

Module 05: 1968 — A Generation in Revolt?

Evidence 24: "Soviet Soldiers and Officers!" Newspaper by Czechs for Russian Occupiers

A

Introduction

The propaganda below was published by Czechs for the Soviet soldiers to read.

Questions to Consider

- The newspaper was written in Russian. How does this contrast with the Soviet propaganda aimed at a Czech audience?

Document



Translation:

Truth

[At the top, written in Czech:]

Do not destroy! Meant for the foreign armies!

[On the left-hand side:]

Soviet soldiers and officers!

When, in 1945, your fathers rode into Prague on Soviet tanks, liberating us from the Fascist aggressors, we welcomed them with flowers and embraced them. But today not one worker, woman, or child will offer you their hand,

or even a glass of water or a crust of bread. The whole nation, all Communists and non-Communists, to whom the fate of socialism in Czechoslovakia is dear, are appalled that you are on the territory of our homeland.

[On the right-hand side:]
Why?

Soviet soldier! Maybe you don't know that almost all the Communist parties of the world condemn this armed action against the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. The whole civilized world condemns the occupation. . . . Tanks and gunfire against unarmed citizens - is that socialist friendship? Is that internationalism? . . . The history of Czech-Russian relations was a history of friendship. Until now. Now a terrible mistake of your government, violating the sovereignty of our socialist government, has undermined the trust of our nation in the USSR. . . . I can tell you a secret: how many "counter-revolutionaries" we have. They are easy to count:

14 million
(the whole nation, excepting a few dozen failed bureaucrats).

Because literally the whole nation stands behind our Communist Party, behind our First Secretary, comrade Dubcek. Our party has never had such support, from all workers, farmers and intelligentsia, as at this terrible moment.

Look, think, don't forget what you've seen here, and try to understand and investigate what is going on. Who attacked whom, who destroyed our friendship.

Friendship can be sworn with blood, but it can be destroyed with blood as well.

Source:

"The Soviet Invasion of Czechoslovakia: August 1968," the Labadie Collection of Social Protest Material, exhibit at the University of Michigan's Special Collections Library. Documents selected by Brian Rosenblum and Jonathan Bolton and translated by Jonathan Bolton.

<http://www.lib.umich.edu/spec-coll/czech/des20.html>.