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School of Modern Languages and Cultures, College of  
Arts



**'The Prague Exit': representations of East German  
migration in the official press of the Czechoslovak  
Communist Party**

© Author: Beatrice Michalovska

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the MPhil degree in Czech  
Supervised by Dr Mirna Šolić and Dr Jan Čulík

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## Abstract

East German migration via Prague in the summer and autumn of 1989 is not discussed in the English-language historiography as an important precondition for the revolutionary changes in Czechoslovakia in 1989. This research examines it and provides an alternative view of Czechoslovak social and political life just before the Velvet Revolution when the ruling Communist Party lost its grip on a regime which they controlled for more than four decades. 'The Prague Exit' analyses the linguistic representations of East German migration via Prague as constructed by the official newspaper of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, *Rudé Právo*. It explores how ideological language constructions present a minority group, and to what extent it reflected on the overall stability of the Czechoslovak Communist Party. A few core theories of Critical Discourse Analysis were employed to inspect how political and social elites constructed the discourse about the migrants' social identity in the country's press. The general migration narrative is further investigated in *The Washington Post* and *The Times*, as these newspapers provided an extensive coverage of the migration. This research found that East Germans were represented negatively because the Party perceived them as a threat to their political power and ideology. The migration narrative changed with time, which indicated a systematic construction of the migration discourse and changing perceptions of the relevance of its threat among the Party members. Their decisions regarding the border control to stop the unwanted migration exposed Party's ideological instability and resolve just before the Velvet Revolution. Additionally, while the Western press represented East German migrants as vulnerable and mistreated human beings, their reporting was based on counter-ideological stereotypes about systemic differences between the 'East' and the 'West'. The East German migration story was marginal in the wider conflict between socialism and capitalism during the last months of the Cold War, as observed in the press reports. Crucially, the analysis of the unpublished archival documents from the National Archive, the Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Archive of the Security Services, consulted in Prague, the Czech Republic, revealed disparities among the Western and Czechoslovak representation of the migrants. These documents presented the Communist Party members as alert about this migration yet pragmatic, calm and confident in their power to solve it and maintain the status quo - contrary to its self-representation in *Rudé Právo* or its panicking character, constructed in the Western press. These findings challenge the traditional perceptions of the Cold War history, and, most importantly, it presents East German migration as an unusual agent in the Czechoslovak Velvet Revolution.

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## Abbreviations

ABS - *Archiv bezpečnostních složek*, the Archive of the Security Services

AMZV or MZV - *Archiv Ministerstva zahraničních věcí*, the Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

FMV - *Federální Ministerstvo Vnitra*, Federal Ministry of the Interior

FRG - Federal Republic of Germany or West Germany

GDR - German Democratic Republic or East Germany

KSČ - *Komunistická Strana Československa*, the Czechoslovak Communist Party

NA - *Národní archiv*, the National Archive

RFE/RL - *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*

RP - *Rudé Právo*

SNB - *Sbor Národní Bezpečnosti*, the National Police Corps

StB - *Státní bezpečnost*, the (Secret) State Security

WP - *The Washington Post*

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## Introduction to 'The Prague Exit'<sup>1</sup>

This research analyses the linguistic representations of the 1989 East German migration to the Federal Republic of Germany via Prague, Czechoslovakia, as presented in the official newspaper of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (*Komunistická Strana Československa* or KSC), *Rudé Právo*. It argues that the representations of the migrants exposed instability of the ruling Communist Party in the country just before the Velvet Revolution, which ended the socialist regime in Czechoslovakia. This thesis proposes that the decision by the Party elites to open the country's border with the Federal Republic of Germany in order to end the migration contributed to the Party's loss of authority and ideological beliefs. To the best of the author's knowledge, this is the first such attempt to include a detailed evaluation of East German migration via Czechoslovakia into the narrative of the Velvet Revolution in the English-language literature and to connect it with the stability of the Czechoslovak Communist Party.

East German migration is not analysed in the topical historiography on the end of the Czechoslovak Communist Party regime as an equally important precondition for revolutionary changes in the country as, for instance, the Western media is. To date, if the migration was discussed at all, it was generally given brief mentions in the analysis of the German history in 1989 or was noted in the timeline of the 1989 events when discussing the nature of the revolution in Czechoslovakia in the English-language literature. The background of this event is critical as it also illuminates the social and political changes in Europe at that time. On 2 May 1989, the reforming Hungarian People's Republic started dismantling the barbed wire, separating the country from Austria, and eventually officially opened its borders with the country on 11 September.<sup>2</sup> 'The

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<sup>1</sup> The phrase 'Prague Exit' was borrowed from N. Broomfield's, British ambassador to the GDR, letter to J. Major, then the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, written on 12 October 1989, 'Party and People at the GDR's 40th Anniversary: 'Immovable Object or Irresistible Force', *Documents on British Policy Overseas*, Series 3 - Volume 7: German Unification, 1989-1990, CHAPTER I 10 April - 9 November 1989, pp. 51-56, <http://dbpo.chadwyck.com/search/displayItem.do?QueryType=default&ResultsID=15ADCC87B1991E172&filterSequence=0&ItemNumber=4&ItemID=DBPO030970028>, (accessed: 16 April 2016)

<sup>2</sup> Gareth Dale, *Popular protest in East Germany, 1945-1989*, (London; New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 140

Hungarian breach' of the 'Inner Iron Curtain' invalidated the 1969 travel treaty with the German Democratic Republic (GDR, East Germany) and created a passage for the thousands of East Germans, seeking a travel route to the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG, West Germany) via Austria.<sup>3</sup> The resulting mass exodus continued through Hungary, the Polish People's Republic and the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, was soon mishandled by the responsible authorities and developed into a crisis.<sup>4</sup> Kevin McDermott and Matthew Stibbe argued that the migration played a 'pivotal role' in destabilising the GDR and the entire socialist bloc.<sup>5</sup> Vilém Prečan has produced the most elaborate analysis of this event from a Czechoslovak perspective. He argued that 'never had Prague [...] drawn so much attention from the world communications media and public' than in autumn 1989.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, this research deems it necessary to discuss this migration further in order to provide a clearer explanation of the Czechoslovak Communist Party's demise from power it held for over four decades. It suggests viewing this process through the lenses of power, migration and the official Communist Party propaganda.

Marianne Jørgensen and Louise Phillips have argued that our knowledge depends on our perception of language.<sup>7</sup> This research contributes to the studies on the representation of migrants in the media, which draw attention to the language used in naming, labelling and framing the migration narrative by those in power who have the means not only to inform the public but also to shape their opinions and perceptions for various ends.<sup>8</sup> Steven Spencer indicates that this is possible because 'meaning is not implicit in signs, images, words and other cultural codes; rather, it is based on shared conventions and these

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<sup>3</sup> Steven Pfaff, *Exit-voice dynamics and the collapse of East Germany: the crisis of Leninism and the revolution of 1989*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), pp. 107

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 108

<sup>5</sup> Kevin McDermott and Matthew Stibbe, 'The Collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe: origins, processes, outcomes', pp. 1-33, in Kevin McDermott and Matthew Stibbe (eds.), *The 1989 Revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe. From Communism to Pluralism*, (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2013), p. 4

<sup>6</sup> Vilém Prečan, 'Through Prague to Freedom. The Exodus of GDR Citizens through Czechoslovakia to the Federal Republic of Germany, September 30 - November 10, 1989', *National Security Archive*, (accessed: 19 November, 2016), <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB294/essay.htm>

<sup>7</sup> Marianne Jørgensen and Louise Phillips, *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*, (London; Thousand Oaks; New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2002), p. 5

<sup>8</sup> Sally Johnson and Astrid Ensslin, 'Language in the media: theory and practice', ch. 1, in Sally Johnson and Astrid Ensslin (eds), *Language in the media: representations, identities, ideologies*, (London: Continuum, 2007), p. 13

vary between and within cultures'.<sup>9</sup> Those conventions often legitimise certain representations of a minority group in the media, as they are considered to be almost universal and acceptable or this general perception is reaffirmed through constant repetition by an ideological entity in power, for instance, the Communist Party.<sup>10</sup> According to Spencer, representations which become stereotypes 'can endure over long periods of time and that while their articulation in each era may be nuanced rather differently, the core values may remain starkly preserved'.<sup>11</sup> Critical Discourse Analysis is often employed to study such representations of minority groups and the discrimination they endure because of the linguistic practices used by the elites in power. This partly stems from the assumption that language is never impartial or neutral.<sup>12</sup> Sue Wright has argued that 'language is a group marker, an indicator of difference and ultimately both the medium and the message of the construction 'us' as opposed to 'them''.<sup>13</sup> It can be used to 'invent the enemy' and to 'distance ourselves by creating a discourse which dehumanises the 'others' and which makes us feel easier about hating, more justified in whatever military measures we take to accomplish our political purposes'.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, this research contributes to our understanding of political language and its intended and unintended biases towards a minority group, which demonstrates how discriminatory linguistic practices permeate different political systems regardless of historical times.

The core questions of this research discuss how institutional language works in the representation of a minority group during the time of perceived

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<sup>9</sup> Steven Spencer, *Race and ethnicity: culture, identity and representation*, (Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2014), p. 1-2

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, xviii

<sup>11</sup> Steven Spencer, *Race and ethnicity: culture, identity and representation*, (Oxon: Routledge), p. 1

<sup>12</sup> Ruth Wodak (ed), *Critical Discourse Analysis*, vol. 1-3, (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2013); Norman Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992); Martin Reisigl and Ruth Wodak, *Discourse and Discrimination*, (London: Routledge, 2001); Yoosun Park, 'Historical Discourse Analysis', pp. 393-395, in Lisa M. Given (ed.), *The SAGE Encyclopaedia of Qualitative Research Methods*, (Thousand Oaks, New Delhi, Singapore: SAGE Publication, 2008), p. 394; Teun A. van Dijk, 'Ideology and discourse analysis', *Journal of Political Ideologies* (June 2006), 11(2), pp. 115-140, <http://www.discourses.org/OldArticles/Ideology%20and%20Discourse%20Analysis.pdf>, (accessed: 19 September 2017), p. 116

<sup>13</sup> Sue Wright, 'Language as a contributing factor in conflicts between states and within states', in Sue Wright, *Language and conflict: a neglected relationship*, (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1998), p. 44; Martin Reisigl and Ruth Wodak, 'The Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA)', Chapter 2, in Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer (eds), *Methods for Critical Discourse Analysis*, (London: Sage, 2009), p. 24

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, p. 43

crisis. Firstly, how did the official press of the Czechoslovak Communist Party represent the migration and reproduce the constructed discourse of their social identity to the people in Prague? If the migrants were discriminated against, how did the socialist ideology or worldview aid the Party in this process? How does their representation of East German migration compare to the American or British coverage of East German migration? Was American or British representation of East German migrants ideological? Crucially, if the newspaper of the Party did discriminate against the migrants, what were the reasons behind this? Can those reasons indicate anything about the overall stability of the Party? By answering these questions, this research offers an alternative perspective through which one can view the not-so-distant past, closer to today's general migration narrative than one might think.

This thesis consists of seven chapters. Apart from this first one, which introduced the main interest for this research and its significance, Chapter 2, or Literature Review, discusses the main theories, which surround the explanations of the fall of the Czechoslovak Communist Party from power at the end of the Cold War. It contextualises this research and positions it among the existing literature on the Velvet Revolution, thus re-introducing it into the topical historiography on 1989, a revolutionary year in Europe. Chapter 3, or Methodology of Critical Discourse Analysis, presents the core ideas and arguments, which govern this thesis and tackle certain aspects of language, ideology and migration. This methodology is an appropriate tool to use for the examination of such primary sources as press, and its main aspects, embedded in the social theory, help understand the possible connection between such representations of the East German migrants and the political state of the Czechoslovak Communist Party in power. Chapter 4 analyses the representation of East German migration in the official newspaper of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, *Rudé Právo*. This chapter forms the basis of this research as it dissects how the Czechoslovak Communist Party newspaper represented East German migration to its population and how the identity politics worked in a socialist country. The chapter presents a layered and evolving representation of their identity through the connections with the GDR, the FRG, its Embassy, and the Czechoslovak authorities. Chapter 5 discusses representation in the Western press, such as the USA's *The Washington Post* and the UK's *The Times*,

in order to investigate whether the Czechoslovak ideological reporting of the migration was similar to broader attitudes towards the migrants at that time in general. These newspapers were chosen due to their frequent review in the Czechoslovak Communist Party's newspaper. They reported extensively on the East German migration right from its beginning to the end and included interviews with migrants, which was considered invaluable for this research because it introduced their 'voice' to the wider readership. Chapter 6 is focused on the stability of the Czechoslovak Communist Party as seen from the original primary sources from the archives of the Czech Republic. It is the product of archival research in Prague, the Czech Republic during June-July 2017, which explored the previously unpublished documents from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the State Security Services and the National Police Corps. All of these three chapters supplemented each other by revealing different aspects of the same event: the local representation for the public, the foreign representation of the same event for the foreign public, and the private, institutional representation of the migration for the top Party leadership. Finally, Chapter 7 presents the overall conclusions of this research as well as some recommendations for future work. The next chapter discusses the most common explanations of the Velvet Revolution to contextualise East German migration within the social and political realities in Czechoslovakia in 1989. Finally, Chapter 7 presents the overall conclusions of this research as well as some recommendations for future work. The next chapter discusses the most common explanations of the Velvet Revolution to contextualise East German migration within the social and political realities in Czechoslovakia in 1989.

## Literature review

The year 1989 stands out in the world's history as the year of major changes in the Cold War social, political and economic landscape. Before the symbolic Cold War division in Europe - the Berlin Wall - surprisingly fell, the political landscape was already different from how it was in 1988 as the Communist system around the world was crumbling.<sup>15</sup> Thousands of protesters in China's Tiananmen Square in Beijing were peacefully calling for political and economic reforms, until the Communist government's military crushed it in June 1989, a shocking event which initiated some reforms within the Chinese government.<sup>16</sup> Also, the first non-Communist government in Poland since 1948, consisting of the members of the civic movement Solidarity, was elected in August. Hungary disassembled its border fences with Austria in September. Yet other events, which contributed to this changing political and social realities of the Cold War, perhaps 'less revolutionary' ones, did not receive adequate attention in the topical historiography. Specifically, during the few months before the Czechoslovak Communist Party (KSČ) lost its grip on power in Czechoslovakia during the country's famed Velvet Revolution or the November events, tens of thousands of East German migrants travelled through the narrow streets of Czechoslovakia's capital, Prague, to the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, in order to emigrate to the FRG. This research investigates the representation of the 1989 East German migration in Prague and how the discourse of their identity was presented to the Czechoslovak society by the KSČ in their official newspaper *Rudé Právo*. It aims to expose the unstable nature of the KSČ regime in Czechoslovakia due to failures to control and contain the East German migration right before the events of November started. Therefore, this literature review will help to identify and disseminate the most common notions about this period in Czechoslovakia in order to contextualise East German migration historically and politically.

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<sup>15</sup> Vladislav Zubok, 'With His Back against the Wall: Gorbachev, Soviet Demise, and German Reunification', *Cold War History*, 14 (2014), 619–45, p. 625, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14682745.2014.950251>, (accessed: 4 June 2018)

<sup>16</sup> Odd Arne Westad, *The Cold War: a World History*, (New York: Basic Books, 2017)

The Velvet Revolution has been traditionally defined as a period of political and societal upheaval in Czechoslovakia, and a transition from a socialist state, governed by the Czechoslovak Communist Party, to a parliamentary democracy.<sup>17</sup> It is popularly noted to have started roughly a week after the Berlin Wall was opened, on 17 November, and lasted until the end of 1989.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, the events in Czechoslovakia are closely linked to external socio-political circumstances. However, despite its seemingly clear definition, the Velvet Revolution is often shrouded in mythological explanations concerned with the nature of the November events.<sup>19</sup> According to James Mark, there are various ways in which history can be interpreted and some of those ways serve the new elites in power, able to remodel the national past of a country for their benefit.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, it is not surprising that history books usually introduce us to one explanation of revolutions, which tells the heroic nationalist story of the people and their fight for their beliefs against the all-powerful and morally corrupt Communist Party. Yet such explanations often simplify complicated historical discourses into an easy-to-understand story of ‘the good people versus the bad Communist Party’ type of representation.<sup>21</sup> Similar explanation serves to inspire patriotism and sustain all of those new democracies, which emerged in the early 1990s in Central-Eastern Europe. Nevertheless, as historical interest into the country’s past grows and archival records become available, many more interpretations appear, challenging the existing narratives. While confusing to some, this, in fact, provides interested parties with an exceptional opportunity to view the ‘big revolutions’ more objectively. As Roland Barthes argued, one can look into history but ‘in order to look at it, we must be excluded from it’.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, this thesis discusses the literature on the Velvet Revolution by overviewing several of its central actors in order to introduce and

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<sup>17</sup> Kevin McDermott, *Communist Czechoslovakia, 1945-89: A Political and Social History*, (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 183

<sup>18</sup> Mary Heimann, *Czechoslovakia: the state that failed*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), p. 298

<sup>19</sup> Michael Meyer, *The Year that Changed the World: the Untold Story Behind the Fall of the Berlin Wall*, (New York: Scribner, 2014), x

<sup>20</sup> James Mark, *The unfinished revolution. Making sense of the communist Part in Central-Eastern Europe*, (New Haven and London: Yale University press, 2010), p. 1-3

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>22</sup> Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida. Reflexions on photography*, (translated by Richard Howard), (New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 1981), p. 65

define the social and political climate of Czechoslovakia in 1989, which enabled the East German migration to take place.

### The media

Siegfried Jäger and Florentine Maier have argued that our historical knowledge is solidified ‘through the repetition of ideas and statements’.<sup>23</sup> Evidently, some ideas in the democratisation literature have been repeated more than others in order to ‘solidify’ our general knowledge of the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Communist Party system in Central-Eastern Europe. One of them is focused on the so-called victory of the Western media over morally corrupt Communist Parties, which denied societies basic human rights, such as the freedom of speech (Urban, 1997; Nelson, 1997; Johnson, 2010).<sup>24</sup> There are numerous accounts, arguing that Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) and Voice of America (VOA) had destabilised the Communist Parties across Central-Eastern Europe, and caused Communism to collapse, by broadcasting visions of democracy, freedom, and prosperity to the ‘enemy territory’. Arch Puddington, a former bureau manager of RFE/RL, stated that radio was the ‘most visible’ institution of ‘official American anti-communism’ and ‘one of democracy’s most powerful weapons’.<sup>25</sup> Puddington also added that the European offices of RFE/RL were filled with people, who visibly opposed the communist governments.<sup>26</sup> Michael Nelson, a former General Manager of *Reuters* news agency, has even suggested that the Velvet Revolution was started by such news outlets as *Reuters*, RFE/RL and VOA.<sup>27</sup> Those organisations were the first to deliver the news (later confirmed as false) of the supposed death of student Martin Šmíd at the hands of the Czechoslovak police forces during the

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<sup>23</sup> Encarnación Hidalgo-Tenorio, ‘Critical Discourse Analysis, An overview’, *NJES Nordic Journal of English Studies*, vol. 10 no. 1, (2011), <http://ojs.ub.gu.se/ojs/index.php/njes/article/view/658/0>, (accessed: 12 October 2017), p. 187

<sup>24</sup> George R. Urban, *Radio Free Europe and the Pursuit of Democracy: My War within the Cold War*, (New Haven (Conn.): Yale university press, 1997); Michael Nelson, *War of the Black Heavens: The Battles of Western Broadcasting in the Cold War*, (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1997); A. Ross Johnson, *Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty: the CIA years and Beyond*, (Washington, D.C., Stanford, CA: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Stanford University Press, 2010)

<sup>25</sup> Arch Puddington, *Broadcasting Freedom: The Cold War Triumph of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty*, (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2000), p. 5, p. 313

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, p. 265

<sup>27</sup> Michael Nelson, *War of the Black Heavens: The Battles of Western Broadcasting in the Cold War*, p. 186

government-sanctioned student demonstration on 17 November 1989, to commemorate International Students Day and the fiftieth anniversary of the murder of student Jan Opletal by the Nazi government.<sup>28</sup> This information influenced many people to join the demonstrations, which arguably started the Velvet Revolution.<sup>29</sup> This story was repeated until it became one of the most popular explanations of the revolutionary November.

The detailed accounts of the importance of media in generating revolutionary changes is an example of psychological warfare, waged by the Cold War superpowers, the United States of America and the United Soviet Socialist Republic (the Soviet Union), and is a welcome contribution to the topical histories of all countries involved in the transitions from socialism to liberalism.<sup>30</sup> As radio stations like RFE/RL had a specific purpose - to 'bring down' the Eastern dictatorships in Central-Eastern Europe, it seems that this vehicle of persuasion completed its Cold War task. However, this view, presenting the Western propaganda media at the central stage in the victory over the socialist bloc, contributes to the popular yet misleading Cold War dichotomy, explained as the irreconcilable differences of ideologies between one bloc of democracies and one of the socialist dictatorships.<sup>31</sup> To agree with this view fully means to accept the largely generalised Europe-centric Cold War 'playbook', which divided the continent into the free 'West' and the subjugated 'East' and positioned them in stark ideological oppositional terms.<sup>32</sup> It means to accept the homogeneity of two militarised and competitive camps and to marginalise the events, which took place in the rest of the world, as well as the individuality of each Communist Party in Central-Eastern Europe and differences among members within them. This presumed political uniformity of the socialist republics was criticised by Jacques Lévesque who argued that the individual approach to Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms of *perestroika*

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<sup>28</sup> Milan Šmíd, 'Případ Martina Šmída', *Mladý svět* č. 49/1991, in 'Jak to bylo v listopadu 1989', *Britské listy*, <http://www.britskelisty.cz/9903/19990304g.html#06>, (accessed: 20 March 2017)

<sup>29</sup> Arch Puddington, *Broadcasting Freedom: The Cold War Triumph of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty*, p. 185-186

<sup>30</sup> A. Ross Johnson and R. Eugene Parta, 'Cold War International Broadcasting: Lessons Learned', Briefing to the Rancho Mirage Seminar, Appendix B, in Johnson A. R., and Shultz, G. P., (eds), *Communicating with the World of Islam*, pp. 53-67, (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, Stanford University, 2007), p. 55

<sup>31</sup> Nicolas Guyatt, 'The end of the Cold War', ch. 34, in Richard H. Immerman, Petra Goedde, *The Oxford handbook of the Cold War*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 607

<sup>32</sup> Steve Phillips, *The Cold War: conflict in Europe and Asia*, (Oxford: Heinemann, 2001), p. 123

(restructuring of the economy) and *glasnost* (political pluralism) from the socialist republics was the primary reason why the different level of implementation of his policies destabilised the bloc.<sup>33</sup> He argued that Gorbachev did not have a 'minimally stable alliance through which to advance his plan', as republics such as East Germany, the Romanian People's Republic and Czechoslovakia, were reluctant (to different extents) to implement his reforms on political transparency and elements of a market economy in their countries.<sup>34</sup> Even though the view of the predestined Western triumph over the Soviet republics, with the help of its media, stands as a popular interpretation of the events of 1989, it shows only a part of what happened in 1989 in Czechoslovakia.

### 'Civil society'- dissidents and students

Jiří Pehe explains that the so-called 'civil society' or the organisations and movements outside the Czechoslovak state structures deserve the credit for their efforts in ending the Communist regime in Czechoslovakia.<sup>35</sup> 'Civil society' is opposed to the 'uncivil society', which practised oppressive and violent rule and held power in Central-Eastern Europe in the shape and form of a Communist Party.<sup>36</sup> As James Krapfl argued, the 'power of the people' and dissent during the November-December events in Czechoslovakia started the Velvet Revolution 'in the street corners and in theatres, in small groups', and aimed to form a 'new society'.<sup>37</sup> As he explains, those small groups represented the people's wish to be included in the decision-making process of their country as opposed to the exclusionary and selective practices of the KSČ.<sup>38</sup> According to Jiří Pehe, the Czechoslovak 'civil society' primarily formed around intellectuals, artists, and students who indirectly 'substituted for politicians' during the

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<sup>33</sup> Jacques Lévesque, 'The Emancipation of Eastern Europe', pp. 107-129, in Richard K Herrmann, Richard Ned Lebow (eds), *Ending the Cold War: Interpretations, Causation and the Study of International Relations*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, p. 126

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>35</sup> Jiří Pehe, Conference *Czech Political Culture and Civil Society*, 2003, <http://www.pehe.cz/prednasky/2003/czech-political-culture-and-civil-society>, (accessed: 10 February 2017)

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>37</sup> James Krapfl, *Revolution with a Human Face: Politics, Culture, and Community in Czechoslovakia, 1989-1992*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), p. 76

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, p. 87

Communist times.<sup>39</sup> Pehe specifically refers this explanation to the actions of the Charter 77, 'the most prominent civic movement during the last twenty years of the communist rule'.<sup>40</sup> The Charter was created in 1977 and proclaimed to be 'a loose, informal and open association of people of various shades of opinion, faiths and professions united by the will to strive [...] for the respecting of civic and human rights [...] – rights accorded to all men [...] by the Final Act of the Helsinki conference and by [...] the U.N. Universal Charter of Human Rights', which, according to the Chartists, 'exist[ed], regrettably, only on paper...' in Czechoslovakia.<sup>41</sup> As Mary Heimann explains, the Chartists soon became the so-called 'watchdogs' of the KSČ.<sup>42</sup> Throughout the 1980s, the group and their supporters drafted and presented petitions and speeches, criticising the way the KSČ governed Czechoslovakia and helped to organise mass demonstrations, making their activities the most visible examples of protest.<sup>43</sup> Therefore, the group presented themselves as anything but a political association, let alone the official opposition to the KSČ (which was illegal), yet the effects of their organisation were political. Therefore, the Charter 77's activity in Czechoslovakia is closely linked with the collapse of the KSČ regime in the country.

The Charter's ideas had substantial support from Czechoslovak students, both independent and from the communist organisations such as the Union of Socialist Youth (Studentské hnutí). However, as Padraic Kenney argued, in many occasions the students wanted to organise their own protests and

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<sup>39</sup> Jiří Pehe, *Conference Czech Political Culture and Civil Society*, 2003, <http://www.pehe.cz/prednasky/2003/czech-political-culture-and-civil-society>,

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>41</sup> Charter 77, 'Declaration of Charter 77', *Making the History of 1989*, Item #628, <https://chnm.gmu.edu/1989/items/show/628>, (accessed: 10 February 2017)

<sup>42</sup> Mary Heimann, *Czechoslovakia: the State that Failed*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), p. 284; Sorin Antohi, Balázs Trencsényi, Péter Apor, *Narratives Unbound: Historical Studies in Post-Communist Eastern Europe*, (Budapest; New York: CEU Press, 2007), p. 222

<sup>43</sup> Bernard Wheaton and Zdenek Kavan, *The Velvet Revolution: Czechoslovakia, 1988-1991*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992); James Krapfl, *Revolution with a Human Face: Politics, Culture, and Community in Czechoslovakia, 1989-1992*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013); Timothy Garton Ash, *The magic lantern: the revolution of '89 witnessed in Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin and Prague*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1999); Michael Kraus, 'Did the Charter 77 Movement Bring an End to Communism?', *New England Review*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (2007), pp. 134-146, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40244963>, (accessed: 31 January 2017), p. 135

demonstrations themselves, without the help and influence of the Charter.<sup>44</sup> In fact, Jan Urban, a former Charterist, has noted that they were never able to organise 'a mass movement' because the Czechoslovak police had a strong grip on them and that their success was mostly due to student demonstrations.<sup>45</sup> The International Students' Day on 17 November 1989, commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> death anniversary of Jan Opletal, a Czech student who was shot during the anti-Nazi demonstration in 1939, was organised by the Union of Socialist Youth and sanctioned by the Party.<sup>46</sup> However, the start of the revolution is often described as if it was the culmination of the Charter 77's civil attack on the Communist establishment.<sup>47</sup> The students' march on 17 November 1989 was supposed to take place on certain streets, further from the centre of Prague. As Kenney suggests, other students in the demonstration wanted to take another route towards the city centre, for reasons which are still debated and surrounded by mystery.<sup>48</sup> As the march continued along the National Avenue (Národní třída), it was soon stopped by the Czechoslovak riot police and one student - Martin Šmíd- was allegedly killed.<sup>49</sup> According to Jan Urban, 'this misinformation [...] electrified an entire population'.<sup>50</sup> Some of the Charter 77 members, such as Havel, and other organisations were not present at this demonstration as he and other so-called 'ringleaders' of civic associations were the first to be rounded up and questioned by the police after any demonstration or perceived unrest. Nevertheless, as Heimann suggests, the Charter soon realised the potential to develop a bigger event out of 17 November and call for a mass action - resignations of those officials responsible for this incident, and, most importantly, a general strike, after which the Communist Party

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<sup>44</sup> Milan Otáhal and Miroslav Vaněk, *Sto Studentských Revolučí: Studenti v Období Pádu Komunistu : Životopisná vyprávění*, (Praha: Lidové Noviny, 1999); Padraic Kenney, *A Carnival of Revolution--Central Europe 1989*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002), p. 281

<sup>45</sup> Justine Costanza, Former Dissident: Recalling the Unexpected Revolution, *Aktuálně.cz*, 10 November 2009, <https://zpravy.aktualne.cz/former-dissident-recalling-the-unexpected-revolution/r?i:article:652457/?redirected=1486911978>, (accessed: 12 February 2017)

<sup>46</sup> Padraic Kenney, *A Carnival of Revolution--Central Europe 1989*, p. 281

<sup>47</sup> Herbert Brynda, 'Studenti a Komunistická moc v roce 1989', *Radio Praha*, 16 November 2003, <http://www.radio.cz/cz/rubrika/historie/studenti-a-komunisticka-moc-v-roce-1989>, (accessed: 11 February 2017)

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid*, p. 282

<sup>50</sup> Justine Costanza, Former Dissident: Recalling the Unexpected Revolution, *Aktuálně.cz*, 10 November 2009

leadership resigned.<sup>51</sup> As the Chartists had substantial links to the foreign press through their friends or other Czechoslovaks abroad, it was not difficult to uphold their own visibility in the English-language news reports about the events as well as in later articles.<sup>52</sup> Therefore, there is little wonder why English-language sources often argue for the importance and influence of the 'civil society' in the context of the Velvet Revolution and the fall of Communism in Czechoslovakia.

As those who participated in the revolution eventually became disillusioned about its impact and results, so did the academic community become critical of the role, influence, and success of this 'civil society' and the Charter 77 in changing the political order in Czechoslovakia. Criticism was emerging from the Charter's own former members such as Milan Otáhal, as he stated that in reality, the 'actual real political significance' of the Charter was 'minimal'.<sup>53</sup> In addition, the very notion of a 'civil society' and its 'power' has been challenged by Stephen Kotkin and Jan T. Gross. They have argued that many analysts have 'disproportionately' focused their research on the dissidents and the opposition.<sup>54</sup> According to them, what really happened in 1989 was not the victory nor the success of the 'civil society', but something quite the opposite - the 'uncivil society' or the establishment, destroying its own system.<sup>55</sup> Each regime misruled itself, and the reforms, coming from the Soviet Union, accelerated this process. Socialist establishments either reformed too much, like Hungary, and significantly deviated from the socialist ideology, or refused to reform, like the German Democratic Republic and, to some extent,

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<sup>51</sup> Mary Heimann, *Czechoslovakia: the State that Failed*, p. 302; Steven Greenhouse, 'Clamor in the East; Prague Party leaders resign; new chief, 48, surprise choice; 350,000 at rally cheer Dubcek', *The New York Times*, 25 November 1989, <http://www.nytimes.com/1989/11/25/world/clamor-east-prague-party-leaders-resign-new-chief-48-surprise-choice-350000.html?pagewanted=all>, (accessed 4 October 2017)

<sup>52</sup> Richard Bassett and John Holland, 'Anthem of liberation echoes in streets of Prague', *The Times* (London, England), 25 November 1989, Issue 63561, p. 6, <http://find.galegroup.com/ttda/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=TTDA&userGroupName=ustrath&abID=T003&docPage=article&searchType=AdvancedSearchForm&docId=IF501786799&type=multipage&contentSet=LTO&version=1.0>, (accessed: 26 February 2017)

<sup>53</sup> Milan Otáhal and Miroslav Vaněk, *Sto Studentských Revolucí: Studenti v Období Pádu Komunistů : životopisná vyprávění*; Michael Kraus, 'Did the Charter 77 Movement Bring an End to Communism?', p. 135

<sup>54</sup> Stephen Kotkin and Jan T. Gross, *Uncivil Society: 1989 and the Implosion of the Communist Establishment*, (New York: Random House, 2010), p. xiv

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, p. 12

Czechoslovakia, thus reforming a little or not at all.<sup>56</sup> Therefore, the 'civil society' was more of a consequence of 1989 and its revolutions than a catalyst of the collapse of the socialist system in Europe.<sup>57</sup> Only after the communist establishment had lost its power, a creation (or re-creation) of the society, based on human rights and civil liberties, was possible. Many could argue that this view is utopian, as the new Central-Eastern European democracies did not completely cease the practices of their communist predecessors. It is also elitist in a sense that it diminishes the importance of various grassroots opposition and activist organisations/associations, and, thus, focuses on the ruling officials. However, such a revision is inevitable as researchers and contemporaries are no longer captured by the surprise, spontaneity and intensity of an event such as a revolution.

#### Central-Eastern European Communist Parties - their response to *perestroika*

Many argued that the final strike to the communist rule came from Moscow itself and the consequences brought on by the reformist policies established by the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev.<sup>58</sup> Gorbachev introduced a set of reforms from 1986 such as *perestroika*, which meant a reduction of central planning, greater autonomy of enterprises, private businesses; politically, it stood for *glasnost* (openness), freedom of speech, and greater political pluralism.<sup>59</sup> He was convinced that the ideological basis for socialism would not be significantly altered if other republics accepted some steps towards liberalisation.<sup>60</sup> Also, Archie Brown has argued that Gorbachev's decision to denounce the use of force in order to

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<sup>56</sup> Archie Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor*, (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 248

<sup>57</sup> Stephen Kotkin and Jan T. Gross, *Uncivil Society: 1989 and the Implosion of the Communist Establishment*, p. xiv

<sup>58</sup> Archie Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor*, p. 248

<sup>59</sup> Michail Gorbachev, 'Perestroika lost', *The New York Times*, (14 March 2010), pp. 1-3, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/14/opinion/14gorbachev.html?hp=&pagewanted=print>, (accessed 1 March 2017), p. 2

<sup>60</sup> D. R. Spechler and M. C. Spechler, 'A Reassessment of the Burden of Eastern Europe on the USSR', *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 61, No. 9, (2009), pp. 1645–1657, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09668130903209178>, (accessed 1 March 2017), p. 1654-65; The 43rd U.N. General Assembly Session, *Gorbachev's Speech to the UN*, excerpts of address, (7 December 1988), [http://isc.temple.edu/hist249/course/Documents/gorbachev\\_speech\\_to\\_UN.htm](http://isc.temple.edu/hist249/course/Documents/gorbachev_speech_to_UN.htm), (accessed 1 March 2017)

protect socialism in Eastern Europe provided more sovereignty to the socialist countries to disobey Moscow.<sup>61</sup> Stephen Kotkin has pointed out that this policy was perceived as a 'Soviet hands-off' approach towards the socialist bloc, which enabled the local opposition to the Communist Parties.<sup>62</sup> However, he adds, in reality, Moscow was as interventionist into the internal affairs of the socialist states as ever by urging other states to reform with the continuous deployment of the Soviet armed forces across the bloc.<sup>63</sup>

The leaders of local Central-Eastern European Communist Parties proved to be decisive in interpreting and adopting Gorbachev's *perestroika* in their countries. While Hungary welcomed the encouragement to reform, Czechoslovakia and the GDR were leery of such Soviet policies. In addition to this, in 1987 Czechoslovak Communist leaders also thought that *perestroika*-style policies, such as the relaxation of border control, for instance, resembled those introduced and abandoned during the Prague Spring - to agree to re-establish them again meant putting the legitimacy of the whole Czechoslovak leadership in question.<sup>64</sup> Many of the Communist Party elites held their offices since 1968 because they were against the reforms of liberalisation and were supported, even if in its aftermath, by the Soviet Union.<sup>65</sup> Therefore, they abstained from the enthusiastic adoption of reforms. László Borhí argued that the Hungarian decision to officially open its border with Austria on 11 September and to let East Germans leave the socialist bloc for democratic West Germany questioned 'the very survival of the communist German state'.<sup>66</sup> This was a decisive break within the socialist bloc which exposed the system as unstable and fractured. Therefore, Central-Eastern European leaders were

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<sup>61</sup> Archie Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor*, p. 247

<sup>62</sup> Stephen Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted: Soviet Collapse, 1970-2000*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, USA, 2009), p. 3-2

<sup>63</sup> Ibid

<sup>64</sup> Stephen White, *Communism and its Collapse*, (Routledge: London, 2001), p. 58; John F. N. Bradley, *Czechoslovakia's Velvet Revolution: a Political Analysis*, (Boulder, Colo.: East European Monographs; New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), p. 29

<sup>65</sup> D. R. Spechler and M. C. Spechler, 'A Reassessment of the Burden of Eastern Europe on the USSR', p. 1654-65

<sup>66</sup> László Borhí, 'The International Context of Hungarian Transition, 1989: the View from Budapest', Chapter 6, in Kevin McDermott and Matthew Stibbe (eds), *The 1989 Revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe: from Communism to Pluralism*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), p. 115

divided over the adoption and development of Gorbachev's reforms.<sup>67</sup> Those policies made the conservative leaders of Eastern Europe, such as those in East Germany or Czechoslovakia, appear especially rigid and hard-line towards any change.

Focusing on the ideas and actions of Mikhail Gorbachev and the adoption of reformist policies across the socialist bloc might have led to an overestimation of the Soviet influence in the internal affairs of other socialist republics in the related historiography. Steven Saxonberg has even argued that Gorbachev, in fact, did not encourage any far-reaching reforms and that his stance towards changes, spinning out of his control, for instance in Poland and Hungary, was 'rather neutral' and 'passive'.<sup>68</sup> He based his argument on the lack of actual archival documents confirming this perspective and instead suggested that Gorbachev had a 'general tendency' to appear more liberal to his Western counterparts while he was 'cautious' when it came to dealing with the leaders of other Communist Parties.<sup>69</sup> However, only a small number of scholars have recently begun to consider the Czechoslovak Communist Party's role in managing their state under Gorbachev's pressure to reform.<sup>70</sup> Stephen White was one of the first scholars to identify the Party's version of Gorbachev's *perestroika*, or *přestavba*, as a Czechoslovak 'compromise' between the unwillingness to reform and the Soviet push to 'restructure'.<sup>71</sup> He argued that such changes as improved management of factories were a welcome consequence of *přestavba*, yet the Party was not so eager to reform itself.<sup>72</sup> Michal Pullmann has argued that *přestavba* contributed to the Party's own loss of confidence and trust in its ideology, which previously enabled the organisation to remain stable in its constitutional leading role in Czechoslovakia.<sup>73</sup> David Green has expanded Pullman's interpretation of

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<sup>67</sup> David Alexander Green, *The Czechoslovak Communist Party's Revolution, 1986 – 1990*, [PhD Thesis, University of Strathclyde, 2014]; Michal Pullmann, *Konec experimentu: Přestavba a pád komunismu v Československu*, (Praha: Scriptorium, 2011)

<sup>68</sup> Steven Saxonberg, *The Fall: Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary and Poland in a Comparative Perspective*, (London; New York : Routledge, 2001), p. 143

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid*, p. 214

<sup>70</sup> Stephen White, *Communism and its Collapse*, (Routledge: London, 2001); David Alexander Green, *The Czechoslovak Communist Party's Revolution, 1986 – 1990*, [PhD Thesis, University of Strathclyde, 2014]; Michal Pullmann, *Konec experimentu: Přestavba a pád komunismu v Československu*

<sup>71</sup> Stephen White, *Communism and its Collapse*, p. 58

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>73</sup> Michal Pullmann, *Konec experimentu: Přestavba a pád komunismu v Československu*, p. 218

*přestavba* and argued that in reality it was aimed at 'devolving responsibility and accountability, particularly to lower regional and district Party committees', thus distancing the KSČ 'from the day-to-day running of the state'.<sup>74</sup> The KSČ itself, as other Communist Parties, were also not monolithic in their support or opposition to *přestavba* or related reforms, with different factions of officials existing not only within the Party but also within the Central Committee of the top leadership. According to Green, the Party was hardly capable to respond to any imminent reform-related problems because the mechanism, keeping all related Party institutions intact, was corrupted and destabilised by such uneven perceptions and adoption of reforms.

### 'The Prague exit'

This research further investigates the role of the Czechoslovak Communist Party in its own downfall by suggesting that East German migration was another destabilising factor, which contributed to the Party's own mismanagement. It is probably unsurprising that the connection between the East German Communist Party collapse and East German migration is clearly established by scholars.<sup>75</sup> According to Corey Ross, 'the emigration crisis was what started the revolution' in the GDR and the migrants were 'the real revolutionaries'.<sup>76</sup> However, scholars such as Katherine Verdery and Kevin McDermott believe that this migration crisis had bloc-wide repercussions.<sup>77</sup> Yet this theory was not explicitly tested with regards to Czechoslovak history, even though Czechoslovakia and the GDR

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<sup>74</sup> David Alexander Green, *The Czechoslovak Communist Party's Revolution, 1986 – 1990*, p. 66

<sup>75</sup> Albert O. Hirschman, *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States*, (Cambridge, Mass. Harvard University Press, 2007); Christian Joppke, *East German dissidents and the revolution of 1989: social movement in a Leninist regime*, (Washington Square, NY: New York University Press, 1995); Gareth Dale, *Popular protest in East Germany, 1945-1989*, (London; New York : Routledge, 2005); Kevin McDermott and Matthew Stibbe, *The 1989 Revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe: from Communism to Pluralism*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Patrick Major, *Behind the Berlin Wall: East Germany and the Frontiers of Power*, (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Steven Pfaff, *Exit-Voice Dynamics and the Collapse of East Germany: the Crisis of Leninism and the Revolution of 1989*, (Durham [N.C.]: Duke University Press, 2006)

<sup>76</sup> Corey Ross, *The East German Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives in the Interpretation of the GDR*, (London: Arnold, 2002), p. 140-141, p. 145; Gareth Dale, *Popular protest in East Germany, 1945-1989*, p. 102

<sup>77</sup> Katherine Verdery, *What Was Socialism, and What Comes Next?*, (Princeton (N.J.): Princeton University Press, [2014]); Kevin McDermott and Matthew Stibbe, *The 1989 Revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe: from Communism to Pluralism*

were close allies during the Cold War.<sup>78</sup> This could be explained by a stronger focus on 'internal' factors in the Czechoslovak revolution, such as non-governmental opposition, so the migration as an external factor is not discussed in depth.<sup>79</sup> To the best of the author's knowledge, the representation of migrants and their migration in Czechoslovakia has not yet been explored in connection to the stability of the Communist Party just before the Velvet Revolution.

Some accounts, which briefly described East German migration usually presented this event as part of the 'people's revolution'. Padraic Kenney depicted East German migration as an event which 'strengthened' 'the people of Prague' and prepared them for the 'battle' against the establishment.<sup>80</sup> According to him, East Germans posed a serious threat to the Party.<sup>81</sup> To support his claim, he adds a short extract from an interview with one of the students, active in the student movement, who confessed that seeing East Germans travelling to West Germany made her and many other Czechoslovaks hopeful that it is possible to go 'somewhere to something normal'.<sup>82</sup> As it follows from this example, the life in socialism was seen as 'abnormal' by this student. Yet Piotr Pykel argued that even though 'the exodus' of East Germans had 'a very important psychological impact on the Czechoslovaks', however, 'it is difficult to answer to what extent the refugee episode accelerated the anti-regime explosion'.<sup>83</sup> Although it was acknowledged, the description 'refugee episode' is perhaps the most accurate evidence of just how little significance this event has been given in Czechoslovak history. It should be noted that this case was discussed the most in essays by Vilém Prečan, which has inspired this research and suggested an alternative approach to the Velvet Revolution,

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<sup>78</sup> Piotr Pykel, *1989 - the Final Stage: a Comparative Study of Transition from Communist Rule to Democratic Government in Poland and Czechoslovakia*, p. 218

<sup>79</sup> Bernard Wheaton and Zdenek Kavan, *The Velvet Revolution: Czechoslovakia, 1988-1991*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992); James Krapfl, *Revolution with a Human Face: Politics, Culture, and Community in Czechoslovakia, 1989-1992*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013); Kevin McDermott and Matthew Stibbe (eds), *The 1989 Revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe: from Communism to Pluralism*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013)

<sup>80</sup> Padraic Kenney, *A Carnival of Revolution - Central Europe 1989*, p. 284

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid*, p. 285

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>83</sup> Piotr Pykel, *1989 - the Final Stage: a Comparative Study of Transition from Communist Rule to Democratic Government in Poland and Czechoslovakia*, p. 221

namely, to look at it through the lens of East German migrants.<sup>84</sup> Contributing to the current accounts on the event, this research will analyse East German migration crisis through the lens of the press, which presented the migrants to the people of Prague and provided the first-hand experience of ideological language. It identifies a clear link between their chosen linguistic representation in the official Czechoslovak newspaper and the political state of the KSČ itself. The next chapter on methodology - Critical Discourse Analysis and several of its core ideas - details how this thesis develops its overarching argument.

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<sup>84</sup> Vilém Prečan, 'Through Prague to Freedom: The Exodus of GDR Citizens through Czechoslovakia to the Federal Republic of Germany, September 30 - November 10, 1989', *The National Security Archive*, 8 November 2009, <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB294/essay.htm> , (accessed: 27 March 2017)

## Research Methodology: core theories from Critical Discourse Analysis

This research disseminates the linguistic representations of the 1989 East German migration crisis via Prague, as presented in the official newspaper of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (or the KSČ), *Rudé Právo*. The majority of this research employs concepts, embedded in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as both theories, governing this thesis, and methods, helping to define a certain aspect of the social reality of the 1989 Czechoslovakia.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an interdisciplinary approach to critical theory which views language as a social practice and studies ‘social phenomena which are necessarily complex and thus require a multidisciplinary and multi methodical approach’.<sup>85</sup> CDA aims to provoke a discussion as well as to help challenge knowledge, which has been taken for granted.<sup>86</sup> Focusing primarily on how language works within a text, this approach is often used in the qualitative analysis to discuss ‘social, political, historical and intertextual contexts’.<sup>87</sup> According to Norman Fairclough, CDA is usually concerned with the relationship between language and discourse and how it affects social change.<sup>88</sup> Therefore, as this thesis aims to discover how the relationship between the language used by the Czechoslovak Communist Party press, related to East German migration, and the Party’s stability, CDA is a beneficial methodological approach. This research identifies the following core concepts used in this research in order to fully engage an analysed text and its language with the social practices of the ideological entity:

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<sup>85</sup> Ruth Wodak (ed), *Critical Discourse Analysis*, vol. 1-3, (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2013); Norman Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992); Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer, ‘Critical Discourse Analysis: History, Agenda, Theory, and Methodology’, Chapter 1, in Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer (ed), *Methods for Critical Discourse Analysis*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (London : Sage, 2009), p. 2

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>87</sup> Paul Baker et al, ‘A useful methodological synergy? Combining critical discourse analysis and corpus linguistics to examine discourses of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK press’, *Discourse & Society* (2008), 19:3, pp. 273-306, <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0957926508088962> , (accessed: 30 March 2017), p. 273-274

<sup>88</sup> Norman Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change*; Carmen Rosa Caldas-Coulthard and Malcolm Coulthard, (eds), *Texts and Practices: Readings in Critical Discourse Analysis*, (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 3

Concept	Definition
Language	Language is defined by Jürgen Habermas as 'a medium of domination and social force' which 'serves to legitimize relations of organized power', making 'language [...] ideological'. <sup>89</sup> In other words, language is a 'power-laden mechanism' which can be used to legitimate various ideas as truths and to construct meanings and definitions, thus providing frameworks for interpreting reality and constituting change. <sup>90</sup>
Power	Max Weber states that power can be viewed 'as the possibility of enforcing one's own will within a social relationship against the will or interests of others'. <sup>91</sup> CDA scholars focus on the ways power manifests itself in various texts, and how the language is manipulated by those who have the power to achieve certain ideological goals. <sup>92</sup> They believe that those in power can reproduce social inequalities, discrimination, and racism through the selected linguistic practices. <sup>93</sup> This research sees the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia as a power, which used language not only to inform its citizens but also to impose a certain way of thinking about East German migrants and their migration in 1989 by the means of the official press.
Ideology	Ideology is seen 'as a perspective (often one-sided), i.e. a worldview and a system composed of related mental representations, convictions, opinions, attitudes, values and evaluations, which is shared by members of a specific social group'. <sup>94</sup> Ideologies 'serve as important means of creating shared social identities', which are introduced and sustained 'by establishing hegemonic identity narratives or by controlling the access to specific discourses or public spheres'. <sup>95</sup> This paper views ideology not only as the political system of socialist Czechoslovakia but also as a way of thinking about the East German migration, as presented in the official Communist Party daily.
Social Identity	Both power and ideology produce definitions and labels for social identity. According to Wodak, 'identity construction always implies inclusionary or exclusionary processes (oneself and others)', and is strengthened by a constant repetition of certain characteristics, related to these identities, thus reproducing them in the everyday language and linguistic practices, which 'determine and define similarities and differences or draw clear boundaries between 'us' and 'them''. <sup>96</sup> In other words, 'them' is different from 'us', and 'them' is also 'seen as a threat to the identity, the values,

<sup>89</sup> Jürgen Habermas; Sherry Weber Nicholsen; Jerry A Stark, *On the logic of the social sciences*, (Cambridge ; Oxford: Polity Pres, 1998), p. 172

<sup>90</sup> Yoosun Park, 'Historical Discourse Analysis', pp. 393-395, in Lisa M. Given (ed.), *The SAGE Encyclopaedia of Qualitative Research Methods*, (Thousand Oaks, New Delhi, Singapore: SAGE Publication, 2008), p. 394

<sup>91</sup> Max Weber (1980:28) quoted in Martin Reisigl and Ruth Wodak, 'The Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA)', Chapter 2, in Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer (eds), *Methods for Critical Discourse Analysis*, p. 24

<sup>92</sup> Martin Reisigl and Ruth Wodak, 'The Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA)', p. 26

<sup>93</sup> Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer, 'Critical Discourse Analysis: History, Agenda, Theory, and Methodology', p. 9

<sup>94</sup> Martin Reisigl and Ruth Wodak, 'The Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA)', p. 24

<sup>95</sup> Ibid, p. 25

<sup>96</sup> James R. Martin and Ruth Wodak, 'Introduction', pp. 1-19, in James R. Martin and Ruth Wodak (eds), *Re/reading the Past: Critical and Functional Perspectives on Time and Value*, (Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins Pub., 2003), p. 8; Ruth Wodak, 'Language, Power and Identity', pp. 393-, in Ruth Wodak (ed), *Critical Discourse Analysis*, vol. 1., (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2013), p. 394

	the economic stability and the security of the constructed 'us'. <sup>97</sup> This paper sees the Czechoslovak Communist Party and its media as an ideological power, which constructed the social identity of East German migrants through systematic 'othering' of this group by the means of ideological persuasion in the Party newspaper.
Migrant	The research uses the term 'migrant' to indicate that the analysis is concerned with people, moving from one place to another. Many researchers agree that the term 'migrant' is often used interchangeably with other terms such as 'refugee', 'asylum seeker' and similar. The author of this research is aware that the term might sometimes carry derogatory connotations or might be used in a manner which disrespects individuals on the move. However, the use of the word 'migrant' does not confuse the discussion of the main findings of this research nor complicates its conceptualisation. Therefore, it is used as an objective description of all travelling East Germans, unless another term was provided in primary sources discussed.

As Ruth Wodak explains, language is a powerful way of introducing, producing, and sustaining discriminatory practices of naming, labelling, and defining a group of migrants, thus, constructing their identity and often misrepresenting them.<sup>98</sup> An overly negative (or positive) representation introduces valid risks of partial judgement and generalisation, which often cloud deeper understanding of migration. This, in turn, prevents possibilities of the adoption of effective solutions to migration-related issues.

### On migration and language

An authoritarian state government/main ruling party usually has unhindered access to the state media in order to 'monopolise perceptions' and voice selected narratives and ideas, expressed through the specific use of language.<sup>99</sup> Those who control the media can influence a support for certain ideas within the society.

Selected ideological narratives can be set to target minority groups. The idea of 'framing effects' is central to this statement as the way an issue is labelled shapes public opinion.<sup>100</sup> Stefano Volpicelli argued that the current

<sup>97</sup> Cagla E. Aykac, 'What Space for Migrant Voices in European Anti-Racism?', chapter 6, in Gerard Delanty; Ruth Wodak; Paul Jones (eds), *Identity, Belonging and Migration*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011), p. 128

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>99</sup> Ruth Wodak, 'Editor's Introduction: Critical Discourse Analysis – Challenges and Perspectives', in Ruth Wodak (ed), *Critical Discourse Analysis*, vol. 1., (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2013); p. xxv; Erik Bleich, Irene Bloemraad, Els de Graauw, 'Migrants, minorities and the media: information, representation and participation in the public sphere', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 6, (2015), pp. 857-873, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2014.1002197>, (accessed: 4 August 2017), p. 857

<sup>100</sup> Erik Bleich, Irene Bloemraad and Els de Graauw, 'Migrants, Minorities and the Media: Information, Representations and Participation in the Public Sphere' p. 860

general narrative of migration is divided into two main views: either perceiving migrants as a problem in Europe, ‘corruptors of the social fabric, inevitably provoking economic disturbance and criminal emergency, which in turn call for repressive and security measures’, or defining them as ‘vulnerable people’, ‘escaping natural or man-made disaster’.<sup>101</sup> Volpicelli argues that labelling the migrants as a threat influences other members of society to further discriminate against them, as such perspectives are ‘authorised’ by the elites in power - political, social, or economical.<sup>102</sup> Erik Bleich, Irene Bloemraad and Els de Graauw have also argued that related ‘research has often centred on negative depictions that might reflect a deeper, underlying racism [...] in the media’.<sup>103</sup> For instance, according to the research on the press coverage of the refugee and migrant crisis in the European Union, the UK press coverage of the migration in 2015 indicated ‘the high incidence of threats to welfare/health systems’ and ‘the prevalence of negative refugee frames’, linking ‘refugees and migrants to crime’.<sup>104</sup> While these arguments were referring to the 2015 migration crisis, which is very different from East German migration, this research is curious whether similar practices were adopted by the Czechoslovak Communist Party against East German migrants, which would suggest that the linguistic discourse of discrimination permeates historical time and space.

### On ideology

The underlying interest of this research is the ideological choice of language of the Czechoslovak Communist Party at the twilight of its power to describe East German migration. This research argues that it highlighted signs of panic and

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<sup>101</sup> Stefano Volpicelli, ‘Who's Afraid of ... Migration? A New European Narrative of Migration’, *Istituto Affari Internazionali, IAI Working Papers* 15, 32, (2015), pp. 1-26, <http://www.iai.it/en/pubblicazioni/whos-afraid-migration#sthash.LktkSSd6.dpuf>, (accessed: 30 December 2016), p. 1

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid*, p. 3; Mike Berry, Inaki Garcia-Blanco, Kerry Moore, *Press Coverage of the Refugee and Migrant Crisis in the EU: A Content Analysis of Five European Countries – find more details-- Press Coverage of the Refugee and Migrant Crisis in the EU: A Content Analysis of Five European Countries*, Report prepared for the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (December 2015), Cardiff School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies, p. 3

<sup>103</sup> Erik Bleich, Irene Bloemraad and Els de Graauw, ‘Migrants, Minorities and the Media: Information, Representations and Participation in the Public Sphere’, p. 861

<sup>104</sup> Mike Berry, Inaki Garcia-Blanco, Kerry Moore, *Press Coverage of the Refugee and Migrant Crisis in the EU: A Content Analysis of Five European Countries – find more details-- Press Coverage of the Refugee and Migrant Crisis in the EU: A Content Analysis of Five European Countries*, p. 8

fear of the migration, which influenced to 'other' or exclude them from the rest of Czechoslovak society as a measure of tackling the migration and ensuring that the Party preserved order in the country.

The notion of who is 'us' and who is supposed to be 'othered' allows those in power to construct a certain image of social identities, which contribute to the nation-building and sustaining processes. Benedict Anderson's argument of 'imagined communities' details how it is possible to socially include and exclude certain groups of people from the preferred model of society.<sup>105</sup> According to him, there is very little chance that every member of a nation meets everyone else in the same nation, yet the 'notion of citizenship and belonging to the nation enables people to imagine the boundaries of a nation even when these boundaries may not physically exist'.<sup>106</sup> For instance, the media is the medium which establishes the meaning behind 'existence, experience and belonging to a community'.<sup>107</sup> The perpetuation of our identity as a nation is crucial to our understanding of who we are, which creates psychological boundaries, defining who belongs and who does not to 'our' nation. Therefore, this perception also permits those in power to portray the 'unwelcome' elements in the society, such as immigrants, negatively. The Czechoslovak Communist Party behaved in a similar way, which was justified in its ideology.

The connection between an ideological political power and its choice of language to persuade their society to support a particular idea largely derives its base from research on the language of Nazism. Viktor Klemperer, a contemporary of the dictatorship of the National Socialist Party in the Third Reich, documented the day-to-day linguistic choices of those in power in his diary to investigate the attitudes of the German society towards the far-right ideology. Klemperer noted that 'words can be like tiny doses of arsenic: they are swallowed unnoticed, appear to have no effect, and then after a little time the toxic reaction sets in after all'.<sup>108</sup> He explained that 'if someone replaces

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<sup>105</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*, (London: Verso, 1991)

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid*, p. 6

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid*, p. 44

<sup>108</sup> Viktor Klemperer, Martin Brady, *The language of the Third Reich: LTI, Lingua Tertii Imperii: a philologist's notebook*, (London: continuum, 2006), p. 14

the words ‘heroic’ and ‘virtuous’ with ‘fanatical’ for long enough, he will come to believe that a fanatic really is a virtuous hero and that no one can be a hero without fanaticism’.<sup>109</sup> Similarly, James R. Martin and Ruth Wodak argued that when a certain idea or definition naturalises within a society and becomes reality due to its consecutive repetition, that idea emerges as an acceptable norm to use.<sup>110</sup> Therefore, if some of those ideas are xenophobic and discriminatory, it might become acceptable to be xenophobic and discriminatory in society as such behaviour is ‘indirectly legalised’ by the powerful.

The language use of the Czechoslovak Communist Party in the 1950-1980s was investigated by Petr Fidelius (real name Karel Palek). He noted that ‘the Communist regime, in its own speech, is giving a true picture of its nature’.<sup>111</sup> According to Fidelius, Czechoslovak Communist propaganda was ‘not meaningless ‘gibberish’’ nor an ‘amorphous pile of ‘lies’’ - it revealed direct and specific information about the ‘producer’ [the Party] of this language as well as ‘his vision of the world’.<sup>112</sup> Fidelius argued that ‘the communist propaganda never concealed itself’ from what it really was - ‘an ideological weapon’ and ‘essentially, an instrument of power’.<sup>113</sup> This observation, according to him, was not taken into account by George Orwell who tried to conceptualise the totalitarian language in ‘1984’, which provoked the ‘illusion of intentionality’ (his own term).<sup>114</sup> As Fidelius noted, the Communist language was not ‘deliberately created as a tool for controlling, or paralyzing, the human mind’ but it ‘tied’ ‘the minds of its producers’ as ‘it was a certain vision of the world’.<sup>115</sup> This research was inspired by Fidelius’ findings about the general features of the language of the Czechoslovak Communist Party and its nature and employed them in exploring East German migration and its representation in the KSČ newspaper *Rudé Právo*.

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid

<sup>110</sup> James R. Martin and Ruth Wodak, ‘Introduction’, pp. 1-19, in James R. Martin and Ruth Wodak (eds), *Re/reading the Past: Critical and Functional Perspectives on Time and Value*, (Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins Pub., 2003), p. 8

<sup>111</sup> Petr Fidelius, *Řeč komunistické moci* (tr. Language of the Communist Party), (Praha: Triáda, 2016), p.

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid

<sup>113</sup> Ibid, p. 13

<sup>114</sup> Ibid

<sup>115</sup> Ibid

Some of the newspapers which were selected for this research included photographs of and related to East German migrants. Roland Barthes argued that ‘every photograph is a certificate of presence’.<sup>116</sup> All of the analysed newspapers acknowledged the existence of East German migrants in Czechoslovakia, yet they did so in different ways and at different times. Barthes argued further that a photograph sends ‘two messages’ to anyone looking at it - ‘one without a code’ or the message of the very existence of something or someone pictured in it, and ‘the other with a code’, or ‘the rhetoric of the photograph’.<sup>117</sup> For instance, a photograph of an apple might simply signify an apple or a healthy lifestyle, which is conventionally associated with this fruit. Lynda Mannik has argued that because images are ‘elusive’ in their meaning, they are ‘vulnerable to manipulations’.<sup>118</sup> This is the very reason, as Robert L. Craig states, which permits ‘those in power’ to use images in order ‘to establish and maintain authority’.<sup>119</sup> Craig explained that the powerful elites can attach preferred meanings to images because ‘one prerogative of power is to saturate culture with images that reiterate ideologies favourable to elite groups’.<sup>120</sup> Those ideologies and ideas are saturated because ‘images communicate social knowledge’ and those in power can ‘efficiently tap into the tacit knowledge held by the audience as they are members of a society’.<sup>121</sup> As *Rudé Právo* journalists wrote for their readers, who read their news because they subscribed to some of the ideas expressed in the daily, or because they were used to reading it, images became an ‘ideal medium for activating tacit social knowledge precisely because they are a mute record of social performance’ in the hands of an ideological power.<sup>122</sup> The Czechoslovak Communist Party allowed pictures of East German migration to be used in certain contexts and

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<sup>116</sup> Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida. Reflexions on photography*, (translated by Richard Howard), (New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 1981), p. 87

<sup>117</sup> Roland Barthes, *Image-Music-Text*, (translation by Stephen Heath), (New York: Hill and Wang, 1990 [1977]), p. 158; Patrik Åker, ‘Photography, objectivity and the modern newspaper’, *Journalism Studies*, 13:3, (2012), 325-339, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2011.629097>, (accessed: 8 September 2017)

<sup>118</sup> Lynda Mannik, *Photography, memory, and refugee identity: they voyage of the SS Walnut, 1948*, (Toronto, Vancouver: UBC Press, 2013), p. 10

<sup>119</sup> Robert L. Craig, ‘Fact, public opinion, and persuasion: the rise of the visual in journalism and advertising’, chapter 2, in Bonnie Brennen, Hanno Hardt (eds), *Picturing the past: media, history, and photography*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), p. 37

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid*, p. 38

<sup>121</sup> Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites, *No caption needed: iconic photographs, public culture, and liberal democracy*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), p. 10

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid*

attributed certain captions to them in order to persuade the readership of the official newspaper to see the migrants in a way, which was favourable to them and their ideology. According to David Bate, our understanding of a photograph is mostly subconscious as we do not think about what we see too much.<sup>123</sup> This is precisely how ideology and its detrimental components can be reproduced and spread, thus becoming normalised within a given society. As Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites argued, photographs help to ‘orient the self within civic life’, establish who ‘we’ and ‘they’ are.<sup>124</sup> Similarly, the RP editors attempted to reinforce the discourse of the social identity of East German migrants as being opposite to that of Czechoslovaks, which helped to establish boundaries of difference, aimed at ending the migration. Therefore, the analysis of photographs is employed to provide more information regarding how the Czechoslovak Communist Party daily ‘framed’ East German migration.

#### About this research

This research investigates the language used in the main newspaper of the Czechoslovak Communist Party. It compares its findings of the representation of East German migrants with other well-known news outlets in 1989. They reveal specific peculiarities of the knowledge base formed by the ideological media.

Peter R. R. White has argued that journalism is ‘conditioned by a complex set of ideologically-determined assumptions, beliefs and expectations about the nature of the social world’.<sup>125</sup> Thus, even though the primary interest of this research is the ideological language of the KSČ in its official newspaper *Rudé Právo*, made available electronically by *Ústav pro českou literaturu*, a wider selection of other newspapers was also selected in order to observe how this minority was represented across other media outlets at the time.<sup>126</sup> A few

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<sup>123</sup> David Bate, *Photography: the key concepts*, (London; New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016)

<sup>124</sup> Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites, *No caption needed*, p. 11

<sup>125</sup> Peter. R. R. White, ‘News as History: Your Daily Gossip’, pp. 61-89, in J. R. Martin and Ruth Wodak (eds), *Re/reading the Past: Critical and Functional Perspectives on Time and Value*, (Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins Pub., 2003), p. 61; John E. Richardson, *Analysing Newspapers: an Approach from Critical Discourse Analysis*, (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 65

<sup>126</sup> Ústav pro českou literaturu AV ČR, v. v. i., (Institute of the Czech literature), Digitalizovaný archiv časopisů, <http://archiv.ucl.cas.cz/index.php?path=RudePravo/1989>, (accessed: December 2016-January 2017)

newspapers which represented the so-called 'Eastern bloc' - the Soviet Union's *Правда* (further as *Pravda*) and *Известия* (further as *Izvestia*) - were consulted electronically through *East View Information Services*.<sup>127</sup> For a 'Western' or liberal perspective, the United Kingdom's *The Times* and America's *The Washington Post* were also investigated as they not only generally reported the news related to their respective governments but were also frequently reviewed in the Czechoslovak press.<sup>128</sup> These newspapers were selected because they offered an in-depth coverage of the East German migration through Czechoslovakia and other countries, presented interviews with travelling East Germans, and were regularly reviewed in the Czechoslovak Communist Party newspaper. Their coverage provided a glimpse into the media perceptions of this migration in the UK and the US and acted as a counter-balance for the findings from the Russian and Czechoslovak newspapers. Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty situation reports were also investigated in order to establish the chronology of events and access some information, which was unavailable elsewhere, made available by the library of the University of Glasgow. These sources were invaluable in providing a different perspective of how the migrants were perceived and presented. They also revealed fascinating details of the ideological-propaganda war, still waged between the so-called East and West at the end of the Cold War, even when their diplomatic relationships were not considered to be openly confrontational anymore.<sup>129</sup>

This thesis is also based on the research in the archives in Prague, Czech Republic, during June-July 2017. The author of this research hoped to find any documented signs of panic within the Czechoslovak Communist organisation, which would indicate the importance of the East German transit via the country to the ideological stability within the Party. The Archives of the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs were consulted in order to explore the

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<sup>127</sup> East View Information Services, *Izvestia* - <https://dlib-eastview-com.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/browse/issues/11265/1989>, *Pravda* - <https://dlib-eastview-com.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/browse/issues/9305/1989>, (accessed: January 2017)

<sup>128</sup> *The Times* - <http://find.galegroup.com/ttda/start.do?prodId=TTDA&userGroupName=ustrath&finalAuth=true>; ProQuest, *The Washington Post* - <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/results/5C34067B039643ABPQ/1?accountid=14540>, (accessed: January 2017)

<sup>129</sup> Nicolas Guilhot, *The Democracy Makers: Human Rights and the Politics of Global Order*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), p. 31; Michael L. Dockrill and Michael F. Hopkins, *The Cold War 1945-1991*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006), p. 147

diplomatic measures the Czechoslovak Communist Party took in order to solve the migration.<sup>130</sup> The National Archives provided further day-to-day reports regarding any incidents related to East Germans in Prague.<sup>131</sup> The Archive of the State Security Services, which holds the reports from the Secret Security and Police Corps, a part of the Ministry of the Interior, stored reports on the internal and external political contexts, related to the migration.<sup>132</sup> Some of their documents were made available online by *Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů*.<sup>133</sup> The archival holdings revealed more than the author of this research has anticipated. The documents informed not only on the perceptions of the migration, as seen by the staff in the State Security organisation and the Ministry of Interior and Foreign Affairs, but they also revealed the character of at least some of the members of the Party towards their own power and control over the Czechoslovak society and various agents affecting its support for the ruling political institutions. Therefore, this research has benefited from the access to those documents, authentic to the times they were reporting on. All of the unpublished documents were investigated because they were prepared by and for the Party members, and suggest that the East German migration presented a legitimate threat to the Party yet it was not considered to signal the end of its rule in Czechoslovakia. A different image of an ideological entity was thus revealed, stripped off of its ideology in the internal bureaucratic communications, which was not visible to the eye of an ordinary citizen. However, this thesis could have included the detailed analysis of personal correspondence among the top Party leadership, its grassroots members, and their international neighbours and allies if they were available to inspect. It could have detailed the mechanisms of the decision-making process in relation to the border controls in Czechoslovakia, rather than informed on the reached conclusions of such discussions. Thus, this thesis recommends to include this in further studies, related to the Czechoslovak Communist Party and the East German migration

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<sup>130</sup> Archiv Ministerstva zahraničních věcí, Loretánské náměstí 5, 118 00 Praha 1 – Hradčany, Czech Republic

<sup>131</sup> Národní archiv, Archivní 2257/4, 149 00 Praha 4 – Chodovec, Czech Republic

<sup>132</sup> Archiv bezpečnostních složek, Na Struže 3, Praha 1, Czech Republic

<sup>133</sup> Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů, <https://www.ustrcr.cz/uvod/listopad-1989/denni-situacni-zpravy/>, (accessed: August 2017)

via Prague. All of the translations of those documents, as well as of the Soviet newspapers, were done by the author of this thesis herself unless stated otherwise.

## Representation of East German migrants in the Czechoslovak *Rudé Právo*

This chapter explores the representations of East German migrants in the official newspaper of the Czechoslovak Communist Party (KSČ) *Rudé Právo* (RP). According to Czech literary critic Petr Fidelius, it was ‘the most authentic interpreter of all the official opinions and attitudes’ - in other words, of the Party itself.<sup>134</sup> As it presented the official attitudes of the government, it was a medium of power, which could influence its readership to support those attitudes as well. The newspaper perpetuated the preferred views of the Communist elites and worked to ensure the uniformity of perceptions towards the issue at hand, thus censoring the development of varied interpretations of any issue.<sup>135</sup> This chapter will argue that the newspaper and the Party selectively represented East Germans, thus forming a certain picture of their social identity for the readership of *Rudé Právo*, conditioning very distinct psychological boundaries between those two entities in order to prevent anyone from emigrating as well.<sup>136</sup> This argument is founded on John E. Richardson’s critical understanding of Teun van Dijk’s statement that every positive ‘self-representation’ is simultaneously a negative ‘other-representation’ and vice versa.<sup>137</sup> Thus, this ‘dichotomised representation’, based on the opposition between ‘Us’ - the readers of *Rudé Právo*, the rest of Czechoslovak society, the Czechoslovak Communist Party, its socialist allies - and ‘Them’ - East German migrants, the enemies of the socialist countries - is constructed to define,

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<sup>134</sup> Petr Fidelius, *Řeč komunistické moci: nové, rozšířené vydání*, (tr. The language of the Communist Party: new, extended edition), (Praha: Triáda, 2016), p. 18

<sup>135</sup> Christine Anthonissen, ‘Challenging media censorship: writing between the lines, in the face of stringent restriction’, pp. 91-115, in James R. Martin and Ruth Wodak (eds), *Re/reading the Past: Critical and Functional Perspectives on Time and Value*, (Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins Pub., 2003), p. 92-97

<sup>136</sup> Pål Kolstø, ‘Discourse and Violent Conflict: Representations of ‘self’ – ‘other’ in the Yugoslav Successor States’, pp. 1-21, in Pål Kolstø (ed), *Media discourse and the Yugoslav conflicts: representations of self and other*, (London; New York: Routledge, 2016), p. 2

<sup>137</sup> John E. Richardson, *Analysing newspapers: an approach from critical discourse analysis*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 51

depict, distance and exclude certain groups of people from the rest of society.<sup>138</sup>

The discussion of the findings is partitioned into sub-chapters for a clearer presentation of the main arguments. In order to grasp the ideological peculiarities which supported the way East German migrants were represented in *Rudé Právo*, the general socialist attitudes towards their allies and enemies, as well as about their perception of history has to be explained in detail. This will also reveal whether the chosen representation of the migration had any deeper effect on the Party itself. The findings will be supplemented with information found in the Soviet *Pravda* and *Izvestia* newspapers, as they spoke in unison with *Rudé Právo* and, thus, revealed the character of the wider socialist propaganda related to the representation of minority groups, which explained the ideological linguistic choices in the reports on East German migration.

### ‘Citizens of the GDR’

East German migrants were the citizens of the socialist German Democratic Republic (GDR) who emigrated and travelled to the liberal Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) from the late summer to November of 1989.<sup>139</sup> During 1989, over 200,000 people left the GDR for other Western countries, and autumn turned out to be the zenith of emigration.<sup>140</sup> The archives of the Czechoslovak State Security Services indicated that the GDR authorities were so worried about this migration that they ‘sent secret agents among the migrants in order to get any information about the migration first hand’, which indicated the severity of the situation in the eyes of the GDR Communist Party.<sup>141</sup> If the Czechoslovak Communist Party’s ally considered it to be a problem, this rhetoric was potentially shared with the KSČ.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid, 209; Ruth Wodak, ‘Us’ and ‘Them’: Inclusion and Exclusion – Discrimination via Discourse’, pp. 54-78, in Gerard Delanty, Ruth Wodak and Paul Jones (eds), *Identity, Belonging and Migration*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011, p. 62

<sup>139</sup> Christian Joppke, *East German dissidents and the revolution of 1989: social movement in a Leninist regime*, (Washington Square, NY: New York University Press, 1995), p. 137

<sup>140</sup> Matthias Judt, ed., *DDR-Geschichte in Dokumenten (GDR History in Documents)*, Berlin, (1997), pp. 545-46

<sup>141</sup> StB DVD ‘Ovjektové svazky (OB) reg. č., OBZ-845 MV ‘Obora’, tématika svazku ‘NSR’, 2/7, RC\_845\_004\_09\_0397, 173 on CD, cast svázku 9, ‘Záznam rozhovoru státního tajemníka MZV NSR Jürgena Südhoffa a s. náměstkem Ministra P. Sadovským 27.09.1989’, [f. 1]

The Czechoslovak Communist Party daily used legal, formal and institutionalised descriptions of East German migrants. Historically, ‘emigrants were considered to be class enemies of the regime both in the totalitarian conditions of the fifties and in the authoritarian period of the eighties’.<sup>142</sup> That included Czechoslovak emigrants, as they fled socialism, and was also adapted to other emigrants, leaving countries such as the GDR. The easiest way to communicate the official attitudes of the Party about emigrants was through the press, which based any news related to emigration on a presentation of opposites - ‘good versus bad’, ‘us versus them’, and alike.<sup>143</sup> Due to the formal and official language used to define the friends and enemies of socialism, certain phrases or words always produced a still, ‘frozen’ and negative description of emigrants, predominantly based on the socialist worldview.<sup>144</sup> The description ‘citizen of the GDR’ was the most common representation of East German migrants, which permeated every article about them published in the Czechoslovak *Rudé Právo*.<sup>145</sup> The most crucial reason for this was the precarious status of the GDR as a country. Liberal media, such as *The Times*, criticised it at that time, that as East German migrants were crossing the state borders of Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia and the Federal Republic of Germany, they were ‘tinkering with frontiers’, which ‘immediately threatens East Germany’ because it ‘exists not as a nation but as a state-supported like a spider by a web of international treaties’.<sup>146</sup> Indeed, the migration from the socialist GDR threatened its historical, national and political identity. The GDR claimed that the country ‘would soon become the 11th federal part of the FRG without socialism’, which indicated the reliance on the ideology in order to

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<sup>142</sup> Radoslav Štefančík and Alicia Nemcová, ‘The emigration of the Czechoslovak inhabitants in the language of the communist propaganda’, *Historia y Comunicación Social*, Vol 20, n. 1, (2005), pp. 89-105, [http://dx.doi.org/10.5209/rev\\_HICS.2015.v20.n1.49549](http://dx.doi.org/10.5209/rev_HICS.2015.v20.n1.49549), (accessed: 17 September 2017), p. 90

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid*, p. 92

<sup>144</sup> Marek Skovajsa, ‘The Absent Past: the language of Czech sociology before and after 1989’, ch 1, in Ernest Andrews, ‘Introduction’, in Ernest Andrews (ed), *Legacies of Totalitarian Language in the Discourse Culture of the Post Totalitarian Era*, (Boulder, New York, Toronto, Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2011), p. 17

<sup>145</sup> Anonymous, ‘O občanech NDR v Budapešti’, *Rudé Právo*, 8 August 1989, p7; Miroslav Kubín, ‘Iluze skončí v troskách’, 14 September 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 7; Anonymous, ‘Občané NDR opustili zastupitelské úřady NSR’, 2 October 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 1; Lubor Kazda, ‘K přůjezdům občanů NDR přes ČSSR’, 8 November 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 2

<sup>146</sup> Roger Boyes, ‘Exodus is response to an identity and power crisis’, *The Times Digital Archive*, 16 September 1989, p. 7

keep the fragile statehood of the GDR.<sup>147</sup> This article implied that the GDR only existed because socialism existed in the country but also if socialism was not defended, the Communist Party of the GDR was defenceless as well. When Hungary officially opened its borders with Austria on 11 September 1989, it invalidated the country's 1969 travel treaty with the GDR, which had prevented the emigration of East Germans to other countries through Hungary.<sup>148</sup> As East Germans emigrated and challenged the justification for the GDR, the GDR authorities hurried to clarify their identity. The GDR Ambassador to Czechoslovakia Helmut Ziebart stated, that these 'citizens of the GDR' 'are by no means political refugees'.<sup>149</sup> However, when the first article about East German migrants in the FRG embassy in Prague appeared on 25 August, the migrants were called 'refugees' by the editors of *Rudé Právo*.<sup>150</sup> A term carries a slightly different, more humanitarian meaning than the bold (and cold) 'citizen of the GDR', as it is usually related to the people running away from natural or man-made disasters rather than to those emigrating for other reasons.<sup>151</sup> The term was used several times in later editions of RP, which associated East German migrants with the problems they might cause in the FRG, such as shortages in housing, employment and education; incidents when some of them were beaten by the Czechoslovak police; the chaotic situation around the FRG embassy in Prague, as 'blocking normal life' there; and in a objectified, reductionist perception that East German migrants were insignificant 'mere statistics' in the FRG.<sup>152</sup> Either this term was conflated with others, an argument which Critical Discourse analysts often use to criticise

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<sup>147</sup> Anonymous, 'Zahraniční tisk', *Rudé Právo*, 26 August 1989, p6; Anonymous, 'Zahraniční tisk', 9 November 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 6

<sup>148</sup> Anonymous, 'Prohlášení AND', 12 September 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 7; Vladimír Plesník, 'Kdo nedodrží slovo', 7 September 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 7

<sup>149</sup> Josef Vlček, 'Čí zájem je na destabilizaci', *Rudé Právo*, 31 August 1989, p7

<sup>150</sup> Vladimír Plesník, 'V rosporu se zájmy vstahů NDR-NSR', *Rudé Právo*, 25 August 1989, p7

<sup>151</sup> Paul Baker et al, 'A useful methodological synergy? Combining critical discourse analysis and corpus linguistics to examine discourses of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK press', *Discourse Society*, (2008), 19; 273, <http://das.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/19/3/273>, (accessed: 17 September 2017), p. 284

<sup>152</sup> Anonymous, 'Nálady proti přistěhovalcům', 22 September 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 7; Anonymous, 'Zahraniční tisk', 4 October 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 6; Anonymous, 'Úsilí vlád NDR a ČSSR o řešení neúnosné situace', 5 October 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 1; Anonymous, 'Rozhovor pro list Die Welt. Rozhodující byly humanitární důvody', 9 October, 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 6; Anonymous, 'Mluvčí ke kampani proti NDR', 6 September 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 7

migrant representation in the media, or it was deliberate.<sup>153</sup> Even if this example risks being criticised for over-interpretation, it does not change the fact that the representation of East German migrants was negative in the KSČ press. Therefore, legal and institutional descriptions of East German migrants in the Czechoslovak *Rudé Právo* were used deliberately to keep the image of the socialist GDR unchallenged. Nevertheless, the somewhat humanitarian description ‘refugee’ was also occasionally used by the daily. It is possible that it was used interchangeably with the description ‘citizen of the GDR’ or ‘migrant’, yet it also could have been done to discredit emigrating East Germans in the eyes of the Czechoslovak readership of the newspaper because the contexts within which ‘refugee’ was chosen were associated with problems and chaos.

According to Teun A. van Dijk, the representation of migrants is almost always related to problems in the press.<sup>154</sup> The representation of East German migrants was attached to criminality and hostility in RP. For instance, some East Germans tried to cross the GDR border and were detained, while ‘an armed incident at the Hungarian-Austrian border, which ended in the death of a citizen of the GDR’ was also reported.<sup>155</sup> It was reported that ‘the first armed incident has been provoked by a GDR citizen who attacked the staff of the Hungarian border guard’. The person reported dead was not provided with any identification and remained a ‘nameless’ casualty. To justify such an attitude towards a human life, the article suggested that ‘the flood of the GDR citizens’ ‘is becoming ever more aggressive’. Christopher Hart explained that the metaphor ‘flood’ is often associated with migration to stress a mass movement of people, which is often unwelcome and difficult to control.<sup>156</sup> According to

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<sup>153</sup> Paul Baker et al, ‘A useful methodological synergy? Combining critical discourse analysis and corpus linguistics to examine discourses of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK press’, p. 284

<sup>154</sup> Teun A. van Dijk, ‘Discourse, content and cognition’, pp. 237-257, in Ruth Wodak (ed), *Critical Discourse Analysis*, vol. 1, (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2013); Norman Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), p. 271

<sup>155</sup> Anonymous, ‘Zahraniční tisk’, *Rudé Právo*, 11 August 1989, p6; Anonymous, ‘Zahraniční tisk’, *Rudé Právo*, 24 August 1989, p6; Anonymous, ‘Nálady proti přistěhovalcům’, 22 September 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 7; Anonymous, ‘Zahraniční tisk’, 4 October 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 6; Anonymous, ‘Úsilí vlád NDR a ČSSR o řešení neúnosné situace’, 5 October 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 1; Anonymous, ‘Rozhovor pro list Die Welt. Rozhodující byly humanitární důvody’, 9 October, 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 6; Anonymous, ‘Postupné uklidňování situace kolem velvyslanectví NSR’, 6 October 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 1

<sup>156</sup> Christopher Hart, ‘Critical discourse analysis and conceptualisation: mental spaces, blended spaces and discourse spaces in the British National Party’, pp. 107-132, in Christopher Hart and Dominik Lukeš

him, ‘flood’ and migrants are ‘two [constructed] mental spaces’ which are integrated together.<sup>157</sup> By this association, an automatic subconscious response to the statement follows that this ‘flood’ requires ‘stemming’, ‘stopping’, or to ‘reverse the tide of migration’, which was precisely what the KSC was eager to do.<sup>158</sup> Additionally, Stefano Volpicelli argued that by attaching negative descriptions to the migrants, their ‘humanity’ is reduced in the eyes of the observers, and, thus, these descriptions become constant stereotypes, prevalent in the linguistic migration discourse.<sup>159</sup> Such constructions might also influence the public to act less humanely towards them. Similarly, if migrants are related to criminal activity in the media, it might influence the public to view all migrants as a criminal threat.<sup>160</sup> Once the perpetual repetition of this ‘frame’ naturalises within society, any repressive measures proclaimed to be related to state security, could be justified, if not supported.<sup>161</sup> Repressive measures do not necessarily need to include police force or brutality - deliberate neglect and exclusion could also be used as such measures. Thus, migrants were contextually connected with a dangerous mass emigration, criminal activity, and aggression in order to ‘exclude’ them from the Czechoslovak social sphere.

Nevertheless, one of the most famous examples of any aggression during the migration was in October when the Czechoslovak police were involved as the main aggressor against East Germans trying to climb the garden fence to the FRG Embassy (Figure 1, p. 43).<sup>162</sup> RP did not provide photographic evidence of this incident, which meant that it may as well have not happened at all and

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(eds), *Cognitive linguistics in Critical Discourse Analysis. Application and theory*, (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), p. 112

<sup>157</sup> Ibid, p. 113

<sup>158</sup> Ibid

<sup>159</sup> Stefano Volpicelli, ‘Who's Afraid of ... Migration? A New European Narrative of Migration’, *Istituto Affari Internazionali, IAI Working Papers* 15, 32, (2015), pp. 1-26, <http://www.iai.it/en/pubblicazioni/whos-afraid-migration#sthash.LtkSSd6.dpuf>, (accessed: 30 December 2016), p. 14, 17

<sup>160</sup> Erik Bleich, Irene Bloemraad, Els de Graauw, ‘Migrants, minorities and the media: information, representation and participation in the public sphere’, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 6, (2015), pp. 857-873, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2014.1002197>, (accessed: 4 August 2017), p. 857

<sup>161</sup> Stefano Volpicelli, ‘Who's Afraid of ... Migration?’, p. 1

<sup>162</sup> Vilém Prečan, ‘Through Prague to Freedom: The Exodus of GDR Citizens through Czechoslovakia to the Federal Republic of Germany, September 30 - November 10, 1989’, *The National Security Archive*, 8 November 2009, <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB294/essay.htm>, (accessed: 27 March 2017)

been a ‘western fabrication’. Yet *Associated Press* published it, thus highlighting the KSČ’s guilt and a strategy to conceal the incident. In the photograph, a Czechoslovak policeman was pulling a person by his jacket from the fence. *Rudé Právo* addressed it as a ‘blatant attack’ from the FRG media, which reported that ‘Czech policemen beat the Germans like cattle’.<sup>163</sup> In order to ‘clear its name’, RP published an article about the incident, justifying the actions of the Czechoslovak police and, thus, excusing their conduct. The



Figure 1: ‘Czech police try to stop wall jumpers’ by Associated Press

article ensured that ‘the conduct of the State Security forces, who at those conditions tried to deal with a very difficult situation, trying to establish order and calmness, was right’. The incident was blamed on ‘the behaviour of the citizens of the GDR, which were blocking access to the street next to the diplomatic mission’, who ‘refused to obey the instructions of the State Security personnel’. It was stated that ‘at one instance police batons were used, contrary to the remarks about the ‘crazy’ behaviour against the Germans by the Czech police’. Therefore, East Germans were represented as the initiators of conflict due to the alleged disrespect of the state police, which also meant disrespect of the KSČ, as the police were working under instructions from the Party. Therefore, even if a photograph did not authenticate that this incident happened, the Party used the image and narrated its meaning to the readers of RP ‘to establish and maintain authority’ as the ‘character of images leaves them open to the inventions of power’ and social discourse.<sup>164</sup>

Generally, East Germans were seen as an obstacle which complicated ordinary life in Czechoslovakia and the mission of the Party and its media was to remove this complication. East German migrants reportedly caused infrastructural problems in Prague by abandoning their *Trabant* cars as they

<sup>163</sup> Anonymous, ‘Úsilí vlád NDR a ČSSR o řešení neúnosné situace’, 5 October 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 7

<sup>164</sup> Robert L. Craig, ‘Fact, public opinion, and persuasion: the rise of the visual in journalism and advertising’, chapter 2, in Bonnie Brennen, Hanno Hardt (eds), *Picturing the past: media, history, and photography*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), p. 37

went to the FRG embassy. Those cars became a target of the Czechoslovak authorities' efforts in 'tidying up' the migration. One of the reports stated that 'no less than 10,000 citizens of the GDR' left their vehicles in the streets, thus jamming transport routes for local Czechoslovaks.<sup>165</sup> A photograph of three cars in a street was included, which also pictured a towing vehicle, taking one of them away (Figure 2). There was a sign 'GDR' in the rear window of the car, which indicated their original place of issue, and belonging. Roland Barthes' theory of mythology construction and the role images play in it could be adapted to



Podle předběžných odhadů je v Praze na 1600 zaparkovaných vozidel opuštěných občany NDR. Komplikují dopravu v úzkých uličkách Malé Strany a stávají se také středem zájmu zlodějů. Jsou proto postupně odhazována na hřbitová parkoviště a o jejich dalším osudu jednájí orgány ČSSR a NDR.  
Foto ČTK

explain the meaning of this photograph.<sup>166</sup> It did not simply show some cars in the street, it depicted East German cars,

Figure 2: 'According to the preliminary estimates, there are 1600 parked vehicles in Prague, abandoned by the citizens of the GDR. They complicate transport in the narrow streets of city's Lesser Town and become an interest of thieves. For this reason they are continuously being towed to a secure parking lot and Czechoslovak and the GDR authorities negotiate over their further status.' By Czechoslovak Press Office

parked at the sidewalk, and the towing vehicle, potentially approved by the Czechoslovak authorities to remove them from the streets due to the congestion, which allegedly made everyday transport difficult for the Czechoslovaks. The caption under it indicated that 'there are 1600 parked vehicles, abandoned by the citizens of the GDR', 'complicating the traffic in the narrow streets', which were 'the centre of interest for the thieves'. The authorities towed them away to a secure parking lot, inaccessible for thieves, which indicated that the Party took care of East German property and dedicated their time to improve problematic infrastructure. By stating that those cars complicated city's infrastructure, those articles suggested an alleged conflict between the locals and East German migrants, which also situated the Party at the forefront of defence against their migration. The 6 October article clearly identified all the work and help the Czechoslovak authorities were providing

<sup>165</sup> Anonymous, 'Občané NDR opustili zastupitelské úřady NSR', 2 October 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 6; Anonymous, 'Úsilí vlád NDR a ČSSR o řešení neúnosné situace', 5 October 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 1; Anonymous, 'Úsilí vlád NDR a ČSSR o řešení neúnosné situace', 5 October 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 7

<sup>166</sup> Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, translated by Annette Lavers, (New York: Noonday Press, 1972), (2007 printing) p. 107

for the locals and East Germans.<sup>167</sup> It was reported that ‘roads and pedestrian sidewalks were cleaned; in order to avoid polluting public spaces, temporary portable toilets were placed in the streets’. The necessity of these services was noted in the Ladislav Adamec interview with *Die Welt* on 9 October, as he said that East Germans ‘practically blocked life in a part of Prague’s Lesser Town district, and disturbed public order, transport, cleanliness and hygiene.’<sup>168</sup> The migrants were reduced to ‘chaos-inducing’ and ‘unhygienic’ elements in Prague. This representation of migrants as disruptors of public order and threats to public health can of course be true as unhygienic conditions develop due to a big gathering of people in one place outside in cold weather, for instance. However, the positioning of the migrants and diseases together sends an indirect message, which indicates how this constructed image and interaction between the two elements operates in negative representation of vulnerable people.<sup>169</sup> Such a representation influences RP readers to associate East German migrants with health problems, even epidemics. Therefore, by representing the migrants as disruptors of the social order and public health in Czechoslovakia, the Communist authorities aimed to reduce the possibilities of contact between them and the local population, so the latter would not support or follow them.

### Socialist worldview as the basis for representations

Socialist ideology explains the world in a certain way, which justifies its hostility and ‘exclusion’ of certain elements from its perception of the world. As published in RP, the alleged ‘[anti-GDR] campaign [of the FRG] represents the clash of the fight against socialism in the spirit of the Cold War’.<sup>170</sup> Both the GDR and Czechoslovakia represented East German migration in relation to a supposed ideological warfare of the FRG as the concept of historical struggle was embedded in the socialist ideology. History was presented as ‘a trajectory, a path’, which led a Soviet man through various encounters with enemy forces

<sup>167</sup> Anonymous, ‘Postupné uklidňování situace kolem velvyslanectví NSR’, 6 October 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 7

<sup>168</sup> Anonymous, ‘Rozhovor pro list Die Welt. Rozhodující byly humanitární důvody’, 9 October, 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 6

<sup>169</sup> Michael M. Cassell, Christine Jackson, Brian Chevront, ‘Health Communication on the Internet: An Effective Channel for Health Behavior Change?’, *Journal of Health Communication*, 3, no. 1 (1998), pp. 71-79, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/10947375>, (accessed: 6 October 2017)

<sup>170</sup> Anonymous, ‘Mluvčí ke kampani proti NDR’, 6 September 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 7

he was supposed to fight ‘for his or her class, against the bourgeoisie, against imperialist powers, against the fascists and against the [capitalist, FRG] German nation’.<sup>171</sup> The newspapers of the Soviet Union - *Pravda* and *Izvestia*- supported this view as well.<sup>172</sup> The FRG was accused of ‘exploiting the illegal exit of the citizens of the GDR to the FRG’ in order to ‘conquer’ the GDR by the ‘chauvinist and nationalist campaign’. Petr Fidelius identified this ‘mythical clash’ as ‘the principle of the big hatchet’.<sup>173</sup> It ‘divides the world into two separate and “diametrically opposed” parts’.<sup>174</sup> This way of thinking permitted the Communist Party elites to portray everything, related to the Western world, negatively, while positioning their organisation positively.<sup>175</sup>

East German migration was explained through historical examples. According to James H. Liu and Denis H. Hilton, historical justifications permit ‘a group’ to use ‘its collective wisdom to manage present crises through its memory of past ones, often with the aim of preventing history from repeating itself’ or even suggesting that it does in the same manner as before.<sup>176</sup> Historical analogies are effective because ‘bind us together, because our past is an important ingredient in our future, and [...] [it] is a critical element in our social identity’.<sup>177</sup> From the very first article, relating to the ‘citizens of the GDR’ in Hungary, RP published an accusation made by a GDR official that the FRG and its media were allegedly leading a ‘noisy’, ‘short-sighted’, ‘damaging’ and ‘artificially created’ ‘campaign’ - East German migration.<sup>178</sup> According to

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<sup>171</sup> James W. Underhill, *Creating Worldviews: Metaphor, Ideology and Language*, p. 112

<sup>172</sup> Anonymous, ‘Disputes around’, *Izvestia*, 8 August 1989, p. 4; Anonymous, ‘Announcement by the TACC’, *Pravda*, 12 September 1989, p. 5; M. Podkliuchnikov, ‘Who complicates the relationship’, *Pravda*, 3 October 1989, p. 5; I. Kornilov, ‘Among the problems of the exit of the citizens of the GDR to the FRG’, *Izvestia*, 4 October, p. 4

<sup>173</sup> Petr Fidelius, *Řeč komunistické moci: nové, rozšířené vydání*, p. 189-199

<sup>174</sup> Marek Skovajsa, ‘The Absent Past: the language of Czech sociology before and after 1989’, ch 1, in Ernest Andrews, ‘Introduction’, in Ernest Andrews (ed), *Legacies of Totalitarian Language in the Discourse Culture of the Post Totalitarian Era*, (Boulder, New York, Toronto, Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2011), p. 18

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid*, p. 19

<sup>176</sup> James H. Liu and Denis H. Hilton, ‘How the past weighs on the present: Social representations of history and their role in identity politics’, *British Journal of Social Psychology*, (2005), 44, pp. 537–556, 10.1348/014466605X27162, (accessed: 17 September 2017), p. 540

<sup>177</sup> Jill A. Edy, ‘Journalistic Uses of Collective Memory’, *Journal of Communication*, Volume 49, Issue 2, (1999), pp. 71-85, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1999.tb02794.x/pdf> , (accessed: 7 February 2017), p. 77

<sup>178</sup> Anonymous, ‘O občanech NDR v Budapešti’; Anonymous, ‘Zahraniční tisk’, *Rudé Právo*, 11 August 1989, p6; Anonymous, ‘Prohlášení AND’; Jan Kovařík, ‘Poznámka: Podporujeme našeho přítele’, 16

the editor of RP, 'the West German television' 'provided detailed instructions, essentially inviting people to emigrate'.<sup>179</sup> The RP used an argument that the FRG, with the help of its alleged revanchist fervour, attempted to 'destroy socialism' by attacking the post-Second World War agreements on state borders.<sup>180</sup> *Rudé Právo* suggested that this 'conspiracy' was related to the so-called Hallstein doctrine, which permitted such actions, on the basis of which the FRG government never officially recognised the statehood of the GDR, and in essence argued for the idea that all German nationals, regardless of their citizenship, were part of the FRG.<sup>181</sup> RP justified negative representation of East German migrants and projected the assumed ideological fallacies of the FRG onto their constructed identity of the migrants. This view was also supported by the Soviet *Pravda* and *Izvestia* even though the Soviet Union was on a well-publicized road to 'reconstruction' and 'restructuring' and allowed criticism towards socialist governments for the sake of 'openness'.<sup>182</sup> This emigration seemed like a criticism of the life in the socialist GDR. The article from 14 September, titled 'The illusions will end in ruins', suggested that 'some of the FRG politicians' 'talk about Germany in terms of its 1937 borders and call for a revision of those borders'.<sup>183</sup> Accordingly, the FRG was pursuing the idea of 'renewal of the 'German Reich' 'which especially concerned Poland, the USSR and Czechoslovakia'.<sup>184</sup> By evoking historical examples, the editors attempted to refer to arguably one of the most traumatic periods in the European history - Nazism - and to suggest that similar trends were emerging again with the help of East German migration, even if it was not the case in reality.<sup>185</sup> This warning was aimed to plant doubt into the heads of the RP readership, which suggested that this traumatic past would repeat itself.<sup>186</sup>

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September 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 7; Anonymous, 'Občané NDR opustili zastupitelské úřady NSR', 2

October 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 6; Anonymous, 'Zahraniční tisk', 4 October 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 6

<sup>179</sup> Vladimír Plesník, 'V rosporu se zájmy vstahů NDR-NSR', *Rudé Právo*, 25 August 1989, p7; Anonymous, 'Zahraniční tisk', *Rudé Právo*, 26 August 1989, p6

<sup>180</sup> Milan Jelínek, 'Když slovo platí pár hodin', 8 October 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 5

<sup>181</sup> Miroslav Kubín, 'Oprašují Hallsteinovu doktrínu', *Rudé Právo*, 31 August 1989, p7

<sup>182</sup> Anonymous, 'About the exit of the citizens of the GDR to the FRG', *Izvestia*, 3 October 1989, p. 5

<sup>183</sup> Miroslav Kubín, 'Iluze skončí v troskách', 14 September 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 7; Anonymous, 'Většina turistů z NDR pro návrat do vlasti', 16 September 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 7

<sup>184</sup> Anonymous, 'Občané NDR opustili zastupitelské úřady NSR', 2 October 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 6

<sup>185</sup> Vladimír Plesník and Miroslav Kubín, 'K odchodu skupin občanů NDR do NSR', p. 7

<sup>186</sup> Jill A. Edy, 'Journalistic Uses of Collective Memory', p. 77

Therefore, Czechoslovak readers of RP were being persuaded to see the migration as an offensive against their country, launched by the FRG.

Radoslav Štefančík and Alicia Nemcová have argued that the Czechoslovak Communist authorities feared the emigration of their citizens, as it indicated that the socialist government was an illegitimate political power, unfit to rule.<sup>187</sup> For this reason, reports about life in other capitalist countries, especially those around Czechoslovakia, constantly indicated poor living conditions and other problems, which were aimed to limit desertion from the state.<sup>188</sup> Following this strategy, the editors of *Rudé Právo* portrayed the FRG negatively in order to discredit it as a destination and discourage anyone in Czechoslovakia who might have attempted to help them in any form or even thought of emigrating to the West themselves.<sup>189</sup> According to the article, the FRG started ‘an imperialist crusade against socialism, which goes against the fraternity of ‘the individual states from Berlin to Beijing’.<sup>190</sup> The article used the spatial example of socialism, present in the territory between Berlin and Beijing, in an attempt to threaten its presumed enemies by the vastness of socialist countries, which implied their strength and fraternity. Furthermore, the statement warned that ‘the socialist social order in the GDR is irreversible’ as the country (and Czechoslovakia) had ‘powerful friends’, such as the Soviet Union, and that those countries will defend socialism from East German migration. Accordingly, the FRG had exploited the migration ‘as a hindrance’ to socialism as the FRG was ‘incapable of hiding hatred of socialism’.<sup>191</sup> RP reported that the FRG also harboured ‘vulgar anti-Czechoslovak’ sentiments by leading the ‘propagandistic campaign against the GDR’, its ally.<sup>192</sup> To strengthen the perspective, a parallel was even drawn to forced ‘transportations’ of Germans from various places in Europe back to Germany

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<sup>187</sup> Radoslav Štefančík and Alicia Nemcová, ‘The emigration of the Czechoslovak inhabitants in the language of the communist propaganda’, p. 96

<sup>188</sup> Ibid

<sup>189</sup> Hermann Wulfert, ‘Chci z NSR do NDR’, *Rudé Právo*, 9 August 1989, p6; Anonymous, ‘Zahraniční tisk’, 7 November 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 3; Anonymous, ‘Zahraniční tisk’, 11 November 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 6; Vladimír Plesník, ‘Polemické komentáře’, 7 November 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 7; Anonymous, ‘Zahraniční tisk’, 8 November 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 6

<sup>190</sup> Anonymous, ‘Prohlášení AND’, 12 September 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 7; Vladimír Plesník, ‘Kdo nedodrží slovo’, 7 September 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 7

<sup>191</sup> Jan Kovařík, ‘Poznámka: Podporujeme našeho přítele’, 16 September 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 7

<sup>192</sup> Milan Jelínek, ‘Když slovo platí pár hodin’, 8 October 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 5

right after the Second World War.<sup>193</sup> The statement seems like a clear exaggeration yet it highlights a perspective from which the migration was viewed, suggested by RP that East Germans were leaving the GDR and travelling to the FRG against their will. Therefore, East German migration was presented as part of the FRG campaign to restore the Third Reich and alter European borders respectively, which not only threatened the political order of the GDR but also of its allies. This meant that East German migration was seen as a personal attack on the political stability of Czechoslovakia.

East German migration was also discussed as a psychological weapon employed by the revanchist FRG in the Czechoslovak daily. RP published the announcement from the GDR's chief ideologist Kurt Hager, who indicated that the FRG was one of the 'enemies of socialism' which was waging 'psychological warfare' against the GDR.<sup>194</sup> It was reported that the FRG manipulated East German migrants and forced them to emigrate, as they were 'naïve'.<sup>195</sup> It stated that 'those harbouring the illusion that they will get a chance in the FRG are mistaken' and will instead witness a 'more sober reality', as 'unemployment, high rent, and lack of workplace for young people' were introduced as the main problems in the FRG.<sup>196</sup> The reported 'influx of refugees' presented the FRG with 'a threat that the newcomers could become the originators of social unrest and, thus changing the political views of the West German citizens'.<sup>197</sup> It could be argued that East Germans were presented as a threat to the social and ideological cohesion of the FRG as 'significant social tensions' would arise 'sooner or later' or 'the supply system will collapse because of the attempts to accommodate' the migrants. According to RP, 'it is cynical to say that these people will supposedly reach 'freedom''. Instead, RP assured its readers that the FRG would exploit them 'as a cheap labour force', which would only have the 'freedom to pay high rent or find themselves without a roof over their head'. Therefore, isolating and excluding East Germans from the Czechoslovak society and constructing their identities as threatening was

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<sup>193</sup> Vladimír Plesník, 'V rosporu se zájmy vstahů NDR-NSR', *Rudé Právo*, 25 August 1989, p7

<sup>194</sup> Vladimír Plesník, 'Hledání odpovědí na palčivé otázky', 13 October 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 7

<sup>195</sup> Miroslav Kubín, 'Iluze skončí v troskách', 14 September 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 7

<sup>196</sup> Anonymous, 'Nálady proti přistěhovalcům', 22 September 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 7; Miroslav Kubín, 'Iluze skončí v troskách', 14 September 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 7

<sup>197</sup> Anonymous, 'Nálady proti přistěhovalcům', 22 September 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 7

meant to influence RP readers to support their government's side and think twice before emigrating.

The concept of 'home' and 'homeland' occupied a very important place in the socialist perception of the world. East German migration was also closely related to it. James W. Underhill stated that the metaphor of home and homeland had been deeply rooted in the Czech national conscience since the nineteenth century and that the Communist Party had adapted this concept to gather support and justification for socialism.<sup>198</sup> Conceptualising homeland in terms of a communal workers' land and the socialist togetherness, the Czechoslovak Communists insisted that the people were at home only in a socialist society.<sup>199</sup> Emigrating East Germans were, therefore, perceived as outside of their 'homeland', which was presented as being attacked by their emigration, created and manipulated by the FRG to uproot 'socialist Germans from their socialist GDR, their home'. *Rudé Právo* declared its 'friendship' with the GDR multiple times to manifest socialist solidarity and strength, as well as to remind their readers what 'socialist homeland' meant.<sup>200</sup> The GDR was presented as 'a proven, reliable partner, neighbour and ally'. However, even if the GDR asked its citizens to come back, the 'flats abandoned by those who left the GDR' were 'vacated and other people will have an opportunity to apply in order to get them'.<sup>201</sup> In essence, East Germans were even excluded from the possibility of coming back as they would have nowhere to come back to in the GDR. The GDR authorities treated their emigration as permanent as an ultimate yet desperate grip on control, authority and strength in the advent of presumed disobedience and treason. In addition to this, according to RP, the remainder of East German citizens, who did not emigrate, 'perceived the exit of the citizens of the GDR to the FRG as a betrayal of their homeland'.<sup>202</sup> By portraying

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<sup>198</sup> James W. Underhill, *Creating Worldviews: Metaphor, Ideology and Language*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), p. 112

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid*, p. 126

<sup>200</sup> Anonymous, 'Prohlášení ČTK', 13 September 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 1; Jan Kovařík, 'Poznámka: Podporujeme našeho přítele', 16 September 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 7; Vladimír Plesník and Miroslav Kubín, 'K odchodu skupin občanů NDR do NSR', p. 7; Jan Kovařík, 'Poznámka: Podporujeme našeho přítele', 16 September 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 7

<sup>201</sup> Anonymous, 'Občané NDR opouštějí misi NSR v Praze', 13 September 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 2; Anonymous, 'Postupné uklidňování situace kolem velvyslanectví NSR', 6 October 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 7; Anonymous, 'Zahraniční tisk', 16 November 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 6

<sup>202</sup> I. Kornilov, 'Among the problems of the exit of the citizens of the GDR to the FRG', *Izvestia*, 4 October, p. 4

the GDR and Czechoslovakia as two fighters of the enemies of socialism, the Czechoslovak press emphasised the distance between the Czechoslovak people, associated with a socialist home, a fraternal community ‘from Berlin to Beijing’, and East German migrants, who lost their ‘home’ when they chose to become ‘traitors’ of their socialist ‘homeland’.

### Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany

Anthony Giddens has argued that people ‘can only grasp time and space in terms of the relations of things and events’.<sup>203</sup> Those relations do not only define space but also project its characteristics onto everyone who might be connected to it, thus contributing to the construction of meanings, values and significance.<sup>204</sup> The Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Prague occupied a pivotal place in East German migration and became its symbol. RP reported the news related to it, which, in turn, revealed more details about the suggested ways to perceive East German migrants.

In the September issues of RP, East German migration was described as a ‘minor abnormality’ the KSČ could contain, yet further articles in RP exposed the increased worries about the lack of control the Party had over it in their own country. The news about the stay of East German migrants in the FRG Embassy was downplayed in order to conceal the fact that there were any migrants in the diplomatic mission at all.<sup>205</sup> It could be argued that the migration was a type of protest against the socialist GDR. According to Holger Lutz Kern, authoritarian regimes ‘orchestrate the media’ and ‘instead of increasing the public’s awareness of protest events, they often ignore protests entirely or portray them as the work of foreign agent provocateurs’.<sup>206</sup> When more people started gathering in the embassy compound at the end of August, it was not possible to suggest that this ‘protest’ was not happening. It was portrayed as a malignant campaign of foreign enemies, aiming to ‘destroy

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<sup>203</sup> Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-identity: Self and Society in the late Modern Age*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), p. 31

<sup>204</sup> Ibid

<sup>205</sup> Vladimír Plesník, ‘V rosporu se zájmy vstahů NDR-NSR’, *Rudé Právo*, 25 August 1989, p7

<sup>206</sup> Holger Lutz Kern, ‘Foreign media and protest diffusion in authoritarian regimes: The case of the 1989 East German revolution’, *Comparative Political Studies*, 44 (9), 2011, pp. 1179-1205, <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0010414009357189>, (accessed: 7 October 2017), p. 1180



As Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites argued, photographs ‘orient the self within civic life’ and attempt to establish who ‘we’ and ‘they’ are.<sup>211</sup> The photograph depicted several big tents, situated close to one another, with people in front of them or around them. The caption announced that the ‘garden is full of tents’, ‘people are aimlessly wandering through narrow and muddy passages’ and ‘having conversations with passers-by through the fence’. This Embassy was reported to have been holding around 2000 ‘citizens of the GDR’, which was ‘abnormal’. Robert L. Craig argued that ‘one prerogative of power is to saturate culture with images that reiterate ideologies favourable to elite groups’.<sup>212</sup> Thus, a dirty and miserable environment was projected onto the migrants. However, the Charter 77’s underground newspaper *Informace o Chartě 77* indicated that the situation was indeed difficult in the embassy compound and that even though ‘the Czechoslovak side provides energy, water, and provisions’, ‘specialized medical care and school lessons are lacking and hygienic conditions are unsatisfactory’.<sup>213</sup> The FRG Embassy and its garden could be understood in terms of a refugee camp. Adam Ramadan stated that ‘the refugee camp is a temporary space in which refugees may receive humanitarian relief and protection until a durable solution can be found to their situation’.<sup>214</sup> As a viable solution to this migration was still being negotiated, their life in tents was suggested to be a temporary stay in the described conditions, with a possibility that it might take some time, as purpose of their stay was questioned.

East Germans were relatively safe but ‘disconnected’, confined and excluded from everyday life in Prague in 1989. Such an image of East Germans in the FRG Embassy garden corresponds with the way the Czechoslovak Communists saw dissenters, as described by James Underhill.<sup>215</sup> As the migrants wanted to leave their socialist home for the West, it could be argued that they

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<sup>211</sup> Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites, *No caption needed*, p. 11

<sup>212</sup> Robert L. Craig, ‘Fact, public opinion, and persuasion: the rise of the visual in journalism and advertising’, chapter 2, in Bonnie Brennen, Hanno Hardt (eds), *Picturing the past: media, history, and photography*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), p. 38

<sup>213</sup> Tomáš Hradílek, Dana Němcová, Saša Vondra, ‘On the question of East German refugees’, *Informace o Chartě 77*, vol. 12, no. 17 (1989), p. 2

<sup>214</sup> Adam Ramadan, ‘Spatialising the refugee camp’, *Royal Geographical Society*, ( 2013) 38, pp. 65–77, 10.1111/j.1475-5661.2012.00509.x, p. 65, (accessed: 17 September 2017)

<sup>215</sup> James W. Underhill, *Creating Worldviews: Metaphor, Ideology and Language*, p. 114

‘dissented’ against the Communist authorities.<sup>216</sup> Underhill argued that ‘they were conceptually expelled outside of the frontiers of the [socialist] homeland’.<sup>217</sup> The fenced territory of the FRG Embassy, being a territory of the FRG, was respected by the Czechoslovak authorities according to ‘the extraterritoriality of the embassy of a sovereign country’.<sup>218</sup> What happened in that territory was the embassy’s business - the migration was understood as a responsibility of the FRG. However, the exclusion of the migrants from public life in Czechoslovakia was at the same time included and held important in the political life of the Czechoslovak Communist Party.<sup>219</sup> Negative representation of their temporary stay at the FRG embassy indicated that the same characteristics of the diplomatic mission were projected upon the migrants themselves, thus strengthening the image of East German migration as an unwelcome anomaly in the country just like dissidence, as it challenged the legitimacy and authority of the ruling Communist Party.<sup>220</sup>

‘In this photo, you can see the citizens of the GDR boarding a bus’

East Germans were allowed to leave to the FRG through the GDR at the end of September 1989, and it was thought that it will end the migration. According to Gareth Dale, the ‘exit through the GDR’ was meant to ‘give their passage the formal appearance of expatriation rather than escape’.<sup>221</sup> The step to ‘deprive’ East Germans of ‘citizenship as traitors to the state’ was ‘portrayed as a joint measure of the GDR and Czechoslovakia’ to ‘prevent imperialist schemes to destabilise and discredit the country’.<sup>222</sup> As East Germans were leaving the Embassy, their story could be found on the front pages of the RP more often than before. The ‘problem’ was going away and it was worth informing the Czechoslovak society about it and to boast that the GDR and

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<sup>216</sup> Ibid

<sup>217</sup> James W. Underhill, *Creating Worldviews: Metaphor, Ideology and Language*, p. 114; Adam Ramadan, ‘Spatialising the refugee camp’, p. 67 (accessed: 15 September 2017)

<sup>218</sup> Adam Ramadan, ‘Spatialising the refugee camp’, p. 67

<sup>219</sup> Ibid

<sup>220</sup> Anonymous, ‘Složité situace na velvyslanectví NSR’, 5 September 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 2

<sup>221</sup> Gareth Dale, *Popular Protest in East Germany, 1945-1989*, (London, New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 153-154

<sup>222</sup> Mike Dennis, *The rise and fall of the German Democratic Republic, 1945-1990*, (Harlow, England; New York : Longman, 2000), p. 110

Czechoslovak authorities finally solved this issue.<sup>223</sup> To ‘authenticate’ or prove that East Germans were leaving, the article provided a photograph of them, depicting people boarding a bus (Figure 4).



**Figure 4: ‘On Saturday buses from the GDR took several hundred citizens of the GDR, who were illegally staying in the territory of the FRG Embassy in Prague, to the train station. From there, they continued their travel to the FRG. This photo was taken before the citizens of the GDR boarded the bus.’ By Michal Kalina, the Czechoslovak Press Office**

The caption under the image of men, women and children standing next to a bus, explained that ‘in this photo you can see the citizens of the GDR boarding a bus’.<sup>224</sup> On its left, there was a larger article about a gardening exhibition in Czechoslovakia. This helped to strengthen the view that ‘the migrants are leaving - time to focus on pleasant (yet not vitally necessary) activities, time to forget about the ‘problems’ and return to happy and idyllic life, symbolically embodied here by gardening’.<sup>225</sup> James van Sweden has argued that a garden is a mental space, which is associated with ‘connecting to something greater’, something serene.<sup>226</sup> As the migrants were leaving, a sense of getting back to a peaceful life was constructed in this RP page. In comparison to this peaceful Czechoslovak socialist garden, the garden of the FRG Embassy was juxtaposed as a completely different, dirty and hostile space - a representation which was strategically projected onto the capitalist system as well as the migrants. A small section at the left corner of the page praised the KSČ for solving this migration, and is also important for the representation of the migrants. The

<sup>223</sup> Anonymous, ‘Občané NDR opustili zastupitelské úřady NSR’, 2 October 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 1

<sup>224</sup> Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-identity: Self and Society in the late Modern Age*, p. 31

<sup>225</sup> James Van Sweden and Tom Christopher, *The artful garden: creative inspiration for landscape design*, (New York: Random House, 2011), p. 181

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid*

letter came from a Czechoslovak citizen and a ‘bearer of the National Honour, ‘For the sacrificial work for Socialism’, and it claimed that the Party’s ‘stance in these difficult times of the fearless enemies of socialism and the Czechoslovak Communist Party’ was appreciated. Moreover, the letter urged the readers of the newspaper to ‘defend socialism and the KSČ, for which we worked all of our lives’. Therefore, the allowed departure from Czechoslovakia to the FRG through the GDR for East German migrants was presented as an accomplishment of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, which established ‘peace’ in the country again.<sup>227</sup>

The first personalised identification of ‘citizens of the GDR’ was provided only upon their departure to the FRG through the GDR. It was indicated that ‘groups of young men and girls around the age of graduation, the middle-aged people and the elderly’ were leaving, as well as ‘mothers [...] carrying their children’.<sup>228</sup> The migrants were described according to their gender, their age and social status. However, there were no names or other personal details provided, implying that these migrants formed a group of nameless people, ‘finally leaving’ Czechoslovakia and ending this ‘intolerable’ migration.<sup>229</sup> In the first RP interview with East Germans a correspondent reported from the Prague-Libeň train station that ‘young people, families with children [were there], [however] one can rarely catch a glimpse of an elderly face’, in a place echoing with ‘frantic cries’.<sup>230</sup> ‘Why are you leaving to the FRG?’, a journalist asked two young guys and one girl around the age of twenty. They eventually replied: ‘We want money and freedom’, ‘We want to travel’, and of course, ‘They are waiting for me there’. ‘Who is waiting for you?’, the journalist asked. ‘Well... everyone’. Young East German migrants were presented as a materialistic and superficial group of people who were manipulated into emigrating to the FRG, where they would find ‘money’, ‘freedom’, and ‘everyone’, who symbolised the idea of belonging - somewhere else than in a socialist country.<sup>231</sup> As the journalist sarcastically and bitterly explained, ‘the

<sup>227</sup> Anonymous, ‘Složitá situace na velvyslanectví NSR’, 5 September 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 2

<sup>228</sup> Anonymous, ‘Občané NDR opustili zastupitelské úřady NSR’, 2 October 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 6

<sup>229</sup> Anonymous, ‘Občané NDR opustili zastupitelské úřady NSR’; Anonymous, ‘Úsilí vlád NDR a ČSSR o řešení neúnosné situace’, 5 October 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 1; Anonymous, ‘Rozhovor pro list Die Welt. Rozhodující byly humanitární důvody’, 9 October, 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 6

<sup>230</sup> Anonymous, ‘Úsilí vlád NDR a ČSSR o řešení neúnosné situace’, 5 October 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 1

<sup>231</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*, p. 6

answer reflects the attitudes and focus of the young people, who with cans and bottles of *Coca-Cola* in their hands left to meet their future, which the FRG television painted for them in rose-tinted colours.’ ‘Cans and bottles of *Coca-Cola*’ were associated with these young migrants, which justified their representation as naïve and mindless consumerists. The next article presented the allegedly ‘deprived environment’ East Germans were going to instead, thus suggesting that those young East Germans were indeed disillusioned about their destination.<sup>232</sup> It was reported that ‘around 7500 citizens of the GDR’ were taken to the ‘special accommodation camps, in many instances to the FRG army buildings’. In other words, a large group of people had to live elsewhere than their own flat for an unspecified amount of time until they were allocated a place to live. By providing this information about the near future of many East German migrants, RP mocked the assumption that the country was ‘better’ than the GDR and other socialist countries. Even when the migrants were identified and provided with an opportunity to express their voice in an interview, their ambitions in the FRG were mocked and discarded as illusions. Such a representation of the FRG and the migrants was employed in order to discredit the migration and its destination in the eyes of local Czechoslovaks.

### Opening and closing the borders: gravity of the migration crisis

The November issues of *Rudé Právo* were immensely concerned with East German migrants coming to the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), as the migration did not stop.<sup>233</sup> In order to ‘demonstrate the [GDR] regime’s resolve and sovereignty’, the GDR-Czechoslovak visa-free border was closed to stop the emigration from the GDR, which exposed the panic felt by both the Czechoslovak and GDR elites in power as they sought to find the best solution to end this emigration.<sup>234</sup> Gregory Feldman argued that some countries use negative measures ‘to contain the threat of unwanted migration’ in order to condition the circulation of people, and in essence to ‘defend’ itself from

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<sup>232</sup> Anonymous, ‘Postupné uklidňování situace kolem velvyslanectví NSR’, 6 October 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 7

<sup>233</sup> Steven Pfaff, *Exit-voice dynamics and the collapse of East Germany: the crisis of Leninism and the revolution of 1989*, p. 111; Steven Saxonberg, *The Fall*, p. 321

<sup>234</sup> Gareth Dale, *Popular Protest in East Germany, 1945-1989*, p. 154

‘the unwanted’.<sup>235</sup> A notable recent attempt by a country to stop them from entering the country was made in Hungary in 2017, as the so-called European migration crisis continued.<sup>236</sup> The GDR and Czechoslovakia agreed on the visa-free travel ban between countries to stop the emigration from the GDR and to protect Czechoslovakia and its authorities from the immigration. The Prime Minister of Czechoslovakia Ladislav Adamec stressed that it was ‘clearly temporary’, as the decision was thought to be effective in stopping the migration.<sup>237</sup> The GDR authorities only allowed travel to Czechoslovakia with a valid visa for ‘trips of businesses and organisations, tourist exchange or emergency’.<sup>238</sup> However, the plan of the GDR to stop the migration by closing its borders with Czechoslovakia backfired as it did not stop the migration, and the border was re-opened at the start of November, which influenced more people to use ‘the Prague exit’.<sup>239</sup> The relatively short period of this ban suggested that the GDR and Czechoslovak authorities were not so certain that the migration would be stopped by closing the borders and were looking for other options, which indicated the fragility of consensus in the decision-making process at the top level of respective governments. Therefore, as East German migration continued despite the visa-free travel ban, this GDR and Czechoslovak meddling with their state borders only highlighted the inefficiency and short-sightedness of the respective Communist Party elites. After the ‘visa-free travel ban’ fiasco, RP changed its strategy in its portrayal of East German migrants from the hostility towards ‘them’ - the FRG and the migrants - to the positive self-representation which was meant to suggest humanitarianism of the Party despite difficulties in ending the migration both for the readership of RP and foreign observers.<sup>240</sup> As it was presented, the Czechoslovak Red Cross was ‘ready to help’ ‘more than 4000 citizens of the

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<sup>235</sup> Gregory Feldman, *The migration apparatus: security, labor, and policymaking in the European Union*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), ch. 4

<sup>236</sup> Marton Dunai, ‘Hungary builds new high-tech border fence - with few migrants in sight’, *Reuters*, 2 March 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-hungary-fence/hungary-builds-new-high-tech-border-fence-with-few-migrants-in-sight-idUSKBN1692MH>, (accessed: 7 October 2017)

<sup>237</sup> Anonymous, ‘Rozhovor pro list Die Welt. Rozhodující byly humanitární důvody’, 9 October, 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 6; Steven Saxonberg, *The Fall: a comparative study of the end of communism in Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary and Poland*, ([S.l.]: Routledge, 2016), p. 321

<sup>238</sup> Vladimír Plesník, ‘Hledání odpovědí na palčivé otázky’, 13 October 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 7

<sup>239</sup> Anonymous, ‘Občané NDR opět na velvyslanectví NSR’, 2 November 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 2

<sup>240</sup> Anonymous, ‘2100 občanů NDR na velvyslanectví NSR’, 3 November 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 2; Anonymous, ‘Čs. Červený kříž připraven pomoci’, 4 November 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 2

GDR' but 'the West German Embassy and its officials did not approve our Red Cross'. According to the newspaper, 'the Czechoslovak Red Cross wanted to provide tents, blankets, sleeping bags, medical supplies and other things but the FRG colleagues decided that they were not necessary'. *Rudé Právo* juxtaposed Czechoslovakia's humanitarian help and services against the refusal to co-operate and the 'ungratefulness' of the FRG Embassy and its staff. By allegedly refusing help, the FRG was ignoring the needs of its fellow nationals. This 'othering' of the Czechoslovak Red Cross by the FRG officials actually highlighted 'the moral superiority' of the Czechoslovak authorities.<sup>241</sup> To strengthen their argument, two photographs of 'more than 5000 citizens of the GDR - mostly young people - squeezed through the gates of the FRG Embassy in Prague' were published (Figure 5). The first photograph was taken from above and pictured a large crowd of people, which gathered in front of the doors of the FRG Embassy. This created a sense of an overcrowded environment. The second one pictured men and women with children, looking towards the embassy doors. RP suggested that the FRG refused the Czechoslovak help despite such scenes of crowds next to the embassy, waiting to come into the building, thus suggesting the necessity to co-operate between two Red Cross organisations. Further, *Rudé Právo* reviewed a GDR newspaper article questioning the motives of the 'citizens of the GDR' leaving to the FRG.<sup>242</sup> 'The existence of distrust' was suggested among those

Figure 5: 'The situation in front of the FRG Embassy in Prague became critically acute yesterday in the evening. More than five 5000 citizens of the GDR filled the diplomatic mission, and about 1500 people occupied the vicinity around the embassy. It prevented normal transit including the transport of sanitary vehicles to the Petřín hospital.' by Václav Jirsa



Situace před objektem velvyslanectví NSR v Praze se v úterý v podvečer kriticky vyhroutil. Objekt mise byl přeplněn více než pět tisíc obyvatel NDR a dalších asi 1500 osob zcela zaplnilo komunikace v okolí velvyslanectví. To bránilo normálnímu provozu, mimo jiné i průjezdu sanitních vozů do Nemocnice pod Petřínem. Snímky RP — VÁCLAV JIRSA

<sup>241</sup> John E. Richardson, *Analysing newspapers: an approach from critical discourse analysis*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 209

<sup>242</sup> Anonymous, 'Zahraniční tisk', 4 November 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 6; Anonymous, 'Odjezd občanů NDR', 6 November 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 2; Anonymous, 'Zahraniční tisk', 6 November 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 6; Anonymous, 'Odjezd dalších občanů NDR', 7 November 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 6

migrating from the GDR, which admitted that ‘more work should be done’ in the country so people would stay. Indeed, as Gareth Dale argued, the report of the GDR’s Secret Police ‘listed grievances that were shared by the majority [of emigrants], including low wages and inflation, shortages and the poor quality of consumer goods, the lack of fresh food, the need to queue and to search for vital foods, the shortages of spare parts and long waiting times for repairs [of cars], and the crisis in the health service’ as the main reasons why so many people emigrated to the FRG instead.<sup>243</sup> Therefore, these failures had to be alleviated in order to keep East Germans in the GDR. Emigration was a big problem to the GDR authorities. This research also understands it as a sign of the weakened hard-line stance of the KSČ towards East German migration, as RP printed this article, where the GDR admitted that the country needed changes. It suggested that the Czechoslovak authorities were willing to compromise as well as the migration proved to be difficult to end.

### The Czechoslovak ‘Inner Iron Curtain’ opened

The ‘Inner Iron Curtain’ of Czechoslovakia - the country’s border with the FRG - was opened by the start of November 1989 by the KSČ leaders and East German migrants walked directly through its checkpoints to the FRG. It was Czechoslovakia’s compromise in order to end the migration, which necessarily opposed the Party’s upheld ideological beliefs concerning the inviolability of strict state borders in order to separate the socialist system from the capitalist. Vilém Prečan argued that the General Secretary of the KSČ Miloš Jakeš called the Foreign Minister of the GDR Oscar Fischer and ‘proposed to resolve the situation by allowing direct travel by citizens of the GDR from Czechoslovakia to the Federal Republic’ on 3 November 1989.<sup>244</sup> According to him, the Party was increasingly opposed to the idea to further ‘provide lodging to the GDR citizens travelling to the FRG’, and it did not have any ‘intention of opening

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<sup>243</sup> Gareth Dale, *Popular protest in East Germany, 1945-1989*, (London; New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 144

<sup>244</sup> Vilém Prečan, ‘Prague Communists Called for Wall to Open on November 8, 1989’, *The National Security Archive*, 8 November 2009, <http://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB294/index.htm>, (accessed: 16 September 2017), Document 23: SAPMO-BArch, Berlin. DY 30, 5196, Fols. 17–19; also DY 30 IV/2/2.039 (Bureau Egon Krenz), Vol. 342, Fols. 155–157, translated by Todd Hammond, [http://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB294/doc23\\_trans.pdf](http://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB294/doc23_trans.pdf); Anonymous, ‘Odjezd občanů NDR’, 6 November 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 2

refugee camps on its territory (with rights of extraterritoriality)'.<sup>245</sup> Thus, East German migrants emigrated to the West through Czechoslovakia - 'more than 62,000 left just in the period from November 4 to 10'.<sup>246</sup> When viewed in perspective with the events which developed in the GDR, the Czechoslovak decision to open its borders with the FRG appear to be self-sabotage. On a historic 9 November, East Germans in East Berlin could freely go to West Berlin through the opened Berlin Wall and through the border between the GDR and the FRG.<sup>247</sup> The migration did eventually come to a halt, yet it took the GDR government down with it.<sup>248</sup> As Piotr Pykel argued, 9 November marked Czechoslovakia's loss of its most important ally who supported its socialist worldview.<sup>249</sup> Even though the decision to open the border was effective, it left the Czechoslovak Communist Party alone to preside over a disintegrating socialist system.

The Party attempted to control the damage the decision to open the borders had caused. *Rudé Právo* changed its strategy again and adopted a view that the opening of the Berlin Wall was temporary and the emigration of East Germans from the GDR and Czechoslovakia was just a curious visit to the FRG. This explanation suggested that the Party was confident and in control of events in its territory and that their ideology still held the country together. RP presented the opening of the Berlin Wall as part of a 'renewal policy' of the

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<sup>245</sup> Vilém Prečan, 'Prague Communists Called for Wall to Open on November 8, 1989', Document 28, 'Information summary from the CPCz Central Committee to the various branches of the CPCz apparatus about the emigration of GDR citizens to the Federal Republic through the territory of the CSSR on November 1–8, 1989', The National Archives, ÚV KSČ (CPCz CC), Documentation 1989 (unsorted), November 9, 1989, translated by Todd Hammond, [http://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB294/doc28\\_trans.pdf](http://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB294/doc28_trans.pdf)

<sup>246</sup> Anonymous, 'Odbavování občanů NDR', 11 November 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 2; Anonymous, 'Volný přechod hranic NDR-NSR', 11 November 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 1

<sup>247</sup> Steven Pfaff, *Exit-voice dynamics and the collapse of East Germany: the crisis of Leninism and the revolution of 1989*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), p. 108; Anonymous, 'Volný přechod hranic NDR-NSR', 11 November 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 1

<sup>248</sup> Anonymous, 'Vláda NDR odstoupila', 8 November 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 1

<sup>249</sup> Piotr Pykel, *1989 - the final stage: a comparative study of transition from communist rule to democratic government in Poland and Czechoslovakia*, (Saarbrücken : VDM Verlag Dr. Müller, 2008), p. 221

GDR, done in order to follow ‘the wishes of the people’.<sup>250</sup> A photograph (Figure 6) of people going past the barrier with a ‘Stop’ sign was published.<sup>251</sup> The caption stated that ‘the border crossing points from the main city of the GDR to West Berlin were opened’ and ‘several hundreds of people used the opportunity to visit West Berlin although the majority decided to come back home’.

However, the opening of the Wall was not a deliberate decision of the GDR



*Jak jsme již informovali, ve čtvrtek večer byly hraniční přechody z hlavního města NDR do Západního Berlína otevřeny a k přechodu hranice stažilo občanům NDR předložení občanského průkazu. Několik set tisíc lidí využilo možnosti navštívit Západní Berlín, drtivá většina se však rozhodla k návratu domů.*  
Telefoto ČTK/ADN

**Figure 6: 'As we have informed, border checkpoints, connecting the capital of the GDR and West Berlin, were opened on Thursday, and citizens of the GDR only had to show their identification documents. Several hundreds of thousands of them used the opportunities to visit West Berlin, the majority of them, however, decided to return back home.'** By Czechoslovak Press Office/ General German News Service

Communist Party nor it followed the wishes of the people. While the authorities of the GDR were pressured to introduce reforms as many of their citizens were protesting against them on the streets, the Wall opening happened due to a blunder of Günter Schabowski, the chief of the Communist Party in East Berlin and Party's spokesman. On 9 November he announced that East Berliners would be able to cross to West Berlin immediately on the same day and failed to mention the ‘small print’, indicating that those wishing to go past the Wall would need a visa first.<sup>252</sup> This reform was supposed to be valid only from 10 November but as the Western media broadcasted this news, thousands of East Berliners went to the Wall without the border guards being informed.<sup>253</sup> After the guards could not control the people, attempting to cross the checkpoints, they relented and let them pass. By portraying this accident as a deliberate reform of the Communist Party indicated the KSČ's desperation over the effect this decision could cause in Czechoslovakia. In order to calm their readership and pretend that nothing major had happened, the choice and wording of their pictures in the newspaper were crucial. The people in the photograph were not

<sup>250</sup> Anonymous, ‘Volný přechod hranic NDR-NSR’, 11 November 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 1; Vladimír Plesník, ‘Volný přechod hranic NDR-NSR’, 13 November 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 6

<sup>251</sup> Anonymous, ‘Volný přechod hranic NDR-NSR’, 11 November 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 7, ČTK/ADN, Telefoto, p. 7

<sup>252</sup> Gareth Dale, *Popular protest in East Germany, 1989-1990*, (London; New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 94-95

<sup>253</sup> Ibid

carrying big travel bags which implied that they went to ‘visit West Berlin’ and not to emigrate permanently. A subsequent report provided a more balanced view that while many (or even the majority) of East Germans were leaving permanently, there were some who were just visiting.<sup>254</sup> It stated that ‘many cars [spotted at the border] are packed with a lot of luggage, other personal things, like pillows’. Nevertheless, somewhat proudly, the article noted that ‘some [people] do not try to hide that they are going just for a visit’ as ‘they do not have any intention to change Czechoslovak currency’. Additionally, the reporter somewhat joyfully concluded that ‘the most sought-after place to cross the border to the FRG is ours’ and that ‘most of the people would rather stand in a queue for four hours here than in some of the border crossing points between the GDR and the FRG’. ‘A bright side’ to this emigration had to be introduced as a last resort in case anyone in the local population proclaimed that these events were ‘questioning the [Cold War] borders’.<sup>255</sup> By trying to assert that the system was still intact, RP seemed to be reassuring its KSČ bosses that all of those events were just temporary setbacks. ‘Visiting East Germans’ and a ‘temporarily opened Berlin Wall’ exposed the Party’s own deception mechanism, established to unknowingly savour the last month of their power monopoly in Czechoslovakia, which would be challenged and defeated by ‘the Velvet revolutionaries’.

## Conclusion

This chapter explored the representations of East German migrants as portrayed in the official newspaper of the KSČ, *Rudé Právo*. The daily mediated the official stance of the Party towards East German migrants and exposed the social identity constructions associated with them. It was conditioned by the establishment of boundaries between the migrants and Czechoslovak society because the migration was portrayed as threatening the stability of the Party and its socialist system and, thus, was unwelcome. This research found that the strategically selected overly formal representation of East Germans worked as a strategy of ‘othering’ them from the rest of the Czechoslovak society in order

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<sup>254</sup> Anonymous, ‘Odbavování občanů NDR’; Anonymous, ‘Zahraniční tisk’, 15 November 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 6; Anonymous, ‘Zahraniční tisk’, 16 November 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 6

<sup>255</sup> Vladimír Plesník, ‘Volný přechod hranic NDR-NSR’, 13 November 1989, *Rudé Právo*, p. 6

to stop their migration as well as to prevent the local population from emigrating, by effectively stripping the migrants of their human characteristics. The actions and language of the Czechoslovak Communist Party were inseparable from its socialist ideology and specific worldview even at the end of the 1980s, which was not traditionally characterised by ideological conflicts. East Germans were represented as traitors of their socialist homeland, the GDR, and naïve, disillusioned know-nothings, susceptible to the FRG propaganda about the materialistic pleasures of a capitalist country. The migration was represented in the same light by the Soviet Union's *Pravda* and *Izvestia*, which reveals the ideological unity of the propaganda newspapers despite the differences in the wake of Mikhail Gorbachev's call to 'restructure' and 'reform' the Soviet Union and the rest of the bloc, which Czechoslovakia tried to ignore. Both newspapers presented the FRG and the West as 'mortal enemies' of socialism - a depiction which was projected onto East German migrants. This dichotomised understanding of the world corresponds to the popular argument of bi-polarity and competition between 'the East' and 'the West', which characterised the world order after the Second World War. This discovery suggests that the traditional view of the Cold War might have been heavily influenced by the content of the propaganda media outlets, representing socialist and capitalist countries. Additionally, Critical Discourse analysts also frequently argue that a minority group is often represented in dichotomised terms as well, which usually exclude it from 'our' societal discourse on the grounds of being perceived as 'others' who are not like 'us'. In the case of socialist Czechoslovakia, ideological nation-building and sustaining practices systematically discriminated against anyone, who did not fit in the socialist worldview. The representation of East German migrants in the Czechoslovak Communist Party newspaper exposed the worries of the KSČ elites about the future of their own rule, especially in the light of its failed attempts to stop the migration. The General Secretary of the Party himself proposed to open the state's borders with the FRG, a decision which compromised the Party's resolve regarding its ideological beliefs in strict border control and its physical and mental capacity to separate 'us', socialist people, from 'them', capitalist enemies. The decision to open Czechoslovak borders soon proved to be an unintended self-sabotage, which, upon an attempt to

reduce the damage, also exposed Party's illusions about the socialist future and their role in it. The falling borders and accidentally opened Berlin Wall forced the Communist Party of the GDR Communist Party to resign, which left the Czechoslovak authorities increasingly isolated, their territorial integrity compromised, and their authority diminished in the eyes of its critics just before the Velvet Revolution put an end to their power monopoly in Czechoslovakia.

## Foreign Press

The previous chapter evaluated the representation of East German migrants in the Czechoslovak Communist Party's *Rudé Právo* (RP). The general strategy of the newspaper was to 'other' the migrants from local Czechoslovaks and project negative characteristics upon them in order to prevent further migration and possible emigration. RP included several foreign - liberal - press articles, which reported on the migration as well. Thus, this research considers that a general perspective of some foreign press outlets, reviewed in the Czechoslovak Communist Party daily, should also be introduced in this thesis in order to investigate whether similar representations of the migrants in RP were prevalent at that time in history. Also, the author of this thesis holds it necessary to juxtapose the Czechoslovak and Soviet press representations against the British and American portrayals of travelling East Germans in order to view the research findings in a more objective light. Therefore, how ideological was the representation of East German migrants in the foreign press? How does it compare to the Czechoslovak and Soviet representations? This chapter analyses *The Times* (UK) and *The Washington Post* (USA) and argues that the liberal newspapers were no less ideological and divisive in their presented worldview than their commonly discredited rivals in socialist Central-Eastern Europe.

### Compassion towards East German migrants

The reporting of East German migration in *The Times* and the *Washington Post* (WP) was similar to one another because it was emotional, sensitive and sympathetic towards the migrants. The representation was as compassionate as that in the newspapers of the Federal Republic of Germany, which, according to the Soviet ambassador to East Berlin Vyacheslav Kochemassov, 'makes martyrs out of these so-called 'cross-settlers', warriors fighting against

socialism'.<sup>256</sup> Reports about East German children and their photographs were at the core of Western reporting of the migration. According to Christina Konstantinidou and Martha Michailidou, there are several strategies which are often used in the migrant representation and one of them is 'familiarisation' which helps the public to 'recognise 'the human face'' of the migration and 'enable the reader to identify with the victims of repressive [migration] laws'.<sup>257</sup> *The Times'* Richard Bassett and John England reported that the 'temporary closure of the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Prague' led to 'dashed hopes' for the migrants, forcing 'several older women burst into tears', while the children of other migrants were running around in the garden of the Embassy of the FRG, 'enjoying their first taste of freedom'.<sup>258</sup> According to Nigel Ashford and Stephen Davies, the idea of 'freedom' is 'vital for liberalism'.<sup>259</sup> It is 'the primary political value', closely related to individual autonomy and absence of restraint.<sup>260</sup> The article stated that

**East Germans Start Over in West: Move Intensifies Split in Bloc**  
Harden, Blaine  
*The Washington Post* (1974-Current file); Sep 12, 1989;  
ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Washington Post  
pg. A1



Figure 7: 'East Germans, exhausted after an eight-hour trip from Hungary, sleep in tents at reception center set up in Vilshofen' by Carol Guzy, *The Washington Post*

East German children ran in the embassy garden freely, allegedly without even understanding how valued their freedom in the Embassy was by their parents and other migrants. *WP* also published an article on its front page which had a big photo of sleeping children attached nearby (Figure 7).<sup>261</sup> The caption read

<sup>256</sup> 'Document no 80: Memorandum of Conversation between Oskar Fischer and Vyacheslav Kochemassov', 7 September 1989, in Svetlana Savranskaya, Thomas Blanton, V. M. Zubok, *Masterpieces of history. The peaceful end of the Cold War*, (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2011), p. 517, (source: Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR-Bundesarchiv, translated by Christiaan Hetzner)

<sup>257</sup> Christina Konstantinidou and Martha Michailidou, 'Foucauldian discourse analysis: photography and the social construction of immigration in the Greek national press', chapter 4, in David Machin (ed), *Visual Communication*, (Berlin, Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2014), p. 117

<sup>258</sup> Richard Bassett and John England, 'Bitterness over embassy closure', *The Times Digital Archive*, 24 August 1989, p. 8

<sup>259</sup> Nigel Ashford and Stephen Davies (eds), *A Dictionary of Conservative and Libertarian thought*, (Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, New York: Routledge, 2011), p. 97

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 97-98

<sup>261</sup> Blaine Harden, 'East Germans start over in West: move intensifies split in bloc', *The Washington Post*, 12 September 1989, a1

'East Germans, exhausted after an eight-hour trip from Hungary, sleep in tents at reception center set up in Vilshofen' (FRG). The photo was compassion-evoking and depicted tired children, who survived a trip which no child should have to endure, as they should have permanent homes. According to Susie Linfield, 'precisely because they represent innocence, children - especially hurt, exploited, or mistreated children - can be used to illustrate what is most unjust about a social order or most sadistic about a war'.<sup>262</sup> As Linfield explains, 'children are vulnerable and blameless - the purest victims - depictions of their suffering have an extraordinarily visceral impact'.<sup>263</sup> The suggested neglect of East Germans by the Czechoslovak and GDR authorities was emphasised through the description of the environment of the FRG embassy grounds, where the children were staying. *The Times*' John Holland reported from Prague that 'the squalor in the half-light of a dark and rainy afternoon in the West German Embassy's muddy compound here is appalling, and settles even more disturbingly on the normally tidy East Germans', adding that 'disease is rife, as is fear that there will be no happy ending in the West in this refugee story'.<sup>264</sup> *WP* reported that there were many children in the FRG compound who were 'ill with diarrhea and respiratory illnesses', common in overcrowded and dirty areas.<sup>265</sup> The described squalor violated basic habitable and healthy human conditions, implying that the KSČ did not ensure decent living conditions for the migrants or their children.<sup>266</sup> Also, the phrase 'normally tidy East Germans' is a rather far-fetched stereotype of the minority group, which further suggested a detached view of the migration. Therefore, even though a photograph was not always attached to these articles, the Western newspapers vividly presented to 'a dire problem' and 'inadequate care' of the migrants or even 'lack of humanitarianism' from the Czechoslovak Communist authorities to their readers.

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<sup>262</sup> Susie Linfield, *The cruel radiance: photography and political violence*, (Chicago; London: University of Chicago, 2012), p. 130

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid*, p. 131

<sup>264</sup> John Holland, 'Bonn envoy reopens Prague mission to refugees', *The Times Digital Archive*, 2 October 1989, p. 10; Blaine Harden, 'E. Germans can go, Bonn official says', *The Washington Post*, 4 November 1989, a18

<sup>265</sup> Blaine Harden, 'East Berlin agrees to let refugees go', *The Washington Post*, 1 October 1989, a25

<sup>266</sup> John Holland, 'Bonn envoy reopens Prague mission to refugees', *The Times Digital Archive*, 2 October 1989, p. 10

The Western press exploited the symbolism of children in their photographs depicting East German migration in order to create a clear image of who was at fault in the suggested neglect of East German migrants. A response of 'pity and outrage' to photographs of mistreated children influences the viewer 'to want to do virtually anything to stop' their suffering.<sup>267</sup> *WP* included many further photographs picturing children where it was implied whose actions led to their poor living conditions in the FRG embassy. One of them was captioned 'East German children huddle under blankets at the West German embassy in Warsaw while waiting in cold weather for shelter and passage to the West' (Figure 8).<sup>268</sup> The photograph pictured two boys and their mother, trying to adjust blankets on their shoulders. One boy was looking directly into the camera as if confronting everyone looking at this photograph. As Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen argued, a close-up and face-to-face portrayal of migrant children is a common way to tackle dehumanisation which often accompanies the migration discourse.<sup>269</sup> As the Czechoslovak media was hostile towards East German migration, the Western newspapers attempted to counter the negative representation. The photographs appealed directly to the readers of *WP* to show compassion towards this migration and support the migrants as their children were suffering at the hands of unwelcoming and hostile socialist governments. The article also stated that 'hard-line Czechoslovakia tried to ignore it', which meant that the Czechoslovak authorities were against the migration and neglected it even when innocent children were involved in the process. The picture stated that this was in Warsaw, although the same cold environment was also indicated in Prague, with descriptions of the environment



Figure 8: 'East German children huddle under blankets at the West German embassy in Warsaw while waiting in cold weather for shelter and passage to the West' by Associated Press

<sup>267</sup> Susie Linfield, *The cruel radiance: photography and political violence*, p. 131

<sup>268</sup> Anonymous, 'East Germans on the move', *The Washington Post*, 4 October 1989, a26; Blaine Harden, 'Thousands more E. Germans leave Prague for the West', *The Washington Post*, 5 October 1989, a1

<sup>269</sup> Gunther R Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen, *Reading images: sociocultural aspects of language and education*, (Geelong: Deakin University Press, 1996), p. 122-123

there including ‘cold cobblestone streets’. Similarly, a photograph of a baby being held next to the fence of the FRG Embassy was also published (Figure 9).<sup>270</sup> The baby in the photo was dressed in white clothes and there were people reaching for him and lifting him over the embassy fence. The article also described East German migration to the FRG by using a metaphor of a



Figure 9: a photo of a baby in The Washington Post

‘flood’, which was also used by RP, but differently. Usually, the pairing of this metaphor and the migration discourse is negative as it provides agency to the migrants to cause an unwanted event, for instance, such as a destruction of ‘European values’.<sup>271</sup> However, as the liberal media supported the positive representation of the migrants, this metaphor gained a positive meaning as it was related to the destruction of inherently-inhumane socialism and its unfairness. Therefore, both *WP* and *The Times* attempted to evoke compassion among its readership towards the migrants and implied that the Czechoslovak authorities had no remorse towards the vulnerable and innocent. A negative representation of this Communist Party-controlled country and their actions formed the basis of Western reporting on East German migration.

East German migrants were provided identification and personalisation in the stories of the Western press, which was an important strategy helping to gain support for the migration and to condemn the socialist authorities for mistreating this group. In today’s discourse of migration, interviews with migrants are very important in getting their story across in order to influence real and substantial change in how they are perceived and treated.<sup>272</sup> *The Times* presented one family’s journey to the FRG.<sup>273</sup>

<sup>270</sup> Ibid, a45

<sup>271</sup> David Shariatmadari, ‘Swarms, floods and marauders: the toxic metaphors of the migration debate’, *The Guardian*, 10 August 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/aug/10/migration-debate-metaphors-swarms-floods-marauders-migrants>, (accessed: 8 October 2017)

<sup>272</sup> Akbar Ahmed, ‘To understand Europe’s immigration crisis, listen to the voiceless ‘illegals’’, *The Huffington Post*, 20 February 2015, [http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/akbar-ahmed/europe-immigration-crisis-illegals\\_b\\_6717170.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/akbar-ahmed/europe-immigration-crisis-illegals_b_6717170.html), (accessed: 25 September 2017); Anonymous, ‘Interview: ‘It is important to let the positive side of migration be told’’, *UN News Centre*, 16 December 2016, <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=55842#.WckQRdSGPIU>, (accessed: 25 September 2017); Ros Drinkwater, ‘Refugees’ dream of West ends in tented city on car park’, *The Times Digital Archive*, 13 September 1989, p. 20

<sup>273</sup> Ibid



Figure 10: 'The Kather family, complete with Batman caps, and all their possessions at Haselbach'

The interviewed Kather family (mother, father, and three children), was reported to have been well-off in the GDR because of their 'comfortable five-bedroom house and large family car' (Figure 10). They stated that they had 'everything but freedom'. They appeared happy in the picture, which implied that their happiness was related to them reaching the FRG and 'freedom'. Similarly, *WP* also provided some interviews with East Germans about the reasons why they left the GDR and their guaranteed jobs.<sup>274</sup> A mason identified a 'competitive society, challenge' as his main reason to leave his homeland. These descriptions of the GDR only strengthened the cause of East German migration as their home country and its living conditions were identified as economically restrictive and lacking basic human rights. However, some less excited voices of the migration were also presented, which indicated that there was some uncertainty among the migrants over their new future in the FRG. A social worker in his/her thirties stated that 'I can't say for sure now whether it was worth it. Ask me in two years'. Therefore, it could be argued that the migrants were not naïve and disillusioned about their future in the FRG as the Czechoslovak *Rudé Právo* reported. By personalising their experiences during their migration, the Western media constructed a humanitarian narrative of their migration by sympathetic and compassionate representation. Therefore, by attempting to portray that East German migrants had to sacrifice their comfortable life in the GDR or their health in order to travel to the FRG, the Western Press presented them as brave, determined and brave, yet vulnerable people, who faced threats to their freedom. However, this research found that it was not done with solely benevolent intentions. *WP* and *The Times* both

<sup>274</sup> Blaine Harden, 'Thousands more E. Germans leave Prague for the West', *The Washington Post*, 5 October 1989, a20

focused on the ideological stereotypes of two Cold War blocs and portrayed Czechoslovakia as a hostile country, which chose to neglect the vulnerable and innocent East German children and their parents. Such a perspective of East German migration indicated a deeply ideological understanding of the migration by the selected outlets of the foreign press.

### The ideology behind the compassionate representation

This research found that the emotional and sympathetic coverage of the migration by *The Washington Post* and *The Times* was ideological and could be studied in parallel with the practices of *Rudé Právo*, *Izvestia* and *Pravda* journalists.<sup>275</sup> According to those newspapers, this migration was a ‘problem’ and it was up to the GDR and the FRG governments to solve it. The Western press chose to portray East German migration through the ideological prism which justified the demonisation of socialist governments and presented clear boundaries between liberalism and socialism.<sup>276</sup>

The East German migration was portrayed as a democratic right by the Western newspapers, which challenged the GDR and Czechoslovakia and their ‘unpopular brand of socialism’, which was a direct example of the ideological perception of the issue at hand.<sup>277</sup> *WP* reported that one interviewed person was so determined to go to the FRG that even the frostbite he suffered ‘was worth it’, which framed the migration in a heroic narrative, and almost idolised the hardship endured by the migrants for a greater cause - freedom in the West.<sup>278</sup> The article called East German migration ‘the most spectacular exit’ from a socialist country.<sup>279</sup> According to Roger Boyes, this migration questioned ‘the legitimacy of East European regimes and the permanent element of friction that has emerged within the Soviet bloc’. The migration was identified by *WP*

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<sup>275</sup> Blaine Harden, ‘East Germans seek embassy refuge’, *The Washington Post*, 27 September 1989, a24; John Holland, ‘Bonn envoy reopens Prague mission to refugees’, *The Times Digital Archive*, 2 October 1989, p. 10

<sup>276</sup> Jaap van Ginneken, *Understanding global news. A critical introduction*, (London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi, Singapore: SAGE Publications Ltd., 2009), p. 154-155

<sup>277</sup> Blaine Harden, ‘East Germans seek embassy refuge’; John Holland, ‘Waiting in Prague for a ticket to freedom’

<sup>278</sup> The Washington Post Foreign Service, ‘Over the Fence in a Snap’, *The Washington Post*, 1 October 1989, a25; Blaine Harden, ‘East German refugees abandon cars on streets around embassy’, *The Washington Post*, 5 October 1989, a1

<sup>279</sup> Roger Boyes, ‘Exodus is response to an identity and power crisis’, *The Times*, 16 September 1989

as ‘the latest symptom of the collapse of Eastern Europe as a communist monolith’, which indicated that the newspaper saw the migration as a long-awaited victory for the West, which was typical of the traditional understanding of the Cold War.<sup>280</sup> The Western representation of East German migration manipulated the idea of borders and boundaries in order to portray the opposition to the migration. Pål Kolstø has recently argued that ‘identity of a group is always constructed upon the boundary separating it from other groups’.<sup>281</sup> Following Griselda Pollock’s explanation on the significance of visual representations, the Western press produced social subjects - East German migrants - ‘in the negotiation of social conflict’, which necessarily depended on ‘social exclusion and inclusion’.<sup>282</sup> A photo of children and two mothers ‘clutching the window grilles of the West German Embassy in Prague’, was published (Figure 11).<sup>283</sup> Mothers and children alike looked sad, worried and unhappy.



Figure 11: Waiting in Prague for a ticket to freedom by The Washington Post

They were safe in the embassy building due to the FRG rights to extraterritoriality as a safe island in an otherwise hostile environment in Czechoslovakia. According to Michel de Certeau, borders, walls and fences create an ‘interior’ and ‘exterior’ spaces, defined by ‘threats and enemies, to

<sup>280</sup> Blaine Harden, ‘E. German refugees pour into embassy’, *The Washington Post*, 26 September 1989, a1; Michael L. Dockrill and Michael F. Hopkins, *The Cold War 1945-1991*, p. 147

<sup>281</sup> Pål Kolstø, Discourse and Violent Conflict: Representations of ‘self’ – ‘other’ in the Yugoslav Successor States, pp. 1-21, in Pål Kolstø (ed), *Media discourse and the Yugoslav conflicts: representations of self and other*, (London; New York: Routledge, 2016), p. 2

<sup>282</sup> Griselda Pollock, *Vision and difference: femininity, feminism, and histories of art*, (London; New York: Routledge, 1988), p. 7

<sup>283</sup> John Holland, ‘Waiting in Prague for a ticket to freedom’, *The Times Digital Archive*, 5 October 1989, p. 10

delineate one's 'own' territory' as opposed to the territory of 'the other'.<sup>284</sup> The Western press created a clear picture of socialist countries such as the GDR and Czechoslovakia with 'bad governments' which did not allow East Germans to travel to the FRG nor welcomed them in Czechoslovakia.<sup>285</sup> The hostility of the Czechoslovak authorities towards the migrants was also identified in a report about the police presence in the FRG embassy compound in Prague, which aimed to stop the East Germans from accessing embassy territory, thus highlighting the threat to the migrants.<sup>286</sup> One incident with the Czechoslovak police was reported, which authenticated how 'unwelcoming' Czechoslovak socialist territory was.<sup>287</sup> The front page of the newspaper had a big photo by the Associated Press, titled 'Prague policeman pulls on a coat of an East German to try to prevent him from climbing the fence to West German Embassy' (Figure 12). The Czechoslovak policeman's behaviour was presented as 'rough, nervous and inconsistent', thus suggesting that the officer was using unevenly exercised force against the migrants, which also seemed unconvinced. Therefore, by constructing boundaries through its photographs and articles, the Western press aimed to portray socialist Czechoslovakia as a hostile environment, which authorized violence against East German migrants.



Figure 12: 'Prague policeman pulls on coat of an East German to try to prevent him from climbing fence to West German Embassy' by Associated Press

The decision to allow the East German migrants to emigrate to the West through the GDR was celebrated in the *The Times* and the *Washington Post* as a heroic victory of the people over the mighty system of the socialist

<sup>284</sup> Mark Silberman, Karen E. Till, Janet Ward, 'Introduction', in Mark Silberman, Karen E. Till, Janet Ward (eds), *Walls, borders, boundaries: spatial and cultural practices in Europe*, (New York, Oxford: Berghahn books, 2012), p. 4

<sup>285</sup> Blaine Harden, 'E. Germans in Prague get assurances: would-be emigrants offered exit to west', *The Washington Post*, 27 September 1989, a1; Blaine Harden, 'East Germans seek embassy refuge', *The Washington Post*, 27 September 1989, a24

<sup>286</sup> Blaine Harden, 'More E. Germans flee to Bonn's embassies', *The Washington Post*, 2 October 1989, a25

<sup>287</sup> Blaine Harden, 'Czechs fail to stem new refugee flood', *The Washington Post*, 3 October 1989, a1

dictatorship of the GDR as well as of Czechoslovakia.<sup>288</sup> The journalists depicted East German departure from the FRG Embassy with two photographs, showcasing clear divisions and the drama of the migrants' experiences. The first one was captioned as men 'celebrating permission to emigrate, after their release from the West German embassy in Prague'. The photo pictured young and smiling men, who seemed like they were just 'released' from prison, or a similar facility, which forcibly kept people enclosed (Figure 13). However, this victory was presented as bittersweet as not all East Germans chose the FRG instead of the GDR.

### Savouring the taste of freedom



East German refugees celebrating their permission to emigrate, after their release from the West German embassy in Prague.

Figure 13: 'East German refugees celebrate their permission to emigrate, after their release from the West German embassy in Prague'



Last farewell: At the embassy fence a mother (right) bids good luck to her refugee daughter before returning to East Germany.

Figure 14: 'Last farewell: at the embassy fence a mother (right) bids good luck to her refugee daughter before returning to East Germany'

Another photograph pictured a young woman and a middle-aged woman, touching their heads through the fence of the embassy (Figure 14). The caption

<sup>288</sup> Ian Murray and John Holland, 'Savouring the taste of freedom', 2 October 1989, *The Times Digital Archive*, p. 1; Ian Murray and John Holland, 'Honecker slams door as 11,000 go free', *The Times Digital Archive*, 4 October 1989, p. 1; Blaine Harden, 'East Berlin agrees to let refugees go', *The Washington Post*, 1 October 1989, a1, a25; John Holland, 'Bonn envoy reopens Prague mission to refugees'; John Holland, 'Hundreds storm into 'freedom embassy'', *The Times Digital Archive*, 4 October 1989, p. 12

below stated that it was ‘the last farewell: at the embassy fence a mother bids good luck to her refugee daughter before returning to East Germany’. They both looked composed, calm but upset. As they held their heads close to one another, the photograph represented connection and a bond in difficult times such as migration, which also highlighted the personal drama which was



Up and over: Scores of East Germans scaling a wall into the West German Embassy garden in Prague yesterday as many more await their turn below.

Figure 15: 'Up and over: Scores of East Germans scaling a wall into the West German Embassy garden in Prague yesterday as many more await their turn below'

happening in the eyes of the observers of East German travel to the FRG. Since this photo was published, *The Times* and *WP* presented the effect of this migration as indicative of the ‘eventual’ defeat of the GDR’s hard-line stance towards allowing their citizens to travel freely. It was reported, for instance, that many East Germans climbed the embassy fence, ‘doubtless sensing that world pressure would soon force their government to relent’ (Figure 15).<sup>289</sup> A photograph was published and its caption described ‘scores of East Germans scaling a wall into the West German Embassy garden in Prague’, thus suggesting that the migrants were willing to overcome any obstacle which separated them from their freedom in the FRG. Potentially, it implied that this obstacle - socialism - would be overcome. These findings correspond to the argument, by Marek Skovajsa, that while ‘the communist political systems had developed an exceptionally complex and oppressive ideology’, ‘Western liberal democracies are no less ideological than the former communist states’.<sup>290</sup> The so-called ‘progressive press’ also uses various means of persuasion, which reproduce stereotypical perceptions of events.<sup>291</sup> Therefore, the permission of East

<sup>289</sup> John Holland, ‘Hundreds storm into ‘freedom embassy’’; Washington Post Foreign Service, ‘Over the Fence in a Snap’, *The Washington Post*, 1 October 1989, a25; Editorial, ‘Goodbye to Berlin’, *The Times Digital Archive*, 4 October 1989, p. 19, (accessed: 10 March 2017)

<sup>290</sup> Marek Skovajsa, ‘Absent past: the language of Czech sociology before and after 1989, chapter 1, in Ernest Andrews, ‘Introduction’, in Ernest Andrews (ed), *Legacies of Totalitarian Language in the Discourse Culture of the Post-Totalitarian Era*, (Lanham; Boulder; New York; Toronto; Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2011), p. 16

<sup>291</sup> Christina Konstantinidou and Martha Michailidou, ‘Foucauldian discourse analysis: photography and the social construction of immigration in the Greek national press’, p. 92

German migrants to emigrate to the FRG was presented as a victory of liberal values against the socialist dictatorship, which then influenced the argument in the Western press concerning ‘the eventuality of the collapse of the socialist system’.

The November coverage of the East German migration had an especially strong ideological spin to it as it concentrated on the passage between Czechoslovakia and the FRG and stated in several articles that the East Germans ‘cheated’ the Berlin Wall. As the iconic wall symbolised divisions and differences between the two German states, and even Europe as a whole, the passage to the FRG through the GDR and the one directly through Czechoslovakia were presented as windows to the West in the ‘irrelevant’ Iron Curtain.<sup>292</sup> Indeed, with the borders between socialist and democratic states opened for the migrants to cross, one could hardly challenge the suggested insignificance of the Wall that came to symbolise the Cold War itself for decades. However, in reality, strict border controls at the Wall existed until 9 November, which highlights the propaganda inherent in the reporting of this event, which symbolically ended the story of East German migration in these Western media outlets.

## Conclusion

*The Washington Post* coverage of East German migration was similar to that in *The Times*. Both of the newspapers represented East German migrants in a positive light as vulnerable and mistreated humans who needed help. This representation was based on compassionate and sympathetic reporting. Both of the newspapers used a great amount of photographic authentication to show that the migration was happening and that it had ‘a human face’. Nevertheless, it was represented in an excessively dichotomised way by both newspapers, which simplified the migration and its hardship into a black and white or good and bad representation, which demonised socialism. Examples of its inherent failure, use of force, neglect and hostility towards vulnerable migrants and their children, and necessary boundary construction in order to protect East

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<sup>292</sup> Blaine Harden, ‘E. Germans can go, Bonn official says’, *The Washington Post*, 4 November 1989, a18; Blaine Harden, ‘With rules eased, E. Germans flock West’, *The Washington Post*, 5 November 1989, a1

Germans were employed to persuade the readership of those two Western newspapers of lack of humanitarianism and respect for human rights and freedoms in the socialist bloc, and even its imminent collapse. Consequently, the Western ideological manipulations behind the presented discourse of the migrants' identity and the meaning of their migration were similar to the Czechoslovak ones due to the analogous tactics in reporting the migration through the lenses of unalterable divisions between socialism and capitalism. Essentially, the migrants' story was caught up in the Western media-supported Cold War propaganda conflict.

## The archives of 'The Prague Exit'

During a meeting between the leaders of Czechoslovakia and German Democratic Republic in April 1989, Ladislav Adamec, the Prime Minister of Czechoslovakia, once again stated the opinion that 'the prerequisite for the preservation of the lasting peace in the European continent is the inviolability of borders'.<sup>293</sup> East German migration would challenge these well-secured borders, put the stability of the KSČ in question and disrupt the cohesion of their ideological beliefs. This chapter explores the general perceptions of East German migration as formed among the Czechoslovak Communist elites in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Federální Ministerstvo Zahraničních Věcí or the FMZV), the Federal Ministry of the Interior (Federální Ministerstvo Vnitra or the FMV), and related organisations such as the (Secret) State Security (Státní bezpečnost or the StB) as well as the National Police Corps (Sbor Národní Bezpečnosti or the SNB). Previously unpublished documents from those institutions, available in their respective archives in Prague, were investigated during the June-July 2017 research trip, made possible by the secured Postgraduate Travel Grant from the University of Glasgow.<sup>294</sup> They supplemented the previous findings from the press about the identity formation of travelling East Germans, and exposed the instability within the top ranks of the organisation. Specifically, this is observable through the documented framing of the migration as a security threat in the Czechoslovak police and secret police reports, the decisions related to border closings and openings and travel reforms. Crucially, this research deems the opening of the Czechoslovak-Federal Republic of Germany border on 3 November as the day when Czechoslovakia's 'Inner Iron Curtain' fell. It was opened by the KSČ leaders themselves, no longer capable to cope with the migration in other ways. However, contrary to the Czechoslovak Communist Party's self-representation in its official newspaper, the archives examined revealed that even though the migration was framed as a threat in the daily security briefs, the language used

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<sup>293</sup> Federální Ministerstvo Zahraničních Věcí FMZV, Zpráva o průběhu a výsledcích přátelské pracovní návštěvy předsedy vlády ČSSR s. L. Adamce v NDR (pro vládu ČSSR), Teritoriální odbor - NDR, 011513/89, secret, 21 April 1989, f. 7

<sup>294</sup> Archiv Ministerstva zahraničních věcí, Loretánské náměstí 5, 118 00 Praha 1 – Hradčany, Czech Republic; Národní archiv, Archivní 2257/4, 149 00 Praha 4 – Chodovec, Czech Republic; Archiv bezpečnostních složek, Na Struže 3, Praha 1, Czech Republic

by the staff responsible for compiling the daily security briefs for the top Party leadership only was plain and did not show any signs of panic. Instead, the migration was described in a calm and confident manner, which informed not only on the extent of ideological propaganda in the official newspaper of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, but it also suggested that the Party bureaucracy intended to continue their daily tasks as usual, despite the 'nuisance' of East Germans crossing the country to 'the West'. In the light of the findings from the Czechoslovak and foreign newspapers examined, this discovery is interpreted comparatively as a sign that the Czechoslovak Communist Party did not evaluate the impact the East German migration through their country might have had on their ideological cohesion, stability and resolve. This, in turn, left them weakened just before the Velvet Revolution forced the organisation to give up their political power in Czechoslovakia in late November-December 1989.

#### [Archives, the KSČ and East German migration via Czechoslovakia](#)

The documents included in this research commented on the ideological press reporting of the East German migration, contained statistics and some policy-formation details, regarding the Czechoslovak border control. They also illuminated how the migration was perceived by the Czechoslovak authorities in the reports and statistics meant to be read exclusively by the top Party members and not shared with the general population of the country. The author of this thesis believes that they have greatly expanded the findings of this research by revealing the image of an ideological entity, the Communist Party, stripped off of its propaganda and persuasion techniques, used so widely in their official press. Researching the press reporting of the late Cold War in the 1980s alone would not have presented the perceptions of the identity of travelling East Germans accurately enough as such representations reflected more on the Cold War differences between the two blocs than it commented on the personal experiences of those East Germans. The findings of this research would have been quite different without the archival documents and its discovered bureaucratic, succinct and even plain language, which left the ideological embellishments of varying representations of

travelling East Germans for the press to persuade its readership to support the 'acceptable', Party-supported way of viewing this migration via Czechoslovakia and the streets of Prague. It would not be focused on the migrants but on the usual Cold War superpowers and their differences, a popular approach which this research aimed to challenge.

The research of primary sources, held in various archives, of course, did not provide the clear-cut and direct answers to the questions addressed in this thesis. According to Jonathan Haslam, many documents related to the Cold War were either destroyed or lost the aftermath of Central-Eastern European revolutions of 1989 as the local Communist Parties and their staff resigned or were sacked by the new authorities in those countries.<sup>295</sup> As he explains, researchers working in the Cold War archives do not and may never have full, accurate, detailed and balanced collections of many crucial events during this conflict because the missing documents might have compromised those officials involved in such events after the fall of their regimes. This research could have benefited greatly from personal correspondence or notes between the top Czechoslovak Communist Party members, their allies and perceived enemies, discussing the East German migration and expressing their true emotions regarding it. As such sources were not available, the majority of the documents consulted either reported the ongoing status of the East German migration via Czechoslovakia or presented reached decisions regarding meetings and travel reforms. The decision-making progress was not detailed - rather, it was noted in conclusive statements as a result of 'negotiations' or 'meetings'. These additional inquiries would have been very informative for this thesis yet also out of the scope of this particular research. Nevertheless, they are recommended for the future work on the issue, as the examination of the East German migration through personal letters and notes of the top leadership could illuminate thoughts, emotions and even the decision-making process and its progress regarding the migration. Therefore, this thesis only presents its findings as discovered from the available and accessible archival holdings, examined during June-July, 2017.

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<sup>295</sup> Jonathan Haslam, 'Collecting and Assembling Pieces of the Jigsaw: Coping with Cold War Archives', *Cold War History*, 4 (2004), 140–52, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1468274042000231196>, p. 140, (accessed: 4 June 2018)

## Stability

Keith M. Dowding and Richard Kimber argued that the political stability of a government rests on the ability of that government to cope with the challenges they face, to ensure or prolong its rule.<sup>296</sup> According to Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty journalist Jan Obrman, the KSČ was immensely pressured from both the West and the reforming East to follow the lead and it was identified as one of the most important destabilising factors of the government, which highlighted how ‘superficial’ their stability was in 1989.<sup>297</sup> This research produced further analysis into the ‘instability’ of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, and how it manifested itself through the Party press and private documents among the governmental staff in relation to East German migration. According to David Green, the Party appeared as if it tried to cope with the problems which challenged its monopoly on power yet it actually did little or nothing.<sup>298</sup> Therefore, the external-turned-internal political challenge, embodied by East German migration via Czechoslovakia, was mismanaged because the Party made questionable decisions, challenging their authority over this migration in their own country.

## Physical and psychological threat

East German migration was perceived as a physical and psychological threat by the Czechoslovak Communist Party. The migration was officially identified as ‘critical’ on 19 August 1989 in the Czechoslovak police daily report, which stated that there were ‘90 citizens of the GDR in the FRG embassy’.<sup>299</sup> This was seen in such terms because diplomatic missions usually do not provide accommodation for large groups of people unless the situation is serious. Unpublished documents from the archives of the State Security Services

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<sup>296</sup> Keith M. Dowding and Richard Kimber, ‘The meaning and use of ‘political stability’’, *European Journal of Political Research*, 11 (1983), pp. 229-243, May 2006, 10.1111/j.1475-6765.1983.tb00060.x, (accessed: 17 August 2017)

<sup>297</sup> Jan Obrman, ‘Political stability: a comment’, 29 May 1989, RFE/RL Situation Report 12, Czechoslovakia, 12-29 May 1989, pp. 7-11, p. 8-9, 10

<sup>298</sup> David Alexander Green, *The Czechoslovak Communist Party’s revolution, 1986-1990*, [PhD Thesis, University of Strathclyde, 2014], p. 66

<sup>299</sup> Archiv bezpečnostních složek (ABS), Na Struže 3, Praha 1, II. Správa SNB, analytický odbor, OB-007/174/03-89, 19 August 1989, Denní situační zpráva č. 174/89 ze dne 19.8.1989, [f. 1]

indicated that the plan of the KSČ was ‘to help in a way which would stop the migration’, as outlined in the meeting of the top Party officials on 29 September 1989.<sup>300</sup> At the time of that meeting, the FRG embassy housed around 6,000 people, who were allowed to leave for the FRG through the GDR the next day.<sup>301</sup> According to some historians, this decision came from the Czechoslovak authorities and was announced by the GDR government.<sup>302</sup> Yet it only influenced more East Germans to attempt to travel to the FRG using the departure route through the GDR.<sup>303</sup> The entrance to the FRG embassy was cordoned off, which physically stopped the people from reaching the diplomatic mission as this ‘issue’ required additional ‘security measures’ to ensure ‘public peace and order’.<sup>304</sup> However, there were no incidents reported shorter before, or after, this decision.<sup>305</sup> Despite that, the Czechoslovak Party increased the number of police officers working at the embassy to ‘the maximum number of the SNB (state police)’ or ‘320 in total’ per day and ‘10 dog handlers in total’.<sup>306</sup> The increased number of Czechoslovak security forces, instructed to physically stop the migrants from escaping socialism, indicated the Party’s perception of migrating East Germans and their identity as a threat, which only exposed its defencelessness against the continuing migration.

According to some Critical Discourse analysts, ‘emigration functions as a catalyst for the creation and for the questioning of images and self-images’ or identities.<sup>307</sup> The perception of the migrating East Germans’ identity was changing fast among the Czechoslovak governmental bodies. On 13 September

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<sup>300</sup> ABS, DVD 2/7, ‘Objektové svazky (Obs), reg. č, Obž-845 MV, ‘Obora’, tematika svazku ‘NSR’, RC\_845\_004\_09\_0405, part 9, [177], II. správa SNB, 2. odbor, 29 September 1989, ‘Žáznam z Jednání – informace’, [f. 1]

<sup>301</sup> RFE/RL, Weekly Record of Events in Eastern Europe, 28 September to 4 October 1989, Czechoslovakia, 30 September 1989, p. 3

<sup>302</sup> Gareth Dale, *Popular protest in East Germany, 1989-1990*, (London; New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 152; Piotr Pykel, *1989 – the final stage: a comparative study of transition from communist rule to democratic government in Poland and Czechoslovakia*, (Saarbrücken : VDM Verlag Dr. Müller, 2008), p. 222

<sup>303</sup> ABS, Federální Ministerstvo Vnitra, OV-039/A-89, Denní situační zpráva č. 143, Bezpečnostní situace v ČSSR, 2 October 1989, f. 1; RFE/RL, Weekly Record of Events, 28 September to 4 October 1989, p. 6

<sup>304</sup> Denní situační zpráva č. 143, 2 October 1989, p. 1

<sup>305</sup> Ibid

<sup>306</sup> MZV, Sprava Sboru narodní bezpečností, Městská zpráva Veřejné bezpečností Praha, VB-0465/-1-19-MBA, Secret, ‘BA’ NDR, ‘Návrh opatření směřujících k uzavření prostorů v blízkosti ZÚ NSR v Praze v souvislosti s řešením otázky NDR občanů’, f. 2

<sup>307</sup> Gerard Delanty, Ruth Wodak, Paul Jones, *Identity, belonging and migration*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011), p. 34

the migration was discussed under the sub-topic of ‘Unfriendly/hostile/enemy actions’.<sup>308</sup> Upon their departure from the Embassy at the start of October, the migration became a matter of the state security.<sup>309</sup> According to Pål Kolstø, minority groups or migrants become a matter of security when the authorities represent them as a threat to the ‘survival of the [majority] group’ in the society, which was ideologically embodied by the Communist Party.<sup>310</sup> On 5 October almost the entire daily report was dedicated to the migration, detailing the situation at Czechoslovakia’s borders, and chronicling their departure proceedings.<sup>311</sup> On 10 October, the migration was discussed in the opinions and views of the population part of the daily brief and it was stated that there were ‘criticisms towards the way the authorities were handling the migration’ in the southern towns of Czechoslovakia not far from the border with Austria.<sup>312</sup> According to them, the Party’s decision to ‘deal with the matter of the foreign citizens in our territory’ by allowing their travel through the country was viewed critically and the security of the Czechoslovak borders was evaluated as inadequate. It is possible that the daily report mentioned these views solely because the top Party leadership had a similar opinion about the migration – they did not want East Germans to travel through their territory. Yet the fact that the Party allegedly enquired about the locals’ views shows that the migration occupied a central role in the Party’s day-to-day agenda. Additionally, to strengthen the view that the local population was against the migration, a report on the security situation in Czechoslovakia informed the Central Committee of the KSČ that ‘the public order was disrupted by the increased flow of the citizens of the GDR’ which ‘created possibilities for dangerous incidents’.<sup>313</sup> Therefore, according to the Czechoslovak Communist

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<sup>308</sup> ABS, FMV, OV-039/A-89, Denní situační zprava č. 130, Nepřátelská činnost, 13 September 1989, [f. 1]

<sup>309</sup> ABS, FMV, OV-039/A-89, Denní situační zpráva č. 143, Bezpečnostní situace v ČSSR, 2 October 1989, f. 1

<sup>310</sup> Pål Kolstø, *Media discourse and the Yugoslav conflicts: representations of self and other*, chapter ‘Discourse and violent conflict representations of ‘self’-‘other’ in the Yugoslav successor states’, (London; New York: Routledge, 2008), p. 12

<sup>311</sup> ABS, FMV, OV-039/A-89, Denní situační zprava č. 146, 5 October 1989, p. 3, 9; special addition to the report, f. 1; Ibid, special addition to the report, ‘Odvoz NDR uprchlíků z budovy ZÚ NSR v Praze’, f. 1

<sup>312</sup> ABS, Federální Ministerstvo Vnitřní, OV-039/A-89, Denní situační zprava č. 149, 10 October 1989, ‘Opinions and moods of the population’, f. 10

<sup>313</sup> Narodni archiv (NA), KSČ-Ústřední výbor, Bezpečnostní situace na území ČSR k 10. 10. 1989, 197/24, Secret, 12 October 1989, fond KSČ – Ústřední výbor 1945-1989, Praha – nezpracované, volume 9, archival unit 22/k inf. 2, [f. 1]

Party documents, the local population was unhappy with the ineffective measures the authorities adopted in order to stop the migration. It was perceived as a 'hostile enemy action', which provided a challenge to the security of the state borders.

East German migration was perceived as a potential disruptor of Czechoslovakia's socialist system because of its alleged connection to the FRG and its 'grand plan' to destroy socialism was primarily ideological.<sup>314</sup> During the 24 October meeting of the GDR ambassador Helmut Ziebart and the Czechoslovak Vice-Chairman of the Central Committee of the National Front Jozef Lenárt, the FRG was jointly accused of leading the 'anti-GDR propaganda campaign' set to destabilise the country.<sup>315</sup> Therefore, an offensive on the 'great life in the FRG' rumours had to be launched in order to discredit the country as a destination. On 30 October, one of the reports stated that East Germans in the FRG embassy gardens were 'divided into two groups'.<sup>316</sup> The first group of people - 'university graduates whose job was important or otherwise interesting' - was set to get access to 'all of the advantages, i. e. quick acquisition of accommodation and employment according to their profession'.<sup>317</sup> The second group - 'the remaining persons' - was supposed to be 'provided with employment as other average citizens of the FRG, but compared to emigrants from socialist and other countries, they should enjoy the same benefits as the FRG nationals'. Yet the local West Germans and other immigrants in the FRG were reportedly unhappy with what seemed to them as 'additional competition'.<sup>318</sup> The FRG employers were reluctant to employ the GDR citizens instead of FRG ones as well.<sup>319</sup> It was also implied that the two groups of East Germans were not seen as possessing the same identity in the eyes of the FRG authorities as their selection process clearly distinguished between 'the qualified' and 'unqualified migrants'. However, this information

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<sup>314</sup> NA, KSČ-ÚV-02/1, KSČ-Ústřední výbor 1945-1989, Praha – předsednictvo 1986-1989, volume 131, item P137/k inf. 6, Záznam y přijetí velvyslance NDR v ČSSR H. Ziebart a členem předsednictvá a tajemníkem ÚV KSČ J. Lenártem, 24 October 1989, P 8898/24, f. 6

<sup>315</sup> Ibid

<sup>316</sup> ABS, FMV, OV-039/A-89, Denní situační zprava č. 163, 30 October 1989, Informace k emigraci občanů NDR při ZÚ v Praze', f. 1

<sup>317</sup> Ibid

<sup>318</sup> Ibid

<sup>319</sup> Ibid, f. 1-2

contributed to the view that the FRG was trying to destabilise the socialist system in the GDR by depriving them of their best and most qualified population first, thus challenging the future of those countries. Additionally, similarly to some of the reporting on the migration in the Western press, discussed in the previous chapter, FRG journalists travelled to the embassy to interview the migrants and represented them selectively and ideologically.<sup>320</sup> It was stated that ‘they [journalists] will go inside the building where women and children stay’ ‘so they could say tomorrow [3 November 1989] that ‘they all have to leave’ the Embassy as soon as possible, and that ‘there is no intention to introduce them to the drunk migrants’.<sup>321</sup> In other words, the FRG wanted a sympathetic and positive response from their coverage of the migration by selectively showing only ‘socially acceptable group of people’ mothers with children, and not intoxicated people or men, who were less likely to receive compassion from the viewers of that news coverage, which suggested that East German migrants were ideologically represented even by the Western countries. By declining to film all of East Germans FRG ‘othered’ and effectively ‘silenced’ the rest of the migrants. These exclusionary practices of selective representation were similar to the ones the Czechoslovak authorities were practising by not providing extensive interviews with the migrants. In a sense, this request by the FRG was a practice of ‘policing’ of the migrants - the right and wrong ones to be represented. Therefore, the FRG was demonised for prioritising ‘specialists’ over other migrants who could come to their country and selectively represented only ‘socially acceptable groups of people’, instead of all the migrants. The migrants were represented as ‘othered’ by the FRG, which justified the same practices of Czechoslovakia.

### Scheduled reforms on travel and border openings

The integrity of Czechoslovakia’s and the GDR’s borders was challenged yet its Communist authorities did nothing to address those challenges as they usually came from the FRG and were verbal suggestions.<sup>322</sup> However, East German

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<sup>320</sup> ABS, II. Správa SNB, analytický odbor, OB-007/243/03-89, 3 November 1989, Denní situační zpráva č. 243/89 ze dne 3.11.1989, [f. 1]

<sup>321</sup> Ibid, f. 2

<sup>322</sup> ABS, DVD 1/7, ‘Objektové svazky (Obs), reg. č, Obž-845 MV, ‘Obora’, tematika svazku ‘NSR’, RC\_845\_004\_08\_0333, Akce SOKOL, Pro: 2-2-1, 10 July 1989, [f. 1]

migration forced the GDR authorities to let East Germans go to the FRG.<sup>323</sup> Czechoslovakia too was forced to abandon its ideological beliefs regarding strict border control with capitalist countries in order to end the migration on 3 November upon the opening of the Czechoslovak-FRG borders for the migrants. This event, together with the proposed travel reform, is considered to be a compromise which the Party made in exchange for the silence at its borders and calmness in its streets.

The relaxation of policies regarding border control was considered as the 'return of the Prague Spring liberalisation reforms of 1968' which were ended violently.<sup>324</sup> Since the majority of the top KSČ leaders in power in 1989 assumed their top positions after the Prague Spring, any meddling with the state borders challenged their longevity in power and their ideological legitimacy.<sup>325</sup> However, East German migrants were perceived as a direct challenge to those borders. The daily brief on 18 September reported that '553 citizens of the GDR' disrupted the Czechoslovak borders.<sup>326</sup> While travelling from Czechoslovakia was not that difficult for the locals, the migration encouraged and the Party to make more concessions for the conformity of their citizens in the light of the mass migration from the GDR through Czechoslovakia.<sup>327</sup> RFE/RL announced on 21 September that the Czechoslovak authorities discussed a relative liberalisation of the travel law and it was suggested that the exit visas should be changed into 'statistical cards' and the crime of 'illegally leaving Czechoslovakia' should be 'abolished'.<sup>328</sup> What seemed like a very moderate amendment was not expected to become a law until 1990. On 30 September, an exception was made for the East German migrants to leave for the FRG through the GDR, and '6000 people left through the GDR' to the FRG the same

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<sup>323</sup> Vilém Prečan, 'Prague Communists Called for Wall to Open on November 8, 1989', *The National Security Archive*, 8 November 2009, <http://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB294/index.htm>, Document 23: SAPMO-BArch, Berlin. DY 30, 5196, Fols. 17–19; also DY 30 IV/2/2.039 (Bureau Egon Krenz), Vol. 342, Fols. 155–157, translated by Todd Hammond, [http://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB294/doc23\\_trans.pdf](http://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB294/doc23_trans.pdf)

<sup>324</sup> Stephen White, *Communism and its Collapse*, (Routledge: London, 2001), p. 58

<sup>325</sup> John F. N. Bradley, *Czechoslovakia's Velvet Revolution: a Political Analysis*, (Boulder: East European Monographs; New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), p. 29

<sup>326</sup> ABS, FMV, OV-039/A-89, Denní situační zpráva č. 133, 18 September 1989, f. 12

<sup>327</sup> Jiří Pehe, 'Social Issues: Government proposes more liberal travel law', RFE/RL Situation reports, Czechoslovak SR/20, 6 October 1989, pp. 25–28, p. 26

<sup>328</sup> RFE/RL, Weekly Record of Events in Eastern Europe, Czechoslovakia, 21 to 28 September 1989, pp. 3–6, p. 3

day.<sup>329</sup> By 3 October, there were ‘5000-7000 citizens of the GDR in the FRG diplomatic mission and in the surrounding streets’ again.<sup>330</sup> Therefore, it was jointly decided that the GDR ended its visa-free travel to Czechoslovakia.<sup>331</sup> However, the ban on visa-free travel had negative effects and, therefore, was ended on 1 November. The State Security reported that the number of incidents involving Czechoslovak tourists and local East Germans increased.<sup>332</sup> In some instances, the tourists were ‘verbally abused and spat at’ and ‘in the city of Plauen 15 young citizens of the GDR tried to turn over a bus of tourists’.<sup>333</sup> In some cases, they were ‘prohibited from purchasing consumer goods in the GDR’.<sup>334</sup> Therefore, the Czechoslovak citizens were in danger because of the decision their authorities had made and, potentially, because their government’s negative stance towards the migrants was projected upon them as well by local East Germans. After the ban was stopped, the treatment of East German migrants changed. Crucially, the GDR border guards ‘were told not to turn East German migrants back from the border if they did not have the right visa’ but instead ‘to talk to them’ and ‘not to use repressive measures’ to stop them.<sup>335</sup> This indicated the defeat of the GDR ideological rejectionist stance towards its own citizens. The Czechoslovak police forces around the embassy were also ordered to not stop East Germans from entering the FRG diplomatic mission.<sup>336</sup> Due to the ineffectiveness of the Party’s decisions regarding the border closures in order to stop the migration and its negative consequences to Czechoslovak tourists abroad, the borders had to be opened

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<sup>329</sup> RFE/RL, Weekly record of events in Eastern Europe, Czechoslovakia, in Eastern Europe, Czechoslovakia, 28 September to 4 October, 30 September 1989, p. 3; ABS, FMV, OV-039/A-89, Denní situační zprava č. 143, 2 October 1989, p. 1; Denní situační zprava č. 143, 2 October 1989, p. 1

<sup>330</sup> ABS), II. Správa SNB, analytický odbor, OB-007/217/03-89, 5 October 1989, Denní situační zpráva č. 217/89 ze dne 5.10.1989, [f. 1]

<sup>331</sup> ABS, FMV, OV-039/A-89, Denní situační zprava č. 146, ‘Situace na státních hranicích s NDR’, 5 October 1989, f. 3

<sup>332</sup> ABS, FMV, OV-039/A-89, Denní situační zprava č. 149, ‘Situace na státních hranicích s NDR’, 10 October 1989, f. 3

<sup>333</sup> Ibid

<sup>334</sup> ABS, FMV, OV-039/A-89, Denní situační zprava č. 150, ‘Situace na státních hranicích s NDR’, 11 October 1989, f. 3

<sup>335</sup> ABS, FMV, OV-039/A-89, Denní situační zprava č. 167, ‘K situaci na státní hranici’, 3 November 1989, f. 12

<sup>336</sup> ABS, II. Správa SNB, analytický odbor, OB-007/243/03-89, 3 November 1989, Denní situační zpráva č. 243/89 ze dne 3.11.1989, [f. 1]

again. East German migration also influenced the Party to change their attitudes towards travel of their citizens.

### The fall of Czechoslovakia's 'Inner Iron Curtain'

East German migration hastened the border-related reforms in Czechoslovakia. According to Peter K. Eisinger, 'revolts occur not when people are most oppressed or best represented, but when a closed system of opportunities has begun to open up'.<sup>337</sup> It was decided that the Czechoslovak-FRG border crossing points would be opened on 3 November.<sup>338</sup> According to the RFE/RL data, '60,000 [East Germans] left to the FRG through Czechoslovakia' between 3 and 8 November.<sup>339</sup> This emigration was 'felt the most in the service, transport, healthcare and industrial sectors', which dealt a heavy loss to the GDR Party's legitimacy and authority.<sup>340</sup> The Czechoslovak authorities were evidently worried about the situation in the GDR as they compiled a report on the opinions and attitudes of the population, which disclosed that Czechoslovak students were 'surprised by the developments in the GDR as they thought it was the most stable socialist country'.<sup>341</sup> The report identified that 'there was a possibility that they will lose their belief in the activities of the workers and communist parties in the socialist states' altogether.<sup>342</sup> This report meant that if the belief in socialism would disappear, so would the power of the KSČ, which based and justified its right to rule on their ideology. This report can explain why the students were at the forefront of the demonstrations on 17 November. Therefore, on 14 November the exit-visas between Czechoslovakia and the Western world were amended to 'statistical cards'.<sup>343</sup> Even though those

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<sup>337</sup> Peter K. Eisinger, 'Conditions of protest behaviour in American cities', *American Political Science Review*, 67, 1973, pp. 11-28, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1958525>, (accessed: 17 August 2017), p. 20; Sidney Tarrow, 'Aiming at a moving target': social science and the recent rebellions in Eastern Europe', *PS: Political Science and Politics*, vol. 24, no. 1, march 1991, pp. 12-20, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/419368>, (accessed: 17 August 2017), p. 14

<sup>338</sup> ABS, II. Správa SNB, analytický odbor, OB-007/243/03-89, 3 November 1989, Denní situační zpráva č. 243/89 ze dne 3.11.1989, f. 3

<sup>339</sup> RFE/RL, Weekly record of events in Eastern Europe, Czechoslovakia, 2 to 8 November, 8 November 1989, p. 10

<sup>340</sup> ABS, FMV, OV-039/A-89, Denní situační zpráva č. 168, 'K situaci v NDR', 3 November 1989, f. 1

<sup>341</sup> ABS, FMV, OV-039/A-89, Denní situační zpráva č. 175, 'Názory a nálady obyvatelstva', 15 November 1989, f. 1

<sup>342</sup> Ibid

<sup>343</sup> RFE/RL, Weekly record of events in Eastern Europe, Czechoslovakia, 9 to 15 November, 14 November 1989, p. 6

wishing to travel still had to be approved by the police, the travel law was liberalised.<sup>344</sup> Therefore, some policies related to East German migration were made available to the local population of Czechoslovakia potentially out of fear so a similar mass exodus, this time from Czechoslovakia, could be prevented. Apart from the emigration, the KSČ was expecting ‘provocations from the demonstrators to influence the use of repressive measures against them’ on 15 November.<sup>345</sup> Nevertheless, the same official, clear language, which dominated the reporting of East German migration in the State Security reports, indicated that the authorities would stop the demonstration if necessary, just as they eventually stopped the migration. However, the ineffective management of the migration and the related policies regarding border openings with capitalist states left the KSČ exhausted, vulnerable and unstable to meet the last series of challenges to their already compromised political system, which started on 17 November in the form of the Velvet Revolution.

### Conclusion

This research found that the archives, explored in the Czech Republic in June-July 2017, reveal a different picture of the stability of the Czechoslovak authorities than its official newspaper constructed for the local public to consume. While the Party did appear worried about the migration in its media and the archives, the unpublished documents also revealed a sense of passivity towards the issue. The archival analysis exposed alertness but calmness among the members of the KSČ in the socialist apparatus. The Party was not so invested in the negative construction of the discourse on the social identity of East German migrants in its private documents. This indicated pragmatism when it came to East German migrants instead of blind socialist idealism, presented in the official press. Contrary to the representation of East German migrants in their official Party newspaper, as well as in *The Washington Post* and *The Times*, the migration, while a problem, was not perceived as a sign of the imminent doom of socialism. However, the migration did expose that the

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<sup>344</sup> RFE/RL, Weekly record of events in Eastern Europe, Czechoslovakia, 15 to 22 November, 17 November 1989, p. 6

<sup>345</sup> ABS, FMV, OV-039/A-89, Denní situační zpráva č. 175, ‘K situaci mezi studující mládeží před 50. Výročím událostí 17. listopadu’, 15 November 1989, f. 2

Party was unsure about the future of socialism, as the migrants were continuously seen as a legitimate threat. Once the Czechoslovak-FRG border was open and the GDR Party resigned, Czechoslovak students reportedly seemed to be losing their faith in socialism. On 17 November, they were in the streets protesting against their socialist government. Therefore, it could be concluded that the documents from the archives in the Czech Republic challenged Czechoslovakia's ideological cohesion at the end of the Cold War. As the 'Inner Iron Curtain' was lifted for East Germans to travel to the FRG, the KSČ could no longer justify their longevity in power in socialist terms. The loss of ideological stability resulted in their weaker opposition to the events and forces which, consequently, swept the Party from power after the events of 17 November.

## The conclusion to 'The Prague Exit'

This research concludes that East German migration affected the Czechoslovak Communist Party's stability and, therefore, should be included in discussions about the Velvet Revolution. Studies like this also highlight the timelessness of the toxic rhetoric utilised against minority groups by those in power, which hinders their integration into society. Such linguistic practices presented a Europe of differences, unalterable ideological dualism and inherent conflicts due to beliefs and worldviews. The linguistic discriminatory practices, which enforced such a perspective on the continent, were found to be commonly employed by those in power regardless of the ideological values they presented or political system they supported.

This research found that the discriminatory and exclusionary language of the official newspaper of the Czechoslovak Communist Party (KSČ), *Rudé Právo*, regarding the 1989 East German migration, was based on the practice of 'othering' this minority group from societal discourse in Czechoslovakia in order to prevent the local population from emigrating as well. Critical Discourse analysts explain 'othering' as 'the situation of being beyond the conceptual definition of national identity in legal, societal and personal terms'.<sup>346</sup> The discourse of the East German identity did not fit in the conceptual understanding of the world in socialist terms and, therefore, was systematically excluded from it. According to *Rudé Právo*, 'citizens of the German Democratic Republic' were 'illegal' in the eyes of the Czechoslovak authorities and their press. They were represented as traitors to their socialist homeland, the GDR, as well as naïve, disillusioned, and susceptible to the alleged FRG propaganda about the materialistic pleasures in a capitalist country. Their personalisation, either in direct interviews or photographs, was kept at a bare minimum, which was not even published before East German migrants were allowed to leave the FRG Embassy compound on 30 September. Their destinations, the embassy of the FRG and the country, were portrayed negatively as a place which has lost its purpose and instead turned into an unhygienic, muddy 'dormitory' for the

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<sup>346</sup> David Ian Hanover, 'Non-Place identity. Britain's response to migration in the age of supermodernity', pp. 198-221, in Gerard Delanty; Ruth Wodak; Paul Jones (eds), *Identity, Belonging and Migration*, p. 202

migrants, and as a failing and hostile country, respectively. The Soviet Union's *Pravda* and *Izvestia* also supported this representation in their articles, thus strengthening the justification for this view by the Czechoslovak authorities - the KSČ had an ally which represented fleeing East Germans in similar terms. The anti-Western propaganda was still strong in the Soviet press even after Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms of *perestroika* and *glasnost*, which invited criticism of the socialist establishment, primarily in order to better diplomatic relationships with the West.

Socialist ideology played a critical role in setting the rationale for the representation of East German migrants. It separated the 'enemies of socialism' - the migrants and the FRG - from the socialist allies - Czechoslovakia and the GDR - thus exposing a deeply dichotomised portrayal of East Germans and their migration as 'us' and 'them'. Interestingly, this research found that the Western newspapers, such as *The Times* and *The Washington Post*, which were analysed in order to provide a different, balancing view about East German migrants, was as ideological and divisive as that of their rivals on the other side of the Iron Curtain. Their reporting was the opposite of the Czechoslovak and Soviet one - both of the newspapers represented East German migrants in a positive light as vulnerable and mistreated human beings who needed help and deserved compassion. Personal interviews and photographs were intended to represent East Germans in a positive and sensitive light, which the Czechoslovak authorities denied in order to reduce their presence and even humanity in Czechoslovakia. However, the Western press appeared primarily to be attacking socialist establishments by highlighting their 'inhumanity' towards 'the East German refugees', rather than showing sincere concerns over their well-being, which made the Western reporting seem detached and impersonal. All analysed newspapers used ideological stereotypes to represent the migrants' story, thus it was caught up in the propaganda war between the Cold War blocs these newspapers represented.

Czechoslovak Communist leaders exposed their worries about the future of their own rule, especially in the light of its failed attempts to stop the migration. The Party could not cope with the migration and their decisions regarding the Czechoslovak-GDR and the Czechoslovak-FRG borders indicated their inefficiency in the search for the best solution for ending the migration,

which was found to have been a costly compromise, sabotaging the KSČ ideological cohesion and authority. East German migration did challenge the Party's ideological stance towards its borders which were opened for East Germans to leave to the FRG even though they were supposed to be inviolable. This suggests that the migration could be regarded as critical to the socialist system in Czechoslovakia. The opening of Czechoslovakia's 'Inner Iron Curtain' forced the Party to oppose their socialist beliefs, thus reducing their ideological cohesion, legitimacy and authority before the Velvet Revolution began.

This research also found that the archives, explored in the Czech Republic in June-July 2017, revealed a different picture of the stability of the Czechoslovak authorities than its official newspaper constructed for the local public to consume. The analysis of unpublished documents suggested that while the staff of the State Security or the Ministry of the Interior perceived the migration as a threat to state security, it did not use elaborate and verbose language to describe it. This showed that the organisation was not led by fanatic idealists in 1989 but rather pragmatic or professional staff, who experienced crises in their country before and simply intended to run the country without major changes in their affairs. This fact, together with the bland language of security reports about the migrants, borders and related incidents, indicates that East German migration was not perceived as the imminent doom of the socialist system in Czechoslovakia.

Many aspects, related to this research, were simply out of scope to examine and include in this thesis. Recommendations for future work, relating to Czechoslovak history, migration and linguistic practices, could include a comparative research into the representation of East German migration in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, the GDR and the FRG in order to provide a more informed understanding of the regional attitudes towards the migrants and compare the linguistic practices which were chosen to represent them. Any related studies would also benefit from additional primary and secondary material in Czech, Slovak, and German. Additionally, a study into the manipulation of Western press reports in the Czechoslovak Communist newspapers and vice versa could be an interesting way to look at Cold War history and ideologies. It would also be worthwhile to analyse personal correspondence, notes and diaries of the top Party leadership in order to

understand how various Party officials received daily news about East Germans crossing through their country. This research could have benefited from further such inquiry into the complexities regarding individual suggestions from the top Party members as to how to solve the migration issue, how concerning it actually seemed to those officials in relation to their personal views on the Party's power in Czechoslovakia. Finally, comparative studies with today's representation of migration discourse in the media could also help to investigate how linguistic practices shape our perception of the migrants.

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