CHARLES UNIVERSITY IN PRAGUE

Faculty of Humanities

Oral History - Contemporary History

Stephen John Chetwode Crawley, BA (Hons.)

The Revolution of 1989 in Czechoslovakia

- Comparison of Memories in the Czech Republic and Abroad

Diploma thesis

Supervisors: prof. PaedDr. Miroslav Vaněk, Ph.D.

PhDr. Pavel Mücke, Ph. D.

Prague 2014

I hereby declare that I have written this diploma thesis solely by myself and I agree with its eventual publication in print or electronic form. All sources and literature were properly cited. The work was not used to obtain different or the same title.

In Prague, 20th June 2014 …….

Stephen John Chetwode Crawley

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my thanks to those people who supported me during work on my thesis especially to my wife, Lucie and family, Christine Kelly and to the interviewees, Mr. Terje B. Englund and Mr. Peter Šeda, who kindly spent so much time with me.

Abstract

This diploma thesis is attempting to analyze the events of November and December 1989 in Czechoslovakia through the eyes of English-speaking witnesses, both at the time and in retrospect, using English language sources. The goal of the thesis is to distill from the analysis notions of freedom and whether there are perceptions of change since 1989. Included in the definition of "freedom" is the means by which it was achieved.

Anotace

Tato diplomová práce má v úmyslu analyzovat události, které se udály v Československu v listopadu a prosince 1989, a to skrze pohled anglicky hovořících svědků. Oba se vrací k událostem, které se tehdy staly a jejich svědectví jsou dokreslena dalšími zdroji, dostupnými v anglickém jazyce. Cílem diplomové práce je analyzovat vše relevantní k pojmu svoboda a zjistit, zda a jak jsou vnímány změny od roku 1989.

Key words

Freedom, 1989, Havel, symbol, 17th November, media, Dubček, BBC, ABC, CBS, AFP, communist, revolution, Englund, freedom, Civic Forum, television

Content

Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to attempt to analyze the events of November and December 1989 in Czechoslovakia through the eyes of English-speaking witnesses, both at the time and in retrospect, using English language sources. The goal of the thesis is to distill from the analysis notions of freedom and whether there are perceptions of change since 1989. Included in the definition of "freedom" is the means by which it was achieved.

In Chapter 1, the author`s personal perspective on a communist state and Czechoslovakia is briefly described. After reviewing existing works on the subject in Chapter 2, the next chapter sets out what sources will be used. Chapter 4 examines some essential points regarding western journalism, the difficulty of defining words and terms and essential factors to keep in mind with regard to the events of 1989. Chapter 5 attempts to illustrate the western point of view by means of symbols, modes of behaviour, language used, assumptions about freedom and political discourse and recent secondary literature. In Chapter 6, the themes of the analysis become more explicit as western groups and structures formulated ways of trying to effect change in Czechoslovakia.

1. Important perspectives on the topic

1.1 Author´s perspective on a Communist regime

The author went for school holidays to Bulgaria, where his father served as a British diplomat for an aggregate total of about nine months between 1967 and 1970. At that time, Bulgaria was ruled by a Stalinist regime closely allied to the USSR.

It should be emphasized that the author did not 'experience' communism but saw it as a detached observer – he never lived *in* the society but outside it in a small expatriate and mainly diplomatic community. Memories include visits to the Georgi Dimitrov mausoleum, standing beside the mausoleum during the annual September 9th parade, lunch at a Party *dacha* and driving with the Military Attaché to various military locations whilst followed by two security police.

His main impression of communist rule revolved around what it meant to be not "free." Ordinary Bulgarians had to be discouraged from making any kind of social contact which had not been sanctioned by the authorities beforehand. Approaching foreigners in the street, the most frequent form of informal contact, could get those individuals into trouble of which they were often not aware. It was assumed that microphones were installed in all enclosed spaces like the house and the car, all foreigners` accommodation was watched by a camera or a uniformed policeman and travel in twenty per cent of the country was forbidden to foreigners. The propaganda of the regime really seemed to achieve its purpose; those few Bulgarians who obtained visas to visit Britain were shocked and bewildered to find that the country was not like the one portrayed in a Charles Dickens novel[1].

One incident, in particular, became a vivid memory of the communist state. The author travelled with family and friends to Istanbul by train in 1967. On the return journey, two Bulgarian passport control officers came to the railway compartment. They were given all the passports for the whole group together which was not according to the instructions of the official. He expressed his displeasure at this by throwing the passports onto the floor of the compartment and shouting at us, with his colleague looking on. The incident was capped when the author`s father complained to a foreign ministry official who expressed genuine embarrassment at what had happened (although the description of events was a little exaggerated!).

1.2 Author´s perspective on Czechoslovakia

The country was associated with the Munich agreement of 1938 which was part of the history 'A' (Advanced) level[2] syllabus taught in British schools. The communist putsch of 1948 was included as part of a sequence of events which led to the establishment of Soviet domination in eastern Europe. When mentioned, it was usually in a European or global context.

The author´s father sometimes talked about Czechoslovakia as he read the dispatches of his colleagues from other Warsaw Pact countries. His colleagues in Prague up to 1968 were both Czech specialists having spent time in Czechoslovakia as students in the late 1930s. After the

[1] Taken from a conversation between the author`s mother and a Bulgarian who had just visited Britain. They had to talk in a corner in low voices during a cocktail party.
[2] The equivalent of the school leaving examination in Britain.

author obtained his TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) qualification, his father was influential in choosing Prague as a place to find a teaching post.

Charter 77[3] was certainly mentioned in the press but was little understood; what use was a short text signed at great personal risk by a few individuals against thousands of Soviet tanks? Havel`s plays were performed from time to time but not seen by the author despite the proximity of the Orange Tree theatre[4] to his place of work. The events of 1989 received regular coverage often as headlines on the TV and front page items in the print media. Prague then became written and widely talked about constantly as a tourist destination during the 1990s

2. Existing works regarding the theme of the thesis

There have been two works which touch on this topic,[5] one about the reaction of Czech-Canadians to 1948, 1968 and 1989 and the other looking at Prague through the eyes of Spanish and English-speaking tourists. As far as the author knows, no work in English has been done on the topic of the events of 1989 including oral history interviews with western foreigners. Tereza Mašková, an MA student in the Faculty of Humanities, completed a thesis on *Foreigners in Czechoslovakia during Normalization*[6] in Czech where she conducted some interviews in English with western expatriate foreigners. The oral history interviews in this thesis, in a sense, continue her work and attempts to shed light on the Velvet Revolution from different perspectives.

3. Sources concerning theory and methodology

Key to the thesis is the oral history interview with Mr. Terje B. Englund with two interviews with Mr. Peter Šeda for reference. One set of sources will be British and American

[3] http://libpro.cts.cuni.cz/charta/docs/declaration_of_charter_77.pdf (StB copy)

[4] http://www.radio.cz/en/section/books/sam-walters-and-vaclav-havel-theatre-on-the-political-stage#0

5 UNIVERZITA KARLOVA V PRAZE FAKULTA HUMANITNÍCH STUDIÍ Katedra sudií občanské společnosti; Bc. Píchová Tereza: Reakce kanadského krajanského hnutí na politické události v Československu v letech 1948, 1968 a 1989; Diplomová práce Praha 2013

UNIVERZITA KARLOVA V PRAZE FAKULTA HUMANITNÍCH STUDIÍ Katedra Obecné antropologie Bc. Waldmannová Eliška „Změny obrazu Prahy po roce 1989 očima turistů *Diplomová práce* Praha 2013

[6] UNIVERZITA KARLOVA V PRAZE FAKULTA HUMANITNÍCH STUDIÍ Pracoviště Orální historie – Soudobé dějiny Bc. et BcA. Tereza Mašková „Západní cizinci“ v normalizačním Československu *Diplomová práce* Praha 2013

television reports made before, during and after the revolution. Written and oral history testimony will provide eyewitness accounts of the events whilst archives, government documents and a cultural history analysis will offer a more retrospective view of events.

3.1 Audiovisual media sources available

It proved difficult to find a comprehensive collection of easily accessible and freely audiovisual reports to examine. The Vanderbilt Television Archive[7] holds such a collection but they are only available on loan for limited periods for a fee. Those archives that are available sell newsclips at commercial prices. Those referenced below are taken from the internet, many from youtube.com and do not represent a comprehensive or rounded view of the events of 1989.

In 2012, a collection of 140,000 videotapes of all American news broadcasts from 1977 to 2012 recorded by an American librarian, Marion Stokes,[8] came to light. They have been passed to the Internet Archive,[9] a non-profit organization dedicated to building a free internet library, and they have begun the huge task of digitizing the tapes. Currently, this represents the only hope of free access to a news archive but may take years to complete.

3.2 Audiovisual and other media sources used

Reports by the foreign networks compiled by Czech Television entitled 'How the World saw us' (*Jak nás viděl svět*)[10] has been used extensively. The Czech commentary supersedes the original foreign language commentary (but not always); the English subtitles are of little use. However, the images have been made use of and the originals can sometimes be found elsewhere. Other television reports come from the BBC in Britain, ABC in the USA and Australia, AFP news agency and CBS in Canada as well as one video presentation of the events in Olomouc in 1989-90. Still photographs from Magnum provide more visual material. Interviews from the English section of Radio Prague and newspaper articles are also included.

[7] http://tvnews.vanderbilt.edu/
[8] http://www.fastcompany.com/3022022/the-incredible-story-of-marion-stokes-who-single-handedly-taped-35-years-of-tv-news
[9] https://archive.org/index.php
[10] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plltt4_B54A

3.3 Secondary sources

Up to 2000, British government papers were kept closed under the 'thirty-year rule' under which a document cannot be released until the 30th anniversary of its creation. Parliament then passed the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)[11] which allowed papers to be released before the end of the thirty-year period upon application. The Act took effect in 2005. Before their release documents are checked by 'weeders' whose deletions in thick black take out anything to be considered to be sensitive in any way. Some documents or parts of them have been held back for periods of up to 100 years.

A number of documents have been applied for, and released to, a research project at the University of Pavia, and carried out by professor Ilaria Poggiolini[12] in cooperation with the Machiavelli Centre for Cold War Studies (CIMA)[13]. The project was entitled 'A Common European destiny and identity beyond the borders of the Cold War? British "Ostpolitik."[14] Many of these have now also been made available on the Thatcher Foundation website[15] which has also applied for papers relating to Margaret Thatcher (MT) and her government.

This thesis also draws on an article by Muriel Blaive[16] who makes several interesting observations on the perceived East-West divide and the temporal continuity for society before and after 1989 using oral history studies in the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

3.4 Notes on the historiography of 1989

Historical works could be set into three possible waves. The first wave is represented by Timothy Garton Ash`s (TGA) eyewitness account of the discussions in the Magic Lantern in the last days of November in *We The People: The Revolutions of `89 Witnessed in Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin and Prague*.[17] This could be called an account "from the top" down, a view as it were from the balcony of the Melantrich building. His books and articles written before and after 1989 refer to conversations exclusively with the intellectual elite.

[11] https://www.gov.uk/make-a-freedom-of-information-request/the-freedom-of-information-actbmnb
[12] http://www.machiavellicenter.net/web/pv_ip.htm
[13] http://www.machiavellicenter.net/
[14] http://www.eu-historians.eu/uploads/Dateien/jeih-31-2010_1.pdf
[15] http://www.margaretthatcher.org/
[16] http://www.cz.boell.org/downloads/http___oldmail.otoman(1).pdf
[17] GARTON ASH, Timothy: *We The People: The Revolution of 1989 Witnessed in Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin, and Prague*, Random House, 1990. ISBN 0-140-28391-9

The next wave is represented by Padraic Kenney`s *A Carnival of Revolution: Central Europe 1989*[18] which seeks somewhat to debunk the importance of the political view involving those dissidents in their fifties and older and highlights the significance of the activities of various students` groups in preparing for change. A political science viewpoint is offered in *The Fall*[19] by Steven Saxonberg.

The latest wave represented by two recent books seeks to question the nature of the changes in 1989. *Revolution with a Human Face. Politics, Culture and Community in Czechoslovakia 1989-92*[20] by James Krapfl is a cultural history concentrated on the lives ordinary people. It examines "the explosion of discourse … in a newly reconstituted public sphere, where the ideals of a new society were articulated"[21] through placards, slogans, speeches, symbols and leaflets used on the streets, to mention but a few. *The Unfinished Revolution. Making sense of the communist past in central-eastern Europe*[22] by James Mark uses oral history methodology to question vigorously whether there was a revolution at all.

3.5 Oral histories

An important source is an oral history interviewee with Mr Terje B. Englund (TBE), a Norwegian student of Czech in the academic years 1987-88 and 1989-90 when he took part in the demonstration of 17th November and has been a journalist, writer and commentator living in Prague since 1993.

Terje B. Englund was born in Oslo, Norway, in 1963, the son of police officers. He grew up in the Norwegian capital, becoming an ardent scout and a not too successful speed skater. Right after finishing high-school[23] he gained exemption from eighteen months` military service after persuading the authorities of his pacifist convictions. As part of alternative civilian service (*siviltjeneste*) for those exempted from military service, he worked from *mid-*

[18] KENNEY, Padraic: *A Carnival of Revolution. Central Europe 1989*, Princeton, 2002. ISBN 0-691-11627-X
[19] SAXONBERG, Steven*: The Fall. A Comparative Study of the End of Communism in Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary and Poland*, Routledge, 2001. ISBN 0-415-36420-5

[20] KRAPFL, James: *Revolution with a Human Face: Politics, Culture, and Community in Czechoslovakia, 1989-1992*, Cornell University Press (25 Sep 2013) ISBN-10: 0801452058 ISBN-13: 978-0801452055

[21] Krapfl p.217
[22] MARK, James: *The Unfinished Revolution: Making sense of the communist past in Central-Eastern Europe*, Yale University Press. ISBN 978-0-300-16716-0
[23] The text in italics shows the additions and amendments made by the interviewee

1991 to early 1993 in an administrative role in the *Institute* of Nordic Studies at the University of Oslo.

His first experience from the east bloc was in the summer of 1981, when he and a friend each smuggled a backpack full of Bibles to Communist Hungary. In November 1982, he went on a two-month journey with two friends to the Soviet Union and East Asia. The trip on the Trans-Siberian railway to China included one-day stops in Leningrad, Moscow and Irkutsk. They were not part of a large tour group but the trip was, nevertheless, arranged by Intourist, the state travel agency.

After returning to Norway, he then entered the University of Oslo as a student at the Institute of Slavonic Studies. First, he learnt Russian, and then moved onto Czech (which he describes as *the Rolls-Royce of Slav languages*) and Polish. To supplement his language studies he studied a course known as *Landeskunde* (regional and cultural studies) which taught some history and literature of the eastern bloc.

In 1987 he was awarded a scholarship as an exchange student to study in the Slavonic Institute at Charles University, Prague, for ten months. He came by bicycle, entering Poland at the port of Świnoujście and cycled through western Poland and North Bohemia to Prague. He returned for another year in 1989 arriving in Prague by train on September 2nd. He took part in the student demonstrations of 17th November and effectively started his career as a journalist by conducting a long telephone interview with Norwegian radio that same evening. He attended the ensuing demonstrations in the centre of Prague, spending much of this time interpreting for Norwegian journalists at the demonstrations and at press conferences at the Lanterna magika. He returned to Norway on June 15th 1990.

From the end of 1991 to March 1993 he worked as a freelance journalist and translator of Czech literature in Oslo. He then returned to Prague to live and work as a journalist, commentator and writer. As a journalist he covers Central and Eastern Europe for the Scandinavian media. He also works regularly with the Nordic Chamber of Commerce in the Czech Republic.

In 2003, he published a book on the Czech Republic *The Czechs in a Nutshell: A User`s Manual for Foreigners*[24], a light-hearted survey of Czech history, society, culture, politics and social attitudes arranged by topic in an A to Z format. The book has sold around 12,000 copies. *In 2010, Norway's leading publishing house Aschehoug published his Spionen som kom for sent [The spy who came too late], a monograph about the operations of the StB, Communist Czechoslovakia's secret intelligence service, in Norway during the Cold War.*

He is married to a Czech wife, Zuzana, with three sons (one of whom is now studying in Norway) aged 23, 18 and 6 years.

As a point of reference, there is also an interview with Mr Peter Šeda (PS) who was born in Prague in 1961. He worked for TESLA, the electronics company, until he emigrated with his wife and two-year-old daughter to Canada in 1988 where they settled in Vancouver. In 1999, he divorced and returned to the Czech Republic in about 2000. He married again in 2002 and is now living in Zbuzany, a village near Prague, with his wife and two young daughters. He has worked as a software engineer and in the field of electronics in Canada and the Czech Republic.

The interviewer was Stephen Crawley, a British MA student of Contemporary and Oral history at the Faculty of Humanities at Charles University, Prague, the Czech Republic. The interview, transcript and interpretation were part his course work for the first year of his MA studies. The interview was transcribed by him. He has been living in the Czech Republic for more than 20 years and he is married to a Czech wife with three children being educated in the Czech state school system.

For the interviews with TBE and PS, there are summaries (two in the case of PS) available at the end of the text as attachments. For both interviewees, the recordings and transcripts are on a separate CD-ROM.

[24] ENGLUND, Terje B.: *The Czechs in a Nutshell: A User`s Manual for Foreigners,* Práh s.r.o., 2009. ISBN 978-80-7252-266-8

4. Issues concerning theory and methodology

The purpose of this section is to sketch some background to the media resources used, to give some historical, military and political context to the events, to discuss the meanings of certain key words and the difficulties in defining them satisfactorily and to describe the attempts by the author to find suitable interviewees.

4.1 The nature of journalism in 1989

It is often said that journalists write the first draft of history. It is certainly the first written record of the past usually in the last 24 hours. Each report was recorded or written with a deadline in mind. Electronic media has newcasts at regular intervals; there might be news bulletins on the hour or even every half hour with a full length prime time news of up to thirty minutes between 2100 and 2200. For audio the most important deadlines would be the last news between 2200 and 2300 just before listeners go to bed and at 0600 to 0800 as they get up and drive to work. For the print media, the deadline would be the newspaper`s first edition which come off the printing presses in the early hours of the morning. The 1980s saw the entry of cable and satellite TV into the market which began to compete effectively with terrestrial channels. Satellite technology was now in use enabling viewers to see events in real time 24 hours a day.

However, journalism also has the power, albeit unintentional, to distort facts and misreport what is going on. Journalists are often sent at the last moment to a country or find themselves reporting on a situation of which they know nothing, with little preparation and are required to file reports immediately they arrive. The deadlines that they have to work to and events they report do not always symchronize, if only because there is a big time difference between the country they are reporting from and the country where their news organization is based. Back in headquarters, editors and sub-editors work to even tighter deadlines cutting and rewriting the copy. Decisions have to be made as to what is news and what is not news, how many words an article should have and where it should go in a print publication and what precedence an item should take in audiovisual news. After the story is perceived to be finished, the journalist will go on to the next one; another day may bring another story.

The journalist makes his or her living from producing reports deemed newsworthy by their editors. Some items are sometimes pushed off the front page by some more important event. With tabloids, this can reach grotesque proportions when a trivial happening in a celebrity`s life takes precedence over an event with global consequences. The journalist makes his or her name by being "with the story", being at the right place at the right time. He can be tempted to exaggerate events through manipulating images and facts in order to get the report noticed not only by his editors, but by the viewers. Such news production was parodied in a British BBC comedy series *Drop the Dead Donkey*[25] where one journalist, Damien Day, fakes or contrives images in order to make a news item more sensational.

Editors are influenced by the need to get the attention of the viewers; the visual image must be worth looking at. An equally important consideration is the subject of the report. Which report will they perceive as close to their interests, and by extension, close to the interests of their community and country? Most media networks carry advertising and the advertisers who are buying slots in the middle of the main news will be trying to choose the best channel to buy time and can therefore indirectly, and sometimes directly, influence the way news is presented and even its content.

Viewers will often have the television set on in the home but may be paying it scant attention. They may watch the images if they grab their interest, otherwise it will be less than 'passive' watching, and similarly with radio, where the majority would be passive listeners. However, the above may apply more to North America; in Britain, a significant section of the population sits down to watch the TV news with their full attention. Meal times are arranged, and visits and phone calls are often timed so a person can watch the news without being interrupted.

4.2 The role of the media in the USA

Needless to say, US public opinion is often of crucial importance when it comes to world affairs and the press, especially television, are the main opinion-formers. The US has three arms of government – the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary; the media is often referred to as the 'Fourth Estate' or fourth arm of government. Their self-confidence in this role is reinforced by a number of factors.

[25] http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0098781/

The President as head of the executive arm of government is not required to answer questions put to him by elected representatives as is the case in Britain. The press take on this role when the president holds regular press conferences, a practice he ignores at his peril. Americans also watch alot of TV and 55% get their news only from television. The print media showed its abilities and power when investigative journalism into the Watergate burglary in 1972 resulted in President Nixon being forced to resign two years later. Visual media is credited with turning public opinion against the Vietnam War, forcing the administration to withdraw from direct participation in military action in South-East Asia. The importance which administrations attach to the media can be illustrated, somewhat ironically, by the fact that, during the Vietnam War, journalists were given the rank of captain in the army. This meant, for example, that newsmen could take precedence over those of lower rank in getting a place on a helicopter.

Another factor in reporting is the TV news anchorman. He is a television reporter who coordinates a broadcast to which several correspondents contribute. One of the most famous was the CBS anchorman, Walter Cronkite who "... at the height of his propularity was the most trusted man in America ..." Breaking briefly with journalistic objectivity in 1968, he declared the Vietnam war unwinnable. President Johnson is alleged to have remarked: "If I have lost Cronkite, I`ve lost Middle America."[26] Johnson subsequently opened negotiations with the North Vietnamese and did not stand for a second term as president.

4.3 The importance of audiovisual sources and new technology

TGA is certain that: "The importance of television can hardly be overstated. Future historians of these events will surely have to spend as much time in television archives as in libraries.[27]" It shows the events from different points of view, what audiences saw at the time or with the arrival of satellite technology, in real time. Above all, for those of us who were not able to witness the revolution, audiovisual sources are the closest we can get to being "there" filmed by people who were. Moreover, much of what was said in negotiations, on the phone or by fax was never recorded for which television is the only substitute.

[26] http://www.cbsnews.com/news/walter-cronkite-dies/
[27] TGA p.23

Another advantage is that a short report which combines commentary and constantly changing moving images offers a huge amount of information for which an audio or print media report can only provide a fraction. For example, the ITN report on the first official meeting between Havel and Adamec shows the two men seated facing each other across a table signals the start of negotiations in which clearly one side must give way (the table is not round in contrast to the 'round table' meetings in Poland). A close-up of Havel talking to a colleague shows strain and tiredness with Adamec and his colleagues behind looking tense and also under much strain. The nature of the negotiations and the impact of events and their pace can be shown in a matter of seconds.

In this revolution, journalists could record the events from where they were happening, with the exception of the deliberations of communist party officials. Indeed, they were welcome everywhere they went as there importance was recognized. The BBC could film Havel in his apartment on the Sunday morning of 19th November as he met with fellow dissidents.[28] Student activists could be filmed at work producing posters and leaflets, although they would have needed informal authorisation from those people at the door whose job it was to keep out *provocateurs* and those bringing false and misleading information. One journalist even made his report (mentioned above) as Havel and Ladislav Adamec were seated behind him at the beginning of the first public negotiations between them.[29] In 1968, western journalists had been obliged to report only from the streets.

The videos from the samizdat *Videojournál*[30] in the early days are the best illustration of the essential role played by the new video technology. Affordable, easy-to-carry cameras and tapes which could easily be copied to be shown to the public in the streets of Prague and round the country quickly countered the lies of the official communist propaganda. In fact, it is almost possible that the momentum of protest could have faltered and the revolution could never have reached its goals bearing in mind that Czech television did not report what was really going on until the end of the first week. The hundreds of foreign television crews that came to Prague had this technology in abundance speeding up the news production process and adding to its quality.

[28] http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/8144165.stm
[29] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plltt4_B54A
[30] http://www.89.usd.cas.cz/en/videos/ovj.html shows some of the videos made by this group.

4.4 Quality of content

In America, networks have recently faced competition especially from BBC America which has overtaken Fox News in viewer ratings. This acid comment from a blog on the BBC website of 31/10/2009 possibly reflects the views of some BBC America listeners:

I call you: "Radio Free America", for your broadcasts provide what no media outlet in the United States does: in-depth world coverage. In the US what goes for news coverage is much more likely to be nothing more than masked propaganda[31]

Although these ratings and this comment is relatively recent, it would indicate that television journalism in the US could not have been much better in 1989. An example of poor reporting is a *Daily Telegraph* video[32] marking the death of Vaclav Havel. He is described as "... a hero of the epic struggle that ended the Cold War." Havel was not concerned with ending the Cold War by any stretch of the imagination – only with obtaining freedom for his countrymen. It seems as if an historical template is imposed on the period with Havel being assigned a role in a global context. The video`s captions often do not match the images on the screen. Another example is a caption to a Magnum photograph which says: "A crowd celebrating fall of the communist regime, November 24th 1989."[33] The regime had not yet fallen although the entire communist leadership had resigned. The lack of background knowledge and understanding of context is evident in an Australian ABC interview with president Havel in February 1995 (discussed in more detail below).

Missing, at least from the sources listed below, are interviews on American television during the events of 1989. With the exception of an interview with Jan Urban by ABC on 28/11/1989, only reporting is done by the anchorman and the reporters.[34] The BBC report of the weekend 18th/19th November shows how valuable an interview can be in informing viewers what is happening. Jan Urban proves to be an articulate interviewee with his good, well-accented English asserting prophetically that … *either we will change the regime or we will have Tiananmen Square very soon*.[35]

[31] http://www.bbc.co.uk/search/?q=czechoslovakia
[32] http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/czechrepublic/8964118/Former-Czech-Republic-president-Vaclav-Havel-dies.html
[33] http://www.magnumphotos.com/C.aspx?VP3=SearchResult&ALID=2K1HRGQM5Y8
[34] http://abcnews.go.com/Archives/video/nov-28-1989-freedom-czechoslovakia-12238317
[35] http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/8144165.stm

4.5 Finding suitable oral history interviewees

Two interviews would probably have been appropriate but proved difficult to find. The author wrote emails to members of the Faculty of Humanities and Radio Free Europe (RFE) as follows:

I am a British MA student at the department of Contemporary and Oral History of the Faculty of Humanities at Charles University. I am writing my dissertation on the western view of the events in Czechoslovakia in 1989 partly through the oral history testimonies of two or three individuals.
I would appreciate any help or suggestions on anybody you know who might be willing to be interviewed.

Only one replied initially as follows: *thank you very much for your e-mail, however, I would appreciate more information about the sample - whom do you exactly look for?* to which the author replied:

I am looking for probably two interviewees. An ideal interviewee should be:
•An English-speaking witness to the events of November and December 1989 and/or with a specialist interest in the Czech Republic (it means he/she didn´t have to necessarily be in the CR that time)
•He/she should have been brought up and educated in a western country
•Such an interviewee could be e.g. a journalist, a retired diplomat, an academic, visiting students studying some aspect of the CR, a student at that time.....

Research questions will include:
•What does "freedom" mean to the interviewee?
•What changes have there been in his/her eyes since 1989?
•What would he/she say to a Czech Citizen who says that there have been few changes and that people need authoritarian government?

Emphasis should be placed on the interviewee`s personal perspective and experience, how he/she reacts as an individual and as a citizen.

The MA thesis will also analyze the western point of view through the media and other western witnesses using the documentary and electronic archive material which is freely available and easily accessible on the internet.

I know that finding a western interviewee in the CR with such criteria is difficult. I am already negotiating with the faculty to make the criteria for a western interviewee wider. I am therefore open to other ideas.

Please, of course, ask if anything is not clear. In the meantime, thank you for taking the time and trouble to consider my request.

This correspondent never replied which presumably meant that she could not find someone suitable and willing to be interviewed. The email to RFE was followed up with a phone call but subsequently yielded no results. A potential source of interviewees was the set of interviews done by visiting American students in 2001/2002 under the guidance of the Oral History Centre in Prague[36]. An email address of a potential interviewee from this group proved to be out of use[37]. Requests to expatriates who were living in Czechoslovakia during the 1970s and 1980s were not made as they had already been approached and any further requests might be considered to be an irritant. Otherwise, a "gatekeeper"[38] might have brought results.

Terje B. Englund`s name first came to the author`s attention as the writer of a book on the Czech Republic *Czechs in a Nutshell*. An interview on the internet revealed that he had been a student at Charles University and that he had taken part in the 17th November demonstration as well as being well-qualified to comment on the Czech Republic. The author wrote to the email address shown in his book (deciding not to use an address in the magazine *Respekt*) as follows:

[36] Available at the Oral History Centre in Prague.
[37] Jarmila Knight
[38] RITCHIE, Don: *Doing Oral History*, Oxford, 2003. ISBN 978-0-19-515434-4, p. 88

I am writing to ask if it would be possible to interview you on your memories of the events of 1989 and your perspective on Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic since then.

I am a British MA student at the department of Contemporary and Oral History of the Faculty of Humanities at Charles University. I am writing my dissertation on the view of the events through the eyes of the western media and through the oral history testimonies of two or three individuals.

Research questions include what is meant by "freedom" and whether there really was a "revolution."

and received a reply a month later as follows:

Thanks for your mail, and my apologies for replying so late, I haven't been checking the Nutshell address for a while. Anyway, if your request is still valid and you think I can be of any use for your dissertation, I am happy to answer your questions.

Mr. Peter Šeda, a parent of one of my students, kindly agreed to participate in two interviews about life in communist Czechoslovakia, his experiences of emigration to Canada, life in Canada and life in the Czech Republic.

4.6 1989

This was a year of great events which influenced the attitude of people in Czechoslovakia. The semi-elections in Poland on June 4th broke the Communist party`s hold on power. On the same day the Chinese military retook control of Tiananmen Square in Peking using tanks, armoured personnel carriers and live ammunition, killing several hundred demonstrators and injuring thousands more. Hungary opened its borders to East Germans wanting to leave for the West in September and more left by special trains for West Germany the following month after seeking asylum in the West German embassy in Prague. The Berlin Wall fell on November 9th and a student demonstration on November 17th led to the swift end of the Communist regime in Czechoslovakia by the end of the year. The Cold War was officially declared at an end at the Malta Summit in December.

It was also the year Francis Fukuyama`s influential essay *The End of History*[39] was published, the 200th anniversary of the French Revolution and the 300th anniversary of the Glorious Revolution in England. Symbolic perhaps for older Czechs was the fact that the number 89, if turned ninety degrees, made the number 68 - a reminder of the year 1968 twenty-one years before.

4.7 The meaning of communist and socialist

Czechs usually refer to the period of Czechoslovak history between 1948 and 1989 as 'Socialism.' Such a definition has its origins in the writings of Karl Marx who believed he had found a scientific explanation of history and of the future. According to Marx, society moved as an inevitable historical process from Feudalism, to Capitalism, to Socialism when the numerical superiority of the workers would enable them to rise against their oppressors, the capitalist owners of industry. "The dictatorship of the proletariat" would then be established with a Socialist economy in which the means of production would be owned by society as a whole. Communism would be the final stage of the historical process with the establishment of a classless society governed by the Communist principle "from each according to his ability, to each according his needs."

The Czechoslovak communist party constantly referred to their form of government as Socialism which was a way of saying, perhaps with deliberate modesty, that they had not reached the utopian paradise of Communism, that they were still building Socialism with the hope one day of reaching the final stage of Marx`s scientific historical process. In Britain, socialism meant principally a 'mixed economy' – an economy half-owned by the state and half-owned by the private sector, although it should be noted that, up to 1994, the Labour Party still had Clause Four[40] in its constitution which called for, in Marx`s almost exact words, the ownership of the means of production by the state. In the US, socialism is akin to communism in that it dares to suggest that some form of ownership of free enterprise by the Federal government is desirable.

'Communist' in the US media would usually be used to refer to forms of totalitarian government which aspire to Marx`s ideals. 'Communist' can also be used outside the political context in everyday speech in a neo-McCarthyite definition. Senator Joe McCarthy conducted

[39] http://ps321.community.uaf.edu/files/2012/10/Fukuyama-End-of-history-article.pdf
[40] http://www.federica.unina.it/economia/lingua-inglese-eco/old-clause-new-clause/

a witchhunt for communists and communist sympathizers claiming that they were everywhere including the US Federal Government whilst, in most cases, proving himself unable to produce evidence to substantiate his claims. This practice came to be known as 'McCarthyism.' In the decades that followed, a communist (here with a small 'c') came to mean a person who did not agree with the general consensus of American society, according, of course, to the perspective of the person using that term. Thus, if as a Canadian said to the author: "Oliver Stone is a communist." it meant that the well-known film director has views outside the mainstream of those held by the greater majority of the American public. A film of the 1990s *The Big Lebowski*[41] might be another example of 'cultural McCarthyism.' Lebowski, played by Beau Bridges, is arrested for simply walking in the streets of a town inhabited by wealthy film stars dressed as a "hippie". Although this might be somewhat of a diversion from the context of 1989, it serves well to illustrate how a word can have different meanings in different contexts and different countries. Ironically, it seems that "dissident" might be a more appropriate word for Lebowski as he is not depicted as diametrically opposing the system as a whole.

4.8 The meaning of velvet and revolution

A revolution is defined in one dictionary as "a time of great change usually sudden, social and political change especially the changing of a ruler and/or political system by force." The word 'revolution' in this text will refer to the period from the early 1970s to the present day. It is suggested that a revolution is not just a snap event but one which is preceded and followed by events which are linked together as a process of change. The real changes could be said to have taken place already and are certainly followed by a period of ongoing and gradual change. Stretching the time scale does not make it potentially any less of a revolution.

It is, of course, impossible to represent the perceptions of western populations but to the western eye, the events of 1989 do seem to fit part of this definition. Changes occurred which, on the face of it, turned the world upside for the whole population. Travel outside the country suddenly became possible without restrictions. Citizens could express their opinions when and where they wanted to. An increasing selection of goods and services became available. People seemed to have more control over their lives. Whether or not there really was a

[41] http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0118715/

revolution is a matter of opinion. However, the term "Velvet Revolution" or "revolution" or "the events" will be used in this text to refer to the period of November and December 1989.

There are certain features that seem to recur in revolutions. The success of a revolution is measured against high hopes and expectations which are never fulfilled. It is said that "revolutions eat their own children" as happened in France in the years following 1789 with the bloodbath that followed. Krapfl compares the 'cycle' of events in the French and Russian revolutions with the Czechoslovak revolution and finds the latter is no different from its predecessors. The "… romantic, heroic period of November and December …" was followed by a period of moderation in the form of the Government of National Understanding and the Government of National Sacrifice which was replaced by the necessarily divisive party agendas of HZDS and ODS culminating a more pluralist politics from 1998.[42]

The above dictionary definition includes change "by force." Revolution should normally conjure visions of the storming of the Bastille in Paris in 1789 or the Winter Palace in St Petersburg in 1917 or the demonstrations in the streets of European cities in 1848. The revolution in Czechoslovakia in 1989 has had the adjective 'velvet' added to the title, maybe because, as TGA concluded in 1999, "... because it [the revolutions throughout eastern and central Europe] was unlike all earlier revolutions."[43]

The term "Velvet Revolution" was first coined by a French journalist or so it is claimed. The Slovaks use their own expression, *nežná revolúcia* - the Gentle Revolution. It has now come to mean the peaceful overthrow of a government especially a communist regime as occurred in Czechoslovakia in 1989.

It is hard for western observers, fed all their lives with the predictable bland and stale routine of democratic politics with the same faces appearing on the television screen uttering the same clichés, to resist seeing the whole period in romantic terms. TGA starts the list of ministerial appointments thus: "As if in a fairy-tale, Jiri Dienstbier went from stoker to Foreign Minister."[44] A tourist guide book could note that Havel went from being a detainee in police custody to president in an imposing castle in a beautiful central European city in just

[42] Krapfl p.219
[43] TGA p.168
[44] TGA p.124

a few weeks. Many documentaries feature the now-iconic views of Prague especially the bridges of the Vltava.

Another image of revolution is cultivated by using biblical terms. While discussing whether … *there was a supra-national cause at work* … TGA`s *personal choice* is … *to stick with the angels*.[45] He repeats Rita Klimová term, *the powers-that-be*, to refer to the regime and recalls the legend … *that wonders would occur in Bohemia when Agnes was canonized*.[46] Despite censuring TGA for using the language of the miraculous, Kenney does it himself.[47]

4.9 What dies the West and western mean?

In the formal definition, the West and western mean those countries which had free, democratic elections, free speech and an independent, free press. This refers mainly to the countries of western Europe and the United States (US) and not those countries which were members of the Warsaw and other professedly communist regimes such as Albania and Yugoslavia. "The West" is usually used by the western press as short for "the Free World", "the Western World" or "Western Europe."

Muriel Blaive illustrates well how misleading it is divide each side of the Iron Curtain into simple categories of East and West. Her own experience of growing up in rural France in the 1970s and 1980s was very similar to that of a family in Czechoslovakia. Coke was considered to be luxury, visits to McDonalds were rare, travel to a foreign country was usually to shop and travel by plane was "a big event." Propaganda from the state could be on a par with a communist state. She "... would have numerous examples of the lies stemming from the French state ..." but mentions the radiation from Chernobyl in 1986 as a prime example. The highest state medical authority in France assured the public that there was no danger and all farm produce could be eaten without risk to health. In fact, mushrooms had radiation 500 times above the maximum allowed level. The French state denies to this day that certain types of cancer were caused by the radiation from Chernobyl.[48]

[45] Ibid p.128
[46] Ibid p. 99
[47] KENNEY, Padraic: *A Carnival of Revolution. Central Europe 1989*, Princeton, 2002. ISBN 0-691-11627-X pp. 33, 216. As cited in KRAPFL, James: *Revolution with a Human Face: Politics, Culture, and Community in Czechoslovakia, 1989-1992*, Cornell University Press (25 Sep 2013) ISBN-10: 0801452058 p. 44
[48] http://www.cz.boell.org/downloads/http___oldmail.otoman(1).pdf p.4-5

There are also many different 'Wests'. Blaive uses the above episode to point out that neighbouring Italy and Germany and Austria took steps to inform and protect their own people in total contrast to France. Moreover, the 'West' of Europe is different from that of the United States.

4.10 What does dissident mean?

The word was originally used in a religious context as one who disagrees or dissents from an established Christian religion. A religious dissenter often disagreed with the structure and rituals of the established church but agreed in the basic essentials - one God, the crucifixion, the primacy of the Bible as the word of God.

Since the 1950s the word has since moved in its meaning to refer to those in opposition to the communist regimes, first in the Soviet Union, then the countries of the eastern bloc. A dissident, at least according to the dictionary , was now "a person who formally opposes the correct political structure; opposes the political group in power, opposes the policies of the political group in power; or opposes current laws."[49]

In his essay, 'The Power of the Powerless'[50] Havel notes that the word was chosen by western journalists " ... and is now generally accepted as the label for the phenomenon peculiar to the post-totalitarian system ... " He is reluctant to use the "... special term ..." and should be used in quotation marks to express the irony and distaste which the word represents. To make matters more complicated the meaning in the communist press, he points out, was equivalent to 'renegade' or 'backslider.' Dissent is not a profession.

Havel`s description is worth reading carefully but for the purposes of understanding their role and goals before, during and after 1989, three points are worth highlighting. The regime`s aggressive reaction to *Charta 77*,[51] in particular compelling citizens to sign an anti-charta, defined the nature of the opposition; such an opposition was by fate pushed together, with

[49] DICTIONARY OF CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH, Longman, 1990. ISBN 0-582-84223-9
[50] VLADISLAV, Jan ed.: *Vaclav Havel. Living in Truth*. Twenty-two essays published on the occasion of the award of the Erasmus Prize to Vaclav Havel, Faber and Faber, 1987. ISBN 0-571-14440-3 p.85-88
[51] http://libpro.cts.cuni.cz/charta/docs/declaration_of_charter_77.pdf

Charta signatories as its core and which represented an enormous spectrum of views (a rainbow coalition is hardly a sufficient term); the term apparently brought by the West has stuck and this way of labelling the opposition is the one generally used and will be used in this text.

4.11 The Cold War

The "Cold War" refers to the period of hostility and tension between the USSR and the USA from 1945 and 1991 without any direct military conflict between the two superpowers. However, the Cold War period has many features which can be added to this definition.

The political systems were different. In the USSR only the Communist power controlled power in a one-party state and there were no free elections. In America, there were two large political parties in addition to other smaller ones and politicians were elected as were many officials.

The opposing economic systems meant that the world was divided into two economic blocs. In the USSR and her satellite states, the economy was controlled solely by the Party – a command economy. The USA and the so-called free world had economies with at least a measure of "laissez-faire" capitalism where the economy was left to run itself with little intervention from the government.

The two economic blocs presented different economic possibilities. The Cold War tended to stimulate economic growth while the Soviet economy was ultimately crippled by its effects. Consumer goods were usually freely available in western countries whilst in the Soviet bloc only in limited quantities. Outside the Soviet bloc, free trade was usually possible with goods imported and exported without the imposition of tariffs. The Communist command economy decided what could be traded within and outside the Soviet trading bloc.

The Cold War period was also marked by rivalry.The form of rivalry most visible to the world was that of international sport. Each side competed to be the first to put a person into space then onto the moon - the "space race" - and to have the most powerful weapons in the largest quantities – the "arms race." This is the bald narrative taught in schools in the West but the narrative has been changing in recent years

It has been said that this period maintained stability based on a balance of power between the two heavily armed nuclear superpowers. However, the global situation was probably more precarious than people thought at the time. Recent papers released from the archives in Britain show just how close the world came to a nuclear catastrophe. In November 1983, NATO conducted a large-scale war games exercise called Operation Able Archer, which was so realistic the Soviet leadership thought that this was a prelude to a nuclear strike against the Soviet Union. Their response was to fit aircraft in eastern Europe with nuclear weapons, put 70 SS-20 missiles on full alert and to send submarines carrying nuclear ballistic missiles under the Arctic ice to avoid detection. Paul Dibb, a former director of the Australian Joint Intelligence Organisation, recently suggested that the exercise posed a greater threat than the 1962 Cuban missile crisis: "Able Archer could have triggered the ultimate unintended catastrophe, and with prompt nuclear strike capacities on both the US and Soviet sides, orders of magnitude greater than in 1962."[52]

Blaive has suggested that popular culture has also changed the way Czech and Polish schoolchildren perceive the period. James Bond, now a product of the 'winner' narrative of the Cold War, has been adopted as the warrior symbol whose side emerged victorious in a global struggle between Good Capitalism and Evil Communism. The experience of living under communism means little to this generation as it does to western schoolchildren thereby globalizing the historical narrative of the Cold War period. The Cold War, on the other hand, means little to those who spent much of their lives under the totalitarian regimes of Eastern Europe. When Blaive asked a lady if the Cold War meant anything to her on a personal level she replied laughing: "The Cold War? I have it at home with my family."[53]

4.12 Political and military factors in 1989

The section intends to set out the kind of considerations which would have been in the mind of Czechs during the events. To this a selective historical background would be necessary and a review of the formidable array of military forcewhich could have been used against activists and demonstrators.

52 http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2013/nov/02/nato-war-game-nuclear-disaster

53 http://www.cz.boell.org/downloads/http___oldmail.otoman(1).pdf p.5

The Czech Lands lie almost in the centre of Europe. This meant that any invader would be aiming to hold the area as a base for further advances in any direction. This was no more evident than during the Munich crisis of 1938. With a regular and reserve army totalling 400,000 manning formidable frontier defences and a small but useful air force, Czechoslovakia became not just a geographical but also a geopolitical obstacle which, when swept aside, gave Hitler access to the agriculture and the Ploesti oilfields of Rumania and the Mediterranean. Furthermore, the Skoda armament factories offered a considerable boost to Germany's wartime production capacity.

Another factor is the proximity of the German-speaking world. Austria and Germany almost begin to surround Bohemia and Moravia and until recently a large German-speaking minority lived in the border regions, a legacy of the *ostsiedlung*[54] dating back to the Middle Ages. In addition, an industrialized Germany, unified since 1871 has, with a current population of nearly ninety million, always held a strategic significance. Those who held effective political power in Germany could hold sway over Europe from the Atlantic coast to the 'Polish corridor'[55] and south to the Balkans and the Mediterranean coast, a fact well understood by the two major protagonists in the Cold War, the USSR and the USA. The fate of the Czechs was influenced by the fate of its powerful neighbour in the twentieth century, as they had been by the Austro-Hungarian empire in the previous three centuries.

From 1945, the Soviet Union, brought into Eastern Europe by the need to defeat Hitler, became the new dominant power from the east which effectively dominated the country until 1990. Russian domination placed Czechoslovakia in a strait jacket in both foreign and domestic policy. The August 1968 invasion was obviously a landmark event as was the Brezhnev Doctrine that followed. In order to assess its real importance, a distinction should be made between the periods of 1945 to 1985 and when Gorbachev came to power. In both world wars, the USA played a decisive role in the liberation of Europe and was ready to take the Czech Republic under her umbrella as a military and diplomatic partner when the Soviet Union lost the will to maintain control of the population by force in 1989.

[54] http://www.vonwitte.org/index.php/german-eastward-expansion-ostsiedlung
[55] http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/history/mwh/ir1/thetreatyrev1.shtml

Although, as will be seen, Gorbachev had made it clear that he was not going to intervene in the internal affairs of its eastern European satellite states, there were still 75,000 Soviet servicemen stationed in Czechoslovakia. There was always the danger of a right-wing coup in Moscow which could have resulted in the "Kalashnikov crutch" being used to prop up the regime. In addition, there were 4,000 well-armed People`s Militia (*Lidové milice*)[56] who the Communist party leadership called to Prague but ordered them back on the evening of the 22nd November. The army had been placed on alert. With this potential military opposition, another Tiananmen Square massacre was not outside the bounds of possibility especially with easy access provided by the Nusle Bridge and the wide roads connecting it to the top of Wenceslas Square. When Don Sparling, a Canadian witness to the revolution in Brno, went to the main square (possibly on Monday 21st November) to find it blocked by the People`s Militia, it was later discovered that their weapons were loaded.[57]

5. Western templates, symbols, icons and enduring images of the revolution

5.1 Introduction

Most revolutions have brought their own symbols and linguistic structures into the public space. The French Revolution had *La Marseillaise*, the *tricolore*, the cockade, the liberty cap, the Russian Revolution the red star. The carnation gave its name to the revolution in Portugal in 1974.

Such symbols can carry different meanings. How a slogan can take on many meanings and be capable of having various interpretations is meticulously described by Havel[58] as he gives the example of the greengrocer who puts a sign outside his shop *Workers of the world, unite!* during the normalization period. Similarly, many Czechs wore a blue, white and red ribbon in their lapel. A waiter in TGA`s hotel draws attention to his ribbon by pointing to it.[59] Does he

[56] The People's Militias, also known as "The armed fist of the working class" was a paramilitary organisation of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia between 1948 and 1989
[57] http://www.radio.cz/en/section/special/don-sparling-part-2
[58] VLADISLAV, Jan ed.: *Vaclav Havel. Living in Truth*. Twenty-two essays published on the occasion of the award of the Erasmus Prize to Vaclav Havel, Faber and Faber, 1987. ISBN 0-571-14440-3 pp. 55-88
[59] TGA p.98

want to impress a western foreign visitor? Waiters in central Prague hotels were notorious black marketeers and would have reported to the StB. Does he also want to tell his colleagues and customers that he has changed sides? How would *they* interpret the sudden appearance of the ribbon in his lapel? This small signifier would certainly have many meanings for many different people. With this in mind, this section is an attempt to ascribe linguistic and symbolic meanings to what westerners read about and saw of the events.

5.2 Reporting on Czechoslovakia before 17th November

When Misha Glenny started as a stringer for the Guardian in 1986 an editor said: *Look, eastern Europe is something of a backwater – nothing ever really happens there and we aren`t that interested*.[60] What does ... *nothing ever really happens* ... mean? The answer may lie in contrasting what he said about the events of 1989 twenty years later (see below). There must be something unusual happening and violence is always newsworthy – note his only reference to a country is Romania where the revolution was the most violent. This probably sums up the attitude of the western press to the Soviet bloc of countries before each one brought about the fall of their respective communist regimes. TGA recalls the chant of the crowds in 1968: "The world is watching you." Before November 1989, the world was not watching as the western media decided that news, that is what they perceived as newsworthy stories, was elsewhere. There was, therefore, little reporting by the western press of what was happening in Czechoslovakia.

One of the exceptions to this was a BBC 'Panorama' report broadcast on 24th April 1989[61] featuring a public meeting of the top communist party leadership including Gustav Husak and the politburo, and the People`s Militia (*milice*) .– ... *the armed fist of the working class* ... to commemorate the anniversary of the February revolution of 1948. It seemed to Gavin Hewitt that: *The event was low-key and even sombre reflecting uncertainty and a new lack of confidence.* According to his commentary, ... *as the speakers began from the podium, cries of "freedom" from the reformers began in the crowd* (this is not recorded). The police and the Militia responded with tear gas at which point the chant *Gorbachev is watching* could be heard (again not recorded). In an interview on 6th November 2009[62] on a BBC blog, Hewitt recalled:

[60] http://www.theguardian.com/world/1999/oct/08/berlinwall.germany
[61] http://news.bbc.co.uk/panorama/hi/front_page/newsid_8347000/8347282.stm
[62] http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/legacy/panorama/2009/11/1989_the_year_of_revolutions.html

The Military Guards` attention turned to the Panorama film crew, thinking we were agitators but the activists in the crowd moved to get us into a car and spirit us away. As we drove away I was left stunned by the boldness of the students and their courage in facing down the soldiers in helping us escape.

Hewitt noted in 2009 the role of the minder or the lack of it:...*we were followed by a minder. Usually a large part of their role was simply to spy on our activities and report it to the party. The minder seemed distracted and disinterested.*

Perhaps in view of this experience, Hewitt had the right to say: *Revolution was inevitable* ... A group had had the courage to chant "freedom" loud enough for those who, evidently, least wanted to hear it.

5.3 Various narratives

Captions or introductions to items recording events, even books, can vary. For Magnum Photos, the history timeline connected straight from 1968 to 1989 ignoring any events between these years.[63] For English-language Radio Prague`s commemoration of the events, the 17th November protests were preceded by a line of martyrs – Jan Opletal in 1939, Jan Palach in January 1969 and the protests of January 1989.[64] For the *Daily Telegraph*, Vaclav Havel was ... *a hero of the epic struggle that ended the Cold War*, seemingly part of a narrative of global events.[65] For Padraic Kenney, the Czechoslovak revolution ended on 17th November 1989.[66]

For Radio Free Europe (RFE), the revolutions of 1989 are part of a narrative[67] about the collapse of communism that started with the building of the Berlin Wall and ending with the disintegration of the Soviet Union making it seem like a domino effect. In the chronology, the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9th and the demonstrations on November 17th are linked by implication. Chronology also contrasts the peaceful protests in Czechoslovakia with the

---

[63] https://www.magnumphotos.com/
[64] http://www.radio.cz/en/static/november-89/
[65] [65] http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/czechrepublic/8964118/Former-Czech-Republic-president-Vaclav-Havel-dies.html
[66] Krapfl pp.38-39 footnote 14
[67] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hc2XGHA7NK4

violence of the last revolution in Romania. Havel is the only individual interviewed, perhaps confirming his iconic status in the 1989 narrative, although his importance to RFE should be borne n mind as he invited them to bring their headquarters to Prague from Munich.

In his introduction to a 2009 blog asking for Hewitt`s recollections of his report from Prague in April 1989 mentioned earlier, the BBC blogger Eamonn Walsh[68] writes in his introduction that Hewitt was "facing the possibility that he might witness a repeat of 1968`s Prague Spring." At one point in 1989 report, Hewitt referred to the activists in the crowd as "reformers." It might reflect how little the BBC reported from Czechoslovakia during he 1970s and 1980s. As a result, the political 'winter' merely froze away the two decades of this period making any protests in 1989 a continuation of the Prague Spring reforms in the minds of the BBC. However, there may have been one link with the death of the reform period in that practically all the People`s Militia shown in the report were old enough to have taken part in the suppression of the demonstrations of August 21st 1969 in Prague.[69]

Another narrative can be found in the Monument to the Victims of Communism (100 million according the monument) unveiled in 2007 which James Mark sees as … *an embodiment of western triumphalism after the end of the Cold War* …[70] The statue of the Goddess of Democracy used by the activists at the Tiananmen Square protests in 1989 was included because of its similarity to the Statue of Liberty even though the Chinese art students intended it to be different to the American symbol. Thus, the past and a symbol of this past were appropriated to fit into a narrative where the Good West, by implication led by the United States, vanquished Bad Communism.

A 'European' narrative is written into a speech the European Union President, José Manuel Barroso, made at the fiftieth anniversary of the 1956 Hungarian Uprising. For him the Uprising lit … *a torch of freedom* … the flame of which … *surfaced again in the Prague Spring in 1968 that lit the way for the collapse of dictatorship in Greece, Portugal and Spain* … which in turn inspired Solidarity in Poland, underground movements until the Fall of

[68] http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/legacy/panorama/2009/11/1989_the_year_of_revolutions.html
[69] http://news.bbc.co.uk/panorama/hi/front_page/newsid_8347000/8347282.stm
[70] MARK, James: *The Unfinished Revolution: Making sense of the communist past in Central-Eastern Europe*, ale University Press. ISBN 978-0-300-16716-0 pp.1-2

Berlin Wall leading ultimately to the enlargement of the European Union.[71] Thus, the narrative identifies the key years of European history beginning in 1956 and progressing to 1968, 1973 (Greece), 1974 (Portugal), 1975 (Spain), 1981 (Poland), 1989 to enlargement in 2004 and 2007.

5.4 The focal points of the revolution

The main ones were Wenceslas Square and the statue of 'King Wenceslas' witness to many celebrations in Czech history, whether it be the founding of the State of Czechoslovakia in 1918 or victory in the world ice hockey championships at Nagano in 1998. Others were the Melantrich balcony and Letna Plain. It was here that the demonstrators would assemble in numbers of up to 500,000 and the cameras were recording a panorama from rooftops or making reports from among the crowd. This was, on the face of it, where the 'story' was. The demonstrations in the rest of the country remained invisible to the western press.

There are, however, some striking images which were taken away from the crowds. The Sky satellite channel filmed the arrival of the communist leadership for a meeting at Vokovice with little commentary. Almost none of them react to the presence of western press. One participant apparently says: "it`s all the fault of the party" in English as he passes the microphone with his back to the camera. The only other communication is "*jde do prdele*" from the Minister of Defence, a general in uniform. The eerie silence as Jakes, Hoffmann and Adamec arrive is as loud as the jingling of the keys.[72]

The footage of the demonstrations in front of the Czech TV building contrasts with the ebullient nature of those in Wenceslas Square. Control of television was essential and the police are filmed in control of the building and no one is allowed in. The fear and despair of one demonstrator clearly shows as he tells an ITN interviewer that "we are afraid that we can`t do much now ..." There was no hope at that moment that Czech television would start to report the truth.[73]

[71]Mark pp.25-26
[72] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plltt4_B54A
[73] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plltt4_B54A

5.5 The Demonstrators

The mass of people shown in Wenceslas Square and Letna Plain is, and will continue to be shown, to illustrate these events and be a symbol in itself. What was or could have been the reaction of western viewers and observers?

First and foremost was the spectacle of the revolutions in eastern Europe. In Misha Glenny`s words: "... it was spectacular. Huge demos, strikes, negotiations, borders being torn down, batons being wielded and, in the case of Romania, gun battles and effective regicide."[74] The use of candles might have recalled for some the ancient Chinese proverb: "It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness." used by Amnesty International as motto to inspire their own logo, a lit candle wrapped in barbed wire.[75] Maybe it served a more practical purpose as in Brno – to show how many people there were in the main square.[76] The result was a mass of candles stretching into the side streets, probably a morale-booster for all concerned.

An ABC report noted the ubiquitous waving of the flag by ordinary citizens and made a comparison with their own: "In America, the flag is a symbol of American identity and pride."[77] The use of the Czech flag could also have expressed the same but in the context of those days; it could also have expressed the sentiment "this is our flag" or "this is now my flag again" echoing the words of Vaclav Havel in his 1990 presidential New Year`s Address: "People, your government has returned to you! (*Tvá vláda, lide, se k tobě navrátila!*)"

The jingling of the keys (the specific symbolic significance of which seems to be unknown) is one of the topics of the same ABC report, an example, perhaps of how a western media organization transforms a symbol into something recognizable to western viewers. In commenting on the use of keys to call on the communist party to resign and make way for free elections, Peter Jennings alludes to Ernest Hemingway`s novel on the Spanish Civil War *For Whom the Bell Tolls,* itself a quotation from the English poet, John Donne. Thus, the poem would have been recalled by British readers of *The Times* when the photograph of Ladislav Sitenský, a photographer and former serviceman with Czechoslovak squadrons of

[74] http://www.theguardian.com/world/1999/oct/08/berlinwall.germany
[75] http://www.amnesty.org/en
[76] http://www.radio.cz/en/section/special/don-sparling-part-2
[77] http://abcnews.go.com/Archives/video/nov-28-1989-freedom-czechoslovakia-12238317

the RAF during the Second World War, appeared on the front page of the December 12th edition ringing a large bell after the communists finally gave up their monopoly on power.[78] For Mark Andrew in Olomouc, it was "Ringing out the old and Ringing in the New."

What did it feel like to be in the crowd? Natasha Dudinski, a student activist, recalls the power of the crowd being potentially dangerous "*... but on that day it was very liberating*." Another activist, Jan Bubeník remembered that "*... you could almost touch the air, how vibrant it was ...* " To Monika Pajerová "*...it was this collective feeling of we can do 'anything'.*"[79] TBE follows the crowd when someone shouts a suggestion.(4) TGA *…trembles for a moment at the ease with which they are swayed* at the 25th November demonstration on Letna Plain. He witnesses *the extraordinary way in which ... one man can start a chant which ... becomes the voice of half a million*.

Most important of all was the sight of peaceful protest, to some even 'unrevolutionary', but by no means different from other recent forms of resistance to unjust government. Different ways of expressing and achieving the replacement of a government or a set of laws unacceptable to the protesters has a long timeline of thought and experimentation. Modes of civil resistance to unjust rule have marked liberation movements in the last 250 years, especially in the twentieth century.

The American Declaration of Independence of 1776 was heavily influenced by John Locke`s ideas (outlined in the section 'Replica of the Liberty Bell'). The document[80] carried within the text the flame of a revolutionary doctrine: "*... That to secure these rights* [outlined in the previous sentence], *Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed*." The text then articulates what should be done if the government does not rule with the consent of governed:

That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter ot to abolish it, and to institute a new Government laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

[78] Seen by the author at an exhibition of Sitenský`s photographs in Prague Castle – no reference available.
[79] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3-B7KsNQiew&list=PLBM6i0wP_VcFHwlx3lWAqUx9UnWKj4t8H&index=3
[80] http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration_transcript.html

Later in the same paragraph, the call for a change of government is more explicit: it is the people`s "*... right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government ...*" The American Colonies managed to throw off British rule by a War of Independence which was concluded with the Treaty of Paris in 1783, although the street protest in Boston in 1774 and the Boston Tea Party in 1775 foreshadowed similar protests to unjust rule in the twentieth century. The principle that resistance to unjust rule was not just a right but also a duty was established in one of the world`s best-known documents relating to human rights; but how was this to be achieved in the face of overwhelming force?

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was perhaps the greatest proponent of non-violent resistance when he challenged first, racist laws in British South Africa from 1906 to 1915 and then, for the rest of his life, the right of the British to rule in India. There are features of Gandhi`s life story which repeat themselves in those of other leaders who used his methods. The young Gandhi, a lawyer newly arrived in South Africa, was travelling in a first-class compartment on a train when a white man came in and ordered him to the baggage car because of his dark skin. When he refused, the man called the guard who threw him off the train at an isolated railway station. This experience in his first week in South Africa led him to formulate two doctrines: nonviolence and civil disobedience. He was inspired by Christ`s teaching in the Bible to turn the other cheek to aggressors. Later in prison, he was profoundly influenced by Henry Thoreau`s essay 'On Civil Disobedience.'[81] Protesting against a US government which continued to support slavery and fighting an unjust war against Mexico in the 1840s, Thoreau expressed his opposition by refusing to pay his taxes for which he was imprisoned.

Gandhi`s preliminary formulations evolved into *satyagraha,* meaning in Sanscrit 'Truth-force' or 'Soul-Force' or more loosely translated as 'insistence on the truth', which would be used to achieve *swaraj* – self-rule from all foreign control. Learning through experience and experiment he found different ways of confronting the imperial authorities. The most notable campaign was his March to the Sea in 1930 in which he made salt in defiance of the government`s monopoly on salt production and the law giving itself the right to tax it.

[81]http://www.gutenberg.org/files/71/71-h/71-h.htm

Martin Luther King`s civil rights activism in the 1950s in the form of boycotts of businesses, sit-ins, marches and demonstrations was inspired by Gandhi`s methods and experimentation. In 1954, the United States Supreme Court recognized the right of African-Americans to be educated in any public school in *Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas,*[82] effectively outlawing the southern state segregation laws implicitly condoned by *Plessy v. Fergusson* in 1893.[83] However, the change was never adhered to. One day in 1955, Rosa Parks, an African-American, refused to give up her seat on a bus allocated to whites in the southern town of Birmingham, Alabama sparking a the first major civil rights protest. This took the form of a boycott of the bus company responsible, resulting in the bankruptcy of the company over a year later. Sit-ins were staged in restaurants where protesters would seat themselves in areas reserved for whites only. Strikes, demonstrations and marches across southern states ending in cities where segregation and racism was the worst usually concluding with speeches by the the main civil rights leader, Martin Luther King, became the staple of protest during the next fifteen years. Like Gandhi, King had to experiment and learn from mistakes. A 'failed' campaign in Albany, Georgia, caused, it could be said by an unexpectedly peaceful and orderly response from the police, resulted in little publicity and no interest from the federal government.[84] King`s careful deliberations before deciding to oppose the Vietnam war recalls Gandhi`s own soul-searching before taking an important step.

A large proportion of the crowd in Wenceslas Square in 1989 would probably have professed complete ignorance, or at best indifference, to anything associated with Gandhi or King. David Attenborough`s film *Gandhi*[85] was certainly shown in Prague in the mid-1980s and made an impression on those who saw it. In his light-hearted *feuilleton* 'A Few Words of Advice for the British Government'[86] Ludvik Vaculik noted the irony of a totalitarian regime allowing such a film to be shown to its citizens; it could be taken as an instruction on how to overthrow such a regime and "... showing us other people`s cruelties and injustices, as if they themselves were pure as driven snow." Vaculik had Gandhi "... very much in mind ..." when

[82] http://www.uscourts.gov/educational-resources/get-involved/federal-court-activities/brown-board-education-re-enactment/history.aspx

[83] http://www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/163/537

[84] ROBERTS, Adam (Editor), GARTON ASH, Timothy (Editor): *Civil Resistance and Power Politics: The Experience of Non-violent Action from Gandhi to the Present*, OUP Oxford (29 Sep 2011). ISBN-10: 0199691452 ISBN-13: 978-0199691456 p.69-70

[85] http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0083987/

[86] VACULÍK, Ludvík: *A Cup of Coffee with My Interrogator*, Reader International. ISBN 0-930523-34-2 p.112-116

he wrote 'Two Thousand Words' (*Dva tisíce slov*) in 1967. He asks: "Was his spirit not there in the streets of Prague in August 1968? And can you not discern him in the ideas of Charter 77?" He muses that citizens "... are in a position to ruin entire industries by refraining from buying their products." – an imitation of boycotting of businesses in the American South during the Civil Rights era. Above all, he became aware of "... the attentive enthusiasm ..." of particularly young people who might acquire "... dangerous, good thoughts which will go on maturing with time". Vaculik gently mocks "the weakness of the British Government" for treating Gandhi like they do – conducting fair trials, revoking laws, allowing journalists to visit him in prison. Prague also boasted a John Lennon Wall where visiting this western symbol of protest was a protest in itself. It is, therefore, possible that something of the spirit of such methods permeated the minds of those who wanted to act in some small way against the regime. Non-violent resistance was scrupulously followed by Czech demonstrators before and during 1989 and was a form of resistance that was recognizable in the West.

What else does Havel have in common with Gandhi or King, dealing as they were with very different situations? It is remarkable how the decision of these individuals to become part of the opposition was sparked by a life-defining incident - Gandhi`s confrontation with naked racism, King`s support for Rosa Parks, Havel`s support of the Plastic People of the Universe when they fell foul of the authorities. A concept of truth forms the central part of each of their thinking; Gandhi`s *satyagraha*, King`s reminder to the crowd at the end of the March on Washington in 1963 of the famous words of the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal ...", and Havel call for citizens "to live in truth." Christianity was certainly an influence on all of them. All firmly called on their governments to stop breaking their own laws. Thus it could be said that dissidents` activities owed much to what had been tried already although the influence may not have been that strong, the antecedents were still there.

How did the demonstrators and activists react to the presence of the press? In Julian O`Halloran`s BBC report on the meeting of artists at the Realistic Theatre on the evening of 18th November[87] a woman apparently takes it upon herself to act as spokesperson for what is going on. The younger of those present seem unconcerned by the camera, one even showing a small sign in English sown into his jacket, "Russian tanks, no thanks." British viewers catch

[87] http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/8144165.stm

their first appearance of Havel signing autographs; the next morning in his flat he is seen conferring with other activists but he is not interviewed. Jan Urban is, however, interviewed shortly before being arrested a few hours later. By the end of the first week, ordinary people are willing to talk to reporters whilst being filmed.[88] Generally, demonstrators are not shown reacting much to the presence of cameras

What do the images tell us about the crowd? Two of John Vink`s photographs of 24th November[89] show a packed crowd along the river embankment outside Manes, the artist`s house, intently watching the *Videojournál* tapes of the police brutality of the 17th. There was no information at all available to the Czech public on the events of 17th except for television screens and video recorders set up by the students in various locations in Prague. In western eyes this amounts to a news blackout. If there was information, nobody was sure who to believe. When the students travelled outside Prague to show the videos in workplaces, they took actors with them as they were the only figures trusted by the general public - something incomprehensible to those from a society with freedom of speech and a free press. Even in 1989, information in a western country was everywhere - on the radio, television, newspapers, at work, at home and in the car and newsstand billboards in the street.

What were the crowd thinking? Many were afraid to come in the first few days for fear of being punished - the Stb were using video cameras to film demonstrators to use against them later. Students were warning pensioners not to join the crowds as there were rumours that the authorities were planning a military operation similar to the Tienanmen massacre in Peking on June 3rd/4th earlier that year. Some local residents were irritated by the mass of people blocking the way to their apartments; those at school might have been happy to see their schools closed temporarily in anticipation of the expected influx of people.

5.6 The statue of King Wenceslas

The statue evokes romantic associations, especially for the British. He is the subject of a famous Christmas Carol composed in 1853 by the Victorian composer, John Mason Neale.[90]

[88] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plltt4_B54A
[89] http://www.magnumphotos.com/C.aspx?VP3=SearchResult&VBID=2K1HZOQS0P3IG1&SMLS=1&RW=960&RH=501 **and** http://www.magnumphotos.com/C.aspx?VP3=SearchResult&ALID=2K1HRGQM5Y8
[90] http://www.carols.org.uk/good_king_wenceslas.htm

He is depicted as a saint ministering to the poor in winter. Neale`s vision has certainly superseded historical truth in the minds of British church-goers who are probably still unaware that he was not a king at all but Saint Wenceslas I, Duke of Bohemia, a vassal of the Holy Roman Emperor.

This is underlined by the dominant position of the statue in Wenceslas Square. An image taken from the steps of the National Museum could take in the statue, well-known to many, and a demonstration of hundreds of thousands of people as the kilometre-long square slopes down to Můstek at the bottom. TGA chose it for the cover of his book *We the People* despite the inclusion of eyewitness accounts of similar events in Poland, East Germany and Hungary. It forms the backdrop to anchorman Peter Jennings` ABC feature.[91] It was said that the only violence during this period was between western photographers trying to get the best photo of the crowds from the steps of the National Museum with the statue in the foreground.

5.7 Alexander Dubček

Dubcek became an icon in the western press during his short reign as First Secretary during 1968. He was adopted as a "good communist", someone who was at least willing to speak with western journalists in a more freer and more open manner than his predecessors and, indeed, any other communist leader in the Soviet bloc at that time. His strenuous efforts to charm western journalists is well illustrated in Alan Levy`s description of his short encounter with him in May 1968, particularly his use of flattery. According to Levy, the short talk with Dubcek lasted two minutes and fifty seconds with a queue of colleagues waiting behind him apparently waiting for interviews of similar length.[92]

After being ousted from the leadership he was sent as Ambassador to Turkey in 1970, it was said, in the hope that he would defect. He then worked with the forestry commission whilst living in a comfortable villa in a good neighbourhood in Bratislava. In 1988, he was allowed to go to Italy to receive an honorary doctorate from Bologna University. In 1989, he was awarded the Sakharov Prize. The West, thus, continued to admire him through these years of obscurity barely noting the fact that, compared to his fellow citizens during this time,

[91] http://abcnews.go.com/Archives/video/nov-28-1989-freedom-czechoslovakia-12238317

[92] LEVY, Alan: *So Many Heroes*, Second Chance Press, 1980. ISBN-10: 0933256167 ISBN-13: 978-0933256163 p.101-102

he was living in relative comfort. The feting of Dubcek bz the West has always puzzled some Czechs; as his speeches in 1989 proved, he was still a believer in communism, albeit the reformed version.

In a BBC report of of 24th November Mike Smart quotes a Moscow newspaper crediting with being "the father of perestroika." There is no evidence, however, to show that Moscow looked to Dubcek`s reforms as a model for their own. In a much shown episode, Havel and Dubcek are on stage for a press conference at the Magic Lantern when the news of the resignation of the communist leadership comes through.[93] The report does not say what they are discussing (which TGA does[94]) – various forms of socialism. The very organization, which he would probably use to put these forms into practice, had suddenly lost its leadership. Nothing could show the poverty of his ideology and Dubcek as a potential leader as in this recorded scene, at least in retrospect, while Havel sits beside him looking bored.

So what did the reappearance of Dubcek represent? What sort of a symbol was he? For a crowd mostly old enough to remember 1968, he obviously symbolized the hopes of that time and the bitter disappointment that followed. It was the crowd that made him into such a symbol in matter of seconds. Standing just twenty yards behind Dubcek as he stood on the Melantrich balcony before the roaring mass of people, Misha Glenny`s reaction, he says, was to cry for five minutes.[95] A woman in the crowd is shown in tears looking up at the balcony[96]. Yet this fleeting glimpse inflated a bubble which burst almost as quickly as it appeared. In an ABC report (date unknown but maybe late November) he has become "... an ageing, nostalgic figure ..." or a simply a figure known well enough to have a brief item announcing his election as Speaker of the Federal Parliament in December 1989 without any additional news on developments in Czechoslovakia. At the end of October 1990, Václav Klaus declared that *Obroda* (Renewal), a club of Dubčekite `68ers, was no longer recognized as part of Civic Forum.

[93] http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_depth/7927123.stm
[94] TGA p.96

[95] GLENNY, Misha: *The Rebirth of History: Eastern Europe in the Age of Democracy*, Penguin Books Ltd; 2nd Revised edition edition (4 Feb 1993) ISBN-10: 0140172866 ISBN-13: 978-0140172867

[96] http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_depth/7927123.stm

5.8 Václav Havel

Havel known in the West only to a few, mostly those who were specializing in Czechoslovakia in some way or those in the theatre. He became a familiar face very rapidly during the November demonstrations and was probably better known to western viewers for a few days in late November than to the Czechoslovak public. He certainly became well-known worldwide and widely-admired in the West when he became president.

In 1968, he had travelled to New York to attend the rehearsal and performance of his plays in Jo Papp`s Theatre in the Park[97] for six weeks and had been interviewed for British newspapers and on British television when he stopped in London on the way. [98] As a leading member of the opposition, he certainly had many foreign visitors, one photographer captioning a 1978 image of Havel as *one of the idols of 'Prague Spring*.' [99] Of the journalists, most would have been looking for 'newsworthy' items. As TGA says, for the western media the news was elsewhere. Havel, however, was interviewed, in spite of the difficulties, by those who had a persistent interest in the dissidents` activities.

Typical of such an interview is the one with John Keane for *The Times Literary Supplement* in 1986.[100] This would have required some preparation with the possibility of the whole project falling through at any time. The article would have been read by a limited number of readers interested in "highbrow" items on current affairs.

During the early 1990s, Vaclav Havel reached iconic status and was frequently interviewed by the western media. In an interview with Canadian CBC,[101] the Czech-born interviewer, Jo Schlesinger, prepares the viewer in the introduction by pointing out that he is the only former dissident left in high political office and asserting that: *What has given him his influence both at home and abroad is the power of his words and thoughts and history*. Recorded shortly after the Czech Republic`s accession to the NATO alliance, he plays different roles. As

[97] http://theatreinthepark.org/
[98] KEANE, John: *Václav Havel: A Political Tragedy In Six Acts*, Bloomsbury Paperbacks, 2000. ISBN 0-7475-4838-2 p. 186 footnote 3
[99]http://www.magnumphotos.com/C.aspx?VP3=SearchResult&VBID=2K1HZOQS40TFSA&SMLS=1&RW=960&RH=501
[100] Ibid p.327-334
[101] http://www.cbc.ca/archives/categories/politics/international-politics/general-23/vaclav-havel-playwright-and-statesman.html

teacher, he is asked about the split of Czechoslovakia. As advisor, he is asked what he would say to countries who have difficulties with national unity. As world statesman, he offers forthright opinions on how Russia should be handled. Havel spoke in abstract terms, as in most interviews, especially when he reviewed European history.

A television interview with the Australian ABC network in February 1995[102] illustrates the clash between the western image of a politician and Havel`s self-perception both as an individual and politician. As the president patiently answers each question, two parallel conversations begin to appear. The interviewer asks some general questions which seem to reveal how little research and preparation he has done in advance (and perhaps reflects how easy it was to obtain the interview). The first question *Do you see yourself as a different kind of leader?* begs the question: what does the interviewer mean by "different?" It could be that the interviewer had in mind the career politician so prevalent in western countries and this, in fact, Havel describes at some length in his answer contrasting him or her with how he came to be president – "*... like a man falling off a bridge into a river*." Candidates for political office in the West (as they all are in former communist countries today, including the communists themselves) are packaged and advertised for sale to voters by Public Relations and advertising agencies together with a team dedicated to making the campaign run as smoothly as possible. The candidate is carefully groomed, coached in how to behave knowing that the TV cameras are watching every move and rehearsed in what to say in public and in interviews and how to say it. Jack Kennedy`s presidential campaign of 1960 in the USA was the first to be effectively run by advertising agencies. In Britain, Margaret Thatcher was the first to follow this practice in all her election campaigns in 1979, 1983 and 1987 by hiring the new and highly successful advertising agency, Saatchi and Saatchi,[103] forcing the opposition Labour party to follow suit in the late 1980s. In fact, as in all interviews, Havel looks like the model of western politician with a suit and tie, a neat haircut and an apparently healthy complexion.

This is not noted in the commentary; instead, it rather draws attention to Havel as the "shy intellectual" as he fiddles with his tie and smiles a little nervously (although he is probably not looking forward to answering the banal questions which he has anticipated will be asked). It is almost impossible to see a western politician behaving like this. Here is Havel as a

102 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wiHTrFid6dQ&list=PLBM6i0wP_VcFHwlx3lWAqUx9UnWKj4t8H&index=13

103 http://saatchi.com/en-us/

phenomenon difficult to categorize, a strange animal under the gaze of the western camera. Western societies are not used to having artists and intellectuals as their leaders. The interviewer seems to express frustration at this by asking him if he is "an ideological eunuch." Jounalists` fondness for presenting a topic as containing a conflict of some kind surfaces as the interviewer depicts Havel as a contradiction – an individual with moral authority versus a conformist (conforming with what is not clear) or the more evident Klaus versus Havel differences.

The commentary describes the revolution thus:

"The old political guard left in disgrace and the new one arrived breathing fresh life into old institutions. The anti-Establishment figure took charge of the Establishment and earned respect as his country`s moral authority and as a figure on the world stage"

'Establishment' (here clearly meant with a capital 'e') means: "The powerful organizations and people who control public life and support the established order of society.'[104] The use of the word is hardly appropriate in the Czech context because it implies that there is a framework – democracy and the rule of law – within which social change can take place. The commentator may have a template of his own in mind. Australian society started to form from largely two divisions between settlers, those who came voluntarily with money and even title, and convicts who were transported to the colonies as convicted criminals. Australia remained deeply conservative until the 1960s (the commentator is old enough to remember this) when this immigrant society with its pioneering origins began to open up and class became less of an issue. It is true that "the old political guard left in disgrace ..." but "the new one ..." had been diametrically opposed to what the communists considered to be government. Old institutions needed drastic reform or else complete abolition and completely new ones created especially in the area of civil society. Pre-1989 is referred to as …*the bad old days* ... which presumably refers to Havel`s four and a half years in prison where he almost died.

The title of the programme "Havel – Hero turned Politician" has comic implications. Now that he is a politician, it seems to mean that he has stopped being a hero or maybe he has demeaned himself by becoming a politician. It follows that Havel cannot be a hero and a

[104] DICTIONARY OF CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH, Longman, 1990. ISBN 0-582-84223-9

politician at the same time. More seriously, western journalists need to include the word where it can catch the eye of the reader.

The title also includes a word that is, after consideration, problematic. A hero or heroine is usually used in everyday speech to describe a person who has been courageous in very dangerous conditions, someone who is admired for the bravery and goodness. Such a person can also be the main character in a work of literature. The ancient Greek dramatist, however, sees a hero somewhat differently; he or she is an ordinary person and is pulled reluctantly into a situation to perform heroic acts, they are brought into the situation by force of circumstances, a victim of undeserved misfortune.

This theme has been examined at length in John Keane`s biography *Vaclav Havel:A Political Tragedy in Six Acts*.[105] Published in 1999, the book is probably the first full biography of Havel from his birth up to 1998 based on access on to private papers and interviews with friends and relatives. It met with good reviews from non-Czech reviewers while Ivan Klíma praised the book in a review in *The Times* but made some sharp criticisms

He is an Australian academic whose main interests lie with political philosophy. He became friends with Havel during his visits to Prague in the 1980s, interviewing him for *The Times Literary Supplement*[106] and engaging in long discussions with him. Keane insisted that his book should not be in any way an 'authorised biography.'

The Prologue notes that Havel`s political star is now waning and his enemies are waiting to assist in his demise. He has taught the world more about the nature of power than any other political figure in recent times of which he is one of the most remarkable. His life has been buffeted by the events of twentieth century Europe; to understand his life, historical context is everything. This context is reviewed and the reader is warned that the biography will be presented as a political tragedy and as "a manual for democrats."

The following six sections are arranged in chronological order. 'The Young Prince' (1936-1945) chronicles his entry into the world, welcomed and admired by many well-wishers,

[105] KEANE, John: *Václav Havel: A Political Tragedy In Six Acts*, Bloomsbury Paperbacks, 2000. ISBN 0-7475-4838-2
[106] http://www.the-tls.co.uk/tls/

relatives and prominent figures of the First Republic. The idyll of this period is viewed briefly through the eyes of a British guidebook written in 1937 and this is contrasted with the gathering storm clouds of Nazism, the Munich Agreement and its destructive consequences for the rump of Bohemia not yet occupied by Hitler. Havel`s grandparents had favoured independence from the Habsburg empire. His father saw impersonal mechanization as a great danger to the growth of freedom in the world. The whole structure and concept of Czechoslovakia is destroyed on 15th March 1939 by the decrees of the *Reichsprotektorat*. The Havels retreated to their country house, Havlov in Moravia, in order to live life as normal like many Czechs. In contrast, his favourite uncle Miloš, whose motto was "the self-determination of the individual", resisted German occupation. The fears of mechanization are fully realized in the bombing of Prague and the shelling of the areas around Havlov. The augur of things to come were amply illustrated by the persecution and subsequent emigration of Uncle Miloš in 1951 and the mysterious death of Jan Masaryk.

Havel had a strong mother who closely supervised his education which included two and a half years at a strict boarding school near Poděbrady (surely a good preparation for his years in communist prisons) after which he was forced to endure several state schools now in the throes on communist reforms. He was tutored by the philosopher, J L Fischer, who must have been a role model with his strident views which had displeased T G Masaryk, the Nazis and the Communists alike. The Party was engaged in show trials believing that they were prosecuting a struggle of universal class liberation. As an organizer of the 'thirty-sixers', a discussion group of friends all born in 1936. Havel proved himself to be a leader and instigator of meetings with leading intellectuals, critical of those who were not committed.

'Stalin`s Shadows' (1956-1968) starts with a defining moment in Havel`s career (or one of them) as he made his address at a writer`s conference at Dobříš at the age of 20. It was a critical period for the socialist state. A gigantic statue of Stalin had just been erected in Prague and the Hungarian revolution was reaching its peak and those present knew that the current state of affairs was not satisfactory. He berated the audience for ignoring certain writers of the past noting the relationship between official and banned literature calling (daringly) for pluralism and broaching a theme that would dominate his writing from then on – that "knowledge of the truth is the fruit of discussion." The speech was extremely bold in the context of events and attitudes and provoked a heated discussion which had to be cut short.

Against a backdrop of a Communist state now out of step with its masters in Moscow, with the Stalin monolith about to be dynamited and destroyed one night in 1961, Havel began writing his first plays during his military service. “You`ve got your whole life ahead of you” (život před sebou) in 1959 made fun of army life. The main character, Maršík, is asked to join the party but at the ceremony he refuses to join anticipating a theme in Havel`s later plays – living an authentic life, living true to yourself.

By the 1960s the Czechoslovak state socialism was in crisis being run by less than 10,000 people with their own material privileges.The economy did not exist as it was run by the Party and output was actually declining. Theres were no intermediary bodies between the state and society and Havel fought for one of the few – “the oasis of Tvář” as he called it and as Keane says: “... the opening round in a battle with the Party that lasted nearly a quarter of a century.” A landmark play ‘The Memorandum’ introduced the language of Ptydepe where the grammar is simplified and similarities between words is kept to aminimum. The final goal is to make language redundant as a means of communication. This manipulation of language has more than a pale similarity to the basic principle set out in George Orwell`s ‘1984.’ All through the mid-summer of 1968, he travelled to the West, talked with emigres abroad and with Dubček, at that time “a politician in retreat.” During the invasion, he broadcast on a secret radio transmitter honing his skills in using words against violence. After the invasion he was engaged in a passionate debate with Milan Kundera who believed that the present state of affairs was the fate of the Czechs and things were not so bad. Havel totally disagreed replying that the situation was critical and what to do next was a primary question.

‘The Beggar`s Opera’ (1975) depicts a world peopled only by thieves, liars and those who cheat on each other. Language again becomes a way to manipulate, emptied of much of its meaning. This was followed by *Charta 77* published in the West and distributed at home where and when possible. It pointed out the difference between the words of the constitution, which imcorporated the Helsinki Accords on human rights, and the reality. The furious reaction of the regime gave ill-advised publicity to the document from the point of view of the regime.

In his seminal essay, 'The Power of the Powerless'[107] he set out his vision of a post-totalitarian regime. He asserted that "the system serves people only to the extent necessary to ensure that people will serve it." In certain circumstances, the powerless are powerful and people should attempt to live in truth.

Keane has dredged up a multitude of information about his subject. Many of his sources seem to come from interviews with Havel`s numerous friends and acquaintances. Yet his book seems to lack a content so essential to a biography. The reader is offered obviously well-researched material but little in the way of analysis. For example, the decisive influence of strong mother in his psychological make-up could have told us much, not just about the place of Olga in his life but also providing an explanation for his drive to write, to aspire to political office and to survive whatever the regime threw at him. There seems to be much journalistic titillation – the minimum resistance offered to the Nazis, his affairs, his apparent abuse of power as president.

The book also lacks the basic craftsmanship of an historian whose rigorous analysis could have firmly set in focus the unique political context of 1990. He is called the 'the King of Castle' or 'His Royal Highness', a philosopher-playwright on the throne of a ´crowned republic' without substantial evidence other than anecdotal (the 'Te Deum' at his inauguration).

Lack of evidence also marks the central thesis of the book that Havel is a player in an Aristotelian tragedy, a victim of events in a turbulent century. On the contrary, he seemed able to shape events himself, especially during the fraught and frantic period of late 1989. People in and outside the Czech Republic have looked to him as a guarantor of genuine democracy and for inspiration as to what the future should be, in particular, the future of Europe. If there is a tragedy, it is Havel`s obvious failure to understand the free market democracy into which he was helping his country to move. The western model had to include political parties and Václav Klaus has to be credited with bringing an understanding of free market economics to the president and the public.

[107] VLADISLAV, Jan ed.: *Vaclav Havel. Living in Truth*. Twenty-two essays published on the occasion of the award of the Erasmus Prize to Vaclav Havel, Faber and Faber, 1987. ISBN 0-571-14440-3 p.36-123

The book is worth reading just for its research, its observations on the nature of power and politics in the twentieth century. His elegant prose gives the historical context essential to an understanding of his life. As Keane says, Havel is one of the best subjects of a biography to illustrate the nature of power itself for which he reaches into his own body of scholarship. Nevertheless, conclusions about many aspects of his life are missing.

5.9 Echoes of the 1960s

The two-fingered sign was used by raising usually the right arm and extending the forefinger and middle finger bending forward in a V-sign with the fingernails pointing backwards. This can have a clear interpretation for American observers; it was a sign of peace during the hippie and Civil Rights movements of the 1960s. However, the sign by Havel made at the moment the news came through that the communist party leadership had resigned was clearly a V-for-Victory made famous by Winston Churchill.[108]

Familiar, also, was the tune of *We shall overcome*[109] (sung by Jaroslav Hutka to the words of *Pravda zvítězí*) which was often heard during the Civil Rights protests of the 1960s. Demonstrators offering flowers to riot police mirrored the American student protests against the Vietnam war. To one American reporter, the occupation of the Faculty of Philoosphy of Charles University resembled the occupation of the faculty buildings of Berkeley in California and Columbia in New York by student protesters in the 1960s - ... *like Berkeley* or *Columbia twenty years ago* ...[110] An ABC report even shows very briefly a protester giving a 'peace' sign at a demonstration swaying back and forth giving the impression that he is on drugs similar to the behaviour of hippies at the Woodstock festival of 1969.[111]

5.10 The replica of the Liberty Bell

In December, a replica was hung from a wooden structure on the balustrade of the outside staircase of the National Museum at the top of Wenceslas Square. This symbol, shown in

[108] http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_depth/7927123.stm
[109] https://www.ksu.edu/english/nelp/american.studies.s98/we.shall.overcome.html
[110] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plltt4_B54A
[111] http://abcnews.go.com/Archives/video/nov-28-1989-freedom-czechoslovakia-12238317

John Simpson`s BBC report,[112] represents what the Czechoslovak state and society lacked in 1989. It also marked a genealogy of ideas which stretched back centuries.

The original hangs in Philadelphia and is itself a symbol of the American Revolution. It was also a symbol of freedom during the Cold War and a focal point for protests in the 1960s. It has associations with the Enlightenment and the Declaration of Independence (it could have one of the bells rung to mark its first reading on July 8th 1776) and the US Constitution.[113]

From the Middle Ages to the period known as the Enlightenment, ordinary people gradually became aware that their lives could be different from what they were used to. Indeed, the Founding Fathers noted this in the Declaration of Independence when they said "... that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed". How and when people began to think for themselves may be difficult to describe in definite terms but there were developments which had consequences, albeit indirect, for the greater part of the population.

To the mediaeval thinker there were basically three authoritative sources of knowledge. First, there was the Bible which revealed God's truth to mankind; the scholarship of mediaeval thinkers such as Augustine and St Thomas Aquinas who sought to interpret the scriptures; and the thought of Greek and Roman philosophers.

In the eighteenth century, following a scientific revolution in Europe from about 1540 to 1700, an intellectual revolution dramatically changed the way people perceived the world about them. Just as Isaac Newton had asked the question "why does an apple fall?" and applied scientific methods to discover the law of gravity, so intellectuals now applied scientific laws to the state of man.

The Enlightenment represented a shift in focus of intellectual interest from the spiritual to the physical world. Scientific thinkers sought natural laws to explain how the universe functioned. This scientific revolution laid the intellectual foundations for the Enlightenment, also known as the "Age of Reason". This concept of natural law was also applied to government and society. People sought to discover laws that governed human behaviour.

[112] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plltt4_B54A
[113] http://www.usconstitution.net/const.html

People began to form a different image of God promoted, in particular, by Deists. Whereas formerly he had been an arbitrary monarch who damned sinners and glorified saints, he was now a divine craftsman whose handiwork could be seen everywhere. The new God seemed not only reasonable but also a remote and indifferent watchmaker who wound up the universe and left it to run itself.

In Europe and the New World just a few individuals in the world of science and ideas changed the whole current of European thought and life. In Scotland, Joseph Black and James Watt discovered that heat and, in particular, steam could be used as a source of power. In *The Wealth of Nations,*[114] Adam Smith invented a new social science – economics. In his *Treatise of Human Nature*,[115] David Hume proved that experience and reason have no necessary connection with one another and there is no such thing a rational belief. Two Scottish architects, the brothers Adam, produced one of the finest pieces of town planning in Europe - the new town of Edinburgh.

In Moravia, John Comenius, challenged traditional views of politics and war sought to reduce conflict by remaking society. For him the reduction of conflict between people depended on the spread of education.

France became the centre of Enlightenment thinking and the *salon*, weekly meetings in private homes, was where leading political and social theories were discussed. Voltaire believed in God but only as a watchmaker (for more see below). Montesquieu`s theory of the separation of powers in fluenced and inspired the writers of the US Constitution. According to this theory, the best guarantee of individual rights lay in the creation of separate and independent executive, legislative and judicial branches of government, each of which would provide checks and balances to the powers of the others. Diderot was the editor of the extensive *Encyclopaedia* whose purpose was to collect the writings and the technological discoveries of the Enlightenment thinkers. Rousseau rejected civilized society and glorified man in his natural state: “the noble savage.”

[114] http://www.econlib.org/library/Smith/smWN.html
[115] http://michaeljohnsonphilosophy.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/5010_Hume_Treatise_Human_Nature.pdf

John Locke was an influential political philosopher of the Enlightenment. In "An Essay concerning Human Understanding",[116] he concluded that mankind was not wholly the creation of God. The human mind was rather a complete blank or "tabula rasa" and upon it was written the knowledge and experience of the five senses. People should not just learn through books, especially the Bible, but through observation and experiment.

In his "Two Treatises on Civil Government"[117] he sought to rebut a divinely ordained social order. He argued that man in a pre-social state possesses certain natural rights which included Life, Liberty and Property. In entering into a social state, that is forming a government, they sacrifice some of their rights in order to protect the remaining ones. If governments ignore these natural rights, the contract between government and man is broken. Man, therefore, has the right to dissolve the contract, in other words, they have the right even duty, to overthrow such a government. Thomas Jefferson, who drafted the Declaration of Independence in 1776 had read and admired John Locke´s works, imcorporated his ideas into the text sometimes almost word for word.

If the Declaration was the promise then the Constitution was its fulfilment. The Bill of Rights includes basic human rights some of which had their origins in the *Magna Carta*[118] in England more than a five centuries before. In 1215, the barons made King John I agree to a document that limited the king's power. This agreement put into law the principle that law can also limit the king. This is the idea that we call the *rule of law* and it became a very important idea. There were two parts of *Magna Carta* that especially show this idea that kings are limited by the law:

"*No free man shall be arrested or imprisoned…except by the lawful judgement of his peers or by the law of the land*."

"*To no one will we refuse or delay right or justice*"

This is the idea and legacy of *Magna Carta* which is still respected by British and American people as one of the first examples of their rights as free people. The Fifth Amendment of the Bill of Rights follows its antecedent very closely:

[116] http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/l/locke/john/l81u/
[117] http://www.gutenberg.org/files/7370/7370-h/7370-h.htm
[118] http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/magnacarta.asp

No person shall ... be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law."

The clauses of the *Magna Carta* relating to an accused`s rights (clauses 36, 38, 39 and 40) developed into the writ of *Habeas Corpus* (meaning "you may have the body ... ") which requires that a person under arrest to be brought before a judge or into a court. The principle ensures that a detainee can be released from a detention which is not lawful and is guaranteed in Article 1 Section 9 of the Constitution. The first case of an international writ being issued was, in fact, for an American journalist, William N Oates, jailed in 1952 in Czechoslovakia. The writ was filed with the United Nations Commission of Human Rights who forwarded it to the Czechoslovak authorities who did not reply. Oates was, however, released in 1953. The name of the document was also the inspiration of the title of the Czech dissidents` own document on human rights, *Charter 77*.

5.11 Witness to the demonstration of 17th November

From TBE, we learn what it is like to be in a crowd of demonstrators. Was he able to hear the speeches at Albertov? It would have depended on where he was standing. Could he see the speakers? Did he just get bored by the "Bolshevik" speeches and chat with his friends instead? The readiness of the crowd to copy the slogan or gesture of one demonstrator (for example, the jingling the keys) noted by TGA is shown again when someone in the crowd at Vyšehrad shouts "Let`s go the centre, to the Václavské náměstí." which the crowd of several thousand follows seemingly without question. Later, he is afraid of being crushed by the forward movement of people behind him but does not mention the shouts and shrieks of others as they realize that they are trapped and maybe about to be beaten.[119]

He briefly recalls student demonstrations in his home country. The organisers would apply to the city authorities for permission to hold the march and the route would be agreed upon and police and other facilities provided. Many students might go just for fun or because their friends or partners were going. The people making the speeches may simply like speaking in public. TBE possibly has this image in mind when he describes his feelings. He likens the "semi-Bolshevik bullshits" (5) to the slogans at such events in his own country. He:

… never liked demonstrations in Norway, student demonstrations … He thought the slogans were silly, quite silly as I saw them but this time I was also walking in that demonstration shouting

[119] Krapfl p.14-16

perhaps silly slogans like … I think we were shouting: "Freedom now!", Chceme svobodu! It was also very naïve, maybe also very pathetic… (5)

The fact that he was shouting the same slogans shows that he was starting to recognize them as having meaning. Nevertheless, his western mindset still sees any such slogan as empty of meaning – completely opposite to the Czech demonstrators. It is also worth recalling the reaction of the authorities to the chants of "freedom" at the party commemoration of 21st February 1989.[120]
From his testimony, we can see the demonstration of that evening started with empty slogans similar to those in the West and ended with shouts which had a meaning for thousands in the crowd.

Krapfl offers a retrospective view of events[121]. The crowd at the cemetery had grown to an estimated 50,000 and the men who shouted suggestions to go the centre were indeed secret police provocateurs. TBE would have been very near the front of the march belonging to those who were cut off by police cordons - the rest were dispersed. Was TBE swept up in the spreading *sense of community* compelling him to go back to the city centre shortly afterwards?

For PS in Canada several thousand kilometres away: *Whatever was happening there was just on the news …* They had *… totally different needs and programmes at that time* and *wanted to finish this American dream, although it was in Canada, to actually start new life, perhaps to get a house and we were just on the beginning of the whole process*. The revolution was distant and no feelings of sympathy are shown for the people in the streets. When asked what pushed him to emigrate, he compares salaries in Czechoslovakia and Canada – information he would have heard from his wife`s uncle. He also got *… a feeling that something wrong, something wrong going on, somebody`s hiding things and truth from you, and is holding you like a prisoner, like having a fish in a fish tank, doing things that they want to, and you have no control over things*…(2) He wanted economic freedom probably based on reliable information but the lack of freedom is just a feeling. This may have matched what the demonstrators were feeling back in Czechoslovakia in the last two months of 1989.

[120] http://news.bbc.co.uk/panorama/hi/front_page/newsid_8347000/8347282.stm

[121] Krapfl pp.46-47

5.12 Witness inside the Magic Lantern

How useful and reliable is TGA as a source? What can he tell us about 1989? TGA says that: *I was the only foreigner to sit in on the hectic deliberations of what most people called 'the Forum'*.[122] Here we have the only eyewitness account of the 'political' machinations of the revolution from the western point of view until he left on Day 19 and he is, above all, a professional historian. He stakes out his position clearly: *there is nothing to compare with being there.*[123]

This is not the only reason why we should take his testimony seriously. He had travelled in eastern Europe since 1979 researching for his PhD in East Berlin, visiting the Gdansk shipyards during the strikes of 1981, visiting opposition figures in Hungary and Czechoslovakia and witnessing the events of 1989 in all these four countries. He noted and commented on what he saw and heard in his essays about eastern Europe entitled *The Uses of Adversity*[124] and continued this work with a wider scope in *History of the Present* to include other parts of eastern Europe especially Yugoslavia. He has speaks fluent Polish (his wife, Danuta, is Polish), German and French. At the time, he was a Fellow of St Anthony`s, Oxford and later he became Professor of Political History at the same college.

There are several observations which are both useful for understanding the revolution but also bewildering to the western eye. For example, TGA was listening in when an *ad hoc* group were discussing who were to be members of the Conceptional Commission (*to handle the political aspect* according to one Forum member):

Sometimes the principle of selection is crudely representative ... There must be The Student, The Worker, The Prognostic etc. "Shouldn`t we have a liberal?" says someone "... "But we`re already got two Catholics!" comes the reply. Thus Catholic means liberal – which here actually means conservative."

---

[122] TGA p.79

[123] GARTON ASH, Timothy: *History of the Present: Essays, Sketches and Despatches from Europe in the 1990s,* Penguin Books Ltd; New edition (19 Jun 2000) ISBN-10: 0140283188 ISBN-13: 978-0140283181 p.xix

[124] GARTON ASH, Timothy: *The Uses of Adversity. Essays on the Fate of Central Europe*, Penguin, 1999. ISBN 0-140-28392-7

This illustrates how the political sliding scale from left-wing to right-wing had different meanings and definitions from the western ones (the Czech slide-scale has probably shifted to a more of a western template since then). 'Liberal' means Centre Left in Britain and Left in the US. In November 1989, 'Catholic' is apparently placed as a set of attitudes opposed to communism. Catholic in the western context does mean, as TGA says, conservative – the Vatican had usually supported right-wing governments and even right-wing dictatorships such as the Pinochet regime in Chile or Francoists and associated parties in Spain

From TGA`s account, we can see emerging new political terms. Was Vaclav Klaus a Friedmanite economist, a Thatcherite, liberal conservative or about to become one or some of these definitions? For the political framework of vocabulary was about to change as political parties began to line up from left to right in the early 1990s according to a western model possibly influenced by the western press. What TGA`s practiced eye does grasp is an apparent consensus among Forum members:

Take a more or less representative sample of politically aware persons. Stir under pressure for two days. And what do you get? The same democracy, the rule of law, market economy ... It is the idea of 'normality'that seems to be sweeping triumphantly across the world.

Despite the extremely varied points of view of this 'rainbow coalition', which include priests and neo-Trotskyists, the western model is accepted apparently without opposition. A set of ideas about freedom is seen as the future; the Forum seemed to know what they wanted as clearly as what they were now rejecting.

5.13 The revolution in Brno

A Canadian witness of the events was Don Sparling, a teach of English first in Brno from 1968 to 1970 then in Prague from 1970 to 1977 when he returned to Brno where he has stayed up to the present day. He has shared his memories in a two-part interview with the English-language section of Radio Prague.[125]

[125] http://www.radio.cz/en/section/special/don-sparling-part-1 **and** http://www.radio.cz/en/section/special/don-sparling-part-2#0

5.14 The Gentle Revolution in Olomouc

This is a video presentation of the events in Olomouc made a by British teacher-trainer, Mark Andrews,[126] who came in September 1989 to work for the British Council. The camera observes the events with a commentary; there are no interviews.

At first sight the events in Olomouc seem to mirror those of Prague. There is a students` strike, the Faculty of Philosophy is occupied where a student newspaper, posters and flysheets are produced, the main Cathedral Square is packed with people listening to speeches and singing songs led by Olomouc-born Jaroslav Hutka, a general strike on the following Monday (presumably November 27th), the cardboard wall built by students in front of the Communist Party regional headquarters; the preparation for Havel`s election the posters for which appear without comment; the arrival of singers from Britain to give a concert in June 1990 near the conclusion parallels the Rolling Stones concert in Prague in August.

The students had already heard about the 'massacre' of Friday 17th. The commentary says that they *were aware of events in the GDR and Bulgaria* which may allude to the access which Moravians had to the less censored Polish television and Austrian channels. Prague was, according to Sparling, *... a weird, weird sort of isolated black hole*.[127] in this respect as there was no free access to foreign broadcasting apart from the illegal and sometimes jammed Radio Free Europe, Voice of America and BBC.

There is no mention of Stb arrests as in Prague or the presence of the People´s Militia as in Brno which may account for *an astonishing lack of fear* noted by Andrews as the the mass of students are shown confronting the the Dean and his colleagues on camera (held, we might assume, by Mark Andrews, a western foreigner). This is corroborated by a student who was at the meeting of the 20th November at the Palacký Sports Hall: *The feeling of unity and strength astounded perhaps everyone*.[128] Don Sparling said that *...when I compared the atmosphere in Prague at the university and in Olomouc, at that time the only other Czech university, they were incomparably worse, in terms of what people could or couldn't do. And the general paranoia.*[129]

[126]https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g_mpmrYZ2Tc&index=4&list=PLBM6i0wP_VcFHwlx3lWAqUx9UnWKj4t8H
[127] http://www.radio.cz/en/section/special/don-sparling-part-1
[128] As quoted in Krapfl p.40 footnote 19
[129] http://www.radio.cz/en/section/special/don-sparling-part-1

5.15 Gorbachev – the unseen presence

A magisterial work, *The Gorbachev Factor*[130] by Archie Brown tells us about the role of Gorbachev inside the USSR and its effect on the Soviet satellites. Some with minimal knowledge saw Gorbachev as a reformer but with little idea what direction his reforms should have taken and certainly not their aims, remaining at heart an *apparatchik*. He never understood that economic reform was not possible without political reform and thus *perestroika* could not be set in motion without *glasnost*. He never foresaw what the consequences would be of loosening the Soviet grip on the Republics, particularly those on the Baltic coast. His main contribution was to open a Pandora`s Box of problems, which had been festering since the fall of Khrushchev and the Stalinist period, and which he seemed unable to control, let alone solve. This is, no doubt, close to many conventional narratives on this subject. Archie Brown`s book sets out to answer a crucial question on this period - what was Gorbachev`s role in the period from March 1985 to August 1991?

Archie Brown is by training a political scientist and historian. In 2005, he was appointed Emeritus Professor of Politics at Oxford University, and among other positions, Director of St Antony`s Russian and European Centre. Topics for his writing include Soviet and Russian politics, Communist politics and its leadership. *The Gorbachev Factor* is one of his major books on *perestroika*, the other being *Seven Years that Changed the World: Perestroika in Perspective* (2007).

Archie Brown is regarded as instrumental in identifying Gorbachev as intelligent, open-minded and concerned with the shape of the future and he predicted his accession to the leadership. He brought Mrs Thatcher and Gorbachev together which resulted in an unlikely political friendship and helped him with relations with both Europe and the USA.

The book has nine chapters. In Chapter 1 *Introduction* Brown sets the historical background and historiographical framework. He stresses how much things changed in the USSR between 1985 and 1991, something which is probably indisputable but certainly easily forgotten. He summarizes the enormous power of a General Secretary whilst carefully sketching its limits. He suggests how evaluations of Gorbachev have changed over the years

[130] BROWN, Archie: *The Gorbachev Factor*, Oxford, 1996. ISBN 0192880527

through the initial years of *perestroika* of 1985 to 1987, to *glasnost* in 1988, his high national and international popularity in 1989-90 and its decline in 1990-91. There were three features which characterised his rule: his ability to learn quickly, the increase in his power which enabled him to do what he wanted to do and the inevitable political pressures which forced him, or could have forced him, to change course. The meaning of "Reform Communism" is discussed, as is the lack of a dissident movement, the obstacles facing any reformer and how prepared the people of the USSR were for democratisation.

Chapter 2 "The Making of a Reformist Secretary" outlines his childhood in the Stavropol region during the Stalin years, his family background, the intellectual influences during his studies at Moscow University, his start as an embryo politician in his native Stavropol region, the people he worked with and who supported his rise in politics.

Chapter 3 "In the Portals of Power" describes his rise in national politics to be a full voting member of the Politburo in 1980, how he advanced under Andropov and prepared for power under Chernenko. The chapter finishes with his smooth succession to the General Secretaryship. As one of his close associates noted, he had long ago rebelled against Communist ideology making him "a genetic error in the system."

In Chapter 4 "The Power of Ideas and the Power of Appointment" shows how he could use his power to change political appointments whilst recognizing its limitations and dangers thereby changing the balance of power. He could also change the balance of influence more decisively by appointing his own advisers, draw upon the knowledge and experience of state bureaucracies and the institutes and learn from western democracies. Gorbachev began to rethink the fundamentals of his political beliefs which sustained his membership of the Communist party. Brown sees Gorbachev`s impulse as a 'conceptual revolution' quoting, for example, his "need for a process which was revolutionary in its essence but evolutionary in its tempo" and listing concepts such as democratisation and pluralism which were not in the Marxist-Leninist vocabulary.

Chapter 5 "Gorbachev and Political Reform" says that he failed in this respect, identifying as the cause the tension between two conflicting aims "... improving the system and constructing the system on different principles ..." Previous attempts at reform, such as the

Kosygin reform of 1965 are differentiated from Gorbachev`s. His groping toward a market economy reached its High Noon with the '500 day programme' in 1990.

Chapter 6 'Gorbachev and Political Transformation', the longest in the book, asserts that Gorbachev realized that the political system needed to be transformed and that reform by itself was not adequate. Four important aspects of political transformation were needed – that of the political system, the move to a market economy with a private sector, a readjustment of relations with non-Russian ethnic groups and a radical reappraisal of foreign policy. The stages of political reform are identified together with the significance of the Nina Andreeva affair, the importance of the nineteenth party conference in February 1988, the reorganization of the Central Committee and the introduction of competitive elections.

In Chapter 7 'Gorbachev and Foreign Policy' we see him devoting no less energy to relations, not just with the USA, but also with Europe especially with Germany with Gorbachev learning from the experience of Spain`s experience in its transition from a dictatorship to a socialist democracy or admiring the federalist system in West Germany.

Chapter 8 'The National Question, the Coup, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union' sees Gorbachev tackling the nationalities question with no less vigour and courage as he gets (mostly unjust) criticism for deaths in Tbilisi, Vilnius, Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia. We learn about his titanic efforts towards a peaceful understanding with the other Republics in the Novo-Ogarevo process, his "turn to the right" from October 1990 to March 1991, the *coup* in August 1991 and the disintegration of the Soviet Union whilst all the time coming under intense political pressure from all sides. Chapter 9 'Conclusions' will be discussed in the next section.

We should, of course, bear in mind that Gorbachev was the clear recommendation of Brown as the politician for the British government to cultivate at an early stage so we would expect prejudice in his favour. However, there is no doubt that his protagonist`s seven years in power is subjected to forensic examination and, if the reader detects any bias of favour of Soviet leader, he always supports it with evidence.

One of the many merits of the book is that Brown, in his precise and literate but readable style, describes the problems stacked against him: a stagnant economy, alcoholism and

corruption, unrest in the other Republics, a confrontational relationship with the USA with a political powerful arms and military establishment taking 40% of the state budget. He then proceeds to judiciously describe how he set out to solve them. What makes the book so authoritative is the fact that Brown rigorously defines his terms, something which not all academics do. His definition of the Communist system, for example, is clearly set out by referring to five distinctive features.

Was the story of Gorbachev`s leadership like a tragedy on the theatrical stage with each of the phases of *perestroika* and *glasnost* forming parts of the play? Brown does not portray his protagonist as a tragic hero with flaws and, as always, the book shows how competently he tackled problems by choosing the right advisers, listening to specialists and adjusting his policies in order to placate opposition to change, if necessary. If he could be judged by the people around him then again he might come out well in the eyes of historians.

A counter-factual (or "what if") view of the period might be useful in assessing his place in history. It is intriguing to speculate how his life and attitudes would have changed if he, like Alexandr Yakovlev and Oleg Kalugin, had spent a year studying in the USA or if he had had full access to foreign literature with which to educate himself. In which case, might his reforms have moved along a clearer path with a set of focused goals to full democratisation?

Indeed it seems hard to find fault with Gorbachev, or indeed, Raisa. Both worked hard, both obtaining second degrees, she with a Ph.d in sociology, a little-known academic field at the time, and he with a second degree in law. There seems to be no taint of corruption although there was a notable digression when Raisa went shopping in New York during her husband`s visit there in 1987 with an American Express Gold card, the use of which was illegal under Soviet law and punishable with a prison sentence. Brown does not mention this incident nor Gorbachev`s major failure not to abolish the privileges of the *nomenklatura,* the Party elite and the senior military, a class system which had exploited the Russian people for so long. It is a pity that this issue is not tackled in the book. Brown`s assessment of Gorbachev seems to show a man of impeccable character and extraordinary abilities. In fact, he seems too good to be true which is possibly where elements of a tragedy lie.

It could be said that one flaw lay in the fact that he did not behave in a way that Russians expected of their leader. In the televised sessions of the Congress of People`s Deputies, he

would use reasoned arguments rather than the dogmatic assertions they were used to and only lecture those who dissented. It is often repeated that Russians like their leaders to be "strong" as the media antics of Yeltsin and Putin testify, nor did he use the weight of his political and military power at his disposal to crush disagreement as did Yeltsin in 1993. Brown points this out but he could have examined this more. Due to a limited choice of media at the time, a significant number of people would have watched the same progamme and formed the same impressions of a "weak" leader.

Similarly, Brown does not deal much with the Soviet public`s perception of his policies. Under his leadership very few people were killed in the Republics; many more died in the 1990s. Indeed he showed himself capable of managing change with a minimum of conflict and resentment from all sides in the negotiations. He is credited with not obstructing the speedy reunification of Germany by trying to extract too high a price. Brown rightly praises him for this but Russians may have perceived these policies and their outcomes as evidence of a leader who was not "strong" enough.

Perhaps Brown could have found fault with his lack of resolve when the opportunity came to force a split in the CPSU. Brown is always ready with a counter-argument, in this case, that a *coup* could have happened at any time (Such a split may have been interesting to watch as the *putschists* of August 1991 proved themselves to be some of the most incompetent in recent times in contrast to Gorbachev`s refusal to give in to any of their demands). It might be just as easy to criticize his "turn to the right" in late 1990 and early 1991. What Brown could have examined is whether Gorbachev fell into a void between "right" and "left."

What emerges from the book as indisputable were Gorbachev`s personal qualities. There is no doubt that he cared and worked hard for the good of the peoples of the USSR putting his personal qualities to their best use. For example, Brown says that one of the reasons he learnt so much from specialists in research institutes was his "... enormous energy, an insatiable appetite for work, and a great capacity for learning which went together with an extremely retentive memory." It is a pity that Reagan was no match for his Russian counterpart in terms of intellect, ability and how well-informed he was. Brown leaves us in no doubt that he was not an *apparatchik*. In his speech of December 1984, to quote the best example, it was clear that the direction he would take would be a divergence from the party line. The following

years showed how much he was to move away from Marxist-Leninism towards a Western model.

What of Gorbachev`s role in the revolutions of 1989 in Eastern Europe? In a speech to the UN in December 1988 he asserted: "Freedom of choice is a universal principle and there should be no exceptions." This was a clear signal to the peoples of these countries to choose their own destiny. On the revolutions Brown has no doubts about his role: "Without Gorbachev ... Vaclav Klaus would still, in all probability, be a fairly obscure economist working for the Academy of Sciences in Communist Czechoslovakia." Brown does not examine other factors concerning the fall of these regimes but, to be fair, lack of space probably justified this omission. However, he could have assessed the impact on a Russian audience. If such a speech was intended as a message for the Russian people (commentators seem to think that it referred to Eastern Europe only) this illustrates Gorbachev`s greatest failing. The Soviet satellites were, in effect, offered freedom and they took it. The people of the USSR watched the events of 1989 whilst seeing greater freedom of expression at home and simply wanted more. If they were given one half of what they demanded, they would inevitably want the other half and Gorbachev never saw it. The Malta Summit undoubtedly had an impact. The Cold War was officially declared to be at an end and instructions passed onto satellite leaders including Karel Urbánek as a result.[131]

The seven years lends itself to easy interpretation. It is tempting to see Gorbachev as an engineer whose dam he was attempting to repair, then reconstruct with a view even to rebuilding, started to break up and then, to mix metaphors, was swept away by the tide of history. He quickly became yesterday`s man, left behind by a pace of change that he himself had initiated. Brown skilfully and painstakingly dismantles this misconception. In a totalitarian system such as the USSR Gorbachev was more than just a factor as the title of the book suggests; he was an initiator, not afraid to use his power to be a moving force in the direction of beneficial change. Let`s hope that Russian historians will treat him as judiciously Brown has so that students will perceive the man and his qualities as a pivotal figure in the progress that Russia has and will continue to make.

[131] TGA p.122

5.16 A different characterization of the opposition in the late 1980s

The title of the book – *A Carnival Of Revolution: Central Europe 1989*[132] - is the first surprise to someone who has read mainly political analyses of the Revolutions of 1989 in Poland and Czechoslovakia. Were the demonstrations, arrests, imprisonment without trial, beatings by riot police really one long carnival? What Padraic Kenney offers us is a series of portraits of various lesser-known young people`s opposition groups in several eastern European countries during the 1980s which expressed their views in unconventional ways. The cover illustration of the paperback edition is based on a poster advertising an Orange Alternative happening in Wroclaw, Poland on June 1st 1987 and prepares the reader for what is to follow. Under the title of the book is 'Central Europe' which includes Lviv and Slovenia as well as Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and the GDR.

Kenney came to Wroclaw in 1986 to study Polish and the history of early Communist Poland but, by his own admission, took almost no part in opposition activities. He became a stringer for the Boston Globe more by accident than by design and covered some of the events of 1989. Later he read the depictions of 1989 which did "... not match what [he] saw, felt and experienced."

A look at the titles of Part One 'Actors, Stages and Repertoires' and Part Two 'A Revolution in Sixteen Scenes' prepares the reader for a narrative which does not follow the well-trodden path of political negotiations, power politics and 'big events' like mass demonstrations. There will be no detailed accounts of the Round Table talks in Poland or listening in to the discussions in the basement of the Magic Lantern in Prague during those hectic days and nights in November and December 1989.

The book starts with a Mardi Gras happening in Wroclaw, its attempted suppression by the police and Jacek Kurón, the Solidarity strategist writing darkly about the "... spectre of a societal eruption ... haunting the country." Many historians have resorted to a supernatural explanation to explain the events of 1989. Kenney asserts that any historian should regard this with suspicion. He goes on: "The carnival that is the subject of this book played for about three and a half years, from the post-Chernobyl demonstrations in Poland in the spring of

[132] KENNEY, Padraic: *A Carnival of Revolution. Central Europe 1989*, Princeton, 2002. ISBN 0-691-11627-X

1986 to the Velvet Revolution in Prague. Over these years, new issues, new movements, and a new generation altered the relationship among state, opposition, and society." This is the thesis of the book.

He calls this era a carnival for several reasons among which was that it was a variety of movements, its joyfulness, the start of a dialogue between movements across the Iron Curtain and a politically unconventional opposition. It was an opposition which could be staged anywhere at any time whilst ignoring the regime.

Three common explanations for the revolutions of 1989 are summarized – the 'Gorbachev Factor', the failure of the Communist economic system and the power of ideas like the Helsinki Accords of 1975, spread through *samizdat*. He outlines the sources of opposition – reformers within the Communist parties, the "civil society" opposition of Charter `77 and KOR, the Roman Catholic church, the counterculture of music, a nationalist opposition, all these elements forming the first opposition movement in Poland in 1980 – Solidarity - which inspired the whole region.

The narrative first looks at the state of Solidarity in the mid-1980s, the role of the churches, the workers and social campaigns as opposition in Central Europe. It describes civil resistance movements, conscientious objectors, the effects of Chernobyl and eco-activism.

In one of the most interesting chapters, the links and dialogue between END and Central Europe movements are examined (where we hear that Havel`s attitude towards Western peace movements was one of "... curiosity mixed with doubt") as well as cross-border contacts countries in the Communist bloc.

The next chapter looks briefly at the impact of Gorbachev, the opposition in Western Ukraine, Slovenia, Hungary, the energizing of opposition in Czechoslovakia by a younger generation. Chapter five is devoted to the antics of the Orange Alternative in Wroclaw, the hippies in Lviv and Prague, *samizdat* in Slovak and Polish schools, resistance in Krakow, the revival of punk in Poland, pushing of acceptable boundaries with the student magazine *Mladina* in Slovenia and the Czech Children.

For Part Two, 'A Revolution in Sixteen Scenes', Kenney sets out "to uncover how a carnival of anticommunist opposition spread so enthusiastically across such a wide region" over two years from the beginning of 1988 to the close of 1989. The scenes are: the candlelight march in Bratislava for the right of Czechoslovak Catholics to worship (March 1988), the strikes in the Lenin Steel Mill in Nowa Huta and the Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk (April-May 1988), the trial of Slovene journalists in Ljubljana (May-July 1988), the demonstrations to protect the Ukrainian language in Lviv led by the Lion Society (June 1988), the wave of strikes in Poland mainly in the Jastrzbie coal-mining region and Gdansk (August 1988), the August 21st demonstration in Prague by founders of the NMS , the protests in Budapest against the construction of the Gabčikovo dam (September-October 1988), the demonstrations in Prague of October 28th (Independence Day), December 10th (Human Rights Day) and the Oalach Week of January 1989, the Polish Round Table talks (January-June 1989), the impact of the Tiananmen Square massacre and the Polish elections on June 4th, the demonstrations of March 15th in Budapest, more demonstrations in Prague on anniversaries such as May 1st and August 21st, the stirring of nationalist opposition in Ukraine (January-November), the emergence of new groups in Leipzig and the Sopron picnic culminating in the street carnival in Berlin on November 9th (January-November) and finally the impression left by the exodus of East Germans from Prague in September-October and the planning of the November 17th march and its consequences.

In the epilogue, Kenney gives some impressions of the aftermath, where former colleagues followed different paths into conventional politics or opting out altogether. Some movements died whole some, like ecology, remained prominent. He finishes with some observations on the memory of 1989 and concludes that "it is likely that the memory and experience of unlimited potential will remain one of the lasting legacies of the carnival of Central Europe."

Kenney`s book brings to mind a cartoon of a Polish riot policeman, his truncheon raised chasing a flying angel. How does a totalitarian regime suppress a happening with students dressed as elves in the main square? How do you prevent a foot race down Political Prisoners Street in Prague with a thousand participants?

What is a carnival? We would have in mind dancing, music, decorated floats, outlandish costumes, caricatures – all-night street party like they have Rio de Janeiro. According to Kenney: "A carnival ... breaks down borders of all kinds. It forces suspension of the usual

rules of society, issuing a challenge to the existing order and reversing social and political hierarchies." Detention by the police was part of the game and the participants were "exhibitionists ... who knew their antics were threatening to the established order without being dangerous." Peter Burke in an essay *The Translation of Culture: Carnival in Two or Three Worlds* offers a definition "... that of cultural exchange between different groups – elites and subordinate classes, blacks and whites, men and women." This could be contrasted with the much-worn political demonstration where people march together in the same direction with placards through the main thoroughfares of an urban centre, usually to an agreed destination where there are speeches, often resulting in confrontation with the authorities in the form of the police brutality. The image wears a little thin at times as Kenney takes the reader to demonstrations which express political demands in this way.

He interviewed over 300 people in 12 countries and it shows in the geographical spread and in the details of the activities of the various movements. Unfortunately, it seems that none of these interviews were recorded, transcribed, analyzed and archived, admittedly a huge task which the author could not possibly have done on his own without additional funding. However, what is missing from this long list of interviewees is a significant number of Communist Party officials or even high-ranking politicians. Kenney could have gauged their reaction to the antics of the "alternative" opposition especially where individuals interrupted official public meetings with senior regime figures present. Like many writers on this period, he makes the mistake of using the word "dissident"and dissent" which, as Havel has pointed out, is a misnomer. Opposition would surely be a more appropriate word (and Keeney does use it, too).

The photo essay – a collection of 22 photographs taken by participants usually at risk to themselves at demonstrations and happenings - adds greatly to the value of the book. What marks them out are the captions which describe what is happening. They often illustrate some pieces of the text, for example, a demonstration with mothers and children in Prague. Many historians include photographs in their works with indequate (sometimes incorrect) captions with little further analysis or explanation.

Kenney argues well that a completely new opposition, new kind of activist, took the stage. He has given a voice to the "voiceless" assigning them "scenes" which work their way towards a *denouement*. He draws attention to the contacts between opposition groups across

national borders and offers a continuity which spans the period before and after 1989. Kenney does not set out to outline the causes of the revolutions of 1989 but does give form to that magic, the *annus mirabilis*, for which others have perhaps offered limited explanations.

6. Contribution of western groups and organizations to the growth of freedom

6.1 Introduction

During communism western governments were limited in the way they could intervene to help the populations of eastern Europe. From 1968, the British government developed a 'dual track' policy of maintaining contact with dissident communities and the communist regimes simultaneously. These contacts were intensified by Margaret Thatcher whose policies were perceived as the opposite to those of communism. Recent publication of documents has revealed much about this policy.

Unofficial cultural visits by foreign academics provided an opportunity for open discussion across the Iron Curtain and helped with material and other assistance to the dissidents. Mary Kaldor summed up this new détente as *a strategy of dialogue, an attempt to change society through the actions of citizens rather than governments, to change ideas and to develop new institutions, in short to create a new political culture*.[133]

6.2 Policies of the British government towards the eastern bloc

During the late 1980s, the dual track policies consisted of a "carrot and stick" approach to governments, offering them favourable trade deals whilst taking care not to upset the precarious power relations, especially the nuclear balance, or risk destabilizing relations between Britain and the United States. The official initiative had its origins in 1968 when the 9th conference of British Ambassadors in Eastern Europe[134] strongly recommended increasing

[133] http://www.eu-historians.eu/uploads/Dateien/jeih-31-2010_1.pdf p.65

[134] G. BENNETT, K.A. HAMILTON (eds.), *Documents on British Policy Overseas. Britain and the Soviet Union, 1968-1972*, s.3, vol.1, The Stationery Office, London, 1997: Record of 9th meeting

trade links, scientific cooperation and information exchange. Michael Stewart`s instructions to eastern European embassies later in the year solidified the new policy in its general purpose: *We recognize that in the longer run contact with Eastern Europe is the principal means by which we can hope to encourage the liberal forces in these countries.*[135]

It should be borne in mind that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) was anxious about becoming overshadowed by the already aggressive *Ostpolitik* of France and the Federal Republic of Germany. One ambassador to Moscow, Sir Duncan Wilson, even suggested that the USSR and West Germany could enter into a "Rapallo-type bilateral pact" and that the British government should try to prevent it.[136] Diplomatic rivalry notwithstanding, the continuation of Britain`s from its first phase of its own *Ostpolitik* was marked by constant monitoring of whether Britain was gaining at least as much from the policy as it was giving.

Ilaria Poggiolini and Alex Pravda are quite categorical about Britain`s policy towards the eastern bloc:

In the second half of the 1980s Britain deployed a wider, more active and more effective Ostpolitik than at any time since the onset of the Cold War. It was the rise in Cold War tensions in the early years of the decade that largely prompted Margaret Thatcher to try and open up dialogue with Moscow. In this sense, her initiative recalled previous attempts by British Prime Ministers, notably Harold Macmillan, to defuse high levels of superpower tension. Thatcher's approach was broader in scope, embracing Eastern Europe as well as the Soviet Union.[137]

There are possibly three factors which Britain`s policy towards Eastern Europe so successful and all of them centred on Margaret Thatcher (MT). First, there was the personality of MT herself - determined, energetic, well-prepared on all issues. These personal qualities

---

of the Conference of HM Representatives in Eastern Europe, 10.05.1968, pp.42-48. As cited in http://www.eu-historians.eu/uploads/Dateien/jeih-31-2010_1.pdf p.83

[135] G. BENNETT, K.A. HAMILTON (eds.), op.cit.: Stewart to Certain Missions and Dependent Territories, Guidance Telegram n.264, FCO, 29.10.1968, p.85. As cited in http://www.eu-historians.eu/uploads/Dateien/jeih-31-2010_1.pdf p.85

[136] G. BENNETT, K.A. HAMILTON (eds.), op.cit.: Wilson (Moscow) to Stewart, Moscow, 14.07.1969, pp.179-187. As cited in http://www.eu-historians.eu/uploads/Dateien/jeih-31-2010_1.pdf p.86

[137] http://www.eu-historians.eu/uploads/Dateien/jeih-31-2010_1.pdf p.8

were a crucial factor in building trust and respect between her and Gorbachev while she, at the same time, helped to bring the US and the Soviet Union closer together.

She also took a strong personal interest in Eastern Europe making visits to Hungary and Poland between 1984 and 1988. Upon her death, Alexander Tomsky recalled MT`s interest[138] in Central and Eastern European affairs:

She supported all the Eastern European dissidents. In every meeting with officials of the Soviet Union she insisted that jailed dissidents be released. She used to come to Keston College where I worked and wanted to read books in English by those people (dissidents) and she read a considerable amount of literature coming from Central and Eastern Europe.

This gave her a positive image in Czechoslovakia, *... the image of a woman who helped to bring down the Iron Curtain, she was perceived as the winner of the Cold War, together with president Ronald Reagan ...*

Above all, 'Thatcherism' by itself made an impression on the future political elite in Czechoslovakia in the 1980s. It was a set of ideas mainly concerning economic policy. It involved free market capitalism, strict controls of government expenditure together with cuts in taxation and a strong British nationalism. To MT, it was a libertarian ideology freeing people as much as possible from state control and broadened the scope of personal freedom. Alexander Tomsky confirms the popularity of Thatcherism:

... after the fall of communism the leading idea here was that we would establish a free-market capitalism, that we would join the West and become affluent like the West because the country was poor after those 42-years of a centralized, planned economy. So in this way her ideas were of the utmost importance here.

6.3 The Oxford Project and the Central European University

The Central and East European Publishing Project (CEEPP), colloquially known as the Oxford Project, was an initiative of Ralph Dahrendorf, Warden of St Anthony`s College at Oxford University and TGA, a Fellow of the College. Dahrendorf`s intention was to create "a

[138] http://www.radio.cz/en/section/curraffrs/publisher-alexander-tomsky-margaret-thatcher-had-an-avid-interest-in-east-european-affairs

Common Market of the Mind in Europe."[139] To this end, the project gave support to the translation of books and journals between western and eastern European languages between 1986 and 1994. An important part was played by TGA in the 1980s as he travelled to East Germany, Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, meeting with dissidents, taking part in discussions and and writing down his observations in articles and essays in Britain and the US. His book of essays *The Uses of Adversity:Essays on the Fate of Central Europe*[140] about the political and social climate on these countries in the 1980s and his witness to the events of 1989 in *We the People: The Revolution of `89 Witnessed in Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin and Prague* testify to his ability to explain eastern Europe to a western readership.

Dahrendorf`s vision had as its intellectual basis Karl Popper`s seminal work *Open Societies and its Enemies*.[141] Published in 1945 at a time when there was an urgent need to reconstruct the societies of post-war Europe, the book postulated the idea of a Closed Society, such as Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, versus an Open Society. Popper insisted that an Open Society only worked based on establishing and testing knowledge; there was no formula for its success. Dahrendorf developed this theory further and applied it to the context of 1990:

The countries of East Central Europe have not shed their Communist system in order to embrace the capitalist system (whatever that is); they have shed a closed system in order to create an Open Society, the Open Society to be exact, for a while there can be many systems, there is only one Open Society. […] The road to freedom is not a road from one system to another, but one that leads into the open space of infinite possible futures, some of which compete with each other. Their competition makes history.[142]

The immediate task was *… to fill the structures of the open society with the lifeblood of civil society.*[143]

---

[139] http://www.eu-historians.eu/uploads/Dateien/jeih-31-2010_1.pdf p.71
[140] GARTON ASH, Timothy: *The Uses of Adversity. Essays on the Fate of Central Europe*, Penguin, 1999. ISBN 0-140-28392-7
[141] POPPER, Karl: *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, Routledge (4 April 2011) ISBN-10: 0415610214 ISBN-13: 978-0415610216
[142] R. DAHRENDORF, *Reflections on the Revolution in Europe: In a Letter Intended to Have Been Sent to a Gentleman in Warsaw*, Times Books, New York, 1990, pp.40-41. As cited in http://www.eu-historians.eu/uploads/Dateien/jeih-31-2010_1.pdf p.67
[143] R. DAHRENDORF, *After 1989: Morals, Revolution and Civil Society*, MacMillan Press, London, p.23. As cited in http://www.eu-historians.eu/uploads/Dateien/jeih-31-2010_1.pdf p.69

Another initiative was the creation a higher education institution in Central Europe the moving forces for which were the Hungarian-born financier, Georg Soros, and the Prague-born academic, Ernest Gellner, another exponent of the views of Karl Popper. In a letter to Soros, Gellner wrote that, apart from Nationalism:

... another and equally important threat is the moral and intellectual vacuum left behind by the collapse of communism (which after all wasn't displaced by a rival, but simply collapsed, leaving a vacuum). The enquiry into philosophical and political issues at the Centre would really be guided by this consideration. [144]

Gellner was determined to engage in analyzing and solving the problems of eastern Europe by employing theoretical ideas to resolve practical issues.

6.4 Amnesty International

One of the first missions Peter Benenson, the founder, undertook was to try and secure the release of Archbishop Jozef Beran in 1962. In 1989, Havel was released following pressure from Amnesty International having been imprisoned for supporting a human rights manifesto.

6.5 The Velvet Philosophers

In 1978, the Czech philosopher, Julius Tomin wrote a letter to universities in Germany and Britain requesting that western philosophers to visit Czechoslovakia to engage in the discussions being held at seminars arranged by him and colleagues. Such discussion groups met sometimes secretly, or at least in a discreet enough fashion so as not to attract the attention of the Stb, and were independent of the any official institution. As far as is known, only one letter arrived at the Oxford University Faculty of Philosophy in Britain. The letter appeared as a final item on the agenda of the sub-faculty meeting; after a brief discussion ti was agreed to send volunteers from the Oxford faculty to Prague. The first visit went ahead in April 1989 when Kathy Wilkes arrived to lead a discussion on Aristotle.

[144] Gellner's correspondence for those years can be consulted in the Gellner Collection, which is held in the LSE Archive in London. LSE ARCHIVES, Gellner Collection, Box M 1913 File 6, Gellner to Soros, 30.10.1995. As cited in http://www.eu-historians.eu/uploads/Dateien/jeih-31-2010_1.pdf p.74

The remarkable story of the co-operation between Czechoslovak intellectuals in a number of fields and their colleagues from western countries during the 1980s is told in *The Velvet Philosophers*[145] by Barbara Day. Published in 1989, it draws on not just the archive of the Jan Hus Foundation (for whom Day was a courier and secretary from 1985 to 1990) and interviews but also on StB and other Czech archives.

The book is obviously the result of painstaking research with copious references and comments to supplement the text. It will be a seminal text on the broad range of co-operation between academics across the Iron Curtain. Day is well-qualified to tell this story. She was researching her PhD on the Theatre on the Balustrade and small Czechoslovak theatre in the late 1960s and teaching English when the invasion came; she later completed her thesis on her return. In 1985, she became secretary of the Jan Hus Foundation Trust and did some courier work herself until 1989. She has been living and working in Prague since 1996, one journalist describing her as the *grande dame* of underground publishing.

The scale and scope of the operation grew rapidly during the 1980s. Day agreed in an interview that she was like a spymaster – briefing a visitor new to this kind of lecturing could take up to two hours as addresses and names had to be committed to memory. Most of the initial contacts were with seminars in Prague but the more adventurous, such as Roger Scruton, went farther afield to Brno and Bratislava. Numerous academics came from western Europe and the US to lead seminars lasting for hours. Many had to be replaced as the authorities barred those who had been arrested from obtaining visas. Books, articles, printers, computers and photocopiers were smuggled in and, occasionally, technical experts to help set up computer programmes.

What is also striking is the success of the whole venture. Each visit always brought requests for more books and more visiting lecturers. As one former student said to the author: "What we used to go the seminars for was to find out how to live in a world of communism and lies." Most former academics managed to regain their posts at universities, although not without difficulty. Some reached high political positions such as Petr Pithart as prime minister of Czechoslovakia and Jan Carnogursky as prime minister of Slovakia. Maybe its success can

[145] DAY, Barbara: *The Velvet Philosophers*, The Claridge Press, 1999. ISBN 1-870626-42-7

be measured by the fierce reaction of the authorities to the seminars and revealing their ability to shoot themselves in the foot to which the arrest of Jacques Derrida testifies. The Foundation transferred its activities to Czechoslovakia after 1989 as a result of requests from former participants and it is still thriving today.

There were some unhappy endings. Julius Tomin and his family emigrated with the help of one of the most active figures in the foundation, Kathy Wilkes, who brought them to Oxford where they were given money to live on for a short time and the two sons were educated in private schools paid for by grants from Oxford colleges. Tomin evidently thought that he should be offered a post at Oxford and remains deeply resentful to this day that he was not; only last year he was demonstrating outside Balliol College, Oxford and pleading his case with the press. He had to live on welfare benefit for many years before being offered paid work. Wilkes continued her work of establishing links with colleagues in Yugoslavia, even Albania. She remained at her teaching post during the bombardment of Dubrovnik but the strain of this and other ventures began to show and she died a premature death at the age of 57 in 2003.

A drawback of the whole venture was it confined itself to the activities of this tiny elite of intellectuals. Ordinary Czechs and Slovaks who lived at that time might not see much of value to them personally. However, this is the first publication which describes in such detail their endeavours. Still missing is research from the Czech and Slovak side which Day pleads for at the beginning of the book. To add to the precise details taken from archives, it would certainly be of value to have recorded testimony, perhaps in the form of oral histories, where narrators could relate exactly how they travelled and lectured and what they felt (some were scared about what the police may do). More could have been said about the need for secrecy whilst at the same time drawing the attention of the Czechoslovak plight to the press. The articles written at the time about the "Oxford Philosophers" are certainly referenced but difficult or impossible to find on the internet. Thus so much more material could be added to give more background and a greater human dimension to the core narrative of the book.

The StB`s behaviour is best illustrated by Jacques Derrida`s absurd exchange with a Czech policeman who, when asked if he believed the charge against him, replied: "Of course, that`s just how western intellectuals behave – look at the Beatles." In a chapter on the police, Day offers an incisive description of their role; the files (those that have survived) show that they

were not so effective as was thought at the time. One of the enduring images of the book is the visiting Norwegian professor, Thorolf Rafto, being torn from the hands of Julius Tomin by the police (by one account Tomin`s hands were bleeding) to disappear from sight for a couple of days before being thrown onto a train to Berlin. The western academic community responded to this and other incidents such as the Derrida arrest by intensifying contacts that endure to this day; the pen was indeed mightier than the sword.

A philosopher`s notion of freedom was perhaps writ large by that first meeting in Oxford in 1978. Colleagues in another country had made a request for co-operation which was accepted without demur. For example, the risks of travelling to a communist country were not considered. Modest finance was allocated and arrangements made. The sharing of philosophy, with its total dependence on discussion and debate, *was* freedom in its purest form.

6.6 The effect of the Western press on events

The western press played an essential part in achieving the goals of the demonstrating crowds. Since totalitarian regimes rely on withholding and distorting information for their hold on power, worldwide publicity not controlled by them erodes their power surprisingly quickly. After all, the main threat posed by *Charta 77* came from its publication in the West.

TGA says[146] that the foreign press influenced the events in two ways. It concentrated the minds of the members of the Forum as they frantically worked out what to say to the foreign media at the afternoon press conference. For this, we only have TGA`s testimony; in view of the steady stream of questions which the Forum had to answer, this seems quite likely (it was often difficult to find volunteers to answer questions at press conferences). Secondly, it offered protection to all participants. The sight of a Tianammen Square massacre (there were rumours circulating to that effect) in broad daylight, which was when most of the demonstrations were held, being witnessed by hundreds of foreign journalists and watched by tens of millions on global television networks, would have spelt the certain end of a regime which was desperately trying to shore up its popularity and play for time.

In another sense, western reporting brought little reaction. As noted in the section 'The Demonstrators', the events were so unexpected and moved so quickly that western politicians

[146] GARTON ASH, Timothy: *We The People: The Revolution of 1989 Witnessed in Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin, and Prague*, Random House, 1990. ISBN 0-140-28391-9 pp.93-94

and diplomats were simply incapable of responding in the early days. Thus, no foreign intervention of any kind was forthcoming, as far as is known.

One group who was not in doubt about the effect of the press on events were the activists and dissidents. Havel and many fellow dissidents kept open house for the western press during the the 1980s. In February 1989, Hewitt and colleagues were protected by activists in the crowd at great personal risk to themselves.[147] During November and December, the western press could go almost anywhere and report without restriction. TGA lists "attention and pressure from the outside world" as one of "the ingredients of the new model revolution."[148]

.

7. Analysis of the research

It was shown how westerners perceived the events of 1989 through the use of audiovisual material, preconceived ideas, iconography created by the media, the sheer persistence of some images and oral history testimony. To strengthen this perception, the question of there really was a revolution was briefly addressed.

TBE sets out the basic facts about himself in the framework of the purpose of the interview which had been made clear to him in the first email sent to the Nutshell address. He gives us a a western foreigner`s view of student life in Prague in the late 1980s, a personal account of the 17th November demonstration as a student participant and journalist and his perspectives on the Czech Republic in the last 21 years. The narrative unfolds an individual who is adventurous, articulate, sociable and idealistic. This makes him an ideal interviewee for this project not least because he was in a good position to witness events before, during and after 1989.

His cycle ride states how adventurous he is. Some might say that he was one of those "young fools" (page 7) he refers to later. For his part he had "… a great kick about the whole thing." He remembers the "friendly people" who he might not have encountered in his own country and other western countries (he says later he travelled round Europe on an Interrail

[147] http://news.bbc.co.uk/panorama/hi/front_page/newsid_8347000/8347282.stm
[148] TGA p.166-167

pass). The low level of western Poland`s economy and infrastructure would have been no surprise after his trip to the Soviet Union.

The apathy regarding politics was disappointing when contrasted with his obviously strong enthusiasm for the topic. The atmosphere was one of gloom – fear is not mentioned. People do not seem to be afraid to talk about politics as would have been the case in the 1950s and 1970s. There are also no memories of problems with border control or police checks to see if he is a potential spy. The shackles of the regimes in Poland and Czechoslovakia have been loosened to the extent that TBE can travel and communicate freely with the local people. In fact, in answer "Did you have any trouble with the authorities?" he answers a different question about the danger of cycling on Polish roads informed by experiences in the present.
Despite the fact that foreign students are kept in a separate "colony", TBE soon overcomes barriers, linguistic, social or otherwise, and begins to meets Czechs. The *hospoda* was probably the only public space where people could meet informally. He says: "Important things in Czech culture take place in the hospoda …"(3) - a point emphasized in his book. It certainly provided information about the country which he could not have found elsewhere. The effectiveness of the regime`s control of information is shown by the lack of knowledge of Charter 77 and Havel. Dedicated efforts to listen to RFE and VOA might have informed them but none had appeared to have done this. It should be borne in mind that Praguers had no access to any Polish or western TV channels as there was in Moravia.

The main grievance seems to be that they could not travel – free speech, freedom, free elections, are not mentioned as being topics of primary importance. It should therefore be questioned the motivations for people to join the demonstrations in the first ten days. The placards at the front of the crowd might call for freedom-related demands but the demonstrators at the back might want something different and more specific.

He uses, perhaps mistakenly, the expression that "people were disappointingly disinterested in politics and life around them."(3) To say "uninterested" would imply that it is possible for people to be interested. "Disinterested" implies detachment, a firm decision not to engage. Such an implication could be extended to mean that Czechs had no stake in politics – that was presumably only open for those active in the Communist Party) – and life around them offered them nothing of interest. For TBE there existed the possibility to take part in meaningful political discourse in his own country. |No such opportunity existed for Czechs.

Thus TBE provides pertinent words – gloom, apathy, disinterested – to characterize the atmosphere in Prague of the mid-1980s. The break between his return to Norway in 1988 and his return on September 2nd 1989 provides us with definitive proof that there had been a definite in people`s attitudes which, in turn, could lead to changes in society and ultimately politics.

The comment "Czechs are extremely pessimistic about everything in life, as I see them" (4) implies that there is such a thing as a national character, now rejected as non-existent in western intellectual discourse (but a subject of intense debate in the CR). There would a strong argument that such pessimism is mainly, or even solely, a product of historical experience, not just recent but going back centuries. His optimism ("… *I have to say that I have the personality disorder that I`m optimistic*."(7)) would have been informed by growing up in a free society. His view of the last 21 years is based on rate of progress from a low base point; Czechs might simply reverse this and point to the lack of it which TBE does refer to (8) and they may be comparing their lives more directly with those in western countries.

A factor crucial to the success of all revolutions is evident – who controls with temporal consistency the central space of an important urban centre. TBE mentions that two recent demonstrations had been not only smaller but held away from the city centre (4). One of them was blocked by police when it tried to cross Charles Bridge and this had occurred without violence. The 17th November was the first recent demonstration to be held in the centre. It is significant that he and his fellow students were told not to go back. Control of public urban spaces also meant that if the communist leadership wanted to communicate with citizens, they had to come to Civic Forum-organized demonstrations to do so as Ladislav Adamec had to on 25th November on Letna Plain.

"Of course" they do go back which highlights another important factor – the ability of youth to achieve what seems to be impossible at great risk to their future lives, for example, being expelled from the university as had happened to 40 per cent of the Humanities students of Charles University in September 1989. The impulsive nature of their actions and a marked lack of neuroses accumulated by the older generation proved, of course only in retrospect, to be a decisive advantage.

However, caution reveals itself when TBE wants his article published in a student newspaper about what happened at the 17th November demonstration without the changes the editors want to make, in other words, without self-censorship (7). A cleavage now appears between TBE, a child of free speech, and the Czech student editors, brought up under totalitarian rule where punishment for writing the truth is normal. TBE has little to lose; the Czechs have much to lose perhaps everything worth having – a chance to study in higher education, a job commensurate with their qualifications and even the same for their children.

"They thought that maybe *some kind of liberation would come to Czechoslovakia* [author`s italics] as they had seen in Poland" (4) faintly echoes the biblical language revealed in Krapfl`s extensive research of local archives and used by TGA and even Kenney. He portrays the coming of freedom as something that was supposed to happen outside the country, something miraculous, even though (a strongly Roman Catholic) Poland had reached the stage of having semi-free elections through their own efforts. Havel, in reference to the crowd cheering Gorbachev outside the National Theatre, is scathing about the belief foreigners can somehow change the destiny of Czechs for the better.

TBE represents the view of any westerner when he says "… the Czechoslovak media didn`t report [*the fall of the Berlin Wall*] at all which is completely unbelievable …"(4) This amounts in western eyes to a complete news blackout, unthinkable in a western society and it would be simply impossible in 1989 with new media technology to keep it from the public. This is not to say that the news is not censored in some western countries (See Blaive in the thesis). However, an important memory of that evening is his debut as a journalist and his relaying of the news that there had been one death of a student which turned out to be fabricated.

The episode with the taxi driver and the caretaker highlights the *1984* atmosphere that citizens lived in up to that time. Some people knew, and certainly western foreigners should have been warned, that taxi drivers and caretakers were usually reporting to the StB. TBE did not grow up in this atmosphere and does not even think twice about telling everything on his mind. Some would say that he was lucky that subsequent events swept away his "sins".

TBE`s attitudes to the events follows the revolutionary pattern mentioned in the main text – heady idealism and belief in the new leaders in the early 1990s, the revelations about

corruption, disillusionment and bitterness (evident in his book) and finally the assertion that the Czech Republic is an "an ordinary European country." Somewhat appropriately, the interview was held in the shadow of the luxury flat belonging to Roman Janoušek, a businessman and political "fixer."

His admiration for the orderly and peaceful split of Czechoslovakia in 1992 reflects the view which reached the western media. It is possible that it was done against the wishes of the majority of Slovaks and Czechs and was subject to political manipulation in both halves. TBE does not focus on the negative aspects.

The question about his refusal to do military service was meant to focus on TBE`s idea of freedom, at least at the age of 18. He felt that he should follow his individual conscience and dissociate himself from all forms of violence. His belief as an individual took precedence over the collective need to defend his own free, democratic country against the Soviet threat. He may have been influenced by the discussions of the Swedish government as to how the civilian population should respond in the event of Soviet occupation and passive resistance was being seriously considered. The film *Gandhi* was due to out shortly and the methods used by the Civil Rights movement in the USA had been largely successful. His travels in The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe clearly changed his mind later. The ideological notion of freedom was soon superseded by the impact of what he saw and his experiences.

His numerous experiences combined with his lack of inhibitions yields an account of considerable use in making some sense of the events of 1989. It strongly underlines TGA`s dictum that *there is nothing to be compared to being there*. Above all, his interest in the world around him means that his memories are sharply focused, perceptive and informative.

8. Conclusion

The thesis has attempted to use analysis of the sources available to answer the questions posed in the introduction. Some ideas have been formed of how westerners saw the events of 1989 and how a western prism can create artificial personalities and remove events and people from their context to one recognizable to western cultures. Despite the fact that the range of the sources was limited in all areas and more research, I believe that the main goals of the thesis were achieved. A future researcher could look at a comprehensive set of sources in the form of complete media archives of 1989 and an oral history project imvolving several western participants, witnesses and commentators. It would be also interesting to repeat the same questions to the same interviewees in ten years` time.

9. Bibliography

BROWN, Archie: *The Gorbachev Factor*, Oxford, 1996. ISBN 0192880527

BURKE, Peter: *Varieties of Cultural History*, Polity Press (1 Sep 1997). ISBN-10: 0745616992 ISBN-13: 978-0745616995

DAY, Barbara: *The Velvet Philosophers*, The Claridge Press, 1999. ISBN 1-870626-42-7

DICTIONARY OF CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH, Longman, 1990. ISBN 0-582-84223-9

DOWLING, Maria: *Czechoslovakia*, Arnold, 2002. ISBN 0-340-76369-8

ENGLUND, Terje B.: *The Czechs in a Nutshell: A User`s Manual for Foreigners,* Práh s.r.o., 2009. ISBN 978-80-7252-266-8

GARTON ASH, Timothy: *The Uses of Adversity. Essays on the Fate of Central Europe*, Penguin, 1999. ISBN 0-140-28392-7

GARTON ASH, Timothy: *We The People: The Revolution of 1989 Witnessed in Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin, and Prague*, Random House, 1990. ISBN 0-140-28391-9

GARTON ASH, Timothy: *History of the Present: Essays, Sketches and Despatches from Europe in the 1990s,* Penguin Books Ltd; New edition (19 Jun 2000) ISBN-10: 0140283188 ISBN-13: 978-0140283181

GLENNY, Misha: *The Rebirth of History: Eastern Europe in the Age of Democracy*, Penguin Books Ltd; 2nd Revised edition edition (4 Feb 1993) ISBN-10: 0140172866 ISBN-13: 978-0140172867

JUDT, Tony: *Post War. A History of Europe since 1945*, Vintage 2010. ISBN 978-0-099-54203-2

KEANE, John: *Václav Havel: A Political Tragedy In Six Acts*, Bloomsbury Paperbacks, 2000. ISBN 0-7475-4838-2

KENNEY, Padraic: *A Carnival of Revolution. Central Europe 1989*, Princeton, 2002. ISBN 0-691-11627-X

KRAPFL, James: *Revolution with a Human Face: Politics, Culture, and Community in Czechoslovakia, 1989-1992*, Cornell University Press (25 Sep 2013) ISBN-10: 0801452058 ISBN-13: 978-0801452055

KURAS, Benjamin: Czechs and balances: A nation's survival kitPublisher: Baronet (1996) ISBN-10: 8085890585 ISBN-13: 978-8085890587

LEVY, Alan: *So Many Heroes*, Second Chance Press, 1980. ISBN-10: 0933256167 ISBN-13: 978-0933256163

MARK, James: *The Unfinished Revolution: Making sense of the communist past in Central-Eastern Europe*, Yale University Press. ISBN 978-0-300-16716-0

PÁNEK, Jaroslav, TŮMA, Oldřich et alii: *A History of the Czech Lands*, Karolinum Press, 2009. ISBN 978-80-246-1645-2

PERKS, Robert, THOMSON, Alistair: *The Oral History Reader*, Routledge, 1997. ISBN 0-415-34303-8

RITCHIE, Don: *Doing Oral History*, Oxford, 2003. ISBN 978-0-19-515434-4

ROBERTS, Adam (Editor), GARTON ASH, Timothy (Editor): *Civil Resistance and Power Politics: The Experience of Non-violent Action from Gandhi to the Present*, OUP Oxford (29 Sep 2011). ISBN-10: 0199691452 ISBN-13: 978-0199691456

SAXONBERG, Steven*: The Fall. A Comparative Study of the End of Communism in Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary and Poland*, Routledge, 2001. ISBN 0-415-36420-5

VACULÍK, Ludvík: *A Cup of Coffee with My Interrogator*, Reader International. ISBN 0-930523-34-2

VLADISLAV, Jan ed.: *Vaclav Havel. Living in Truth*. Twenty-two essays published on the occasion of the award of the Erasmus Prize to Vaclav Havel, Faber and Faber, 1987. ISBN 0-571-14440-3

Internet sources including videos and audio

http://www.vonwitte.org/index.php/german-eastward-expansion-ostsiedlung

http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/history/mwh/ir1/thetreatyrev1.shtml

http://zpravy.aktualne.cz/domaci/arabska-a-sametova-revoluce-na-namesti-republiky/r~i:gallery:23310/r~i:photo:425421/

http://www.magnumphotos.com/C.aspx?VP3=SearchResult&VBID=2K1HZOQS0P3IG1&SMLS=1&RW=960&RH=501

http://www.magnumphotos.com/C.aspx?VP3=SearchResult&ALID=2K1HRGQM5Y8

http://ps321.community.uaf.edu/files/2012/10/Fukuyama-End-of-history-article.pdf

http://theatreinthepark.org/

http://saatchi.com/en-us/

http://www.the-tls.co.uk/tls/
https://www.ksu.edu/english/nelp/american.studies.s98/we.shall.overcome.html
http://www.usconstitution.net/const.html
http://www.econlib.org/library/Smith/smWN.html
http://michaeljohnsonphilosophy.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/5010_Hume_Treatise_Human_Nature.pdf
http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/l/locke/john/l81u/
http://www.gutenberg.org/files/7370/7370-h/7370-h.htm
http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/magnacarta.asp
http://www.radio.cz/en/section/special/don-sparling-part-1
http://www.radio.cz/en/section/special/don-sparling-part-2#0
http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/legacy/panorama/2009/11/1989_the_year_of_revolutions.html
https://www.magnumphotos.com/
http://www.magnumphotos.com/C.aspx?VP3=SearchResult&ALID=2K1HRGQM5Y8
http://www.muzeumkomunismu.cz/en/
http://www.voanews.com/content/velvet-revolution-inspires-and-disappoints-74662707/368318.html
http://www.radio.cz/en/section/one-on-one/misha-glenny-uk-writer-with-close-ties-to-prague#0
http://www.radio.cz/en/section/news/poll-suggests-third-of-czechs-believe-1989-changes-did-not-pay-off#0
http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio/player/b011jv8c
http://www.eu-historians.eu/uploads/Dateien/jeih-31-2010_1.pdf
http://www.radio.cz/en/section/curraffrs/publisher-alexander-tomsky-margaret-thatcher-had-an-avid-interest-in-east-european-affairs
http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration_transcript.html
http://www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/163/537
http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0083987/
http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0098781/
http://www.radio.cz/en/section/special/don-sparling-part-2
http://www.radio.cz/en/static/november-89/
http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/czechrepublic/8964118/Former-Czech-Republic-president-Vaclav-Havel-dies.html
http://www.89.usd.cas.cz/en/videos/ovj.html

http://www.magnumphotos.com/C.aspx?VP3=SearchResult&VBID=2K1HZOQS40TFSA&SMLS=1&RW=960&RH=501
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bPyKuGXppsA&list=PLBM6i0wP_VcFHwlx3lWAqUx9UnWKj4t8H&index=1
http://abcnews.go.com/Archives/video/nov-28-1989-freedom-czechoslovakia-12238317
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aC5Mxvj-h2c
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hc2XGHA7NK4
http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/legacy/panorama/2009/11/1989_the_year_of_revolutions.html
http://www.cbsnews.com/news/walter-cronkite-dies/
http://www.bbc.co.uk/search/?q=czechoslovakia
http://news.bbc.co.uk/panorama/hi/front_page/newsid_8347000/8347282.stm
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/8144165.stm
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/8144165.stm
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_depth/7927123.stm
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7915244.stm
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7900278.stm
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3-B7KsNQiew&list=PLBM6i0wP_VcFHwlx3lWAqUx9UnWKj4t8H&index=3
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g_mpmrYZ2Tc&index=4&list=PLBM6i0wP_VcFHwlx3lWAqUx9UnWKj4t8H
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8IYJJXTGpOk&index=5&list=PLBM6i0wP_VcFHwlx3lWAqUx9UnWKj4t8H
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wiHTrFid6dQ&list=PLBM6i0wP_VcFHwlx3lWAqUx9UnWKj4t8H&index=13
http://tvnews.vanderbilt.edu/
http://libpro.cts.cuni.cz/charta/docs/declaration_of_charter_77.pdf
http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2013/nov/02/nato-war-game-nuclear-disaster
http://www.cbc.ca/archives/categories/politics/international-politics/general-23/vaclav-havel-playwright-and-statesman.html
http://www.radio.cz/en/section/books/sam-walters-and-vaclav-havel-theatre-on-the-political-stage#0
http://www.fastcompany.com/3022022/the-incredible-story-of-marion-stokes-who-single-handedly-taped-35-years-of-tv-news
https://archive.org/index.php

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plltt4_B54A
https://www.gov.uk/make-a-freedom-of-information-request/the-freedom-of-information-act
http://www.machiavellicenter.net/web/pv_ip.htm
http://www.machiavellicenter.net/
http://www.eu-historians.eu/uploads/Dateien/jeih-31-2010_1.pdf
http://www.margaretthatcher.org/
http://www.cz.boell.org/downloads/http___oldmail.otoman(1).pdf
http://www.federica.unina.it/economia/lingua-inglese-eco/old-clause-new-clause/
http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0118715/
http://www.magnumphotos.com/C.aspx?VP3=SearchResult&ALID=2K1HRGQM5Y8
http://www.amnesty.org/en
http://www.theguardian.com/world/1999/oct/08/berlinwall.germany

Used abbrevations

CR	Czech Republic
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act
TGA	Timothy Garton Ash
RFE	Radio Free Europe
VOA	Voice of America
TBE	Terje B. Englund
PS	Peter Seda
HZDS	Hnutie za demokratické Slovensko
ODS	Občanská demokratická strana
CBS	Columbia Broadcasting System
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
AFP	Agence France-Presse
ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation OR American Broadcasting Company (US radio and TV network).
MT	Margaret Thatcher
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
RAF	Royal Air Force
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ITN	Independent Television News

StB	Státní bezpečnost
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union

10. List of Enclosures

Enclosure no. 1: Transcript of interview with Mr. Terje B. Englund

Enclosure no. 2: Audio recording of interview with Mr. Terje B. Englund

Enclosure no. 3: Transcripts of interviews with Mr. Petr Seda No. 1

Enclosure no. 4: Transcripts of interviews with Mr. Petr Seda No.2

Enclosure no. 5: Audio recording of interview with Mr. Petr Seda No. 1

Enclosure no. 6: Audio recording of interview with Mr. Petr Seda No. 2

All enclosures are available on CD – ROM, which is part of this diploma thesis.