

Alexander Dubček



Alexander Dubček was a significant Slovak politician who dreamed of creating a better world. In the 1960s, Czechoslovakia was under a very strict Soviet rule, and people had very little freedom. Dubček wanted to change that. He became a leader of the KSČ Czechoslovak Communist Party in 1968 and started reforms to make life fairer and more open. His idea, which was called “socialism with a human face,” gave people a lot of hope.

It was the spring of 1968, and the streets of Prague were alive with much excitement. Many people, if not all, were discussing Dubček’s reforms, which allowed freedom of speech and a freer press. Workers felt empowered, and students cheered for him. Dubček felt proud but also very nervous, because he knew that these changes would highly anger the Soviet Union, which controlled Indirectly. One night, as Dubček was sitting in his office, news arrived: Soviet tanks were crossing the Czechoslovak borders. The invasion had begun. Dubček immediately gathered his team and urged them to stay calm. “We must show the world that we want peace, not violence,” he exclaimed firmly.

In the days that followed, Dubček was arrested and taken to Moscow. Despite pressure put up on him by the members of the Soviet Communist Party, he defended his vision. He later returned to Czechoslovakia, but his reforms were rolled back, and he was eventually removed from office.

Years later, during the Velvet Revolution in 1989, the time in which the communist regime was overthrown and completely dismantled, Dubček’s ideals inspired a new generation. His courage showed that standing for what is right can inspire change, even if success is not immediate. Though the results may not be seen right away, bravery and hope can sow the seeds for a better future.

by Dávid Sidor, IX.NA (Slovakia)

More about Alexander Dubček

Alexander Dubček was a Slovak politician and leader of Czechoslovakia during the Prague Spring in 1968. Born on November 27, 1921, in Uhrovec, Czechoslovakia, he became a prominent member of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. In 1968, Dubček was appointed First Secretary of the Communist Party and became known for his efforts to reform the country’s communist regime. His political agenda, called “Socialism with a human face” aimed to create a more liberal and democratic society by introducing greater freedom of speech, press, and travel. However, his reforms were met with resistance from the Soviet Union, and the Prague Spring ended when Soviet and Warsaw Pact forces invaded Czechoslovakia in August 1968. Dubček was removed from power after the invasion but remained a symbol of reform and resistance. He continued to be active in politics after his removal and played a significant role in Czechoslovakia’s transition to democracy after 1989.

Exercise 1. Decide if these statements are true / false or not given.

	T	F	NG
Alexander Dubček was a significant Italian politician.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He had a wife called Geltrude and two sons.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
His idea was called “socialism with a human face.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dubček immediately gathered his team and urged them to stay calm.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He had a brother who was a soldier.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dubček wasn't arrested and escaped to Moscow.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He became a leader of the KSČ Czechoslovak Communist Party in 1978	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
In the 1960, Czechoslovakia was under a very strict Soviet rule, and people had very little freedom.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The invasion began in Italy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
In 1989 the communist regime was overthrown and completely dismantled.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Exercise 2. Answer these questions with a full answer

1. Who was Alexander Dubček?
2. When was he born?
3. Where was he born?
4. What was Alexander Dubček's dream?
5. When did he become the leader of the KSČ Czechoslovak Communist Party?
6. Were the people happy about Dubček's reforms?
7. What was the name of his political agenda?
8. Who invaded Czechoslovakia in August 1968?
9. Where was Alexander Dubček when the Soviet tanks entered Czechoslovakia?
10. When Dubček was arrested, where did they bring him?

Exercise 3. Fill in the gaps and choose a word from the box

politician - freedom - invasion - arrested - office - 1968 - reforms - Soviet Union - Dubček
Czechoslovakia - KSČ - reforms - crossing

1. Alexander Dubček was a significant Slovak.....who dreamed of creating a better world.
2. In the 1960s, Czechoslovakia was under a very strict Soviet rule, and people had very little.....
3. Dubček became a leader of the Czechoslovak Communist Party in..... Many people were discussing Dubček's, which allowed freedom of speech and a freer press.
4. Dubček knew that his reforms would highly anger the.....
5. Soviet tanks were the Czechoslovak borders and the began
6. Dubček wasand taken to Moscow.
7. He later returned to, but hiswere rolled back, and he was eventually removed from
Years later, the communist regime was overthrown and completely dismantled and 's ideals inspired a new generation.

Exercise 4. Discuss these topics

1. What do you think about communism?
2. What would you do if you were Dubcek?
3. What's your opinion about people who have little freedom?
4. Is the invasion of a country good or not? Why?
5. Where are dictatorships in the world now?
6. What can you do for people's rights?
7. Is it good that the states have all the power?
8. Is there anything you can do to help people who have little freedom?

Exercise 5. Match the words and the definition

	Definition
ALEXANDER DUBCEK	a very big country
KSC	large military fighting vehicles.
VELVET REVOLUTION	make changes in (something, especially an institution or practice) in order to improve it.
TANKS	Czechoslovak communist party
COMMUNIST	the time in which the communist regime was overthrown and completely dismantled.
POLITICIAN	somebody who believes in or supports communism.
REFORM	a significant Slovak politician.
THE SOVIET UNION	a person who is professionally involved in politics, especially as a holder of an elected office.
STUDENTS	capital of Russia.
MOSCOW	a person who is studying at a university or other place of higher education.

Exercise 6. Write a poem using the protagonist's name. Here is one example:

Dubcek was a Slovak politician who never
Used weapons and violence ever.
Brave and polite was this hero but for the
Communists he was worth less than zero.
Eventually the communist regime was overthrown:
Keep going on and you won't be alone!