

Summary

The Czechoslovak attempt for reform of Socialism in 1968 has, without any hesitation, become one of the most important events in the history of the common state of Slovaks and Czechs. Its birth, the gradual maturation and hopes for a better future were interrupted by the brutal invasion of five Warsaw Pact armies, and of course subjected to the wings of the Soviet Union in August 1968. Moscow, with help of tanks, regained control over the industrially mostly developed country of its Eastern Bloc. Czechoslovakia would once again become the example of an ideal satellite.

The Czechoslovak attempt for reform of Socialism started during the time when the great powers, the Soviet Union and the United States of America, were trying to come to an agreement in *détente* politics. It proved to be unequivocal that this policy preserved the state from the Cold War. One of its main features was the mutual acceptance of the status quo by the great powers, whereas both great powers, Moscow and Washington, avoided interfering in the internal affairs of the Blocs.

At first Moscow blessed the effort of the Czechoslovak revival, but as soon as Moscow evaluated this situation as the one that could violate the unity of its empire, it has decided to put an end of this process. Even if it might have initially seemed that Moscow hesitated to use its armed forces, well aware of the idleness and the lack of interest of the United States, Moscow finally did commit its armed forces, airplanes and tanks together with Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria and East Germany. Its one and only task was to change Czechoslovakia to become an obedient foot-soldier and a strong component of the Eastern Bloc.

Many books on Czechoslovak - or better to say Dubček's "Socialism with a human face" have been written. These books focus mainly on internal development and attitudes of the Soviet Union and its European satellites. The Slovak, Czech and also foreign historiography have achieved quite amazing results regarding this topic. There are also many documents published in book form. Without any doubt, memories of the participants of that period have appeared in Slovakia and the Czech Republic after the "Velvet Revolution" from the beginning of 1990s. The purpose of this paper was not to provide a revision or summary of up-to-present available literature, but rather provide the attitude from a certain point of view. It is obvious from the title of the book that the main focus of this essay is the attitude of the United States of America, but also those of the West and the United Nations Organization. In reality there has not been such a compiled publication on the market until now.

The attitude of the United States towards the Czechoslovak reform and towards its violent termination was influenced by several external factors. The most dominant ones were, for example, the Vietnam War, the effort to achieve the bipolar *détente* politics, and also the unimportance of a small Socialist country (Czechoslovakia) in the horizon of

the American interest. When mentioned factors are taken into consideration, it is no wonder that the American attitude towards Czechoslovakia and its development after the year 1968 was as it was. Simply put, it was passive, unenthusiastic and uninterested. However, the American Administration of President Lyndon B. Johnson verbally accepted the Czechoslovak liberalism; but on the other hand, it did not help it at all. The United States publicly deplored the August invasion and the subsequent occupation of Czechoslovakia, but otherwise it did not interfere within the affairs. The United States evaluated the situation as the affair of the Eastern Bloc, which was not focused against the interests of the United States and the Soviet Union. However, the American attitude was well known as early as the invasion had been planned. This was also the reason why the Soviet Union acted as it did. The Soviet Union knew for sure that nobody would interfere in its policy of how to solve its internal problem.

A similar reaction came also from the countries of the West. The verbal disagreement with the aggression was perceived more as a “good point” for the evaluation of the events in the future. The attitude of nonintervention is also not surprising, because of the fact that the structures of armed forces arrangement of the Atlantic Pact were only the “extended” hand of the main power, The United States of America.

What was the role of the United Nations Organization? Actually, it declared its weakness, “toothlessness” and inability to retrieve injustice of the military conflict. There were no proposed resolutions of the Security Council approved in consequence of the Soviet veto, which should have deplored the invasion of Czechoslovakia at least by declaratory means. Though Czechoslovakia strongly protested via the “mouth” of its Minister of Foreign affairs in the United Nations in New York and asked for immediate troop withdrawal from its territory, Czechoslovakia alone backed out of the public forum very quickly after the strong pressure from Moscow.

When investigating this issue, many questions emerge. One of these questions is: Whether Dubček’s mission of “the human face” could have been successful? When the context of that period, the world politics of the Soviet Union and other external factors are being taken into consideration, the answer is no. Other generations of Slovaks and Czechs would later pay for that.