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Audrius Justinas Rickus

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**The Thesis Committee for Audrius Justinas Rickus
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**Contesting Détente: European Challenge to the Yalta Order in the Late
1960s**

**APPROVED BY
SUPERVISING COMMITTEE:**

Mark Atwood Lawrence, Supervisor

Mark Pomar

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this master's thesis to my family – my parents Audrius and Aurika, sister Nerile, grandparents Petras, Irena, Antanas and Eugenija, and my Aunt Liucija. Without their love, support, and guidance I would have not been able to be exactly where I want to be at this point of my life.

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Abstract

Contesting Détente: European Challenge to the Yalta Order in the Late 1960s

Audrius Justinas Rickus, M.A.

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Supervisor: Mark Atwood Lawrence

This master's thesis analyzes the tensions and anxieties that surrounded the term "détente," particularly when it came to European affairs, in the late 1960s. It argues that during the last years of the 1960s, 1966-1969, different approaches to détente clashed and influenced each other to create a certain ambiguous atmosphere within the European space, which formed the overall understanding of Europe's future at the time; Prague Spring, the ultimate geopolitical crisis of the time, was formed and resolved in accordance to these notions. On the one hand, there was a top-down movement, mostly dominated by policymakers from the United States and the Soviet Union, but sometimes embraced by Western European statesmen, to define détente through an entrenchment of the Yalta order. The idea was that mutual acknowledgment of the status quo in Europe would allow for a creation of a commonly accepted and controllable framework for states to cooperate. In parallel, a bottom-up movement consisting of Western and Eastern European believers in European unity as the most rational and effective possible manifestation of détente, existed

to challenge and influence the prescriptive nature of détente that was embraced by the superpowers. These idealists sought to define détente as a drive towards the abandonment of the Yalta order and unification of the continent on European terms, thus diminishing the importance of the Iron Curtain, which was seen as the cause of global instability. Overall, this master's thesis provides an insight into how a term that is widely used to describe a period of time, "détente," was formed and conceptualized within the central arena of the Cold War – Europe. Its aim is to serve as a think piece that reevaluates the discourses surrounding détente and to position them not as mere products of Cold War bipolar international order, but as ideas rooted in thoughts on European unity and future. Different interpretations of the term "détente" that floated around the continent in the 1960s would later define European unification under the auspices of the European Union in the 1990s and early 2000s.

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Introduction

The world of the late 1960s was a world of détente. From an etymological point of view, détente is a French word that means “relaxation, especially regarding something that is tense.”¹ According to Merriam Webster dictionary, the French word was adopted into the English language to mean “the relaxation of strained relations or tensions (as between nations)” and was first used in 1908.² The term ended up defining a period in the Cold War from the late 1960s to the late 1970s, when Soviet-American ties flourished in ways that they had not before. This master’s thesis tracks what détente meant initially, in between 1966 and 1969, when a Nixon-Brezhnev world was still not a given, and when European intellectuals and superpowers’ policymakers tried to prescribe the term a connotation before it meant anything tangible.

Even though the diplomatic thaw in East-West relations was more vivid in the 1970s, the late 1960s was a time frame when cooperation-minded leaders took power on both sides of the Iron Curtain. On the one hand, after assuming the American presidency in November 1963, Lyndon Johnson continuously sought a closer relationship with the Eastern Bloc and, more specifically, the Soviet Union. His last years in office, 1966-1969, were marked by consistent efforts to promote arms control and to create a positive climate for further cooperation with America’s main competitor for global dominance. On the other

¹“Définitions : détente - Dictionnaire de français Larousse.” Larousse Éditions Accessed April 8, 2020. <https://www.larousse.fr/dictionnaires/francais/d%C3%A9tente/24784>.

² “détente,” Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, accessed April 8, 2020, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/d%C3%A9tente>.

hand, Leonid Brezhnev, who succeeded Nikita Khrushchev as the First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1964, personally desired to leave a mark on the international stage as a peacemaker. The Soviet leader embarked on a path of pronounced cooperation with the West shortly after his ascendance to power.³ The leaders of the most powerful sovereign Western European countries in the mid to late 1960s shared these sentiments. President of France Charles de Gaulle expressed willingness to create a strong Europe from the Atlantic Ocean to the Ural Mountains, which would defuse the tensions damaging the stability of the continent.⁴ West German leaders during the same period were also willing to intensify the dialogue with the Eastern Bloc. The policy of *Ostpolitik* was crafted with the emergence of the first joint Social Democratic and Christian Democratic (Grand Coalition) government in 1967.⁵ Decision-makers sought to create a clear framework of cooperation.

However, doing that meant entrenchment of the status quo, at least in the short term. Neither the East, nor the West, were willing to sacrifice the roots of their political systems for cooperation; yet, ideological differences did not constitute a reason not to work on common points of interest. Status quo within this context refers to the mostly Soviet and American acceptance of the Cold War bloc system for the purposes of developing a common framework to address issues that were of common interest to both superpowers.

³ Vladislav Zubok, *Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev*. New Cold War History. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009), pp. 205-207.

⁴ Gaël Moullec, *Pour Une Europe de l'Atlantique à l'Oural: Les Relations Franco-Soviétiques, 1956-1974. Essais et Documents*. (Paris: Les Éditions de Paris Max Chaleil, 2016), pp. 51-63.

⁵ Timothy Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name: Germany and the Divided Continent*. (London: J. Cape, 1993), p. 55.

The pursuit of the status quo did not imply a move towards a post-Cold War order; ideological competition between the United States and the Soviet Union remained strife. Nonetheless, the entrenchment of clearly delineated spheres of influence and the relative acknowledgment of each other's ideologies allowed the superpowers to obtain a certain level of normality within the international system. Détente seemed like a conscious decision to normalize the Cold War and to work within the system.

Perhaps the best examples of the pragmatic spirit of the times can be deduced from two late 1960s memorandums that came out from two rival military alliances, the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance (NATO) and the Warsaw Pact.⁶ Both documents called for intensification of cooperation in security matters. NATO's June 1968 Declaration on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions (also known as the "Reykjavik Signal") expressed a desire for an intensification of bilateral and multilateral discussions on tension reduction between East and West.⁷ Similarly, Warsaw Pact's Budapest Memorandum of March 1969 called for a pan-European multilateral conference for security to accommodate the needs of Western and Eastern Blocs interests.⁸ Intergovernmental relations were at the center of attention of the late 1960s.⁹ Subsequent diplomatic victories were noble, but they did not challenge the status quo. The seemingly dramatic gestures of détente did not fundamentally

⁶ Ibid p. 57.

⁷ "NATO Mini. Comm. Paris 24th-25th June 1968." NATO Online Library, accessed December 2, 2019. <https://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c680624a.htm>.

⁸ "Обращение государств-участников Варшавского Договора ко всем европейским странам (Будапешт, 17 Марта 1969)." CVCE.EU by UNI.LU., March 7, 2015. https://www.cvce.eu/obj/obrashchenie_gosudarstv_uchastnikov_varshavskogo_dogovora_ko_vsem_evropeiskim_stranam_budapesht_17_marta_1969-ru-ad406a56-f121-4d4e-9721-87700f88211e.html.

⁹ Kacper Szulecki, "Heretical Geopolitics of Central Europe. Dissidents Intellectuals and an Alternative European Order." *Geoforum* 65 (October 2015), p. 25. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2015.07.008>.

alter the East-West divide. On the opposite, it normalized it further with the purpose of working within, rather than beyond, the Cold War order.

In parallel to policymakers' visions, however, some intellectuals and policymakers in Eastern and Western Europe, the central arena of the Cold War, sought to convert diplomatic openings into more consequential developments. For them, the root of the lack of stability in the continent was the persistence of the Yalta order, which Tony Judt defined rather straightforwardly as "the pattern of division [of Europe] drafted at Yalta and frozen into place during the Cold War."¹⁰ The status quo could be entrenched in the short term, but, in their framework, stability could not be achieved if there was no pressure to push superpowers and their allies towards a drastic redefinition of the international system. Conveniently, the late 1960s was a period when détente's definition was still fluid. Transcending existing notions of the international system, intellectuals on both sides of the continent were devising ways in which the East and the West could come together in a comprehensive way. Movements for European unity on different sides of the Iron Curtain were driven by different motives. However, as opposed to earlier post-Second World War decades, there was less "othering" and less acceptance that the two Europes could continue to develop separately.¹¹ The idea of a détente, based on progression towards a wholly

¹⁰ Tony Judt "The Past Is Another Country: Myth and Memory in Postwar Europe." *Daedalus* 121, no. 4 (1992), p. 83, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/20027138.pdf?acceptTC=true>.

¹¹ Szulecki, "Heretical Geopolitics of Central Europe," p. 26. "At least since the 19th century, in an Orientalizing process of "othering" many Western scholars were involved in the creation of an "Eastern" Europe as the "West's" doppelganger. Geographic realities, like the fact that "Prague is more to the West than Vienna", had little difference. The postwar political settlement in Yalta and Potsdam rounded that intellectual project in political, if not material realities. In that bipolarity "the Soviet Union was represented as an 'Eastern Power' the mirror image of the West. [. . .] The regions and peoples of Eastern Europe were known as 'the Eastern bloc'."

European space defined by a certain set of values, reverberated within the societies on both sides of Europe. These policymakers and intellectuals were idealistic, as they thought that détente could happen through the diminution of the Iron Curtain, which was not the immediate goal of the superpowers, at least for the time being.

Movement for a European style détente on the Western side of the Iron Curtain was seen as a continuation of European integration that was taking shape in the 1960s. Diplomats and statesmen of smaller European states used the forum of Council of Europe, a multilateral institution, to promote a détente that would push for a European solution to the Cold War issues. More importantly, however, the founders of the European Community championed the ideals of a European détente, an aspiration shared on both sides of the Iron Curtain, even if that did not explicitly seem to be the case at the time. Western-style European integration was foreign to Eastern Europeans, mostly because of its inherently capitalist nature. Nonetheless, a European détente was vivid among the social circles associated with the European Community. For Jean Monnet, a Frenchman at the forefront of the establishment of the European Community, European integration could only be successful if it engaged in a dialogue with the Eastern Bloc in a manner unrelated to negotiations over balance of power.¹² Altiero Spinelli, a political philosopher and a European federalist, claimed that a closer European Community's relationship with Eastern European states should entail a liberalization of those countries' economies that

¹² Jean Monnet, *Memoirs* (London: Collins, 1978), p. 475.

would lead to political changes as well.¹³ These people were policymakers, but they were idealistic about what the Iron Curtain meant. In their viewpoints, the divide was not as significant in the grander scheme of things and détente would happen once the absurdity of the Yalta order would be acknowledged.

Central and Eastern European intellectuals did not discuss the meaning of European Community or Council of Europe during the 1960s; nevertheless, they consistently analyzed past models of political organization to show that Europe's only salvation in the bipolar Cold War order would have to be tied to integration. Czesław Miłosz, a Nobel Prize-winning writer who fled the Polish Communist state in 1951, longed for a non-ethnic political entity based on inclusivity and political rights in Central and Eastern Europe. He might have been writing about the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and its ideological opposition to the Russian way of life. However, in between the lines, there is a suggestion that a multinational state, transcending ethnic boundaries, and defined by political and civil rights, would be a successful recipe for peaceful coexistence among European nations.¹⁴ In Czechoslovakia, the East-West division was challenged in a similar way, with a popular theme in political essays of the time being a historical *Mitteleuropa* (*Central Europe*), incompatible with the Yalta arrangements and the Iron Curtain.¹⁵ For example, Karel

¹³ Altiero Spinelli, *The European Adventure: Tasks for the Enlarged Community* (London: C. Knight, 1972), p. 165.

¹⁴ Czesław Miłosz, *Native Realm: A Search for Self-Definition*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), pp. 7-18. Miłosz extensively defines the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth of the early modern era, stressing its multiculturalism, pluralism and inclusivity. The fact that the book was written in 1968 makes me believe that he was reflecting on the post-Yalta order in Europe.

¹⁵ Szulecki, "Heretical Geopolitics of Central Europe," p. 25.

Kosik, a Czech Marxist philosopher, wrote an essay after the Prague Spring, in which he idealized a semi-mythical past *Central Europe*, whose essential features were defense against imperialism and reaffirmation of freedom and equality of all nations within the space.¹⁶ Finally, Andrei Sakharov might not have been as explicit in his references to Europe, but he did call for a coming together of the world based on respect for self-determination and human rights.¹⁷ Therefore, numerous intellectuals on both sides of the Iron Curtain strived for détente to mean a comprehensive transcendence of the Yalta order. There is no doubt that some Eastern European intellectuals occasionally used this kind of discourse to wage the Cold War. However, their ideas were oftentimes grounded in historical memory, tradition and certain values, not on a prescribed set of notions to be used in an East-West political warfare. It was a bottom-up movement, aimed to push policymakers to address their grievances in a top-down manner. Intellectuals in the East and the West were yearning for a coming together of the continent with the hope that it would address the instability stemming from the bipolarity that defined the Cold War.

Thus, détente for policymakers and for intellectual milieus of the 1960s meant different things. This leads to the key question behind this study: how did these visions of détente function together in the late 1960s? This study will argue that both Eastern and Western policymakers' and intellectuals' priorities when it came to détente clashed and

¹⁶ Karel Kosik, *The Crisis of Modernity: Essays and Observations from the 1968 Era. States and Societies in East Central Europe*. (Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield, 1995), p. 154.

¹⁷ Andrei Sakharov, "Progress, Coexistence and Intellectual Freedom | Международная Конференция 'Идеи Сахарова Сегодня' (1968)," The Sakharov Center, accessed November 10, 2019. <https://www.sakharov-center.ru/asfconf2009/english/node/20>.

influenced each other to create a certain ambiguous atmosphere within the European space, which formed the overall understanding of Europe's future at the time; Prague Spring, the ultimate geopolitical crisis of the time, was formed and resolved in accordance with these notions. The ambiguous atmosphere created by the incertitude about détente drove international and national politics, as well as political writing. Sometimes that connection was strong and obvious, other times it was subtle and coerced. The atmosphere of a fluid détente created a situation, where a bottom-up movement of intellectuals and less influential, yet idealistic, policymakers pressured the United States and the Soviet Union, which were the top-down executors of détente, to move towards rapprochement more than the superpowers themselves were willing to go. These forces constantly interplayed and constrained each other, which allowed for a world of opportunities of a yet-to-be-defined détente to flourish during the short period of time in the late 1960s. It should be stressed that the goal of this study is not to prove that one or the other vision of détente was dominant; its aim is to serve as a think piece that reevaluates the discourses surrounding détente and to position them not as mere products of Cold War bipolar order, but as ideas rooted in thoughts on European unity and future.

The Prague Spring and the subsequent Warsaw Pact invasion to Czechoslovakia serve in this master's thesis as a prime example to understand what that atmosphere of contested détente was like and how it influenced diplomacy and intellectual trends during and after the time of crisis. The Czechoslovak case demonstrates how the amalgam of interpretations of détente affected democratization of Czechoslovakia. It also explains why

the events, despite their monumental nature, were curbed and, in the aftermath, overlooked in the context of international diplomacy.

Recent scholarship on détente is balanced in the sense that it takes into account both policymakers' intentions and European intellectuals' expectations of what amounted to the process of relaxation of tensions. Yet, there does exist a gap in historiography in terms of whether there was a viable ideological alternative to how the rapprochement between East and West unraveled.

Détente is typically defined as a successful period of intensified cooperation, mostly on an intergovernmental basis, between Western Bloc and Eastern Bloc states from the late 1960s to the late 1970s. Oftentimes it is portrayed as an effective and beneficial period of coming together among political leaders of the capitalist and the communist worlds. Odd Arne Westad claims that détente, an overall successful period for policymakers, was best exemplified through Soviet-American Basic Principles agreement, through which both sides accepted peaceful coexistence as a key feature of the international system.¹⁸ John Lewis Gaddis conceptualizes détente as a process through which the superpowers successfully tried to maintain their power and control smaller actors around the world.¹⁹ The Soviet idea of détente, as Vladislav Zubok stresses, was based on the Soviet leadership's desire to use it as a substitute for internal reform. Often driven by Brezhnev's hope to be seen as an international peacemaker, it did have support in the Soviet

¹⁸ Odd Arne Westad, *The Cold War: A World History*. (First edition. New York: Basic Books, 2017), p. 414; 421.

¹⁹ John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History*. (New York: Penguin Press, 2005), p. 120.

Politburo as well, as some saw the policy as the best way to accumulate global power.²⁰ Finally, Timothy Garton Ash claims that West German politicians' initiatives towards Eastern Europe were an effect of détente between the superpowers, which itself was sparked by a desire to reduce tensions, rather than a process in its own right.²¹

There is also a good number of studies that move beyond the bureaucrats' conceptualizations of détente by focusing on how global forces within and outside sovereign states shaped policymakers' actions. Jeremi Suri acknowledges the role of policymakers' fear surrounding global popular movements in setting up the détente: policymakers were turning to diplomacy to contain societal forces they could not control.²² Michael Morgan also points to détente and its crown jewel for policymakers, the Helsinki Final Act, as a conscious diplomatic attempt to address the crises of legitimacy that political leaders were experiencing.²³ Akira Iriye's scholarship argues that throughout the 1960s, a global consciousness, dissatisfied with the existing Cold War, was emerging on both sides of the Iron Curtain. "...[T]he Cold War that had seemed to define the "real" state of international affairs now [throughout the 1960s] began to appear to belong more and more in the realm of "imagination" (inasmuch as the third world war never came), whereas postcolonialism, human rights, and a host of other nongeopolitical issues were coming to the surface as the "real" phenomena." As the decade went by, global non-conformist

²⁰ Zubok, *Failed Empire*, p. 223-224.

²¹ Ash, *In Europe's Name*, pp. 55-57.

²² Jeremi Suri, *Power and Protest: Global Revolution and the Rise of Detente*. (1st Harvard University Press paperback ed., 2005. Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 2005), p.2.

²³ Michael Cotey Morgan, *The Final Act: The Helsinki Accords and the Transformation of the Cold War. America in the World*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), pp. 8-9.

consciousness transcending the Iron Curtain began to challenge the existing status quo in policymakers' minds.²⁴ These interpretations of détente have also been analyzed within the European context. For example, a growing field of scholarship that considers information exchanges that were happening in Europe, either through clandestine methods, such as exchange of samizdats and tamizdats, or through official means, such as international broadcasting, aims to establish the existence of a common informational sphere, which invigorated various human rights, environmental, and nationalist movements.²⁵

Nonetheless, despite its depth, the existing scholarship lacks assessment of whether these global non-political communities had a distinct vision of how they wanted a rapprochement between the East and West to happen. There is much focus in historiography on how these communities functioned without necessarily analyzing what their ultimate goals were and whether they seriously wanted to bring them about. Furthermore, while there is research done on how détente unfolded and what it meant to policymakers and regular citizens, evaluation of the success of these processes from a strictly European point of view is lacking.

My study goes beyond the existing assessments of détente by contending that a vision for détente centered on unification of Europe, shared by some intellectual milieus

²⁴ Akira Iriye, *Global Community: The Role of International Organizations in the Making of the Contemporary World*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 111-113.

²⁵ For more, among others, see Friederike Kind-Kovács and Jessie Labov, *Samizdat, Tamizdat, and Beyond: Transnational Media During and After Socialism*. (Berghahn Books, 2013.); On international radio broadcasting, see, among others, Anna Bischof and Zuzana Jürgens, eds, *Voices of Freedom--Western Interference? 60 Years of Radio Free Europe*. (Veröffentlichungen Des Collegium Carolinum, Band 130. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015) and A. Ross Johnson, *Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty: The CIA Years and Beyond*. (Washington, D.C.; Stanford, Calif.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press; Stanford University Press, 2010).

across the continent, was prevalent and seriously challenged the diplomatic realities of the late 1960s. Europe, in this study, serves as a term that has a historical-geographical connotation and is linked to a number of liberal civil and political rights; the combination of these two elements made it into an intellectually strong rallying cry, which pushed policymakers focused on negotiations within the Cold War normality to rethink the status quo itself. The processes of détente have not been extensively analyzed from the point of view that claims an ultimate desire among Europeans of the late 1960s to see their continent as a singular integrated, multinational and democratic entity. With the exception of Morgan's study, which focuses on the mid-1970s, this angle is not given enough prominence in recent historiography. It prevents a reassessment of détente on European terms.

Similarly, while Prague Spring has been analyzed extensively as a product of détente, it has rarely been interpreted as an event rooted in its *Europeanness*. The Soviet-led military intervention to Czechoslovakia is most often analyzed in recent historiography through a policy lens, as can be seen from Thomas Schwartz's, Mitchell Lerner's, Westad's and Zubok's scholarship.²⁶ Particular mention should be made of Karen Dawisha's study, which analyzed Soviet policymakers' behavior during the Czechoslovak crisis and their

²⁶ Thomas Alan Schwartz, *Lyndon Johnson and Europe*. (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2003), pp. 210-222; Westad, *The Cold War*, p. 381; Zubok, *Failed Empire*, pp. 208-210; Mitchell Lerner, "'Trying to Find the Guy Who Invited Them': Lyndon Johnson, Bridge Building, and the End Of the Prague Spring," *Diplomatic History* 32, no. 1 (January 20, 2008), pp. 78–81. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7709.2007.00668.x>.

reasoning about intellectual and political implications of the reformists in Prague.²⁷ Recent scholarship also tackles ideological implications of the Prague Spring, however, mostly within the localized Czechoslovak or Eastern Bloc context.²⁸ My study will break from these modes of analysis of the Prague Spring, as it will focus not on what drove the external assaults on democratic mechanisms, but rather what role the idea of Europe as a basis for détente played in the developments and unravelling of the Czechoslovak crisis. This study will demonstrate how a common European integrationist intellectual spirit associated with détente both in East and West was suppressed precisely because it neglected the Yalta order, which served the Soviets and, to a lesser extent, the Americans.

This master's thesis will consist of two parts, which are meant to demonstrate an existence of a European conception of détente and its resonance within a major geopolitical crisis of the time. Part I of this work attempts to define the contesting notions of détente that were floating around the European and trans-Atlantic sphere of the late 1960s. It will argue that détente, as devised by policymakers in the superpowers, oftentimes clashed with the idealized versions of détente based on such principles, as a "common European home" and liberal civil and political European values. The process created limitless possibilities as to what détente could mean, which, at least initially, helped to achieve breakthroughs in cultural, social and political spheres. Treaties, radio broadcasting, and even criminal trials were interpreted by Europeans of the time within the same framework of analysis. An

²⁷ Karen Dawisha, *The Kremlin and the Prague Spring. International Crisis Behavior Series; v. 4.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. 3.

²⁸ For example, Suri, *Power and Protest*, pp. 194-202.

extensive survey of various publications dedicated to politics and culture, as well as output of the European media outlets of the late 1960s, crystalize an uneven, yet a present, idea that a real and lasting détente based on European integration could repair the post-Yalta order that destabilized the continent and the world. To emphasize the differences between idealistic European intellectuals' and policymakers' expectations were from what actually unfolded, the European notion of rapprochement is contrasted with the conceptions of détente developed by policymakers of superpowers and, occasionally, their allies. Part II of this work demonstrates how the atmosphere devised by these contrasting notions of détente influenced a political crisis in Czechoslovakia in 1968. Prague Spring was chosen as a case study, because it shows how Eastern Europe and Western Europe were connected despite the divisions of the Iron Curtain. Comparison of policymakers' and intellectuals' interpretation of what Czechoslovakia of the 1960s meant demonstrates how different visions of détente functioned, how they influenced each other, and even why Prague Spring itself was so monumental. While Czechoslovakia was an entrenched member of the Eastern Bloc, its attempts at liberalization gave hope to some disgruntled Western European intellectuals that the Yalta order was indeed the source of instability in the world. Prague Spring was rooted in European values and that was felt on both sides of the continent despite its political division.

The importance whether there was a unique European notion of détente goes beyond mere statement of fact. For one, it reaffirms that social and political forces outside policymakers' control did actively try to shape international politics outcomes in the late

1960s in very specific ways. The discourse focused on European unity might not have been taken too seriously by Moscow and Washington, but it did stir up citizens across Europe, which had effects on future politics. The leaders of 1989 Revolutions in Eastern Europe, some of whom became active in politics in the 1960s, often positioned their states becoming European again or participating in unification of Europe.²⁹ Same discourse, among intellectuals and politicians alike, would follow in 2004, when a number of Eastern European states joined the European Union.³⁰ This study will also show how the existence of a trans-European intellectual discourse manifested itself in a concrete political goal (even if it might not have been seen as a viable one in the late 1960s). It gives an insight into how popular transnational political movements emerge, develop and proclaim their existence in the public sphere. After all, even though there was no explicit and official East-West movement for a European federation at the time, assaults on a particular set of ideals, as in the case Czechoslovakia in 1968, called out a reaction that exposed that there were common values that were not supposed to be questioned within the European space.

²⁹ Walter Stefaniuk, "Walesa Asks for United Europe: We All Helped Forge Changes in East Germany, Crowd Told." *The Toronto Star*. November 11, 1989, [https://advance-lexis-com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:3WG1-Y320-00H1-R1RW-00000-00&context=1516831](https://advance.lexis-com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:3WG1-Y320-00H1-R1RW-00000-00&context=1516831).; "Text of Havel's Speech to Congress." *The Washington Post*, February 22, 1990, <https://advance-lexis-com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:3SJF-C410-002S-T2V5-00000-00&context=1516831>.

³⁰ Vladimiras Laucius, "E.Gudavičius: visa mūsų istorija yra ubagiška," DELFI, March 28, 2004. <https://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/egudavicius-visa-musu-istorija-yra-ubagiska.d?id=4013829>.

Part I: Defining Détente(s)

If one browsed the headlines of newspapers on both sides of the Iron Curtain in the late 1960s, one could notice an intensification of diplomatic cooperation within the transatlantic sphere. On July 3, 1968, just a little bit over a month before the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, the French daily *Le Monde* made it clear that Soviet and American policymakers were moving towards closer cooperation: “The Discreet Settlement of the Air Incident Over the Kurils Confirms the Improvement of Moscow-Washington Relations.”³¹ The July 2, 1968, issue of the Soviet daily *Pravda* praised the Non-Proliferation Treaty, a direct result of Soviet-American rapprochement, through a headline reading “An Important Step Forward.”³² Even the vehemently anti-communist Lithuanian émigré press in the United States reluctantly acknowledged the thaw in the Soviet-American relations. A headline from a Boston-based weekly *Keleivis* on June 18, 1969, duly noted that “Both Enemies are Sharpening their Scythes but Want Peace.”³³

These headlines from the late 1960s allude to the beginnings of what would become known as détente. The period saw a clear improvement of bilateral ties between Moscow and Washington. As early as in April 1966, American president Lyndon Johnson indicated

³¹ “Le règlement discret de l’incident aérien des Kouriles confirme l’amélioration des relations entre Moscou et Washington,” *Le Monde*, July 4, 1968.

³² “Важный Шаг Вперед,” *Pravda*, July 2, 1968. <https://dlib-eastview-com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/browse/doc/21699291>.

³³ “Abu priešai galanda dalgius, o nori taikos,” *Keleivis*, June 18, 1969. <https://www.epaveldas.lt/recordDescription/LNB/C1B0002293646>.

his wish to pursue “bridge-building” with Eastern European countries.³⁴ Under the auspices of this new policy, Johnson pushed for the Glassboro Summit of June 1967, where the American president met the Soviet Premier Aleksei Kosygin. The meeting opened doors for tangible cooperation and mutual understanding.³⁵ The trend would follow throughout the successful negotiations and ultimate signing of the Non-Proliferation Treaty on July 1, 1968. Soon enough, Johnson felt comfortable enough to plan with his advisors a visit to the Soviet Union (even in the aftermath of Soviet invasion to Czechoslovakia).³⁶

Despite promising moves, policymakers, especially in the United States and the Soviet Union, did not anticipate that their increasingly cooperative relationship would fundamentally reform the international system. Détente of the late 1960s was mostly limited to diplomatic initiatives, such as meetings and treaty negotiations, which amounted to small steps towards a mutual understanding, but, at least initially, not to something more. In some ways, the approach the superpowers took was more akin to earlier diplomatic initiatives of the Eisenhower-Khrushchev era, rather than to later Gorbachev era revamps of the international order.³⁷ The late 1960s were defined by a controlled and clearly delineated rapprochement, one that could proceed or end at policymakers’ will. Perhaps

³⁴ Lyndon B. Johnson, “Remarks in New York City Before the National Conference of Editorial Writers. | The American Presidency Project.” The American Presidency Project, October 7, 1966. <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-new-york-city-before-the-national-conference-editorial-writers>.

³⁵ Schwartz, *Lyndon Johnson and Europe*, p. 182; also, “Выступление Л. Джонсона,” *Pravda*, June 27, 1967. <https://dlib-eastview-com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/browse/doc/21449831>.

³⁶ Schwartz *Lyndon Johnson and Europe*, p. 220.

³⁷ More on the seeming diplomatic thaw of the 1950s could be read in Timothy Naftali and Aleksandr Fursenko, *Khrushchev’s Cold War: The inside Story of an American Adversary*. (1st ed. New York: Norton, 2006.) More on Mikhail Gorbachev’s era foreign policy could be read in William Taubman, *Gorbachev: His Life and Times*. (First edition. New York, N.Y: WWNorton & Company, Inc, 2017.)

nothing exemplified this approach as well as the Soviet Foreign Affairs Minister's Andrei Gromyko's speech before the Communist Party Congress published on *Pravda* on June 28, 1968. Two main themes that would define détente for the decade to come were mentioned in this speech: arms control and diplomatic cooperation. Gromyko argued for the right of the people to demand the end to the madness of arms race. At the same time, Gromyko stated that the Soviet Union was open to concluding treaties with other socialist and capitalist states of the world in areas of similar interests, even to conclude formal diplomatic to define a new global status quo.³⁸ Judging from Gromyko's insistence on arms control, "areas of similar interest" were limited. The speech did not contain any comprehensive propositions to bring the people of East and West together, such as, for example, intensification of cultural ties or opening of the borders.³⁹

Gromyko also called for a common European solution to existing security problems within a multilateral framework. The Soviet minister stressed the importance of assembling a pan-European conference to settle security issues, as not a single conference of this type had happened since the end of the Second World War.⁴⁰ This conference would have normalized the post-Second World War European status quo, as it would have focused on

³⁸ "О Международном Положении Внешней Политике Советского Союза: доклад министра иностранных дел СССР депутата А.Л. Громыко," *Pravda*, June 28, 1968. <https://dlib-eastview-com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/browse/doc/21698941>.

³⁹ In fact, opening Czechoslovakia to foreign tourism in the Summer of 1968, which brought 370 thousand tourists from the West and, arguably, improved East-West ties, was used as one of the justifications to intervene in Czechoslovakia. More "Постановление Политбюро ЦК КПСС 'Об Информации для Братских Партий Относительно Событий в Чехословакии'," July 26, 1968 in «*Пражская Весна*» и *Международный Кризис 1968 Года*, N.G. Tomilin ed. (Москва: Международный Фонд «Демократия», 2010), pp. 174-180.

⁴⁰ "О Международном Положении Внешней Политике Советского Союза": доклад министра иностранных дел СССР депутата А.Л. Громыко"

a pan-European security settlement in which Eastern European socialist states would have negotiated as equals with their Western European capitalist counterparts.⁴¹ A call for a pan-European security conference might have hinted at détente in the sense that it promoted cooperation, rather than confrontation. However, Gromyko's goal was to use cooperation to entrench the status quo. Soviet Foreign Minister's speech at the Communist Party Congress features many references to possible "treaties" or "agreements" but no concrete guidelines for a fundamental restructuring of the world.⁴²

In a way, Gromyko's discourse corresponded to the main objectives of Soviet foreign policy after Khrushchev's ouster of power in 1964. As Brezhnev's actions in the international arena testified, delimitation of the existing order was seen as a way to legitimize the often-questioned Soviet international stature after the Second World War.⁴³ The least Soviets wanted was a détente that would unleash forces that could destabilize the superpower itself.⁴⁴ Pursuit of stability driven by entrenchment of the status quo was the basis and the goal of a broad East-West détente, at least in the short term. It should be mentioned that, perhaps, the American policymakers were less interested in the long-term

⁴¹ To a certain extent, this will be eventually done by the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe in 1975.

⁴² "О Международном Положении Внешней Политике Советского Союза": доклад министра иностранных дел СССР депутата А.Л. Громыко"

⁴³ Ash, *In Europe's Name*, p. 57.

⁴⁴ For example, some countries, like the United States, never officially (de jure) accepted the occupation of the Baltic States and, therefore, the western border of the USSR. This started with the Welles Declaration in 1940 and remained the official policy until 1990 when the Soviet Union collapsed. "Welles Declaration, Department of State Press Release, 'Statement by the Acting Secretary of State, the Honorable Sumner Welles'," July 23, 1940, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, NARA, RG 59, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/144967>. Also, "Seventieth Anniversary of the Welles Declaration." U.S. Department of State, July 22, 2010. //2009-2017.state.gov/secretary/20092013clinton/rm/2010/07/144870.htm.

pursuit of stability than the Soviets; however, for the time being, both superpowers behaved similarly in the Cold War world.⁴⁵ The fact was that within the broader Soviet policy, a European security conference was a way to legitimize the division of Europe, which was then to be used as a framework for further dialogue. The United States, while uneasy, were not necessarily opposed to these developments. For people like Gromyko, simultaneous pursuit of arms control and diplomatic cooperation was the recipe for success, as it created a sense of stability without an overhaul of the bipolar world order.

At roughly the same time, on other side of the Iron Curtain, Jean Monnet was also calling for European solutions to European problems. On the basis of liberal democratic rights, he wanted to consolidate Western Europe to create a framework that could stabilize the bitterly divided continent. Monnet advocated for unity of the European Community's and the United States' actions; yet, the only purpose of this unity was to balance the Soviet force in Europe so that both sides could coalesce harmoniously. A European solution to issues within the continent, in Monnet's views, would also help solve problems in other parts of the world.⁴⁶ Security for Monnet certainly mattered, and he wanted a peaceful and stable continent as much as Gromyko.⁴⁷ Nonetheless, he imagined the same process unfold differently and with greater immediate consequences. Monnet craved a *détente* and most

⁴⁵ LBJ's muted reaction to the Prague Spring, which will be explored in Part II, is one example.

⁴⁶ Jean Monnet "Le maillon de la chaîne sur lequel on peut actuellement agir, c'est l'Europe," *Le Monde*, February 16, 1966.

⁴⁷ Western European Union is a good example, as this military organization was supposed to develop in parallel to the European Economic Community. The founding treaty of the Western European Union tied military cooperation to successful economic recovery. "The Brussels Treaty," WEU Secretariat General - Secrétariat Général UEO, CVCE, accessed March 14, 2020, http://www.cvce.eu/obj/the_brussels_treaty_17_march_1948-en-3467de5e-9802-4b65-8076-778bc7d164d3.html.

likely welcomed developments between the Soviet Union and the United States. However, the European Community, as a concept, was not promoting the status quo. If anything, Monnet was more interested in diffusion of tensions than in mere normalization and maintenance of the status quo. A successful example of European integration might have meant more leverage when dealing with Eastern European countries, and who else understood one of the root causes of Cold War, the division of Europe, more than Europeans? Détente, for Monnet, was a good approach to international politics, but it could not exist and fully manifest without European consent. Pacification of Europe, not engraving of the Yalta order, was the recipe for détente.

In their discourses surrounding Europe, Gromyko and Monnet agreed on a need for détente, yet their intentions and goals were different. For people like Gromyko, the very thought of cooperation with a supranational and transnational international body based on liberal values did not seem right. Comprehensive engagement with the multilateral European Community did not correspond to the spirit of the Yalta order that Soviet policymakers of the time tried to normalize. The European Community's nature was just too peculiar for Soviets to handle and did not fit in within their understanding of the international system. Perhaps that is why the European Community, an organization partly created by Monnet, was pictured in the Soviet press in the filthiest ways possible. *Pravda* labelled the European Community as a vehicle for German militarism and territorial expansion through deceit; the whole purpose of the organization, in Soviet journalists'

view, was to convert Western European states into German colonies.⁴⁸ None of these statements had anything to do with reality, as the leaders of European Community member states themselves did not feel subjugated in any way.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, Soviets were suspicious of the European Community, even if both entities wanted a détente centered on Europe.

While people like Gromyko did not have any reservations about dealing with ministers in European and North American capitals, there was something about the supranational organization that made Soviets dismissive of it. It is very likely that Soviet decision-makers interpreted the European Community as a Cold War project that was used to “Americanize” Western Europe and, therefore, keep it antagonistic to the Eastern Bloc. The Soviet press questioned the supranational pretensions of the organization with a claim that the capitalist ideology is only a sham to cover the German desire to seize foreign lands and to deny the existence of two Germanies.⁵⁰ The concept of “Common Market,” according to the same journalist, was only a way for German monopolies, which were, after all, “aligned with American ones,” to seize control of the continent.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Viktor Mayevsky, “Терзания “Малой Европы,” *Pravda*, February 12, 1966. <https://dlib-eastview-com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/browse/doc/21446070>.

⁴⁹ A 1964 United States Department of State research memorandum notes that “each of the Six [Member States] has strong economic and/or political interests in maintaining the Community as a going concern, although the future institutional forms of their unity and the degree of economic fusion that it may actually achieve remain in doubt.” More in Research Memorandum “European Integration: Problems and Prospects,” Thomas L. Hughes to the Secretary of State, 2/7/64, “European Integration,” Country File, NSF, Box 162, LBJ Library, p. 16.

⁵⁰ Mayevsky, “Терзания “Малой Европы,” *Pravda*, February 12, 1966. Also, Viktor Mayevsky, “Терзания “Малой Европы,” *Pravda*, February 14, 1966. <https://dlib-eastview-com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/browse/doc/21446407>.

⁵¹ Mayevsky, “Терзания “Малой Европы.” Also, Viktor Mayevsky, “Терзания “Малой Европы,” *Pravda*, February 15, 1966. <https://dlib-eastview-com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/browse/doc/21446374>.

However, behind this intuitive hostility, a deeper underlying cause might have worried the Soviets. The European Community had pan-European pretensions, which were diametrically opposed to the post-Second World War order. The organization was founded on the principle that European nations only go to war when they are not united in cause. That was perhaps the main message of the Schuman Declaration, which started the process of European integration on May 9, 1950.⁵² While Schuman spoke about Franco-German relations, the idea of breaking through entrenched modes of thinking about ties between European nations was not in the Soviet interest. People like Monnet were advocating for Western European integration, but the idea of an international and supranational state preaching European values was not acceptable within the Soviet understanding of the world. Soviet leaders were not enthusiastic about ideas that negated the division of Europe in favor of different interpretations of the region. Gromyko himself in the same speech that called for European security conference condemned concepts such as *Mitteleuropa*, which transcended the Iron Curtain by putting Western countries, such as Belgium, Germany and Austria, and Eastern ones, such as Czechoslovakia and Poland, under one label.⁵³ In a way, there was reason for concern. The late 1960s saw a proliferation of pan-Europeanist intellectual currents in Eastern Europe, which actively challenged whether détente could be achieved without addressing the ahistorical division of Europe. Even more, European Community values, in an abstract sense, equally reverberated in different forms in the East.

⁵² Robert Schuman, “The Schuman Declaration – 9 May 1950.” European Union, accessed February 16, 2020. https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/symbols/europe-day/schuman-declaration_en.

⁵³ “О Международном Положении Внешней Политике Советского Союза: доклад министра иностранных дел СССР депутата А.Л. Громыко”

European Community consisted of states that were also members of the Council of Europe, whose European Convention of Human Rights, agreed upon by the organization's member states, pushed Western Europeans to adopt negative and positive human rights provisions as laws.⁵⁴ Similarly, emerging social movements in Eastern Europe oftentimes focused on human rights, freedom of movement, and democracy.⁵⁵ It is likely that Soviet policymakers were first and foremost reacting to the European Community as a new Cold War challenge. Yet, perhaps that hostility was reinforced by the underlying ideological notions behind the organization that broke with the underlying basis of stability that Brezhnev and Gromyko desired.

While reporting in the Soviet press does not necessarily represent a full-scale attack on European consolidation or integration, it does demonstrate that détente in the late 1960s was not a strictly defined process. At the time, there were many ways in which different communities imagined relaxation of tensions between East and West. Some bureaucrats and diplomats in Moscow, Paris, Washington, and other capitals, might have considered a focus on straightforward and achievable goals as the best method to achieve a lasting rapprochement. Other people, like the European bureaucrat Monnet or Polish intellectual Czeslaw Milosz, saw the need to push détente towards a fundamental reconstruction of the European order. Gromyko and Monnet both called for a multilateral framework in Europe, but their intentions, goals, and actions were different, even if related. Both visions of

⁵⁴ "European Convention on Human Rights," European Court of Human Rights, accessed March 15, 2020. https://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Convention_ENG.pdf.

⁵⁵ Prague Spring, which will be discussed in Part II, is, perhaps, the best example.

détente had policymakers and intellectuals supporting them, but while there was a clear sense of superpowers' desire for stability, smaller states' bureaucrats and intellectuals typically wanted from détente something tangible sooner, rather than later. All these groups, however, shared their enthusiasm for détente, which in the late 1960s still lacked a concrete definition. Even more importantly, actors on both sides did not see the creation of status quo as necessarily exclusive from reduction of tensions – and vice versa.

This part of the thesis will focus on these visions of détente, which competed with and complemented each other all at once. It will argue that during the late 1960s, two different approaches to détente were present in the European context, one focused on enhancement of stability through entrenchment of status quo, the other on pan-European reduction of tensions. Both approaches fundamentally strived to achieve a lasting settlement between East and West, but their foundations and aims were different. The superpowers were pushing for a top-down normalization of the bipolar world order that they cultivated in the aftermath of the Second World War. Smaller European states, the European Community founders, and certain intellectuals on both sides of the Iron Curtain were striving for a bottom-up redefinition of Europe that would reduce tensions.

The top-down and bottom-up processes were not contrary in their functioning. In fact, they drew on each other. For example, U.S. policymakers both reached out to Soviet diplomats and advocated for a strong and independent Europe to reduce global tensions, as seen from American-sanctioned Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty broadcasts in the late 1960s. Conversely, emerging multilateral treaties driven by Soviets and Americans created

a medium that allowed for hopes of reduction of tensions and pacification of Europe through European measures.

This argument does not claim that the vision focused on reduction of tensions through a comprehensive bringing together of Eastern and Western Europe was a dominant intellectual force of the time. There were almost no clear ties between Western and Eastern Europeanist enthusiasts for reduction of tensions entrenched in redefinition of the European Yalta order. The intellectuals and idealist politicians interested in European unity on different sides of the Iron Curtain most likely did not even think of themselves as members of the same community. Yet, it is remarkable that the idea of a united Europe as a precondition for actual relaxation of tensions did exist within the continent at the time. Without an active link, the same ideas, albeit coated in different discourses, existed in both East and West. Both of them were as stark in contesting the sterile conceptualizations of rapprochement dominant in the offices of West and East diplomatic offices. Johnson's, de Gaulle's and Brezhnev's actions created hope, which intellectuals used to pitch their views on détente.

One more note should be made as to why a window for a détente opened in the first place. The 1960s was an age of turmoil; a wide chasm opened up between the aims of the elites and of social activists in every major society.⁵⁶ Both intellectuals and policymakers searched for solutions to narrow and, ultimately, control that gap. Both sides built on each other's ideas; yet, they were fundamentally different in measures and aims. For some,

⁵⁶ Suri, *Power and Protest*, p. 164.

containment of social forces was about coordination and cooperation with governments on the other side of the Iron Curtain. For others, it was about reassertion of a European space, restructuring of the Yalta order and a comprehensive reduction of tensions in the continent.

What sparked the drive towards détente?

Before delving into détente visions of the late 1960s, it is important to understand what prompted intellectuals and policymakers on both sides of the Iron Curtain to think of ways to reconceptualize the global order. Intellectuals and political elites alike were developing ideas to manage political and social disruptions that were particularly acute in between 1966 and 1969. As Jeremi Suri argued, daily crises caused by protests and riots made long term policy planning unimaginable; there were too many variables to control at the same time.⁵⁷ Alone in 1968, riots in Paris, West Berlin, Washington DC, as well as protest movements in Czechoslovakia, Poland, and the Soviet Union made policymakers acknowledge the need of change.⁵⁸ A reconfiguration of the international system, which ultimately would happen through détente, was seen by some as an antidote to stabilize the Euro-centric world of the time. Statesmen, bureaucrats, various elites and intellectuals were all equally distraught by what they saw as a decay in cultural and societal norms that previously underlined the status quo created by the Cold War. Some would even go as far

⁵⁷ Ibid p. 247.

⁵⁸ Some of the first protests against the government in Soviet Union took place in response to the 1968 Warsaw Pact invasion to Czechoslovakia. It is also the beginning of the dissident movement in USSR. Another reference – May 1968 and de Gaulle's response.

as to decry the youth of the time, especially in Western Europe, as one trying to trample the present to move onwards to future without really understanding the benefits of the stability of their detested status quo.⁵⁹

The degradation of order could be defined as one resulting from policymakers' and statesmen' lack of ability and eagerness to follow social and intellectual trends. As Akira Iriye argues "the Cold War that had seemed to define the 'real' state of international affairs [in the late 1960s] began to appear to belong more and more in the realm of 'imagination' (inasmuch as the third world war never came), whereas postcolonialism, human rights, and a host of other non-geopolitical issues were coming to the surface as the "real" phenomena."⁶⁰ People started to feel that abstract notions, which possessed policymakers' minds, such as balance of power and nuclear deterrence, were not relevant to their everyday lives. The language of dissent became the common discourse. People in different countries had different grievances, but they together blamed the ruling elites for ignoring the realities in their diplomatic and domestic political conduct.⁶¹ The nature of power was also changing, as people realized that state authority was not as strong as typically believed.⁶² Over time, statesmen came to understand that the people stopped believing in the antagonistic nature of the international system. But that took time.

⁵⁹ "Laiškas is Nottinghamo," *Europos Lietuvis*, July 2, 1968.
<https://www.epaveldas.lt/object/recordDescription/LNB/C1B0002106552>.

⁶⁰ Iriye, *Global Community*, pp. 111-112.

⁶¹ Suri, *Power and Protest*, p. 130.

⁶² Gaddis, *The Cold War*, p. 120.

The destabilization of the international sphere was present in both Eastern and Western Europe. Distrust in the bipolar world order found its footing across the continent.⁶³ For example, an opinion piece from July 2, 1968, issue of *Europos Lietuvis* titled “A Letter from Nottingham” mentioned that the lack of trust in the communist system and all of its features created a rebellious spirit in students in Moscow, Prague and Warsaw, who wanted freedom. The text noted that students in Berlin, France, Italy, and Spain also rose up, perhaps inspired by their Eastern European counterparts (although it should be mentioned that the author is much more critical of Western European protesters demanding freedom in capitalist societies due to their left-wing leanings – Lithuanian émigré press at the time was strictly anti-communist).⁶⁴ The late 1960s were marked by social forces that demanded more control over their lives, partly because of superpowers’ detachment from everyday matters. The Soviet Union and the United States seemed to be in control of global affairs, but before the late 1960s they often appeared unwilling to tackle acute geopolitical issues, such as the division of Europe, in a comprehensive manner.⁶⁵ Statesmen and public intellectuals alike tried to think of ways to curb these processes.

⁶³ Suri, *Power and Protest*, p. 113-114; Western Europe and the United States might have had a higher amount of massive protest movements, as the same type of activism was actively marginalized in Eastern Europe. Yet, the sentiments resonated on both sides of the Iron Curtain. In late 1960s, the first human rights networks took root in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

⁶⁴ “Laiškas is Nottinghamo.”

⁶⁵ As demonstrated by the complete failure to unify Germany and sign a proper peace treaty in the aftermath of the Second World War. For example, East German leaders wanted to maintain their power and Soviets were reluctant to dismantle a regime that was sympathetic to them. Uncertainty regarding the two Germanies destabilized Europe. More in Hope Millard Harrison, *Driving the Soviets up the Wall: Soviet-East German Relations, 1953-1961*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

In the longer term, it can be questioned whether these social movements achieved any tangible disruptions of the international system, at least within the transatlantic and trans-European sphere. The most tumultuous year when these forces clashed with the establishment was 1968; yet, none of the assaults on the elites yielded tangible change. The riots in France and West Germany did not critically redefine power structures.⁶⁶ Indeed, by the end of the decade, there were no controversial changes among the ranks of leading statesmen. De Gaulle remained in power even after the stressful May 1968 events and handed power to his hand-picked successor Georges Pompidou in 1969; the Grand Coalition in Germany remained intact with all of its Adenauer era baggage; even in the United States, the 1968 presidential election was won by Richard Nixon, perhaps the opposite of the charismatic political leader idealized by the civil and political movements of the late 1960s. The Eastern Bloc also entered a phase of normality in the late 1960s. Despite all of shortcomings and lack of popularity, the communist leaders in all of the Eastern Bloc countries stayed in power.⁶⁷ Leonid Brezhnev's Soviet Union learned to use selective repressions that helped to maintain order and fear with minimum cost. People themselves, after a spark of unrest, might have found a way to compromise with communist governments even if that was not an ideal arrangement.⁶⁸ In Czechoslovakia, there was a semblance of a popularly supported leader in Aleksandr Dubcek, who led the Prague Spring reforms; yet, by mid 1969, he was replaced by an orthodox communist and Soviet-

⁶⁶ Gaddis, *The Cold War*, p. 148.

⁶⁷ Westad, *The Cold War*, p. 370.

⁶⁸ Ibid p. 370.

loyalist Gustav Husak. Polish leader Wladislaw Gomulka remained in power despite intense protests in Warsaw throughout 1968.⁶⁹ Hard-liner German Democratic Republic leader Walter Ulbricht might have been ousted a few years into the 1970s, but his successor Erich Honecker was as orthodox as his predecessor; after all, in the late 1980s, the East German Socialist Unity Party would pride itself on the stability of the regime, partly founded on strict repression.⁷⁰ Throughout Europe and North America, despite some of the biggest unrests after the Second World War, not much changed in between 1966 and 1969 in terms of political structures.

There were many decisions that allowed policymakers to reassert control of order in the European and transatlantic sphere, among them the emerging détente between East and West. Political strategists, diplomacy experts, economists and idealist intellectuals were all thinking of ways to stabilize Europe that seemed to fall apart at the end of the decade. A thaw between East and West emerged as the antidote to the political crises. Superpowers chose to entrench the status quo to contain social forces. Policymakers in Washington and Moscow shared a desire to draw clear boundaries and enforce orderly spheres of authorities, which would then limit the likely causes of proliferation of social movements and unrest.⁷¹ This course of action was not a fundamental reform of the existing order. However, détente, at least in policymakers' view, was supposed to demonstrate a change in how the Cold War was understood, which would satisfy the people, at least to a

⁶⁹ William I. Hitchcock, *The Struggle for Europe: The Turbulent History of a Divided Continent, 1945-2002*. (1st ed. New York: Doubleday, 2003), p. 290.

⁷⁰ Ibid p. 363.

⁷¹ Suri, *Power and Protest*, p. 247.

certain extent. It was also much cheaper, easier and effective in the short term to appease Cold War critics with a semblance of détente, rather than with a comprehensive plan for addressing structural geopolitical issues. Détente was not the only thing people of influence came up with to stabilize the world order. However, it was the one that was actively pursued. It also created a medium of further conceptualizations of reduction of tensions to emerge, even though most of them were not pursued. Détente was often seen as a success, even if it ignored fundamental ways to fix the problems of the center of the Cold War world – Europe.

Having said that, the shift in diplomacy in the late 1960s opened the doors for a body of different approaches to détente. Oftentimes they influenced policymakers from bottom up, even if their significance was not immediate. Within the very authoritarian Soviet Union, the late 1960s were marked by the birth of a dissident movement, which, through everyday actions of dissent against authoritarianism, actively sought for a comprehensive change of the international system.⁷² An inherent feature of this movement was the thirst to overcome the barrier of the European Iron Curtain, which dissidents saw as the main obstacle for relaxation of tensions in the Cold War world.⁷³ These networks,

⁷² Barbara Walker describes the Soviet dissident movement as follows: “A more positive community identity began to emerge in the mid to late 1960s through the expression of a group ethos and narrative of self-giving and self-sacrifice. This ethos motivated many dissenters to give of themselves in one way or another for the human rights cause, from donating clothing for political prisoners to submitting themselves to the dangers to health and life that were part of arrest by the state. ... It became a vital feature of the movement.” More in Barbara Walker, “Moscow Human Rights Defenders Look West: Attitudes toward U.S. Journalists in the 1960s and 1970s.” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 9, no. 4 (2008), p. 909, <https://doi.org/10.1353/kri.0.0041>.

⁷³ Barbara Walker, “Moscow Human Rights Defenders Look West: Attitudes toward U.S. Journalists in the 1960s and 1970s,” p. 912.

inspired by their experience of Cold War stagnation of the 1960s, would continue into the 1970s, often taking a more substantial form and reverberating within the Western bloc. Western societies were sympathetic to Eastern Bloc dissidents and partly perpetually gave meaning to their existence.⁷⁴ Clandestine human rights groups in Moscow cooperated with New York based International League for Human Rights and Western European based Alexander Herzen Foundation to promote the idea of proliferation of civil and political rights to pacify Europe in the mainstream.⁷⁵ Policymakers, especially in the superpowers, often chose to prioritize stabilization of the world through increased diplomatic cooperation, rather than to pursue visions of comprehensive relaxation of tensions. Dissident movements were not necessarily important in the late 1960s summits' agendas, which were overwhelmingly dominated by questions of arms control and war. Yet, their intellectual proposals captured the attention of some détente-minded politicians minds, like the West German Foreign Affairs Minister Willy Brandt's or American diplomat George Vest's, who later put human rights in the agenda in the mid-1970s negotiations surrounding the Conference for Cooperation and Security in Europe.⁷⁶

Policymakers' actions created a climate that allowed the intelligentsia and dissidents to consider ways to further détente. The superpowers recognized destabilization

⁷⁴ For example, Lithuanian Catholic Church Chronicles publications, which first appeared in 1972, were smuggled from Lithuania to dissidents in Moscow and then to the West by sympathetic foreign visitors. These publications would be republished in foreign press (mostly in Lithuanian exiles newspapers) and transmitted through Radio Free Europe and Vatican Radio. The Chronicles documented human rights violations that involved the clergy and the Catholic community. More in "Lietuvos Katalikų Bažnyčios Kronika: Skleidimas Pasaulyje" in "Lietuvos Kultūros Paveldo Tūkstantmečio Virtuali Paroda: Religija." Katalikai.LT, Accessed March 7, 2020. http://www.lcn.lt/paveldas2000_relig/all/c_7_1.htm.

⁷⁵ Morgan, *The Final Act*, p. 172.

⁷⁶ Ibid pp. 172-73.

of the international system and actively pursued détente as a way to entrench the status quo. Nonetheless, convergence on diplomatic approaches gave a lifeline for more ambitious interpretations of détente, which would always affect, if not influence, the development of East-West rapprochement.

Stability Through Diplomacy

The way policymakers on both sides of the Iron Curtain, particularly within the superpowers, chose to contain their challenges was typically defined by top-down policy tools. Intensification of bilateral diplomatic ties between East and West and pursuit of arms control, which together defined détente, were seen as means to entrench and control the Yalta order. Americans and Soviets had different ideas about how to use that embedded status quo: both superpowers had their own long-term agenda. Perhaps the Johnson administration wanted to build on the newly accepted status quo to push further decrease of tensions through governmental tools, while the Soviets wanted to establish their global reputation. In any case, partly due to the abstract nature of nuclear deterrence policies of the 1950s, partly because of the social movements that were challenging accepted forms of governance, inner-bloc ties in Eastern and Western blocs alike were constantly challenged by intellectuals and policymakers of European states.⁷⁷ Reinvigorated cooperation for superpowers seemed like a path to create certainty in the world that was increasingly

⁷⁷ Daniel J. Sargent, *A Superpower Transformed: The Remaking of American Foreign Relations in the 1970s*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 29.

uncertain and to redefine the bipolar model of global governance as one with equal stakes for both superpowers, at least for the moment. They wanted controlled stability, which would reduce costs of endless confrontation and allow limited contacts between the two blocs to flourish.⁷⁸ Diplomacy was both the most immediate and the most effective tool that policymakers could turn to in order to launch détente.

The United States and the Soviet Union wanted to define détente as an effective, rapid, and controlled mutual policy. It functioned in a top-down manner and was best encapsulated by photographs of hands-shaking politicians from the East and the West.⁷⁹ This is not to say that superpowers' decision-makers only wanted a temporary ceasefire in the Cold War. There were voices among some statesmen and intellectuals on both sides of the Iron Curtain that expected more from détente than short-term limited stability. However, a strictly defined détente fit superpowers' immediate needs and seemed like a rational choice to deal with the issues of the late 1960s. For the Americans, as Daniel Sargent argued, "[Stabilization] was connected to the preservation of American global power. The Pax Americana had, after all, emerged in a bipolar world, and Washington's leadership of the West still depended, in some fundamental sense, on the Cold War division of the world... détente aimed to preserve American international primacy through the construction of a geopolitical balance that would preserve – not resolve the bipolar schism that had opened in the 1940s." Richard Nixon, who ended up being associated with détente

⁷⁸ Morgan, *The Final Act*, p. 51.

⁷⁹ For example, Yoichi Okamoto, "President Lyndon B. Johnson shaking hands with Soviet Premier Aleksei Kosygin." C5776-6A, Glassboro Summit Conference, White House Photo Office, June 23, 1967, lbjlibrary.net/collections/photo-archive/photolab-detail.html?id=1145.

more than Johnson, claimed that “[American] interests in the Middle East, Europe, [and] China require keeping the Soviet Union going.”⁸⁰ As will be seen, Johnson administration’s outlook did not necessarily differ from what Nixon and Kissinger had to offer in the subsequent years. Furthermore, as the earlier thaws in Soviet-American ties showed, it was not useful for American policymakers to invest hope in Soviet Union’s liberalization, as that had never happened in the past; it was more prudent, at least in these policymakers’ view, to seek accommodation, not reconciliation.⁸¹ This approach completely aligned to Brezhnev’s policy, which neither wanted reform within or beyond the Soviet Union, nor really sought any type of comprehensive reconciliation with the West. Both superpowers simply did not see an extensive comprehensive rethinking of post-Second World War divisions as an immediate necessity. Lack of agreement on long-term vision of the world was not enough to preclude mutual understanding.

Therefore, during the late 1960s, there was a clear trend on the part of the superpowers to improve bilateral ties to create a sense of stability in the world. Europe was at the center of this process; the continent was the focal point of the Cold War, with the divided Germany as the symbol of bipolar international system. Reducing the significance of East-West rivalry through superpowers’ cooperation was seen as a way to stabilize Europe and, consequently, the world. This process was not ideal, but it did entail a framework for cooperation that also extended beyond the Soviets and the Americans. Both

⁸⁰ Sargent, *A Superpower Transformed*, pp. 61-62.

⁸¹ Sargent, *A Superpower Transformed*, p. 60.

the United States and the Soviet Union had more items on their agendas when turning to détente, but acknowledgement of status quo through active diplomacy was perceived as the first step.

The United States was the first to set the tone for what would define the surprisingly close East-West diplomatic relationship for the next decade and a half. On October 7, 1966, President Johnson gave a speech on his European policy. The address, despite its relative obscurity nowadays, defined the American perception of détente.⁸² Johnson stated that “[The United States] must improve the East-West environment in order to achieve the unification of Germany in the context of a larger, peaceful, and prosperous Europe.”⁸³ Despite mentioning Europe as a whole, the President also underlined the importance of current territorial boundaries of the continent.⁸⁴ While Johnson’s administration maintained the idea of a large-scale European settlement, at least initially it was not meant in political and social form to move beyond the existing status quo. The speech started off a policy known as bridge-building, which entailed “an attempt to reach out to the Soviet Union and its Eastern European allies through a series of small steps that lacked dramatic impact but together might lay the groundwork for more significant breakthroughs”; according to Johnson’s Secretary of State Dean Rusk, the initiative was aimed at finding common points of interest that could quickly and efficiently provide benefits for both the Soviets and Americans.⁸⁵ The Johnson administration saw bridge-building as necessary to

⁸² Schwartz, *Lyndon Johnson and Europe*, p. 226.

⁸³ Ibid p.135.

⁸⁴ Ibid p. 135.

⁸⁵ Lerner, “Trying to Find the Guy Who Invited Them,” p.77.

bring stability internationally and domestically. Since smaller actors of international diplomacy were becoming difficult to contain, Johnson saw cooperation between the principal nations of East and West, the United States and the Soviet Union, as an action that would set a good example to create “an environment of peace.”⁸⁶ Consequently, domestically bridge-building would allow the United States to avoid conflicts abroad that were fostering tumultuous isolationist social movements.⁸⁷ Increased diplomatic cooperation was seen as the best method to achieve tangible results. Johnson saw intensification of bilateral ties between blocs as an opportunity to search for solutions in a divided Europe in a way that would not antagonize the Soviets. His détente was not calling for any fundamental change in the way international politics were conducted, even if it did demonstrate the possibility of a world that was not permanently antagonistic.

Luckily for Johnson, the Soviet leaders shared his idea to pursue a closer relationship. While there were some hardliners in the Politburo of the time, one of the most important figures, Brezhnev, was defined through his desire to become a peacemaker. The Soviet leader thought that direct negotiations with the West would be the fastest route to international recognition of the Soviet Union’s status and a manageable détente.⁸⁸ The key for Soviet leadership was to make sure that restructuring of Europe happened on their terms. In addition, Brezhnev knew that Soviet economy was slowing down, while the aggressive foreign policy was not as effective in keeping the allies in line as before.

⁸⁶ Schwartz, *Lyndon Johnson and Europe*, p.20.

⁸⁷ Suri, *Power and Protest*, p. 247.

⁸⁸ Zubok, *Failed Empire* pp. 205-207.

Negotiating with the West and the Third World, in his opinion, was to help increase Soviet international legitimacy, create an opportunity to gain unavailable technologies from abroad and, consequently, revive legitimacy at home through improved standards of living.⁸⁹ Indeed, the economic aspects were quite important and without doubt were part of the reason why Soviet decision-makers reacted positively to Washington signals. As William Thompson argued, “Although economic performance in the late 1960s was still quite satisfactory, there was already a growing awareness within the Soviet elite that the USSR, while overtaking America in the output of some traditional industries, like steel, was falling behind in computers, petrochemicals and other rapidly advancing sectors. Trade and technology imports seemed to offer at least part of the solution to this problem.”⁹⁰ Consequently, the entrenchment of the status quo was seen as a path to normalize the Soviet empire, allow it to deal with the outside world when it came to common issues, and improve its economic health. It was natural for Soviets to seek détente with the West, as it provided for an opportunity to control the diplomatic thaw.⁹¹

Therefore, for Soviet statesmen, the ultimate détente’s goal was to create a sense of stability that would reinforce a role for the Soviet Union in the bipolar world. Normalization of that Cold War order was to bring other benefits, mostly in areas of diplomatic prestige and economic development. However, the entrenchment of the status quo was the immediate goal. To claim a Soviet focus on promotion and entrenchment of

⁸⁹ Morgan, *The Final Act*, pp. 53-54.

⁹⁰ William Thompson, *The Soviet Union under Brezhnev*. (1st ed. Routledge, 2014), p. 41.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315840055>.

⁹¹ Gaddis, *The Cold War*, pp. 152-153.

the Yalta order is not to say that an overall reduction of tensions in the continent could not occur as an after-effect of détente. Nonetheless, pacification of the continent was secondary and, if it was to happen, it had to conform to existing Soviet views on East-West dialogue.⁹² No wonder that the 1966 Johnson speech coincided with Soviet diplomatic signals that they were open to an intensified diplomatic dialogue.⁹³ Détente, as it was occurring, was not intended to fundamentally change the European order, but it did aim to temporarily create a sense of stability that could allow the superpowers to divert some resources to accommodate social forces at home. It is also important to note that the Soviets, perhaps even more than the Americans, did see détente as directly stemming from societal pressures.⁹⁴ They might have influenced Soviet leaders' thinking, but détente was always to be a top-down, rather than bottom-up, process, defined by bureaucrats and diplomats.

Perhaps the best example that demonstrates the functioning of the cooperative feature of the early détente is the Johnson-Kosygin summit at Glassboro in June 1967. In the midst of the United Nations General Assembly, Soviet Premier Kosygin travelled to Glassboro, New Jersey, to meet with President Johnson. Technically, the summit did not lead to fruitful breakthroughs, perhaps because Kosygin did not have a mandate to give any explicit promises.⁹⁵ However, the meeting created an opportunity for an extensive exchange of thoughts about the international system. According to the Soviet press of the

⁹² Gromyko's speech at the Party Congress is a good example. "О Международном Положении Внешней Политике Советского Союза: доклад министра иностранных дел СССР депутата А.Л. Громыко"

⁹³ Schwartz, *Lyndon Johnson and Europe*, p. 137.

⁹⁴ Social movements in Eastern Europe in the late 1960s, Prague Spring being the best example.

⁹⁵ Schwartz, *Lyndon Johnson and Europe* pp. 181-182.

time, a general overview of Soviet-American bilateral ties occurred, and Johnson was happy that the meeting helped the superpowers to know each other better.⁹⁶ These types of summits would continue to define the détente years beyond the late 1960s. The Glassboro Summit represented everything détente was supposed to be for superpowers in the late 1960s: a normalization of dialogue without any immediate structural changes in Europe and the World. It demonstrated that United States and Soviet policymakers and statesmen could meet, have a normal conversation and pursue a dialogue, which created a sense of stability. A more comprehensive reduction of tension was not the first item on the agenda, as both Johnson and Kosygin limited their summit statements to an assessment of overall bilateral ties. There were no immediate diplomatic breakthroughs. Nonetheless, it is not inconceivable that meetings like this inspired other actors, unrelated to superpowers, to pitch their own visions of how détente should move forward.

Soviet and American policymakers were not the only ones who pursued intensification of bilateral diplomatic ties at the time. The late 1960s witnessed increasing political contacts between Eastern European and Western European nations. Akin to the conduct of the superpowers, these continental rapprochements aimed to create a dialogue between East and West with the purpose of working within the Yalta order. France and West Germany are particularly acute examples, as they tried to find an equal footing with the superpowers in redefining the post-Yalta status quo. Their actions suggest a desire to

⁹⁶ “Встреча А. Н. Косыгина с президентом США Л. Джонсоном,” *Pravda*, June 27, 1967, <https://dlib-eastview-com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/browse/doc/21449840>.

pursue further pan-European reductions of tensions more than those of the superpowers, yet, fundamentally, they also first and foremost tried to shape the accepted status quo to their favor.

French President de Gaulle actively pursued contacts with Eastern European countries to create a workable framework within the European sphere. In the late 1960s, he visited a number of Eastern European capitals. Neither the Americans nor the Soviets were particularly happy that the French leader was carving himself out a role in détente defined by superpowers. *Le Monde* reported that the Soviets praised French policy precisely because it was based on diplomacy and because it aimed at limitation of American political influence in Europe, not for any other reasons.⁹⁷ At the same time, Radio Liberty noted that Soviets were also not always happy that the French reached out to other Eastern European states.⁹⁸ De Gaulle was looking for ways to increase French independence and prestige; unilateral diplomacy to Eastern European states could be interpreted as a way to pitch a bigger role within the status quo that was forming in the late 1960s. Yet, de Gaulle did not necessarily see the augmentation of French role within the bipolar status quo as an end goal in itself. He himself indicated that he expected this cooperation to lead to more openness in the East and, perhaps, its abandonment of

⁹⁷ “Moscou : la France reste obstacle principal auquel se heurtent les États-Unis en Europe,” *Le Monde*, February 10, 1966.

⁹⁸ “Comments and Replies on the Current Agenda”, 16 September 1967 [Electronic record]. HU OSA 297-0-1-96755; Radio Liberty (Radio Svoboda) Russian Broadcast Recordings; Open Society Archives at Central European University, Budapest. Accessed December 4, 2019. <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:78780d5f-5fb9-4f33-bb92-2896c925d799>.

communist totalitarianism.⁹⁹ In the mid 1960s, he expressed his desire to create a Europe from “the Atlantic to the Ural Mountains,” with the Soviet Union as a European power, which hints at a pan-European settlement breaking the Cold War divides. Nevertheless, de Gaulle and his team did not elaborate on how this “Europe” would work.¹⁰⁰ Perhaps it was more of a public statement meant to give meaning to the French way of pursuing intensified diplomatic ties and not be defined as merely a secondary actor within the Soviet-American détente. After all, de Gaulle is reported to have told Gromyko in 1966 that “... the partition of Germany was ‘abnormal’ and would not last forever, but he was ‘in no hurry’ to overcome it, and for the time being partition was ‘an accomplished fact’.”¹⁰¹ He did not call for concrete measures to immediately reduce tensions as a method to pursue a broader détente and, in conduct, conformed to the rules that were written by American and Soviet policymakers.

West Germany also pursued intensification of bilateral ties with Eastern European countries in the last years of the 1960s. The Bonn government established diplomatic relations with Romania and significantly improved its ties with Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria. Moscow became interested in a formal relationship with the Federal Republic of Germany in 1969.¹⁰² West German case was slightly different from superpowers’ approaches to détente, as it was no secret that a unification of Germany could not occur

⁹⁹ Georges Henri Soutou, “The linkage between European integration and détente: The contrasting approaches of de Gaulle and Pompidou, 1965 to 1974” in *European Integration and the Cold War: Ostpolitik-Westpolitik, 1965-1973*. ed. N. Piers Ludlow (London: Routledge, 2007), p.18.

¹⁰⁰ Moullec, *Pour Une Europe de l’Atlantique à l’Oural*, pp. 51-52.

¹⁰¹ Georges Henri Soutou, “The linkage between European integration and détente,” p. 19.

¹⁰² Ash, *In Europe’s Name*, pp. 55-56.

within an entrenched status quo crafted by the superpowers. West Germany under the Grand Coalition actively sought to intensify links with the German Democratic Republic beyond mere intensification of diplomatic ties, as it sought to overcome the artificial post-Second World War division. In 1966, the first declaration of the first Grand Coalition government, which included representatives from both the Christian Democratic and the Social Democrat Parties, stressed the importance of *Ostpolitik*, government's policy of increased cooperation with Eastern Europe.¹⁰³ This is not to say, however, that the Bonn government saw the rest of Eastern Europe in the same terms. Nonetheless, the Grand Coalition in the late 1960s was also forging relationships with Eastern European countries, with the purpose of finding a role within the normalized post-Yalta order first, and only potentially, at a later point, attempting to address fundamental issues plaguing Europe.

One particularly successful element of intensification of cooperation, which would ultimately define détente, was arms control. Both the Soviet-led Warsaw Pact and the American dominated NATO started in the late 1960s to define cooperation through simultaneous arms control. This did not necessarily diffuse the root tensions in Europe and the world, but it did help policymakers to create some certainty in global affairs. In between 1966 and 1969, both NATO and the Warsaw Pact published memorandums favoring intensification of diplomatic ties between the blocs and simultaneous reduction of tensions through arms control. The 1968 NATO Reykjavik Summit finished with a declaration, part

¹⁰³ Ibid pp. 15-17.

of which was dubbed as the “Reykjavik signal.”¹⁰⁴ The memorandum very explicitly stated that all members of NATO were actively hoping to promote an intensification of diplomatic contacts to solve the pressing security issues of the time. The document stated that “Ministers [nevertheless] reaffirmed their intention to continue their efforts to promote détente. Each ally should play its full part in improving East-West relations, bearing in mind the established practice of timely consultation within the Alliance.”¹⁰⁵ The cooperation mentioned in this memorandum was mostly supposed to foster arms control within the European continent with little immediate commitment to other issues. “Ministers concluded that the intensified examination and review, within the Alliance, of suitable policies to achieve a just and stable order in Europe, to overcome the division of Germany and to foster European security had proved of great value and should continue. This task will be part of a process of active and constant preparation for the time when fruitful discussions of these complex questions may be possible bilaterally or multilaterally between Eastern and Western nations.”¹⁰⁶ Arms control and closer diplomatic ties were seen as different sides of the same coin. The document did present a commitment to reduction of tensions, but it did not address structural issues that destabilized the continent. Arms control was a step forward, but it operated within the framework that entrenched, rather than overcame, the post-Second World War order. The document crucially lacks concrete references to stakeholders that were less invested in matters of national security.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid p. 57.

¹⁰⁵ “The Future Tasks of the Alliance: Report of the Council (‘The Harmel Report’).” NATO, December 1967, accessed December 10, 2019. http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_26700.htm.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

The Soviet Union called for similar approach to diplomacy: one based on arms control without immediate further forms of comprehensive cooperation. At roughly the same time as the Reykjavik Declaration was drafted, the Soviet press was signaling its openness to use arms control as a basis for further intensification of diplomatic ties. A February 3, 1966, *Pravda* article stated that arms control would fuel cooperative spirit in the world, as it is impossible to find common points of interest in the perpetual state of possible war. The article argued that all military bases in Europe should be closed, while central Europe should be declared to be a “nuclear-free zone.”¹⁰⁷ While the article was anti-Western and appealed to a European peace settlement that would overwhelmingly benefit the Soviets, it did indicate a tangible ambition to reduce tensions through negotiations based on reduction of arms. Structural changes in Europe were not a priority, as arms control and cooperation were enough to stabilize the Cold War on Soviet terms.

Furthermore, between 1966 and 1969, the Warsaw Pact summits would produce memorandums that would demonstrate a multilateral dedication of the Eastern Bloc states to use arms control to foster cooperation. These meetings would typically be dominated by the Soviet Union, which would use them to instruct the Eastern Bloc states in a top-down manner their position within the international system. Documents from Warsaw Pact summits reflected policy goals outlined by Gromyko.¹⁰⁸ The July 5, 1966, Bucharest

¹⁰⁷ “Послание председателя Совета Министров СССР участникам Комитета 18 государств по разоружению в Женеве,” *Pravda*, February 3, 1966, accessed January 29, 2020, <https://dlib-eastview-com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/browse/doc/21445550>.

¹⁰⁸ “О Международном Положении Внешней Политике Советского Союза: доклад министра иностранных дел СССР депутата А.И. Громыко.”

meeting memorandum titled “Declaration of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Pact on the strengthening of peace and security in Europe” echoed the same sentiments seen in the *Pravda* piece by trying to imply that the bloc was ready to negotiate with NATO for the purposes of European security. The document noted that the most important points of negotiations to achieve European security were the closing of foreign military bases, arms control of both East and West Germany, and taking up of measures to reduce the risk of a nuclear war. The declaration called for a “Convocation of a general European conference to discuss the questions of ensuring security in Europe and organizing general European co-operation would be of great positive importance.” This would be a first step in using arms control to intensify East-West contacts, as, in Warsaw Pact’s policymakers’ view, this type of conference would produce a declaration that “could provide for an undertaking by the signatories to be guided in their relations by the interests of peace, to settle disputes by peaceful means only, to hold consultations and exchange information on questions of mutual interest and to contribute to the all-round development of economic, scientific, technical and cultural relations.”¹⁰⁹ As in the case of the NATO declaration, the Warsaw Pact member states did not offer a redefinition of the world order in their proposal for a détente. They called for a pan-European security conference, but it was not something that would fundamentally create a closer link between Eastern and

¹⁰⁹ “Declaration of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Pact on the strengthening of peace and security in Europe.” Warsaw Pact, CVCE, July 5, 1966, accessed January 27, 2020. https://www.cvce.eu/obj/declaration_of_the_political_consultative_committee_of_the_warsaw_pact_on_the_strengthening_of_peace_and_security_in_europe_bucharest_5_july_1966-en-c48a3aab-0873-43f1-a928-981e23063f23.html

Western Europeans. It is true that there were references in the memorandum to potential areas for cooperation in cultural relations, among others, but they are defined only as potential further areas of coalescing. Détente, in Warsaw Pact leaders' view, was first and foremost diplomatic cooperation and arms control, not restructuring of the existing situation in Europe. A similar policy was promoted in another Warsaw Pact declaration, which was signed after Prague Spring. The 1969 Budapest summit declaration noted that any kind of settlement in Europe should be achieved through negotiation, and not military force. It also referenced the Bucharest declaration to reinvigorate the idea of a pan-European conference that would be focused on arms control, but which would also eventually lead to improved bilateral and multilateral ties.¹¹⁰ Once again, policymakers, perhaps pushed by Soviet leverage, put emphasis on security questions, rather than structural reform that could address tensions in a more fundamental way.

These memorandums from NATO and the Warsaw Pact were not empty talk: late 1960s saw tangible arms control agreements, which consequently reduced international tensions, at least as much as policymakers were concerned in the United States and the Soviet Union. Subsequent treaties would address global security problems, but they would not tackle the roots of why Europe lacked stability in the first place. It is difficult to judge the Soviets or the Americans for their attempts to maintain their perceived spheres of influence, especially as policymakers in each country lived within a world defined by the

¹¹⁰ “Обращение государств-участников Варшавского Договора ко всем европейским странам,” Warsaw Pact, CVCE, March 17, 1969, accessed December 3, 2019, http://www.cvce.eu/obj/obrashchenie_gosudarstv_uchastnikov_varshavskogo_dogovora_ko_vsem_evropeiskim_stranam%20m_budapesht_17_marta_1969-ru-ad406a56-f121-4d4e-9721-87700f88211e.html.

Cold War. Nonetheless, it is important to note that normalization of the divided world did not necessarily address the instability that it brought.

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, signed on July 1, 1968, embodies the relationship between arms control, cooperation and détente that superpowers pursued. With this document, the United States and the Soviet Union agreed not to share their nuclear weapons and technologies with other states, as well as to accept safeguards that would prevent the evolution from peaceful to aggressive use of nuclear power.¹¹¹ While the Treaty initially was not signed by all nuclear powers of the time, it was seen as an important milestone in arms control and a symbol of an intensified cooperation. It was precisely what Johnson imagined a few years before to be a possible success of his bridge-building initiative. Similarly, it was a successful demonstration of statesmanship by Soviet leaders, who proved after the tumultuous Khrushchev era foreign policy that they could negotiate complex international treaties. The public opinion of the time acknowledged the role of this event in the conception of an effective détente. *Pravda* reprinted a speech made by Gromyko, where he underlined that the Non-Proliferation Treaty was made “in the name of the long-term interests of the world.”¹¹² After the signing ceremony, Kosygin was reported to have said that this event should unleash a “process to solve problems pertinent

¹¹¹ “Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. International Atomic Energy Agency, April 22, 1970” International Atomic Energy Agency, accessed January 29, 2020. <https://web.archive.org/web/20070807060917/http://www.iaea.org/Publications/Documents/Infocircs/Others/infocirc140.pdf>

¹¹² “О Международном Положении Внешней Политике Советского Союза: доклад министра иностранных дел СССР депутата А.Л. Громыко”

to everyone around the world.”¹¹³ Another article in the same issue also reported that other leaders of the world, such as the Czechoslovak minister of foreign affairs Jiri Hajek, the document should be signed by every country that wants peace.¹¹⁴ Similar optimistic outlooks of a further détente stemming from arms control were shared by Western media outlets. The French *Le Monde* mentioned that this treaty, while deeply flawed, showed that “...President Johnson desires to have a dialogue with the USSR and to explore chances to avoid annihilation.”¹¹⁵

It is important to note, however, that, first and foremost, the treaty was a product of superpowers’ cooperation, which tried to stabilize and regulate global nuclear politics in a top-down manner. The Lithuanian émigré newspaper *Keleivis* acknowledged the treaty to be “a big deal” in creating a relationship to the benefit of humanity, but the author did state that it was unclear how effective the treaty would be without France and China as signatories.¹¹⁶ This is an important remark, as it underlines the boundaries that existed to the crafting of détente. Policymakers in the superpowers were the ones who would define the rapprochement. Even though this agreement had been in negotiation for a number of years before, it was, ultimately, for Soviets and Americans to decide how far they would go with arms control and what implications it would have. Failure to initially obtain French and Chinese signatures might signify the top-down nature of the process. Nuclear Non-

¹¹³ “Выступление Председателя Совета Министров СССР А.Н. Косыгина,” *Pravda*. July 2, 1968. <https://dlib-eastview-com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/browse/doc/21699430>.

¹¹⁴ “Важный Шаг Вперед.”

¹¹⁵ “Un Geste Circonspect,” *Le Monde*, July 2, 1968.

¹¹⁶ “Pasirašyta atominių ginklų apsiribojimo sutartis,” *Keleivis*, July 3, 1968. <https://www.epaveldas.lt/object/recordDescription/LNB/C1B0002293646>.

Proliferation Treaty created a set of rules for the United States and the Soviet Union to play by in the international arena and seemingly contributed to a détente between the powers. Nonetheless, on its own, it did not comprehensively reduce tensions in Europe and the globe beyond reassurances that would come with this type of agreement, as the root cause of the Cold War, the Yalta order, was not addressed.

Détente focused on stability and status quo had been attacked on policy grounds, as not everyone agreed that the superpowers shared a sense of what would be the next step to initial rapprochement. For example, French neoconservative political philosopher Raymond Aron did not consider the intensification of bilateral ties as a détente, because, in his view, the reality of a thaw in intra-bloc relationship was a fiction. Aron might not have been a part of the movement that saw détente in cultural-political terms. He did not see the failure to recreate the pre-Yalta European space as a tragedy. However, being anti-communist, he criticized one underlying feature of the late 1960s international system. For him détente as it was popularized, especially in the early years of Nixon, was based on false hypotheses, such as that diplomacy somehow would appease the Soviet authorities and stabilize the global situation. Aron did not agree with that and pointed to continuing Soviet disruptions in the Third World as proof of failures of détente.¹¹⁷ He did not have hopes in accommodation of the Soviet Union as a possible method to pursue global stability. Neither a structural, nor a cosmetic reconfiguration and stabilization of the

¹¹⁷ Daniel Steinmetz-Jenkins, “Le tournant néoconservateur en France,” Lava, April 5, 2018. Accessed on November 29, 2019. <https://lavamedia.be/fr/le-tournant-neoconservateur-en-france/>.

international system was possible. However, Soviet and American willingness to pursue treaties show that both superpowers had an interest in at least a temporary acknowledgement of the status quo, within which they could work in some areas. Soviets and Americans saw intensification of ties as important and, at least in their own minds, it was a success. A *détente* of sorts was happening. Furthermore, there was no reason why this rapprochement, as it occurred, could not lead to something more meaningful in the future.

Therefore, even though the late 1960s were swarmed by local and international crises, a very well-defined rapprochement emerged, partly out of desire to curb the very same crises. With every year, there was more clarity and less ambivalence towards the nature and limits of the international system. Diplomats on both sides of the Iron Curtain, but mostly in the United States and the Soviet Union, defined together what would be a success in international diplomacy and stuck with those notions, even if they did not invigorate any structural changes that cut to the very roots of instability. Their statements included potential guidelines for further cooperation, even if they were not followed immediately. Nonetheless, superpowers can be credited, at least initially, with making the definition of *détente* fluid. Less-influential stakeholders of the international system, like statesmen of smaller European states and the European Community, as well as certain intellectual circles associated with pan-European ideas, seized the moment to pitch their vision of a comprehensive reduction of tensions, first in Europe and then, potentially, the world. Superpowers pursued *détente* to entrench the status quo and stabilize the world, but

their actions unleashed ideas that went beyond United States' and Soviet Union's ambitions.

Policymakers' Détente in Action: Limits of the Free Word

The experience of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), some of the most successful tools in American ideological warfare, represents how American policymakers sought to control the meaning of détente. RFE/RL, largely used by Eastern European émigrés to advocate for relaxation of tensions through liberation of the Eastern Bloc, almost fell into obscurity once Soviet and American statesmen started to pursue a rapprochement based on entrenchment of the existing status quo. It does not matter whether Americans sought the entrenchment of the status quo only as a temporary concession or not; what matters is that policymakers attempted to control and even to terminate the radios, even if their existence represented the overall American Cold War strategy, as soon as the radios got in the way of détente.

Initially, RFE/RL were valued for airing grievances of Europeans who were left behind in the Soviet sphere after the abnormal division of Europe in Yalta. In late 1966, the 303 Committee that controlled the RFE/RL's role in the overall American foreign policy strategy, was adamant to use RFE/RL in an openly adversarial manner, not that dissimilar to its 1950s policy.¹¹⁸ The memorandum stated that “[the goal of the radio is to

¹¹⁸ A. Ross Johnson, *Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty*, p. 14.

achieve and maintain] monopoly over communications with the people of Eastern Europe and in this way to limit the capabilities of the regimes and USSR for exploiting the political, military and economic resources of the area for their own purposes.”¹¹⁹ If a relaxation of tensions was to happen, the Soviets had to liberalize their sphere of influence, and RFE/RL with its loud émigré voice played a role in promotion of this strategy.

However, as the superpowers started to move towards a mutual understanding in late 1966 – early 1967, policymakers decided that the radios should be less adversarial in its reporting because they were undermining the superpowers’ common implicit approach towards détente. When Svetlana Alliluyeva, Joseph Stalin’s daughter, fled the USSR in March 1967, policymakers instructed the newsrooms to have only minimal coverage on the matter.¹²⁰ Perhaps the bureaucrats in Washington did not want such a petty incident to get in the way of intensification of bilateral ties, even if Alliluyeva’s case pointed to the confrontational nature of the Eastern European way of life. This is not to say that the Americans wanted to cease the political warfare altogether; however, as the decade came to the close, it became obvious that propaganda was to be suppressed. The Soviets wanted to entrench the status quo of the international system and if the Americans wanted to work on common issues, they had to accept that, at least in the short term.

¹¹⁹ “CIA Submittal to 303 Committee, Reaffirmation of Existing Policy on Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty,” September 08, 1966, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Obtained and contributed to CWIHP by A. Ross Johnson. Reference Ch4 p135 in his book *Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty*, CIA mandatory declassification review document number C01434015.
<http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115097>

¹²⁰ “Memorandum, Central Intelligence Agency, ‘Guidelines on Svetlana (Stalin) Defection’,” March 13, 1967, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Obtained and contributed to CWIHP by A. Ross Johnson. CIA mandatory declassification review document number C01385020.
<http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/134832>

From the RFE/RL point of view, this became even more obvious in 1969, when the new Nixon administration contemplated the closure of these radios. It was a top-down attempt to control the informational narrative in the Cold War to pursue a détente that was largely in the interest of exclusively policymakers in Washington and Moscow. One of the first Nixon administration's actions in February 1969 was to cut the funding for RFE/RL, which almost amounted to its death warrant.¹²¹ Eventually, the radios were maintained, but mostly as a potential negotiation chip with the Soviets (Nixon's National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger claimed that the radios should be kept to see "what quid pro quo from the USSR" could be received).¹²²

The experience of RFE/RL reflects what détente was for policymakers in the late 1960s, as it represents how intensification of ties and bridge-building between East and West happened in action. Détente for policymakers was about further cooperation, not about winning the Cold War, at least for the time being. Some of the reporters working at RFE/RL themselves wanted closer ties between East and West and the diminution of the importance of Iron Curtain. Nonetheless, this vision of détente was in tension with what policymakers wanted. Americans, as Soviets, were affected by the general media landscape of the time, but they chose to focus on problems that were more easily tackled through

¹²¹ "Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty Excluded from Katzenbach Committee Restrictions," February 20, 1969, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Obtained and contributed to CWHIP by A. Ross Johnson. Cited in his book *Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty*, CIA mandatory declassification review document number C01441046. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115125>

¹²² "Nixon Approves Continuation of Radio Liberty," December 29, 1969, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Obtained and contributed to CWHIP by A. Ross Johnson. Cited Ch8 n25 in his book *Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty*, CIA mandatory declassification review document number C01441044. Published as document 23, FRUS, 1969-76, XXIX. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115128>

governmental intervention. This was something that the intensified diplomatic ties signified and what Nixon and Brezhnev would reaffirm in the following decade.¹²³

The ideological warfare did not cease altogether. It could be argued that the Johnson administration saw these steps as necessary sacrifices to have at least a basic common diplomatic framework, which could lead to more meaningful cooperation in the future. However, in the short term, tackling structural problems of the Cold War was not in the interest of the superpowers. Partners, who want stability in their relationship, avoid confrontations. When bilateral and multilateral treaties are negotiated, there is little need for aggressive ideological warfare. In the late 1960s, *Pravda* became more concrete in using terms such as “peaceful coexistence.”¹²⁴ Conversely, even a key tool of United States political warfare, RFE/RL, almost perished precisely because of the importance of détente. Senator Fulbright eventually wanted to close the radios as “Cold War relics” that were getting in the way of further intensification of East-West ties.¹²⁵ The Soviet Union and the United States became allied in entrenching the status quo to use that as a common framework for further cooperation. This might have very well been a short-term goal for both of the superpowers, but the fact is that underlying issues that destabilized Europe, first and foremost its division by the Iron Curtain, was not to be addressed.

¹²³ The Basic Principles Agreement is a good example of the cooperation that defined the 1970s. Westad, *The Cold War*, p. 414.

¹²⁴ “О Международном Положении Внешней Политике Советского Союза: доклад министра иностранных дел СССР депутата А.Л. Громыко”

¹²⁵ A. Ross Johnson, *Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty*, p. 216; also, Nicholas John Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency: American Propaganda and Public Diplomacy, 1945-1989*. (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 313.

Historians often praise statesmen of the late 1960s for the successful détente that created global stability for the following decade. There is no doubt that people in East and West were excited, at least initially, about the improvements in intra-bloc ties. Perhaps some even thought that the processes could lead to the diminution of the Iron Curtain itself. By mid-1968, however, there was some disappointment in the way the West visualized the East. Despite all the diplomatic initiatives, the underlying structural issues with the Yalta order were not addressed. The prescriptive nature of the Iron Curtain was, at least for the time being, ignored. Politicians in East and West were getting along, but the entrenchment of the status quo was not necessarily what détente meant to some intellectual classes in Eastern and Western Europe, for whom memories of Europe as a single historical space from only a few decades ago were still fresh. As the next pages will show, they wanted a more meaningful détente and constantly promoted a vision focused on a European-wide rapprochement.

Moscow's and Washington's diplomatic overtures were promising, but also disappointing. Diplomacy, in the way it was pursued by the superpowers in the late 1960s, did not mean structural change. *Europos Lietuvis* noted that the people of occupied Baltic states were more and more labelled in the international sphere as Russians, although that had nothing to do with ethnical and political realities.¹²⁶ Some Eastern European intellectual exiles based in the West thus could not understand the use of détente if it was

¹²⁶ "Kitiems Mes Jau Rusai," *Europos Lietuvis*, June 25, 1968. Accessed January 25, 2020. <https://www.epaveldas.lt/object/recordDescription/LNB/C1B0002106552>.

not based on concrete and sound ideas, which would lead to relaxation of tensions felt in everyday life. They could not understand policymakers' strategy when they focused on common definition and entrenchment of the status quo, which left Eastern European states within a sphere of influence that they had not chosen, and Western European states in the shadow of American policy. Some Europeans had their own thoughts about détente, which were constantly in the background of policymakers' deliberations. Driven by different aims, intellectuals on both sides of the Iron Curtain had their own recipes to overcome Cold War divisions.

Another Voice: Relaxation of Tensions in a Bounded Space

In parallel to the diplomatic activities of the late 1960s, there was a bottom-up European-wide intellectual movement for détente that was different in its aims to the détente pursued by the superpowers. It was based on abstract political ideals, rather than concrete, yet limited diplomatic cooperation. Elites from the political sphere in the West, often associated with the European Community, like Monnet and Spinelli, adamantly pursued integration that, potentially, was to be extended one day to the East. They saw integration as a catalyst for relaxation of tensions through example, which, one day, could lead to reconfiguration of the destabilized continent. Even more, some statesmen of smaller European states bought into this narrative, as the existing Yalta order did not favor a diversity of opinions on the functioning of the international system. In parallel, public intellectuals from Eastern Europe, such as Milosz, Kundera, and Kosik, among others,

explored ideas focused on political and cultural European unity. Eastern and Western European intellectuals might have promoted different discourses. Western European type of integration was not an option for Eastern European states, and Eastern Bloc intellectuals understood the reality of their voice being diffused only within strictly defined limits. However, interestingly enough, both Western European idealist policymakers and Eastern European intelligentsia, in content, had similar ideas about the functioning of détente. They saw stability in the world not as something that could be achieved through sterile diplomacy, but as something that could be obtained through structural reshaping of Europe, the center of the Cold War world. Eastern and Western Europeans agreed that the pacification of the continent would reverberate around the planet.¹²⁷ Relaxation of tensions in Europe, felt by all Europeans, was to lead to a global reconfiguration of international politics. For these intellectuals, diminishing the political, cultural and social significance of the Iron Curtain was the actual ideal of a détente between East and West. European intellectuals sought to address the structural issues of the Yalta order sooner, rather than at an undefined moment in the future.

This alternative vision of détente, forged by various European-minded intellectual circles, was based on two key concepts. Pacification of the continent through diplomacy for them was impossible, because all the barriers between East and West could not be eliminated in a Cold War world driven by bipolarity. Intellectual elites in the Western and Eastern parts of the continent agreed that a tangible détente would first and foremost have

¹²⁷ Jean Monnet “Le maillon de la chaîne sur lequel on peut actuellement agir, c'est l'Europe.”

to be based on acceptance of the idea of a common European space. They also agreed on the need of convergence along the lines of similar political norms. This was not the course of action chosen by the most prominent statesmen of the time, particularly in the case of the superpowers. They focused on common workable issues. Johnson and Brezhnev were interested in stability first, and the above-mentioned ideas clashed with their idea of limited cooperation in areas of mutual interest. Yet, this ideal of a European détente floated around the continent in the late 1960s and contested the slower and less ambitious path pursued by the superpowers.

European intellectuals considered that an actual détente between East and West could only occur if the world acknowledged that Europe was one space, whose division was ahistorical. On both sides of Europe, an idea of a common European space transcending the Iron Curtain was pertinent, as it represented the grievance that the continent lacked stability precisely because of the artificial division of a culturally homogenous region. Abandonment of the rigid bloc system in the continent was seen as a method to achieve a lasting peace. Eastern and Western Europeans used different arguments to justify why Europe should be considered as a one single common space in the midst of the Cold War. Yet, this idea was simultaneously developed on both sides of the Iron Curtain, which demonstrates an opening that the intellectuals felt for redefinition of the Yalta order on their terms. A real détente could not take place without the conversion of Europe into a shared space.

Among the elites associated with European integration, Monnet was the most vocal in implying an East-West common space to set off a détente. Even though his ideas focused more clearly on the integration of Western European states, he mentioned the idea of a united Europe enough for it to seem as a potential, even if a utopian, future goal. In an op-ed in 1966 published in *Le Monde*, Monnet noted that “Constructing a strong Europe would allow [the Europeans] to solve problems that [they] cannot solve when Europe is not united.” Monnet argued that change in the continent, through European integration, could incite a chain of events for a rapprochement to emerge.¹²⁸ He espoused a similar sentiment in his memoirs, by pointing to the goal of “bringing together the free peoples of continental Europe.” While these ideas could be interpreted as more pertinent to the Western part of the continent, he also mentioned that West Germans, whose political elites shared Monnet’s ideals, “...did not regard [permanent division of Germany] as an alternative to the Community: quite the reverse.”¹²⁹ This implies that Monnet did not see the development of a common European space through the European Community as an exclusively Western European phenomenon. West Germany was dedicated to unification of Germany. If East Germany could become part of West Germany, Eastern Europe could also be considered as part of the same European space. This would happen simultaneously as relaxation of tensions – German unification in the late 1960s could not be imagined if the intra-bloc rivalry did not dissipate. In any case, Monnet did not see the Iron Curtain as

¹²⁸ Jean Monnet, “Le maillon de la chaîne sur lequel on peut actuellement agir, c’est l’Europe.”

¹²⁹ Jean Monnet, *Memoirs*, p. 445.

a permanent division marker. A European Community of all European states was a utopian thought, but one that nonetheless was at the back of Monnet's mind.

Similar thoughts were shared by some Western European politicians as well. Even though they did not necessarily act upon their words of a united Europe or a common European space (often even acting in a contrary manner), it could be argued that their speeches represented the public mood in Western Europe, which was antagonistic to the Cold War divisions. In addition, leaders of smaller states such as Denmark or Malta might have had less to lose and were freer to define their own conceptions of European space, unrelated to Cold War divisions. These sentiments, perhaps fittingly, were often addressed in the general assemblies of Council of Europe, an organization that was more of an ideal than a true force in the continent.¹³⁰ For example, the Danish Prime Minister Jens Otto Krag in his address to the assembly on September 27, 1966, stated that the "idea of European unity is gaining ground among the peoples of Europe." He also mentioned that the Eastern European countries "countries belong to the European family of nations." While Krag was not saying that the East and the West are one and the same (he called for cooperation, rather than unity), these types of statements did imply an existence of a common European sphere, which was divided diplomatically, rather than historically.¹³¹ A

¹³⁰ "Council of Europe, organization of European countries that seeks to protect democracy and human rights and to promote European unity by fostering cooperation on legal, cultural, and social issues. The council is headquartered in Strasbourg, France... The Council of Europe was founded on May 5, 1949, by 10 western European countries—Belgium, Denmark, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and the United Kingdom." More in Matthew J. Gabel "Council of Europe," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, February 22, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Council-of-Europe>.

¹³¹ Jens Otto Krag, "Speech Made to the Assembly," Council of Europe, September 27, 1966. Council of Europe, accessed January 29, 2020. <http://www.assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/Speeches/Speech-XML2HTML-EN.asp?SpeechID=125>.

few months later, the British Prime minister also mentioned the importance of acknowledging European space and “embracing all Europe, East and West” to contribute to world development.¹³² The same theme would continue into the last year of the decade. Malta’s Prime Minister George Borg Olivier expressed his sentiment of understanding the continent as one single space, rather than one of communist and capitalist blocs. He argued that “The Council of Europe could [also] be instrumental in furthering co-operation and better understanding in the context of a wider Europe embracing both East and West irrespective of the ideologies and political systems they may have chosen to adopt.” By stating this, Borg Olivier underlined the literal importance of the institution as one connecting the whole continent as a unit, rather than some of its parts. Although the Maltese statesman later in the speech also noted the importance of détente over condemnation of the Soviets over Prague Spring events, his statement alluded to an idea that East and West, Malta and Soviet Union, were part of the same space.¹³³

These politicians defined Europe differently than the superpowers which thought of themselves as the principal architects of détente. For Johnson and Brezhnev, divisions of Europe were, at least for the moment, permanent; they wanted to learn to work within the existing framework by acknowledging it. However, Western European politicians understood that tensions could never be relieved comprehensively if the population of the

¹³² Harold Wilson, “Speech Made to the Assembly,” Council of Europe, January 23, 1967, Council of Europe, accessed January 29, 2020. <http://www.assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/Speeches/Speech-XML2HTML-EN.asp?SpeechID=250>.

¹³³ George Borg Olivier, “Speech Made to the Assembly,” Council of Europe, May 13, 1969, . Council of Europe accessed January 29, 2020. <http://www.assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/Speeches/Speech-XML2HTML-EN.asp?SpeechID=25>.

continent remained divided in two classes, which had not existed before 1939. Of course, these speeches and statements could be interpreted as Cold War discourse. The idea of a single European space broke with the Soviet vision of Europe a lot more than with the American one; even more, the Soviets were often the ones blamed for the Iron Curtain and for a good reason.¹³⁴ Nevertheless, the accountability for the Cold War was beyond the question when it came to détente, as the thaw in East-West ties could not happen in a continued atmosphere of political warfare. While superpowers chose to control détente by their own means, Western European political elites had their own claim for détente based on the idea of single Europe, as they saw it as the structural issue behind why a thaw could not happen in the first place. Within the context of the international system, it was a bottom-up attempt by the smaller and weaker countries to push the superpowers to consider their grievances.

Eastern European intellectuals could not imagine their states joining an integrationist pan-European and Euro-centric institution or having their leaders deviate from socialist interpretations of the world. However, the idea of the existence of a distinct European space, whose manifestation in an ideal world would lead to an actual détente between East and West, did develop within Eastern European capitals. A particularly explicit example of this trend of thought could be seen from the popularity of the

¹³⁴ Soviet actions in the aftermath of the Second World War attest to that. Democratic elections were promised by Stalin in all Eastern European countries, first and foremost in Poland, but that never happened. Subsequent events, such as the quashing of East German Protests in 1953 and Hungarian Revolution in 1956, construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961, and the Warsaw Pact invasion to Czechoslovakia pushed the West to put blame for the Cold War on the Soviets.

Mittleuropa principle within the Central and Eastern European parts of both the capitalist and the Soviet bloc. The term refers to the idea that Central European countries (widely defined) share a particular set of cultural norms, which make them a part of the same region. It reflects a “desire to weaken [Eastern Bloc states’] ties with the East and to re-establish Central Europe’s traditionally strong ties with the West.”¹³⁵ An important feature of this concept was that it transcended the East-West divide that existed in Europe after 1945. West Germany, in this framework, was interpreted as a member of the same historical region as Czechoslovakia, Hungary or Poland, not because of any diplomatic agreements, but because of their belonging to the same cultural space. Consequently, the concept would be analyzed by intellectuals in both West Germany and the other side of the Iron Curtain. Policymakers, especially those in the Soviet Union, such as Gromyko, did not like these kinds of concepts for their clash with the Cold War order.¹³⁶ *Mittleuropa* directly broke with the status quo and it is understandable that its persistence in the Eastern Bloc could have been interpreted as a tool of Western ideological warfare. Yet, it is the non-Cold War historical rooting of *Mittleuropa* what made it a powerful concept to use to reimagine détente. The artificial Yalta divide was diminishing a historical space, whose legacy was still fresh among both Eastern and Western European elites and intellectuals.

German intellectuals’ definitions of the term often implied Germany as the center of the Central European space; yet, Germany’s role in *Mittleuropa* was seen as one of a

¹³⁵ Hans-Georg Betz, “Mittleuropa and Post-Modern European Identity.” *New German Critique*, no. 50 (1990), p. 174. <https://doi.org/10.2307/488216>.

¹³⁶ “О Международном Положении Внешней Политике Советского Союза: доклад министра иностранных дел СССР депутата А.Л. Громыко”

catalyst of an explicitly culturally European space transcending the divisions of Cold War. Throughout the 1960s, some left-leaning German elites would reflect on ideas associated with *Mitteleuropa* from the post-First World War period, which included Social Democrats' public calls for a creation of United States of Europe based on the Central European region.¹³⁷ These intellectual discourses were pursued in the public sphere by politicians of the social-democratic left, such as Brandt, who would, at least discursively, try to promote similar notions in the 1960s. Brandt publicly advocated for an East-West relationship based on "shared cultural roots and an awareness of shared responsibility for the inhabitants of this continent," a sentiment akin to the ideals of people promoting the idea of *Mitteleuropa*.¹³⁸ The idea of "shared responsibility" is key, as it implies an understanding of space that transcends the East-West divide. What is fascinating is that this principle transcended mere German reunification. *Mitteleuropa*, as seen from Brandt's statement, was more than only Germany between Oder and Rhine. Eventually, Brandt's policy was different from that of the superpowers in its comprehensiveness, even if it built on the initial thaw between the United States and the Soviet Union. What it shows, however, is that détente was contested and that different approaches clashed and influenced each other.

A similar idea of a united Central European space, transcending the Iron Curtain, was also explored by the German political right, which shows that a comprehensive

¹³⁷ Christian Bailey, "Socialist Visions of European Unity in Germany: Ostpolitik since the 1920s?" *Contemporary European History* 26, no. 2 (May 2017), p. 250.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S096077731700008X>.

¹³⁸ Ibid p. 257.

redefinition of the international system was a pertinent topic throughout the political spectrum. Christian Democrat Europeanism in Cold War West Germany was understood through its promotion of the “Christian West” (*Das Abendland*), which was seen as a supranational and symbolic space between Bolshevik Russia and capitalist America.¹³⁹ The idea of distinct and well defined area with unique cultural and social norms, and opposed to Cold War, was an ideal for these political ideologues. Both the German right and left, therefore, agreed on the absurdity of existence of the Iron Curtain. It divided a historically shared and single space, which encompassed both Eastern and Western European countries. That division was unnatural and source of instability and as long as it was in place, relaxation of tensions was simply impossible.

Variations of *Mittleuropa* were discussed among intellectuals in other Eastern European countries as well. Perhaps they were the most common in Czechoslovakia, where people felt very much European in the late 1960s despite their presence in the Eastern Bloc. Czechoslovak philosopher Karel Kosik defined the importance of a common European space for the continent to come to peace through the very same idea of a historic Central Europe. While he did not directly tackle détente in his writing, in Kosik’s framework the recreation of *Mittleuropa* space would pacify the Central European region and would lead to the collapse of the East-West divide that destabilized Europe and the world. Kosik pointed to the Austro-Hungarian empire as a model of an area that transcended artificially

¹³⁹ Rosario Forlenza, “The Politics of the Abendland: Christian Democracy and the Idea of Europe after the Second World War.” *Contemporary European History* 26, no. 2 (May 2017), p. 261. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777317000091>.

created Eastern or Western Europeanisms and was defined through lack of any barriers. He discussed in his writing ideas of Austro-Hungarian political elites, which he thought were applicable in the late 1960s, since they could have been seen as pertinent to recreation of a climate of an actual rapprochement between East and West.¹⁴⁰ Kosik claimed that “[Frantisek] Palacky regarded the disposition of central Europe as a matter for all of Europe, and Hugo von Hofmannsthal expressed the view that Central Europe was “Europe in miniature.”¹⁴¹ The real Europe was not a capitalist or a communist Europe – it was a common space, not defined through Cold War modes of understanding the international system, but characterized by a historical heritage dating a millennium. Kosik was unyielding in diminishing the importance of artificially created definitions of the continent: “Central Europe is a historical space. This statement has a double meaning. On the one hand, it excludes as one-sided and misleading all ideas that equate central Europe with enumeration of famous names, or a listing of the nations and nationalities living in the region that designates them merely geographically. On the other hand, thinking is exhorted to search for and investigate the singular properties and the nature of this space and its

¹⁴⁰ Kosik wrote this essay in 1968, which is even more impressive, as it shows deliberations about a shared space with western parts of *Mitteleuropa* in the midst of Prague Spring.

¹⁴¹ Kosik, *The Crisis of Modernity*, p. 157; Frantisek Palacky (1798-1876) – an active political figure in late 19th century Bohemia. According to Encyclopedia Britannica, “Palacký propounded a federalism based not on nationalities but on the historic provinces of the Habsburg empire. His influence on Czech political thought and historiography was immense. The liberal nationalism of Tomas Masaryk and his generation owed much to Palacky.” More in The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, “Frantisek Palacky,” Encyclopaedia Britannica, June 10, 2019. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Frantisek-Palacky>. Hugo von Hofmannsthal (1874-1929) – Austrian writer. According to Encyclopaedia Britannica, after the First World War, “he responded to the collapse of the Habsburg empire by an increased awareness of his Austrian heritage, at the same time committing himself to the European tradition.” More in The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica “Hugo von Hofmannsthal,” Encyclopaedia Britannica, January 28, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Hugo-von-Hofmannsthal>.

historicity.”¹⁴² Furthermore, Kosik tied the fate of Central European space to fate of stability in Europe beyond 1960s: “In the collapse of Central Europe, a danger appears clearly that all of Europe falls into. Europe, deprived of its center – European identity – sinks into mediocrity and gets by on procuring: it does not focus, but only procures.”¹⁴³ After all, in this mindset, “Central Europe is an integral part of Europe, and it rises or falls with Europe.”¹⁴⁴ Kosik dismissed the idea that Europe could be defined through divisions. The continent was always meant to be a singular space and that had to be recreated if one wanted an actual and fruitful rapprochement. For Kosik, Central European space reflected the European space. When Central Europe is given its historic role as part of the European space, divisions disappear and the continent flourishes. For people like Kosik, that was the ultimate aim of détente.

Mittleuropa was not the only conceptualization of a possible détente through affirmation of a common space within the public Eastern Europe discourse of the time. Others moved beyond the *Mittleuropa* framework to establish a common European space less through a historical and more through a 20th century based cultural-political framework. This concept was often promoted by émigré intellectuals, who fled Eastern Europe in the aftermath of the Second World War and were searching for ways to connect with their past homelands. Promotion of the idea of common space as a necessary step for an actual coming together of East and West was a resonating feature of these émigrés’

¹⁴² Karel Kosik, *The Crisis of Modernity*, p. 152.

¹⁴³ Ibid p. 168.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid p. 179.

intellectual dialogues. For example, the fact that flow of information and flow of people through the Iron Curtain was curbed was seen as an artificial barrier to a historically fluid region.

Perhaps the most vivid example of this sentiment can be seen in the mindsets of émigrés who worked for American-sponsored surrogate international broadcasters. The above mentioned RFE/RL is a case in point, as it actively justified its existence by claiming to have a quest to ensure an intellectual bridge between the East and the West.¹⁴⁵ This is not to say that the RFE/RL journalists were only focused on maintaining the existence of a distinct European sphere. More often than not, they reported on world news and human rights violations without explicit messaging that the Eastern Bloc is a part of a common European home. However, partly due to the nature of the radio, the reporters were conscious of a common space between Eastern and Western Europe through airwaves and thus actively contributed towards something that could be called a single intellectual sphere transcending the Iron Curtain.¹⁴⁶ The concept of Europe itself figured extensively in deliberations of how to use the radios to bridge the gap between the East and West intellectuals.¹⁴⁷ Conscious struggle towards this aim created an impression of “a not that divided all-European, and even transatlantic, Cold War media landscape,” which was, for

¹⁴⁵ Johnson, *Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty*, p. 6.

¹⁴⁶ Even though the radios were technically American political warfare tools, they were run by émigrés from the Eastern Bloc. Gene Sosin, a former employee of Radio Liberty, noted that the radio staff consisted of a “mixture of Soviet emigres from different ethnic origins, all with their own political agenda...” See more at Gene Sosin, *Sparks of Liberty: An Insider's Memoir of Radio Liberty*. (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), p. xv.

¹⁴⁷ Friederike Kind-Kovács, “Voices, Letters, and Literature through the Iron Curtain: Exiles and the (Trans)Mission of Radio in the Cold War.” *Cold War History* 13, no. 2 (May 2013), p. 203. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14682745.2012.746666>.

these reporters, the precondition for any kind of comprehensive détente to even take place.¹⁴⁸ RFE/RL broadcasts would call out in their programming obstacles to free movement between Eastern and Western Europe not only as a human rights issue, but also as a failure to maintain a historically uniform European space, without which the continent could not be pacified. Perhaps this is why in the late 1960s Radio Liberty vehemently praised cultural exchanges and condemned limits on movement from East to West.¹⁴⁹ These actions signified an intellectual unification of European space, which was a precondition for a meaningful rapprochement could not happen.

Eastern and Western European intellectual elites lived in different realities. While a certain level of voluntary unification of Europe was happening in the West, the East was tightly under Soviet control. Nevertheless, elites on both sides of the Iron Curtain shared an understanding that they existed within the same pan-European space, whose division was a source of instability. A forced ideological division of the continent was a novelty that did not permit the continent make peace with itself. Détente for these intellectuals meant achieving a mutual understanding between East and West through the diminution of the Iron Curtain, not through cooperation within the status quo that would only prolong the artificial divisions for the sake of short-term gains. In other words, correcting the errors of the Yalta order would have allowed, in their mindsets, for détente to flourish in ways that

¹⁴⁸ Ibid p. 196.

¹⁴⁹ In this June 1967 Radio Liberty broadcast reporters condemn the Soviets for limiting cultural and praise the Polish government for doing the opposite. See “Letters to the Editor”, 13 January 1968. [Electronic Source] HU OSA 297-0-1-96574; Radio Liberty (Radio Svoboda) Russian Broadcast Recordings; Open Society Archives at Central European University, Budapest. Accessed December 7, 2019. <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:7fa3ef82-4cc8-4977-82aa-bc05a5d5c954>.

could not be achieved through diplomatic statements. The motives for creation of a European space of Monnet, Borg Oliver, Kovacs and Abdurakhman Avtorkhanov (Professor Temirov), might have been different.¹⁵⁰ Yet, they all involved the feature of recreating a historically uniform European space to address the structural issues behind the global rivalries and endless political, military and ideological struggles.

Common space was not only defined through historical memory – a liberal set of values, within these intellectual circles, was equally as important in defining how a European détente should look in practice. Intellectuals on both sides of the Iron Curtain promoted the ideal of convergence of Eastern and Western Europe along similar liberal socio-political and/or economic norms as a method to achieve a comprehensive diffusion of tensions within the continent. While the superpowers often proclaimed the need for a more comprehensive cooperation framework, they almost always remained vague on concrete details as to not undermine the diplomatic successes of the late 1960s. However, intellectuals challenged this view by providing for a concrete framework that would have permitted a more comprehensive change to occur within the continent. Convergence along the lines of similar social, cultural and political norms was desirable, because the existence of two ideologically antagonistic blocs perpetuated the hostilities and divisions. It ensured that any kind of détente based on the status quo would only be short-term. For European intellectuals and idealists, détente in Europe could not happen without a common,

¹⁵⁰ Abdurakhman Avtorkhanov was a Radio Liberty reporter, who hosted programs on Bolshevik totalitarianism throughout the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s and 1980s.

substantive and comprehensive frame of cooperation, based on acknowledgment of civil and political rights, which theoretically existed across the continent, but practically were pronounced only in the West.¹⁵¹

Even though political elites associated with the European Community were mostly preoccupied with unifying the western part of the continent, some of them did envision convergence with the Eastern Bloc states along similar political and economic norms as a recipe against the lack of stability in Europe. In their view, a comprehensive rapprochement between the societies of Eastern and Western Europe would immediately reduce tensions and, over time, lead to a unification of the continent with positive reverberations around the world. For certain idealistic Western European elites, this is what détente was all about. Perhaps the superpowers, sometimes backed by major European nations, also wanted a certain level of convergence, but they rarely proposed comprehensive measures to spill over détente to matters beyond diplomacy on immediate issues. European intellectuals could not imagine a détente without realignment of Europe along the lines of similar norms sooner, rather than later, which distinguished them from more goal-oriented policymakers in traditional state bureaucracies of the time. Of course, the political elites of the European Community saw détente as a conscious move towards liberalism by the Eastern Bloc and an overall triumph of Western political values in the Cold War. However, the desire to engage and use those ties to diminish the meaning of the Iron Curtain was what

¹⁵¹ Soviet Constitution guaranteed most of the civil and political rights that were present also present in Western constitutions; unfortunately, barely any of them were present in practice. The Constitution can be found here: “Конституция СССР 1936 Года.” Проект «100 главных документов российской истории», accessed April 1, 2020. <http://doc.histrf.ru/20/konstitutsiya-sssr-1936-goda/>.

distinguished them from the superpowers, which practiced a more rigid form of diplomacy at the time.

One of the ideological fathers of the European Community, Altiero Spinelli, argued that Western European integration would not fulfill its purpose if it did not push Eastern European states to converge along the lines of European institution norms. Being one of the most outspoken European federalists, Spinelli did not shy away from advocacy of a common Western European approach to Eastern Europe, which would be based on negotiating power that could be used to draw states from the other side of the Iron Curtain towards a common understanding. He did not want to destroy the Soviet Bloc. Instead, Spinelli wanted to push the Eastern European states to converge along similar sets of rules: “the Community will need all the bargaining power it can summon to negotiate the conditions under which future East-West collaboration takes place. It must, furthermore, be a sufficiently valid interlocutor to be able to assure the Soviet Union of the limited objectives of such a policy: to allow greater pluralism in economic relations, certainly, but without any attempt to weaken the strategic relationships which bind the countries of the Warsaw Pact.”¹⁵² “Greater pluralism in economic relations,” in his vision, meant “less central control, more initiative for industrial enterprises, and the introduction of a realistic, rather than administrative, system of pricing,” which would be achieved through expanded economic contacts.¹⁵³ Acceptance of shared economic norms was the catalyst for

¹⁵² Spinelli, *The European Adventure*, pp. 165-166.

¹⁵³ Ibid p. 165.

unification of Western Europe.¹⁵⁴ Pursuit of similar approach towards Eastern European states would, potentially, draw those states closer to the West and lead to a comprehensive rapprochement. In the end, mutual economic understanding might have seemed as a small step; however, in Spinelli's framework, it could have taken cooperation of two Europes to a new level. Eastern and Western European systems would overlap and could create a new European order. Spinelli advocated for a limited convergence; yet, step by step, the continent would share more and more values, which would lead to a tangible rapprochement, whose potential would be much bigger than any benefits of rigid bilateral negotiations. In Spinelli's view, tensions would not disappear through diplomatic cooperation alone; a real effort had to be done for relaxation of tensions that would be felt by all Europeans.

Other key figures in the creation of the European Community did not elaborate as extensively on particular strategies to converge with the East; however, a lot of them shared Spinelli's sentiment for the need of convergence with the Eastern Bloc. Monnet claimed that real rapprochement could not happen unless there was some common ground with the Eastern Bloc states. In other words, détente could not happen when there was nothing to agree on and no path to tangible benefits for all. He argued in his memoirs that "[the current divisions] would continue to be the case so long as those countries did not conduct their public life according to the principles of freedom, as our democracies did."¹⁵⁵ Monnet

¹⁵⁴ Andrew Moravcsik, *The Choice for Europe: Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht*. (Cornell Studies in Political Economy. Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1998), p. 5.

¹⁵⁵ Monnet, *Memoirs*, p. 475.

pointed to principles of freedom as the ones that would have to be adopted by Eastern European states to expect a coming together of the continent. Conversely, if those states made a conscious attempt to move towards a European understanding of public life, a real détente could happen. Relaxation of tensions in Monnet's framework was impossible without elimination of the cause of that tension. Monnet's pre-conditions made his recipe for détente more complex than the one pursued by policymakers in European and North American capitals, as it denied the possibility of a European détente with no structural changes. The continent could simply not be stabilized in this way. Monnet was arguing for a détente that would fulfill the meaning of the world in its comprehensiveness.

Another father of the European Community, Paul-Henri Spaak, also argued for a convergence along similar economic and political lines with the West as a defining feature of a rapprochement. The first president of the European Parliament and once the head of NATO thought that a détente could not occur without the Soviet Bloc and the West converging within a common set of norms. In memoirs written in 1971, he described a discussion that occurred with the Soviets in the late 1950s – early 1960s on some sort of non-aggression pact between East and West. However, both then and in 1971, Spaak was clear that any type of military pact could only be a culmination, rather than impetus, of détente.¹⁵⁶ This example shows how for European federalists the concept of détente could not be associated with mere diplomatic agreements between statesmen. For Spaak, the

¹⁵⁶ Paul-Henri Spaak, *The Continuing Battle: Memoirs of a European, 1936-1966*. (London: Weidenfeld, 1971), p. 409.

deals that politicians would make could occur only in the aftermath of convergence of both sides around similar norms. There would have to be a sincere coming together of both sides for diplomacy to even become a possibility. Otherwise, any stability achieved would be built on false premises.

Finally, Walter Hallstein, the first President of the European Commission, also implied the importance of common rules, first in Europe and then, perhaps, the world, for stabilization of the international system. In a 1963 speech, he mentioned that “a new method of work, a new form of international life,” practice in Europe, could have wider possibilities. The method of cooperation within the European Community “have shown the way ahead.”¹⁵⁷ While these were vague statements, they did indicate a sense of self-confidence on the part of Hallstein to assume that the whole world would converge ultimately along European norms to foster cooperation. He, as well as other founding fathers of the European Community, saw European values as appropriate to be converged upon and as the only recipe for diffusion of tensions in Europe.

Various European federalists, not technically related to the European Community, also shared a similar ideal of a détente through a norm-based accommodation between the communist and capitalist worlds that could one day lead to European unity. The Action Committee for United States of Europe was particularly vocal in advocacy of convergence between Eastern and Western Europe. Its mission was to publicize the achievements of

¹⁵⁷ Walter Hallstein, *The European Community: A New Path to Peaceful Union*. (Azad Memorial Lectures 1963. New York: Asia PubHouse, 1964), p. 68.

European integration, which would shape the public opinion in favor of European federation.¹⁵⁸ The organization was made up of idealistic members of Western European political parties and unions, who were committed to advocate for Committee's resolutions, which was supposed to give the organization some institutional power.¹⁵⁹ The Action Committee in the late 1960s clearly underlined the importance of convergence between East and West for a creation of a tangible and well-defined détente. For example, a June 15, 1967, resolution called for a creation of a cooperative mechanism between the European Community and the Eastern Bloc states. The Action Committee expressed its wish to see a creation of common rules for both blocs to follow in creating solutions to the problems that were, at the time, dividing the different sides.¹⁶⁰ While the Action Committee was ambiguous as to what those rules mentioned in resolution would be, it nonetheless signified that a common approach of both sides was necessary for both entities on different sides of the Iron Curtain to come together in pursuit of détente. Of course, the European Community enthusiasts wanted the East to move towards the West, rather than vice-versa. However, the very fact that Western Europeans openly were willing to promise to reach out to Eastern European states if convergence was taken seriously signifies an important feature of this interpretation of détente – its willingness to use values to immediately

¹⁵⁸ Monnet, *Memoirs* p. 431.

¹⁵⁹ François Duchene and Jean Monnet, *Jean Monnet: The First Statesman of Interdependence*. (1st ed. New York: Norton, 1994), p. 285.

¹⁶⁰ “Résolution Treizième Session, 15 Juin 1967,” Comité d’Action pour les États-Unis d’Europe, June 15, 1967, in “Activités Au Sein Du Comité d’action Pour Les États-Unis d’Europe (PU-90).” European University Institute: Historical Archives of the European Union, accessed February 12, 2020. <https://archives.eui.eu/en/fonds/189823>.

obscure the physical and intellectual Yalta divide. Relaxation of tensions in Europe as a whole could not start without a common starting point. Only through convergence existing problems could be solved and a comprehensive reduction of tensions could occur.

The idea of a convergence towards the same political norms as a recipe for *détente* was shared by Eastern European thinkers. Of course, European Community did not figure in their writings. However, in content, their proposals also pointed to the need of convergence along the lines of similar political norms as a recipe for a full-scale *détente* that could lead to a tangible resonance around the world. For Polish, Czechoslovak, Russian, Lithuanian and other countries' intellectuals it was important to acknowledge a common European space, but it was only the first step in forging a *détente*. Converging with the West by adopting similar, European, political, economic and social norms was seen as a route to stabilization of the continent and creation of an actual thaw between the capitalist and communist systems of the time. This course of events was seen as one moving beyond policymakers' cooperation. For Eastern Europeans, the ability of both sides of Europe to accept similar norms was understood as a way to create a real framework for an inclusive pacification of the continent. Their acknowledgment of importance of liberal civil and political rights demonstrated their understanding that Western Europe maintained the values that should have existed in the East all along.

The same idea of *Mitteleuropa* that advocated for a European space transcending the Yalta order also invoked the region as a historical site of convergence of norms. Recreation of *Mitteleuropa* was seen as a method to overcome Cold War rivalries and

create a positive living space for all Europeans. Kosik, after all, defined *Mitteleuropa* through political norms. While he used historical context to justify the existence of a space transcending the East-West divide, the importance of liberal political norms, pertinent to the region in the past, were to be an important feature of the new possible rapprochement within the space. Kosik argued that *Mitteleuropa* should be defined through opposition to the authoritarian values that are not European (after all, *Mitteleuropa* was supposed to be a miniature version of an ideal Europe.)¹⁶¹ As Timothy Garton Ash observed, “[*Mitteleuropa*’s] central image is a simple and extremely powerful one: rational, civilized man or woman – a European – stuck between two irrational, uncivilized giants – Gog and Magog, United States and Soviet Union, two giants whose central political objectives have become increasingly further removed from the problems facing the rest of the world, including the Europeans.”¹⁶² Kosik shared this sentiment: “Central Europe consists of a dispute between democracy on the one side and three forms of an undemocratic symbiosis – “Austrianism,” “Prussianism” and Czarism – on the other.”¹⁶³ Central Europe in this framework was the zone where common European norms were to be crafted, which would then reduce global tensions in ways that were impossible for diplomatic détente. The convergent Eastern and Western parts of Europe in this framework were to adopt inherently European values of democracy, plurality, tolerance and “the will to work together and the desire for unity and reconciliation.”¹⁶⁴ Kosik argued for the adoption of same norms in both

¹⁶¹ Kosik, *The Crisis of Modernity*, p. 157.

¹⁶² Betz, “Mitteleuropa and Post-Modern European Identity,” p. 183.

¹⁶³ Kosik, *The Crisis of Modernity*, p. 179.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid p. 179.

East and West as a basis for overcoming the artificial divisions of the Cold War. While he did not use the term *détente*, it is clear that he saw civil and political rights and their inherently Central European nature as a basis for reconciliation of Europe. Otherwise, no matter what kind of good or bad political relations European countries had among themselves, the continent would only be a “a great caricature of European identity” because of its succumb to “modern symbiosis.”¹⁶⁵ *Détente* could not happen if the very same ideals that value cooperation and honesty were trumped. Simultaneous movement towards these values was seen as an antidote to instability of the late 1960s.

The idea of *Mitteleuropa* with inherent European values would continue to reverberate as the real recipe for *détente* even beyond the 1960s. The intellectuals that developed this concept in the 1970s and 1980s were shaped by the promises and betrayals of the late 1960s. They were formed by historical memory of a *Mitteleuropa* based on European values that was totally disregarded by policymakers preaching reconciliation between East and West. *Détente* was imagined by these people to develop ultimately to democratization of the Eastern Bloc, with Central European countries leading the way.¹⁶⁶ The hope would evaporate by the end of the 1960s, but the ideas that Kosik, among others, espoused in 1968 would be built on in the coming decades. Intellectuals on both sides of the Iron Curtain persistently pointed to convergence of Europe as the recipe for reconciliation of the Yalta order, which was seen as inherently flawed and artificial. Milan

¹⁶⁵ Ibid p. 179.

¹⁶⁶ Szulecki, “Heretical Geopolitics of Central Europe,” p.25.

Kundera, who left Czechoslovakia right after 1968, advocated for a central Europe transcending these injustices of the Cold War order. For him, in Georg-Betz's view, Central Europe was to be "...a family of equal nations, each of which – treating the others with mutual respect and secure in the protection of a strong, unified state – would cultivate also [that state's] own individuality."¹⁶⁷ In this framework, sovereignty is key; yet, it is protected by a democratic international system, based on respect and equality. In Kundera's mindset, if these features would have had the chance to define both sides of the Iron Curtain, a true political thaw could occur between East and West. The region was defined by, as Georg-Betz mentioned quoting Kundera, "the great common situations that resemble peoples, [the situations that] regroup [peoples] in ever new ways along the imaginary and ever-changing boundaries that make a realm inhabited by the same memories, the same problems and conflicts, the same common tradition."¹⁶⁸ For people like Kundera, shaped by the late 1960s, détente could not be a diplomatic process. After all, it did not provide tangible benefits in peoples everyday lives in East and West. Failure to acknowledge common norms, let alone converge towards them, predestined the collapse of Europeans' détente. Relaxation of tensions did not occur because of failure to fulfill European citizens' desire to assert common values.

Mittleuropa was also not the only concept developed within the lands of Eastern Bloc that envisioned a détente through convergence. For some intellectuals, a movement

¹⁶⁷ Betz, "Mittleuropa and Post-Modern European Identity," p. 189.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid p. 190.

towards a common cultural and political set of rules was a continuation of how their states functioned in the past. One example of this type of framework can be found in the works of Polish Nobel Prize winning writer Czesław Miłosz. For most of the Cold War, Miłosz lived in the West. Yet, in his works he defined the whole continent as his home: “I could call Europe my home, but it was a home that refused to acknowledge itself as a whole; instead as if on the strength of some self-imposed taboo, it classified its population into two categories: members of the family and poor relations.”¹⁶⁹ For Miłosz, Eastern Europeans, as people, were different from Western Europeans in some important ways: “delays, absurd decisions, political campaigns, mutual recriminations, public opinion polls and demagoguery” were supposedly inherently Western and not-understandable to Eastern Europeans.¹⁷⁰ However, Miłosz continued to argue that precisely these notions “afford some guarantee that the father of a family will return home for supper instead of taking a trip to a region where polar bears thrive but human beings do not.”¹⁷¹ The Polish intellectual was adamant about the two categories of Europe disappearing. All Europeans should have become members of the European family. That could only be done, however, if the East abandoned the totalitarian ways of life and embraced the oftentimes redundant Western values, which would lead to the former’s acceptance as a “member of the family.” That was the only recipe for détente. For a relaxation of tensions to happen, Europe had to

¹⁶⁹ Czesław Miłosz, *Native Realm: A Search for Self-Definition*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), p. 2.

¹⁷⁰ Czesław Miłosz, *The Captive Mind*. (Vintage International ed. New York: Vintage International, 1990), p. 31.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid* p. 31.

recognize itself as whole and proclaim the continent's uniformity in terms of cultural and political norms. Even more, Milosz defined his ideal for a European future based on early modern European history. In his mindset, Europe as a whole, based on similar rights, had existed before. The writer pointed to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth throughout the 1968 book *Native Realm*, as well as his other writings and interviews, as a place, where liberal values and multiculturalism had existed and transcended ethnic boundaries before these values became Westernized. There was no reason for this particular historical reality to be recreated. Nevertheless, Europe could be made whole only through a mutual effort of convergence towards the European values.

There were also some Eastern European intellectuals who advocated for convergence within European space along similar norms without any historical rationales. For them, this process was a subsequent step to détente which was already happening; yet, without this step an actual thaw in the continent could not occur. These intellectuals were, therefore, building on policymakers' attempts to stabilize the system. No one exemplified this idea of convergence along similar norms within the European (and trans-Atlantic) sphere better than the Soviet physicist and intellectual Andrei Sakharov. While mostly arguing for a Soviet-American rapprochement, it is clear from Sakharov's writing that the processes he defined had to occur in the European space. The Soviet physicist outlined his proposals in a 1968 essay titled "Progress, Coexistence and Intellectual Freedom." Sakharov argued that the mankind was "threatened with destruction" and that "freedom of thought is the only guarantee against an infection of people by mass myths, which, in the

hands of treacherous hypocrites and demagogues, can be transformed into bloody dictatorship.” “The international policies of the world's two leading superpowers (the United States and the Soviet Union) must be based on a universal acceptance of unified and general principles,” such as freedom of expression, ban on military-economic forms of aggression, and a “strive toward mutual help in economic, cultural, and general-organizational problems with the aim of eliminating painlessly all domestic and international difficulties and preventing a sharpening of international tensions.”¹⁷² Therefore, Sakharov pointed to the importance to converge along similar norms in order for a rapprochement to mean a peaceful coexistence beyond mere words. Soviet Union’s political reality did not possess features of outward intellectual freedom. Yet, in Sakharov’s mindset, only an embrace of this concept would allow a scientific approach to international politics, which would rationally lead to peace. Since the Western polities did possess this feature, the East should have also moved to that direction to converge so that an actual thaw and relaxation of tensions could happen. The world, in Sakharov’s opinion, was ready to abandon divisions, and “Intellectual freedom of society [would] facilitate and smooth the way for this trend toward patience, flexibility, and a security from dogmatism, fear, and adventurism. All mankind, including its best-organized and most active forces, the working class and the intelligentsia, is interested in freedom and security.”¹⁷³ Sakharov noted that

¹⁷² Sakharov, “Progress, Coexistence and Intellectual Freedom.”

¹⁷³ Ibid.

his views represented the views of Soviet intellectual milieus. These thoughts were widespread and, ultimately, relevant to ideological currents in the Eastern Bloc and beyond.

Even if the essay itself was more directly dedicated to Soviet-American relations, its meaning was pertinent to processes within the continent. Détente had to manifest itself in Europe if it was to be felt by the Cold War world at all. What Sakharov had argued for was, essentially, the same approach to détente that existed among central European advocates from *Mitteleuropa*, European Community's elites advocating for a common framework with the East, and émigré communities, which left the East for the West, but which strived for a comprehensive détente beyond policymakers' maneuvers. Radio Liberty, an institution swarmed with Russian émigrés seeing Russia as inherently part of European culture, saw Sakharov's essay as a model for détente. For example, their August 4, 1968, broadcast of a talk-show "Events. Facts. Opinions." mentioned Sakharov's essay as a plan of action, which provided a different recipe for rapprochement than the one advocated by policymakers. The reporter positioned the Soviet physicist's approach within the general framework of the convergence theory, which was popular in the West. The émigré talk-show host agreed with Sakharov's approach, because it was, in his view, realistic. For a détente to happen, both the East and the West had to move closer to each other politically and economically i.e. the East had to decentralize, while the West had to centralize. The fact that the Western European states were adopting welfare state models

was, for him, proof that convergence can happen with the West on a common basis, which would then lead to further thaws in relationship.¹⁷⁴

This one program was not an exception to the rule: in fact, Sakharov's ideas of the late 1960s featured prominently in Radio Liberty broadcasting, which demonstrates the shared desire of the émigré community for a European based convergence. In between mid-1968 and April 1969, Sakharov's call for increased intellectual and social openness and exchanges between the blocs was read and discussed on the air at least fifteen times.¹⁷⁵ Soviet intelligentsia that travelled abroad confirmed that Sakharov's advocacy of convergence between East and West was vigorously gaining ground in the Soviet Union.¹⁷⁶ Similar thoughts were also shared by other émigré communities. American-Lithuanian daily newspaper *Draugas* reported on Sakharov's essay one day after its publication on the New York Times with a headline "Sakharov Supports Freedom in the Soviet Land." The article summarized the main points of the essay and mentions that the Soviet physicist's thoughts are shared by the Soviet intelligentsia and Western public.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁴ "Events, Facts, Opinions", 04 August 1968 [Electronic Resource]. HU OSA 297-0-1-96113; Radio Liberty (Radio Svoboda) Russian Broadcast Recordings; Open Society Archives at Central European University, Budapest. Accessed December 4, 2019. <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:0098d0ae-28b6-4867-b9c5-7dd2262b7f5b>.

¹⁷⁵ This number was defined after an online search of the Open Society Archive ("Osa Archivum Catalog," accessed December 10, 2019. http://catalog.osaarchivum.org/?f%5Bprimary_type_facet%5D%5B%5D=Audio&q=sakharov&range%5Bdate_created_facet%5D%5Bbegin%5D=1969&range%5Bdate_created_facet%5D%5Bend%5D=1969&search_field=dummy_range.)

¹⁷⁶ Victor Cohn, "Soviet Scientist's Call for Freedom Widely Shared: Reported by Scientists." The Washington Post, Times Herald (1959-1973), Nov 10, 1968. <http://ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/docview/143367324?accountid=7118>.

¹⁷⁷ "Zacharovas už laisvę Sovietuose," *Draugas*, July 30, 1968, <https://www.epaveldas.lt/object/recordDescription/LNB/C1B0001661471>.

Sakharov's thoughts reverberated in the émigré communities. The framework laid out in essay "Progress, Coexistence and Intellectual Freedom" created a sense that coming together of the continent was possible, that was is a concrete method to achieve that, and that there was a critical mass of people on both sides of the Iron Curtain that strived for this type of rapprochement. Its popular appeal would guarantee relaxation of tensions in ways that were impossible for diplomatic détente. It was building on policymakers' actions, but it was also pushing the limits of diplomatic cooperation to the extent where détente would have to be redefined based on public's, not statesmen's, goals. Sakharov's approach was one of a gradual movement to pacification of the trans-Atlantic (and, by extension, European) sphere. Perhaps his approach did not explicitly advocate European space or European values. Nonetheless, in content, it was not that dissimilar from what European integrationists in the West or Central Europe advocates in the Eastern Bloc desired. Both sides shared a desire for convergence within a well-defined European and trans-Atlantic sphere.

This view of détente through convergence of political norms within the European space was not only shared by intellectuals. The public discourse in the West strived for a comprehensive rapprochement, which was often seen from reactions to even minor assaults on civil and political rights in Eastern Europe. This is not to say that diplomatic initiatives between the superpowers and between Western and Eastern European states were not welcomed. They produced a sense of growing cooperation, in a time when reality was often defined by government action. However, this approach did not address the structural issues

plaguing the continent, mostly stemming from the existence of the Iron Curtain. They only entrenched the status quo and some intellectuals were responding to that with their counterproposal for détente that would have depoliticized the Cold War and, thus, allowed for a meaningful rapprochement. This dynamic of tension between the relaxed Cold War tensions, which, nonetheless, were mostly focused on intergovernmental and not societal ties, is well seen from the trial of Soviet writers Andrei Sinyavsky and Yuli Daniel, which took place in the second half of the 1960s. The event was taken up as an example by Western media of the importance of convergence of norms for stabilization of the continent. It represented a totalitarian attempt to curb Eastern Bloc's population's desire to converge with the West along the same political norms.

Sinyavsky-Daniel Trial: Intelligentsia's Détente Curbed

Sinyavsky-Daniel trial represented the tensions between ordinary Europeans' desire for a common European space engrained in common culture and identity, and a détente that was present in the headlines, but not necessarily in everyday life. The trial took place on February 10-13, 1966, at roughly the same time the first signs of détente were emerging with Johnson's bridge-building initiative. At the same time as diplomats were thinking of ways to strengthen bilateral ties, numerous artists from both sides of the Yalta divide were looking for ways to recreate a common European artistic canon limiting the

damage done by the artificial East-West separation.¹⁷⁸ Sinyavsky and Daniel were parts of this movement only to crystalize the difference between various types of détente that were desired in the trans-Atlantic world. Daniel was a verse translator, who also had several short stories written under a pseudonym and published in the West. Sinyavski was a staff member of the Gorky Institute of World Literature in Moscow, who also had his work published in France under the pseudonym of Abram Tertz after the manuscripts were smuggled out of the USSR by a French acquaintance.¹⁷⁹ The acts of sending literature abroad without government's knowledge was pushing the limits of existing Cold War divides.

Daniel's and Sinyavsky's activities implied a conscious attempt to bring the Soviet (and, by default, Eastern European) standards of openness to the ones of the West through a cultural exchange with Western Europeans. This was not uncommon from other Eastern European writers of the late 1960s.¹⁸⁰ The Soviet authorities, however, were disappointed that these authors sent their works to be published to the West without their knowledge. In addition, those satirical pieces were critical of life in the Soviet Union. Therefore, the Soviet regime decided to sentence these authors to jail in order to warn other writers, who might have felt similarly about their identity as European literary figures, against

¹⁷⁸ Szulecki, "Heretical Geopolitics of Central Europe," p. 29.

¹⁷⁹ David Caute, *Politics and the Novel during the Cold War*. (New Brunswick, N.J: Transaction Publishers, 2010), p. 219.

¹⁸⁰ "[Radio Liberty's News Programme]", 14 September 1967 [Electronic Resource]. HU OSA 297-0-1-96745; Radio Liberty (Radio Svoboda) Russian Broadcast Recordings; Open Society Archives at Central European University, Budapest. Accessed December 4, 2019. <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:7a7e7c9a-ae3e-49b1-bb87-00ebafe57227>.

publishing in the West without the knowledge of the authorities. The reaction to the trial was volatile, as both Soviet intelligentsia and Western intellectuals were unhappy about the assault on freedom of expression.¹⁸¹ Both Sinyavsky and Daniel were appreciated in Western Europe as writers who were part of the European tradition. Literature was something that did not succumb to the East-West divide in neither Western, nor Eastern European worlds; Sinyavsky and Daniel were understood as parts of an explicitly European literary family tackling with their writing the lack of European political norms in Eastern Europe. For example, critics compared Sinyavsky's writing with that of ETA Hoffman, Nikolai Gogol, Franz Kafka, George Orwell, and Henry Miller, among others, showing that the Iron Curtain could not preclude the fact of a common European intellectual heritage. In this framework, Soviet writers were no different from their Western colleagues and there was no reason to build up artificial political barriers and, more importantly, put people to jail for trying to cross them.¹⁸² The fact that Soviet authorities put constraints on authors' ability to publish in the West and be critical of their states was fundamentally anti-European, especially at a time when the Soviet Politburo was led by individuals like Brezhnev and Kosygin, who, supposedly, were striving for closer ties with the West.

Sinyavsky and Daniel experiences proved the existence of a common European space with people that had similar views on what it meant to be a European and who were ready to defend those notions. The writers were challenging the idea that Europe was

¹⁸¹ Walter F Kolonosky, *Literary Insinuations: Sorting out Sinyavsky's Irreverence*. (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2003), pp. 11-15.

¹⁸² Ibid, pp. 16-18.; David Caute. *Politics and the Novel during the Cold War*, p. 225.

inherently divided into communist and capitalist blocs. They appealed to their right to be published and appreciated within their cultural European sphere. Sinyavsky and Daniel claimed a European space to exist, whose division could be challenged through the idea that Soviet authors could write about the same things as Western authors. Lack of ability from policymakers to acknowledge that was destabilizing the continent. Artistic currents might have been temporarily detached after the creation of Yalta order, but they were once again converging and single-handedly pushing for relaxation of tensions only to be curbed by state power. February 1966 was still before the upcoming intensification of bilateral diplomatic ties between East and West. Yet, as the time would go on, the trial would have no effect on détente as it unfolded. Sinyavsky and Daniel clashed with the status quo, but superpowers' policymakers wanted to work within the system, not break it, as that seemed more productive for the moment.

Nonetheless, some elements within the general European public connected to the experiences of Sinyavsky and Daniel, and were disgruntled by the fact that a Cold War superpower, interested in the continuation of a divided continent, put a lid on historical destiny. The free press of the time covered the trial extensively and journalists were antagonistic to Soviet authorities' actions. Throughout February 1966, the French *Le Monde* extensively covered the trial. Most of the information in the daily issues was based on Soviet news agency's TASS reports, but there were also some opinion pieces from French journalists and public figures. Par Etienne, a professor at the Literature Department at University of Paris, was baffled as to why publishing books abroad was a

criminal act. These kinds of acts from the Soviet authorities, in his view, did not help to reconcile socialism with freedom.¹⁸³ The author did not necessarily tie the trial to an assault on European values, but he was pointing to the offbeat attempt by an Eastern Bloc government to prevent intra-bloc communication. French communist leader Louis Aragon also condemned the trial as one that was tainting the nature of communism.¹⁸⁴ Indeed, the trial created a stark divide between the Soviet and Western European communist parties. European communists throughout the western part of the continent reaffirmed their belief in freedom and the split between liberal Euro-Communists and neo-Stalinists deepened.¹⁸⁵ The fact that the cultural canon could not converge made some French intellectuals to feel that an actual, comprehensive détente, was being curbed. The Iron Curtain was being strengthened in a time when statesmen in East and West spoke about cooperation.

Even harsher critiques in the name of a European détente were made in the Eastern Bloc émigré journalism. Radio Liberty was particularly uncompromising in its critiques of the trial for the same reasons as the European public. For example, the January 15, 1967, Radio Liberty broadcast was focused on the nature of the accusations for which Sinyavsky and Daniel were convicted. “Facts. Events. Opinions.” talk-show experts were comparing Soviet methods to curb intellectual freedom with those used by Gestapo (Nazi Germany’s secret police). In their opinion, a particularly alarming issue was that the writers were

¹⁸³ Par Etienne, “Pour Siniavski et Daniel,” *Le Monde*, February 11, 1966.

¹⁸⁴ Louis Aragon, “C’est faire du délit d’opinion un crime d’option,” *Le Monde*, February 17, 1966.

¹⁸⁵ David Caute, *Politics and the Novel during the Cold War*, p. 225.

deemed anti-Soviet to imply that they were treasonous to their country.¹⁸⁶ Within this framework, Soviet émigré journalists saw Russia as literally being detached from European intellectual life because of the Soviet government's desire to promote itself in opposition to Western culture. Radio programs also called for institutional change in the Soviet Union through rectification of results of this particular trial, which could be interpreted as a call to Europeanize their approach. A news program from September 1967 called for amnesty of the two writers as a precursor to liberalization, which would then potentially lead to closer ties with the U.S.¹⁸⁷ The American-Lithuanian *Keleivis* noted that Daniel and Sinyavsky were put to jail because they consciously sent their work to the West. According to the newspaper, "this case study, especially for the détente minded fellow Lithuanians, should demonstrate what kind of liberty exists in the Soviet Union."¹⁸⁸ *Draugas*, reported on this event with a headline that underlined the relationship between the trial and the writers' contacts with the West: "Jail for Cultural Contacts with the West."¹⁸⁹ These journalists, therefore, stressed that a real détente with Soviets could not exist, because they were trampling what these Lithuanians saw as fundamental rights of a tangible

¹⁸⁶ "Facts. Events. Opinions.", 15 January 1967. [Electronic Resource] HU OSA 297-0-1-97117; Radio Liberty (Radio Svoboda) Russian Broadcast Recordings; Open Society Archives at Central European University, Budapest. Accessed December 11, 2019. <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:103e56a5-8351-4941-82ee-b94cff16a5df>.

¹⁸⁷ "[Radio Liberty's News Programme]", 14 September 1967.; also, this and the previous one could be referenced to my past paper.

¹⁸⁸ "Komunistai teisia du rašytojus," *Keleivis*, February 16, 1966.

<https://www.epaveldas.lt/object/recordDescription/LNB/C1B0002293646>.

¹⁸⁹ "Kalėjimas už kultūrinį bendravimą su vakarais," *Draugas*, February 15, 1966.

<https://www.epaveldas.lt/object/recordDescription/LNB/C1B0001661471>.

rapprochement. Soviet authors were literally prevented from being within the European literary canon and that was unacceptable.

The Sinyavsky-Daniel trial signifies that despite the Iron Curtain the idea of a common European space converging along the same cultural and political norms was well and alive throughout the continent. The writers saw themselves and were seen by their peers as members of a pan-European artistic community. They also saw their work as relevant to Westerners, which only undermined the existence of the East-West divide. When these authors were detached from the West by government coercion, the main critique of this action came precisely from détente-minded Europeans. For them, détente could not occur if a common European space, converging along similar socio-political norms, would not be acknowledged.

Conclusion

Détente in the late 1960s was a contested notion. While everyone could agree that détente meant a “relaxation of tensions” of sorts, different individuals had contrasting visions about what a real détente should entail, how it should function, and what it was supposed to lead to. Together, these contrasting intellectual currents created a certain atmosphere within the continent, where the powerful, yet fluid, notion of détente defined political thinking of the late 1960s. Eventually, the two main approaches to détente entailed either a move towards the entrenchment of the status quo or a move towards the erasure of

the Iron Curtain's significance. These two streams, which vibrantly coexisted within the European space, were in constant tension and defined the political climate of the late 1960s.

On the one hand, the policymakers of the superpowers assumed that détente would focus on the entrenchment of the status quo. Both the United States and the Soviet Union had internal social and economic problems, partly prompted by the global Cold War that they were waging, and the stabilization of the situation seemed to be in the interest of both countries. Occasionally, other influential European powers, such as France, bought into this framework as well. This is not to say that the superpowers decided to leave each other alone. U.S. leaders saw stabilization of the international system as the first step to further cooperation with the Eastern Bloc. However, in the short term, both powers saw détente as the entrenchment of the status quo, as both the Americans and the Soviets sought to create a framework where they could work on mutual points of interest. Structural redefinitions of the international order were not to happen. Détente resembled a truce, rather than a peace treaty.

In parallel, however, different notions of détente were forming. Inspired by diplomatic developments, Western and Eastern European intellectuals and idealistic elites sought to push détente to an actual diminution of the Iron Curtain, which they saw as the sources of instability in the world. Some intellectuals in East and West both suggested common European space as a way to overcome the Cold War divisions. It was the recipe for a tangible and lasting détente. Of course, these discourses, coming from elites associated with the European Community, leaders of smaller European states, and Eastern

European dissidents and public intellectuals might have themselves been products of the Cold War. In many ways, a lot of these discourses put emphasis on defining Europe through Western, rather than Soviet, interpretation of history and norms. Nonetheless, in many cases, especially in Eastern Europe, these intellectuals that saw the idea of Europe as salvation positioned themselves in opposition to both the Soviet Union and the United States. Assertion of European identity was a way to diminish the Iron Curtain, stabilize the Euro-centric Cold War world and redefine the international system.

Together, the tension between these developments created a certain atmosphere, where the idea of *détente* was fluid. Different notions competed and influenced each other, creating an interesting dynamic, where bottom-up and top-down movements for *détente* constantly influenced and delineated each other. They affected the social forces in East and West, as well as the way the international system was perceived. Numerous events and developments, such as the functioning of RFE/RL, Sinyavsky-Daniel trial, and diplomatic negotiations of the late 1960s were affected by the tension behind the meaning of the term *détente*. However, no other event represented these tensions as well as the Czechoslovak crisis, which consisted of Prague Spring and the subsequent Warsaw Pact invasion. The event was defined by the tensions surrounding the term “*détente*.” It was internally driven by the rapidly evolving nature of *détente*; it was also understood internationally through the globally felt confusion as to what *détente* should ultimately mean.

Part II: Czechoslovakia in the Midst of Détente(s)

On August 20, 1968, at 11:00 PM Central European time, or 1:00 AM Moscow time, Soviet Tactical Air Army forces took control of a number of airports throughout Czechoslovakia. The Soviet Union, together with its Warsaw Pact allies East Germany, Poland, Hungary, and Bulgaria, started their invasion to Czechoslovakia. By the morning of August 21, the whole country was occupied.¹⁹⁰ The military operation was a response to the process of liberalization, dubbed as Prague Spring, which had been unfolding throughout 1968. In January, the neo-Stalinist communist General Secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, Antonin Novotny, was outvoted and replaced by a reformist communist Alexander Dubcek. While the orthodox wing maintained some influence for a while, by April Novotny was forced to resign from his position as president and all of his allies were purged. Soon, the new Czechoslovak leadership embraced reforms aimed to liberalize civil and economic life.¹⁹¹ Brezhnev and other Eastern Bloc countries' leaders were worried that the reforms were moving too fast and that Dubcek was not addressing his fellow communist leaders' anxieties. By consensus, the August 20-21 invasion was swiftly agreed upon on August 18.¹⁹²

¹⁹⁰ Dawisha, *The Kremlin and the Prague Spring* p. 319-320.

¹⁹¹ Hitchcock, *The Struggle for Europe*, pp. 288-290.

¹⁹² “Стенограмма Совещания в Москве Представителей Коммунистических и Рабочих Партий Народной Республики Болгарии, Венгерской Республики, Германской Демократической Республики, Польской Народной Республики и Союза Советских Социалистических Республик,” August 18, 1968, in *«Пражская Весна» и Международный Кризис 1968 Года*, N.G. Tomilin ed pp. 232-237.

While Soviet troops were storming airfields around Czechoslovakia, the atmosphere in Washington, DC, was relatively calm. The U.S. officials were unwilling to acknowledge the likelihood of the invasion until it actually happened. Only a few days before, the Americans and the Soviets agreed to issue a joint statement on August 21 that would announce President Johnson's intention to travel to Soviet Union to initiate negotiations for the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT).¹⁹³ As rumors spread about an imminent Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia on August 21, Secretary of State Rusk was reluctant to draw clear cut conclusions, as, in his view, the Soviet leaders would not have agreed to announce a superpowers summit if they had planned something as egregious as an invasion of sovereign state at the same day.¹⁹⁴ Americans simply did not want to believe that they would have to deal with a military invasion in Europe on top of all the other problems Johnson and his aides had to address every day. By late Summer of 1968, Johnson's administration was exhausted of various publicly lauded failures, most notably its mismanagement of the military operation in Vietnam. United States diplomats were desperate for at least some foreign policy successes, and they were feeling hopeful after the signing of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in July 1968. Soviet military action could derail détente, which was already in full swing in 1968, and it was not something American policymakers wanted to anticipate.

¹⁹³ Kyle Longley, *LBJ's 1968: Power, Politics, and the Presidency in America's Year of Upheaval*. (Cambridge: University Press, 2018), p. 186.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid pp. 187-188.

As the Soviet invasion became a reality, the United States officials responded with myriad non-responses. When the Soviet ambassador to the United States Anatoly Dobrynin informed Johnson on the evening of August 20 about the Warsaw Pact military intervention, the President seemed reluctant to comprehend and react to the situation. In a way, it seemed that he barely noticed the statement.¹⁹⁵ Johnson insisted on talking with Dobrynin about the upcoming summit, which totally shocked the Soviet ambassador.¹⁹⁶ To be fair to American policymakers, the United States did react after some time to the crisis in a more dramatic fashion. In the United Nations Security Council meeting, United States Ambassador George Ball condemned Soviet-style communism and compared its promotion to attempts at growing mushrooms that physiologically always disintegrate in the heat of sun rays (in this case, sun rays represented Western-type of freedom). The Security Council attempted to condemn the Warsaw Pact intervention, but the resolution was vetoed by the Soviet Union and critiqued by its ally Hungary.¹⁹⁷ Nevertheless, when it came to long-term planning, the aggressive Soviet policy did not alter American policymakers' desire to pursue détente. Rusk cancelled the upcoming Soviet-American summit and Johnson imposed some minor sanctions on the Soviets, such as the cancellation of the second inaugural flight of a Soviet commercial jet to the United States.¹⁹⁸ The United States statesmen were not happy about the invasion and it cooled the international climate

¹⁹⁵ Schwartz, *Lyndon Johnson and Europe*, p. 217.

¹⁹⁶ Longley, *LBJ's 1968*, p. 190.

¹⁹⁷ "Sovietų Sąjunga rugpjūčio 20 d. užėmė Čekoslovakiją," *Keleivis*, August 28, 1968.
<https://www.epaveldas.lt/object/recordDescription/LNB/C1B0002293646>.

¹⁹⁸ Longley, *LBJ's 1968*, p. 192;199.

within which détente was developing. However, the Soviets themselves were eager to come back to the pre-Prague Spring atmosphere of diplomatic thaw and Johnson wanted to leave the presidency as a peacemaker, which prompted him even to ask Richard Nixon for an approval of a last-minute visit to Moscow after the 1968 election.¹⁹⁹ None of the superpowers wanted to abandon their stakes in defining the climate for diplomatic cooperation. Détente remained to be constructed in a top-down fashion and if the United States and the Soviet Union chose not to make the Warsaw Pact invasion in Czechoslovakia a big deal, that was their prerogative.

A few blocks away from the White House, the Soviet military action was interpreted as the end of détente. Having offices both in Washington DC and Munich, West Germany, the United States-funded RFE/RL was somewhat accountable to American policymakers in terms of the content they put on air. Nevertheless, that did not mean that people, mostly of Eastern European origin, who ran the radio programs on a daily basis followed the government line. The radios had two main goals: to give voice to dissidents and opposition of Eastern European states with the purpose of creation of a civil society; and to push the Eastern European communist parties in a more liberal and national direction. Oftentimes, this was done through a conscious attempt to provide examples of political institutions in Western Europe so that Eastern Europeans could contextualize their own existence within the intellectual space encompassing both East and West.²⁰⁰ In a sense,

¹⁹⁹ Schwartz, *Lyndon Johnson and Europe*, p. 220.

²⁰⁰ Johnson, *Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty* pp. 135-136.

the reporters promoted détente based on structural and comprehensive convergence of East and West in the European space, rather than limited cooperation that was, at least for the short-term, employed by Western policymakers. No wonder that RFE/RL's response to the Prague Spring corresponded to their own vision of détente. Throughout the Summer, Radio Liberty actively disseminated and analyzed Sakharov's essay "Progress, Coexistence, and Intellectual Freedom," which corresponded to the spirit of Czechoslovak reforms that prompted the Soviet invasion. An August 4, 1968, program passionately defended the Soviet physicist's idea of convergence of East and West, based on, among other things, Eastern European countries' decentralization and, therefore, liberalization of political system, which would move towards the Western model. The proof of the possibility of this type of convergence, as the reporter noted, was the proliferation of welfare states in the West.²⁰¹ Czechoslovakia and its leaders' ambition to create "socialism with a human face" fit into this theory and gave hope to some intellectuals that convergence could become synonymous to détente. After all, in early August 1968, it seemed that as this was precisely the case. No wonder that RFE/RL reporters were very angry about the brutish invasion against a reforming Eastern Bloc country.²⁰² For them, détente died the moment Soviet troops entered Czechoslovakia.

²⁰¹ "Events, Facts, Opinions", 04 August 1968.

²⁰² Professor Temirov's rant is only one example of many. "[Conversation with Professor Temirov] / [Czechoslovakia]", 21 August 1968 [Electronic Resource]. HU OSA 297-0-1-27840; Radio Liberty (Radio Svoboda) Russian Broadcast Recordings; Open Society Archives at Central European University, Budapest. Accessed on November 26, 2019. <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:335229a1-1304-48e0-844d-18db04d8044c>.

Prague Spring and the subsequent Warsaw Pact invasion to Czechoslovakia in August 1968 serve as a good case study to assess the different, yet interconnected, interpretations of détente within the late 1960s context. Prague Spring was a monumental event, which reverberated around the world. An Eastern Bloc country attempted to reform itself without refusing to abandon its socialist foundations altogether but, nonetheless, was still brought back with force to its pre-designed place within the Yalta order. In addition, the whole process unfolded in a time when different stakeholders in East and West, from policymakers to intellectuals, were thinking of ways to embrace and shape the détente that was initiated by the Soviet, Western European and American statesmen. This part of the thesis will argue that the events in Czechoslovakia in 1968 were both internally and externally largely defined by different interpretations of détente that various stakeholders held. Prague Spring and its consequences demonstrated the influence and the effects of embracing détente at a time when the process itself was not very well defined. The responses to Prague Spring throughout 1968 defined détente and its pitfalls for the years to come.

Czechoslovakia as the Embodiment of the International System

Prague Spring is crucial in understanding détente, as the event itself and its aftermath represented all the tensions surrounding the future of relations between East and West. It is important to understand the internal contradictions that existed in Czechoslovakia and its links to the global movement towards détente, as that contextualizes

the emergence of Prague Spring as a part of an international discussion on the merits and functioning of rapprochement. Czechoslovakia in the years leading to 1968 was a country characterized by orthodox neo-Stalinist communists who sought to entrench the state within the world defined by the Iron Curtain. At the same time, the Czechoslovak Communist Party was affected by bottom-up intellectual currents, which, among other things, wanted to redefine their state's role within the international order through internal reform and, in a way, to reposition Czechoslovakia as a European state thus diminishing the importance of the Iron Curtain. Interestingly enough, both sides saw détente as a chance to strive for improvement of Czechoslovak well-being, but the methods and goals, especially when it came to definition of Czechoslovakia's place in the Cold War world, were different.

By 1968, Czechoslovakia was in a state of rigid stagnation, partly because of its political elites' rooting in the Yalta order. Politically, the country was ruled by a communist party that was not interested in a broad and comprehensive rapprochement with anyone outside of the Eastern Bloc. Its leader, Antonin Novotny, had a tight grip on the political situation in Czechoslovakia, which he used to entrench the legitimacy of his regime precisely within the post-Second World War order. During his tenure from 1953 to 1968, the most powerful state institutions in Czechoslovakia were tightly intertwined with Soviet power structures, which made sure that the country would not slip from the communist orbit. For example, the Ministry of Interior's Prague office was swarmed with Soviet informants, who served both Novotny and the Soviet leadership in maintaining the

country's communist course. Out of the 10,000 full-time employees, roughly 30% were also working for the Soviets, which made sure that Czechoslovak society and political structures did not deviate from Eastern Bloc political dogmas.²⁰³ Personally, Novotny entrenched Czechoslovakia's position within the Yalta order through political trials and purges of the 1950s, which drove away all moderate and reformist communists, let alone other politicians and intellectuals, from the public sphere.²⁰⁴ In the late 1960s, the memories of these show trials were still very fresh and defined the public perception of the Czechoslovak Communist Party.²⁰⁵

Furthermore, Czechoslovakia was economically tied with the Eastern Bloc, which only augmented the regime's perceived need to entrench itself within the international system defined by the Iron Curtain. Just like any other Warsaw Pact member, its international economic position disincentivized the need for a deeper détente to overcome economic problems. Throughout the 1960s, Czechoslovakia was stagnating economically and experienced a recession, but the neo-Stalinist leadership was reluctant to address the problems.²⁰⁶ Czechoslovak policymakers chose not to seek out for extensive help outside its bloc, mostly due to the nature of the international system of the time. One of Czechoslovakia's biggest trading partner was the Soviet Union, with which it had massive

²⁰³ Dawisha, *The Kremlin and the Prague Spring*, p. 53.

²⁰⁴ Hitchcock, *The Struggle for Europe*, pp. 288-289.

²⁰⁵ As seen from the condemnations of these purges in the Two Thousand Words Manifesto. More in Ludvik Vaculik, "Two Thousand Words," PWF.cz. Accessed March 15, 2020. https://www.pwf.cz/rubriky/projects/1968/ludvik-vaculik-two-thousand-words_849.html.

²⁰⁶ Hitchcock, *The Struggle for Europe*, p. 288.

and comprehensive trade agreements.²⁰⁷ The country did open up to trade and financial loans from the West in 1967, which moderately increased during the last years of the decade.²⁰⁸ However, the regime still avoided further economic liberalization, which was a consciously created obstacle to further rapprochement between East and West. As seen from the Czechoslovak case, the European Community's goal to use trade to push the Eastern Bloc states to economic liberalization was, at least at that moment, failing. In addition, despite an increasingly difficult economic situation, the Czechoslovak leadership also rejected economic aid offers from communist China, which was at odds with the Soviet Union at the time. Czechoslovak regime opted for loyalty to the Warsaw Pact.²⁰⁹ Therefore, Czechoslovakia remained a dedicated member of the post-Yalta order politically and economically. The country's leadership did not have a controlling stake in the international system, but it did its act to maintain the Iron Curtain normality within Europe with some minor advances in trade to the West. Before 1968, Czechoslovakia was buying into the détente's ideal shared by Soviet policymakers, which created a sense of stability and status quo.

The Soviet leadership actively promoted this type of behavior. The Politburo was plotting a détente with the West, but for them it did not entail a fundamental realignment of its allies in either the short or the long term. Brezhnev and his team were happy to see

²⁰⁷ As seen from the USSR-Czechoslovak communications of the time. For example, "Постановление Политбюро ЦК КПСС 'О вопросах, поставленных первым секретарем ЦК КПЧ, Президентом ЧССР т. Новотным'," March 16, 1967, in "Чехословацкий Кризис 1967-1969 гг. в Документах" edited by N.G. Tomlin, (Москва: Росспэн, 2010), pp. 14-19.

²⁰⁸ Lerner, "Trying to Find the Guy Who Invited Them," p. 89.

²⁰⁹ Ibid p. 91.

Novotny's regime entrench itself within the Eastern Bloc with some minor advances to the West that did not amount to fundamental change. A Soviet Politburo resolution of March 14, 1968, which was supposed to be verbally conveyed to Novotny in Prague before he was forced to resign as President, indicated that the political course that the country took for the last fifteen years was the right one. The resolution notes that Novotny's leadership was "... in the interest of the working class of Czechoslovakia and all people... [His leadership would] undoubtedly have a positive impact on the health of the party and the state, which are faced with the task of preventing changes in the course of domestic and foreign policy and the weakening of fraternal friendship and the alliance with our [socialist] states." The Politburo also conveyed that Novotny was strong enough to fight the counterrevolutionary forces.²¹⁰ Novotny's orthodox, unambitious, and dogmatic policies fit within the Soviet agenda and its détente international policy; anything more amounted to "counterrevolution." The Soviets wanted Czechoslovakia to accept the international system based on bipolarity and, consequently, a détente in which an Eastern Bloc country would have little say.

Intellectually, Czechoslovakia also represented the tensions surrounding the meaning of détente, as the ideologies attached to entrenchment of the status quo clashed with ideas focused on redefinition of the late-1960s normality. The Czechoslovak Communist Party was aware of its role within a détente focused on entrenchment of the

²¹⁰ "Постановление Политбюро ЦК КПСС 'Об указаниях совпослу в Чехословакии' П74/43," March 14, 1968, in "Чехословацкий Кризис 1967-1969 гг. в Документах" N.G. Tomlin ed., p. 55.

post-Yalta order. However, in parallel a bottom-up movement was forming, which identified a liberalization of Czechoslovakia as the incarnation of a broader and more meaningful East-West rapprochement. Both sides saw détente coming, but it meant for them different things, which, later, had effects on how the Prague Spring itself was interpreted by the international community.

Czechoslovakia's role in the international system was one point of contention between the policymakers and the intellectuals in the late 1960s. The more conservative elements among the Czechoslovak communists understood that the Soviet Union was moving towards its own détente with the United States. However, this was not necessarily connected to potential redefinitions of Czechoslovak policy goals. As Karen Dawisha noted, Vasil Bil'ak, one of the most conservative Czechoslovak communists, claimed that the Soviets during the Prague Spring "begged us [Czechoslovak communists] not to forget that the Western boundaries of the CSSR were at the same time the boundaries of the socialist camp" and that "to permit Czechoslovakia to fall out of the socialist camp would mean the betrayal of socialism and the annulling of the results of the Second World War... [which the Soviets] could not permit even at the cost of a third world war."²¹¹ While détente was not out of the question, the Soviets would risk a war to maintain the socialist camp, which meant that a comprehensive, structural and long lasting détente was not an option for the Eastern Bloc states. The Czechoslovaks understood that, and even Dubcek, the instigator of reforms that would later lead to a Warsaw Pact invasion, reassured the Soviets

²¹¹ Dawisha, *The Kremlin and the Prague Spring*, p. 75

multiple times that his state would not move outside the Soviet orbit.²¹² The overall trend within the Czechoslovak Communist Party was that détente could not go much beyond the entrenchment of reality. This did not mean that the Soviet-led course could not open up ways for further cooperation precisely because of a well-established framework. The Soviets, on the Eastern Bloc side, were leading these efforts, and it was for Czechoslovak communists to follow their superpower's lead. However, some Prague intellectual circles constantly challenged, especially by 1968, these pre-existing notions.

One of the intellectual currents that underlined the Prague Spring within the Czechoslovak society had to do with the desire to redefine the country's role within the bipolar Cold War world. Czechoslovak intellectuals did not prioritize a redefinition of their state's role in the international system within the Prague Spring movement. However, this idea was oftentimes floated in the background. Czechoslovak intellectuals advocated reforms that would have changed the country in ways that could have contributed to the persistence of the idea of a comprehensive détente. Execution of their proposals would have diminished the importance of the Iron Curtain and, potentially, redefined the Euro-centric international system.

For one, Czechoslovak intellectuals were as enthusiastic about the theory of convergence as Sakharov was in the Soviet Union. The convergence theory implied an

²¹² Even as late as a week before the Soviet invasion, Dubcek was trying to convince Brezhnev of his loyalty to the communist bloc. His opinion would change after the Soviet invasion in August 1968, but while he was in charge, he did not explicitly declare any wishes to move Czechoslovakia beyond the what was established after the Second World War. "Запись телефонной беседы генерального секретаря ЦК КПСС Л.И.Брежнева и первого секретаря ЦК КПЧ А. Дубчека. 13 августа, 1968 г.," August 13. 1968, in *«Пражская Весна» и Международный Кризис 1968 Года*, N.G. Tomilin ed., pp. 196-207.

evolution within the Eastern Bloc towards more liberal civil and political rights that would, in turn, enhance cooperation between East and West. The Two Thousand Words Manifesto by Ludvik Vaculik, which was signed by hundreds of Czechoslovak intellectuals precisely underlined the need of a move towards liberalization of Czechoslovak socio-political structures.²¹³ While mostly exhibiting a sense of dissatisfaction with the political situation, the manifesto could be interpreted as a desire for a motion towards a more decentralized and Western European style of governance than the one that Novotny's promoted in the years leading to 1968. This perception has some merit, as some intellectuals contextualized Vaculik's ideas as a reaction to European-wide problems. For example, Kosik, in a 1968 essay titled "Socialism and the Crisis of Modern Man," argued that the crisis of the bureaucratic-police system in Czechoslovakia and the evolution towards a "system of socialist democracy" had a lot in common with the crises of the "modern man" in Western Europe. In Kosik's view, both bureaucratic Stalinism and democratic capitalism had similar origins and had been plaguing the European society. The Czechoslovak experiment, in which "critical thought, individual groups, and individual forces stand before open possibilities, and have the opportunity to influence the course of events and shape it" is a possibility to create "humanist socialism," which would help overcome the system of generalized manipulation.²¹⁴ Kosik's interpretation of Prague Spring demonstrates the idea that Czechoslovakia could serve as a model for redefinition of the meaning of state within

²¹³ Ludvik Vaculik, "Two Thousand Words."

²¹⁴ Kosik, *The Crisis of Modernity*, pp. 54-55.

the Cold War world, which is consistent with Sakharov's vision of détente, based on simultaneous decentralization of Soviet style communism and centralization of Western democracies that could allow a common framework of cooperation to emerge. "Humanist socialism" was an ideal, and both the East and West had to move in particular directions in terms of civil rights to truly achieve this standard. Vaculik's manifesto was the first step for this convergence, at least on the Eastern Bloc side. Kosik's trust in the new communist leadership meant that, at least for the Spring and Summer of 1968, a meaningful détente was a prevalent and rational aspiration. At the time, it was not a given that developments in Prague had no chance to spill over to other Eastern Bloc countries, as well as the Western capitals.²¹⁵

The legacy of Czechoslovakia's role as a *Central European* country also influenced the perception of how détente should take place within the country. While orthodox communists were not keen on placing the state within a framework that directly clashed with Europe defined by the Iron Curtain, some intellectual currents sought to push the country towards a different role within the international system through its embrace of historical trends. As mentioned in Part I, the idea of *Mitteleuropa* was quite popular among Czechoslovak intellectuals of the time. Some of them interpreted Prague Spring as a move towards redefinition of Czechoslovakia from a country within the Yalta order to a country within a broadly defined historical European space transcending the East-West divide.

²¹⁵ Protests in Paris in May 1968, while very different in nature and context, might have given some further steam to the idea of structural change in how Europe functioned politically and socially.

Kosik's essay on *Mitteleuropa* titled "What is Central Europe?" was, after all, written in August 1968.²¹⁶ In some other ways, the idea of the historical *Central Europe* served as a bridge to positioning of Czechoslovakia within an idealized European space, encompassing the continent as a whole. A Czechoslovak Marxist, Ivan Svitak, wrote a pamphlet titled the "Ten Commandments for a Young Czechoslovak Intellectual," which was widely circulated in Prague in 1967 and published in a weekly magazine *Student* in March 1968. Commandment no. 6 of this decalogue stated "Do not think only as a Czech or a Slovak but consider yourself a European. The World will sooner adapt to Europe (where Eastern Europe belongs) than to fourteen million Czechs and Slovaks. You live neither in America nor in the Soviet Union; you live in Europe."²¹⁷ These circles of intellectuals thought of Czechoslovakia's belonging to the Eastern Bloc as an ahistorical tragedy. Czechoslovakia was Europe and Prague Spring was an opportunity to reassert the European space, so different, yet so alluring to Europeans divided by the Iron Curtain.

The Czechoslovak Communist Party leadership even under Dubcek did not actively pursue a redefinition of the country's role through détente, but it was influenced by sentiments that positioned Czechoslovakia as a part of Europe as a whole. For example, Dubcek's religious policies throughout 1968 represent at least a limited acceptance of the idea that Czechoslovakia was not strictly an Eastern Bloc country with no unique notions surrounding its national identity. While his government's relaxation of religious policies

²¹⁶ Kosik, *The Crisis of Modernity*, p. 182.

²¹⁷ Ivan Svitak, *The Czechoslovak Experiment, 1968-1969*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971,) p. 18.

might be very well been interpreted as a limited concession to the dissatisfied strata of society, its implications were significant and directly clashed with the realities of the post-Second World War Europe. Soviet policymakers critiqued in April 1968 Dubcek's government's restoration of the Eastern Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia, because it had an impact on reviving the historical links within the Carpathian region between Western Ukraine and Czechoslovakia.²¹⁸ Both regions used to be parts of the historical Central European region and practical transcendence of post-Second World War borders through religion even within the Eastern Bloc was against the spirit of the status quo. Relaxation of religious policies also, in Soviet policymakers' view, marginalized the Orthodox Christian Church influence in Czechoslovakia, which further diminished links between Moscow and Prague and enhanced Czechoslovakia's traditional stature of a land in the middle of Europe.²¹⁹ While Dubcek might not have seen his actions as provoking any sort of redefinition of his state's role within Europe, the symbolism behind the once again lax religious policies added to the idea that détente in Europe could lead to structural change of how the international system appeared and functioned. Actions like this challenged the status quo, even if that was not obvious to policymakers at the time.

²¹⁸ "Информация Митрополита Киевского и Галицкого, Экзарха Украины Филарета об обновлении в Чехословакии Греко Католической Церкви, Апрель 1968 г.," April 1968, in *«Пражская Весна» и Международный Кризис 1968 Года*, N.G. Tomilin ed., pp. 61-63.

²¹⁹ Ironically, despite its atheist nature, Soviet officials still thought pan-Slavism with all its traits (including promotion of the Orthodox Christianity) to be an important element in their foreign policy. "Информация Митрополита Киевского и Галицкого, Экзарха Украины Филарета об обновлении в Чехословакии Греко Католической Церкви, Апрель 1968 г.," April 1968, in *«Пражская Весна» и Международный Кризис 1968 Года*, N.G. Tomilin ed., pp. 61-63.

Czechoslovakia in 1968 was in the middle of the world of détente. At the same time, the country itself contemplated its relationship with monumental shifts in how the Cold War functioned. As within the international sphere, policymakers and intellectuals clashed and were influenced by each other on questions related to Czechoslovak national identity and role within a world that was moving towards an East-West rapprochement. While the leadership of the Czechoslovak Communist Party in the years preceding 1968 were focused on maintaining the status quo both internally and externally, the Prague Spring brought a different government. It was much more aligned with various Prague intellectual circles that had been vocal about their dissatisfaction, partly related to Czechoslovakia's role in the world, since at least early 1967.²²⁰ This is not to say that Dubcek's government was inherently anti-Eastern Bloc. However, the Prague Spring happened at a time when intensification of East-West ties was occurring and the developments in Czechoslovakia were partly denoted by the international situation. Unsurprisingly, the event itself would end up influencing the definitions of détente that floated in the international sphere of the late 1960s.

²²⁰ As William Hitchcock notes, already in 1967, the Writers Union was vocal in its critique of Novotny and others. There were also protests in 1967 as noted by Suri. Hitchcock, *The Struggle for Europe*, p. 288; Suri, *Power and Protest*, pp. 194-197.

Cool Reactions: A Dully Noted Invasion

Policymakers of the superpowers interpreted Prague Spring as an obstacle to their cooperation which, nonetheless, they were ready to push aside to maintain the mutual pursuit of the status quo that started in the mid-1960s. This does not mean that the events in Czechoslovakia were completely ignored by the international community of the time. The Warsaw Pact invasion was met with protests in the West.²²¹ Major statesmen of the time, including the French President de Gaulle and United States President Johnson condemned the invasion.²²² Even in the Soviet Union a protest took place in the Red Square with four participants, all of whom were later sentenced to jail or psychiatric institutions.²²³ Nevertheless, in the grander scheme of things, policymakers in East and West did not allow for the seemingly tense Warsaw Pact intervention in Czechoslovakia to get in the way of the détente and the progress stemming for establishment of a common diplomatic framework. The superpowers in the years preceding 1968 had major breakthroughs in areas of arms control and overall diplomatic openness, which neither the Soviet, nor American

²²¹ For example, at least 1500 people protested the Soviet invasion in London at the site of the 1968 Soviet Exhibition at Earl Courts. More in Verity Clarkson, "Sputniks and Sideboards": Exhibiting the Soviet 'Way of Life' in Cold War Britain, 1961-1979," at *A People Passing Rude: British Responses to Russian Culture*, edited by Anthony Cross, (Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers, 2012), accessed March 6, 2020. <https://www.openbookpublishers.com/htmlreader/PPR/chap20.html>.

²²² "Maskva, negalėdama staiga čekų įveikti, smaigia pamažu," *Keleivis*, September 11, 1968. <https://www.epaveldas.lt/object/recordDescription/LNB/C1B0002293646>; Lyndon B. Johnson "Statement by the President Calling on the Warsaw Pact Allies To Withdraw From Czechoslovakia." The American Presidency Project, August 21, 1968, [presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/statement-the-president-calling-the-warsaw-pact-allies-withdraw-from-czechoslovakia](https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/statement-the-president-calling-the-warsaw-pact-allies-withdraw-from-czechoslovakia).

²²³ "Sovietų rašytojų protestas," *Keleivis*, September 11, 1968, <https://www.epaveldas.lt/object/recordDescription/LNB/C1B0002293646>.

policymakers wanted to abandon. The way the superpowers appraised the Prague Spring adhered to their implicitly agreed upon framework of détente.

Policymakers within the superpowers chose to interpret Prague Spring and the subsequent Warsaw Pact invasion as an important, yet inconsequential event, as there was a desire on both sides not to let it get in the way of increased diplomatic cooperation of the late 1960s. This is not to say that the Czechoslovak situation came out of nowhere. The Prague Spring was in some ways an effect of the international climate, as détente before 1968 was fluid and no one knew the limits of rapprochement. United States was even happy to see Czechoslovakia comprehensively address its role in the world.²²⁴ This is also why the Soviet Union was uncertain as to how to respond. The communist superpower did not want to undermine the flourishing relationship with the United States.²²⁵ For some reason, however, as the situation escalated the superpowers chose to prioritize their own interests and to gloss over disagreements. For one, Soviet and American diplomats were in touch throughout 1968 on the question of Czechoslovakia, which helped the superpowers to assess the situation together and make sure that they had the chance not to undermine the certainty of the Cold War status quo. The Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin was reassured already in April 1968, that the United States would not interfere into the Czechoslovak internal affairs and would not finance the new communist leadership, which shows that the

²²⁴ Lerner, “Trying to Find the Guy Who Invited Them,” p. 90.

²²⁵ Inner competition for policy outcomes signify this trend. The hardliners in the party wanted to intervene in Czechoslovakia as soon as possible, but they did not have full support of Brezhnev until Summer. In addition, the nominal Soviet head of state, Aleksei Kosygin, opposed the invasion. More in Dawisha, *The Kremlin and the Prague Spring*, pp. 344-347.

Americans acknowledged the legitimacy of Soviet sphere of influence in accordance to the Iron Curtain status quo.²²⁶ On the Soviet side, while Brezhnev exhibited some anti-Western sentiments in his speeches leading to August 1968, overall he often stressed the importance of the détente and the significant treaties it produced, in a way consciously stressing the big picture of international affairs.²²⁷

Even though these types of contacts became restrained during the invasion, the attitudes of each side did not change dramatically. American policymakers showed outrage, the Soviets kept using anti-imperialist lexicon, but there was a certain degree of dullness in both of the superpowers' actions. The West was not going to help Czechoslovakia even if it was converging towards some Western values, and the overall development of détente in the international arena was not affected as much as it could have been. During the invasion, certain individuals within the United States diplomatic corps were very skeptical of the Soviet actions in Czechoslovakia and strongly advised Rusk and Johnson to condemn it in the strongest terms; at the same time, they recognized that the United States should be clear that they had no intentions vis-à-vis the mitigation of the situation. In addition, while the Ambassador in Prague John Beam advised caution in terms of pursuit of détente in the aftermath of these events, he still did not think that sanctioning the Soviets with withdrawal from the diplomatic treaties that had been agreed upon before was prudent.²²⁸ The response

²²⁶ “Депеша посла ЧССР в США К. Дуда об адресованных посольству СССР в США Заверениях США и НАТО о невмешательстве в Чехословацкие Дела, 28 Апрель, 1968 г.,” April 28, 1968, in *«Пражская Весна» и Международный Кризис 1968 Года*, N.G. Tomilin ed., p. 57.

²²⁷ Dawisha, *The Kremlin and the Prague Spring*, pp. 182-183.

²²⁸ “Сообщение посла США в Чехословакии Дж. Бима Государственному секретарю США Д. Раску о возможной американской реакции на ситуацию в Европе после интервенции в Чехословакию, 21

of the United States to the Warsaw Pact invasion was so meager that Rusk had to send out a telegram to all diplomats in American embassies around the world in October 1968, which denied the rumor that the American policymakers made a deal with the Soviets and green-lighted the Warsaw Pact response to Prague Spring.²²⁹ It was no secret that Johnson wanted to start the negotiations for the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty whether there was a Soviet invasion within a sovereign state of Eastern Bloc or not.²³⁰ His behavior created a sense of certainty and willingness to cooperate in spite of Soviet actions within their portion of Europe. The superpowers knew that their reactions to the Prague Spring did not look good in the international arena. However, both powers were willing to diminish the event's significance, as it was getting in the way of their cooperation. While Prague Spring represented hope for a broader and structural détente, both the United States and the Soviet Union were in any case not ready for it in 1968. They focused, at least for the few years to come, on achievable aims that stabilized, rather than revolutionized, the international order.

Similar positions were taken up by major European states, France and West Germany, which at the moment were making their own claims for détente. Western European states might have been more invested into the desire to see their continent healed. However, in the short term, they agreed with the superpowers of the need to maintain the status quo, at least in the context of Prague Spring. De Gaulle publicly condemned the

августа 1968 г.," August 21, 1968, in *«Пражская Весна» и Международный Кризис 1968 Года*, N.G. Tomilin ed., p. 278.

²²⁹ "Телеграмма государственного секретаря США Д. Раска всем дипломатическим представительствам США за рубежом, 12 Октября 1968 г.," October 12, 1968, in *«Пражская Весна» и Международный Кризис 1968 Года*, N.G. Tomilin ed., pp. 355-356.

²³⁰ Dawisha, *The Kremlin and the Prague Spring*, pp. 252-253.

Warsaw Pact invasion to Czechoslovakia, but, privately, did not want the event to get into the way of his own rapprochement with the Eastern Bloc. On the one hand, de Gaulle's post-invasion communiqué stated that the Warsaw Pact invasion amounted to the "continuation of "politics of blocs," imposed on Europe by the Yalta accords, which contradict the politics of détente in Europe which France is conducting."²³¹ His negative opinions were widely published in the press.²³² On the other hand, de Gaulle did not want this event to get in the way of his dialogue with the Eastern Bloc. French diplomats at the time were saying that the invasion made the French public cooler towards the USSR. Nonetheless, senior French diplomats, such as secretary general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Herve Alphand, were reassuring the Soviets that France was still dedicated to cooperation in Europe. In November 1968, the Soviet Ambassador in Paris told de Gaulle that the Soviets still wanted to work with French on geopolitical issues that they partly agreed on, like the Southeast Asian policy. De Gaulle said that détente was difficult to justify after the invasion, but he also did not back out from the trade deals negotiations that made France and the Soviet Union economically intertwined.²³³ Therefore, French policy resembled a desire for détente, similar to the one pursued by the superpowers on a grander scale, at the expense of grandiose rhetoric of "Europe from the Atlantic Ocean to the Ural Mountains." De Gaulle liked to proclaim his wish for a fundamental restructuring of the European order, but Soviet great power politics did not make him significantly less

²³¹ Moullec, *Pour Une Europe de l'Atlantique à l'Oural*, p. 109.

²³² "Maskva, negalėdama staiga čekų įveikti, smaigia pamažu."; "Kalta Jalta," *Europos Lietuvis*, August 27, 1968, <https://www.epaveldas.lt/object/recordDescription/LNB/C1B0002106552>.

²³³ Moullec, *Pour Une Europe de l'Atlantique à l'Oural*, pp. 111-112.

reluctant to deal with Soviets in spheres where they had mutual interests, like trade or issues in the Third World. Prague Spring, even for a regional European power striving for relevance, was not a deal breaker in its overall foreign policy strategy.

A trend towards a limited condemnation of the Warsaw Pact invasion was felt in Bonn's actions as well. The tension between the need to respond to Soviet invasion to a sovereign state, even if within its own political bloc, and the desire to pursue *Ostpolitik* to achieve at least the limited goals within the status quo plagued decision-makers. In a letter, West German foreign minister Brandt emphasized to his American counterpart Rusk the confusion as to how to respond to the Warsaw Pact actions. French Foreign Minister Michel Debre told Brandt that he did not want a re-escalation of the Cold War. Brandt claimed, however, that a policy of détente was impossible to promote as long as Soviet troops were present in Czechoslovakia. This also corresponded to West German public opinion, which favored strengthening NATO at this particular hour. However, in the end, Brandt claimed that while the Soviet Union should be held accountable for the events, the economic relations should be developed even during this politically tense situation.²³⁴ While the German minister did show some understanding as to the futility of the idea of structural change in Europe following the suppression of Prague Spring, he still wanted to pursue at least limited rapprochement as to not preclude at least a stabilization of the European order within the Cold War status quo. For Brandt in September 1968, the status

²³⁴ “Письмо министра иностранных дел ФРГ В. Брандта государственному секретарю США Д. Раску, 10 Сентября 1968 г.” September 10, 1968, in «Пражская Весна» и Международный Кризис 1968 Года, N.G. Tomilin ed., pp. 339-340.

quo was not an ideal option, especially since Germany lost the most out of the reality that emerged with the descent of the Iron Curtain. However, the status quo gave some certainty to the reality and gave hope that through small steps bigger change could happen at some point in the future.²³⁵

From the Soviet side, the decision to intervene in Czechoslovakia served the purpose of strictly defining what détente would mean for the communist superpower. The aftermath of the Prague Spring was marked with delineation of what détente was and the creation of a clear framework for cooperation. The Soviets themselves clearly saw their intervention as a unilateral claim for a controlled détente, which had to happen under their own conditions if it was to happen at all. Bridges to the Eastern Bloc states would have to be built through Moscow.²³⁶ Soviet actions after the invasion testify this truth. By mid-1969, the Soviet Union felt confident enough to publicly invite the Western powers to pursue new forms of cooperation with the Eastern Bloc as was indicated in the Bucharest Memorandum of the Warsaw Pact member states.²³⁷ In 1972, Brezhnev told the Party Plenum that without Czechoslovakia there would have been no Brandt in Germany and no Nixon in Moscow.²³⁸ The suppression of the Prague Spring, therefore, served as a suppression of different ways to interpret détente. The early period of rapprochement created an ambiguous climate within which it was not clear into what the international

²³⁵ This would end up defining Brandt's policy once he would become the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1969.

²³⁶ Dawisha, *The Kremlin and the Prague Spring*, p. 374.

²³⁷ Ash, *In Europe's Name*, p. 57.

²³⁸ Zubok, *Failed Empire*, p. 209.

system could evolve. However, drastic Soviet actions in August 1968 made it certain that structural change within the European continent would not happen. The Soviet leadership would not tolerate a plurality of opinions within its bloc, as it could lead to potential redefinitions of the Yalta order, which, at the end of the day, was not in the Kremlin's interest. The Soviet Union wanted to avoid being caught up within structural changes that it did not anticipate and the invasion to Czechoslovakia established, from Soviet policymakers' point of view, the rules according to which the rapprochement would function.

Despite its monumental impact, superpowers and other influential Western European states reacted to the Prague Spring with reservations. The diplomatic appraisal of Czechoslovak crisis defined what *détente* would become. While the situation in Czechoslovakia represented some of the tensions related to the meaning and utility of *détente*, policymakers largely sought to diminish its importance not to allow the existing formal cooperation to evaporate. Policymakers in Washington, Moscow, as well as in Paris and Bonn, were concerned about the possible consequences of military action in Czechoslovakia. However, in a time period when cooperation was in full swing, decision-makers opted to focus on entrenchment of status quo, rather than structural change within the continent and, by extension, the Cold War world. For them, *détente* would be about creation of a mutually acceptable framework, and the Soviets made it clear that Czechoslovak-type gambles were not part of the rule book. Nonetheless, this is not to say that there were no different responses to Prague Spring within the continent. *Détente* was

in full swing and the Czechoslovak crisis was interpreted in multiple ways by people, who had less power over policy.

Reverberations in the European Space

While the Warsaw Pact invasion to Czechoslovakia did not significantly alter the move towards détente among the superpowers, Prague Spring's ideals did reverberate among European intellectual classes. The Czechoslovak crisis showed the limits of détente, as well as the possibilities of structural change in Europe. Prague Spring was about openness and reassertion of Czechoslovakia as an inherently European state. It was about Czechoslovakia as a part of Europe, where a certain set of rights was a given and its prescription as an Eastern Bloc state ahistorical. Even though this fell outside the dogmas of the bipolar Cold War world, the idea behind the developments in Czechoslovakia represented a desire for a redefinition of the Yalta order in more European terms. The suppression of the Prague Spring crystalized the divergent interpretations of détente even further.

Prague Spring and its aftermath was relevant to intellectual circles advocating détente through a reaffirmation a European space because it precisely demonstrated an assault on an attempt to redefine the Cold War order. The abrupt ending of reform in Czechoslovakia signified, to a certain extent, the end of an era when détente could inspire certain strati of European publics to expect a comprehensive coming together of East and West and recreation of the historical singular European space. The idea would continue to

float, but its realization, at least for the time being, became unlikely. The interpretation of the Prague Spring within the European context oftentimes came from the non-communist Left. Within Czechoslovakia the Prague Spring was often interpreted as reassertion of the country's Central European identity that split with the binary order of the Cold War. Abroad, however, the non-communist Left took up the reforms in Prague as an example of a common European clamor for reform and a desire to employ the idea of European space to advocate for a third European way, which was distinct from capitalist and communist impulses of the superpowers. This is why the Warsaw Pact invasion to Czechoslovakia had been connected, especially within the non-communist European Left, in the years following 1968 with the United States-backed 1967 coup in Greece. Both events represented a suppression of democracy within the European sphere by forces that were not inherently European. In 1967, the Greek military seized power through a coup amid fears that a social-democratic government led by Andreas Papandreou could be formed in the aftermath of parliamentary elections.²³⁹ Democratic governance was replaced by a right wing dictatorship defined by some serious human rights violations, which the Johnson's administration seemed to ignore. What is more, the Prague Spring itself ended up catalyzing increased American aid to Greece due to perceived threats of communism.²⁴⁰

Some European intellectuals contextualized both of these assaults on democracy as taking place in the same sphere and for the same reasons. A real rapprochement from

²³⁹ Sarah B. Snyder, *From Selma to Moscow: How Human Rights Activists Transformed U.S. Foreign Policy*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), p. 60.

²⁴⁰ Ibid pp. 75-76.

bottom-up in Europe was precluded because of the top-down nature of détente that the superpowers wanted to maintain. Developments in Greece and Czechoslovakia did not adhere to the idea that status quo in Europe should be entrenched for cooperation to be possible. Furthermore, as argued by Kim Christiaens, James Mark and Jose Faraldo, during the 1960s it became increasingly popular, among some Western political philosophers, such as the French political scientist Maurice Duverger, to analyze and compare dictatorships in East and West through the concept of totalitarianism, which equated Southern European fascism with Eastern European communism. “The totalitarian idea that fascism and communism were not opposites but rather shared many characteristics, and were interconnected phenomena, stimulated analysts to seek out common features between the regions: it became, for example, the story of Franco as another Stalin, or the suppression of the Prague Spring in 1968 as a replay of the repression of the left by the Colonels’ Coup in Greece one year earlier. New Left critiques brought both regions together as common victims of a broader imperialism, whether it be the Southern European regimes supported by United States or the Eastern European socialist rulers kept in power by Moscow.”²⁴¹ In other words, even if détente did exist between the United States and the Soviet Union, both powers, in this framework, shared a desire for imperialism that would allow them to control their respective blocs. Relations could improve between the two superpowers, but that would not mean anything for the European states caught up between the two powers. While

²⁴¹ Kim Christiaens, James Mark, and José. M. Faraldo, “Entangled Transitions: Eastern and Southern European Convergence or Alternative Europes? 1960s–2000s.” *Contemporary European History* 26, no. 4 (November 2017), pp. 279-280, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777317000261>.

this view was not completely accurate, it did give credibility to voices of European intellectual forces, which hoped that détente would redefine the Yalta order.²⁴² The Warsaw Pact invasion to Czechoslovakia, together with the Greek Colonels' Coup, both represented a suppression of bottom-up movements to break with the norms of the post-Second World War Europe. Czechoslovakia, as Greece, were inherently European countries, but were forced to align themselves with particular blocs that historically were not present in the European sphere. Prague Spring, therefore, represented for these Western European intellectuals a counterattack against any attempts for structural redefinition of the international system that would go beyond short term diplomatic initiatives. Europeanization of European affairs was broken by Soviet military power and accepted by the United States.

A more concrete example of these developments can be seen from the direct link between the suppression of Prague Spring and the emergence of Eurocommunism. Even though the events in Czechoslovakia did not spill over in a consequential way, its communist party's attempt to reform itself reverberated in the West, which created a sense of a third way that was distinct from both American-style capitalism and Soviet-style socialism and, potentially, was seen as a way to encapsulate a different idea of détente. Within Czechoslovakia, some local communists, such as Zdanek Mlynar, saw the 1968 events as an opportunity to move from "Asian" and Russian communism and to become

²⁴² United States official policy was always aimed at liberation of Eastern Europe, even if that policy was not always present in day-to-day diplomacy. Welles Declaration and its persistence during the Cold War, as mentioned before, serves as an example.

in-sync with traditional European Marxism.²⁴³ This created a sense that developments in Prague were European in nature, which broke with the notion of a Western capitalist and Eastern communist Europe. This new school of thought made it clear that the Cold War status quo was not anymore applicable within the European context and that it had to be broken. Eurocommunism emerged out of realization that Western European communist parties had more in common among themselves, as well as with the reformist elements in Eastern European parties, than with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. It strove to define communism through a European, not a Cold War, lens.

Western European communists were influenced by the Czechoslovak socialists, a process which converted Europe into one intellectual space, thus directly contesting the notions of détente in the Cold War of the late 1960s. For example, the French left was inspired by the Czechoslovak Communist Party that attempted to form a unique route to achieve socialism.²⁴⁴ The French Communist Party, due to its close ties to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, was reluctant to embrace the reforms in Prague; however, other French left-wing circles, some of which identified as anti-Soviet communists, lauded Prague Spring precisely because of its ability to make a case for a comprehensive European détente, based on, as Svitak or Kosik would have said, “humanist socialism,” rather than potentially short-term rapprochement in policymakers’ areas of interest. As Maude Bracke argued, “[The French Left] understood the Prague Spring and the May events in France as

²⁴³ Maud Bracke, *Which Socialism, Whose Détente?* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2007), p. 139, <https://doi.org/10.7829/j.ctt1cgf8r9>.

²⁴⁴ Moullec, *Pour Une Europe de l’Atlantique à l’Oural*, p. 109.

expressions of one and the same tendency, and both developments were identified with one another. Both situations would help undermine the static bipolar status quo in Europe, “divided by neo-capitalists and neo-Stalinists.”²⁴⁵ Similar notions were shared by the Italian Communist Party, which saw détente as a move towards loosening of inner-bloc relations and a move towards blurring of the Iron Curtain. Similarly to Sakharov’s promotion of convergence, the Italian communists advocated by the late 1960s for abdication of Soviet micromanagement of the Eastern Bloc and of the American hegemony in the West with the purpose of allowing East and West become one shared space that could peacefully coexist.²⁴⁶ The developments in Czechoslovakia represented an initial move towards this convergence, whose suppression shocked Italian communists.²⁴⁷ Détente, as it was understood, was completely disregarded when a threat to Soviet dominance emerged. Moreover, it did not significantly affect American-Soviet ties, which crystalized the existence of different priorities, aims and methods to achieve détente between the policymakers of superpowers and more idealistically minded politicians and intellectuals, who strived for European solutions to lack of stability in the Cold War. Therefore, the Prague Spring represented an idea of a common intellectual space that could spill over to politics and split with the Yalta order that plagued Europe. Its development amounted to a détente, at least according to some, and its suppression was the manifestation of the superpowers’ will to define cooperation through their opportunistic lenses.

²⁴⁵ Bracke, *Which Socialism, Whose Détente?*, p. 161.

²⁴⁶ Ibid pp. 212-213.

²⁴⁷ Ibid p. 212.

Comprehension of Prague Spring as an assault on the spirit of détente that was based on recreation of the European space was not only present on the left – the same approach was seen in the reporting of RFE/RL. As mentioned before, RFE/RL served as an intellectual bridge between East and West that connected Europe and attempted to create a sense of shared space to overcome Cold War divisions.²⁴⁸ While policymakers who supervised RFE/RL were uneasy about antagonizing the Soviets through reporting, the journalists at the radio wanted to contextualize Prague Spring's conclusion as a tragedy of a European rapprochement. Of course, policymakers' attempt to manage the RFE/RL narrative could be interpreted as a mere desire not to repeat the Hungarian Revolution fiasco, rather than to push for its own control of the international system that was not interested in a comprehensive détente per se.²⁴⁹ RFE avoided promotion of Czechoslovak voices calling for democracy and independent foreign or security policy, as blatant confrontation of the Soviet Union.²⁵⁰ Nevertheless, the divergence between the radio programs and policy directives from Washington show the rivalry between the ideas of Prague Spring as a European tragedy and a less significant obstacle in the development of détente.

RFE/RL reporters contextualized Prague Spring as a European phenomenon with European consequences. For example, Abdurakhman Avtorkhanov, known in Radio

²⁴⁸ Johnson, *Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty*, p. 6.

²⁴⁹ RFE/RL's response to the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 has been criticized as overly emotional and misleading in the sense that some Hungarians expected the United States to intervene in case of a Soviet invasion. More in Johnson, *Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty*, Chapter 3 "Two Octobers."

²⁵⁰ Johnson, *Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty*, p. 160.

Liberty under his alias Professor Temirov, interpreted Prague Spring and the Warsaw Pact invasion in the context of Soviet dismissal of peaceful coexistence. While peaceful coexistence implied a sense of convergence between the East and the West, Professor Temirov argued that Soviets were not interested in any real rapprochement, as everything they did was focused on promotion of communist revolutions around the world.²⁵¹ Therefore, using this framework, he interpreted the Warsaw Pact invasion as an assault on peaceful coexistence, which broke any hopes for convergence. Furthermore, Professor Temirov, right after the invasion, argued that Soviet actions demonstrated the incompatibility of freedom and communism.²⁵² While the theory of convergence itself might not have been grounded in the idea of a united Europe, its realization would have looked precisely as people like Sakharov, Professor Temirov and others imagined. Convergence meant coming together of East and West and that would have implied a united continent. Radio Liberty also kept contextualizing the event in the days following the invasion within the European context, by noting that prominent Czechoslovak communists, such as General Jan Sejna, fled to the West, while some other communist European countries, as Yugoslavia and Romania, condemned the invasion.²⁵³

²⁵¹ "Conversation on the Party Topics / History of the Cult of Personality", 28 June 1968 [Electronic Resource]. HU OSA 297-0-1-97525; Radio Liberty (Radio Svoboda) Russian Broadcast Recordings; Open Society Archives at Central European University, Budapest. Accessed December 3, 2019. <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:bc5b62f2-18c2-4284-845a-3aa4019978a0>.

²⁵² "[Conversation with Professor Temirov] / [Czechoslovakia]", 21 August 1968.

²⁵³ "Short Czech Chronicle (1968)", 25 August 1968 [Electronic Resource]. HU OSA 297-0-1-32477; Radio Liberty (Radio Svoboda) Russian Broadcast Recordings; Open Society Archives at Central European University, Budapest. Accessed December 5, 2020. <http://hdl.handle.net/10891/osa:65456c26-eda5-4b5b-9264-a597822b9861>.

American policymakers, who technically controlled the radio, did not appreciate this type of reporting, because it clashed with the directives from the State Department that urged them not to discredit the potential for diplomacy even in the context of the invasion. The crisis was followed by governmental memos that urged the reporters not to report anything in an overly emotional manner; when it came to the Russian-language Radio Liberty broadcasts, the directives asked the reporters not to differentiate the programming because of the invasion.²⁵⁴ Even more, a memorandum from August 23 by a CIA official Fred W. Valtin to the President of Radio Free Europe William Durkee stressed that even if the Czechoslovak leaders themselves issued pleas to resist, RFE/RL were not to report on those calls.²⁵⁵ The United States policymakers did not want anything to do with making the suppression of Prague Spring into anything more symbolic than what it was in the crudest terms. This obviously clashed with the reporters' view, who saw the event as a monumental shift, perhaps minimizing the chances of a tangible and comprehensive coming together of East and West. Policymakers directly clashed with the notion of RFE/RL being a bridge between Eastern and Western Europe, even though this is the framework within which some of the intellectuals working for the radios interpreted Prague Spring. The Soviet Union's assault, for them, implied an assault on the idea that Europe

²⁵⁴ "CIA-State Consultations on Czechoslovak Crisis," August 22, 1968, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Obtained and contributed to CWHIP by A. Ross Johnson. Cited Ch5 n14 in his book *Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty*, CIA mandatory declassification review document number C01441043. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115111>.

²⁵⁵ "Fred W. Valtin, 'Czech Crisis--Policy Guidance from State' [Approved for Release May 6, 2019]," August 23, 1968, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Declassified by the Interagency Security Classification Appeals Panel (ISCAP), May 6, 2019, #C01431408. Obtained and contributed by A. Ross Johnson. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/208791>.

could converge and be a space of similarly minded nations. It represented a rupture in the ideal of structural change in the way the international system functioned. This notion is even more clear when put side-by-side to the way American policymakers perceived Prague Spring, as it shows the tension the Prague Spring crystalized between détente that was aimed at entrenchment of status quos and détente that wanted something more.

It should also be noted that Prague Spring was considered in the European sphere as an assault on a country that moved towards European values, without whose widespread acceptance the existence of a structural and long-lasting détente was impossible. The most unsettling development for Soviet leaders in Czechoslovakia, which, in a way, prompted the invasion itself, was the abolition of censorship. At least within the Western European context, freedom of expression with no censorship was one of the fundamental rights that defined the European experience. This has been underlined in Article 10 of the European Convention of Human Rights, adopted by all member states of Council of Europe.²⁵⁶ Dubcek's government, under the pressure of the Czechoslovak Writers Union, moved towards these values in April 1968, with the Action Program of the Communist Party.²⁵⁷ This was followed by a proliferation of plurality of opinions, which made the Czechoslovak public sphere not that dissimilar from a relatively free society. The Warsaw Pact invasion was later condemned partly because of how vividly a European value was attacked through brutish force. A détente could not happen if both sides of the Iron Curtain could not agree

²⁵⁶ "European Convention on Human Rights"

²⁵⁷ "The Action Programme of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, 1968." Marxists.Org, Accessed March 7, 2020. <https://www.marxists.org/subject/czech/1968/action-programme.htm>.

on a common framework, and the West was not ready to abandon its fundamental feature, especially since it had been a Western ideal since the Enlightenment era. On the other hand, Brezhnev himself multiple times expressed his unease with the lack of censorship in Czechoslovakia. As Karen Dawisha noted, “Brezhnev was involved in revising Khrushchev’s “over-lenient” attitude toward domestic dissent and he repeatedly saw the Prague Spring through this focus.”²⁵⁸ Therefore, the international perception of the Prague Spring had, at least to a certain extent, to do with its loss of a European value. After the event, Czechoslovakia would become a fully-fledged member of the European Congress of Enslaved Nations, even though technically the country was still sovereign.²⁵⁹ The intellectual implication of the crisis meant that a feature that some circles expected from détente – an increased openness in the East – was not going to happen. It did not preclude the development of détente, but the invasion crystalized the disappointment with the fact that the process would be defined in a top-down, rather than a bottom-up manner.

Conclusion

Prague Spring and the subsequent Warsaw Pact invasion to Czechoslovakia represent all the anxieties and debates that existed over the meaning and development of détente of the late 1960s. While the processes themselves might not have consciously been

²⁵⁸ Dawisha, *The Kremlin and the Prague Spring*, p. 344.

²⁵⁹ “Pavergtieji ištvermingai siekia laisvės,” *Keleivis*, October 9, 1968, <https://www.epaveldas.lt/object/recordDescription/LNB/C1B0002293646>.

aimed to define détente, the developments linked to the Czechoslovak crisis were both inspired by and influential on the competing notions of détente floating around Europe of the time. The most fascinating element of this case study is that the idea of détente drove internal developments and inspired the international response to the crisis. The Czechoslovak Communist Party and dissenting elements within the Czechoslovak society were equally dissatisfied with the stagnation of the country throughout the 1960s. They were inspired by the endless possibilities of a détente that seemed to be able to redefine the existing post-Second World War order and address the structural economic, political and cultural issues within the Czechoslovak state. At the same time, the event was getting in the way of local neo-Stalinist communists, who saw détente as an entrenchment of the status quo and did not see the necessity of structural local change to reap the fruits of increased economic and diplomatic cooperation. Internationally, the developments within Czechoslovakia were also interpreted within the frameworks of different approaches to détente.

Policymakers in the superpowers differed in their approaches to the Prague Spring, but, overall, chose to pursue stability in their relationship and avoided renewed rivalries. The United States statesmen were not happy about an invasion of the Soviet Union to a sovereign state, even if it was within its own sphere of influence. The French and West German leaders shared this sentiment. However, in the longer term, the United States was dedicated to a détente which kept bringing short term improvements in arms control and

cooperation, even if the international system was not fundamentally reformed. Prague Spring and its ideals were lost in the greater picture of international affairs.

Nonetheless, détente was still contested, and some intellectual circles saw the unravelling of 1968 as a proof that their détente based on fundamental change of the Yalta order was desired, even if precluded by the superpowers. The Prague Spring was interpreted and contextualized as a European phenomenon, rather than an internal one, throughout and following the invasion. The European Left, including some Western European communists, saw developments in Prague as an Eastern European reassertion of its link with the West and saw the Soviet invasion as an assault on the reestablishment of that connection. Eastern European émigrés in the West, such as RFE/RL journalists, who were not necessarily from the political left, also partly saw the invasion as a blockade of the intellectual link that was forming across Europe. This was particularly frustrating, as the Europeanization of Prague Spring was physically disturbed by Soviet force and bureaucratically perturbed by American policymakers. Finally, the main reform of the Prague Spring, abolition of censorship and enabling freedom of expression, was an inherently European value, whose proliferation was seen as a method to bring the East and the West together. However, its suppression through the Soviet invasion meant that détente would not mean fundamental change in Europe, at least as long as it was pursued in a top-down manner.

Conclusion

The late 1960s was a period when East-West ties were in a constant state of flux. Different European societal and political actors in the Eastern and Western blocs invoked the term “détente.” Policymakers, intellectuals and political activists all agreed on the need for the two principal Cold War blocs to ease unnecessary tensions. The international climate seemed ripe for a fundamental reform of the way international politics were done. That idealism spilled over to the domestic affairs in Western European and, perhaps even more prominently, in Eastern European countries. Ironically, while détente was a popular term, it was often unclear what it actually meant.

The years 1966-1969 were marked by an increasing tension between how policymakers of superpowers and how various European political elites and intellectuals interpreted the meaning, the functioning and the aims of policy of détente. The United States and the Soviet Union, the main architects of the détente that would be remembered in historiography and the public perception, pursued an intensification of ties between East and West within a strictly defined framework. Policymakers and statesmen of the superpowers actively worked to improve bilateral ties, which they saw as a potential impetus to diplomatic and commercial breakthroughs around the world. This type of détente entrenched the existing bloc system in Europe and, instead of diminutions of the destabilizing effects of the Iron Curtain, opted for a commonly acceptable framework where limited cooperation could occur, even if it did not address the fundamental flaws of the international system. This is not to say that the United States was enthusiastic to accept

the status quo. Nevertheless, in the short-term, détente for the United States meant affirmation of the post-Second World War status quo with no fundamental redefinitions of the international order. Johnson's bridge-building initiative was noble to attempt to push Eastern Bloc states towards more openness, but, at least during the late 1960s it did not challenge the existing division of the world. Bridge-building was about living in an Iron Curtain world, rather than transcending the divide altogether. This fit with the Soviet outlook, as statesmen like Gromyko and Brezhnev wanted détente to happen on their terms, which meant a clear delineation of spheres of influences and a free hand in Eastern Europe. The superpowers might have had contrasting visions of the world, but in the late 1960s they seemed to agree on the need to work within, rather than beyond the Yalta order. They saw a top-down approach to a reform of the international system on common grounds as a way to proliferate effective and controlled cooperation. Short-term partnership on issues of mutual concern, as arms control, trumped the desire (or lack of) to address the structural issues with the Cold War world. They achieved tangible successes, like the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty that was signed in July 1968. This does not mean, however, that other stakeholders of the Cold War shared a similar interpretation of the international system. As much as it seemed like it, neither Johnson, nor Brezhnev could control the hopes and expectations associated with the term "détente."

A bottom-up movement aimed at the pursuit of a comprehensive détente through diminution of the Iron Curtain existed in parallel to what the superpowers were scheming. Defined through different discourses by very different actors, it characterized détente in

European terms, clashing with the conception of détente shared by the superpowers, which wanted to entrench the division of the continent. For one, there was a strong trend among European policymakers to demand from détente more than the superpowers were willing to concede. Western European statesmen in France and West Germany were particularly adamant, as the entrenchment of the status quo was against their interest as European powers, willing to have a role in international diplomacy. They sought to have a stake in the international system, oftentimes invoking idealistic visions, such as de Gaulle's "Europe from the Atlantic Ocean to the Ural Mountains" or Brandt's *Ostpolitik*. A caveat should be made, as the European powers were equally interested in navigating the détente that superpowers sought to create. Sometimes, they bought in to the entrenchment of the status quo, as they also wanted certainty. Similarly, the statesmen of smaller European states attacked détente for not going far enough, thus forging a comprehensive critique of the Cold War realities based on the need to reunite Europe. European states' policymakers often bought into the framework forged by the superpowers, but they also defended in public the need to use the opportunity of pan-European climate for cooperation to address the structural issues in the continent. They pressured the superpowers that acted in a top down manner to use the European lens to rethink the benefits of the bipolar world order.

Furthermore, the elites associated with the European Community were even more explicit in their wish to redefine détente on their terms. Monnet and Spinelli actively called for the organization's engagement with the Eastern Bloc with the intention of pushing the Eastern European countries towards European Community's values. Of course, this could

be seen as an attempt to win the Cold War through an American-backed international organization. However, the very fact that the European Community was based, in its ideology, on liberal values with roots in the European space, which also encompassed an ultimate, even if distant, unification of continent made it into a strong intellectual claim for a unique détente. Monnet spoke of rapprochement of the East, but Gromyko was not happy with the pan-Europeanist ideas coming from the West.

At the same time, various intellectual streams were floating around Europe that sought to equate détente to the diminution of the importance of the Iron Curtain. Some of this discourse was used by the very same elites dedicated to the cause of the European Community, which engaged with Eastern Bloc states on the basis of their belief of a common European space and a set of common values. Promotion of Europe, as a concept, was their approach to give meaning to détente, which, at the time, was yet to be defined. A similar intellectual discourse was developing on the other side of the Iron Curtain. The notion of a historically rooted singular European space persisted within the Eastern Bloc, especially as a response to the Yalta order following the Second World War which, arguably, disadvantaged the states that fell under Soviet control. Concepts like *Mittleuropa* became popular among some Eastern European intellectuals and its recreation, for them, amounted to a comprehensive détente that mere superpower diplomacy could not provide. Émigré intelligentsia from Eastern Europe populated and ran RFE/RL with the purpose of creating an intellectual bridge in between East and West to recreate a European space that was to be used as a basis for a future comprehensive coming

together of capitalist and socialist Europes. Furthermore, a sense of European values emerged on the Eastern Bloc, which implied the idea that for a comprehensive détente to happen, the East and West should converge towards a similar set of values. Again, some of this discourse was associated to the idea of *Mitteleuropa*; however, oftentimes, Sakharov's theory of convergence served as a basis for détente, which would draw East towards the West and vice versa within the European space.

In more concrete terms, Prague Spring and the subsequent Warsaw Pact invasion to Czechoslovakia in August 1968 represented all the tensions surrounding the meaning, the development, and the implications of various conceptions of détente. This case demonstrates the resilient contestation of détente in the late 1960s, which defined a geopolitical crisis from front to back, internally and externally. From a domestic point of view, the political leadership in Czechoslovakia was affected by these contesting notions of détente. This is not to say that ideas of a "common European space" were crucial and defining in the way the Prague Spring unfolded. However, the Czechoslovak Communist Party was split as to how to understand détente, which, in a way, influenced the internal developments in the country. While some, like Novotny, wanted to keep a neo-Stalinist grip on the way the country was ruled, partly because it fit with the whole architecture of the bipolar international system of the time, others, like Dubcek, were influenced by the Czechoslovak intelligentsia's ideas about redefinition of the European space, which affected the party's conduct. The international reactions to the Prague Spring followed a similar line. Different notions of détente prescribed the meaning that was given to the event

and its suppression. While policymakers in the superpowers and, to a lesser extent, Western European states chose to gloss over the invasion and its impact not to curtail the move towards a détente as a workable framework, certain intellectual classes interpreted the event as an assault on détente itself. There was no straightforward answer as to how the Warsaw Pact invasion to Czechoslovakia was to affect détente. However, the contesting notions as to what détente entailed underlined how the Czechoslovak crisis was appraised and contextualized.

The focus of this master's thesis was not to show that one or another vision of détente was the dominant one within the political, social and cultural landscape of the late 1960s. Its main aim was to crystalize the existence of these divergent, yet intermingled, trends that perpetually contested the term "détente," so prominent in the vocabulary of the time period. Arguably, policymakers within superpowers had the last word in defining détente's uses, limits and implications. However, Americans and Soviets negotiated treaties and dealt with common international issues in the context of various groups that had different interpretations of what détente should entail. These idealists were themselves influenced by the policymakers in superpowers; after all, without initial positive developments in diplomacy, no further rapprochement could have happened. However, the idealist policymakers and intellectuals from both sides of the Iron Curtain outlined in the late 1960s their own visions of détente, oftentimes based on a unification of Europe as the antidote to lack of stability in the continent, and actively tried to interpret the international system through that lens. These two forces, one stemming from bottom-up, the other acting

in a very clear top-down manner, constantly affected each other and thus created an atmosphere, within which détente meant everything and nothing. This master's thesis aimed to showcase that atmosphere, because it serves as a useful framework to interpret Europe-based political and social developments and their implications in the late 1960s.

It should be mentioned that this ambivalent atmosphere did not last for long and détente ended up being defined largely through diplomatic treaties and superpowers summits. Ideas focused on Europe remained in the public sphere into the 1970s, but détente itself was not necessarily defined through pacification of Europe, at least when it came to American-Soviet ties. Nixon, Kissinger, Brezhnev, and Gromyko did not prioritize pacification of Europe when both states aimed to reduce the costs of the global Cold War.

Having said that, European space and certain values associated with Western European liberalism did gain footing with how idealist policymakers and intellectuals in East and West imagined a lasting pacification of the continent to take place. For one, these ideas were influential in the set-up of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, as well as the signing of the Helsinki Final Act in 1975, which institutionalized and legalized some of the norms that European enthusiasts promoted during the last few years of the previous decade. More importantly, however, these ideas grounded the legitimacy that the European Union would take up after its official establishment with the Maastricht Treaty in 1992. After the end of the Cold War, Western European states were eager to invite the Eastern European states to join the European Union, while the latter countries wanted to join the pan-European supranational organization. By 2004, ten former

Eastern Bloc states, including three former members of the Soviet Union, joined the supranational organization after a period of extensive reforms aimed at political and economic convergence with the European Union. Romano Prodi, the President of the European Union Commission at the time, congratulated the new member states on the day of their accession, May 1, 2004, and expressed his hopes that “Other European countries and nations will decide to join [EU’s] undertaking until the whole continent is unified in peace and democracy.” Polish President at the time Aleksander Kwasniewski claimed that “Poland [was] returning to its European family.”²⁶⁰ The ideas of détente based on various Euro-centric concepts of the late 1960s might not have seemed very consequential at the time. However, they lived on and gave legitimacy to various European integrationist discourses in the 1990s and 2000s. Peace, democracy, and the reaffirmed European space were all celebrated the day the former Eastern Bloc countries joined the European Union. The ideals from the 1960s based on a détente on a European basis became a total and factual reality in 2004.

In 2009, Vaclav Havel, the President of the Czech Republic who was very much in the social circles of the *Mittleuropa* enthusiasts of the late 1960s, addressed the European Parliament five years after his country joined the European Union. In this speech, Havel argued that “...over recent decades Europe has managed to create maybe the firmest supranational union in the world today. And yet – and this is the most important thing –

²⁶⁰ “CNN.Com - EU Welcomes 10 New Members - May 1, 2004.” CNN, May 1, 2004, <https://www.cnn.com/2004/WORLD/europe/04/30/eu.enlargement/>.

this union did not come into existence - as invariably in the past - as a result of the conquest of the weaker by the mighty. On the contrary it was the product of pragmatic agreement... What I see as the optimal political order in the coming decades is the creative co-operation and partnership of these larger supranational or continental entities based on a certain common minimum, one that is more moral than political.”²⁶¹ Forty years after the Prague Spring, Havel was still enthusiastic about the concept of Europe, whose ideals he saw as an applicable framework of cooperation in other contexts in the future. The ideals of détente based on convergence along similar liberal norms within the European sphere eventually triumphed, even though during the late 1960s they were only in the backgrounds of policymakers’ deliberations. The intellectual climate of contested détente in the late 1960s allowed a comprehensive reduction of worldwide tensions to become tied with the idea of a pragmatically unified Europe.

²⁶¹ Vaclav Havel “Speech of Vaclav Havel in the European Parliament,” Study Center for National Reconciliation, November 11, 2009, <https://www.scnr.si/speech-of-vaclav-havel-in-the-european-parliament.html>.

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