

**Michael POLÁK *Students in the Post-Stalinist Czechoslovakia: Universities and Students`
Participation in Czechoslovakia (1956-1969)***

This dissertation examines the student social movement in post-Stalin Czechoslovakia (1956-1969). One of the main goals of social movements is to impose their cultural ideas about social relations on social reality. This thesis asks how an initially relatively small group of people who set out to establish independent student governments succeeded in achieving their goal. This thesis thus analyses primarily the dynamics of the student movement. Because understanding the dynamics of social movements requires an understanding of the problems that particular actors want to address, this thesis also examines the everyday experience of students. Thus, the text not only adds to the research on this particular social movement but also enriches the existing knowledge about the nature of post-Stalinism as a specific historical period.

The work is divided chronologically into four phases according to the development of the social movement. The first phase examines the emergence of student discontent. This discontent arises particularly when there are contradictions between expectations shaped by the promises of the official structures and lived realities. Thus, in this phase, the thesis analyses four key promises and their non-fulfilment in student life. These were 1) expectations associated with promises of welfare, 2) expectations based on the promises of the scientific and technological revolution, 3) lack of information, and 4) problems associated with the promises of socialist democracy.

The second phase concerns the emergence of a social movement that creates an intellectual construction (a political programme) to address the above-mentioned problems. This movement had its roots in Prague and its aim was to promote its programme based on the creation of independent student political organisations.

The third phase examines the moment when the social movement succeeded in pushing through its political programme. This happened after the suppression of a spontaneous student demonstration in 1967. During these events, all of the above-mentioned types of problems manifested themselves in a short period of time, triggering a huge mobilisation of students who stood up for the social movement's programme and started to establish independent student governments before the beginning of the Prague Spring.

The last phase examines the practical implementation of the student movement's programme, i.e., the establishment of student organizations independent of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and the Czechoslovak Youth Union. It also looks at the end of the movement, which occurred in the fall of 1969. This was mainly due to a strong repressive cut, but also due to the internal conflicts of the movement.

Keywords:

Students, Czechoslovak Youth Union, Social Movements, Student Movement, Post-Stalinism, State-Socialism, Contradictions, Emotion