


- **History of Central Europe**

1960s – 1970s

• 2 blocks: need to coexistence

- Since 2nd half 1950s new relation btw 2 blocs - political rapprochement, but emergency of objective need of crisis management on international scale – fear of nuclear weapons
- Need of coexistence: both blocs in fact needed each other – economical interests: Soviet Bloc – technical and technologically backwardness x USA: possibility of new market - Eastern Europe
- 1962: after Caribbean Crisis – beginning of beginning of the negotiations on the control of nuclear danger

- BUT basic objectives of both superpower remained incompatible
- USA: balance bwt 2 blocs x Soviet Union: aim to spread the power
-  alternating periods of negotiations, conflict, tension and loosening (end 1989)
- 1st phases lasted until end of 1960s : quite successful solution: Indo-China and Austria x lasting issue – Germany – 2nd Berlin Crisis 1961 and August 1968 in Czechoslovakia

• GDR 2nd and Berlin Crisis

- One of the most sensitive question – Germany - conflicts of interest
- **Hallstein doctrine** (named after Walter Hallstein, was a key doctrine in the foreign policy of the Federal Republic of Germany - West Germany after 1955. It established that the Federal Republic would not establish or maintain diplomatic relations with any state that recognized the German Democratic Republic - GDR, East Germany. Important aspects of the doctrine were abandoned after 1970 when it became difficult to maintain and the Federal government changed its politics)
- **Economical miracle** (West Germany)
- **Control of West Berlin – N. S. Khrushchev** – neutral or part of GDR – pressure Paris conference 1960 – not successful
- August 1961 – **Berlin Wall**
- **1963: J. F. Kennedy visited Berlin:**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=56V6r2dpYH8>

• Berlin Wall

- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_vXsdaUmG8s



• Czechoslovakia

- President **Antonín Novotný** –first secretary of CP 1953 – 1968, President 1957 - 1968 (K. Gottwald died on March 14, 1953 a week after attending J. V.Stalin's funeral in Moscow)
- 1960 – New constitution and new name Czechoslovak Socialistic Republic (ČSSR) and new state symbol - centralization and concentration of totalitarian power, The 1960 Constitution of Czechoslovakia declared the victory of "socialism" and proclaimed the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic - leading role of the Communist Party in society, the president, the cabinet, the Slovak National Council, and the local governments were made responsible to the National Assembly - National Assembly needed approval of CP policies
- Bill of Rights emphasized economic and social rights (right to work, leisure, health care, and education); Civil rights were deemphasized
- The judiciary was combined with the prosecuting branch; all judges were committed to the protection of the socialist state and the education of citizens in loyalty to the cause of socialism.
- All private enterprises using hired labour were abolished
- Comprehensive economic planning was reaffirmed
- Drastically decline of Czechoslovak Economy
- Need of Economical reform – the most – radical one in Soviet Bloc – showed that democratization and liberalization of the economy is not possible without changes in policy
- Collectivization was completed by 1960
- Liberalization: 1st phases of liberalization of the political regime



• De-Stalinisation

- 1958 CP Party Congress XI. - formalized the continuation of Stalinism.
- Czechoslovak economy became stagnated
- 1963 reform-minded Communist intellectuals produced a proliferation of critical articles – respond of CP (trials were reviewed, for example, and some of those purged were rehabilitated; some hardliners were removed from top levels of government and replaced by more liberal communists)
- 1965 CP approved the New Economic Model
- CP "Theses" of December 1965 presented - call for political reform (democratic centralism was redefined, placing a stronger emphasis on democracy; leading role of the CP was reaffirmed but limited) → **CONSEQUENCE:** National Assembly was promised increased legislative responsibility; The Slovak executive and legislature were assured that they could assist the central government in program planning and assume responsibility for program implementation in Slovakia; regional, district, and local national committees were to be permitted a degree of autonomy; CP agreed to refrain from superseding the authority of economic and social organizations. **BUT CP control in cultural policy was reaffirmed**
- **January 1967 was the date for full implementation of the reform program** → first secretary of CP A. Novotný and his supporters hesitated (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** adopted a resolution calling for rehabilitation of the Czechoslovak literary tradition and the establishment of free contact with Western culture) → **A. Novotný** regime responded with repressive measures

• De-Stalinisation

- October 1967 meeting of the CP Central Committee, **Alexander Dubček** challenged first secretary of CP **A. Novotný** → **A. Dubček** was accused of nationalism
- University students in Prague demonstrated in support of the liberals → **A. Novotný** appealed to Moscow for assistance → December 1967 Soviet leader **Leonid Brezhnev** in Prague (but did not support **A. Novotný**) and gave speech to the inner circle of the CP in which he stated
 - *"I did not come to take part in the solution of your problems... ...you will surely manage to solve them on your own."*
- **5 January 1968**, the Central Committee elected **A. Dubček** to replace **A. Novotný** as first secretary of the CP (**A. Novotný's** fall from CP 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 Youth, and from local party organs. On 22 March 1968, **A. Novotný** resigned from the presidency and was succeeded by General **Ludvík Svoboda**).
- January Plenum = beginning of the democratization of the Czechoslovak Society
- Requirements: recall of the President, economical reform, relax tense social situation
- New leader of CP **Alexandr Dubček**
- End of censorship
- Law to the Federation
- Prague Spring

• Czechoslovakia 1968

- Requirements: demission of the President, economical reform and liberalization of life BUT all changes should be done under the control of CP
- Head of CP **Alexander Dubček**



• **Reform: socialism with human face, Prague Spring**

- Against: bureaucratic-totalitarian model of socialism
- Idea of Socialist democracy
- Requirement: more democratic, more economical and more social regime
- Idea of political pluralism
- Church – freedom of religion,...
- Action programme – April 1968 - principles of market economy, political freedoms and citizens' rights, did not **guarantee political pluralism and creation of democratic regime**

- * **Prague Spring**, brief period of liberalization in Czechoslovakia under Alexander Dubček in 1968
- * Soon after he became first secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party on January 5, 1968, Dubček granted the press greater freedom of expression; he also rehabilitated victims of political purges during the Joseph Stalin era
- * In April he promulgated a sweeping reform program that included autonomy for Slovakia, a revised constitution to guarantee civil rights and liberties, and plans for the democratization of the government
- * Dubček claimed that he was offering “socialism with a human face”
- * By June many Czechs were calling for more rapid progress toward real democracy
- * following April.

• Prague Spring 1968

- **A. Dubček** - reform movement a step further in the direction of liberalism (censorship was lifted, media—press, radio, and television—were mobilized for reformist propaganda purposes)

- April 1968 CP Presidium adopted the Action Programme - "new model of socialism" (e.g. 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; New Economic Model was to be implemented; also reaffirmed the Czechoslovak alliance with the Soviet Union and other socialist states; reform movement, which rejected Stalinism as the road to communism, remained committed to communism as a goal)

- Action Programme: did not promise - pluralism and creating standard democratic regime

- Effort to restore the Czechoslovak Social Democratic Party

- Since May 1968 – growing tension – reform in deep crises

- June 1968 **Ludvík Vaculík**, a lifelong communist and a candidate member of the Central Committee, published a manifesto entitled the "*Two Thousand Words*" (The manifesto expressed concern about conservative elements within CP and "foreign" forces as well; It called on the "people" to take the initiative in implementing the reform programme) → **A.**

Dubček, CP Presidium, National Front, and the cabinet denounced it

<http://www.radio.cz/en/section/curaffrs/the-two-thousand-words-that-started-the-prague-spring>

● Artists

- First time criticism of dogmatism and the aim go back to “*Young or authentically Marx*”
- Not only democratization but also democracy: main tension between culture and political power
- Demand for creative freedom



- Artists - requirement - creative freedom
- Czechoslovak film: Miloš Forman, Ivan Passer, Jan Němec, Vojtěch Jasný, Jiří Menzel, Věra Chytilová...
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WM3lrSc0Tp4>
- Writers: Milan Kundera, Ivan Klíma, Ludvík Vaculík, Josef Škvorecký, Bohumil Hrabal, Arnošt Lustig,...
- 4th congress of writers 1967 – open criticism of political conditions - cruel punishment – cancel: Literární noviny and movement against liberalism

• Prague Spring 1968

- **USSR alarmed by L. Vaculík's Manifesto** → Warsaw Pact declared the defence of Czechoslovakia's socialist gains to be not only the task of Czechoslovakia but also the mutual task of all Warsaw Pact countries → **CP** rejected the Warsaw Pact ultimatum, and **A. Dubček** requested bilateral talks with USSR
- **L. Brezhnev** hesitated to intervene militarily in Czechoslovakia
- USSR agreed to bilateral talks with Czechoslovakia: held July 1968 in **Cierna nad Tisou** (**L. Brezhnev** decided on compromise: CP 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; USSR agreed to withdraw their troops - stationed in Czechoslovakia since the June maneuvers- and permit CP congress)
- 3 August 1968: USSR, GDR, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia met in Bratislava and signed the **Bratislava Declaration** (affirmed unshakable fidelity to Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism and declared an implacable struggle against "bourgeois" ideology and all "antisocialist" forces).
- After the Bratislava conference, Soviet troops left Czechoslovak territory but remained along Czechoslovak borders

• Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia

- CP party congress scheduled for 9 September 1968
- After Bratislava conference - information: most of **A. Dubček's** opponents would be removed from the Central Committee; Prague municipal party organization prepared and circulated a blacklist, anti-reformist coalition could hope to stay in power only with Soviet assistance → CP anti-reformists: effort to convince USSR → danger of political instability and "counterrevolution" did indeed exist
- CP anti-reformist used **Jan Kašpar** Report, prepared by the Central Committee's Information Department (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)
- **Drahomír Kolder** and **Alois Indra** evaluate the report for the 20 August meeting of the CP Presidium.
- These actions are thought to have precipitated the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia: - CP Presidium convened on 20 August, the anti-reformists planned to make a bid for power, pointing to the imminent danger of counterrevolution - **D. Kolder** and **A. Indra** presented a resolution declaring a state of emergency and calling for "fraternal assistance." (resolution was never voted on, because the Warsaw Pact troops entered Czechoslovakia that same day)

• Disintegration of the régime - Czechoslovakia

- Need of the reforms even in the CP – conservative fraction in troubles
- Calls for pluralism, autonomous development and ignoring official institutions
- Consolidation of the Catholic church

• Warsaw Pact intervention and the end of Prague Spring

- August 18, 1968 Moscow - adopted a resolution on military intervention
- At night August 20, 1968 – Soviet troops, Hungarian, GDRs, Polish and Bulgarian crossed the boards
- CP conservatives had misinformed Moscow regarding the strength of the reform movement
- CP Presidium met during the night of 20–21 August; it rejected the option of armed resistance and condemned the invasion. Two-thirds of the KSCĚ Central Committee opposed the Soviet intervention. A KSCĚ party congress, convened secretly on 22 August, passed a resolution affirming its loyalty to **A. Dubĉek's** Action Program and denouncing the Soviet aggression.
- President **Ludvĭk Svoboda** repeatedly resisted Soviet pressure to form a new government under **A . Indra**
- Czechoslovak government adopted resolution – occupation is against the will of Czechoslovak citizens, international law

• Warsaw Pact intervention and the end of Prague Spring

- Nonviolent resistance, also called civil resistance
- The generalized resistance caused the Soviet Union to abandon its original plan to oust **A. Dubček**
- **A. Dubček**, arrested on the night of 20 August, was taken to Moscow for negotiations (outcome was the **Brezhnev Doctrine** e.g. strict CP control of the media, and the suppression of the Czechoslovak Social Democratic Party; it was agreed that **A. Dubček** would remain in office and a program of moderate reform would continue)



- Occupation of Czechoslovakia

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- 21st August 1968 – troops of 5 states entered
- Against occupiers - citizens unarmed resistance
- **Moscow Protocol August 1968** – was signed (allowed most Czechoslovakian leaders to remain in power, but implicitly condemned the post-January reforms. The agreement demanded the increased suppression of opposition groups and a tighter censorship policy. It also allowed Soviet forces to remain in Czechoslovakia)



- Public reaction to the Moscow protocol was mixed, with many seeing it as a failure of the resistance. Mass resistance is said to have lasted for about seven days, after which the resisters became exhausted and partly demoralized.
- Soviet forces would linger in Czechoslovakia for months, pushing their political agenda.
- But public resistance to the occupation didn't stop completely. In early November there were mass demonstrations in Prague, Bratislava, Brno, and other cities.
- Later, tens of thousands of students conducted a four-day sit-in in high schools and colleges, with factories sending them food in solidarity.

*Moscow Protocol

● Poland

- The reform-promising **W. Gomułka** of 1956 turned into the authoritarian **W. Gomułka** of the 1960s (W. Gomułka promised - end to police terror, greater intellectual and religious freedom, higher wages, and the reversal of collectivization; other forms of collective community expression and a legally guaranteed academic autonomy lasted until the *1968 Polish political crisis*)
- The dissident *Club of the Crooked Circle* - discussion survived until 1962
- After the first wave of reform – **W. Gomułka's** regime started to move back on their promises
- Decisions of XIII Plenum of the Central Committee (1963) - definite end of the post-October liberalization period
- **W. Gomułka's** regime became steadily less liberal and more repressive and **W. Gomułka's** popularity declined

• Poland

- By the mid-1960s - economic difficulties
- From 1960, the regime increasingly implemented anti-Catholic policies, including harassment, atheistic propaganda, and measures that made carrying out religious practices more difficult
- 1965 Conference of Polish Bishops issued the *Letter of Reconciliation of the Polish Bishops to the German Bishops*
- 1966 Celebrations of the 1,000th anniversary of the Baptism of Poland led by the Cardinal **Stefan Wyszyński** and other bishops turned into a huge demonstration of the power and popularity of the Catholic Church in Poland

- * **Polish 1968 political crisis**, also known in Poland as **March 1968**, **Students' March**, or **March events** - was a series of major student, intellectual and other protests against the communist regime of the Polish People's Republic
- * The crisis resulted in the suppression of student strikes by security forces in all major academic centres across the country and the subsequent repression of the Polish dissident movement
- * It was also accompanied by mass emigration following an antisemitic (branded "anti-Zionist") campaign waged by the minister of internal affairs, General Mieczysław Moczar, with the approval of First Secretary Władysław Gomułka of the Polish United Workers' Party
- * The protests overlapped with the events of the Prague Spring in neighboring Czechoslovakia - raising new hopes of democratic reforms among the intelligentsia

* **Polish Political Crisis**

• Poland in 1968

- By the 1960s - rival regime officials and their followers, generally people of a younger generation, had begun to plot against the rule of **W. Gomułka** and his associates
- January 1968 - Polish revisionist opposition and other circles were strongly influenced by the developing movement of the Prague Spring
- March 1968 - student demonstrations at Warsaw University broke out in the wake of the government's banning of the performance of a play by **Adam Mickiewicz** at the National Theatre in Warsaw because of its alleged "*anti-Soviet references*"
- **March 1968 events:** used the spontaneous and informal celebrations of the outcome of the 1967 Arab–Israeli war and the Warsaw theatre affair as pretexts to launch an anti-intellectual and anti-Semitic press campaign; real goal was to weaken the pro-reform liberal party faction and attack other circles - thousands of generally secular and integrated people of Jewish origin lost their employment and some 15,000 Jews emigrated between 1967 and 1971

• Poland in 1968

- Other victims: college students, academic teachers, liberal intelligentsia members; Jewish or not, were removed from the government and other places of employment...
- Finally purge in CP itself
- 1968 purges meant also the beginning of a large scale generational replacement of CP executive membership
- March 1968 Gdańsk - students and workers fought by the police
- Internal attempt to discredit **W. Gomułka's** leadership, but **W. Gomułka's** regime reasserted itself and was saved by a combination of international and domestic
- August 1968 - Polish People's Army took part in the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia → Some Polish intellectuals protested and **Ryszard Siwiec** burned himself alive during the official national holiday celebrations
- Granted Soviet right to forcefully intervene if an allied state strays too far from the fraternal course

• Hungary

- **J. Kádár** followed retributions against the revolutionaries. 21,600 dissidents were imprisoned, 13,000 interned, and 400 executed
- In the early 1960s – **J. Kádár** announced a new policy under the motto "*He who is not against us is with us*"
- **J. Kádár** declared a general amnesty, gradually curbed some of the excesses of the secret police, and introduced a relatively liberal cultural
- 1966 Central Committee approved the "*New Economic Mechanism*", which moved away from a strictly planned economy towards a system more reminiscent of the decentralized Yugoslavian model
- Over the next two decades of relative domestic quiet, **J. Kádár's** government responded alternately to pressures for minor political and economic reforms as well as to counter-pressures from reform opponents
- Dissidents still remained closely watched by the secret police

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