

Abstract

Foreign policy of Czechoslovakia in 70's and 80's depended completely on the policy of the Soviet union and its promoted ideology. The Czechoslovak socialist republic preserved the narrowest relationship with the Soviet union and its satellite states in Eastern Europe, while the relationship with the western countries oriented to co-operation with the United states, was very cold and was being restored very slowly and gradually. The developing countries, especially those heading to a socialist establishment, had a special position in Czechoslovak foreign policy.

Especially these countries benefited from Czechoslovak aid such as financial, military or material support. Another way Czechoslovakia implemented its development aid was offering scholarships for university students. The purpose of this form of aid was to contribute to the progress of developing countries, most of whom gained independence recently. Simultaneously the policy pursued another aim - to spread the socialist ideology and the influence of the Soviet union around the world. Hundreds of foreign students studied in Czechoslovak universities every year during 70's and 80's. Most of them came from so called developing countries.

Foreign students came from various countries of the world, various cultures and therefore they perceived Czechoslovak society and their study experience unlikely. Every student perceived its study in a unique way and had different experience. Nevertheless it is possible to say that students coming from the same geopolitical position had very similar experience in several ways. That was caused by the political system of their country, which had a big influence on the study conditions of their citizens, and it was caused by the mutual relationships of both countries - Czechoslovakia and the sending country. Czech studies students from the eastern bloc, Vietnam citizens whose government rode herd on them during their study, students from African countries - each of them had different experience.

Key words

Czechoslovakia, Normalization, Foreign policy, Development co-operation, Universities, Foreign students, Eastern bloc, Vietnam, Africa, Oral history