

Reality Czech: Prague Spring 1968



Letter From The CD

Dear Delegates,

Ahoj! Welcome to MUNE XV and Reality Czech: Prague Spring 1968! My name is Briella Lucadamo and I am the crisis director for this committee. I am in my senior year here at Emory and this is my 8th year being involved in Model UN. I have competed in and chaired both crisis and general assembly committees on the college circuit. I am a neuroscience & behavioral biology major and plan to pursue a Ph.D in neuroscience. I spend much of my time in the cell biology department's Alvarez Lab studying spinal interneurons involved in locomotion, but when I get the chance I also love to draw and watch hockey (go Pens!).

Prague Spring was a key event in Europe during the Cold War, as well as a key event in my personal history. My Děda (grandfather) is an immigrant from the Czech Republic and emigrated during the Prague Spring period; much of my maternal family still resides in the country. I also happen to be Slovak (though a few more generations back) on my father's side. As such, I have a lot of love for Czech & Slovak culture and history, which I encourage you all to explore in committee and in your crisis arcs. There are so many interesting things happening within the country and around the world at this time in history, so I encourage you to be mindful of the time period.

As much as this is my committee—it is also yours—and though I have a general idea of the timeline and key events, I hope to have a reciprocal relationship with the delegates in which ingenuity, respect, understanding and thoughtfulness are mutually demonstrated. While I encourage creativity, I hope for delegates to develop interesting and exciting crisis arcs that keep in mind the issues and setting (time period, dimension) of the committee. As with other committees I've staffed for, I'll try to be as attentive as possible to all crisis arcs and any references or details included in the notes. I believe that enthusiastic engagement and effort in frontroom and backroom by delegates and staff will make this committee a rewarding experience for everyone.

Hodně štěstí!

Briella Lucadamo
Crisis Director

Sensitivity Statement

At MUNE, it is our responsibility to ensure that every delegate feels safe and respected in this committee. We ask that delegates treat one another with the highest level of kindness and respect, and MUNE maintains a strict zero-tolerance policy for bullying, harassment, or discrimination of any kind. If you ever experience a problem, please raise it with your CD, ACD, and/or Chairs, and we will do everything in our power to help you.

This committee depicts a totalitarian state at the height of its machinery of repression, and delegates will encounter content that can be difficult or disturbing. The historical record includes secret police surveillance and torture, forced labor camps, show trials, and the imprisonment and execution of real people, several of which were carried out under explicitly antisemitic pretexts. Delegates may explore these events and their consequences in crisis arcs, but must not treat state violence, imprisonment, or executions as occasions for humor, and must not reproduce antisemitic or otherwise bigoted rhetoric, even when it is drawn from the historical record or attributed to a character. Military action, including in response to the Warsaw Pact invasion, is permitted in the backroom, but war crimes and atrocities will not be tolerated; keep the spirit of the Geneva Convention in mind and exercise good taste in how conflict is depicted. Additionally, because this committee sits at the intersection of Czech and Slovak national identity, delegates should engage with these distinctions thoughtfully rather than reducing them to stereotypes.

Lastly, understand that though the characters you play may hold ideological convictions you personally disagree with, or existed within a system built on repression, this is no excuse to violate our zero-tolerance policy of bullying and discrimination. Any personal attacks on other delegates are completely unacceptable. This will ensure a better committee for everyone involved.

You can report any incident directly with the chairs of the committee, your crisis director, Secretary-General, or through an anonymous google form posted at the front of each room.

Introduction to Committee

Prague Spring was a period of great political change and liberalization within Czechoslovak Socialist Republic (also known as Czechoslovakia, then the Czech Republic and Slovakia), which had been a satellite state of the Soviet Union since the coup d'etat of the communist party in 1948. The once thriving region had been struggling with economic downturn and social unrest. Alexander Dubček attempted to reform the oppressive and totalitarian government by initiating decentralization and loosening restrictions on individual freedoms under a campaign of "socialism with a human face."

This committee will begin in the wake of the Čierna nad Tisou conference and the Bratislava Declaration in late July and early August of 1968. The Soviet Union is displeased with the reforms of the Republic, though they openly reaffirm their continued friendship and unity under socialism. However, there seem to be prolonged Warsaw Pact military exercises along Czechoslovakia's borders.

Surely this is just a show of power, nothing more...

Historical Background

Pre-Communism

The lands and peoples that now make up the countries of the Czech Republic and Slovakia have had a tumultuous history, only achieving independent statehood in 1918 in the wake of the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire post-WWI. Though Czechs and Slovaks have unique cultural identities due to the influence of their past imperial rulers—the Holy Roman Empire & Austria and Hungary respectively—close similarities in language, West Slavic roots, and a belief



that combined strength would aid diplomatically drove the establishment of Czechoslovakia as a nation.

Unfortunately, independence would not last long as the Sudetenland would be sacrificed by Great Britain, France, and Italy in the 1938 Munich Agreement to Nazi Germany. Just six months later in March of 1939, the rest of the Czech lands were invaded and occupied under direct Nazi control while Slovakia was pressured to secede and exist as a Nazi puppet state or be repossessed by the Hungarians. The policy of Appeasement was abandoned only after the invasion of Poland in September of 1939 when the British and French chose to intervene, starting WWII.

In 1945, the Soviet Red Army liberated much of Czechoslovakia from a weakened Germany, and the state was restored to a democracy. This incarnation was sadly also short-lived. In the 1946 parliamentary election, Klement Gottwald of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (*Komunistická strana Československa*, KSČ) became prime minister. By 1947, the party's popularity had significantly diminished and it was not expected to maintain power after the May 1948 elections. In the first Cominform meeting, the Soviet Union pushed the KSČ to take complete power over the country, especially after the failures of the Italian and French communist parties. Tension came to a head in early February of 1948 when the KSČ extended their powers in attempting to purge remaining non-Communist elements in the National Police Force, transforming them into implements of the KSČ. Infuriated, non-Communists in the cabinet demanded punishment for the overreaching KSČ, but Gottwald refused, leading 12 non-Communist ministers to submit resignation. The non-Communists assumed that President Edvard Beneš would refuse to accept their resignations to preserve balance in government, but Beneš remained neutral.

The Soviet deputy foreign minister came to Prague to help make arrangements for a coup, supporting Communist demonstrations and armed militia/police taking over the capital (as well as preparing for a purge of non-communists). Gottwald threatened a mass workers strike unless Beneš agreed to form a new Communist-dominated government. On 25 February 1948, Beneš, fearing a brutal civil war and looming Soviet intervention, capitulated to the KSČ. He accepted the resignations of the non-Communist ministers and appointed a new government in accordance with the demands of the KSČ. The 1920 Constitution was replaced, Beneš resigned, and the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic (*Československá socialistická republika*, ČSSR) was born.

Life Under Communism

Political Repression

Political repression reached its peak during the early Stalinist period of the 1950s, when thousands were imprisoned and numerous political trials were conducted. While repression

became less overt following de-Stalinization in the late 1950s and early 1960s, surveillance, censorship, and restrictions on political opposition remained central features of the communist system. Any published material critical of the government, Soviet policy, or Marxist-Leninism was censored. Expressing alternative political views could affect an individual's employment or housing, leading to self-censorship. Individuals were also unable to leave the country, with failed attempts ending in imprisonment or execution.

As with many authoritarian regimes the Czechoslovak government employed a secret police force, the *Státní bezpečnost* (StB). They engaged in wire tapping, house searches, surveillance, kidnapping, and physical and psychological torture against suspected enemies of the communist regime. If deemed a political dissident, one could be sent to one of 18 correctional labor camps around Jáchymov, referred to as the "Czech Gulag." As the name implies, the conditions in these camps were horrific, and prisoners were forced to mine uranium ore without any protective equipment in order to support the Soviet nuclear effort. Prisoners were malnourished and ravaged by tuberculosis, as well as the effects of direct radiation exposure. Miners were not given any method to protect themselves from uranium exposure, leading many to develop leukemia and other cancers later in life.

Show trials were another prominent method of threatening the population into subjugation and were employed throughout the 1950's. Most infamous were perhaps the trials of Rudolf Slánský and Milada Horáková. Milada Horáková was a resistance fighter during WWII, a women's rights advocate, and ardent supporter of democracy. She was accused of treason in a televised trial and was executed in 1950.

In the 1952 Slánský trial, 14 members of the KSČ were accused of high treason. After the Tito-Stalin split, Stalin demanded the purge of communist parties across the Eastern Bloc. Rudolf Slánský was the General Secretary of the KSČ, second-in-command and close friend to Klement Gottwald and one of the originators of communism in Czechoslovakia. His rank did not save him from Gottwald's betrayal; looking to save himself, Gottwald charged Slánský with organizing an international western capitalist zionist conspiracy and had him and 10 others hanged and their ashes thrown in the street.

Economy

After 1948, the economy of the ČSSR was shaped to model that of the USSR. The economy was guided by central planning, most sectors were nationalized, agriculture was collectivized, and ambitious Five-Year-Plans set economic goals. The regime unilaterally dictated job assignments and wages and the allocation of investments, housing, education, and the supply of goods and services. Due to this, shortages were not uncommon and unemployment was illegal—one could be charged with "social parasitism" and imprisoned. Czechoslovakia was a major industrial base during WWII and many centers of production remained intact and were expanded, with heavy industry—metallurgy, chemistry, mining, machinery—forming the ČSSR's production basis.

Historically, industrial centers resided in the Czech lands, but during this period Slovakia experienced notable industrial development. Industrial output and national income was reported to increase year-over-year, but large investments were required to maintain economic growth. The GDP per capita of the ČSSR was greater than that of the Eastern Bloc, but significantly below Western Europe and Austria.

By the mid-1960s, Czechoslovakia possessed one of the most industrialized economies in the Eastern Bloc, yet decades of centralized planning had produced declining growth, shortages of consumer goods, and little incentive for innovation. Industrial performance stagnated and the weak agricultural sector continued to fail to reach output goals. Economic decisions regarding production, prices, wages, and investment were made largely by state authorities, leaving enterprises with little flexibility to respond to changing demand. Growing dissatisfaction with this system convinced many economists and party officials that reform was necessary.

In June 1966, the Thirteenth Party Congress gave its official approval to the new program designed by Ota Šik, which came to be called the New Economic Model (NEM). Unfortunately not all of the reforms outlined by Šik would be able to be implemented due to Soviet meddling in 1968.

Society and Religion

By 1968, Czechoslovakia was one of the most educated and industrialized countries in the Eastern Bloc. Home to approximately 14 million people, the country was composed primarily of Czechs and Slovaks, alongside other ethnic minorities. Universal education, high literacy rates, and a strong tradition of scientific and technical training produced a highly skilled workforce, while universities, research institutes, and cultural organizations played prominent roles in society. Although economic growth had slowed under centralized planning, living standards remained relatively high compared with many other communist states.

Religion played a relatively limited role in public life, though it remained a part of many Czechoslovaks' personal and cultural identities. Historically, the Czech lands were predominantly Roman Catholic but had become increasingly secular, while Slovakia retained a stronger tradition of religious observance. Following the communist takeover in 1948, churches were placed under strict state supervision, clergy were required to obtain government approval to minister, and religious organizations faced significant restrictions. Although many citizens continued to practice their faith privately, the state officially promoted atheism and closely monitored religious institutions.

The Reforms

Prague Spring was not a complete rejection of socialism, but an attempt to create what reformers called “socialism with a human face.” Under Alexander Dubček’s leadership, the Communist

Party sought to preserve the socialist state while reducing political repression, increasing public participation, modernizing the economy, and expanding individual rights. These reforms transformed Czechoslovak public life, but many remained incomplete when Warsaw Pact forces invaded in August 1968.

Censorship was progressively relaxed and ultimately abolished, producing an expansion of freedom of expression. Newspapers, television, and radio began openly discussing government policy, economic failures, and the crimes committed during the Stalinist period. This sudden availability of information contributed to new levels of political awareness, but it also alarmed the Soviet Union and conservative communist officials, who feared that the Party was losing control.



The Ministry of the Interior was under the leadership of a reformist, leading to a reduction in the power of the StB, removal of officials associated with torture, and investigations into past injustices and abuses committed by the organization. Rudolf Slánský and Milada Horáková, as well as others accused in show trials, were exonerated of their crimes and were in the process of public rehabilitation. The Action Programme condemned arbitrary arrests and political interference in judicial proceedings, called for greater independence for courts and prosecutors, and emphasized that citizens should be protected by law from abuses of state authority.

Economic reform was led by Deputy Prime Minister Ota Šik. His New Economic Model sought to address stagnation and inefficiency by reducing the state's direct control over individual businesses. Businesses would receive greater freedom to determine production, investment, wages, and employment, while prices and consumer demand would play a larger role in guiding economic decisions. Šik also supported greater competition among state-owned enterprises and expanded trade with Western countries.

Restrictions on movement were eased, and Czechoslovak citizens gained greater opportunities to obtain passports, travel abroad, and establish contact with people and institutions outside the socialist bloc. Increased travel also allowed exchange of ideas with Western Europe. To Soviet leaders and domestic conservatives, however, freer movement raised fears of emigration, Western ideological influence, and declining state control over the population.

State of Committee

It is August of 1968, eight months into Dubček's reforms. Czechoslovakia is one of the most educated and industrialized countries in the Eastern Bloc. The country is home to 14.3 million people, with approximately 64% Czechs and 30% Slovaks—the other 6% being composed of

Hungarians, Roma, and other ethnic groups. The vast majority of the population has taken enthusiastically to the reforms, enjoying freedom of expression, relaxed travel restrictions, and a hopeful future. However, the USSR does not look favorably upon liberalization within a country within its sphere of influence and is mounting a military response.

You have received a tip that Soviet aircraft and Warsaw Pact military forces will reach Czechoslovakia within a few hours.

Current Problems

Response to the Invasion

This is the most proximal problem that must be addressed.

- Should the government order military resistance or maintain its policy of nonviolence?
- Should officials negotiate with Moscow or refuse cooperation?
- How can order be maintained amongst the citizen population?
- How will the actions of citizens affect national and international opinion and response to the crisis?
- How will different civilian populations (different generations, levels of education, ethnicity, etc.) respond to the invasion?
- Will the government produce a unified response, or will conflicting interests prevent a substantial response?

International Relations

USSR

The USSR exerts significant influence over Eastern and Central Europe since the end of WWII through alliances such as the Warsaw Pact and Comecon; it expects full loyalty from members of the Eastern Bloc and other communist allies. It is at the height of its geopolitical influence and is economically growing under General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev. Despite the struggle for influence, the USSR does not want direct war with the US. It fears that opposition in Prague will lead to a domino effect of similar movements across the Eastern Bloc.

United States

The United States stands in opposition to the USSR, yet possesses the goals characteristic of that of a global superpower. The U.S. seeks to maintain and expand its economic and political sphere of influence and secure ideologically similar allies. It has been following a policy of containment towards communism and is in the midst of the Vietnam War. Despite ongoing nuclear proliferation, the US recognizes that nuclear war would be catastrophic.

Warsaw Pact

Most fellow members of the Warsaw Pact participate in the invasion of Czechoslovakia, with only Romania and Albania refusing or condemning the invasion. Though the alliance was strong, many citizens of member states are dissatisfied with their governments. Their governments worry that the liberalization movement in Czechoslovakia will inspire similar opposition.

Western Europe

Many countries in Western Europe are experiencing major student and worker protests and call for reforms. Western communist parties are distancing themselves from the USSR. They also condemn the invasion.

Other Countries

Yugoslavia, despite sharing a socialist ideology, condemns the invasion. It has had relatively poor relations with the USSR since the 1948 Tito-Stalin split and has pursued “Third Way” self-governing socialism. Additionally, the Sino-Soviet Split has been gradually escalating over the past decade, leading to a loss of the previously united front of global communism. The People’s Republic of China under Mao Zedong condemned the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia.

- How does the ČSSR avoid a situation à la the Munich Agreement and encourage international involvement—should they desire it?
- How should ČSSR handle relations with their Warsaw Pact allies (?) and the Soviet Union?
- Should the ČSSR attempt to seek aid from Western Europe or the United States? What would be the consequences of doing so?
- What message should be sent to the international community regarding the status of Czechoslovak sovereignty and loyalty to the USSR?

- In the context of the Cold War and nuclear arms race, what are the potential motivations and concerns of different states?
- Who are potential allies and enemies for the different factions within the Czechoslovak government?

Reforms and Normalization

With the invasion, many of the reforms introduced are now in jeopardy of being repealed and oppressive policies being reinstated.

- What compromises should be made to appease the Soviets and ensure national security? Should compromises be made?
- How much freedom of the press should be retained? Should censorship be partially reinstated, fully restored, or permanently abolished?
- Should political prisoners and those rehabilitated during the Prague Spring remain exonerated?
- How should the government respond to growing public resistance, demonstrations, and civil disobedience?
- Should "socialism with a human face" remain the guiding principle of the government?
- How can the government balance national sovereignty with Warsaw Pact obligations?
- Should constitutional reforms, including federalization, continue despite Soviet objections?
- How should the government address increasing emigration and public disillusionment?

Economics

The people of the ČSSR have been dealing with food shortages, inflation, and poor quality of life compared to the countries of Western Europe. Šik's reforms have not been fully enacted, nor are they unilaterally supported. Under the previous system, job security was guaranteed. Šik's plan of stopping state subsidies for chronically unprofitable factories lead to workers fearing unemployment and more inflation. Trade unions conflict with new reformist overseers over management and the future of heavy industry (the nation's primary economic sector).

Simultaneously, these factory workers worry about Šik's active de-leveling of wages, though the state's aggressive egalitarianism had caused the economy to stall. Those with higher education and skill development are elated regarding these reforms, finally hoping to be paid for their skilled labor.

- How will the New Economic Model continue to be implemented? Will it be abandoned in the face of Soviet threats?
- What reform to heavy industry is needed for economic growth? Or what should replace heavy industry to propel the economy further?
- What balance should exist between state planning and market incentives?
- Should foreign trade with Western Europe be expanded despite Soviet concerns?
- How should shortages of consumer goods be addressed?
- Should agricultural reforms be expanded to improve food production?
- How can unemployment be prevented if inefficient factories are restructured?
- What role should trade unions play in economic decision-making?
- How can inflation be controlled without reversing economic liberalization?
- How should Czechoslovakia reduce dependence on Soviet economic support?

Political Groups

The Communist Party is heavily divided amongst individuals with different beliefs and visions for the future of the country—Reformers, Radicals, and Conservative Stalinists. There are also other political groups emerging at this time, including trade and student unions.

- What political ideologies will define the ČSSR's policies during this tense time?
- Will leadership and unity within the party remain stable?
- Should conservative Stalinists regain positions of influence?
- Should non-Communist organizations be permitted greater political participation?
- What role should student organizations play in political life?
- Should local governments receive greater autonomy from Prague?

- How should disagreements within the Communist Party be resolved?
- How can unity within the Communist Party be maintained while allowing ideological debate?
- Should Alexander Dubček remain First Secretary?
- What relationship should exist between the Party and the National Assembly?
- How do Czech and Slovak cultural identities and nationalism affect policy decisions?

Other Issues

Different economic and political issues often have a ripple effect that leads to the development of other, more peripheral issues that can build over time and be damaging if left unaddressed.

- How should the government address severe industrial pollution in regions such as the "Death Triangle" (the heavily polluted border region between northern Bohemia, East Germany, and Poland)?
- What measures should be taken to improve housing shortages and aging infrastructure?
- What policies should be enacted to discourage the emigration of skilled workers and intellectuals?
- What role should scientific research and technological innovation play in modernizing Czechoslovakia?
- What role should literature, theater, and film play in shaping national identity?



Characters

Ludvik Svoboda: President of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic (ČSSR) and a celebrated general of WWII. Widely respected by the Czechoslovak public and military, Svoboda has supported the reform process while remaining deeply committed to Czechoslovakia's alliance with the Soviet Union. His prestige, military background, and generally good standing with both reformers and Moscow give him authority as a mediator during the crisis.

Alexander Dubček: First Secretary of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSČ) and the principal political leader of the Prague Spring. An advocate of "socialism with a human face," Dubček seeks to democratize and liberalize Czechoslovak socialism without abandoning either communism or the Warsaw Pact. Enormously popular among the public, he must balance domestic demands for continued reform against escalating Soviet pressure.

Gustáv Husák: Deputy Prime Minister of Czechoslovakia and influential Slovak communist politician. Once imprisoned during the Stalinist purges and a sharp critic of Antonín Novotný, Husák initially supports the reform movement but is considerably more pragmatic than many of its leading figures. Politically ambitious and increasingly concerned with preserving order and

the Communist Party's authority, he is willing to consider compromise with Moscow if necessary to prevent a broader political catastrophe.

Alois Indra: Secretary of the KSČ Central Committee and one of the most prominent members of the party's conservative, pro-Soviet wing. A strong opponent of the Prague Spring's liberalization, Indra fears that continued reforms will destroy Communist Party control and encourage counterrevolution. Trusted by Moscow and involved with efforts to establish an alternative pro-Soviet leadership, he is positioned as a potential leader of a government capable of replacing Dubček's reformist administration.

Václav Havel: Playwright, essayist, and increasingly prominent independent intellectual. Havel is an outspoken advocate of freedom of expression, cultural independence, and greater political pluralism. His influence comes primarily through writers, artists, students, journalists, and other members of Czechoslovakia's increasingly assertive civil society.

Antonín Novotný: Former President of Czechoslovakia and deposed First Secretary of the KSČ. Once the country's dominant political figure, Novotný was forced from power as dissatisfaction with economic stagnation, Slovak grievances, and political repression helped produce the Prague Spring. Though politically weakened and personally unpopular among reformers, he retains relationships within conservative party networks and has every reason to see Dubček's reform movement discredited or reversed.

Stepan Chervonenko: Soviet Ambassador to Czechoslovakia and Moscow's principal diplomatic representative in Prague. Chervonenko serves as a crucial intermediary between the Kremlin and Czechoslovak leaders, communicating Soviet warnings, demands, and assessments. His access to both governments makes him one of Moscow's most important sources of political intelligence and influence inside Czechoslovakia.

Vladimír Škutina: Popular television journalist, broadcaster, satirist, and commentator known for using humor to criticize political authority. Previously imprisoned after satirizing President Novotný, Škutina became closely associated with the extraordinary expansion of press freedom during the Prague Spring. His access to mass media gives him considerable ability to shape public opinion, communicate with citizens, and challenge official narratives during a rapidly developing crisis.

Ota Šik: Deputy Prime Minister, economist, and principal architect of the Prague Spring's economic reforms. Šik advocates replacing central planning with a decentralized socialist economy incorporating greater enterprise autonomy while retaining socialist ownership. His proposals have made him one of the most internationally recognizable reformers—and a major target of conservative criticism. At the outbreak of the invasion, Šik is on vacation in Yugoslavia.

Vasil Biľak: Senior Slovak communist official and one of the most influential leaders of the conservative, pro-Soviet faction within the KSČ. Alarmed by political liberalization and increasingly hostile toward Dubček's leadership, Biľak believes the reforms threaten both socialism and Communist Party control. As a signatory of the secret appeal requesting Soviet assistance against alleged "counterrevolution," he maintains particularly important connections with Moscow and with conservatives seeking to reverse the Prague Spring.

Josef Josten: Exiled Czechoslovak journalist, publisher, and anti-communist activist based in London. After fleeing Czechoslovakia following the Communist takeover, Josten established himself as an important source of information about political repression and conditions behind the Iron Curtain. Through journalism, international contacts, and assistance to refugees and asylum seekers, he can mobilize Western attention in ways unavailable to figures operating within Czechoslovakia.

Věra Chytilová: Internationally renowned avant-garde filmmaker and one of the leading figures of the Czechoslovak New Wave. Known for formally experimental and politically provocative films, Chytilová represents the flourishing cultural freedom made possible by the gradual erosion of censorship. Her international reputation and connections within Czechoslovakia's artistic community give her a platform from which to defend cultural freedom and influence intellectual opposition to censorship.

Rita Klímová: Economist and lecturer at Charles University who has become an important supporter of the Prague Spring reforms. Once associated with the Stalinist wing of the Communist Party, Klímová has moved decisively toward reform and uses her academic and international connections to provide Western journalists with information about developments inside Czechoslovakia. Her access to both Communist Party circles and foreign media makes her a valuable intermediary between domestic reformers and international observers.

Vera Roubalová: Student at the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering of the Czech Technical University in Prague and participant in the increasingly active student movement. Involved in demonstrations, poster-making, and other forms of grassroots political organization, Roubalová represents a generation of young Czechoslovaks pushing the Prague Spring beyond elite party politics. Her influence lies in student networks and their ability to organize demonstrations, distribute information, and provide assistance.

Mária Sedláková: Editor-in-chief of the Slovak Communist Party newspaper *Pravda*, member of the KSČ Central Committee, and secretary of the Communist Party of Slovakia. A longtime critic of Novotný's leadership, Sedláková emerged as an important supporter of Dubček during his rise to power and helped advance the reformist cause from within the Communist Party itself.

An outspoken journalist as well as a party insider, she commands influence within both the Slovak political establishment and the increasingly independent Czechoslovak press.

Karel Kryl: Young singer-songwriter known as “the Czech Bob Dylan”, Kryl uses folk music to criticize political conformity and authoritarianism. For the purposes of the committee, his album *Bratříčku, zavírej vrátka* will appear during the first session, giving him a rapidly expanding national audience.

Milan Kundera: Novelist, playwright, essayist, and prominent member of Czechoslovakia's reformist intellectual community. Previously expelled from the Communist Party for political dissent before later being readmitted, Kundera has repeatedly challenged Stalinist dogmatism through his writing, including his internationally successful novel *Žert (The Joke)*—that is currently getting him into more hot water with the Party. He supports the Prague Spring's cultural and political liberalization while remaining engaged with debates over whether socialism itself can be successfully reformed.

Josef Smrkovský: Chairman of the National Assembly, member of the KSČ Presidium, and one of the Prague Spring's most charismatic political leaders. A committed communist who nevertheless strongly supports democratization and the dismantling of Stalinist politics, Smrkovský combines reformist credentials with considerable experience inside the party apparatus. A gifted public speaker with significant popular support, he is among the strongest advocates for continuing the reform program and has publicly rejected the likelihood that Moscow would resort to military invasion.

Additional Comments and Tips

- If looking for sources and quick overviews of characters, use the Czech version of Wikipedia (cs.wikipedia) instead of the English version, as you'll find a lot more information—Google Chrome will auto-translate it for you
 - Google will also auto-translate most Czech and Slovak webpages and primary sources (including the ones I have listed)
- My general plan is to begin the committee as noted, and allow delegates time to react to the immediate invasion by stretching August 20-21st into ~2 committee sessions, then stretching the timeline to allow the committee to reach at least the end of 1968.
 - I have a general idea of the structure and progression of committee, however this is subject to change based on delegates' actions!
- War crimes, murder, etc. are generally frowned upon (not allowed) so be creative about how to mount resistance (or aid the invasion...).
 - Military action is allowed, but let's keep in mind the Geneva Convention
- Take note of your portfolio powers. They provide foundational abilities to use in your crisis arcs!



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