



# The Prague Spring and the Warsaw Pact Invasion of Czechoslovakia, 1968: Forty Years Later

*M. Mark Stolarik*

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Forty years after the forces of the Warsaw pact invaded Czechoslovakia and put an end to the 'Prague Spring', eight knowledgeable scholars from the member states of this former military alliance gathered at the University of Ottawa in the fall of 2008 to present fresh interpretations of these tragic events. Leading scholars from the United States and Canada critiqued their work.

Even though many books and articles about the 'Prague Spring' have been written by scholars in the West starting in 1968, until recently certain questions remained unanswered. For instance:

- \* Why did Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev not support Party boss Antonín Novotný when the latter came under severe criticism by his colleagues in the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in December of 1967?
- \* Why did Alexander Dubek, the new Party leader, not immediately purge the conservatives from the Central Committee of the Communist Party?
- \* Why did Walter Ulbricht of East Germany and Wadysaw Gomuka of Poland fear and hate Alexander Dubek so much?
- \* Did János Kádár of Hungary really play a mediating role between the Warsaw Pact and Czechoslovakia?
- \* Did Bulgaria only reluctantly join in the invasion?
- \* Why did East Germany not participate in the intervention?
- \* What was the reaction of the people in the member states of the Warsaw Pact to the invasion?

With the opening of the formerly inaccessible archives of the Warsaw Pact after the fall of communism in Eastern Europe in 1989, scholars have dug deeply into these sources and have been able to answer many of these questions. This book provides the latest and best scholarship on the 'Prague Spring' and the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968.

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