

**CHARLES UNIVERSITY**  
**FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

Institute of International Studies

Communist History in the Czech National Historical Narrative  
---A Case Study of Czech Secondary Education History Textbook

Master's thesis

Author: Nana Qian

Study program: Master in Area Studies

Supervisor: Mgr. Ondřej Klípa, Ph.D.

Year of the defence: 2021



**FACULTY  
OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**  
Charles University

## **Declaration**

1. I hereby declare that I have compiled this thesis using the listed literature and resources only.

2. I hereby declare that my thesis has not been used to gain any other academic title.

3. I fully agree to my work being used for study and scientific purposes.

In Prague on

the 3rd of January, 2021

Nana Qian

## **Abstract**

After the collapse of the communist rule, how to collectively-memorize and narrate its Communist past in the contemporary context has been an urgent and critical mission for the Czech Republic. Interpretations and portrayals of the communist state have experienced a fluctuating path, from complete rejection to indifference and empathy. An examination of the re-interpretation of the Czech communist history to its younger generation could be an effective approach for a clearer and overall understanding of Czech communist history narration. Meanwhile, history textbooks are, to a great extent, representations of the authoritative narrative. Therefore, while drawing on the rich literature on both the studies of historical narrative and especially Czech communist history, the interpretation of Czech communist history narration in this research is focused on the close examination of a Czech secondary education textbook. This thesis argues that in addition to stating and explaining the general historical facts, the textbook utilizes emotionally descriptive expressions, selective depiction, and an indictive comparison to highlight a narrative of discontent and distrust towards the communist regime and the Soviet oppression while endorsing democratic values and the market economy of the West.

## **Abstrakt:**

Po pádu komunistické vlády se pro Českou republiku stalo kritickým a naléhavým úkolem přijít na způsob, jak komunistickou minulost uchovat v paměti a jak o ní vyprávět v současném kontextu. Interpretace a vykreslení komunistického státu prošlo kolísavou stezkou od kompletního popření přes lhostejnost po empatii. Zkoumání re-interpretace české komunistické historie mladším generacím by mohlo být efektivním prostředkem k jasnějšímu a všeobecnému výkladu české komunistické minulosti. Zatím jsou učebnice dějepisu do značné míry reprezentanty autoritativního příběhu. Proto se při čerpání z bohaté literatury o studiu historického narativu a zejména z českých komunistických dějin, z interpretace českého komunistického výkladu dějin v tomto výzkumu zaměřuji na důkladné zkoumání české učebnice pro střední školy. Tato práce tvrdí, že kromě uvedení obecných historických faktů využívá učebnice emocionálně popisné výrazy, selektivní zobrazení a indiktivní srovnání k zvýraznění příběhu nespokojenosti a nedůvěry vůči komunistickému režimu a sovětskému útiskem.

**Keywords**

Communism, history, Czech Republic, textbook, historical narrative

**Klíčová slova**

Komunismus, dějiny, Česká republika, učebnice, historický příběh

**Title**

Communist History in the Czech National Historical Narrative --- A Case Study of Czech  
Secondary Education History Textbook

**Název práce**

Komunistické dějiny v českém národním dějinném příběhu --- Případová studie české učebnice  
dějepisu pro střední školy

## **Acknowledgement**

I would like to take this opportunity to express of my gratitude to those who have contributed suggestions during the research and writing of this paper. Special thanks are due to my thesis adviser PhDr. Ondřej Klípa for guiding the direction of my thesis and encouraging me to complete the thesis in this short and stressful time. I would also like to express my gratitude to my dear friends Vlado, Tana and Sherry for helping with the material research and translation, critical suggestions, and thesis proofreading.

I would also like to thank the Faculty of Social Sciences of Charles University for the meaningful and enjoyable studying experience. I have greatly benefited from the classes with broad topics, various focuses, and in diverse forms.

In addition, I would like to pay my tribute to all the excellent academics and scholars for their research and findings that have built and enriched all disciplines of studies and human civilization.

## Table of Contents

<i>Table of Contents</i> .....	7
Introduction .....	8
Motivation.....	9
National historical narrative.....	9
Why study historical narrations in textbooks? .....	11
The chosen textbook.....	15
1. Defeat of democracy in Czechoslovakia.....	17
1.1 The match to maintain democracy.....	18
1.2 Communist overturn.....	21
1.3 Consolidation of the communist regime.....	30
2. From democratizing reform to normalization .....	38
2.1 Years of democratizing reform.....	39
2.2 Soviet intervention in the coup d'état.....	45
2.3 Post-Prague Spring "Normalization" .....	49
3. The restoration of democracy .....	54
3.1 The "Velvet Revolution".....	55
3.2 Elimination of totalitarianism.....	56
Conclusion .....	58
Summary.....	61
References: .....	62

## Introduction

Following the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the Soviet Union, Czech society has entered a new era. The fall of communism was characterized by enthusiasm and expectations<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, the later slogan of "The Return to Europe" also started to echo in the post-communist Czech society. It was high time for the Czech society, traditionally seen as the cross-roads of various movements of Europe<sup>2</sup>, to again deal with its complicated past, this time its communist past.

How the society has been dealing with its communist past to prepare itself for the free market economy, parliamentary democracy, and the pro-Europe diplomatic stance can be reviewed from multiple perspectives. Personal memories can differ; politicians' views can vary; academic analyses can contradict, but is there a universally advocated stance in the narration of the Czech communist past? Is there a narrative promoted by the Czech authority to stabilize certain stances and interpretations of its communist past?

This thesis employs the assumption that the use of language is a form of social practice tied to particular historical contexts through which different interests are served<sup>3</sup>. As all textbooks in the Czech Republic are required to obtain approval from the government authority, this thesis argues that the textbooks' historical discourse can also be regarded as a representation of the authoritative. This thesis analyzes the critical narration of Czech

---

<sup>1</sup> Brodsky, 2003

<sup>2</sup> Holy, 1996: Page 129

<sup>3</sup> Janks, 1997: Page 329



communist history in a widely used and recognized Czech secondary education history textbook. Through analyzing and examining the text itself, it aims to investigate how Czech communist history is reproduced and explained to the young generations.

## **Motivation**

Two motives have driven me to write about this topic. First of all, considering that historic narration can be adaptive, I am curious how mutual or one-sided narration directly affects factual historical knowledge delivery. Secondly, as an international student in Prague, I am inquisitive about how the Czech Republic deals with its Communist past and how its Communist History influences the country. There is countless scholarship research completed in Czech communist history studies, whereas very limited (I found none) studies have been conducted to exclusively examine how its communist history is portrayed in textbooks. After considerable research, I intend to focus on one aspect that is not yet well-studied in either Czech or English: the historical narration of the communist past in Czech textbooks. Considering the feasibility of completing the textbook translation and thesis writing, so rather than casting a comparison among textbooks, this paper focuses on a case study of investigating one secondary education book to exemplify the current status quo of historical narration of the communist history in the Czech Republic.

## **National historical narrative**

Historical narrative, namely, is the narrative adopted in presenting certain historical events. Jerzy Topolski (1987) defines historical narratives, as mentioned above, as means of historians

transmitting their knowledge of the past through description and interpretation. Moreover, according to C. Behan McCullagh (1987), the widely agreed "minimal requirement" of historical narratives is that they recount historical events in roughly chronological order to make them credible. An argument echoes the statement by Topolski (1987) that there are rules which connect past facts to their respective narrative representation, and he deems the coherence of a narrative as one of the conditions of reaching the truth.

So, is it possible to reach historical facts through a historical narrative? G. R. Elton (1970) considers it possible to present "lumps of analysis" of political history within an overall narrative structure. Ankersmit (1983), on the other hand, claims that historical narratives on the whole just "pretend" to be a possible adequate presentation of past facts and could largely result in forming full pictures from scattered facts. He also believes the construction of these totalities is merely an art because there are no rules for forming a narrative. Similarly, Gorman (1982) suggests that narratives can contain nothing but true sentences, yet careful selection produces an entirely distorted impression of the narrative subjects.

The arguments above all have their righteous points. Since historical narratives are constructed, more or less, based on past events, they should in return, more or less, be reliable presentations of the past. While how much credibility resides within those narratives is in the hands of varied factors.

And why do we exam historical narratives?

Paul Ricoeur (1981) has concluded that many historical synthesis studies have suggested that even "the humblest narrative is always more than a chronological series of events". Historical events are usually recorded in varied types of texts. How they are narrated, anchored,

and interpreted can vastly differ and could significantly diverge understanding of the history beyond merely connecting a string of facts. For example, the aspects that are selected to be covered or described in detail can influence the ultimate delivery of complete historical pictures. As pointed out by David Cannadine (1984), a narrative draws attention to certain important aspects of the narrative subject as it gives "disproportionate emphasis" to a limited number of considerations. Scholars from a wide range of disciplines have increasingly argued that political instability is rooted in the proliferation of competing historical narratives<sup>4</sup>. A narrative could account for important outcomes as it may embody a particular trend or be coined under a series of determinative goals or values<sup>5</sup>. To study historical narratives is an efficient way of understanding the connection among the past, present, and future and is particularly helpful with a multi-perspective understanding of the past.

### **Why study historical narrations in textbooks?**

American Historical Association (AHA, 2018) published "Guidelines for the Preparation, Evaluation, and Selection of History Textbooks" on its official website, stating that textbooks play a vital role in history education. History textbooks used in public schools usually are approved by governmental authorities. They are a significant vehicle through which the past events are portrayed to the young students, so to speak, society's future. The historical facts taught to the new generations are often one of the most officially recognized and needed historical aspects in the view of the incumbent state authority or its society or even its

---

<sup>4</sup> Hammack, 2010

<sup>5</sup> McCullagh, 1987

international community. Therefore, to look into textbooks, the public educator is robust evidence of the country's officially recognized way of historical narration.

However, the writing of history textbooks is sometimes not utterly credible as it is also a way of narrating past events in an "organized" manner. Jerzy Topolski (1987) views historical narrative as an approach of historians transmitting their knowledge of the past through description and interpretation. AHA also writes that apart from addressing a broad scope of topics, textbooks also "appropriately reflect authors' particular tastes and approaches." As John Issit (2004) has stated, this "authorial monotone underlines the claim to objectivity and neutrality inherent in textbooks." The textbook author has the relatively free space to interpret the historical events and ultimately, to some extent, lead to reshaping the history. These underlying interpretations would formulate the construction of history and the historical narrative itself<sup>6</sup>. History books are the most important, if not the only important, historical instrument for middle school students. Therefore, how their textbooks are narrated has a significant impact on the reception of historical events on the society's future major role players and is, on the other hand, a robust proof of the needs of its society, politics included.

In his comparative analysis of the history textbooks in post-Yugoslavia states, Michael Apple proves that the narrative of the past, communist past, in particular, is entirely determined by the present political needs<sup>7</sup>. The ideal construction of history would serve as a "counterpoint to communism" in order to forge the identity of the newly established states<sup>8</sup>. The communist past is comparatively recent, and thus, how the communist history is written on textbooks and

---

<sup>6</sup> Vanhulle, 2009

<sup>7</sup> Apple, 1991, 1995

<sup>8</sup> O'Donnell & Schmitter, 1986: Page 154

conveyed to those junior recipients can directly lead to strong emotions in these recipients and can serve as a "political opinion guideline" of the communist past<sup>9</sup>. Likewise, Stojanović (2017) also points out that, in order to manage a historical context for understanding the present, current circumstances decide which past facts to be emphasized and which ones to be omitted. In the meantime, images of the past value system, political turning points, and so on influence the future's unfolding.

The Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes, founded in 2007 in Prague, is the central institution for studying the political history of the 20th century. It writes on its official website that "a potential tension related to history teaching in schools is rising in Central European countries." It suggests that the interpretation of the communist history in the Czech land has been through a particular ticking between the long lines of the criticism of totalitarianism and nostalgic reflection of the fine old days. For central European societies experiencing a cultural transition, potential tension emerges between history education in schools and memory at individual and collective levels<sup>10</sup>.

Given the previously mentioned possibility of undermining credibility and neutrality in history textbooks, an insight into the narratives in history textbooks is, therefore, after four decades of communist rule, necessary and vital in the Czech case. However, very limited scholarship in neither the Czech nor English language has been conducted in this specific regard. This paper, as an effort to shed light on this little-studied area, investigates and analyses one Czech secondary education history textbooks: *Dějepis 4 pro gymnázia a střední školy*-

---

<sup>9</sup> Tawil & Harvey, 2004, Page 23

<sup>10</sup> Macgilchrist, 2014

Nejnovější dějiny (History 4 for grammar schools and high schools-Contemporary History).

This case study aims to analyze the textbook's overall adopted narrative to investigate how Czech communist History is narrated in history textbooks of Czech secondary education as a national historical narrative.

This paper will investigate the narrative of communist History on the Czech land mainly by the case study of looking into a widely used history textbook in high school, as well as analyzing and comparing with that of other literature in the meantime. The discussion on the relationship between education and history remembrance will be focused on the Czech context. No presumption of the historical narratives underlined in Czech secondary education history books would be made before the analysis and comparison unfold in the following parts of this article. This article is not an attempt to identify any "bad blood" in the history teaching in Czech secondary education. Nor does it intend to point out which claims in the chosen works are superior. But instead, it aims at providing an alternative of objectively understanding how communist history is narrated. Hopefully, this paper can bring light to a more well-rounded panorama of Czech history memory of its communist period.

It is also important to clarify the limitation of this paper. As an international student studying in an English-taught program in Prague, I have minimal knowledge of the Czech language. I read the textbook materials that are first auto-translated into English by Google Translate and then proofread and edited by my Czech college mates. The translation version might limit the accuracy of the author's understanding of certain linguistic or contextual sentences or words. Also, the other sources and literature that this paper refers to are also mostly in the English language.

## **The chosen textbook**

Despite a free choice of textbook selection by schools, all textbooks used in public secondary schools in the Czech Republic should obtain approval by the Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports in advance (Section 27, Education ACT No. 561/2004). Thus, history textbooks are representatives, to a great extent, of the authoritative narrative. This paper has chosen one of the most recognized and widely-used history textbooks in the Czech Republic to base its investigation and analysis.

Fifty-four secondary education schools nationwide responded to a 2008 survey by the Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports on the use of history textbooks. The textbook named *History for gymnasiums and secondary schools (Dějepis pro gymnázia a střední školy)* from the publishing house SPN - pedagogického nakladatelství, is the most widely used in schools (with 25 schools out of 54 surveyed schools). The textbook was first approved by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports for the first time in 2001 and is still widely in use today. It is also ranked in the first place in the evaluation of popularity among teachers in secondary education in the survey presented in the proceedings of Masaryk University NO.27/2013/1. This paper will analyze the communist history-related parts of this textbook in the category "Contemporary History".

This textbook is usually used in the senior year in secondary schools with students typically aged between 18 and 19 years old. This paper would like to note that Gymnasium secondary schools offer students various study programs and are geared towards preparing students for further studies in college, and are thus regarded as prestigious. Besides, the historical narration

in the used history textbook is significantly more detailed than the textbooks used in vocational or specialized secondary schools, which is why it is the primary analysis source of this thesis.

There are four chapters in the textbook's main body. Chapter 1 is "Between Two World Wars. The First Czechoslovak Republic - An attempt in Democracy in Central Europe; The title of Chapter 2 is "Second World War - Years of Failure". Neither Chapter 1 or 2 directly involves the history of Czech Communist rule, so this thesis will skip these two chapters. This thesis will mainly examine the narration in Chapter 3(page 111-149) and Chapter 4(page 151-205).

Chapter 3 is titled "Europe and the World after 1945. The Defeat of Democracy in Czechoslovakia". And the thesis mainly analyzes Section 5 "Defeat of democracy in Czechoslovakia"(page 130-134) and Section 8 "Consolidation of the communist regime in Czechoslovakia" (page 143-149).

Chapter 4 is titled " Divided World. From Totality to the Renewal of Democracy in Czechoslovakia". This thesis will mainly investigate its Section 5 "A failed attempt to build socialism in Czechoslovakia"(page 170-175), Section 6 "From reform to normalization" (page 176-183), Section 9 "The normalization era of building 'real socialism' in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic"(page 194-200), and Section 10 "Restoration of democracy and the establishment of the Czech Republic"(page 200-204).



## 1. Defeat of democracy in Czechoslovakia

This part "Defeat of democracy in Czechoslovakia" (Chapter 3, p.130) in the textbook *Dějepis pro gymnázia a střední školy (History for gymnasiums and secondary schools)* primarily mostly focuses on the historical period from early 1946 until the communist February Coup in 1948. Before this part in the same Chapter (III) titled "Europe and the World after 1945. The Defeat of Democracy in Czechoslovakia", there are also sections about the post-WWII world, the beginning of the Cold War, the dealing with Germans, a general description of post-war Czechoslovakia as a liberated republic as well as the position and fate of national minorities. This section ("Defeat of democracy in Czechoslovakia") is followed consecutively in the same chapter by the sections about the consolidation of the Soviet bloc, the western world, and the establishment of the Atlantic Alliance, and the consolidation of the communist power in Czechoslovakia.

This chapter is mainly written in chronological order. It depicted a Czech world that had returned to its liberal democracy from the totalitarian Nazi regime. At the same time, its democratic power was not competent enough to curb the political expansion of another non-democratic power in growth-- communists. Later, it led to an ultimate political take over by communists with the support of the Soviet Union in 1948.

This part of the writing in the book primarily emphasizes two aspects. The first one is that the democratic parties were initially unaware of the totalitarian nature of the communist party. Therefore, they missed the early opportunities to curb its growth and gradually lost the counter-balance to communist power. Eventually, they were swallowed by a hopeless political swamp controlled by the communists and thus failed to defend democracy. In contrast, the other

depicted aspect is how the communists took advantage of malicious political leverages such as scandals, intimidation, and the Soviet power to cast a thick shadow over the political struggle with non-communist powers.

This paper argues that the Czech communist history in the textbook is mostly written objectively with a string of key facts, for example, by writing about the efforts done by the democratic forces while simultaneously pointing out their limitations in the situation. On the other hand, it is still slightly selective and has set a tone of criticism and even direct hatred against communists while casting comparison, a tone of sympathy and gratitude towards the democratic powers.

### **1.1 The match to maintain democracy**

There is a part also named "The match to maintain democracy" in this Chapter of the textbook (Chapter 3, p.111-150), stating the political rivalry between the Communist Party and democratic segments. This chapter opens with remarks that "the political development in the country was determined by the pre-election battle of the candidate parties."<sup>11</sup> to indicate the non-democratic nature of the next election. Then it starts to unfold the narration of the battle between Communist and democratic powers from early 1946 until February 1948. This part of the textbook states the development of the power battle and change following mainly two lines: the schemes played by the communist party and its support from the Soviet Union, and the vain efforts and frustration of democratic forces.

---

<sup>11</sup> Page 111

Firstly, the textbook explains the provocative tactics employed by communists in order to seek more power. On the one hand, it writes that the communist party organized "extensive campaigns," "massive trials against the verdict of the protectorate government," incited national and class hatred, and "deliberately fueled the confrontational atmosphere with agitation, and even staged scandals and assassination attempts" to cause open crises. This part carries a slightly emotional tone when explaining the actions mentioned above by the communist party. One example is a sentence that goes as "On the eve of the election, the Communists handed out decrees on the allotment of land!" The tone underlying in this sentence is as if it is a frustrated person condemning the deeds of the communist party with the emotions highlighted by the exclamation mark at the end of the sentence.<sup>12</sup>

On the other hand, the book writes that communists "sought mass support" through special taxation policy with the demagogic slogan "Let the rich pay!" The narration here depicted the communist party as a power-seeking group with well-planned, robustly-played schemes. The textbook comments that "the state budget received only about 6 billion crowns" from Communists' taxation bill, and this "propaganda policy" gained more popularity for the communist party because the communist propaganda magnified the support from the Soviet Union. Another example is the food aid of 600,000 tons of grain from the Soviet Union to alleviate food shortage caused by natural disasters in Czechoslovakia. The textbook narrates that the food sent by the Soviet Union "only partially solved the critical situation." However, it was still propagandized by the Communist Party as the Soviets "saved Czechoslovakia again". The textual narration brings a stimulation of the feeling that despite the minimal benefits the

---

<sup>12</sup>Page 130-131

Communist Party brought to the state, due to the party's evil nature, the benefits from them are of no comparability with their intention of the monopoly of party rule. Even though, according to the statistics in "Act No. 59/1946 Coll. Financial Act of the Czechoslovak Republic" and "Act No. 234/1946 Coll., The Financial Act of the Czechoslovak Republic, the annual state administration was budgeted in the amount of CZK 31.4 billion for the year 1946 and 48.4 billion for 1947, meaning that the received 6 billion crowns actually contributed a considerably big part to the state revenue, and thus the "only" tone applied in the textbook seems unfair. Besides, a sense of sarcasm is raised here to satirize the communist propaganda for boosting the Soviet Union again as the savior of Czechoslovakia in crisis.<sup>13</sup>

Another political leverage employed by the communist party, as written in the textbook, is that Stalin brought a "decisive confrontation" by sending a high Soviet Official Valerian Zorin to urge the Czechoslovak communist party leader Gottwald to "ask for Soviet military assistance if necessary". This request was not accepted by Gottwald. Nevertheless, the narration here highlights the direct intervention of the Soviet Union in Czechoslovakia, the Czechoslovak Communist Party's reliance on the Soviet intimidation, and it indicates the significantly weaker power of the democratic forces.<sup>14</sup>

Secondly, the textbook depicts the democratic parties as anti-communist forces that constantly got frustrated and weakened by the political play of communists in the tough battle of defending democracy. It writes that democratic parties "thought" parliamentary democracy would be gradually implemented after the 1946 elections. After realizing they were "obviously

---

<sup>13</sup> Page 131

<sup>14</sup> Page 130-135

wrong", they "began to act more courageously and profiled themselves as opponents of the communists". This depiction hints how the democratic parties were astonished by the arbitrary communist party and how they were different and distanced from the communist party as the communist party corroded democracy, and non-communist parties bravely opposed communists to defend democracy.<sup>15</sup>

Another example is that 12 ministers from non-communist parties resigned in protest against the impending reassignment of several National Security Corps (SNB) commanders in Prague. The textbook describes that the ministers "believed the president would not accept their resignation"; "they expected that either early elections would take place or that the Communist Party would withdraw" and "they expected the political and governmental crisis to be resolved in a parliamentary way". All the "expected" and "believed" here contain the hopeful expectations of the non-communist forces. It makes the real result look disappointing. It forms a drastic contrast with the reality that the Communist Party used the situation to counterattack and seized power, with what could have become if things turned out differently at that moment. This description could stimulate the feel of pity in the reader.<sup>16</sup>

## **1.2 Communist overturn**

The book writes that the communist party demanded that President Benes accept the non-communist ministers' resignation with an obvious threat of armed forces. It was a vital step of the communists' seizure of power. Non-communists were counting on President Benes not to

---

<sup>15</sup> Page 131

<sup>16</sup> Page 132

accept the resignation of the ministers. However, it was "short-sighted", as described by the book. Only two public demonstrations of support for democracy were organized by Prague university students, making them "the only public opposition to the establishment of totalitarian power". Here the book indicates a tone of criticizing the tardiness and inactiveness of the counter-communist action by the non-communist forces, democratic politicians especially.<sup>17</sup>

Meanwhile, the book directly condemns the flagrant overturn of power by the communist party. After "democratic parties from public office at all levels" were removed by communists, the communists elected a few representatives from other parties in order to, as the book writes, "mask the fact that power in the state was seized by a single party". Since the overturn, the textbook starts to define the Communist-led rule as a totalitarian regime, which first appears in the depiction of college students' demonstration after the power overthrow, as "the only public opposition to the establishment of totalitarian power".<sup>18</sup>

To conclude this part of communist coup history, the text ends with the touching words President Benes told the Communist Party leader K. Gottwald at the signing of the resignation on February 25, 1948. This tragic and solemn excerpt accounts for around twenty percent in length in this section about the February communist coup in the textbook:

"The dearest oath to not only ourselves but also to the whole nation.....: We will remain faithful. If I resign, then it is only to prevent the fratricidal struggles with which you threaten me and which you are able to provoke. I believe that the Czechoslovak people will understand my actions and at the next opportunity will prove in their majority that their methods are foreign

---

<sup>17</sup> Page 132

<sup>18</sup> Page 132

to them and that you underestimated the moral maturity, loyalty, and democratic whirlwind of our people.<sup>19</sup>

President Benes's sorrowful farewell passage marks the official success of the Communist Party's seizure of power in Czechoslovakia. On the other hand, Benes's words provide the prediction or hope of the fall of the communist regime, which Benes deemed as "foreign" to the Czechoslovak land. The textbook quotes Benes's concluding words here to extend the distant feelings of communist seizure of power and the loss of democracy in history to promote positive patriotic emotions to defend democracy and the strong condemning feeling towards the communist party.

Following the narration of the communist seizure of power, the textbook continues to write about President Edward Benes' life stories in length. By exploring the place of Benes's direct individual experiences in collective events and historical time, the narrative can evoke many additional feelings with distinct temporalities.<sup>20</sup>

It starts by ranking Benes next to T. G. Masaryk as having the most involvement and intervention in modern Czech and Czechoslovak history in the first half of the 20th century. Following the conclusive remarks about the importance of Benes's role in Czech history, it writes that after having been elected as president, again, he was unable to "prevent the suffocation of Czechoslovak democracy". An analogy of the Nazi regime (a radicalized form of Fascism) with the Communist regime is underlined, both depicted as assaulters of democracy. The first time Czechoslovakia lost sovereignty to the Nazi regime; its democracy

---

<sup>19</sup> Page 133

<sup>20</sup> Maynes, Pierce & Laslett, 2019, Page 43

was devastated. Here, the textbook refers to the communist seizure of power as, again, suffocation of Czechoslovak democracy. This analogy is repeated multiple times in the textbook. The narration here embodies the helplessness of the democratic segments (represented by Benes) in Czechoslovakia in the face of absolute powers. Also, this narration treats communism, to some extent, as an equivalent to Fascism. This analogy could intensify the totalitarian image of the communist regime as the Nazi regime driven by Fascism has been universally perceived as an abuser of humanity and democracy.<sup>21</sup>

Interestingly though, the notion of Fascism held by the Marxists is merely the manipulation by monopoly capitalists<sup>22</sup>, which corresponds to communists' "class enemy" theory and distances itself from Fascism. Maintaining the anti-Fascist banner remained a primary feature of Communist Soviet policy (Payne, 2000). While in the meantime, both Fascist leaders Hitler and Mussolino emphasized the anti-communist thrust to save their countries from the "Bolshevik threat"<sup>23</sup>. Fascist movements criticized parliamentary democracy for not preventing the Marxist threat from existing in the first place<sup>24</sup>. Furthermore, one significant difference between the two ideologies is that the Communist ideology allowed space for potential reforms, even for socialism with a human face. However, such a thing would have been unimaginable under Nazism<sup>25</sup>. On the other side, both ideologies shared multiple similarities. Both had vast global significance, almost simultaneous emergence, common origins in Europe, and similar

---

<sup>21</sup> Page 133-134

<sup>22</sup> Fetscher, 1962

<sup>23</sup> Cannistraro, Wynot, 1973

<sup>24</sup> Soucy, 2020

<sup>25</sup> Tismaneanu, 2001



to the textbook's narrative, both Communist and Fascism are regarded by many as failed radical totalitarian movements<sup>26</sup>.

There are descriptive and emotional expressions in writing about Benes, which could call out the empathy and patriotism from the readers (mainly students in this context) to indirectly strengthen the theme of power and state stole by the communist party. There are also descriptions of Benes' personal life. The text narrates his humble family background, his study abroad experiences in Germany and France, his political science as "greatest love and passion", and how he befriended T. G. Masaryk and started to enter politics. By comparatively writing about Benes's personal experiences in detail, Benes's figure could appear closer to the readers(students), and a feeling of empathy could be stimulated among readers. Afterward, it uses Masaryk's words to conclude Benes's political contribution: "Without Benes, we would not have a republic". The tracing back to the establishment of the republic could easily recall the patriotism from its readers. Therefore, the narration of how Benes was cornered to sign an alliance agreement with the Soviet Union " as his effort to secure the Czechoslovak Republic" could help gain empathetic understanding from the readers. Also, it contrasts the image of a democratic defender of the Benes-led democratic force with the negative image of the communist party.<sup>27</sup>

The narration of Benes's personal experiences ends with his tragic ending of resignation from the presidency, his death a few months after the communist coup, and his misplaced reputation. In the textbook, it writes that the communist regime slandered him as a

---

<sup>26</sup> Tismaneanu, 2012

<sup>27</sup> Page 134

representative of "Munichism", "betrayal of the Czechoslovak bourgeoisie", and an "anti-people and anti-international" politician. Benes's life is an epitome of the most important historical events in Czechoslovakia. The narration brings the image of a nation that has been through great hardships and frustration in maintaining its democracy. It also inspires the feeling of closeness and empathy towards the experiences of the non-communist segments, in the meantime of condemning the Communist Party.<sup>28</sup>

Next, the textbook proceeds to describe the specific features of communist totalitarianism in Czechoslovakia. The first above all traits it says is that the constitutional institutions of a democratic state were preserved but were "excluded from decision-making at non-constitutional means", and it did not encounter resistance of the majority of the population. However, it was proceeded with "consent and support". Apart from using tactics like slogans and propaganda, the textbook does not describe other reasons why the communist party could win support in "a large part the citizens", especially the workers' and employees' categories. It is inadequate to simplify or selectively write about the historical background from merely one aspect and owe the communist party's sweeping victory to their political schemes in power struggle and provocation. Moreover, in the previous description of the power struggle between non-communist parties and the communist party, the book does not mention that the communist party had broad support from the masses, which was why they could mobilize people to demonstrations. Instead, the textbook only mentions the unions were its substantial leverage to influence the public and that the communist party frequently used them to organize massive strikes and demonstrations.

---

<sup>28</sup> Page 123

In narrating the communist victory, the textbook lacks a concrete explanation of the various background factors that contributed to their power growth and eventual election victor. Instead, it focuses mainly on the level of political struggles, the Communist Party's manipulation to fuel scandals and demonstrations, its expansive influence over key ministries, its doubled representation due to the separate Communist Party of Slovakia, as well as its support from the Soviet Union, and the missed anticipation or failed plans of the non-Communist parties. The textbook mentions some other reasons in a different section, "Czechoslovakia after the war" in Chapter 3. It describes that the Communist-leading the Ministry of Agriculture redistributed the land of Germans and Nazi collaborators to impoverished peasants in the land reform<sup>29</sup>, which partly contributed to the Communist Party's support base's growth. The nationalization of large enterprises and key industries is described as the drive for the emerging economic base of the Communist Party.<sup>30</sup>

A social transformation cannot occur unless the old structures are destroyed or at least weakened, or if there is an overwhelming desire for change<sup>31</sup>. Moreover, a transformation is due to fundamental changes in socio-political preferences<sup>32</sup>. Aside from the factors explained in the textbook, this paper argues that some non-mentioned social status-quos were also fundamental premises or bases for the Communist seizure of power. Even though the textbook has mentioned some historical backgrounds separately in other sections, their causal links to the communist rise are not established when narrating the background for the Communist

---

<sup>29</sup> Page 123

<sup>30</sup> Page 123

<sup>31</sup> Colla, 2019: Page 55

<sup>32</sup> North, 1990

overturn. That would result in the understanding that only the directly mentioned factors (political power struggle, Soviet Union's intervention, etc.) attributed to the Communist victory in the 1948 election.

Economy-wise, one primary feature of communism is deprivatization and a centrally planned economy, which might enlighten the labor class who tasted the bitter fruits of capitalism's flaws, such as mounting inequalities and worsening cycles of economic contraction. Moreover, all these capitalist economic setbacks could set capitalism to collapse in a revolutionary uprising ignited by the working class<sup>33</sup>. Therefore, apart from Communist Party's strategies to win support from the lower class explained in the textbook, the social-economic background for the Communist Party should be explained as the fundamental reason for its gaining of massive support from the labor class.

Besides, the textbook does not point out the favor over communism at the time was also a choice made by Czechoslovak people themselves, voluntarily, instead of only a result of the strategies of the Communist Party. Mary Heimann (2009) also argues that "the Czechoslovak People's Democracy was neither forced to go Communist nor to ally itself with the Soviet Union. It did both voluntarily, acting in what looked to the political leadership of the day to be national self-interest". The disappointing betrayal by the Western allies at Munich, the widespread enthusiasm for building a new post-war society, and other issues such as the United States' termination of a large loan to Czechoslovakia due to Benes government's strong opposition to the armament plan of Germany, which outraged the public, an offer of help by the Soviet Union and a revived conception of Pan-Slavic solidarity fed by strong anti-German

---

<sup>33</sup> Strayer, 2015

feelings<sup>34</sup>, responded to both the Communist Party (KSC) and the Soviet alliance<sup>35</sup>. These facts also contributed to the Communist Party's popularity.

In the following narration, the textbook writes that by the Communist overturn, the "democratic country" Czechoslovakia has become fully involved in the Soviet power bloc". The description here sets a tone that Czechoslovakia was a democratic country; however, under the invasion of a power that was foreign to this land, it fell into the hands of the communists backed by Soviet power. Also, it is "a great warning" for the democratic world to "look for means to counter the advancing Sovietization". Despite the fact mentioned in the textbook that the communist party obtained massive domestic support from mainly the labor class, the narration here has ignored this fact. It highlights that the power and the country were stolen by the expansion of Sovietization, which was executed by communists in Czechoslovakia.<sup>36</sup>

At the end of this section, the textbook illustrates a metaphor to describe and conclude the communist totalitarian rule: "the police and workers' unions worked like the pistons of a steam engine, while the National Front and the parliamentary system acted as levers, pushing the opposition out of the way". The metaphor has made the abstract and complex operation of the communist regime simpler for its recipients(students) to understand better how the Communist Party took advantage of the armed forces(police) and masses-based support from the unions to control the government and country completely.<sup>37</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> Guins, 1949

<sup>35</sup> US National Archive

<sup>36</sup> Page 134

<sup>37</sup> Page 134

The textbook maintains neutrality in the narration of some aspects, such as the depiction of the unwise misjudges of situations by the non-communist powers and their inactive response and that from the masses to the attempted coup. In addition to the considerably frequent usage of commentary expressions, the concentration of the a-top political power struggle together with the individualized story of President Benes's life has already set a tone in the history knowledge delivery to the younger generation, and thus have made it a struggle to keep its neutrality as institutional media in history education.

### **1.3 Consolidation of the communist regime**

The description of the rule of the communist regime in Czechoslovakia is mainly discussed in the last module (title "Consolidation of the communist regime in Czechoslovakia) of Chapter 3(title "Europe and the World After 1945. The Defeat of Democracy in Czechoslovakia"), from page 143 to page 149 in the textbook. This paper concludes that the description of the communist rule consolidation in Czechoslovakia in the textbook is primarily written from two perspectives, so this part of the analysis will follow these two perspectives to investigate the narration applied in the textbook. The first perspective is political-totalitarian power in practice, and the second is on the socialist economy. This paper argues that this part of the chosen textbook utilizes descriptive narration to reinforce the discontent tone of the communist regime, and particular highlights of the Czechoslovak economic setback attribute to the close relationship with the Soviets and Eastern bloc are also made.

The textbook begins the description of communist rule in practice in Czechoslovakia with a remark that "After February 1948, it became clear that the communist coup was to be secured

and completed by the establishment of a totalitarian regime." This remark has set the tone before the content unfolds and has thus limited the students' independent critical judgment. After this, the text continues to write about the initial enhancement of the communist regime. The regime's structure was "fully in line with the one-party system of government", and the regime carried out a "cleansing of public life" by arresting communist opponents, which directly resulted in an exodus of non-communist leaders from leading positions in public life or even went into exile.<sup>38</sup>

In the following description, the book proceeds to write about the history of the Communist dealing with non-communist parties. It says that the ruling communist party opted to use non-communist parties as "a mere cover for a totalitarian organization" in the dilemma of "whether to liquidate them or involve them in the newly created political system". In the text, it says that Social Democratic Party (Česká strana sociálně demokratická, ČSSD) was directly incorporated into the communist party in mid-1948 but with only around a third of original membership left, and the remaining part had "undergone a revival and purification". Furthermore, the textbook writes that "a similar fate awaited mass social organizations and various associations and trade unions" and afterward most of them "will become an instrument for exercising the power of a single party - the Communist Party". The expression here is as if it is a confident political critic foreseeing future politics. It highlights that it is clearly inevitable that the communist party would hunt the non-communist parties and organizations to serve the single-party regime.<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> Page 143

<sup>39</sup> Page 143

On the other hand, the textbook in the following part writes that in one single year after the communist party took power, the Czechoslovak communist party (KSC) members "increased significantly from 1.3 to 2.1 million", among which thousands of them joined the party "out of conviction", "out of existential reasons", or "out of purely careerist reasons". The text's order also can stimulate an impression that the leap of communist members was a result of the political cleansing, which is arguable as it selectively omits the fact that hundreds of thousands of new joiners voluntarily joined for what they believed in the party at the time. The implied message from the listed reasons in the textbook is that: yes, indeed, a large number of people had joined the ruling party. However, many of them joined it not because they were willing to join it but because they were forced to join it. It is relatively debatable that the communist membership had grown by nearly 1 million within one year; however, similar to its approach to narrating the wide popularity the communist party had gained before the February coup in 1948, the textbook omits the description of the support of the Communist Party from the massive size of new joiners who joined out of their own will. The textbook selectively emphasizes the tone of forceful membership.<sup>40</sup>

For instance, there were strong resolutions passed to a communist rally in Prague as early as May 12, 1945, attended by a crowd of communists and interested communists-to-be:

"We shall build a strong Communist Party, a tried and trusted fighter for the freedom of the nation and of the working people. We shall open the doors of the party wide, primarily to those who have proved themselves in the heroic struggle

---

<sup>40</sup> Page 143



against bestial Fascism under the most difficult conditions, and mainly to workers in the factories, working peasants and the intelligentsia."<sup>41</sup>

Melissa Feinberg (2006) argues that in the political discourse of the prewar Czech society, "democracy" could mean a "liberal state with the republican government", an "egalitarian community of citizens", a "state dedicated to social justice and equality of economic opportunity" or "something else entirely". The Communist Party's vision responded to some of such expectations of an ideal society. Compared with most of its non-communist counterparts, the Communist Party had a better-defined blueprint of the society it wished to create. And this kind of offering an answer in the immediate time to a country that experienced the Western betrayal at the Munich Agreement, and just restored sovereignty with the help of the Soviet Red Army, significantly promoted the Communist Party and led to a massive leap of the number of communists in Czechoslovakia<sup>42</sup>.

Following the explanation of how the communist party strengthened its muscles in controlling the one-party regime by eliminating influences from other parties as well as vastly recruiting new members, the textbook then explains how the communist totalitarian power was exercised. A "rigid centralization of state administration" was applied, the book writes, and that a particularly "illegal component of the new regime was created by Soviet advisers" as "everything essential" must "serve Soviet interests". The image of a totalitarian communist regime's close relationship with the Soviets is further stressed in the textbook.<sup>43</sup>

---

<sup>41</sup> Fulka, 1970

<sup>42</sup> Wightman & Brown, 1975

<sup>43</sup> Page 144

In the ensuing description, the book writes that it was "no wonder" that in the "manipulated atmosphere" of "intimidation" which had left the voters "no choice" when accounting for the communist victory in the 1948 elections. Accompanying the "evoked feelings of fear and a sense of powerlessness", the textbook writes that many citizens felt "passivity and indifference" to politics, and it was used by the regime "to exercise dominance". This narration paints a picture that the Czechoslovak people did not really vote for or support the Communist Party but were forced into the choice.<sup>44</sup>

Furthermore, political persecution is concluded in the textbook as a primary political means of the so-called "political processes" to consolidate the communist power. The role of Moscow is emphasized in this event. And a bluntly condemning tone towards the communist regime's persecution is formed by using descriptive condemning expressions. The condemning narration is further strengthened in the contrast narration of the innocence and excellence of the persecuted. The "idea of political processes" was set up "at the instigation of Moscow" in January 1955 by the presidency of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, and the idea was fully developed after "a larger group of Soviet advisers arrived in Czechoslovakia". The textbook explains that "the consolidation of the communist regime was accompanied by manifestations of illegality and widespread persecution", which were "systematic and characteristic means of exercising totalitarian power" and especially manifested "the hypocrisy and moral incompetence of the then party and state leadership". Moreover, the "repressive"

---

<sup>44</sup> Page 145

state power "became the executive of mass execution", which resulted in "23,000 innocent and unjustified" people the forced labor camps "suffering from the communist regime".<sup>45</sup>

To further explain, the textbook emphasizes that "most of the processes were artificially constructed" based on the communist State Security body StB provocations "under the leadership of Soviet advisers". And the StB played a "criminal role in the preparation of political process". Before the show trials, "questions and answers" were "discussed endlessly with the defendants," and the "tragic theatre known for Moscow trials was repeated" in Czechoslovakia. Besides, "the trials were illegal simply because guilt and punishment were not decided by judicial bodies, but by political bodies - the Communist Party bodies". It also claims that "political responsibility for judicial crimes lies with the party leadership" of the communists.<sup>46</sup>

Examples were added to describe the communist prosecution further, and the textual narration was with noticeably emotionally directive elements. The textbook writes that "the indictment against Bishop Dr. J. Zela" was "asserted absurdly"; and that "even elite athletes" could not "escape" the political prosecution and "these unforgettable representatives" were "sentenced to many years in prison after a senselessly fabricated accusation"; another example is a trial of former communist functionaries in which "11 death sentences were handed down (8 of those convicted were Jews)" and "the trial was clearly anti-Semitic". The narration of trials utilizes a combination of factual history and descriptive words such as "endlessly" "absurdly" "even" "clearly" "simply" and so on to add and strengthen the tone of condemnation

---

<sup>45</sup> Page 145

<sup>46</sup> Page 145; Page 172

of the communist regime. In addition, it reminds the readers that the prosecution took form from Moscow trials again to point out the Soviet influence on Czechoslovak communist rule. It also seems to remind the readers of the Communist regime's anti-Semitic nature to hint at a similarity between Nazism and totalitarian communism.<sup>47</sup>

Economy-wise, one of the significant characteristics was the "rapid and complete introduction of socialization of the economy and for the liquidation of the private sector". The centralized economy was "managed from a single center and according to a single central plan" by "not economic analyses, but political goals". The ruling communist party is described as the "sole master of the entire economy". The textbook affirms the positive results from the communist economic management as the economic system "was able to record a relatively high growth rate for a transitional period and expand the country's economic and military potential, and even partially increase the living standards of the population". A U-turn is taken following the achievement depiction in the sentence beginning with "although" to discredit the achievement by that following "but" sentence: but it was "all at the cost of depleting reserves and clearly at the expense of the future".<sup>48</sup>

The economy "was governed by five-year economic plans" which outlined "the general line of construction of socialism according to the Soviet model". The textbook points out that Czechoslovakia's position as "an armory of the Soviet bloc" was "fully reflected in its foreign trade ties". Its foreign trade was completely one-sided, 70% of which focused on the CMEA countries, especially the Soviet Union. That meant "a strong attachment to the Soviet Union

---

<sup>47</sup> Page 146

<sup>48</sup> Page 148-149; Page 142

and the CMEA", and this tie with the Eastern bloc is interpreted as that "Czechoslovak Republic adapted its successful economy to the less developed countries". The textual connotation seems to imply that the economic setbacks Czechoslovakia faced or would face soon were due to its economic adaption following the Soviet model and its attachment with the poorer states in the Eastern bloc. A sense of Czechoslovakia's economic superiority to the Soviet bloc is embodied in the narration. Apart from the mainly East-orientated foreign trade, the textbook does not discuss the missing stimulus of competition for the Czechoslovak economy to develop further<sup>49, 50</sup>

Further criticism of the communist economy is employed through the narration of the collectivization of agriculture. The first wave of collectivization was launched by the Act on Unified Agricultural Cooperatives adopted in February 1949. The second wave of collectivization came in 1952-1953 and the third stage after 1955. The agricultural collectivization, as narrated in the textbook, "brought even fewer lasting results," and many peasants "rightly felt deceived by the Communist Party". Furthermore, "farmers were particularly annoyed by unskilled and politically motivated interventions by party authorities in the management of agriculture, which resulted in a sharp decline in agricultural production". Farmers' emotions and the commentary description are used to emphasize the discontent towards the communist regime.<sup>51</sup>

---

<sup>49</sup> Zeman, 1969

<sup>50</sup> Page 149

<sup>51</sup> Page 149

## 2. From democratizing reform to normalization

After over two decades of intense feeling that Czechoslovakia was an annexed province of the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia became once again the master of its own destiny to strike for its own path to socialism<sup>52</sup>. Following the death of Stalin in 1953, a degree of "de-Stalinization" slowly took place. In the early 1960s, in response to an economic downturn, Czechoslovak President Antonin Novotny introduced an economic reform that subsequently sparked popular demand for political and social reform<sup>53</sup>.

Czechoslovakia, although led by the Communist Party, peacefully implemented a comprehensive and thorough reforming program. Unlike the feverish Polish and Hungarian revolutions initiated from below in 1956, the Czechoslovak reform was not a spontaneous mass movement, and it was not anti-communist. Instead, its revolutionary program of reform initiated from above by the Czechoslovak Communist Party reformists was clearly socialist in nature<sup>54</sup>. Yet, the Soviet government viewed the Czechoslovak reforming development as a threat and decided to intervene in the Czechoslovak attempt to establishing a so-called "bourgeois" system<sup>55</sup>. Soviet attitude during the Czechoslovak crisis combined hostility with compromise. Because of the non-radical and non-violent nature of the Czechoslovak reform, it took Moscow longer (months) to reach a consensus to deal with this challenge of the Soviet

---

<sup>52</sup> Holy, 1996

<sup>53</sup> Gina Peirce

<sup>54</sup> Valenta, 1984

<sup>55</sup> Gina Peirce

political and ideological interests. Only in May 1968 did the Politburo seriously begin to contemplate military intervention as a viable option<sup>56</sup>.

In the textbook, besides holding a neutral stance in constructing most of this period of history picture, it occasionally employs intensely expressive and descriptive words to emphasize the dissatisfying management of the regime and strong opposition to the Soviet Power. Besides, similar to the book's approach to adding Benes's life stories after the narration of the Communist seizure of power, the textbook placed the "Two Thousand Words" manifestation after the narration of the failed reform, the Soviet military intervention, and the "normalizing" measures. The intention of adding this rather lengthy document to the textbook in such a layout seems to stimulate feelings of shame and regret of the target readers (secondary-school students). Furthermore, it could help upgrade their negative feeling about the communist regime, the Soviet regime especially.

## **2.1 Years of democratizing reform**

In early 1953, shortly after Stalin, the head of the Communist Party in Czechoslovakia also died, which naturally led to the shift of power takeover. Communist leader Antonin Zapotocky was elected as President and Slovak communist politician Viliam Siroky became Prime Minister. The Central Committee of the Communist Party held a meeting later in September 1953 and launched the so-called "New Course" program. The textbook objectively affirms the positive results by stating that "After all, the 'New Course' brought some results". People's

---

<sup>56</sup> Valenta, 1984

material situation "was somewhat improved," and the "aggravated mood in society was somewhat calmed by the fact that large political processes ceased".<sup>57</sup>

Nonetheless, the accomplishment of the "New Course" is limited as Communist Party "mistakenly believed that the crisis of confidence had been averted" and the party leadership failed to "see that the process of growing social and political crisis is deeper". When a new phase of this regime crisis broke out in the spring of 1956, the Communist Party "did not intend to allow any discussions." Only until "the world press and foreign radio broadcasting for Czechoslovakia" systematically discussed the issue, the communist party leadership decided to hold an internal discussion to look at its own past critically. A consensus was reached in the communist leadership that "debates on the correctness of the Communist Party's political line and apparent political crimes of the previous period cannot be accepted" and "it did not lead to real changes to the old system." However, the inclination of reform within and outside the Communist Party could not be stopped.<sup>58</sup>

Meanwhile, the uprisings against the communist regime in the neighboring Eastern bloc countries, Poland and especially Hungary in 1956, were alerting to both the Communist Party in Czechoslovakia that "tried to misuse the facts" about the uprising events and Czechoslovak citizens who "apparently did not want to solve social problems in a similar way". The textbook also writes that "at that time, most of society did not yet feel opposition to the Communist Party," and thus, what the Czechoslovak people wanted was not an anti-regime revolution but a reform to improve the regime and society. This narration does not wholly correspond to its

---

<sup>57</sup> Page 171

<sup>58</sup> Page 171



previous emphasis on the people's opposition to the regime, which gives the readers the impression that the Communist regime had already become the public enemy with the support base from the masses. So, it is absurd to see its description in this context that the majority of Czechoslovak citizens were not anti-communist.<sup>59</sup>

The "current of reform within the ruling party" was still "weak" by the time when the Hungarian uprising broke out. But factors, such as the stagnation of the economy and the influence of the reform-minded members within the Communist Party, push the Communist Party to seek a necessary reform. Compared with the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, the Czechoslovak reform movement, as argued by Czech historian Zbynek Zeman, is more of an intellectual exercise<sup>60</sup> because the people managed to produce reforming results without a large-scale violence outbreak. The reform started mainly from the economy, soon followed by social and political liberalization. The textbook mentions the sharp decline of Czech trade with China, the Berlin and Caribbean crises, and the hit of two barren years of natural disasters in 1963-1965 to account for the Czechoslovak economic stagnation.

However, "the inefficient economic management system itself" by the Communist Party, as explained in the textbook, was "above all the crisis factors." The Communist Party leadership discussed the next path of the Czechoslovak economy after "the economically catastrophic year of 1962". The following liberalization of the economy "represented the most radical and deepest economic reform in the entire Soviet bloc." The economic reform, as stated in the textbook, was based on the following principles: basic directive role of the economic plan,

---

<sup>59</sup> Page 143

<sup>60</sup> Zeman, 1969

expansion of the independence of enterprises and the measuring of a company's success by gross profit.<sup>61</sup>

The economic reform sparked the democratization and liberation of the society (politics in particular), as "the democratization and liberation of economic life cannot be separated from the democratization of political life". Criticism in the ideological field took place, which "penetrated deeper into the hitherto unshakable dogmas and raised doubts about the whole regime". The narration of an opposition current against the regime in Slovakia unfolds. The abolishment of the Board of Commissioners and limiting the powers of the Slovak National Council were signs of Prague centralism, which aroused opposition among Slovak society. The communist leadership's responses to the Slovak discontent are described as "ill-considered and blunt" that exacerbated the situation. The Slovak opposition's main demand was "also connected with the efforts to democratize the regime."<sup>62</sup>

As the "barrier of fear of totalitarian power has been broken", the voices demanding real democracy got higher, which was largely embodied in the "tension between culture and communist power." The textbook narrates this tension by drawing detailed examples from the film industry, theatre, literature, and other cultural fields such as radio and newspapers. All these cultural criticism and debate on the regime "have intervened in all areas of life, broken long-standing taboos and helped to shape public opinion that has been silenced for years". The textbook concludes the narration of cultural criticism of the Communist regime by remarking

---

<sup>61</sup> Page 172

<sup>62</sup> Page 173

that what those cultural influencers expressed was "just what most of society instinctively thought and felt".<sup>63</sup>

Another aspect of the reforming period narrated in the textbook is the Communist party's relations with the youth. The Czechoslovak Youth Union (ČSM) became a "mere existential formality of membership" as more and more young people tried to "break away from the forced way of life". Their anti-regime elements on the youth are highlighted in the textbook from two perspectives: their pursuit of western lifestyle and their public expression of political criticism and appeals. The youth "sought fun and adequate satisfaction for their interests in a lifestyle similar to that of their peers in developed countries" through enjoying the same music, dressing in the style, and wanting to explore new countries as the youth in the West. Their pursuit of the western lifestyle, according to the textbook, "supported the spontaneous expressions of dissatisfaction" which the communist regime struggled to contain. On the other hand, the communist regime's dealing with the young educated students entangled. Students demonstrated "extraordinary ingenuity in criticizing contemporary conditions".<sup>64</sup>

In the wave of reform, the Communist Party leadership's conservative segments started to lose ground while the regime "watched with concern about the growing call for the introduction of elements of plurality into the political system". The totalitarian communist regime at this moment, as narrated in the text, "found itself in disarrays" partly as a result of the emergence of institutional independence, revival of associations, and other components of civil society. Nonetheless, there was "still a monopoly on the power of the Communist Party".<sup>65</sup>

---

<sup>63</sup> Page 173-174

<sup>64</sup> Page 174-175

<sup>65</sup> Page 175-176

Condemnation on the communist leader is emphasized in the textbook regarding the critical social voices "against the unprofessional way of managing the economy and other areas of society" and Novotny's personal intention of abusing power "to save his position. This discontent with Novotny is further stressed in that most of the reformists within the communist party wanted the removal of him. Novotny was replaced secretly with the covered information telling the public that he voluntarily resigned to ensure the power change was under the ruling Communist Party's control. Another wave of social criticism was accumulated after "a disparate coalition of party functionaries took part in enforcing the change in the leadership of the Communist Party". And this motive in the reform currents is interpreted as "the legacy of the authentic tradition of the anti-fascist resistance", which implies that the communist regime is an equivalent occupier as the Nazi regime and the opposition of Czechoslovak people against the communist regime is as just and inspiring as their resistance to the Nazis.<sup>66</sup>

Overall, the democratization reform is aimed at not the full sense of democracy, but at establishing a socialist democracy, to create "socialism with a human face", a notion incorporated by reformist leaders of the Czechoslovak Communist Party in 1968, shortly before the Soviet intervention. The reformists did not intend to liquidate the essence of the socialist establishment, but the "bureaucratic-totalitarian model of socialism taken from the Soviet environment", to establish a more democratic model that would better reflect the "traditions of Czechoslovakia's historical development". The Soviet influence is again emphasized in the communist rule in Czechoslovakia, and a strong indication is made in the textbook that this Soviet influence directly caused the totalitarian elements in the Czech socialist society.

---

<sup>66</sup> Page 176

Czechoslovakia is depicted as a country with a democratic tradition, and the bureaucratic totalitarianism was foreign to this state, brought by the Soviet influence.<sup>67</sup>

Civil society awoke as the reform moved closer towards "real political pluralism". One important symbol was the foundation of the Club of Engaged Non-Partisans (KAN) in March 1968, whose root remained socialist support of the reforming process. By this time, as written in the textbook, "the Communist Party had lost the ability to unambiguously dictate its will," which led to a change in its political system "without thoughtful, conceptual interventions from the center." And in April 1968, the goal, forms, and limits of the reform were stated in the Communist Party's Action Program. Without changing the essence of the socialist political organization, the program promised more democracy and autonomy in politics, market, civil rights, artistic creation, and so forth, which was a considerable leap of communist rule. However, it received a "quite cold" reception from the public. Because, according to the textbook, it did not offer what had been "taken for granted in the civilized world"; it offered "a problematic vision"; and that the program would be implemented by "apparently conservative politicians." Regardless, further reform steps proceeded until the Warsaw Pact countries' international intervention came out of "brotherly love" to stop the reforms.<sup>68</sup>

## **2.2 Soviet intervention in the coup d'état**

The Czechoslovak reforms intimidated the communist regimes in the Soviet Bloc, and they therefore "tried to stop them at all costs" so as not to stimulate possible similar reforms in their states. In May 1968, the Brezhnev Doctrine claimed the necessity of defending socialism in

---

<sup>67</sup> Page 176

<sup>68</sup> Page 177

Czechoslovakia as part of the common defense of the socialist bloc, which directly paved the way for military interference in the so-called "catastrophic" Czechoslovak situation. The Soviet delegation, insisting that socialism in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic was threatened, "broke customs and arrived in the strongest group of Politburo members. The Soviet delegation "expressed the opinion that any freedom and democracy meant the end of socialism" to highlight that communist rule, especially under the communist regime in the Soviet model, is not compatible with the nature of democracy.<sup>69</sup>

On August 3, 1968, a Communist Party meeting was held in Bratislava, which reached the agreement on preparing a coup d'état. Meanwhile, during the meeting, representatives from the hardline Communist Party members in Czechoslovak presented the Soviet leadership a "Letter of Invitation" to help against the so-called "counter-revolution." A last, the military intervention to Czechoslovakia was adopted at a new meeting on August 18, 1968.<sup>70</sup>

When the troops led by the Soviet Union entered the Czechoslovak territory, the pro-Soviet Czechoslovak Communist Party leaders saw the Soviet intervention as "fraternal international aid in 'saving socialism in Czechoslovakia. On the contrary, the textbook explains that the troops "occupied the country against its will" and "violated the principles of socialist relations and international standards" to emphasize that this intervention is an invasion and occupation by nature. The text points out that the military invasion sparked such a massive and spontaneous resistance against the "humiliation" among the civilians and even some communist officials that even the authors of the "invitation letter" did not find the courage to

---

<sup>69</sup> Page 178

<sup>70</sup> Page 179

declare a "workers 'and peasants' government." The text implicates that the Soviet-led military intervention was a humiliating occupation and that the proponents of the old Communist orders should feel ashamed of their invitation of the Soviet intervention, which contradicted their claim of a regime for the workers and peasants.<sup>71</sup>

The intervention military forces are also clearly listed in the textbook: "750,000 soldiers, 6,300 tanks, 800 aircraft, 200 cannons, and other equipment" to emphasize the massive size of the intervention. Czechoslovak people defended themselves with "unarmed and non-violent resistance to the occupation." A clear contrast of the civilians' unarmed resistance with the heavily-equipped military intervention force highlights the courage and determination of the Czechoslovak people and the overwhelming intimidation of the Soviet forces. The anti-intervention and pro-reform communists are narrated as patriotic as other Czechoslovak people who stood up to the Soviet intervention. Unlike the previous narrations in the book, the criticism here is not towards the entire communist regime but is mainly targeted at the Soviet forces and the pro-Soviet segments in the Czechoslovak Communist Party. The pro-reform communists who were not standing by the Soviets were exempted from the condemnation but are positively portrayed in this part of historical narration. On the other hand, the narration strongly links the conservative communists with the Soviets, portraying both as an enemy of the Czechoslovak people.<sup>72</sup>

Also, the resistance is portrayed as not only a symbol of the Czechoslovak population's opposition to the Soviet intervention but also as proof of their attitude toward the communist

---

<sup>71</sup> Page 179

<sup>72</sup> Page 179

regime on the whole. The population resisted, "refused to cooperate with the occupying forces," and organized political protests "with the ingenuity that the democratic world admired." The text acclaims and highlights the Czechoslovak population's pro-democracy nature to hint its otherwise closer connection with the democratic West if not having been trapped by the totalitarian power of the Soviets. Moreover, "in this way, the world learned true information about the attitudes of the population". The underlined narration is that the Czechoslovak people may not have been very vocal or progressive in opposing the communist regime. However, this public resistance to the Soviet military intervention is proof of the actual negative attitudes towards the Communist Party. There was no mass bloodshed in the demonstrations against the Soviet, but as emphasized with a strong emotional attachment by using of the exclamation mark at the end: "However, this doesn't mean that the occupation will not claim its civilian casualties!" Around 90 civilians died, and over 300 people were severely injured.<sup>73</sup>

Days after the Soviet intervention on August 23, 1968, Soviet leaders began negotiations with Czechoslovak officials in Moscow as "the Moscow rulers accepted the idea that they would have to ensure the restoration of the totalitarian order in Czechoslovakia in a different way". As a result, the reform measures were pushed for abolition, and the reformists were forced to "make concessions and degrading self-criticism."<sup>74</sup>

---

<sup>73</sup> Page 179

<sup>74</sup> Page 179



## 2.3 Post-Prague Spring "Normalization"

"Consolidation" of the communist rule was launched in the autumn of 1968. The textbook concludes it as "a process of a gradual return to the pro-Soviet totalitarian regime" during mid-1968 and mid-1971, which marked the beginning of the "normalization" era, the whole process of "fully totalitarian political and social development from mid-1968 until November 1989."<sup>75</sup>

A direct result from the Soviet intervention was the "occupying troops" stationed in the Czechoslovak territory. The so-called "middle-group of Soviet troops" with a total of 75,000 soldiers played the role of "general interference in the internal affairs of the Czechoslovak Republic," regarding which the textbook remarks that "every illegal concession was the legalization of the stay of Soviet troops on the Czechoslovak territory to point out the illegal nature of the concession of Czechoslovak officials and of the Soviet troops' residence in Czechoslovakia. Nevertheless, "Consolidation" was increasingly gaining support "in the sphere of power", and besides the abolition of reforming measures, proponents of the Soviet order demanded harsh sanctions against reformists. This is depicted as a "deep moral crisis" in the textbook, in which even extreme resistance manifestations like the self-immolation protests failed to reverse the development of the situation."<sup>76</sup>

After the celebration of the Czechoslovak hockey team's defeat of the Soviet team twice at the World Cup in 1969, in which were also "expressions of dissatisfaction with the Soviet occupation," the Soviet leader Brezhnev demanded "the swift and unequivocal liquidation of the reformist communists at all levels". Under this situation, even the previously pro-reform

---

<sup>75</sup> Page 180

<sup>76</sup> Page 180

communist officials in Czechoslovakia "succumbed to illusion" and elected Gustav Husak to head the Communist Party, who turned out to be "associated with the renewal of the totalitarian communist government in almost the entire era of normalization. Other important state positions were taken by communists loyal to Moscow". From the depiction of the political opposition expression in celebrating a Czechoslovak sporting defeat of the Soviet team, followed by the Soviet leader's order of a thorough political cleansing of reformist communists, then to the newly-formed pro-Soviet Communist government, the textbook stresses the influence from the Soviet Union in the Czechoslovak Communist Party's power consolidation. Under the wording "succumbed to illusion," when an anti-reformist was elected the Communist party leader, the tone criticizes the decision reached within the party and seems to strengthen the impacts of the Soviets and the Communist Party leaders in the normalization era.<sup>77</sup>

The textbook identifies the deeds in the political cleansing as "guilt". A large part of people was expelled from the Communist Party, and their livelihood was also affected. Non-communists were also exposed to "existential insecurity". Strong expressions are employed to describe the result of the political cleansing. The political oppression made most citizens indifferent to the "disgust" of the regime and "manipulated" people into electing the Communist Party. The Communist Party also concluded the interpretation of the recent reforming history which reviewed the Soviet intervention as "fraternal international aid" and the reforming process as "counter-revolution. The textbook also points out that the

---

<sup>77</sup> Page 180

condemnation of the cultural, artistic, scientific and educational fields was devastating the culture and the condemnation was "unhistorical", "unfair" and "incorrect".<sup>78</sup>

The complete "Two-Thousand Words" manifesto is added after the narration of the consolidation measures and results. This was considered one of the first and most essential steps that started the Prague Spring<sup>79</sup>. This manifesto, published by the prominent writer Ludvík Vaculík called on the Czechoslovak people to take the lead in implementing the proposed reforms<sup>80</sup>.

As a reminder of what the society could have been and the challenges it might encounter during the freedom-reviving process, the declaration contrasts the wishes and expectations with the reality, and the possible challenges with the realization of the problems, and has thus enhanced the emotional shame and regret, and the sense of tragedy.

The Communist Party's normalization policy is concluded as its "determination to re-establish totalitarian power". The program announced in May 1971 to build "real socialism" was focused mainly on economic issues. The intention of paying much attention to the economy, as explained in the textbook, was because the regime "was aware that a necessary precondition for maintaining peace in society is the achievement of at least acceptable social conditions". This interpretation enhances the textbook's narration that even when the communist regime intended to improve the society, it was for the sake of consolidating their reign.<sup>81</sup>

---

<sup>78</sup> Page 182

<sup>79</sup> Radio Prague International, 2008

<sup>80</sup> Gina Peirce

<sup>81</sup> Page 194

The designation of the term "real socialism" was to make the citizens keep realistic hope instead of exaggerated expectations of the living standard. The textbook objectively acknowledges the regime's completion of many planned tasks in the most recent five-year plan, but the acclaim is weakened by the added notes in the brackets that say "especially in comparison with the failures of previous five-year periods". Similarly, in the narration of the regime's projects and policies amid the normalization era, "however" is used after all the neutral or positive aspects to place their negatives impacts over their positive accomplishments.<sup>82</sup>

Overall, there was some improvement since the early 70s, and the example of the material benefits to the Roma minority group is given in the textbook. Roma were allocated flats and gained other social benefits. Even though the ongoing problem such as Roma's self-sufficiency remained unsolved, their living standard and the social situation improved. Nonetheless, the narration is primarily concentrated on the problems manifested in the sixth five-year plan period (1979-1980). The main cause of the economy's negative issues is explained as the "historically obsolete central-directive system of the economic system". As of the end of the 1970s, the regime "found itself in a deep crisis, still rather hidden".<sup>83</sup>

When it comes to the seventh five-year plan period (1981-1985), the textbook concludes that the regime was "doomed to gradual disintegration". To illustrate the reasons for supporting that conclusion, the book points out that the economy's growth at the time was achieved at the cost of heavy reliance on resources, yet the personal consumption growth was very slow. Other problems are also listed, such as the exacerbating ecological situation and the "demoralized

---

<sup>82</sup> Page 195

<sup>83</sup> Page 195

society" resulting from fraud, theft, bribery, and corruption. Besides, a contrast of living standard with the West is made. The "demoralization" of society is also embodied in the situation where people "were willing to serve the new regime without moral restraints" in order to enrich themselves.<sup>84</sup>

The depiction of the democratic world in the textbook is tightly tied to the idea of a prosperous economy (mainly in Section 7 "The world of democracy and economically developed market economies" of Chapter 4 in the textbook), which on the other hand, indicates the causal relationship between the communist regime and its failing economy. The increasing gap between Czechoslovak living standards and overall dynamics, and those of the Eastern bloc as a whole, is emphasized in comparison with the West. In comparison with the "prosperous, democratic world", in Czechoslovakia, "there was a constant tension in society, feelings of dissatisfaction and hopelessness" to further stress the unsatisfying life under the Communist regime and further prove the failure of the Communist regime's overall management.<sup>85</sup>

---

<sup>84</sup> Page 196

<sup>85</sup> Page 195

### 3. The restoration of democracy

Just as people do in other kinds of society, most of the time in Czechoslovakia, most "ordinary people" simply took the system for granted, accommodated to it, and lived their lives without joining either the Communist Party or a dissident group. So to speak, they "muddled through"<sup>86</sup>. Nonetheless, the dissident movements were continuously existent in Czechoslovakia, though they may be varied in forms and strength. Holy (1996:9) argues that the opposition to the communist system was unfolded in the name of the nation and was instrumented as the nation's rising against the generally perceived foreign oppression. The opposition to this alien system was construed as the nation against the alien system embodied in the communist regime, and the overthrow of socialism took the form of national liberation.

The textbook also mentions the indifference of most citizens, and it adds the explanation that it is due to the disgust and the manipulation of the regime. But "there were individuals and smaller groups who, individually or later in a coordinated manner, opposed the violent regime". Gradually, these people formed the dissident. The dissident was mainly represented by intellectuals and cultural elites, such as writers, scientists, journalists, and artists, even though the textbook considers them "a very diverse group". The dissident, represented by a handful of intellectuals, was poorly organized and lacked any coherent political program, clear leadership, or tangible support from the working class<sup>87</sup>. However, though often frail, the dissident influence did not cease to exist. The anti-reformist Czechoslovak Communist leaders' cooperation with the Soviet intervention in 1968 broke the link between socialism and

---

<sup>86</sup> Hann 1993: Page 11-12

<sup>87</sup> Holy, 1996

nationalism in many citizen's minds, making the next post-Prague Spring socialism felt like “a foreign occupation”<sup>88</sup>. And in 1989, joined by many other forces and factors, the dissident movement reached its peak and represented, as the textbook states, "the majority of society". In the end, it contributed to the collapse of the Communist regime.<sup>89</sup>

### **3.1 The "Velvet Revolution"**

The Velvet Revolution took place in the form of a non-violent transition of power in Czechoslovakia from November 17 to December 29, 1989. The result of the Velvet Revolution was the end of 41 years of single-party communist rule in Czechoslovakia and the conversion to a multi-party parliamentary republic.

A student demonstration took place on November 17 on International Student Day, which is narrated in the textbook "as a symbol of the fight against totalitarian oppression". However, the demonstration was faced with the "extremely brutal" intervention of the regime. The public's reaction to this was "spontaneous, emphatic and uncompromising," and a wave of protests followed with a "clear rejection to the communist government". The textbook continues with the narration of the growth in size and force of the protest group.<sup>90</sup>

In the meantime, the power within the Communist Party disintegrated, and that eliminated the possibility of the deployment of armed forces. However, the textbook does not elaborate on why the Communist Party's power was broken. On November 29, the articles containing

---

<sup>88</sup> Heimann, 2009: Page 809

<sup>89</sup> Page 197

<sup>90</sup> Page 200

provisions on the leading role of the Communist Party and the embracement of Marxism-Leninism were amended, symbolizing the end of one-party communist rule in Czechoslovakia.

The textbook proceeds to depict the preparation of establishing a new government – a government of "national understanding". Vaclav Havel, whose figure is highlighted in the textbook, was elected the new president. He was depicted as the man who "shared great hopes and expectations" with the citizens and lived up to his motto "Love and truth will triumph over Jesus and hatred". Havel's New Year's speech is quoted in the textbook. His speech conveyed wishes and resolutions such as free elections and public power serving with the public instead of personal interests. However, as narrated in the book, his messages "remained unheard" to many people to imply the violation and barriers encountered by the new government and society in the following narration.<sup>91</sup>

### **3.2 Elimination of totalitarianism**

The new government announced a series of legislative measures aimed at dealing with the Communist Past. The significant issues that were established or made legal during the communist rule were, on the contrary, made illegal and were abolished by the new government, such as the abolition of State Security (StB) and the termination of the activities of the National Front were terminated. Other steps such as a law on the rehabilitation of the persecuted by the communist regime of 1948-1989 were passed. Other important steps in "redressing the injustices" mentioned in the textbook are the adoption of a restitution law, which returned

---

<sup>91</sup> Page 201-202



private property confiscated or nationalized, and the rehabilitation of the persecuted during the Communist rule.

Measures for establishing a new order are also mentioned, such as the removal of a unified school system, the abolition of the death penalty, and the freedom given to religious life. The textbook affirms these measures by commenting that they were "important for the establishment of a democratic order". Economic measures aimed at transforming the centrally managed economy to a market economy as soon as possible are listed. Czechoslovakia "clearly stated its interest in joining European structure" as part of its effort to become a country "where human rights and democratic principles are respected", which seemingly indicates the binding of the Soviet Union was non-European, non-democratic, and non-humanistic. The negotiation of the retreat of Soviet troops is considered the most serious act. Through all those measures, Czechoslovakia ridded its dependencies on the Soviet Union and began to "find its place in European and world politics". The textbook objectively points out the controversial measures as well. The large amnesty announced in January 1990, which affected around two-thirds of all prisoners, resulted in an increase in crimes. In dealing with the state's new name, the relations between Czechs and Slovaks were also tested.<sup>92</sup>

---

<sup>92</sup> Page 202

## Conclusion

Through an examination of the textual depiction of Czech Communist history in the chosen textbook *History for gymnasiums and secondary schools (Dějepis pro gymnázia a střední školy)*, this paper argues that the textbook intends to portray an economically-developed and politically-democratic Czech society that fell victim to the Communist regime supported by the oppressive Soviet power. As an important embodiment of the authoritative narration of Communist history in the present Czech Republic, this textbook's multiple narration features tend to be value-oriented to guide its target readers-students. The primary reasons that lead to this conclusion are:

1. its selective narration;
2. its intensely emotional expressions;
3. its purposeful comparison between the developed Czechoslovak society with the poor Eastern states, and the comparison between the economically prosperous West with the Soviet bloc.

Many intensively emotional expressions are used to enhance the narration tone. Affirmative expressions such as "brave critics" and "excellent players" as well as exclamation marks at the end of sentences are used to depict the opponents of the communist regime. In contrast, negative expressions such as "absurdly," "suffocation," and a metaphor portraying the communist rule as a powerful and terrifying machine, are employed to criticize the regime. Besides, the textbook adds lengthy narration of personal stories, touching excerpts of speeches, and reformist declaration after the primary depiction of historical events to inspire empathy and closeness to the anti-communist individuals and stimulate pro-democratic values.

Moreover, the textbook selectively emphasizes certain negative aspects of the Communist Party while omitting a few other neutral or positive factors. For instance, Czechoslovakia was the only country that elected the communist party to power in free and fair elections, and proportion-wise, it had the largest number of Communist Party members outside the Soviet Union. The textbook selectively focuses on the Czechoslovak Communist Party's manipulative political scheme and its assistance from the Soviet Union to account for its massive population base and victory in elections. The narration lacks a causal link between the Communist Party's rise of power and other crucial objective factors such as the economically discontent labor class, the Communist Party's clear vision of the post-war society, people's disappointment by the West, etc.

Furthermore, the textbook portrays Czechoslovakia as an economically developed and traditionally democratic society that was cornered to join the Eastern bloc from its original western-oriented society and was devastated after that. It highlights the "foreign" oppression of the Soviet Union to Czechoslovakia throughout the Cold War era. The narration also suggests the social-economic superiority of Czechoslovakia to the Soviet bloc allies, as well as a favorable narration of the prosperous and liberal West in comparison with the totalitarian Soviet bloc. In the meantime, the Czechoslovak connection to the West is positively narrated.

By revealing these features of the Czech communist history narration in the textbook, this paper hopes that a more objective stance could be witnessed in history textbooks to present a full picture of historical events and inspire a more objective understanding of controversial and even painful history. Well-informed knowledge of a country's past and development path is

the foundation of a better understanding of its current status, and it has a significant reference value for the future.

## Summary

Therefore, this paper would like to conclude that the chosen textbook (*History for gymnasiums and secondary schools (Dějepis pro gymnázia a střední školy)*), aside from an overall factual description, has to some extent failed to describe the Czech communist history on an objective stance that the educational institutions should take. In addition to stating the general historical facts, it utilizes emotionally descriptive expressions, selective depiction, and an indictive comparison to emphasize a narrative of discontent and distrust towards the communist regime and the Soviet oppression while endorsing democratic values and the market economy of the West.

## References:

Ankersmit, F. R. *Narrative Logic: A Semantic Analysis of the Historian's Language*, 1983, P81

Apple, M. W., & Christian-Smith, L. K. (1991). *The politics of the textbook*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Apple, M. W. (1995). *Education and power*. London: Routledge.

Bert Vanhulle (2009). "The path of history: narrative analysis of history textbooks – a case study of Belgian history textbooks (1945–2004)", *History of Education*, 38:2, 263-282, DOI:10.1080/00467600701827837

Brodsky, Jiri. *Czech Identity and Returning to Europe, 2003-2004:1-2 SIEN QUARTERLY*.

Cannadine, David. "The Present and the Past in the English Industrial Revolution 1880-1980", *Past & Present*, Volume 103, Issue 1, 1984, P171

Cannistraro, Philip V., and Edward D. Wynot. "ON THE DYNAMICS OF ANTI-COMMUNISM AS A FUNCTION OF FASCIST FOREIGN POLICY, 1933-1943." *Il Politico*, vol. 38, no. 4, 1973, pp. 645–681.

Czechoslovakia from Liberation to Communist State, 1945-63: RECORDS OF THE U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT CLASSIFIED FILES. PDF.  
[https://www.gale.com/binaries/content/assets/gale-us-en/primary-sources/archives-unbound/primary-sources\\_archives-unbound\\_czechoslovakia-from-liberation-to-communist-state\\_1945-1963\\_records-of-the-us-state-department-classified-files.pdf](https://www.gale.com/binaries/content/assets/gale-us-en/primary-sources/archives-unbound/primary-sources_archives-unbound_czechoslovakia-from-liberation-to-communist-state_1945-1963_records-of-the-us-state-department-classified-files.pdf)

Feinberg, Melissa., *Elusive Equality: Gender, Citizenship and the Limits of Democracy in Czechoslovakia, 1918-1950*. Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006

Fetscher, Iring. "FASCHISMUS UND NATIONALSOZIALISMUS: Zur Kritik Des Sowjetmarxistischen Faschismusbegriffs." *Politische Vierteljahresschrift*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1962, pp. 42–63. JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/24194160](http://www.jstor.org/stable/24194160).

G. R. Elton, *Political History, Principles and Practices* (London, 1970), Chapter 5.

"Guidelines for the Preparation, Evaluation, and Selection of History Textbooks" (2018): AHA. (n.d.). <https://www.historians.org/jobs-and-professional-development/statements-standards-and-guidelines-of-the-discipline/guidelines-for-the-preparation-evaluation-and-selection-of-history-textbooks>

Guins, George C. "The Politics of 'Pan-Slavism'." *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, vol. 8, no. 2, 1949, pp. 125–132. JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/3484023](http://www.jstor.org/stable/3484023).

Hammack, Phillip. (2010). Identity as Burden or Benefit? Youth, Historical Narrative, and the Legacy of Political Conflict. *Human Development*. 53. 173-201. 10.1159/000320045.)

Hann, C. M. 1993. *Introduction to Socialism: ideas, ideologies, and local practice*, ed. C. M. Hann. ASA Monographs 31. London: Routledge.

Heimann, Mary. *Czechoslovakia: The State that Failed*. Yale University Press, 2009.

Hilary Janks (1997) Critical Discourse Analysis as a Research Tool, *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 18:3, 329-342, DOI: 10.1080/0159630970180302

Holy, L. (1996). *The Little Czech and the Great Czech Nation: National Identity and the Post-Communist Social Transformation* (Cambridge Studies in Social and Cultural Anthropology). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511621727

Issitt, John. *History of Education*, "Reflections on the Study of Textbooks". 2004. P688.

Jaroslav, Fulka. "Rust clenke zakladny KSC a unor 1948", *Nova mysl*, 1970, no.3, P.348.

J. L. Gorman, *The Expression of Historical Knowledge* (Edinburgh, 1982), chap. 3.

LIST OF Approved TEXTBOOKS FOR SECONDARY EDUCATION in 2001:

<https://www.msmt.cz/vzdelavani/stredni-vzdelavani/seznam-ucebnic-pro-stredni-vzdelavani?fbclid=IwAR2CcDkLyCDI59li51pkEugAHW9zDF09LNaYm3zOxl6Ac3lWXi3PxiIq6MU>

Macgilchrist, Felicitas. "School vs. Memory: Conflict, Identity, Coexistence (Central Europe)". 2014. <https://discourseanalysis.net/es/node/1148?language=en>

Marcus Colla (2019) *State and Society in Communist Czechoslovakia: Transforming the Everyday from WWII to the Fall of the Berlin Wall*, *Cultural and Social History*, 16:4, 535-536, DOI: 10.1080/14780038.2019.1669850

Maynes, M. J., Pierce, J. L., & Laslett, B. (2019). " 2. Intersecting Stories: Personal Narratives in Historical Context". In *Telling Stories*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. doi: <https://doi.org/10.7591/9780801459030-004>

McCullagh, C. Behan. "The Truth of Historical Narratives", *History and Theory*, 1987, pp. 30-46



North D. (1990), *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*. Cambridge University Press.

O'Donnell, G., & Schmitter, P. (1986). *Transition from authoritarian rule. Tentative conclusions about uncertain democracies*. Baltimore, MD: JHU Press.

Peirce, Gina M. "1968 and Beyond: From the Prague Spring to "Normalization" Center for Russian and East European Studies, University of Pittsburgh, <https://is.muni.cz/el/cus/podzim2019/CZS59/um/from-the-prague-spring-to-normalization.pdf>

Proceedings of Masaryk University number 27/2013/1, from Pedagogical Faculty. <https://www.ped.muni.cz/whis/rsv131.pdf>

Ricoeur, Paul. "Narrative Time" in *On Narrative*, ed. W. J. T. Mitchell (Chicago, 1981), P174.

Section 27, the Education Act, "ACT No. 561/2004 Coll.of 24 September 2004, on Pre-school, Basic, Secondary, Tertiary Professional and Other Education"

Soucy, Robert . November 04, 2020, "Fascism", *Encyclopædia Britannica* <https://www.britannica.com/topic/fascism>

Stanley G. Payne (2000) *Fascism and Communism, Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, 1:3, 1-15, DOI: 10.1080/14690760008406938

Strayer, R. (n.d.). *Communism and fascism (Chapter 17) - The Cambridge World History*.<https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/cambridge-world-history/communism-and-fascism/53239684CEF298D0D192E81E430506C6/core-reader>

Stojanović, Dubravka (2017). "The crossed swords of memory: the image of communist Yugoslavia in the textbooks of its successor states". *European Politics and Society*, 18:1, 10-22, DOI: 10.1080/23745118.2016.1269440

Tismaneanu, Vladimir. *Understanding Radical Evil: Communism, Fascism and the Lessons of the 20th Century*. (n.d.). 2001.

Tismaneanu, Vladimir. *Devil in History*. 1st ed., University of California Press, 2012. JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/j.ctt1ppwf2](http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/j.ctt1ppwf2).

Topolski, Jerzy. *History and Theory*, 1987, Vol. 26, No. 4, Beiheft 26: The Representation of Historical Events, pp. 75-86.

Valenta, Jiri. "Revolutionary Change, Soviet Intervention, and 'Normalization' in East-Central Europe." *Comparative Politics*, vol. 16, no. 2, 1984, pp. 127–151. JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/421602](http://www.jstor.org/stable/421602).

Verdery, K. 1993. *Ethnic relations, economies of shortage, and the transition in Eastern Europe*. In *Socialism: ideals, ideologies, and local practice*, ed. C. M. Hann. ASA Monographs 31. London: Routledge.

Wightman, G., and A. H. Brown. "Changes in the Levels of Membership and Social Composition of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, 1945-73." *Soviet Studies*, vol. 27, no. 3, 1975, pp. 396–417. JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/150444](http://www.jstor.org/stable/150444).

Zeman, Z. A. B. (Zbyněk A. B.). (1969). *Prague spring: a report on Czechoslovakia 1968*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.