as an indisputable truth, that is, believed into it. If ideology forces the subject to pretend, as if he believes, it is also quite successful.

## **The Czechs and their Communism, Past and Present**

One must first know one's past well to be able to reflect on it or adjust to it. Not only is today's Czech Republic lacking the means to get to know its own past well, there is no political or social consensus for it to even start doing so. In fact, a political scientist has observed that if one looks at today's Czech society, "It looks as if Czech communism had never existed." Contemporary history, including communist history, is marginal in the Czech Republic. It is barely taught in the universities, let alone in high schools, and the activities of the Prague Institute of Contemporary History remains rather modest in scope.

Muriel Blaive

According to Marxist-Leninist theory, the communist party represents the working class-the revolutionary proletariat-whose interests it champions against those of the capitalist bourgeoisie. The period between the fall of a bourgeois state and the attainment of communism is a subject on which Marx was reticent, believing that the state would "wither away" once the workers took power. Lenin, facing a real revolution and the possibility that the communist party might be able to seize power, put theoretical subtleties to the side. He suggested that the fall of the bourgeois state (a label of questionable accuracy when applied to tsarist Russia) would be followed by a transitional state characterized by socialism and communist party rule-the "dictatorship of the proletariat."

In practice, the transition from this phase to true communism has proved to be a good deal lengthier than Lenin anticipated. His suggestion that the "dictatorship of the proletariat" should last until 1923 in the Soviet Union serves as a general commentary on the disparity between theory and practice. Once in power, the communist party has behaved very much like other entrenched bureaucracies, and its revolutionary mandate has been lost in the tendency of those in power to wish to remain so. The Communist Party of Czechoslovak (Komunistická strana Československa -KSC), which was founded in 1921, came to power in 1948. Because of the KSC's mandate to be the workers' party, questions about the social background of party members took on a particular salience. The KSC was often reticent with precise details about its members, and the question of how many in the party actually belonged to the revolutionary proletariat became a delicate one. Official statements appeared to overstate the percentage of workers within the party's ranks. Nonetheless, a number of trends were clear. The proportion of workers in the KSC was at its highest (approximately 60 percent of the total membership) after World War II but before the party took power in 1948. After that time, the percentage of workers in the party fell steadily to a low of an estimated one-quarter of the membership in 1970. In the early

1970s, the official media decried the “grave imbalance,” noting that “the present class and social structure of the party membership is not in conformity with the party's role as the vanguard of the working class.” In highly industrialized central Bohemia, to cite one example, only one in every thirty-five workers was a party member, while one in every five administrators was. In 1976, after intensive efforts to recruit workers, the number of workers rose to one-third of the KSC membership, i.e., approximately its 1962 level. In the 1980s, driven by the need for intensive economic development, the party relaxed its rigid rule about young workers' priority in admissions and allowed district and regional committees to be flexible in their recruitment policy, as long as the overall proportion of workers did not decrease. The average age of party members has shown a comparable trend. In the late 1960s, fewer than 30 percent of party members were under thirty-five years of age, nearly 20 percent were over sixty, and roughly half were forty-six or older. The quip in 1971, a half-century after the party's founding in Czechoslovakia, was “After fifty years, a party of fifty-year-olds.” There was a determined effort to attract younger members to the party in the middle to late 1920s; one strategy was to recruit children of parents who were KSC members. The party sent letters to the youngsters' schools and their parents' employers, encouraging the children to join. By early 1980 approximately one-third of KSC members were thirty-five years of age or younger. In 1983 the average age of the “leading cadre” was still estimated at fifty. Whatever the social composition of the party, it effectively functions as a ruling elite—a group not known for self-abnegation. As an elite, it allows the talented and/or politically agile significant mobility. Workers might have made up a minority of the party's membership, but many members (estimates vary from one-half to two-thirds) began their careers as workers. Although they tend to exaggerate their humble origins, many functionaries have clearly come from the working class. Several policies have increased the social mobility of party members. Foremost was doubtless the process of nationalization, started after World War II, when scores of politically active workers assumed managerial-level positions. Periodic purges have played a role as well, permitting the politically compliant to replace those less so. The numerous education programs offered by the KSC for its members also represented a significant avenue of mobility, as did policies of preferential admissions to secondary schools and universities; these policies favored the children of workers and agricultural cooperative members especially. It is hardly surprising that the KSC membership has guarded its perquisites. Aside from special shops, hotels, hospitals, and better housing for members, KSC members stood a better chance of obtaining visas for study or travel abroad (especially to the West). Nonmembers realized that their possibilities for advancement in the workplace were severely limited. For anyone in a professional position, KSC membership was a sine qua non for promotion. Part of the decline in workers as a proportion of total membership

resulted from the rapid increase in the number of intelligentsia joining the party soon after the communists took power. In the 1980s most economic managers, executives in public administration, and university professors were KSC members. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the official media have denounced party members' lack of devotion to the pursuit of KSC policies and goals. Complaints have ranged from members' refusal to display flags from their apartment windows on festive occasions to their failure to show up for party work brigades, attend meetings, or pay dues; a significant minority of members have tended to underreport their incomes (the basis for assessing dues). In 1970, after a purge of approximately one-third of the membership, an average of less than one-half the remaining members attended meetings. Perhaps one-third of the members were consistently recalcitrant in participating in KSC activities. In 1983 one primary party branch in the Prague-West district was so unmoved by admonishments that it had to be disbanded and its members dispersed among other organizations. In part, this was a measure of disaffection with Czechoslovakia's thoroughgoing subservience to Soviet hegemony, a Svejikian response to the lack of political economic autonomy. It was also a reflection of the purge's targets. Those expelled were often the ideologically motivated, the ones for whom developing socialism with a human face represented a significant goal; those who were simply opportunistic survived the purges more easily.

Some of the historical theses developed during the communist era have not really been challenged yet, especially where the 1950s are concerned. A first example of this inability to challenge history is the case concerning one of the most famous sentences written by the regime historian Karel Kaplan. In the summer of 1968, Karel Kaplan wrote, "One fact is particularly important: in Czechoslovakia, the great political show trials started in 1950, at the time where they had elsewhere already reached an end and that is why the first court sentences already resulted in more deaths than the trials in all the popular democracies put together." This sentence was quoted by nearly every book on the subject written since then. This belief became almost mythical, and systematic distortions credited Karel Kaplan with stating that Czechoslovakia (not just the Czechoslovak communists but the whole population) has more suffered from terror (not just from political trials) than all the other popular democracies put together for the whole communist period (and not just in 1950). Ever since the archives opened in former satellite countries, it has become clear that neither the political trials against communists nor the politics of terror as a whole have resulted in more casualties in Czechoslovakia than elsewhere – let alone than in all the other communist countries put together. Yet this theory has not been clearly challenged by Czech historians and is still regularly quoted in works relating to the communist era – albeit mostly by non-Czech historians.

A second example showing the Czech difficulty in dealing with the communist past is the aborted project to create an institute to document the totalitarian regime. One of the purposes of this proposed law, started in 2001, was to overcome the unwillingness of the archivists. Considering their patent hostility expressed in public statements toward any measure which would favor greater access to archive materials, it was said that the members of Parliament feared that the archivists would “sabotage by any possible means the communication of the files to the public” after opening the Secret Police files. The introduction of this proposed law explicitly refers to the Gauck Institute and the Institute for National Remembrance (IPN), which were similar to institutions in Germany and Poland that were to serve as models. Interestingly, the preamble of the proposed law states: “Any people who is not familiar with its own past is doomed to see it repeat itself. The Parliament of the Czech Republic, aware of the necessity to deal with its communist past, expresses its will to study and to remind the existence of the criminal and reprehensible organizations based on the Czechoslovak Communist Party’s ideology, which aimed at repressing human rights and democratic principles between 1948 and 1989.”

This institute had a two-fold task. The first one was to supervise the research, collection and analysis of data concerning the communist regime. Special attention was to be dedicated to the “analysis of the internal and external factors which made possible the settlement and preservation of the totalitarian regime” (although the term “totalitarian” was never defined). This statement constituted in itself quite a scathing criticism of the historians’ work, since it implicated that this work, their work, had not yet been completed. It is therefore not very surprising that they collectively opposed its creation. The institute’s second task was to centralize, manage and open to the public the files of the Secret Police (StB.) All the local depositaries were to transfer their archival funds to this central institution before March 31, 2003. In reality, this project was so hotly debated that the Parliament failed to reach an agreement and it never came into being. The Czech Republic, unlike Germany and Poland, failed to set up a structure capable of managing or dealing with its national collective memory of communism.

Faced with this unwillingness to reopen certain chapters of Czechoslovak history, this problematic relationship to the past can only be explained by this in-itself-problematic past. It is precisely because Czech society has entertained an ambiguous relationship with communism that it has problems dealing today with its communist past. This ambiguity is reflected in the political landscape since 1990, which more than one observer has described as “paradoxical.” On the one hand, an unreformed and proud Communist Party not only still exists, but still receives around

20% of the votes (it is now ahead of the Social Democrats in terms of voters' preferences for the next elections). On the other hand, the rest of the political elites paid lip service to a rather primitive anti-communism, especially in the 1990s, and for a long time pretended that they would never work together with the communists (although things are actually quite different at the local level). "Neither a hero, nor an executioner,' but firmly decided to escape this unpleasant collective past," could have been the slogan of Prime Minister Václav Klaus.

There is indeed an apparent paradox between this haughty surviving symbol of the past – the Communist Party – and the parallel willingness of the Czechs to turn their back on the past. I will solve this paradox by exploring two theses. First, the Czechs define themselves culturally and politically as a democratic nation, but socially and economically as an egalitarian one, which rendered them particularly pervious to the Communist ideal. Second, many associated the communist period with great stability in the Czech standard of living. The quality of life and personal comfort communism ensured, even if modest, was unquestionable, and therefore certain nostalgia for the communist past still exists.

The ambiguity of the expression "dealing with the past" in Czech (vyrovnávání se s minulostí) reflects this duality. It refers to either something like an acquittal, or to something like a settlement of accounts. One would then either acquit himself of, or adjust to, his or her own past or, on the contrary, settle his or her accounts with it. On one hand, the individual is somehow guilty – for instance, guilty of having done little or nothing against the regime. On the other hand, he is somehow a victim – either a direct political victim or a victim of the circumstances – of the fate which forced him to live in this country at that time. There is a certain vacillation between anger and shame.

So what describes the current Czech mindset – shame, anger, a mixture of the two, or something else? A tour of the past is necessary in any case. I will show how the Czech communist regime found a solid basis in the country and was able to attract a sizable portion of the population. I will illustrate using two perspectives: an ideological (or at least political) one between 1945 and 1948 – that is, at the time when the post-World War II regime settled down – and an economic one in 1956.

### **Comparative perspective**

It is useful to first examine the historical context in which the Czechoslovak Communist Party took its dominant position on the political scene in 1945. As reminded by the Czech-born

American political scientist Edward Taborsky, conditions in Czechoslovakia in 1945 were particularly favorable to communism. Czechoslovakia was a highly industrialized country – indeed, it was the least rural of all Moscow’s satellites. Furthermore, the state had traditionally owned part of the business enterprises and there was no hostility from the population toward public intervention in the economy. Therefore, even the private entrepreneurs were used to relying on state support. The Communist Party was a legally formed and powerful party between the two world wars, and a social ideology was firmly established among workers and intellectuals. Indeed, social egalitarianism was a prevailing ideal at the time, and a certain Russophile sentiment (against the “German danger”) was widespread. Last, but important to note, religion exerted a small influence only in two provinces – in Bohemia, and a bit stronger influence in Moravia.

Moreover, a series of factors relating to the settlement of the Second World War quite clearly distinguished Czechoslovakia from its Polish and Hungarian neighbors. First and foremost, Czechoslovakia was considered a victor of the war. In actuality, the Red Army freed Czechoslovakia, and it was not even a disguised occupation -the Red Army left the Czechoslovak territory together with the American forces on December 1, 1945. The Soviet secret police (the “NKVD”) didn’t behave as if on conquered soil, however, and the country did not suffer deportations of its citizens to the USSR, or massive plundering, looting or raping. It also did not have to pay war reparations; on the contrary, it received some reparations from Germany and Hungary. Lastly, its infrastructure was not dismantled and shipped to the USSR, as in the cases of Poland and Hungary.

Furthermore, the Czech population was not nearly as Russophobic as the populations in Poland and Hungary (even though the Czechs’ alleged Russophilia was exaggerated). More accurately, the few skeptical currents which existed in the Czech culture towards the Soviet Union were not in the least likely to offset the haunting fear of Germany which prevailed at the time. Finally, Czechoslovakia was the only one of the three countries which never had any important territorial conflicts with the USSR (Subcarpathian Ruthenia, which went to the Ukraine in 1945, had never been a historical land of the Bohemian crown and its loss was in no way a tragedy). Quite the opposite was in fact true. Thanks to the Red Army, Czechoslovakia recovered, without any strings attached, the territories it had been deprived of in 1938 and 1939 by Germany, Poland and Hungary (i.e., the Sudetenland, the Tesin region and Southern Slovakia, respectively). To sum up, Czechoslovakia was all the more predisposed to enter the socialist camp in 1945 because of the prevailing traumatic memory of the Munich Agreement, when the Western democracies France and Great Britain abandoned their ally Czechoslovakia to Hitler’s

armies. Most importantly, the USSR opposed Czech nationalism on almost no grounds, thus rendering the latter exceptionally compatible with communism (the situation was not as “favorable” in Slovakia but Slovakia didn’t have much to say in the post-war Republic.)

Under these circumstances, it is not really surprising that the Communists largely won the free elections of 1946. The Communist Party polled 38% of the votes in the whole country, but actually won up to 40% in the Czech lands and even 43% in Bohemia. Considering the proportional electoral system, this constituted a really high score and the Czechoslovak Communist Party (the KSC) was by far the most popular political party. This, however, was not enough. Klement Gottwald, the President of the Communist Party and Prime Minister of Czechoslovakia, declared that he wanted the absolute majority of votes at the next elections, scheduled for May 1948. To succeed in this “conquest of 51% of the electorate,” as the slogan went, Gottwald based his political campaign on the pragmatic assumption that Party members would vote for the Party. The detailed results from 1946 showed that the KSC even received approximately two votes per member.

After 1945, all the new “popular democracies” implemented a policy of massive recruitment on Stalin’s orders, the common purpose being to gain the support of the population. But Czechoslovakia distinguished itself in this matter. The doors of its Communist Party were open to all, particularly to all social classes. Restrictions were placed only on so-called “Trotskyites” (without any further definition), collaborators of the Nazi regime imposed on Bohemia and Moravia between 1939 and 1945, and Sudeten Germans, while candidates suspected of “careerism” were to undergo a six-month trial period. With the explicit aim of getting at least three million votes (i.e. approx. 60% of the national vote) at the May 1948 elections, Gottwald ordered at the summer of 1947 to carry on with the campaign and to recruit up to 1,500,000 members. Surprisingly, after February 1948 and the coup which left the Communists alone in power, the campaign sped up. On February 29, 1948, the target was raised to recruit two million members before the May elections. The scores of those newly accepted shareholders of victory rose at a breathtaking speed: the numbers rose from over 147,004 in March 1948 to more than 188,398 in April, rose yet again to more than 235,146 in May, and then increased by more than 175,378 in June. Ten thousand membership cards were issued daily. The principle of free elections was officially discarded on April 5, 1948 with the setting up of a single list, but this apparently had little or no influence on the recruiting policy.

At the end of 1948, the KSC reached a pinnacle in the history of Communism, if not in the history of political parties, in achieving two and half million party members from a total population of eleven million. This represented an incredible 23% of the total population, or one

out of every three adults. In fact, because the members were mainly concentrated in the Czech lands, it actually represented 49.2% of the active Czech population. The Czechoslovak Communist Party thus had twice as many members as the total population in Hungary, and almost four times as many members as in Poland's total population.

At this stage in the analysis, two questions come to mind. Were people forced to enter the Party, or did they join voluntarily? Secondly, why did the KSC pursue its recruitment policy after February 1948, in direct contradiction to Stalin's doctrine that "the class struggle intensifies with the building of socialism?"

The answer to the first question can be found in the reaction of an interesting group of the population to the KSC recruitment campaign between 1945 and 1948 – the so-called "employees." In the Czechoslovak case, this category had a very wide meaning, since it included professions such as professors, physicians, lawyers, engineers, technical workers, teachers, nurses, and any profession where a person was in an employer's (particularly the State's) pay. This group therefore included most of the "intelligentsia." In 1946, this group was the least represented in the KSC. It represented 9.2% of all party members, although it represented 16.7% of the active population. In February of 1948, despite Gottwald's repeated efforts to seduce the "bourgeoisie," the percentage of "employee" Party members had sunk to 5.6%.

The situation started to change only after February 1948. The middle class indeed became the most zealous subscribers to the Communist Party between February and December 1948. First and foremost were the State employees – with 6.3 times more entries to the Party between February and June than before February, and 8.7 times more entries between June and December. Next were the regional and local public administration employees. This massive entry brought their representation in the Party practically up to a level proportionate to their weight in society.

Their integration strategy was obvious. Since the Communist Party was meant to rule over the State after the coup of February 1948, the middle class made its own provision for the future by taking the side of the victors as long as there was still time. Indeed, they didn't have much of a choice if they wanted to avoid being ostracized by the new regime. But direct coercion cases seem to have been relatively sparse, which confirms the hypothesis that the public's acceptance of the Communist Party was a partly forced but also partly voluntary "compromise." It might be useful here to remind that the Communist Party's pressure was at least as strong in Poland and Hungary in inciting the people to become members, but that it never succeeded in convincing those much more reticent populations. What could be called a certain Czech "opportunism" (the

Slovak numbers remaining very modest) reveals a different adaptation strategy. In this strategy, the Czech public didn't differ in any way from its political elites. Both President Benes and the National Assembly, although democratically elected, surrendered to the Communists without the faintest show of resistance. Only nine representatives of the democratic camp renounced their parliamentary seats between February 25 and March 10, 1948, when the Parliament met for the first time since the Communists took over. During this meeting, Gottwald was greeted with loud applause and a standing ovation from the members of Parliament, and his speech received 230 votes in favor of his programs and 0 votes against.

Let us not forget that if the Communists failed to bump up against any ideological obstacles on their road to power, it is in part thanks to the Democrats, who let themselves be hoaxed by the promise of a "socialist democracy" utopia. As Minister of Commerce Hubert Ripka put it, "We want to ... create a new social order, which means to radically change the economic structure according to socialist principles. We are perpetuating the constructive energy and the creative spirit of our people because it is a way to offer a real hope that our political democracy, which showed its value under the First Republic, will be sustained and strengthened by the economic and social democracy. ... I am convinced that we will succeed within a few years to build an efficient socialist democracy in Central Europe." Between the "democratic socialism" of the Communists and the "socialist democracy" of the Democrats, the country was decidedly – and dangerously – sliding down the slope of socialism.

As for the potential recalcitrants who would possibly have voted for democracy without socialism, the Democrats came to a direct understanding with the Communists to exclude them from the political game. The right-wing political parties were nothing short of ousted in the name of their alleged collaboration with the Nazis. Three basic principles were adopted before the May 1946 elections by all authorized government parties: 1) no party may criticize the government's policies; 2) no party may question the government's pro-Soviet orientation; and 3) all parties shall make publicly clear that they intend to pursue the National Front policy after the elections. If all political parties belonged to the government, all intended to remain in it after the elections, and all agreed to refrain from any criticism of its policies, one might as well wonder what the sense of these elections was. If the Communists undermined democracy, the Democrats definitely didn't adequately stand up to it either.

Coming back to the end of 1948, if such a high proportion of the adult population was enrolled in the Communist Party, and if we take into account the 150,000 or so persons who are said to have been informers of the Secret Police (StB) between 1948 and 1968, we must conclude that the Communists concentrated an impressive amount of power in their hands. The

system sustained this so-called “popular support,” meaning that when one became a Party member, one was under a considerable amount of pressure to support its policies. All members had to attend demonstrations, “voluntary” socialist brigades, and militant meetings, or even “offer” to work extra hours for causes like the Korean War or the fight against American barbarism. Fear, opportunism and conviction were the mixed feelings which constituted the cement of a finely supervised Communist “popular enthusiasm.” Moreover, just as it became very difficult to get into the Party in the 1950s, it was just as hard to get out of it (unless one was purposefully excluded from it). Despite the purges which affected the KSC like all other Communist Parties, its membership rate remained far higher than those of any other “popular democracies.” In 1962, Czechoslovakia retained the world’s highest percentage of Party members, with 17.8% of its adult population enrolled in the party, compared to 7.6% in Poland and 7.1% in Hungary.

The way the KSC membership was constructed between 1945 and 1948 practically doomed its stability, owing to the fact that the regime structures were not challenged either from “above” (as was the case in the 1960s, a process which eventually led to the 1968 Prague Spring) or from serious social pressure, as in 1989. The case of the “employees” illustrates the ambivalence of Czech society toward communism. Surely none of them supported the dictatorship, but very few were willing to resort to violence or other risky means to challenge a regime which did offer serious social and ideological benefits.

In 1956, the Czechs and Slovaks watched their Polish and Hungarian neighbors rebel against the Communist regime, but showed no eagerness to join them. This apparent docility is first and foremost a political translation of a relatively high standard of living. People were surely not in favor of the Communist regime; but they were just as surely pacified by relatively satisfying conditions of life.

After World War II, Czechoslovakia was one of the ten richest countries in the world. Its high industrial potential had not been very damaged by the war, and if it did suffer under Soviet rule between 1948 and 1953, the situation steadily improved. American diplomats also noticed the extent to which the regime was willing to compromise with the population to maintain its standard of living. After 1953, the regime increased the tempo of price reductions, maintained salary raises and showed other efforts to keep shops well supplied. The economic expert from the French embassy confirmed a positive economic outlook for Czechoslovakia: shops had been “better and better supplied” since 1955, the quality of goods was “improving”, employees’ birthdays and namedays were celebrated with wine and pastries at work, the population was better-groomed, automobile traffic had densified to the point of creating a few traffic-jams at the

end of week-ends, and the population had some meager savings. Even before the 1956 Hungarian revolution and Czechoslovakia's show of passivity, he concluded: "These various aspects tend to prove that the population is not 'unhappy.'"

Czechoslovakia's relatively privileged economic situation was mentioned a good hundred times by the citizens themselves in the Secret Police's accounts of the year 1956, as an explaining factor of the prevailing "calm" in their country. If the standard of living was much higher in Czechoslovakia than in Poland or Hungary, was it worth the fight? A so-called "kulak" believed that this regime was "bad" but that it was not worth a fight similar to the one that took place in Hungary. A priest preferred a "bit of repression" to "glory on corpses" in the streets and in the fields. A small private farmer commented that freedom of expression meant nothing for him if it meant he wouldn't have anything to eat anymore. One of his friends claimed the Czechoslovaks had a much higher standard of living than the Poles and the Hungarians, and that they had more culture as well, which is why the situation was so different in their country.

Although I will not take the time to study the history of the whole Communist regime through 1989, it would not be difficult to show that even after 1968, even in the morose atmosphere of the "normalization" regime, the standard of living was always kept at a decent level. Life was perhaps not very glorious, but for the people who didn't get involved in politics, it was not difficult and it was full of certainties. As a consequence, the dissidents were not very numerous and they were completely isolated from the rest of society, which differed greatly from the situation faced by dissidents in Poland. The memories of that time are also not so bad, if one takes into account the number of films or TV serials dating from the 1970s and 1980s which are currently being rebroadcast. A number of showmen, as well as movie and music stars, began their career under the Communists and remain popular today.

Let us now go back to our starting paradox: why are the Czechs, who were the most "communist" of all the nations that submitted to the Soviet diktat, apparently the most anti-communist since 1989? The explanation lies in the fact that the post-1989 anti-communism was mainly a façade. This has been made quite clear by the French sociologist Françoise Mayer. Mayer shows that the political elites who drafted and voted in the laws were mainly trying to earn a solid democratic reputation for themselves. The privileged form of Czech nationalism has always been, at least since the twentieth century, the feeling that the Czechs are more cultivated and more democratic than their Central European neighbors. It was true under Masaryk, it was true under the Communists and it remained true under Prime Minister Václav Klaus in the 1990s, when he advocated a rather individualistic policy and pleaded for an earlier entry of the Czech Republic into the European Union. Under these circumstances, it was very easy for the

Czechs to convince themselves that the Czech nation was the most democratic because the break with the Communist regime had been the most peremptory. As Françoise Mayer puts it, the past was “most often convened in the shape of innuendo and denunciation, much more rarely in the aim to reflect on and understand what the Communist regime had truly meant.”

Practically all the great episodes of managing of the communist past testify to a firm and swift will to condemn the old regime and its champions on the matter of principles. Conversely, these examples also point to a slowness and carefulness approaching on total idleness when it came to establishing concrete and personal responsibilities. Let us review some of them.

First was the law 119/1990, which rehabilitated by principle all citizens who were condemned as “anti-democratic.” This law exonerated also by principle certain groups of the population, mainly farmers and former Democrats, which had been particularly oppressed under the preceding regime. Ninety-nine percent of the people were thus rehabilitated without even having to make a request at a tribunal. In a way, this is of course very positive, but one can also remark that it is convenient to show a large number of “victims” without having to clarify in any way how much political oppression they faced. In concrete terms, it is not known whether the judgments were death penalties, long term sentences or simple fines.

A second example, a 1993 law which designated the former Communist regime as globally “illegal” and “criminal,” touches on the regime itself and not just on the victims. Certain intellectuals, notably Václav Zák, saw this law as the application of a collective guilt on the former members of the KSC. The “purification” laws of 1991 and 1992 are our third, very controversial example of the hesitancy to take responsibility for the Czech communist past. Again, a group of citizens was collectively designated as guilty. Collaborators of the StB, militia, police and secret police starting at a local executive level of the Communist party, were banned for five years from working in certain public administrative agencies. These public departments included the army, the defense and other ministries, the secret services, the President’s office, the Supreme Court, the State radio and television services, the national press agency (CTK), public enterprises, state railways, and more. The proof of guilt or innocence was to be found in the State archives, among other records in the Secret Police files.

The critics of this law are so numerous that they could not all be quoted here. Petr Uhl stated that the law was a form of “unacceptable judiciary barbarism which only betrays a thirst for revenge.” In response to the fact that this law did not apply to the president of Parliament, the MP Pavel Dostál commented that Alexander Dubcek was allowed to preside over the Parliament but couldn’t run a local post-office. The Communists were naturally outraged and claimed that

the law went “against all international settlements on human rights.” The Communists were equally outraged by the activities of MP Jan Sokol, who had voted for the law, but evidence from a Viennese canteen supposedly documented the espionage activity of the few MPs positively “purged.” The World Labour Organization, the Council of Europe and the European Parliament criticized these laws and explicitly recommended to abrogate them. President Havel, who had signed the law, publicly regretted it. No one has yet to conclusively analyze the mark that these laws left on Czech society. The one thing that remains for certain is that many of those who were “purified” went to court to defend themselves and usually won their cases. The former dignitaries, however, most of whom were the intended targets of the law, did not bother to petition for a job in public office and spared themselves any harmful publicity.

The last example is not a law, but aptly symbolizes the poisonous atmosphere of the 1990’s when it came to dealing with the Communist past. The Cibulka List was allegedly a list of former Secret Police (StB) agents made public by Petr Cibulka, a former dissident and fanatical anti-communist. How Cibulka got access to the list is unknown. No executive or legislative office gave him any authority to publish it, and thus it had no official status. Nevertheless, this did not prevent it from creating a major social uproar. What is truly remarkable about the list is that it fails to give any details about the nature or duration of the alleged collaborations with the Secret Police. It features only the names, dates of birth and code names used by the alleged agents. The list did, however, serve up approximately 160,000 citizens supposedly “compromised” for public consumption. Many of those whose names or whose relatives’ names are listed deny having had anything to do with the Secret Police. This was possible, as some StB professionals tended to purposely exaggerate the number of “agents” they had in their employ in order to satisfy their superiors.[47] Rumors flew concerning the circumstances surrounding the list. It was uncertain who made the list and how, and what the possible manipulations of the StB were around and after 1989, not to mention how Cibulka got hold of the list.

Outside of those “technical” considerations, the timeliness of such a publication was largely questioned on a moral level. Many of those who had been forced to collaborate under threat, sometimes while doing their best not to endanger anyone, found it difficult, seeing their name on the list, to take it philosophically or at least with a certain detachment. If the degrees of personal tragedy can vary, an example which caught the public’s attention was that of the novelist Zdena Salivarová. Her husband, Josef Skvorecký, described in one of the most touching novels of the post-communist era the ordeal she went through. She sued the Ministry of Interior and won her trial but this victory didn’t erase the years of suffering and disgrace she went through.

In 2002, an official version of the list was made public for the first time by the Ministry of Interior. It is extraordinary that after all the time that had past, and after all the scandals and controversies which had followed the first list, that the second list failed to give any additional details on the persons' alleged collaborations. The second list still does not describe any details besides the name, the date of birth and the code name of the alleged agents. On the other hand, more than half the names of the alleged conspirators disappeared from the list without explanation. The press also reported a number of preposterous cases. For instance, a notorious agent who was so unconcerned with disguising his activities that he wrote a novel describing them is not on the list. On the other hand, certain present-day spies of the Czech Republic have been mistakenly included in the second list. In short, the archives of the Secret Polices have yet to be rigorously managed.

### **The Politics of Decommunization**

In dealing with the legacies of communist dictatorship, the transition to democracy in Central Europe was soon confronted with the issue of what to do with the perpetrators of repression and human rights violations before 1989, and to what extent, and how, to compensate the victims. According to estimates for Czechoslovakia, about a quarter of a million people were at one point or another imprisoned on political grounds, and 240 people were sentenced to death. After 1990 the Czechoslovak (and after 1992 the Czech) authorities adopted a far-reaching set of policy measures starting with the rehabilitation of the victims, moving on to the restitution of the property confiscated after the communist takeover in February 1948, and thirdly lustration—i.e., a screening procedure by which people who had been collaborators or informers of the secret police as well as high ranking party officials should be banned from prominent positions in the government, the army, and the courts (though not parliament) for five years. These policies drew criticism inside the country and abroad.

So why did the Czechs (in East Germany the process was clearly linked to reunification and was largely driven by West Germany) push decommunization further and sooner than their neighbors? Several explanations can be suggested. The first concerns the type of legacy left by the communist dictatorship or, to use a “nonscientific” category, the “degree of nastiness” of the old regime. It is quite clear that exiting from communism in Czechoslovakia after 20 years of “normalization” under the hard-line regime of Gustáv Husák was somewhat different from leaving behind the more benign authoritarianism of János Kádár's Hungary. The latter is considered today by a majority of Hungarians as one of the more positive periods in the country's history, an unthinkable proposition in the Czech context. The purges of the 1970s and

the repression, ideological control, and finally even resistance to Gorbachev's perestroika account largely for the outright rejection of the pre-1989 period.

The second explanation concerns the nature of the transition process: a radical break or a negotiated compromise. In his study of democratic transitions Samuel Huntington suggests that in practice the choices made between different options as to how to deal with the legacy of dictatorship (prosecute and punish, or forgive and forget?) were "little affected by moral and legal considerations. Policy was shaped almost exclusively by politics, by the nature of the democratization process, and by the distribution of political power during and after the transition." A key ingredient in a peaceful transition is the extent to which the old communist elite was able to secure immunity from prosecution as a condition for abandoning (or sharing) power. Clearly, in Poland and Hungary, where the transition was negotiated among moderate elites of the old system and of the democratic opposition, there was not really the option of retribution against those who took part in a negotiated settlement. You cannot say one day, to use Adam Michnik's phrase during the summer of 1989 "your president, our government," and the next moment turn democratic justice against the prime instigator of the military coup that had crushed the Solidarity movement in December of 1981.

The Czech and the East German cases were in contrast marked by a more sudden and abrupt regime change, less marked by negotiations from above than by pressure from below and from outside. In retrospect, it seems that the fast retreating representatives of the old regime were hardly in a position to negotiate immunity from prosecution. It was more the restraint, the self-limitation of the Civic Forum leaders who negotiated with the communist leadership at the end of November and December 1989 that allowed for a smooth, "velvet" changeover. The communists managed that phase as an exercise in damage limitation but, unlike in Hungary or in Poland, they could not claim to have contributed, even modestly, to the democratic changes.

A third hypothesis concerns the inversely proportional relationship between decommunization and the degree of resistance of society. To put it bluntly: Polish society is unquestionably one that had resisted the communist regime most persistently and most massively (at least since 1956) and with increasing vigor since the workers' strikes of 1970. Yet it opted initially, at least during most of the 1990s, against "lustrations." Czech society (the argument is even stronger for the former GDR) showed little overt resistance to the system or support for the dissident human rights movement, yet it backed the decommunization legislation, particularly in the first three years of transition.

To use Albert Hirschman's typology (exit-voice-loyalty) one could argue that the Czechs (unlike the Poles, Hungarians, or even East Germans) had no "exit" option. "Voice" was confined to a fairly small group of dissident intellectuals. And reluctant "loyalty" was the dominant pattern for the rest of society. It is therefore perhaps not out of place to suggest that a compensation phenomenon could be at work, particularly among some who embarked on a most radical and uncompromising struggle against the "communist evil" in December 1989.

This third hypothesis needs to be qualified since it can lead to a somewhat simplified or indeed misleading interpretation. It suggests that the dissidents who actually suffered at the hands of the old regime are less vindictive, less eager to seek revenge than those in the silent majority who compensate for their guilt. In Claus Offe's words: "people who have been active in the struggle against the old regime, and who have hence experienced its harshness most directly, will normally advocate more moderate modes of punishment than those who have lived in conformity and acquiescence under the old regime." Though the general proposition about the correlation between the degree of resistance of society and propensity to retribution after dictatorship may have some relevance, the widely used arguments about the dissidents' reluctance to retribution are inaccurate.

To be sure, one can invoke Adam Michnik's warnings about the dangers of "anti-Bolshevik Bolshevism," János Kis' emphasis on rule-of-law liberalism, or Václav Havel's reservations about the lustration law. And they do represent an important apprehension in some dissident circles about the perils of retrospective justice in postcommunist Central Europe. However, their international prominence has led a number of observers to a hasty generalization. Shortly after the "lustration" law was passed by the Czech parliament the reservations in some ex-dissident circles were used in the West to castigate the law as a menace to the new Czech democracy.

The "lustration" was indeed a problematic remedy. First, the very idea of the files of the old communist secret police (plundered, doctored, manipulated) in the hands of sorcerers' apprentices was objectionable; the new democrats were the prisoners of the most dubious of communist legacies. Secondly, the unauthorized publication of the files (by a radical group of ex-dissidents) without properly distinguishing among the categories of people on the record (some people put under the label of "candidate" were not even aware that they were being considered for recruitment) has sometimes led to wrongful accusations. Such cases were exposed in the case of Zdena Salivarová-Škvorecká, the wife of the famous Czech writer living in Canada who devoted 20 years to the most important Czech publishing house in exile. Most importantly, while the identities of low-level informers were abundantly documented in the police records, the same cannot be said about the officers and their superiors in charge of the police system. So

you end up exposing the small fry, but not the people who were actually running the system. A cartoon in the daily *Lidové noviny* in 1991 summed it up: a man standing in front of the Parliament building says to another: “I’m not worried about lustration; I wasn’t an informer. I was only giving orders!”

Two aspects, however, mitigate these reservations. The “lustration” is not a penal procedure, but a vetting system for the higher echelons of public office. Is it really so outrageous to consider that the senior government officials of a new democracy should try to avoid having too many people associated with the old secret police in their midst? Secondly, contrary to much of the criticism on the grounds that a principle of “collective guilt” was being used against former communists, the lustration process is strictly individual and the results can be appealed in courts.

The criticism of the lustration law came from international institutions such as the Council of Europe and the International Labor Organization, and above all from New York human rights and media circles. Jeri Laber of Helsinki Watch wrote about a “witch hunt in Prague,” alleging a new form of McCarthyism was in the offing in the Czech capital, while Lawrence Weschler in the *New Yorker* wrote about “the velvet purge” and compared the case of Jan Kavan, the most notorious lustration case, to a new “Dreyfus affair.” Both comparisons say more about fears and fantasies concerning Central Europe as seen from New York than about the actual issues in postcommunist Bohemia. There was no “witch hunt” or McCarthyism to speak of. The communist leaders responsible for preparing the invasion of their country and ushering in the harshest neo-Stalinist repression in post-1968 Central Europe retired quietly to their luxury villas without facing any kind of retribution.

As for the case of Jan Kavan, the comparison with Dreyfus is simply preposterous. A Czech exile in London, Kavan had been involved in assistance to the dissidents in the 1970s and 1980s and after 1989 became a Social Democratic MP. He was accused of collaboration with the secret police and (after admittedly acrimonious press treatment) appealed against the verdict of the lustration commission in the courts. He was vindicated, reelected to Parliament in 1996, and became Foreign Minister of the Czech Republic in 1998 and later President of the UN General Assembly.<sup>18</sup> For a victim of a “witch hunt,” “McCarthyism” or a new “Dreyfus affair,” this was, after all, not so bad.

The main reason for the widespread assumption that dissidents opposed retribution is, in the Czech case, related to a certain reading of Václav Havel’s first presidential New Year speech on January 1, 1990. In an oft-quoted passage, Havel refers to the shared legacies of totalitarianism: not just the “powers that be” but the citizenry at large that “helped to perpetuate it.” “In other

words, we are all—though naturally to different extents—responsible for the operation of totalitarian machinery. None of us is just its victim: we are all also its creators.” This argument, consistent with much of Havel’s earlier writings going back to the 1970s, tries to overcome the simple and convenient “them and us” dichotomy in accounting for the modus operandi of the posttotalitarian system and the reflection of the admittedly unevenly shared responsibilities. Of course, only somebody of his stature who had never been a communist and spent several years in jail could then afford to make such a statement.

Yet those who are keen to quote this part of Havel’s speech against any kind of retribution conveniently omit another passage in the same speech where he actually suggests that the prosecution of crimes might well be necessary: “We should not forget any of those who paid for our present freedom in one way or another. Independent courts should impartially consider the possible guilt of those who were responsible for the persecutions, so that the truth about our recent past may be fully revealed.” Curiously, this passage is never quoted. Nor is there any mention of his speech on the anniversary of the 1968 Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia on August 21, 1990, in which he called for the dismantling of the “old structures” and the removal of the “incompetent and sabotaging nomenclature”; “the main part of the revolution must still happen.” One can indeed read such statements as legitimizing decommunization. So, Havel the moralist and thinker knows that no amount of rhetoric or legal measures should spare the Czechs confronting the deeper issues of the traumas and responsibilities for the decades of totalitarianism. But Havel the political leader also knows that the dismantling of the old regime after a “velvet revolution” and a social demand for justice will not be defused by the most sophisticated formulation of a pessimistic philosophical vision of the victim, in some way contaminated by the totalitarian legacy, as the henchman.

It is often assumed, since Havel the moralist had reservations about the perils of decommunization and of “lustration” in particular, that his main “constitutive other” in Czech politics—the right-wing economist and 1990s prime minister Václav Klaus—would presumably be in favor. The truth, as with Havel, is more complicated than the political stereotype. In a little-publicized essay Václav Klaus answered the question posed to him by the editors of the levelheaded Prague intellectual journal *Prostor* concerning “settling accounts with the past—a call for justice.” The then Prime Minister insisted he saw the problem of “coming to terms with the past” as an “individual problem,” as a “private matter” and warned against the dangers of “moralization” and “self-flagellation.” “I do not believe,” he continued, “that a coming to terms with the past can be achieved by an abstract entity called society, nor that it is correct to speak of some national guilt which therefore would have to be collective. The solution of the problem

cannot be reached by some simple act of the state or a declaration of a public figure, a scientist, or an artist. In substance, this is a private matter for each of us ...” Explicitly rejecting Jaspers’ categories of guilt and responsibility as well as Havel’s view that “all of us (with the exception, of course, of the one who formulates this view for the others) have been morally corrupted by living in the totalitarian system,” Klaus argued that there is really no criterion for judgment of the past, no “neutral, unearthly truth” to judge human behavior in these particular circumstances. What the Czechs need in this respect is “lucidity,” “practical realism,” and faith in “skeptical reason” rather than in “big words.” In an earlier statement Klaus had argued that “no litmus test exists which could precisely divide good and evil between communists and noncommunists.” Not exactly the radical call for decommunization and settling accounts with the communist past that is often associated with Klaus’ period in office. Klaus’ implicit pragmatic message was in fact well understood by the Czechs: “I am a bit like all of you. Neither a former communist, nor a former dissident; neither a henchman nor a moralist whose very presence in the Presidency is your bad conscience, a daily reminder of the courage you did not have.” Klaus reiterated this message as Havel’s successor in the presidency on the anniversary of the “velvet revolution” when he emphasized that it was not dissident intellectuals but “ordinary people” who had the decisive part in the downfall of the old regime. Through their loose working hours and disregard for its ideological claims they hollowed out the regime from within until it cracked like an empty shell.

Thus, neither Havel nor Klaus quite fit the divide on decommunization between moderates and radicals usually associated with their names. How then to account for the fact that Klaus’ party, the Civic Democratic Party (ODS), and his government actually became the promoters of radical decommunization policies? The prime explanation lies in the breakup of the large coalition, the Civic Forum, and the formation of competing political factions which, in the absence of a structured party political system, instrumentalize issues that favor the process of polarization of the political scene. In the early 1990s in the Czech Republic the rejection of the old regime was strong among the population while the differentiation of interests as a basis for party formation was weak. It is in this context that a very deliberate two-pronged strategy of polarization has been implemented by Václav Klaus and the ODS in search of a political identity. First came the emphasis on the acceleration of economic reform, rapid privatization and marketization to dismantle the social base of the old regime. This was followed by the lustration law, which proved to be a major dividing issue with the other successor to the Civic Forum, the Civic Movement (OH), led by ex-dissidents Jiří Dienstbier and Petr Pithart. The lustration law, according to Klaus, made it possible “to clarify who stands where, who really wants

consequential change for our society, our economy, and who, on the other hand, wants to draw us into new experiments carried out by the old experimenters we know so well.” (The “old experimenters” was a reference to the 1968 reformers associated with “socialism with a human face” some of whom later joined the dissident movement and were members of OH. So the man who a year earlier did not want to distinguish between communists and noncommunists now wanted to clarify the issues going back to 1968, while adding on the eve of the June 1992 elections that “it is necessary to settle accounts with the communist past.”

The second dimension in the polarization strategy offered by lustration was vis-à-vis the Slovaks. Vladimír Mečiar’s Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS) opposed both Klaus’ radical economic reform concept as well as the lustration policy. The Slovak nationalists (HZDS and SNS) did not pass the law and Mečiar campaigned on the promise to fight for Slovak sovereignty, and never to implement lustration in Slovakia. He had briefly been Minister of the Interior in Slovakia and preferred to make a more private, targeted use of the files himself. Decommunization certainly was an important divisive issue between Czechs and Slovaks in the run-up to the velvet divorce.

The contrasting attitudes of Czech and Slovak public opinion to the issue reflects different perceptions and experiences of the communist past (particularly the “normalization” period after 1968). A survey carried out in Slovakia concerning the perceptions of the past indicated that the population considered the communist period, 1948–1989, and the wartime period of the pro-Nazi Slovak State as the two best periods in Slovak history. Both periods were, in contrast, considered by the Czechs as the two totalitarian legacies of which they were trying to rid themselves. Different perceptions of the communist past in the Czech lands and Slovakia were a factor (albeit not a decisive one) in the dissolution of the common state. The breakup with communism and the split with Slovakia overlapped (at least in the minds of some of their instigators).

Decommunization became a means to legitimize a new political elite and indirectly also a new state. Indeed, shortly after it had been established, a Resource Center of the Unlawful Conduct of the Communist Regime was created, and in July 1993 the Czech parliament adopted a “Law on the Illegality of, and Resistance to, the Communist Regime.” The regime between February 1948 and December 1989 is characterized as “criminal, illegitimate and abhorrent.” Its illegality rests on the “systematic destruction of traditional values of European civilization.” The law declared opposition to the regime as “legitimate, morally justified and honorable.” The law seemed at first to be largely a rhetorical and symbolic exercise. Yet it is revealing and deserves attention in several respects. First, it suspended the statute of limitations for political crimes committed between 1948 and 1989. The Office for the Documentation and Investigation of

Communist Crimes (UDV) received a clear mandate not only to document the crimes of the communist period but also to investigate them and possibly file criminal charges. Secondly, it introduces the idea that the political representation has as part of its mission to legislate on history. This judicialization of history is, of course, part of a broader international post-Cold War trend by which legal measures are supposed to correct the injustices of the past. In this process, groups of victims use the recent progress made in the promotion of human rights to seek compensation as well as moral and political condemnation. This is where the legislators and the media converge in the attempt at facilitating the “coming to terms with the past.”

Yet the question remains: can you revise history by law? And is an officially provided version helpful in understanding the historical process and the coming to terms with the past? The issue is directly related to the previous one. The 1993 law considers that “the Communist Party was a criminal organization” and that “the KSČ (Czechoslovak Communist Party), its leadership, and its members are responsible for the way the country was ruled” (i.e., also for the above-mentioned crimes). If the search for criminal responsibility slides from the political leadership and the repressive apparatuses to the membership you obviously challenge indiscriminately a substantial part of the population. Some six million people passed through the Czechoslovak Communist Party at some point since 1945. The Party had a million and half members in 1968. Half a million were purged, lost their jobs, and were otherwise harassed for their association with the Prague Spring. They were replaced by a half a million new and more docile members, some of whom became part of the new post-1989 establishment. Ironically, several prominent members of the Klaus government at the time were former members (some of them very recent ones) of the criminal organization and thus concerned as co-responsible en bloc for the misdeeds of the period 1948–1989. None of them resigned.

The politics of decommunization in the Czech Republic thus point to a paradoxical conclusion. On one hand the country went further than most in attempting to legislate on the criminal nature of the old regime. Yet none of the leading criminals were brought to justice to account for their crimes. Not even the signatories of the infamous letter to the Soviet leadership asking for “brotherly assistance” in 1968 have been sentenced. The degrees of responsibility of “lustrated” or “illustrious” police informers can be debated endlessly. But a group of political leaders conspiring with a foreign power against the legal (if not elected) leadership of the moment in the planning and execution of the occupation of their own country, would, in most countries, be understood as “high treason.” A major public trial of those who were co-responsible for the occupation and for the repressive regime that followed could have provided a catharsis and answered symbolically and politically, the formidable quest for justice in the

society when the old regime collapsed. Yet none of the communist leaders concerned (Biřák, Kolder, Indra, Hoffman, Jakeš etc.) was called to account. And the rhetoric about the criminal nature of the communist regime rings more hollow than ever.

While the law of July 1993 lumps together millions of former members of the Czechoslovak Communist Party as members of a “criminal organization,” its successor party, which did not bother even to change its name, is alive and kicking. Indeed, it was precisely on the 10th anniversary of the “Velvet Revolution” in December 1999 (and again in November 2003) that it reached a staggering 20% support in the opinion polls. Although that figure has since been somewhat reduced it remains the strongest Party in the country in terms of membership (160,000) and organizational structure. The Communist Party chose as its leader Vojtěch Filip, a secret police agent until 1989, and includes among its Members of Parliament a former prison guard (Josef Vondruška). Unlike its reformist counterparts in Poland, Hungary, or even Slovakia, it remains an unreconstructed party, unwilling and unable to face the communist past. All this is obviously related to the traumatic legacy of 1968: by thoroughly eradicating the reformists at every level the Czech Communist Party rendered itself unable to make the gradual adjustments which allowed the excommunists in neighboring countries to find a new lease on life as would-be Social Democrats. The support and loyalty displayed toward an unreconstructed Communist Party thus raises particularly disturbing questions about Czech society’s relationship to the communist past that no amount of legislative posturing or moral exhortation seems able to challenge. Its isolation on the political scene after 1989 is obviously the price to pay for the scorched earth policy it followed after 1968 and its inability to reinvent itself after 1989. To prevent any temptation on the part of the Social Democratic Party of bringing the communists out of isolation and into the political game, campaigns are periodically relaunched by some members of the Senate (Štětina, Mejstřík) to introduce a ban on the Communist Party. 20 years after the collapse of the communist regime the Czech debate about the ban of the Communist Party and an alleged “communist threat” seems to confirm the Czech exception in Central Europe.

### **The Rewriting of Modern History to Smooth It’s Consequence**

One of the difficulties in coming to terms with the communist past stems from the specific ideological nature of the communist regimes and their prime reliance, in post-Stalinist Central Europe, on non-violent means of coercion. In the words of Tina Rosenberg: “the Eastern European dictatorships were criminal regimes, while those of Latin America were regimes of criminals.” The issue of confronting the crimes of the communist regimes in Eastern Central Europe is not altogether new. It has been with us at least since 1956 and certainly since 1968.

And that in turn allows us to assess in what respects the terms of the debate have changed with the steady exhaustion of the ideology.

In his novel *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* Milan Kundera evokes the terms of the post-1968 Czech debate:

“Anyone who thinks that the communist regimes of Central Europe are exclusively the work of criminals is overlooking a basic truth: the criminal regimes were made not by criminals but by enthusiasts convinced they had discovered the only road to paradise. They defended that road so valiantly that they were forced to execute many people. Later it became clear that there was no paradise, that the enthusiasts were therefore murderers.

Then everyone took to shouting at the communists: You’re the ones responsible for our country’s misfortunes (it had grown poor and desolate), for its loss of independence (it had fallen into the hands of the Russians), for its judicial murders! And the accused responded: We didn’t know! We were deceived! We were true believers! Deep in our hearts we are innocent!

In the end the dispute narrowed down to a single question: Did they really not know or were they merely making believe? ( ... ) But ( ... ) whether they knew or didn’t know is not the main issue; the main issue is whether a man is innocent because he didn’t know.”

Is the quest for justice synonymous with the quest for historical truth? Members of Parliament may make such claims. Historians should think twice. In the Czech case they have been, until recently, rather absent from the debate. It might have been partly an instinct toward self-preservation after decades of historiography subjected to political norms and paying a high price for it. It might also be revealing of a more serious problem: 20 years after the fall of communism, no major systematic study of the history of Czechoslovak communism has yet been published, let alone a wide-ranging debate provoked on the subject in the scholarly community. This may be changing now.

When signing the 1993 law declaring communism a criminal regime, Václav Havel considered it to have an essentially declarative purpose, and expressed the hope it would close a chapter and allow the Czechs to adopt a more forward-looking attitude. Yet there was little critical reflection concerning the implications of the Law except for the new lease on life it gave to Václav Benda’s Office for the Documentation and Investigation of Communist Crimes and accelerating the case for opening up access to police files. In this respect the Czechs are marching in the footsteps of Gauck’s Institute in former East Germany and more recently of the Polish Institute of National Memory. A Czech version of such an institute was to be established

in 2006. A controversy concerning its somewhat Orwellian name (the idea that a state institution is supposed to be the depository of national memory) and the fact that the bulk of that memory was made of communist police files eventually led the founders to change the name to a more sober Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes. Its director, historian and journalist Pavel Žáček, had first been appointed as head of security archives under the Minister of Interior who later appointed him to head the new institute. Its budget of 240 million crowns is well above that of academic institutions, the biggest investment in the national past since the founding of the National Museum in the 19th century. All secret police files are being made available on the Internet and revelations about their content are regularly provided by researchers of the institute in the media. The Institute's greatest claim to fame so far has been the exposure of the case of Milan Kundera by the weekly *Respekt*. But it is one thing to open police files for investigation of past crimes, and another to make good use of communist archives for the purpose of writing a new history of the period. The former unfortunately does not necessarily lead to the latter.

Two main criticisms of the new official version of postwar history (as presented in the law of July 1993) were made; both, incidentally, came from prominent Czech exiles in Italy. The first, Jiří Pelikán (in 1968 director of Czechoslovak television), questioned not only the lumping together of leaders and membership but also the lack of distinctions made in the 40-year-long period; thus the Prague Spring of 1968 is considered as belonging to the same “age of darkness” as the Stalinist period. The leaders associated with the Prague Spring—Dubček, Smrkovský, Kriegel, and Hájek—are put in the same category as Husák, Biřák, and Jakeš, who liquidated the democratic reforms and imposed a hard-line repressive dictatorship. Such a reading of history, Pelikán argued, is utter nonsense. Communism in Czechoslovakia had its different and often contrasting historical phases. One kind of orthodoxy and intolerance is being replaced by another.

The second criticism of the prevailing thinking on these issues in the 1990s came from the philosopher Václav Belohradský: “In our political discourse something prevails which I would call ‘nihilistic revisionism.’ It is a sign of the uprooting of communist totalitarianism from the history of the West and moving it to a chronicle of mere crimes of the 20th century. It is its Russification, reduced to crimes against Western civilization. In reality, communist violence does not belong among the crimes against our (European) civilization, but is one of the authentic forms of that Western civilization. It relates to its very substance—the idea of a universal empire based on the revelation of truth (or reason).” The attempt to expel communism from the history of the West by “Russification” is to miss the point about the connection of the communist catastrophe as part of the catastrophe of modern rationality. It fails to understand its deeper

sources and thus misses the possibility to really learn something from it. The author is critical, along the same lines, of the *Black Book of Communism* (which was a publishing success in the Czech lands) because it fails to address the sources of the totalitarian phenomenon and is more prone to the political instrumentalization of its victims.

The two critiques challenge, from very different perspectives, the convenient version of what Belohradský calls the “dominant public discourse.” First, there is the assumption of the externality of totalitarianism. It is doubly external: a Russian/Soviet post-World War II import, alien to Czech society and to Western or European civilization. If the cause is external there is little incentive to examine the inner sources and responsibilities. The second assumption is to present the totalitarian period en bloc. At first it was 1948–1989; then with the creation (in 1993) of the Office for the Documentation and Investigation of Communist Crimes the period was extended from 1945–1989 (thus including the democratic interlude of 1945–1948); at the end of the 1990s the Institute of National Memory/Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes, created on the initiative of prominent members of parliament, includes in one totalitarian period the Nazi and communist domination from 1938 to 1989.

For a historian such a progressive extension of the “age of totalitarianism” can be intellectually stimulating, but also a potential trap. To be sure, taking the long view, the “*longue durée*” familiar to the French historical school can allow a historian to formulate new hypotheses about the slide since the 1930s from one totalitarianism to another in the 1940s; about how a democratic state in the middle of Europe threatened by a totalitarianism of the right became vulnerable (in a sort of compensation mechanism) to a totalitarianism from the Left. From this perspective, it is the War and the complete collapse of the old social order more than the nitty-gritty of communist tactics in February 1948 which matters for the understanding of the formation of the communist system. This connection between war and revolution in the bringing about of totalitarianism after the two World Wars was addressed by the philosopher Jan Patočka in his essay “The Wars of the Twentieth Century and the Twentieth Century as War.” It remains one of the major issues for Central European historiography today.

However, it does raise several problems relevant to our topic.

1. To focus the historiographical interpretation on the slide from one totalitarianism to another could (but need not) imply their equivalence: in both cases, Czechs were subjected to a “totalitarian era” characterized by the criminal nature of the regimes concerned. And it is indeed a meager consolation to the victims to know that they suffered at the hands of a totalitarianism “with good intentions” rather than with evil ones. Yet it is not enough to lump together Nazism

and communism as “criminal” and “totalitarian” to make sense of postwar Czech history (which leads to a second point).

2. What is arguable at a certain level of generalization does not quite fit the actual experience of Czech society which rejected outright the first totalitarianism while, at least initially and partially, welcoming the other. There was an actual history of communism in Central Europe and in the Czech lands in particular, with different phases whose political and moral significance is by no means identical. Is the period 1945–1948 merely the link between two totalitarian regimes or is it a democratic experience which separates them? Or can 1968 (and more broadly the 1960s) which saw the decay and failure of the reform of the communist system reduced—the dominant view in the 1990s—to a mere squabble between two communist factions? The mid-to-late 1960s was a period not only of gradual relaxation of rigid ideological party control over the society, it was (and remains) unquestionably the greatest period of cultural creativity (in literature, film, theater, the fine arts) since the 1930s, in stark contrast to the relative cultural sterility of the 1990s. Call it whatever you wish (decaying communism, “socialism with a human face,” hopeless revisionism) but it was not the totalitarianism of the Stalinist period nor that of the post-1968 “normalization” years.

It is, of course, perfectly legitimate and in some respects fruitful to compare totalitarian regimes and the crimes they have committed. But we also need to reintroduce the meanders of history, the resistance or adaptation of societies which were not only the passive, innocent objects of totalitarian oppression and manipulation. In short, next to the “Red Book” of the communist utopia and the “Black Book” of the crimes committed in its name, there is a place for a “gray book” of the histories of Central European societies under communism as both victims and accomplices, oscillating at different periods between resistance and adaptation.

Nowhere would such a history be more needed than in the Czech Lands. There is a diversity of the communist experience in postwar Eastern Central Europe, with the national specificities that should be of interest to historians. The Czech case is remarkable in more ways than one. It is, after all, the only country in the region where the communists came to power without Soviet troops on its territory and where the communist Party triumphed in a free election in 1946 with 40% of the votes. It is a country where the Communist Party had half a million members in 1945, one and a quarter million members in 1947 and two and half million members in December 1948—i.e., almost a quarter of the total population and half of the working population. During the 40 years between what the late Pavel Tigrid called the “elegant takeover” in 1948 and the “velvet revolution” of 1989 the Party was like a sieve: in the various purges and recruitment campaigns some six million people (in a country of 15 million in 1989) passed

through the party at some point. Unlike Poland and Hungary, there was no challenge to the system in 1956; during the post-1968 “normalization” period there was little unrest; and the Charter 77 movement remained confined to a dissident ghetto which by no means diminishes (on the contrary) its moral and political significance.

In short: what is needed is not just rhetorical statements about the criminal nature of communist totalitarianism or more editions of the police files in every bookstore, but a history which will try to address the difficult and somewhat embarrassing question about the indigenous sources of Czech communism, about the role of nationalism (and the German question), about the vulnerabilities of Czech political culture (an egalitarian not a liberal democracy) to the totalitarian temptation: How come the most economically advanced democratic country in Central Europe produced the most rigid, entrenched, and lasting brand of communism in the region?

It is striking that in the last two decades Czech historiography has not produce a thorough comprehensive examination of those issues, no history of the Communist Party with its prewar roots and its postwar consequences. A polemic on this subject has opposed Zbyněk Zeman, a Czech exile teaching contemporary history at Oxford University, and Oldřich Tůma, the director of the Institute of Contemporary History in Prague. The former criticized the absence of serious scholarship on the history of Czech communism and a historiography that is either positivist and descriptive or politically subservient (to whomever is in power). The latter answered that, with very limited means after a period when the profession had been decimated (contemporary history had been the most thoroughly purged), considerable, albeit still partial, work had been done on the history of the resistance to communism and its disintegration.

It is, however, in the heart of the historical profession itself, namely the Association of Historians of the Czech Republic that something resembling a *Historikerstreit* has been brewing for two years. Exactly ten years after the fall of communism, representatives of the younger generation of historians have openly challenged the “establishment” of the profession on both political and historiographical grounds. Their main spokesman, Martin Nodl, challenged the reluctance or inability of established historians to confront the issue of coming to terms with the communist past. The main reason, he pointed out, was not unrelated to their own past as conformist communist historians under the old regime. Jaroslav Paněk, chairman of the Czech National Committee of Historians, answered that such political attacks come from people who have so far still to prove themselves professionally. He opposed the “negativist,” “goal-oriented disinterpretation of Czech history,” particularly with respect to Czech-German relations and the issue of the expulsion of the Sudeten German population at the end of the War. In short, there

seems to be a difference both generational and political (“decommunizers” vs. defenders of “national” interpretation) and possibly also a methodological difference between traditional positivist historiography and more modern “European” approaches.

It is too early to say whether this first attempt at moral and political introspection within the historical profession will eventually produce a more far-reaching reassessment of postwar Czech history. In the two decades before 1989 a lively debate about the history was carried out by independent dissident intellectuals while professional historians were silent (or silenced). For two decades now historians have been free at last but there has been little or no debate to speak of, which has left the field open for political instrumentalization of the issue of the coming to terms with the communist past.

All over Central Europe it used to be said that “the most difficult thing to predict is the past.” That era is not quite over yet. In reclaiming and reinterpreting their history, all the nations of the region ask: when did the “tragedy of Central Europe” (Milan Kundera) start? Who is responsible? Nations, like individuals, need to be able to look at themselves in the mirror. Historical narratives are such mirrors, and historians the psychoanalysts of their nations. Everywhere there is a search for “original sin” and the answer carries considerable political implications. In the Czech case, should we start searching in 1968 (the Russians), or in 1948 (the Czech communists), or in 1938 (the Franco-British betrayal to Hitler), or even in 1918 (i.e., nationalism and the very idea of small nation-states in Central Europe as a chimera?) How far back should we go to understand the roots of “our present crisis” (Masaryk, 1894; Košík, 1968)? Each of the abovementioned answers is politically loaded. The historian is thus placed in a gratifying yet uncomfortable role: he is to provide the tools to confront the communist legacy and at the same time to help recompose a traumatized identity, help to choose a usable past for a democratic future. In this respect the task of the Czech historian today is not completely dissimilar to that of the French historians helping society at large to cope with the past of the wartime Vichy regime. In France, it took almost 30 years (the eclipse of De Gaulle and of the communists) for a new generation to be able to confront old political clichés and taboos. In Prague, as in the rest of Central Europe, the “Vichy syndrome” has only just begun.

## Sociological Quiz

**Marketa H.**

**Age: 57**

**Economy**

### **1. Did planned economy of Soviet pattern influence on your everyday shopping list?**

I cannot answer equivocally. Some kind of things could always be found on the shelves of shops, there were no problems, for something it was necessary to “hunt”, but I think that it was everywhere. Maybe it depended on the specific family and their wealth and the position they occupied. My family is the simplest - my father is an electrician and my mother is a nurse, we lived not far from Hradec and if we had to find something extraordinary, we went either to Hradec or to Prague. The girls wanted to dress nicely and have a few pairs of shoes, but this was not the problem in Czechoslovakia. I remember that it was hard with perfumery, it was not a product of first necessity and when I found a bottle, it was just problematic. Perhaps this is not exactly what I should write about; I was distracted, if we talk about simpler things, then I did not feel any problems as in neighboring Poland. I do not remember the queue in the store or the deficit of products. Maybe I had modest inquiries; we did not prepare anything special and did not buy anything. At least often, and a goose or festive duck could always be ordered from a neighbor for friendship. Now the range has grown, in the supermarket, eyes run up, not comparable to the years of my youth.

### **2. Have You ever felt, that Your consumer needs are not satisfied?**

I answered in the previous question that during student years, like every girl, at times there was not enough of the same spirits, an extra pair of shoes or special holiday shoes. I cannot say that I watched fashion or read magazines for hours, if I need something, my mother and I could sew a dress or blouse, but my needs were not satisfied because of the limited funds, and not because of the economic situation.

### **3. Could You proud of Czech production during Soviet era or modern product represent Your countries potential better?**

A difficult question ... I do not quite remember the exact name of the brands or firms, Batya did produce excellent shoes, I heard that there was a huge demand for it in the Soviet Union, worked for exports, also exported clothes, I cannot say for sure about the quality - looking at what you expect or what you want. Cotton was excellent. Now the choice is certainly huge, but I will not say that the quality is always and everywhere excellent, there are frankly bad goods. Personally, my opinion - Batya soured, a couple of seasons withstand shoes and can throw, although I have

been wearing a purse for six years. You asked about pride, but I'm pleased that we have something to give the world, but I do not feel any special feelings about this.

**4. Please, compare your consumer possibilities during Soviet epoch and nowadays (criteria: quantity, quality, specter and number of possibilities, trademarks).**

How difficult, but I'll try to answer. The number suited me, but maybe you just found not quite a fastidious person, quality was sometimes higher than even now, so a huge choice is not yet a guarantee of quality. If, again, compare with today, the spectrum was much narrower, many new brands and firms appeared, I keep silent about foreign ones. About the brands I mentioned above Bata, Botas still was, and so could and imported from near abroad, but the prices were not always suitable. Now I can afford more, I just do not want this. In the youth we have more requests, but more opportunities. Alas. Now I pay more attention to quality and convenience.

**5. What kind of everyday services have You used? What services You can use today and what services seen to be retrograde?**

Put me to a standstill. Probably my answers are too amateurish, I do not know how they will help in the study of such vital details, and I do not even know how to correctly answer. Again, this is incomparable with today. Starting from the banking system and ending with the services of a hairdresser. Today my daughter takes a dog to a haircut, it looks a bit strange and absurd to me, because before, a person could not get all kinds of services, but it is more the merit of technology and the development of these services. I'm silent about the fact that now without a computer in any way; this is our main assistant, at least in my work.

## **Politics**

**1. Did You share the communist ideology that was represented in Your life?**

I am an apolitical person. Absolutely. I was about eight years old when the Prague Spring was. I do not really remember anything, father and mother, relatives were also not enthusiasts. They had their own internal family problems, some sort of household trivia, lived a little in their own world. When I became older, in school and university I felt a little pressure, but I cannot call this pressure intolerable. Yes, I had to go to some sort of demonstrations, but I was not involved in it, but rather had the opportunity to just spend time with friends in the fresh air, chatting laughing. We did not take it as hard work and service. It did not affect me in any way, I knew and heard about dissidents, about some movements, but I am not from socially active citizens. Today, not all young people go to the polls or are members of the party, so do they. In 1989, I felt revived, we seemed to be part of the whole, the whole world showed us what was happening in Prague, in Berlin, in Poland, I felt proud for the students, but I just had a daughter and I plunged into family

life, then It was necessary to get used to changes and some difficulties in terms of employment. On the whole, the question of communism did not concern me.

**2. Have you been proud to consider that your country was a member of the Warsaw Bloc?**

Of course, no, I need to repeat, I did not think about it and some of my university friends had a far from positive attitude to the Soviet Union, they certainly were not dissidents, they did not break the law, but I remember that they were drawn to Western culture, listened to American performers, even studied English, so I cannot say that they were proud of being in the Warsaw Bloc. It's funny even.

**3. Have you been a member of some Communist organizations? Describe your positive or negative experience.**

No, not again. Absolutely no desire to be involved in politics, understand me correctly - I'm an ordinary person, the priority for me was to find a job that would provide both myself and help my sister, then my family life began. The 80's are my youth and the beginning of my family life, a wedding, and then the birth of my daughter. Yes, I listened to the radio and watched TV, it was funny to look at old Brezhnev, his bad speech, then I remember Raisa Gorbachev and the way her meetings with other politicians' wives were shown, glasnost and perestroika were often mentioned, but I did not go into the terminology and in processes that occurred in the Union. My husband said that most likely sooner or later there will be an explosion, well, that's it, if, of course, 1989 can be called an explosion. Everything went peacefully and more or less quietly.

**4. How did the regime bound your personal sense of freedom? Did You feel bounded? Did You have some obligations or ideological pressure?**

No way. I did not feel unfree, restrained. Most likely, I led a boring and ordinary life in order that I might be suspected of something and limited my freedom. If we talk about ideology, then in the flow of life, I simply did not pay attention to some of its attributes, it was sometimes amusing to hear speeches on the radio as a carbon copy, very patterned and boring to yawn, but it did not bind me and did not infringe on me.

## **Culture**

**1. Did You feel the unification pressure on Your native culture? How it was represented?**

Rather no, I studied in Czech, there were Russian lessons and Russian literature, I remember Pushkin and Chernyshevsky "What to do", forced to write school essays on the main heroes and their character, I still remember. The Czech authors were also in the program, the classics were in high esteem, especially those who described the life of the common people and peasants.

Perhaps the more sensitive people felt this pressure, for which these questions were painful, but I again went past it.

**2. Was it possible to preserve some characteristic features of Czech cultural life during the Soviet period?**

You have difficult questions for me. I think it can be. There were festivals of folk music and art, where you could hear Moravian songs, see people in traditional clothes, it was not forbidden, it was not prosecuted by law. I have nothing more to say.

**3. Was CZ more integrated into world`s heritage due to the second greatest country in the world?**

More likely no, than yes. I make this conclusion, remembering how my friends were fond of American culture and English, tried even to imitate. Do not quite understand what do you mean by the word heritage. Culture? Something concrete? Then definitely not, I cannot remember anything significant. There was some emphasis on studying the same Russian literature or language, but this did not affect the involvement of my country in any way. In general, I did not understand the question, it is very specific.

**4. Please, name positive and negative changes, which started with new historical period (literature, music, mass media, cinema, press, architecture)**

Above wrote that there were lessons in Russian, but we did not forget our own. I was not fond of music, I danced at a disco for the same as all my peers, Karel Gott was very popular, but I did not particularly like him, disco music was mostly German or Swedish, I cannot remember the popular Czechoslovak singers. Many films of Soviet production showed in the cinema, some of them were interesting to me, I do not remember the movie title, it was about a man who came to Moscow instead of Leningrad and confused apartments because all houses are the same. By the way, seems to be this Soviet innovation - panel houses? Or not? Such blocks of the same type, very much on the outskirts of the city, I do not like this kind of architecture. In general, I remember many construction projects, new department stores, and on Benesovka rows of houses, where shops are located at the bottom - convenient and practical, but I prefer a private house.

**5. How did propaganda touch Your everyday life? Was it successful in changing democratic, western cultural pattern?**

I did not understand the essence of the question. Propaganda did not affect me, I lived my life, as far as possible my husband and I traveled around the country, I did not pay attention to communist slogans and appeals, I lived outside politics, and at work I personally was not forced to do anything related to Party or communism. Perhaps this question would be more suitable for a person who was in the party or worked in a special position.

I do not understand the second part of the question. I cannot answer.

**Lenka V.**

**Age: 45**

**Economy**

**1. Did planned economy of Soviet pattern influence on Your everyday shopping list?**

Personally, I did not experience any discomfort and could buy everything that I need, not on such a scale as today. It is a matter of choice and needs. There have always been people who are few, but I am not one of those people. I have always had enough. If I was abruptly transferred to 30 years ago, I would protest, there was no such wide choice, but in my childhood, I could not know about it. I was not abroad, there is nothing to compare.

**2. Have You ever felt, that Your consumer needs are not satisfied?**

The question is similar, it seemed to me that I had everything, in childhood and adolescence, the requests are not large. This is now my son often changes mobile phones or earns money to buy fashionable clothes, but personally, I was not interested in it at his age.

**3. Could You proud of Czech production during Soviet era or modern product represent Your countries potential better?**

I was born in 1972, the end of the dependent Czech Republic came in 1989, and I was at the age when such questions are not reflected. I can only say that now there are more brands, more choices, I am silent about the opportunity to buy anything through the Internet. I do not feel strong feelings like pride. Is that I love my car brand Skoda. Relatively inexpensive, has not yet contacted the service.

**4. Please, compare Your consumer possibilities during Soviet epoch and nowadays (criteria: quantity, quality, specter and number of possibilities, trademarks).**

The choice has become wider. As for quality - all individually. I do not want to return everything back; I have something to compare with today.

**5. What kind of everyday services have You used? What services You can use today and what services seen to be retrograde?**

Services today are much more - from beauty salons and to mobile operators. The point here is not whether we were part of the Soviet Union or independent - it is just that all life has changed, a lot has become automated, there are many services that could not have existed before.

**Politics**

**1. Did you share the communist ideology that was represented in Your life?**

Absolutely not. I just finished school in 1989. There was already no ideology. My parents, too, did not influence me; they themselves did not support the communist party and were cool towards the Russians. Father was a teacher at school and was negative about the fact that the children were obliged to learn Russian. Although he taught mathematics, he did not like this situation. I already practically do not remember anything from what I was teaching. There were lessons devoted to communism, but I did not endure any of them except for the names of general secretaries. I was interested in something completely different.

**2. Have you been proud to consider that your country was a member of the Warsaw Bloc?**

In 10-15 years I did not think about it. I was born too late. I cannot answer.

**3. Have you been a member of some Communist organizations? Describe your positive or negative experience.**

No.

**4. How the regime did bound your personal sense of freedom? Did you feel bounded? Did you have some obligations or ideological pressure?**

I can only retell, what my parents told me. Father was impressed by Dubcek and he criticized Gustav Husak. My father fully supported what Dubcek wanted to do, since my grandfather supported Benes and the independence of Czechoslovakia and our family as a whole was cautious and cool about the new government. His father believed that Stalin was the same criminal as Hitler, considered Brezhnev a close leader, and was oriented toward Western Europe. My father really liked Havel and he believed in him as a president and leader of the country. 1989 our family met enthusiastically. My father did not like it when all the teachers were forced to take the courses of Marxism-Leninism, considered it a waste of time, but of course it was undesirable to openly demonstrate this. People rather just fulfilled these boring commitments, but did not take them seriously.

## **Culture**

**1. Did You feel the unification pressure on Your native culture? How it was represented?**

In the late 80's this was not exactly the same, it's not 50-60's, except that there was a list of authors who were not printed and who were undesirable. But global prohibitions, pressures, I cannot remember. I know that before many cultural figures were forced to immigrate, the same to Kundera, but I cannot say anything else. I listened to foreign music; I do not know what was happening on our stage. There were collectives, performers, Elena Vondrackova

performed and performs now, many singers stayed on stage today. Was there any pressure on them? I do not know.

**2. Was it possible to preserve some characteristic features of Czech cultural life during the Soviet period?**

Can't reply.

**3. Was CZ more integrated into world`s heritage due to the second greatest country in the world?**

As a lover of Western music and cinema, I can't not say. Even today, being in the EC Czech Republic is not entirely known in the world. We have athletes, actors, singers, writers, but they are known only in the Czech Republic, maybe in Slovakia. Czech is not open to the world, and then even more so. Many know our cars or beer, but most likely, outside the country there are very few people, except specialists, who will name known Czechs or some achievements. I am rooting for the Hradec Ice Hockey Team, but I understand that most people probably knows about it, as for example they know about famous football clubs. The Czech Republic is a small country, and in the USSR there were no prerequisites to allocate us among other countries. If I correctly understand the question, then the introduction to world culture does not depend on whether we were in the Soviet bloc or not.

**4. Please, name positive and negative changes, which started with new historical period (literature, music, mass media, cinema, press, architecture)**

Once more I will return to what I heard from my elders and from my father - I cannot name anything positive. You cannot forbid people to express themselves, say what they think, you cannot force people to study Marxism or read Brezhnev's books. In terms of culture and art, there must be complete freedom.

**5. How did propaganda touch Your everyday life? Was it successful in changing democratic, western cultural pattern?**

I personally was not affected by propaganda. At first, I was too small to understand anything, and then everything sorted out by itself and I did not feel any propaganda. Unless there were additional lessons, scientific atheism, but a child or teenager does not perceive this as an ideology. Rather, just a boring lesson, which must be served, and then go home.

**Dita K.**

**Age: 55**

**Economy**

**1. Did planned economy of Soviet pattern influence on Your everyday shopping list?**

In this regard, it was worse than the neighbors were, I don't speak about Western Europe, but I cannot complain. I was told that in the Union itself it was much worse - the queues and deficit of products, but I do not remember that. Relatives traveled to Russia, they said that the stores were empty, such a nightmare. I cannot imagine it. Vegetables, potatoes, cereals have always been freely available. Meat was also, sausages, cheeses, fruits. I grew up in a middle-class family, and did not complain. I know that in Russia, it was difficult to get shoes and clothes from Czechoslovakia; I heard that our crystal and dishes were much appreciated. Prices were not low, but a working family could buy a crystal set, often it was bought as a gift for a wedding or birthday. Clothes and shoes were of high quality, different styles. I liked to dress well, with this, even in the 70's and 80's there were no problems. I am not an economist and it is hard for me to compare the economy now and then. However, I can say for sure - I personally did not need anything, did not stand in line and did not feel constrained.

**2. Have You ever felt, that Your consumer needs are not satisfied?**

No.

**3. Could You proud of Czech production during Soviet era or modern product represent Your countries potential better?**

Our textiles and shoes were pride. Russians and residents of the eastern republics, as far as I know, really wanted to buy these goods. The quality is excellent, now the quality level has fallen. I know in practice. Now many foreigners want to buy the same glass sets from Bohemia, in Prague there are whole glass shops. In each sideboard, there was a Czech crystal, prestigious and beautiful, the best choice for a gift. In Prague, before and now tourists buy our famous goods, we are proud of them. Probably not everything, I cannot answer for all, but I am pleased to realize that our factories have built such a huge country and the quality was at the highest level. Now there are more options and opportunities, but the competition has increased, although there are still brands and goods that you can buy only from us.

**4. Please, compare Your consumer possibilities during Soviet epoch and nowadays (criteria: quantity, quality, specter and number of possibilities, trademarks).**

Why I should compare? Now there are much choicer, huge supermarket chains, in each - their own special products, it is difficult to compare even Kaufland and Tesco; I am not talking about other stores. It should be borne in mind that wages have become different and I can afford more, of course, temptations, and unnecessary spending more. Capitalism as it is. It is not always good - you do not know what to choose, you think for a long time, advertising is not always true, beautiful packaging does not yet guarantee quality or result. However, I am used to it and buy

only what I am sure of. Perhaps the Russian people were even more difficult - after the empty shelves in the store to see whole supermarkets of goods. We were used to it.

**5. What kind of everyday services have You used? What services You can use today and what services seen to be retrograde?**

Now I use more. Mainly related to health care. Children went to sport sections - dancing and swimming. I think this can be attributed to the service too. In principle, in the Soviet era there were clubs for children, I myself went to the sports section, and we went on camping trips, now everything has become bigger and developed. Personally, I love hiking and active recreation. Just at this time, there are opportunities to actively travel, my husband and I get out once or twice a year to some places, now it is easy, and every country is open for tourism. This is important for me, still remember what circles of hell had to go-to-go abroad, not the fact that they will release and not the fact that the trip will be successful. In this regard, life in Czechoslovakia I did not like.

**Politics**

**1. Did you share the communist ideology that was represented in Your life?**

Only formally, we went for some sort of meetings from the school with local leaders of the party, celebrated on May 1, but no more. I did not penetrate into what was told on TV or radio, life was for me in another senses. When I entered the university in Brno, I met the same young people as I; they were sharply opposed to the USSR and the fact that we became part of the Warsaw Bloc. They caught every news or rumor about what is happening in neighboring countries, especially Poland. The example of Solidarity inspired them; they wanted that we would like this. Most likely I was given their mood, we often gathered for hikes and trips, we had an informal company. However, more talk than deals.

**2. Have you been proud to consider that your country was a member of the Warsaw Bloc?**

No, I knew approximately how things were in the USSR, all these ques and the lack of products, while the other part of the world was developed and was free. I keep silent about the persecution of people. It is inconceivable to imprison only for the fact that people do not think as system wants. This is nonsense.

**3. Have you been a member of some Communist organizations? Describe your positive or negative experience**

No, she did not want to and did not intend to join any committees at work. I'm not the kind of person who would do something against his will.

**4. How the regime did bound your personal sense of freedom? Did you feel bounded? Did you have some obligations or ideological pressure?**

I did not leave the feeling that something was going wrong as it should. That we should not be part of a huge whole, that we seem to be cut off from the whole world. These were fleeting feelings; I cannot say that they were deep. It has always been strange to me why I cannot travel freely, communicate with foreigners, learn something new by traveling. Why should I report to other people where I want to go and why I want to go. I was indignant at the persecution of dissidents. People have the right to ask questions to the authorities and receive answers to them. Why should we remain silent? Why should everyone think alike and be afraid to ask the simplest questions? This annoyed me. Personally, I did not feel constrained, I was not in opposition, I lived a normal life, but I was indignant with the fact that in some situations I have to report to other people.

**Culture**

**1. Did You feel the unification pressure on Your native culture? How it was represented?**

In the sphere of culture, I did not feel pressure. Most likely, I just did not know about the state of folk culture, because there were other interests. It seems that there were festivals of folk culture, so that probably there was no pressure on our culture.

**2. Was it possible to preserve some characteristic features of Czech cultural life during the Soviet period?**

Except for the persecution of opposition cultural figures, there was no pressure. Czech films were produced, we had our bards, we often sang some favorite Czech songs in our campaigns.

**3. Was CZ more integrated into world`s heritage due to the second greatest country in the world?**

We were interested in the West and America, we listened to jazz, rock, got some records, dreamed of attending a concert of a cult group. All that was from the USSR was considered not fashionable, as it was obsolete, it was not interesting for us to delve into what the USSR could give us in this regard. Personally, I felt that we are distant from the world precisely because of the Soviet Union. It seemed to me that the best and the most advanced awaited us in the West, not in the East.

**4. Please, name positive and negative changes, which started with new historical period (literature, music, mass media, cinema, press, architecture)**

Unless some sports sections were well funded, many stadiums or sports complexes, swimming pools were built. About literature, music, I cannot say anything. Many houses were built, there

were always some construction projects, new shopping centers and department stores. Sometimes the buildings were ugly, straight in the historic center of the city.

**5. How did propaganda touch Your everyday life? Was it successful in changing democratic, western cultural pattern?**

Propaganda did not irritate me. Rather, she was laughing. I cannot believe that someone seriously took it all in. It did not affect me and had no influence on my choice.

**Jitka N.**

**Age: 49**

**Economy**

**1. Did planned economy of Soviet pattern influence on Your everyday shopping list?**

No, every day I liked to go to the store like today and buy everything I wanted. The question is the amount of salary and desire. Now it is easier to buy something, because there are chain stores and huge shopping centers.

**2. Have You ever felt, that Your consumer needs are not satisfied?**

Even now they are not always satisfied. I mean some special products, for example, medicines for which a prescription is needed and not all pharmacies can provide it in the right amount. Then I just had enough, but it's very individual. It is difficult for me to answer unequivocally.

**3. Could You proud of Czech production during Soviet era or modern product represent Your countries potential better?**

I do not see the difference. The assortment became wider.

**4. Please, compare Your consumer possibilities during Soviet epoch and nowadays (criteria: quantity, quality, specter and number of possibilities, trademarks).**

Definitely the choice has become more, I cannot appreciate the quality, the amount is simply off scale. Although it seemed then that everything is there, but this is incomparable with today's abundance.

**5. What kind of everyday services have You used? What services You can use today and what services seen to be retrograde?**

Today I consume much more services. Car service, mobile communications, internet, banking services, insurance, personal services.

**Politics**

**1. Did you share the communist ideology that was represented in Your life?**

I did not even think about its existence. Did not support. I am not interested in politics.

**2. Have you been proud to consider that your country was a member of the Warsaw Bloc?**

What is there to be proud of? The fact that we are lagging behind other countries? Thanks, that the EU leveled the situation. For these twenty-five Czech Republic made a huge breakthrough, became part of the open world. I am happy with the fact that now - this is an opportunity to work and a good salary and the opportunity to travel, to do what I want. This is very important for me and my children.

**3. Have you been a member of some Communist organizations? Describe your positive or negative experience.**

No, was not. Did not want.

**4. How the regime did bound your personal sense of freedom? Did you feel bounded? Did you have some obligations or ideological pressure?**

In terms of travel abroad restricted. There are no other spheres of life.

**Culture:**

**1. Did You feel the unification pressure on Your native culture? How it was represented?**

I have no idea about the state of culture. I cannot answer.

**2. Was it possible to preserve some characteristic features of Czech cultural life during the Soviet period?**

Did not participate in cultural life.

**3. Was CZ more integrated into world`s heritage due to the second greatest country in the world?**

I do not know. Probably not. Rather, on the contrary, since the border was almost closed. Now it's freer.

**4. Please, name positive and negative changes, which started with new historical period (literature, music, mass media, cinema, press, architecture)**

I do not know how to correctly answer. I worked and did not follow the culture.

**5. How did propaganda touch Your everyday life? Was it successful in changing democratic, western cultural pattern?**

No way. I worked and was engaged in family, communicated with friends. None of us thought about this and lived a personal life.

**Zuzanna F.**

**Age: 56**

## **Economy**

### **1. Did planned economy of Soviet pattern influence on Your everyday shopping list?**

Depends on what specific time you want to ask me. In the 70's you could buy everything you want. For example, in Poland it was more difficult to find something, not to mention exclusive goods. Poles from the border regions came to Czechoslovakia for shopping. It was much better, I do not know how it is in the USSR and other countries. There were no interruptions in supplies, queues or feelings, which is something that is lacking.

### **2. Have You ever felt, that Your consumer needs are not satisfied?**

No. I just wanted more styles of clothes and shoes. Sometimes I read Western, mostly German and French fashion magazines and assortment of clothes, cut, the number of models amazed. The choice of cosmetics was not very great, but as a whole I cannot complain. Now a very large selection, for every taste, but criticize what I could not.

### **3. Could You proud of Czech production during Soviet era or modern product represent Your countries potential better?**

Czechoslovakia and now the Czech Republic are known in the world as a producer of machines, beer and musical instruments. I think we have something to be proud of, we are a developed country and we have something to offer the world. I am not an economist by profession and I do not know in all the details where we export goods, I cannot say for all producers. Something I like, something that does not. So it is for any person, the tastes are different.

### **4. Please, compare Your consumer possibilities during Soviet epoch and nowadays (criteria: quantity, quality, specter and number of possibilities, trademarks).**

Changed, of course. So everything has changed, go to any store - you can get lost. Literally yesterday I spent an hour in Albert when I chose baking sour cream and other products. There used to be a limited number of firms and suppliers, there were few private entrepreneurs, they were almost nonexistent. Now anyone can offer their services or goods. The competition is huge, not to mention the import goods.

### **5. What kind of everyday services have You used? What services You can use today and what services seen to be retrograde?**

Now there are more services to facilitate life, more services for children, pensioners. Now the service is much more comfortable. Buses, trolleybuses, trains are better equipped. There was a lot of things that I could not even dream about. I do not know how in other cities, but in Hradec Králové there are all - any sports circles, a planetarium, a swimming pool, you shouldn't leave the city to enjoy life

## **Politics**

### **1. Did You share Communist ideology, how it was represented in Your life?**

My parents supported the Communist Party. They were not party members, but I've never heard a condemnation or criticism. They did not talk about the events of 1968 in a negative way, they were not interested in the unrest in neighboring countries. I remember when there were strikes in Poland, my father said that it does not threaten us, and the Poles themselves do not know what they want. Maybe he was wrong and just did not know how these people lived and why they protested. I did not follow the news, then after 1989 the news flow came down on us, there were a lot of broadcasts and articles about the repression of the 50s, about rehabilitation. All this is certainly monstrous, but then we did not know all the details, did not go into political life. Everyone lived their own worries, everyone had families. Maybe I did not want to ask myself these questions.

### **2. Were You proud of consideration, that Your country was the member of Warsaw Block?**

And this should be proud of? It's just a fact.

### **3. Were You a member of some communist organizations? Describe Your positive or negative experience.**

I was not. My parents too. If a person wanted promotion at work, he joined some committees and went to meetings. My work did not expect this and I was not interested in it

### **4. How did regime influence on Your personal feeling of freedom? Did You feel bounded by some obligations or ideological pressure?**

I did not like the control of going to the neighboring countries. At the moment, free entry to any country makes me very happy.

## **Culture:**

### **1. Did You feel the unification pressure on Your native culture? How it was represented?**

In my opinion, on the contrary, as far as I can remember, for all sorts of holidays bands of Czech and Slovak music played, prepared national dishes, people dressed up in traditional costumes. Although maybe I'm not quite right understood the question.

### **2. Was it possible to preserve some characteristic features of Czech cultural life during the Soviet period?**

Don't understand

**3. Was CZ more integrated into world's heritage due to the second greatest country in the world?**

I felt integration only when the Czech Republic became a member of the EC. People began to travel, became open to the world, and this means that there is an exchange of experience and knowledge. Then it was not entirely possible.

**4. Please, name positive and negative changes, which started with new historical period (literature, music, mass media, cinema, press, architecture)**

I did not notice the changes. Perhaps there was some kind of control of what is possible, and what cannot be done. If you look at some actors or actors, then it was probably more difficult to build a career, much was forbidden. Now almost anyone can write a book and publish it, no one checks anything. It's better or worse - I do not know. Everywhere there are minuses.

**5. How did propaganda touch Your everyday life? Was it successful in changing democratic, western cultural pattern?**

Personally, I did not touch. I was not a member of the party or any organization, my work was not connected with politics, production or the personnel department. Pressure on my life was not, of course, now any person can ask a policy this or that question, many cases when people protest against some actions of the president or the government, it is covered in newspapers and on TV. Previously, it was probably risky.

**Jakub B.**

**Age: 57**

**Economy**

**1. Did planned economy of Soviet pattern influence on Your everyday shopping list?**

There were not enough special things, access to services. In general, rather yes than not. Any person can compare their past lives and what is happening now. Now I am more satisfied as a buyer. I can give more to my family; I feel more comfortable.

**2. Have You ever felt, that Your consumer needs are not satisfied?**

It was so long ago, from the position of an adult it's hard to judge what the young man lacked me about 30 years ago. If I could travel in time and got back for about 30-35 years ago, I certainly felt uncomfortable.

**3. Could You proud of Czech production during Soviet era or modern product represent Your countries potential better?**

I want to tell you about cars. Literally about 15 years ago they were more reliable and could drive 300,000 km without any problems. At the moment require more repairs. About production 30 years ago, I cannot say for sure. There were probably objects of pride. Like beer or Becherovka today, I cannot remember exactly. Crystal seemed to be popular with tourists and those who came from the Union itself.

**4. Please, compare Your consumer possibilities during Soviet epoch and nowadays (criteria: quantity, quality, specter and number of possibilities, trademarks).**

Elementary. The choice is now more. It's just huge. Imports are many unequivocally.

**5. What kind of everyday services have You used? What services You can use today and what services seen to be retrograde?**

The car service became developed. But this is not because I now live in the Czech Republic, not Czechoslovakia, but because time has changed. Standards are higher, technology developments. And everywhere.

## **Politics**

**1. Did You share Communist ideology, how it was represented in Your life?**

I grew up in an environment where I was not interested in politics. Nobody forced me to go anywhere or join any organization. My friends went to football or hockey, met with girls, in general behaved like ordinary guys. They did not ask themselves such questions. I cannot even recall a single person to whom such things were as interesting.

**2. Were You proud of consideration, that Your country was the member of Warsaw Block?**

No

**3. Were You a member of some communist organizations? Describe Your positive or negative experience.**

No

**4. How did regime influence on Your personal feeling of freedom? Did You feel bounded by some obligations or ideological pressure?**

I did not conduct any kind of antisocial activity. I had no problems even with the police, I felt free.

## **Culture:**

**1. Did You feel the unification pressure on Your native culture? How it was represented?**

I did not feel.

**2. Was it possible to preserve some characteristic features of Czech cultural life during the Soviet period?**

Difficult to answer. I do not remember unequivocally any prohibitions or persecutions.

**3. Was CZ more integrated into world`s heritage due to the second greatest country in the world?**

We learned more about Russian culture and Russian. They learned the language, read the classics, I still remember certain phrases and words.

**4. Please, name positive and negative changes, which started with new historical period (literature, music, mass media, cinema, press, architecture)**

I didn`t follow the culture.

**5. How did propaganda touch Your everyday life? Was it successful in changing democratic, western cultural pattern?**

No way. To date, it is good of course that the political choice has also become wider. More parties for which I can go, with different programs. Elections became more open and more honest, then everyone knew the result in advance. Politicians spoke with learned phrases, every day the same thing. Today it is easier to follow their actions and how these actions help people. I'm not happy with everyone now, but who is fully satisfied? Such people probably do not.

**Petr L.**

**Age: 52**

**Economy**

**1. Did planned economy of Soviet pattern influence on Your everyday shopping list?**

In Czechoslovakia there were no huge problems with the production and supply, in contrast to Poland. On the contrary, we had exports inside the system and everything worked at full capacity. When the Poles almost starved, we lived peacefully and these problems did not concern us. Perhaps the regions and regions were poorer, I do not know how it was in the villages.

**2. Have You ever felt, that Your consumer needs are not satisfied?**

I did not feel it. They all had the same level of prosperity, there was no feeling of envy or infringement. I was definitely pleased.

**3. Could You proud of Czech production during Soviet era or modern product represent Your countries potential better?**

Oh, yes, I remember how the hunt for crystal or some sort of kitchen service was conducted. It was our brand, the Russians almost certainly fought for it. It seemed strange to me, you'll think what kind of dishes. The footwear was also prestigious for people from other countries, for us it was a reality. Apparently we lived much better than most of Blok's neighbors. Pencils are still excellent with us.

**4. Please, compare Your consumer possibilities during Soviet epoch and nowadays (criteria: quantity, quality, specter and number of possibilities, trademarks).**

The quality is still good. Watching what you want to ask me about. I can definitely vouch for beer and liquor. The choice and spectrum became wider.

**5. What kind of everyday services have You used? What services You can use today and what services seen to be retrograde?**

The service industry has expanded. There are frankly useless and unnecessary, as I understand it, it's just a money earning. Annoying ads, constantly pulling out advertising mail from the mailbox, tired. Anything you can buy and order, with the Internet easier. A lot of cafes, restaurants, coffee houses, before there were a couple of places where you can have lunch, now more. But the prices have changed too.

## **Politics**

**1. Did You share Communist ideology, how it was represented in Your life?**

I did not find much pressure. Many felt that most likely there would be some changes, the system was not functioning well. Many were sympathetic to the Poles, to their struggle. We are more passive. In Hungary, too, society was more passive, I do not know why. I did not perceive my life through a filter of some kind of ideology. When you perform any duties every day, there is not much time to analyze yourself and what affects you.

**2. Were You proud of consideration, that Your country was the member of Warsaw Block?**

No. This inhibited us objectively speaking.

**3. Were You a member of some communist organizations? Describe Your positive or negative experience.**

Нет. Даже родители не были.

**4. How did regime influence on Your personal feeling of freedom? Did You feel bounded by some obligations or ideological pressure?**

I do not like when something is imposed on me. In any sphere. People should have their heads on their shoulders and their opinions. Probably the system cannot function without control. Personally, I did not feel this control, but some little things bothered me. For example, I wondered why you cannot travel freely to France or another country. Why it is impossible to speak openly about the fact that you are a believer or go to church. If we learned about what was happening in the world, then this information was not always identical with what was being said to us. Only relatively recently we learned how to hide the Chernobyl accident. I believe that it is unacceptable to lie to people and hide information from them.

**Culture:**

**1. Did You feel the unification pressure on Your native culture? How it was represented?**

Czech culture was not oppressed at the expense of the Russian.

**2. Was it possible to preserve some characteristic features of Czech cultural life during the Soviet period?**

Don't understand.

**3. Was CZ more integrated into world's heritage due to the second greatest country in the world?**

I think that this slowed us down. I proceed from a later experience and look back at the past. To date, I personally feel more connected with the world. I travel, I have business contacts, I have the opportunity to work not even in the Czech Republic. My son after school went to England and worked there, taught the language. Then he returned and entered the university. This is a huge plus of openness and freedom. In my youth, I could go to a certain republic of the USSR and study there in Russian.

**4. Please, name positive and negative changes, which started with new historical period (literature, music, mass media, cinema, press, architecture)**

Today, there are many buildings that functioned to us from that era. Sports actively developed, was in high esteem, probably well financed. Our hockey players were among the best in the world. I have not followed and do not follow the development of culture. I can tell only about sports.

**5. How did propaganda touch Your everyday life? Was it successful in changing democratic, western cultural pattern?**

I do not know how it was in other countries of the bloc, but I had no strong influence of propaganda. You always need to focus on yourself, what you see, and not what you want to see

for you. Perhaps in an earlier period, when Czechoslovakia only became a communist country, the pressure was stronger, but I did not find it.

**Pavel H.**

**Age: 51**

**Economy**

**1. Did planned economy of Soviet pattern influence on Your everyday shopping list?**

There were no problems in the cities. Everything was open access. I do not quite understand what the Soviet model of the economy is. Perhaps I would have answered more fully.

**2. Have You ever felt, that Your consumer needs are not satisfied?**

No.

**3. Could You proud of Czech production during Soviet era or modern product represent Your countries potential better?**

I'm proud of the automotive industry, it's cheaper than Volkswagen, the build quality and mechanics are not worse.

**4. Please, compare Your consumer possibilities during Soviet epoch and nowadays (criteria: quantity, quality, specter and number of possibilities, trademarks).**

Quality - almost did not change. Quantity - has grown.

**5. What kind of everyday services have You used? What services You can use today and what services seen to be retrograde?**

I often go to restaurants and pubs. I do not often use special services. I do not know whether it is possible to write about car service. Difficult to answer.

**Politics**

**1. Did You share Communist ideology, how it was represented in Your life?**

No. It did not lead to anything good. 1968 is a disaster for the country. Now I consciously understand this. We would now live better, no worse than in Germany or France, communism slowed us down.

**2. Were You proud of consideration, that Your country was the member of Warsaw Block?**

No, not again. This is a swamp, we were lucky that the Czechs and Slovaks lived on the whole richer than the Poles, Hungarians did not lag far behind us. We must look ahead, participate in

global processes. Membership in the Block hampered, did not allow to reveal the potential of the country.

**3. Were You a member of some communist organizations? Describe Your positive or negative experience.**

No. I have a negative attitude towards the Communist Party, I'm surprised that today they took the third place in the elections.

**4. How did regime influence on Your personal feeling of freedom? Did You feel bounded by some obligations or ideological pressure?**

I wanted more freedom of movement and freedom for private entrepreneurs. There was no business to think about. There was not enough private initiative.

**Culture:**

**1. Did You feel the unification pressure on Your native culture? How it was represented?**

Difficult to answer

**2. Was it possible to preserve some characteristic features of Czech cultural life during the Soviet period?**

Have no answer

**3. Was CZ more integrated into world`s heritage due to the second greatest country in the world?**

On the contrary. Much came to us later - some musical groups, news, foreign films. The record of some collective or group, for example, was difficult to find.

**4. Please, name positive and negative changes, which started with new historical period (literature, music, mass media, cinema, press, architecture)**

I cannot name positive ones. I will say about music - I loved Led Zeppelin and Pink Floyd, then I learned about heavy music. I wanted to try playing the guitar, but amateur music was not encouraged. There were a lot of folk music bands, it seemed to me that this is an old thing and boring music for pensioners. But as it was undesirable to openly play rock, there was no possibility.

**5. How did propaganda touch Your everyday life? Was it successful in changing democratic, western cultural pattern?**

Older people still somehow could be involved in this. My generation was mostly negative and had a negative experience. It surprises me that now young people vote for Communists. People under 25 or slightly older. They just did not find it. If they lived there, then most likely their

opinion would be different. I also disapprove of Zeman's foreign policy. I do not like his steps towards Russia. I believe that it is better to have ambiguous decisions of the European Parliament and membership in NATO and the EU. I do not agree with the migration policy, but Russia's policy revolts me more.

**Martin J.**

**Age: 53**

**Economy**

**1. Did planned economy of Soviet pattern influence on Your everyday shopping list?**

I lived in a village near Hradec, almost all of us grew ourselves - vegetables, greens, rabbits, chickens. Mama sewed or changed clothes. It was difficult with special products, such as fruits. Queues for bananas were. Mom complained about the prices, we tried to live at the expense of our farm, at times it was difficult.

**2. Have You ever felt, that Your consumer needs are not satisfied?**

My needs did not go beyond my desires and what I could get.

**3. Could You proud of Czech production during Soviet era or modern product represent Your countries potential better?**

Undoubtedly, our economy is working better now. I do not complain about my salary; I can provide the family in full. I'm not sure that it's worth comparing almost two different countries. Previously, everything was completely different.

**4. Please, compare Your consumer possibilities during Soviet epoch and nowadays (criteria: quantity, quality, specter and number of possibilities, trademarks).**

The assortment has grown, there are more opportunities, but not all of them are useful or necessary.

**5. What kind of everyday services have You used? What services You can use today and what services seen to be retrograde?**

Then many things had to be done by yourself, today there are more services that help and make life easier. With age, they become larger.

**Politics**

**1. Did You share Communist ideology, how it was represented in Your life?**

No, since my parents had a negative experience with the authorities. I do not want to write about it.

**2. Were You proud of consideration, that Your country was the member of Warsaw Block?**

No. I was very happy about the events of 1989 and I am proud of the students and all those people who helped the country to become free and decide their own destiny.

**3. Were You a member of some communist organizations? Describe Your positive or negative experience.**

No.

**4. How did regime influence on Your personal feeling of freedom? Did You feel bounded by some obligations or ideological pressure?**

After graduating, I wanted to be engaged in private entrepreneurship. I am very glad that the events of 1989 gave me and many others the opportunity to do this.

**Culture:**

**1. Did You feel the unification pressure on Your native culture? How it was represented?**

I did not participate in any cultural events. Theater Yara Zimmerman existed and was popular, he tried to close, but without success. Probably badly tried.

**2. Was it possible to preserve some characteristic features of Czech cultural life during the Soviet period?**

Difficult to answer. Probably yes, all the same if everything was banned or destroyed, now we have what we have.

**3. Was CZ more integrated into world`s heritage due to the second greatest country in the world?**

After 1989, the Czech Republic became much more in contact with the world. There were new trading partners, after joining the EC it became easier to move around, there was a sense of freedom. A lot of young people after school or university go to work in other countries. I consider it a merit of democracy.

**4. Please, name positive and negative changes, which started with new historical period (literature, music, mass media, cinema, press, architecture)**

I mentioned the pressure on what went beyond a certain framework. Now the information has become more honest, people have a choice what to read or what they want to hear. The lack of pressure is a plus. I'm not a man of art, but even I can say that he needs freedom. But there was no complete freedom.

**5. How did propaganda touch Your everyday life? Was it successful in changing democratic, western cultural pattern?**

People can't be changed in a short period of time. Personally, I felt some kind of lies and insincerity. I do not believe in the power of propaganda, when there are matters more important and more interesting. When a person lives full life, he simply does not need to think about the class struggle or the struggle against capitalism.

**Milan M.**

**Age: 63**

**Economy**

**1. Did planned economy of Soviet pattern influence on Your everyday shopping list?**

Until the early 70's it was difficult. As now I remember that we lived very modestly. Things were changing, I was worn out for my brother. Then the situation began to improve. Not as it is now, but when I already went to university such difficulties as in the 60's were not.

**2. Have You ever felt, that Your consumer needs are not satisfied?**

Always what was missing, but wanted. Leather jackets or jeans, but such goods were not for everyone, they had to be looked for. In full satisfaction was not. Rare goods were expensive, rather gift, for a wedding or some important holiday.

**3. Could You proud of Czech production during Soviet era or modern product represent Your countries potential better?**

I judge from the position of the owner of the electrical goods store - there was less choice, but the product was better. Now almost everything is done in China, a lot of marriage, sometimes buyers can return the goods. Quality control was more severe; the requirements are higher. Czech products are not as many as they seem, imports are larger. Definitely cannot judge. It is necessary to compare a specific product of the same manufacturer.

**4. Please, compare Your consumer possibilities during Soviet epoch and nowadays (criteria: quantity, quality, specter and number of possibilities, trademarks).**

It is necessary to take a specific product, compare its performance with the analog for today. The amount is naturally larger.

**5. What kind of everyday services have You used? What services You can use today and what services seen to be retrograde?**

Which services are you interested in? Individuals have grown at times. On other parameters, the system has changed dramatically, as far as medicine is concerned, everything has changed radically.

## **Politics**

### **1. Did You share Communist ideology, how it was represented in Your life?**

Father was a military man and had a party membership, but he rather soberly assessed the situation, and was not a fanatic. I have seen positive moments - a good and affordable education or medicine for example. After the intervention, his father's opinion did not change, in general he was not enthusiastic about the Prague Spring, he believed that we all follow one route and then it will be easier, most likely he survived the war and did not want any more conflicts. I cannot call myself a person who was involved in some kind of activity.

### **2. Were You proud of consideration, that Your country was the member of Warsaw Block?**

Personally, I did not feel any special feelings.

### **3. Were You a member of some communist organizations? Describe Your positive or negative experience.**

No.

### **4. How did regime influence on Your personal feeling of freedom? Did You feel bounded by some obligations or ideological pressure?**

Most likely, I could not conduct entrepreneurial activities. I could not cross the border freely. I did not feel any discomfort.

## **Culture:**

### **1. Did You feel the unification pressure on Your native culture? How it was represented?**

No.

### **2. Was it possible to preserve some characteristic features of Czech cultural life during the Soviet period?**

Difficult to answer.

### **3. Was CZ more integrated into world`s heritage due to the second greatest country in the world?**

Can`t understand

### **4. Please, name positive and negative changes, which started with new historical period (literature, music, mass media, cinema, press, architecture)**

Construction of new areas for housing.

**5. How did propaganda touch Your everyday life? Was it successful in changing democratic, western cultural pattern?**

Although I did not feel much pressure, today's life brings me more comfort and tranquility. I'm doing what I wanted. As you see, our country chose not communism in 1989, so propaganda has not achieved any success.

## Conclusion

In this thesis, we raised the issue of the Soviet legacy in the modern Czech Republic. The work consists of two parts - theoretical and practical. The aims were formulated as: 1. Define and describe Soviet Heritage.

2. Integrate our sociological quiz into theoretical part of the work and combine it for final result.
3. Find specific features in CZ economic and politic life, due to the Soviet Heritage.
4. Try to analyse the phenomenon of “Homo soveticus” and it’s representation in Czech Republic.

The theoretical part is devoted to covering political, economic and social situations in the metropolis, from the end of the war until 1989. In the first section, all changes in the metropolis and in Czechoslovakia are described in the chronological order, which gives us the key to understanding the practical part. We see what path the socialist system has taken in a particular country in Central Europe, what changes have taken place in social and economic structures. The changes were dramatic; Czechoslovakia was a member of the Warsaw Pact and underwent a transformation according to the standards of the Soviet system. Unlike other countries of the socialist bloc, the economy after 1968 functioned to satisfy the consumer needs of the population. This argument we followed in the survey, which is presented in the second part of the work. Unfortunately, it was difficult for us to determine the political involvement of the population, based on our survey, since the respondents were not members of the Communist Party and led an apolitical way of life. This conclusion is consistent with data on Czechoslovakia during the normalization period, when the main goal was to “calm down” the population and prevent conflicts. The survey data showed us this trend. Part of the survey on culture showed a generally neutral assessment of the Soviet presence in Czechoslovakia. The cultural pattern was not radically changed due to membership in the Warsaw Bloc, total Russification was not carried out, and manifestations of national self-awareness were not oppressed. The main problems were: limited access to Western European countries and their heritage, inadequate financing of some sectors of the economy, a narrow range of services, and the inability to freely travel abroad. In general, no features of Homo Soveticus have been identified, the phenomenon of which is described in a separate chapter of the work. As a result, we can summarize that the Soviet model of thinking is not typical for a resident of the Czech Republic as a whole.

This model is rooted in the countries of Eastern Europe, especially in Russia, where this phenomenon can be traced in the organization of work, collectivist thinking, peculiar pride in the

Soviet heritage, reflected in contemporary pop art, cinema, the cult of the Great Patriotic War, places of glory and Soviet attributes of life, which are objects of pride and distinction from Western civilization. We find an acute opposition between ourselves and others, which are represented by modern North American and European societies whose values and heritage are a priori, diminished before the legacy of the Soviet empire. These trends are absent in the modern Czech Republic, which has successfully integrated into the EU and NATO, has a steadily developing economy, low unemployment rates, a developed middle class and a political system with developed democratic institutions. We have used mostly Russian sources, some articles of modern sociologist. During our researching visual materials, diagrams and schemes were used to analyse and compare past and present situation, it helps to understand the result of the quiz and understand these people more.

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