

Alexander Dubček Unknown

(1921–1992)

The Life of a Political Icon

With a foreword
by Jan Pešek

and
oral history interviews
with Pavol Dubček
and Ivan Laluha

Josette Baer

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This study is dedicated to my husband Peter who has been supporting my research for years, in academic and psychological terms. One could not wish for a better friend.

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-------------|
| Foreword by Jan Pešek | XI |
| Abbreviations | XIII |
| Acknowledgements | XVII |
| X. Introduction | 1 |
| X. 1 Alexander Dubček – Naïve Apparatchik, Independent Thinker, Courageous Reformer, or Political Dreamer? | 1 |
| X. 2 Analytical Framework and Conceptual Matrix..... | 12 |
| X. 2. 1 Analytical Framework..... | 12 |
| X. 2. 2 Conceptual Matrix | 14 |
| X. 3 Method, Key Issues, Research Interest..... | 15 |
| X. 3. 1 Method: Contextual Biography..... | 15 |
| X. 3. 2 Key Issues..... | 17 |
| X. 3. 2. 1 Czechoslovakism and the Czechoslovak Nation | 17 |
| X. 3. 2. 2 <i>Rovný s Rovným</i> – The Three Prague Agreements (1945–1946)..... | 30 |
| X. 3. 2. 3 The Relationship between the KSČ and the KSS (1948–1967)..... | 43 |
| X. 3. 3 Research Questions | 47 |
| I. Childhood, Early Years and Education (1921–1939) . | 51 |
| I. 1 Childhood in Soviet Kyrgyzia and Gorky (1925–1938)..... | 51 |
| I. 2 The Soviet Purges of the 1930s and Return to Czechoslovakia (1938)..... | 56 |
| II. Dear Sasha – A Career in the Communist Party (1939–1968) | 63 |
| II. 1 The Slovak National Uprising (1944)..... | 63 |
| II. 2 Political Training in Moscow (1955–1958)..... | 68 |
| II. 3 The Slovak <i>predjarie</i> (Pre-Spring) (1963–1967) | 73 |

| | | |
|----------|--|-----|
| II. 3. 1 | Currency Reform and the Consumer Goods Industry (1953–1958)..... | 75 |
| II. 3. 2 | The Scientific-Technical Revolution (early 1960s) | 78 |
| II. 3. 3 | The Rehabilitation Commissions (1955–1968) ... | 80 |
| II. 4 | First Secretary of the KSS (1963–1968) | 85 |
| II. 4. 1 | A Soviet Cosmonaut (1963) | 88 |
| II. 4. 2 | A Rebellious Party Member (1964)..... | 94 |
| II. 4. 3 | Ideological Unity and Party Discipline à la Novotný (1964) | 98 |
| II. 4. 4 | ‘Electing’ the President and the Tasks of Loyal Journalists (1964) | 105 |
| II. 4. 5 | Comrade Cvik (1965)..... | 110 |
| II. 4. 6 | A Failed Intrigue: The Dubčeks in the SNP (1965–1967)..... | 113 |
| II. 4. 7 | The Affair of the Bear (1966) | 124 |
| II. 4. 8 | Anonymous Letters (1963, 1966) | 132 |
| II. 5 | The Eight Months of the Czechoslovak Spring (1968)..... | 141 |

| | | |
|-------------|---|------------|
| III. | Oblivion? Dubček’s Dissent and Return to Politics (1969–1992)..... | 159 |
| III. 1 | Soviet Salami Tactics..... | 160 |
| III. 2 | The Politics of Normalization | 171 |
| III. 2. 1 | The Purges at Charles University (1969)..... | 173 |
| III. 2. 2 | Travel Restrictions..... | 179 |
| III. 3 | Everyday Life in Czechoslovakia | 181 |
| III. 3. 1 | Fear | 181 |
| III. 3. 2 | The Weekend, Socialization and Humour | 184 |
| III. 3. 3 | The Underground | 188 |
| III. 4 | Dissent and Return to Politics (1970–1989)..... | 191 |
| III. 4. 1 | Dubček’s Protest Letters | 191 |
| III. 4. 2 | The StB’s Psychological Terror..... | 199 |
| III. 4. 3 | November 1989 and the Transition to Democracy | 204 |

| | |
|---|------------|
| Conclusion..... | 211 |
| Oral History Interview with Pavol Dubček, MD | 219 |
| Oral History Interview with Professor Ivan Laluha..... | 222 |
| Oral History Interview with Mr Miloslav Liška | 227 |
| Appendix | 231 |
| Dubček in Data | 231 |
| Chronology..... | 233 |
| Bibliography..... | 253 |
| Index..... | 273 |

Foreword by Jan Pešek

This year in August, the Slovaks and Czechs remember what happened fifty years ago: the Czechoslovak Spring of 1968 and its brutal end by Warsaw Pact troops. The Czechoslovak Spring has been well researched, or so the knowledgeable Western reader might think. This latest biography of Alexander Dubček by the Swiss political scientist and historian Josette Baer, a renowned specialist on Czechoslovak and Slovak history and political thought, presents a new approach to the political history of Slovakia and Czechoslovakia. As the first non-Slovak historian, Baer investigates two crucially important chapters of Slovak history that so far have been under-researched: the years of the Pre-Spring from 1963 to 1968 and the years of the so-called Normalization (1969–1989).

The liberalization of the Czechoslovak Communist regime began in 1963 with Dubček's election as First Secretary of the Slovak Communist Party KSS; the Czechoslovak Spring originated in Bratislava and, with Dubček's election to First Secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party KSČ in January 1968, the way for the reformers was free. Baer focuses on Dubček's career in the KSS in the 1960s and his dissent in the 1970s. After the Communist Party had relieved him from all functions in Party and state, Dubček, the former most powerful politician of Czechoslovakia, found employment at the State Forestry in Bratislava. The State Security Service StB monitored him and his family every day, exerting psychological terror to the maximum. The Normalization regime under General Secretary KSČ and President in personal union Gustáv Husák wanted to delete Dubček and his reform course from Czechoslovak collective memory – an endeavour that was not only unsuccessful but

would backfire in November 1989: the Communist Party was brought down in 10 days by the people, who had not forgotten Dubček and his attempt at Socialism with a Human Face.

Baer's biography closes important gaps in international and interdisciplinary scholarship about the Czechoslovak Spring. Her book is a must-read for everybody interested in the history of Central Europe in the 20th Century and the history of European Communism alike.

Jan Pešek, Bratislava, August 2018

Abbreviations

Archives and libraries

- ABS ÚSTRČR Archiv Bezpečnostných Složek – Ústav pro Studium Totalitních Režimů České Republiky – Archives of the State Security Services at the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes of the Czech Republic, Prague.
- AMSNP Archív Múzeum Slovenského Národného Povstania – Archives of the Museum of the Slovak National Uprising, Banská Bystrica, Slovak Republic.
- HÚ SAV Historický Ústav Slovenskej Akadémie Vied – Institute of History at the Slovak Academy of Sciences, Bratislava, Slovak Republic.
- SNA Slovenský Národný Archív, Bratislava – The Slovak National Archives, Bratislava, Slovak Republic.
- SNK Slovenská Národná Knižnica, Martin – The Slovak National Library, Martin, Slovak Republic.

Political parties, associations and organizations; media

- CC KSČ Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party
- CC KSS Central Committee of the Slovak Communist Party
- COMECON Council for Mutual Economic Assistance; see RVHP
- CP Communist Party
- ČSNB Československá Národní Banka – Czechoslovak State Bank

| | |
|----------|--|
| ČSSD | Česká Strana Sociálně Demokratická – Czech Social Democratic Party |
| ČSTK | Československá Tlačová Kancelária – Czechoslovak Press Chancellery |
| ČT | Česká Televize – Czech National TV |
| DS | Demokratická Strana – Slovak Democratic Party |
| FZ | Federálne Zhromaždenie – Federal Assembly |
| HG | Hlinkova Garda – Hlinka Guards |
| HSLŠ | Hlinkova Slovenská Ľudová Strana – Hlinka’s Slovak People’s Party |
| HZDS | Hnutie Za Demokratické Slovensko – Movement for a Democratic Slovakia |
| IMF | International Monetary Fund |
| KPSS | Komunističeskaia Partiiia Sovetskogo Soiuzu – Communist Party of the Soviet Union |
| ÚKRK KSC | Ústřední Kontrolní a Revízní Komise KSC – Central Control and Revision Commission of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia |
| ÚKRK KSS | Ústředná Kontrolná a Revízná Komisia KSS – Central Control and Revision Commission of the Slovak Communist Party |
| KSC | Komunistická Strana Československa – Communist Party of Czechoslovakia |
| KSS | Komunistická Strana Slovenska – Slovak Communist Party |
| MP | Member of Parliament |
| MV | Ministerstvo Vnútra – Ministry of Interior, Slovakia |
| MZV | Ministerstvo Zahraničných Věcí – Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs |

| | |
|------|---|
| NAM | Non-Aligned Movement |
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organisation |
| NF | Národní Fronta – National Front |
| NKVD | Narodnii Kommissariat Vnutrěnnikh Del – The People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs |
| ODS | Občanská Demokratická Strana – Czech Civic Democratic Party |
| OF | Občanské Forum – Czech Civic Forum |
| RVHP | Rada vzájomnej hospodárskej pomoci – Council for Mutual Economic Assistance |
| SDSS | Sociálnodemokratická strana Slovenska – Social Democratic Party of Slovakia |
| SPS | Slovenský Poslanecký Klub – Slovak Parliamentarians Club |
| SLS | Slovenská Ľudová Strana – Slovak People’s Party |
| SNP | Slovenské Národné Povstanie – Slovak National Uprising |
| SNR | Slovenská Národná Ráda – Slovak National Council |
| SNS | Slovenská Národná Strana – Slovak National Party |
| SSI | Strana Slobody – Slovak Party of Freedom |
| SSSR | Soiuz Sovietskich Socialističeskich Respublik – Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics |
| StB | Státní Bezpečnost – Czechoslovak State Security Service |
| STV | Slovenská Televízia – Slovak National TV |
| TASR | Tlačová Agentura Slovenskej Republiky – Slovak Press Agency |

| | |
|--------|--|
| ÚV KSČ | Ústředný Výbor Komunistická Strana Československa – Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia |
| ÚV KSS | Ústředný Výbor Komunistická Strana Slov- enska – Central Committee of the Slovak Com- munist Party |
| VPN | Verejnost' proti násiliu – Slovak Public Against Violence |
| ZNB | Zbor Národnej Bezpečnosti – Corps of National Security, Slovakia |

Acknowledgements

Not another biography of Alexander Dubček! Surely, – all there is to say about the Prague Spring of 1968 has already been said – or so the historically informed reader might think. True, Dubček's reform programme (*akční program*) and the military invasion by Warsaw Pact troops on 21 August 1968 have been widely researched and analysed. Therefore, the eight months of the Czechoslovak Spring are not the focus of this political biography, but Czechoslovakia and Slovakia's political history prior to and after the invasion of 1968, embodied in the life of Alexander Dubček. The archive material I found in Slovak and Czech archives is available to the English reader for the first time.

Two main aspects of Dubček's life are unknown to the Western reader; these are the gaps I aim to fill with this book. First, Dubček's career in the Slovak Communist Party KSS in the 1960s that culminated with his election as First Secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party KSČ in January 1968, providing him with the legislative, executive and judicial power to embark on his reform course. Second, his life after June 1969, when, back home after some months as Czechoslovak ambassador to Turkey, he was ousted from all functions in state and Party.

A principal goal of the Normalization regime (1969–1989) was to efface Dubček from the collective memory of the Czechoslovak people. The almighty StB (State Security Service) had him and his family under constant surveillance, but they could not silence him. After 1969, Dubček was a dissident in the truest sense of the Latin *dissidere*, which means 'sitting apart': a former insider who became an outsider, a fellow believer who dared to protest against the powers that be, among them, Gustáv Husák.

In this volume, I have tried to convey to the reader how the Cold War and the Soviet Union's role in it affected the political

history of Central Europe – and with that, the life of a leading Czechoslovak Communist who believed in Marxism-Leninism and the rightfulness of his political reforms. I have tried to probe into Dubček's thought and activities with a dispassionate, rational and fair approach.

My thanks: The Stiftung zur Förderung der wissenschaftlichen Forschung of the University of Zurich UZH granted me a generous stipend, which allowed me to do research in Slovak and Czech archives. I am greatly indebted to my colleagues and friends for their interest in my research and willingness to discuss specific issues with me. In alphabetical order: Jozef Banáš, Mária Banášová, Juraj Benko, Vladimír Handl, Michael Hässig, Karen Henderson, Vlasta Jaksicsová, Lukas Joos, Marina Jozef, Juraj Kalina, Ivan Kamenec, Miloslav Liška, Miroslav Londák, Anna Mazurkiewicz, Slavomír Michálek, Delia Popescu, Francis Raska, Jaroslava Roguľová, Marc Winter and my great friend XY, whose wish for anonymity I respect.

I would like to thank Dušan Čabrak, deputy major of Uhrovec, and the lovely guide Mrs Mikušová for taking the time to show me the birthplace of Alexander Dubček in Uhrovec, now a museum, in July 2017. The ladies at the SNK Martin were, as always, professional, friendly, swift and uncomplicated: Ľudmila Šimková, Karin Šišmišová, Miroslava Pražková and everybody else who helped me with the material – thank you. Deputy director Augustin Matovčík SNK went to great lengths to help me with pressing copyright problems. Mária Zsigmondová and Marek Púčík at the Slovak National Archives SNA in Bratislava were very helpful, friendly and professional. My thanks go also to Jitka Bílková, Veronika Chroma, Juraj Kalina and Michal Kurej at the Archives of the State Security Forces at the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes (ABS ÚSTRČR) in Prague. Lisa Brun at the Institute of Philosophy at UZH took care of the financial management of this project.

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This study could not have been written without Stanislav Sikora and Jan Pešek's expertise. Stanislav was my supervisor, teaching me how the liberalization of the regime began in Slovakia, from where it spread to the Czech part. From his publications, I learnt about the Slovak Pre-Spring (*predjarie*). Jan Pešek, a specialist on the history of the KSS, was also extremely helpful, explaining to me the complicated relationship between the KSS and the KSČ, and the non-existent balance of power between the two political parties. Thanks to Stanislav and Jan, I was able to understand how the *predjarie* changed Czechoslovak society, and the citizens' support of Dubček's Reform Communism.

My very special thanks go to Pavol Dubček, Ivan Laluha and Miloslav Liška, who answered all my questions, thereby contributing to our Western knowledge about politics and daily life under Communism, the aftermath of the Velvet Revolution of 1989, the Velvet Divorce of 1992 and sports under the Communist regime.

Needless to say, any errors and shortcomings in this volume are my own.

Josette Baer
Zurich, Bratislava and Prague, August 2018

X. Introduction¹

X. 1 Alexander Dubček – Naïve Apparatchik, Independent Thinker, Courageous Reformer, or Political Dreamer?

“From him radiated what one calls the magic of charisma. He conquered people by taking a genuine interest in them and with a pure and direct smile. From his eyes sprang kindness and benevolence. He was not ashamed to admit that he did not know a thing. He was not a convincing speaker, rather the opposite, but it was wonderful that people believed him. For the first time, a Communist leader stood before the people who, they felt, had a human heart.”²

The former most powerful politician of Czechoslovakia was a pensioner, living quietly in Bratislava, when the Velvet Revolution of November 1989 started in Prague and immediately spread to Slovakia. The mass protests of Czech and Slovak citizens, the foundation of the OF in the Czech part and the VPN in Slovakia and the country-wide general strike, in which the state media participated, led to the abdication of the KSČ. The events catapulted the 68-year-old Dubček onto the political scene of a

¹ All translations from Slovak and Czech into English are by me, if not otherwise referred to. I shall be using the concept “Marxism-Leninism” as the official ideology of the Soviet bloc after 1945 since I focus on Dubček’s political thought and his belief in Marxism-Leninism, not the theoretical details of Marxism and Marxism-Leninism.

² Jozef Banáš, *Zastavte Dubčeka! Príbeh človeka, ktorý prekážal mocným* (Bratislava: Ikar, 2009), 145. This popular biography is very well researched. Banáš is a historical witness: in 1968, he was 20 years old. Large parts of his book are fiction, that is, how Dubček could have acted and what he could have said. However, in the context of Slovak history and the Slovaks’ way of thinking and acting, Banáš’s extraordinarily talent for imagination renders his biography authentic. See: <http://www.jozefbanas.sk/index.php/english>; accessed 5 June 2017.

new Czechoslovakia, a country that was about to reconnect with its democratic traditions after 41 years of Communist rule.

I wondered how Dubček began his career in the KSS and KSČ. As a young Party member, he was too insignificant to raise suspicions of 'Slovak bourgeois nationalism' in the early 1950s, hence was not one of the accused in the 1954 trial of elder, prominent Slovak Party members born at the turn of the 20th century. Furthermore, young Dubček was from proper proletarian stock; he was raised in a Communist family and grew up in Soviet Kyrgyzia, where his family had moved in 1925 to support the building of Socialism – in the Party's ever watchful and powerful eyes, he was beyond suspicion.

I was curious about the origins of the idea of reforming the Socialist system: did Dubček have his own ideas about a reform course or did he follow the Soviet party line that embarked on a course of de-Stalinization, after General Secretary Nikita S. Krushchev (1894–1971) had criticized Stalin's crimes in his secret speech to the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party on 25 February 1956? In 1956, Dubček was in Moscow, attending the Higher School of Politics of the Soviet Communist Party; because he spoke Russian fluently, he had a particular close insight into the significance of Krushchev's speech – and what consequences the revelations about Stalin's crimes could prompt for the states of the Soviet bloc.

Furthermore, I wanted to get a better understanding of the relationship between the Czechoslovak and Slovak Communist parties, which – to some extent – reflect the relationship between Czechs and Slovaks ever since the end of WWII. The Slovak Communist Party (KSS) was founded in 1939 as an illegal organization in the Slovak state, while the leaders of the Czech Communist Party (KSČ) fled to Moscow after the Munich Agreement in 1938. In June 1945, the KSČ, then completely

under Stalin's control, allowed the KSS some autonomy in Slovakia, hoping that the Party would emerge victorious from the parliamentary elections of 1946. When this plan did not work out – the centre-right Democratic Party (DS) won in Slovakia – the KSČ changed its strategy: it subordinated the KSS under its leadership to gather strength and discipline for the assumption of power.

Alexander Dubček is so well known, nothing new can be written about him – or so one might think. Is this true? What do we really know about the father of Czechoslovakia's reform communism? Dubček is the symbol of *Socialism with a Human Face*.³ The Western reader knows about Dubček's career in the Czechoslovak Communist Party (KSČ) only from his memoirs.⁴ A study of his early years, that is, before he and his followers in the Party's top echelons launched the reform course in 1968, is more than due, especially in view of the 50th anniversary of the Czechoslovak Spring in 2018.

Up to date, there is no scholarly analysis available in an international language that informs the reader about Dubček's early career in the Slovak Communist Party (KSS) prior to his election as First Secretary⁵ of the KSČ in January 1968. The

³ The origin of the expression *Socialism with a Human Face* is unclear: According to Zdeněk Mlynář (1930–1997) and Ota Šik (1919–2004), the Czech sociologist Radovan Richta (1924–1983) coined the expression. The Czech journalist and translator Antonín J. Liehm (*1924) thinks that Western Communists invented the expression to give Czechoslovak Reform Communism a positive name; Vlasta Jaksicsová, "Spor o Dubčeka", in DUBČEK (Bratislava: Veda, 2018), 1–14, 3.

⁴ Alexander Dubček, *Leben für die Freiheit* (München: Bertelsmann, 1993); *Hope Dies Last. The Autobiography of Alexander Dubcek* (London: Harper-Collins, 1993).

⁵ The KSČ changed the title of 'First Secretary' to 'General Secretary' in 1971, following slavishly the Soviet Communist Party under Brezhnev, while the KSS kept the title 'First Secretary'; Jan Pešek, *Centrum Moci. Aparát Ústředního výboru Komunistické strany Slovenska 1948–1989* (Bratislava: AEP, 2006), 21. For a history of the KSS see Jan Pešek, *Komunistická*

Czechoslovak Spring has been subject to various historical analyses, but all studies, translations of documents and biographies⁶ focus on Dubček's eight months as First Secretary, the famous action programme (*akční program*)⁷ that his government launched in April 1968, the invasion⁸ of the Warsaw Pact troops on the night of 21 August 1968, and his subsequent fall from Leonid I. Brezhnev's (1906–1982) grace.

Who was the person and politician Dubček? How could he gain power in the KSS, convincing the Stalinists to go along with a reform course in the early 1960s, while the Czech comrades were suffering under First Secretary Antonín Novotný's (1904–1975) Stalinist style of government? What were the ideological origins and intellectual inspiration of his reform course – the new Soviet thinking about the future of Socialism⁹ or his own

Strana Slovenska. Dejiny politického subjektu I. (Bratislava: Veda, 2012). A planned second volume did not materialize.

- ⁶ In chronological order: *Dubček's Blueprint for Freedom. His Documents on Czechoslovakia Leading to the Soviet Invasion* (London: William Kimber, 1969); Pavel Tigrid, *Why Dubcek Fell* (London: Macdonald, 1971); Gordon H. Skilling, *Czechoslovakia's Interrupted Revolution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976); *Sedm pražských dnů. 21–27. srpen 1968. Dokumentace* (Praha: Academia, 1990); William Shawcross, *Dubcek. Revised and Updated Edition* (New York: Touchstone, 1990); Kieran Williams, *The Prague Spring and its Aftermath. Czechoslovak Politics, 1968–1970* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
- ⁷ An English translation of the *akční program* in *Hope Dies Last*, 287–335.
- ⁸ *Strategic Warning & the Role of Intelligence. Lessons learnt from the 1968 Soviet Invasion of Czechoslovakia* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2012); Matthew J. Ouimet, *The Rise and Fall of the Brezhnev Doctrine in Soviet Foreign Policy* (Chapel Hill, London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003). For a Slovak analysis of the French media's coverage of the invasion see Pavol Petruf, "Vojenská intervencia krajín Varšavskej zmluvy v Československu v auguste 1968 na stránkach publikovaných francúzskych diplomatických dokumentov", in *Slovensko a Európa medzi Demokraciou a Totalitou. Kapitoly z dejín 20. Storočia k jubileu Bohumily Ferenčuhovej* (Bratislava: Veda, 2017), 213–229.
- ⁹ Michail Gorbačov a Zdeněk Mlynář, *Reformátoři nebývají šťastni. Dialog o „perestrojce“, Pražském jaru a socialismu* (Praha: Victoria Publishing, 1994), 21. The English translation is *Conversations with Gorbachev. On*

reform ideas that originated in the particularly complex environment of Czech and Slovak Communism?¹⁰

Slovak historians have published several excellent studies about the *predjarie*, the precursor or run-up to the Czechoslovak Spring that had begun in Slovakia in 1963 in the context of the lukewarm rehabilitation of the victims of the show trials of the 1950s, a rehabilitation that Dubček as First Secretary of the KSS had initiated and presided over.¹¹ Unfortunately, they are not available in an international language. The Institute of History of the Slovak Academy of Sciences HÚ SAV published a selection of Dubček's speeches, newspaper articles and

perestroika, socialism, the Prague Spring and the crossroads of socialism (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002). See also Zdeněk Mlynář's memoirs of the Prague Spring *Mraz přichází z Kremle* (Köln: Index, 1979).

¹⁰ The best reference book in English about Slovakia's history is Mikuláš Teich, Dušan Kováč and Martin D. Brown, eds., *Slovakia in History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011). See also the encyclopaedia of Slovak history by Vojtech Dajgl, Valerián Bystrický a kol., *Chronológia Dejín Slovenska a Slovákov. Od najstarších čias po súčasnosť. Dejiny v dátumoch, dátumy v dejinách, vol I a II* (Bratislava: Veda, 2014). A superb account of Slovakia's economic and political development is Miroslav Londák, Slavomír Michálek, Peter Weiss et al., *Slovakia. A European Story* (Bratislava: Veda, 2016). Highly recommendable about the Communist era is Jan Kalous a Jiří Kocian, eds., *Český a slovenský komunismus (1921–2011)* (Praha: Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů, 2012). See also the chronology of Czechoslovakia's foreign policy by Pavol Petruf, *Československá zahraničná politika 1945–1992 (vybrané udalosti a fakty v dátumoch)* (Bratislava: Prodama, HÚ SAV, 2007).

¹¹ Miroslav Londák, Stanislav Sikora a Elena Londáková, *Predjarie. Politický, ekonomický a kultúrny vývoj na Slovensku v rokoch 1960–1967* (Bratislava: VEDA, 2002); Valerián Bystrický a kol., *Rok 1968 na Slovensku a v Československu* (Bratislava: HÚ SAV, 2008); Miroslav Londák, Stanislav Sikora a kol., *Rok 1968 a jeho miesto v našich dejinách* (Bratislava: Veda, 2009); Stanislav Sikora, *Po Jari krutá zima* (Bratislava: Veda, 2013); Miroslav Londák, Stanislav Sikora a Elena Londáková, *Od predjaria k normalizácii. Slovensko v Československu na rozhraní 60. a 70. rokov 20. storočia* (Bratislava: VEDA, 2016).

interviews that had appeared from 1963 to 1992.¹² A bibliography of Dubček's speeches, interviews and radio broadcasts and studies about him was published in 2007.¹³ A compilation of memoirs of Dubček's relatives, friends and acquaintances was published in 1998; among the authors was the Soviet physicist and Nobel Peace Laureate Andreii D. Sakharov (1921–1989).¹⁴

In January 1968, Dubček convinced the majority of the CC of the KSČ that Novotný posed a serious threat to Czechoslovakia because he was alienating the Czechs from the Slovaks, risking the state's sovereignty by driving a wedge between the Slovaks and Czechs, whose relations had been more than difficult since WWII. On his official visit to Slovakia in August 1967, Novotný offended the Slovak people and the KSS leadership.¹⁵ The almighty State Security Service StB wanted to get rid of Novotný too because he had ordered that they compose lists of persons to be arrested – one had to expect a new purge (*čistka*), a renaissance of the Stalinist terror of the 1950s. In January 1968, the CC of the KSČ elected Dubček First Secretary – and the atmosphere in the country swiftly changed: the citizens were optimistic that the times of brutal Stalinist terror were over. A new era of liberalization began. Hopes were high that

¹² Jozef Žatkuliak a Ivan Lалуha, eds., *Alexander Dubček: Od totality k demokracii. Prejavy, články a rozhovory. Výber 1963–1992* (Bratislava: Veda, 2002).

¹³ Soňa Šváčková, Michela Garaiová, Anna Klimová a Blanka Snopková, *Alexander Dubček v slovenskej a českej tlači* (Banská Bystrica: Štátna vedecká knižnica, 2007). The bibliography covers the years 1963 to 2004.

¹⁴ Tereza Michálova, ed., *Dubček známy neznámy* (Bratislava: Prospero, 1989 (2)). The volume contains memoirs of Dubček's friends, relatives and Slovak politicians, among them statements of his sons, his granddaughter, his dentist, his Italian friend Vittorio Caffeo, former Slovak president Michal Kováč (1930–2016) and Russian physicist and nobel laureate Andreii Sakharov (1921–1989).

¹⁵ Dušan Kováč, *Dejiny Slovenska* (Praha: Lidové Noviny, 2007 (2)), 283.

Communism could not only be reformed, but also made more human and less violent.

Jo Langer (1912–1990), whose husband Oscar Langer had been arrested in 1951 to serve as a ‘witness’ in the show trial¹⁶ of the Zionist and Titoist conspiracy against the state in November 1952, described her mixed feelings at the advent of the reforms:

“It is difficult if not impossible to explain to a westerner why we sat in front of the TV in a trance of gratitude [...] Total strangers exchanged smiles, listened to each other’s transistor radios in the streetcar and discussed events. [...] I felt the charm of all this. I wanted to rejoice so much that there were times when I almost did. [...] I felt increasingly that this ‘new socialism’ was only skin deep. The Party remained infallible.”¹⁷

My biography focuses on two under-researched aspects of or phases in Dubček’s life: first, *his career in the KSS after the end of WWII*, which resulted in his election as First Secretary of the KSS in 1963 and First Secretary of the KSČ in 1968; and second, *his years in political oblivion* after the KSČ relieved him of all functions in Party and state in April 1969. Gustáv Husák (1913–1991), who had spent almost a decade in prison (1954–1963)

¹⁶ On the 1952 show trial see Artur London, *On Trial* (London: Macdonald, 1970); Karel Kaplan, *Report on the Murder of the General Secretary* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1990); Igor Lukes, *Rudolf Slansky. His Trial and Trials. Cold War International History Project Working Paper no. 50* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center, 2008), on <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/WP50IL.pdf>. Slánský; accessed 6 June 2017

¹⁷ Jo Langer, *Convictions. My Life with a Good Communist* (London: Granta, 2011), 214. Langer’s memoirs in Slovak: Jo Langerová, *Môj život s Oscarom L.* (Bratislava: Marenčin PT, 2007). Prominent members of the 1952 show trial were Rudolf Slánský (1901–1952) and Vladimír Clementis (1902–1952). The first biography of Vladimír Clementis in English is my ‘*Spirits that I’ve cited? Vladimír Clementis (1902–1952). The Political Biography of a Czechoslovak Communist*’ (Stuttgart, New York: ibidem, Columbia University Press, 2017).

for his alleged ‘Slovak bourgeois nationalism’, followed him in office, establishing the course of Normalization on Moscow’s diktat.¹⁸ Note that I shall not deal with the invasion of the Warsaw Pact troops, since Pauer’s superb study explains and analyses to the full the preparation, conduct and consequences of the military invasion of 21 August 1968.¹⁹

Dubček grew up in a Communist family and spent the crucially important years as a young child and teenager in the Soviet Union, hence in a strictly Communist environment. He did not experience the democratic system and civil liberties of the Czechoslovak Republic, which President Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk (1850–1937)²⁰ had established on 28 October 1918 after

¹⁸ The first academic biography of Husák is Slavomír Michálek, Miroslav Londák a kol., *Gustáv Husák. Moc politiky. Politik moci* (Bratislava: Veda, 2013). For a review see my “A Man Motivated by Power”, *New Eastern Europe* 4, no. 5 (2014): 156–160. See also my attempt at a psychological profile of Husák in “Vertrauen ist nichts, Macht ist alles. Gustáv Husák (1913–1991) und die tschechoslowakische Normalisierung. Versuch eines politischen Psychogramms”, in *Vertrauen* (Basel: Schwabe, 2015), 161–179. For an excellent analysis of the trial of the ‘Slovak bourgeois nationalists’ and its connection with the Slánský trial see Jan Pešek, “Nepriateľ so straníckou legitímáciou. Proces s tzv. Slovenskými buržoáznymi nacionalistami”, in *Storočie procesov. Súdy, politika a spoločnosť v moderných dejinách Slovenska* (Bratislava: Veda, 2013), 210–226.

¹⁹ Jan Pauer, *Prag 1968. Der Einmarsch des Warschauer Paktes. Hintergründe – Planung – Durchführung* (Bremen: Edition Temmen, 1995).

²⁰ A selection of studies in chronological order: Otakar Funda, *Thomas Garrigue Masaryk. Sein philosophisches, religiöses und politisches Denken* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1978); Roland J. Hoffmann, *Thomas G. Masaryk und die tschechische Frage* (München: Oldenbourg, 1988); Jozef Novák, ed., *On Masaryk. Texts in English and German* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1988); Stanley B. Winters, ed., *T. G. Masaryk (1850–1937). Thinker and Politician* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, SSEES, University of London, 1989); Robert B. Pynsent, ed., *T. G. Masaryk (1850–1937). Thinker and Critic* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, SSEES, University of London, 1989, 1990); Harry Hanák, ed., *T. G. Masaryk (1850–1937). Statesman and Cultural Force* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, SSEES, University of London, 1990); Jaroslav Opat, *Filozof a politik T. G. Masaryk, 1882–1893* (Praha: Melantrich, 1990); *Masaryk a myšlenka evropské jednoty* (Praha: Filosofická Fakulta Univerzity Karlovy FFUK, 1992); Zwi Batscha, *Eine Philosophie der Demokratie. Thomas G.*