Czechoslovakia Primary Sources

**Excerpt From “Two Thousand Words that Belongs to Workers, Farmers, Officials, Scientists, Artists, and Everybody”**

*Our Source: Navratil, Jaromir. "The Prague Spring 1968". Hungary: Central European Press, 1998, pp. 177-181*

*Translated by: Mark Kramer, Joy Moss and Ruth Tosek*

The first threat to our national life was from the war. Then came other evil days and events that endangered the nation's spiritual well-being and character. Most of the nation welcomed the socialist program with high hopes. But it fell into the hands of the wrong people. It would not have mattered so much that they lacked adequate experience in affairs of state, factual knowledge, or philosophical education, if only they had enough common prudence and decency to listen to the opinion of others and agree to being gradually replaced by more able people…

Let us demand the departure of people who abused their power, damaged public property, and acted dishonorably or brutally… Let us form committees for the defense of free speech. At our meetings, let us have our own staffs for ensuring order. If we hear strange reports, let us seek confirmation, let us send delegations to the proper authorities and publicize their answers, perhaps putting them up on front gates. Let us give support to the police when they are prosecuting genuine wrongdoers, for it is not our aim to create anarchy or a state of general uncertainty. Let us eschew quarrels between neighbors, and let us avoid drunkenness on political occasions. Let us expose informers.

There has been great alarm recently over the possibility that foreign forces will intervene in our development. Whatever superior forces may face us, all we can do is stick to our own positions, behave decently, and initiate nothing ourselves. We can show our government that we will stand by it, with weapons if need be, if it will do what we give it a mandate to do…

This spring a great opportunity was given to us once again, as it was after the end of the war. Again we have the chance to take into our own hands our common cause, which for working purposes we call socialism, and give it a form more appropriate to our once-good reputation and to the fairly good opinion we used to have of ourselves. The spring is over and will never return. By winter we will know all.

So ends our statement addressed to workers, farmers, officials, artists, scholars, scientists, technicians, and everybody. It was written at the behest of scholars and scientists.

**Sergei Kovalev, The International Obligations of Socialist Countries. September 25, 1968**

*Original Source: Pravda, 26 September 1968, p. 4*

In connection with the events in Czechoslovakia, the question of the relationship and interconnection between the socialist countries' national interests and their internationalist obligations has assumed particular urgency and sharpness. The measures taken jointly by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries to defend the socialist gains of the Czechoslovak people are of enormous significance for strengthening the socialist commonwealth, which is the main achievement of the international working class.

At the same time it is impossible to ignore the allegations being heard in some places that the actions of the five socialist countries contradict the Marxist-Leninist principle of sovereignty and the right of the nations to self-determination… There is no doubt that the peoples of the socialist countries and the Communist parties have and must have freedom to determine their country's path of development. However, any decision of theirs must damage neither socialism in their own country, nor the fundamental interests of the other socialist countries, nor the worldwide workers' movement, which is waging a struggle for socialism. This means that every Communist party is responsible not only to its own people but also to all the socialist countries and to the entire Communist movement. Whoever forgets this is placing sole emphasis on the autonomy and independence of communist parties, lapsing into one-sidedness, and shirking his internationalist obligations...

Each Communist party is free to apply the principles of Marxism-Leninism and socialism in its own country, but it cannot deviate from these principles (if, of course, it remains a Communist party). In concrete terms this means primarily that no Communist party can fail to take into account in its activities such a decisive fact of our time as the struggle between the two antithetical social systems-capitalism and socialism. This struggle is an objective fact that does not depend on the will of people and is conditioned by the division of the world into the two antithetical social systems...

There is no doubt that the actions taken in Czechoslovakia by the five allied socialist countries, actions aimed at defending the fundamental interests of the socialist commonwealth and primarily at defending Czechoslovakia's independence and sovereignty as a socialist state, will be increasingly supported by all who really value the interests of the present-day revolutionary movement, the peace and security of peoples, democracy and socialism.

Source: United States Department of State, Problems of Communism. Washington: International Information Administration, 1952.