A Velvet Revolution Vaclav Havel And The Fall Of Communism World Leaders

In Czechoslovakia, in the 1960s, artists began to realize that the aesthetics of social realism contrasted with the realities of daily life; a movement of film arose in response to the politics and history of the nation. This work collects candid interviews with the creators of the Czech New Wave film movement (1960-2000). Their work put Czech film on the map of world cinema, generating two Oscars for Best Foreign Film, but the official critique marked them as decadent, pessimistic, and reactionary. The work contains sixteen uncensored interviews with filmmakers such as Jan Nemec, Jiri Menzel, Saša Gedeon, and Jan Sverak, who describe the struggle to realize their visions in a constantly shifting political landscape: from the mid-1960s, through the repressive "normalization" after the Soviet occupation in 1968 (more films were banned in 1970 than during the previous twenty years of Communism), and after the Velvet Revolution of 1989. The interviews give portraits of some of the most talented figures in film, revealing artists searching for individual and national identity, who describe living and making film in the Czech Republic now and in the past, explore how foreign films influence Czech film, and speculate on the future of film. Each interview includes a short biography, filmography, and list of awards. The work is bookended by essays giving background on the political and economic situations leading up to and after the Velvet Revolution.

A Study Guide for Vaclav Havel's "The Memorandum," excerpted from Gale's acclaimed Drama For Students. This concise study guide includes plot summary; character analysis; author biography; study questions; historical context; suggestions for further reading; and much more. For any literature project, trust Drama For Students for all of your research needs.

An astonishingly candid memoir from the acclaimed, dissident playwright elected President after the dramatic Czechoslovakian Velvet Revolution — one of the most respected political figures of our time. As writer and statesman, Václav Havel played an essential part in the profound changes that occurred in Central Europe in the last decades of the twentieth century. In this most intimate memoir, he writes about his transition from outspoken dissident and political prisoner to a player on the international stage in 1989 as newly elected president of Czechoslovakia after the ousting of the Soviet Union, and, in 1993, as president of the newly formed Czech Republic. Havel gives full rein to his impassioned stance against the devastation wrought by communism, but the scope of his concern in this engrossing memoir extends far beyond the circumstances he faced in his own country. The book is full of anecdotes of his interactions with world figures: offering a peace pipe to Mikhail Gorbachev, meditating with the Dali Lama, confessing to Pope John Paul II and partying with Bill and Hilary Clinton. Havel shares his thoughts on the future of the European Union and the role of national identity in today’s world. He explains why he has come to change his mind about the war in Iraq, and he discusses the political and personal reverberations he faces because of his initial support of the invasion. He writes with equal intelligence and candour about subjects as diverse as the arrogance of western power politics, the death of his first wife and his own battle with lung cancer. Woven
through are internal memos he wrote during his presidency that take us behind the scenes of the Prague Castle – the government’s seat of power – showing the internal workings of the office and revealing Havel’s mission to act as his country’s conscience, and even, at times, its chief social convenor. Written with characteristic eloquence, wit and well-honed irony combined with an unflailing sense of wonder at the course his life has taken, To the Castle and Back is a revelation of one of the most important political figures of our time. 

Czechoslovakia has captured the nation’s imagination throughout the twentieth century. The Allied betrayal of the country to Nazi Germany in 1938 was to demonstrate the appalling consequences of naive appeasement of aggression. The wholesale reform of Soviet communism in the Prague Spring of 1968 won western support, and sympathy when it was crushed by Warsaw Pact tanks. The fierce communist regime thereafter was brought down almost magically in 1989. Czechoslovakia added to the international political vocabulary the term, 'Velvet Revolution', and the velvet metaphor has characterised much of the country’s path-breaking postcommunist transformation and its peaceful break-up in 1993. In separate chapters on history, politics, economics, foreign relations and the new Czech identity, this book not only applauds the successes of the Czech Republic since 1993, but also uncovers the frayed edges of the velvet nation.

Abstract: Contrasts the philosophies of Tomas G. Masaryk & Vaclav Havel, the men who led the Czech Velvet Revolution in 1918 & 1989. Masaryk opposed a regime he would not fully reject until later in life, whereas Havel opposed an indisputably repulsive regime. For this reason, Masaryk sought deeper reasons for the revolution & legitimated the renewal of the Czech state with his philosophy of history. Positing that the world evolved from theocracy to democracy, Masaryk argued that the Czechs initially provided the impetus for the shift during the fifteenth-century Hussite movement, lost touch with the democratization process after the Battle on the White Mountain in 1620, & returned to the mainstream of European history in their fight against absolutism. Masaryk’s faith in the meaning & strength of democracy was subsequently destroyed by the Munich Agreement. Havel, by contrast, based his political vision not on the philosophy of history, but on belief in democratic values. Both men have accen
affected our lives. The biographies that follow are organized in an A-Z format: each biography is divided into a "life" section describing the individual's life and influences and a "legacy" section summarizing the impact of that individual's work throughout history. These biographies cover a diverse group of men and women from around the globe and throughout history. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Mao Tse-tung and Genghis Khan are among the 200 well-known historical figures included in this volume.

Examples of other lesser-known, yet important, individuals covered in this work are: Gustavas Adolphus, Swedish empire creator; Hatshepsut, queen of ancient Egyptian dynasty; and Jean Jaurès, French socialist leader and pacifist. Each synopsis provides information on each individual's enduring impact on the common understanding of fundamental themes of human existence.

"This book investigates how values such as freedom, work, family, free time, and politics changed in Czech society in the two decades before and after the November 1989 Velvet Revolution" -- Provided by publisher.

A critical study of the philosophy and political practice of the Czech dissident movement Charter 77. Aviezer Tucker examines how the political philosophy of Jan Patocka (1907-1977), founder of Charter 77, influenced the thinking and political leadership of Vaclav Havel as dissident and president. Presents the first serious treatment of Havel as philosopher and Patocka as a political thinker. Through the Charter 77 dissident movement in Czechoslovakia, opponents of communism based their civil struggle for human rights on philosophic foundations, and members of the Charter 77 later led the Velvet Revolution. After Patocka's self-sacrifice in 1977, Vaclav Havel emerged a strong philosophical and political force, and he continued to apply Patocka's philosophy in order to understand the human condition under late communism and the meaning of dissidence. However, the political/philosophical orientation of the Charter 77 movement failed to provide President Havel with an adequate basis for comprehending and responding to the extraordinary political and economic problems of the postcommunist period. In his discussion of Havel's presidency and the eventual corruption of the Velvet Revolution, Tucker demonstrates that the weaknesses in Charter 77 member's understanding of modernity, which did not matter while they were dissidents, seriously harmed their ability to function in a modern democratic system. Within this context, Tucker also examines Havel's recent attempt to topple the democratic but corrupt government in 1997-1998. The Philosophy and Politics of Czech Dissidence from Patocka to Havel will be of interest to students of philosophy and politics, scholars and students of Slavic studies, and historians, as well as anyone fascinated by the nature of dissidence.

On 4 June 1989 the Communist regime in Warsaw collapsed as Solidarity won the election, 12 days later Imre Nagy was buried in Budapest, 31 years after his execution. The Berlin Wall came down and in Prague, Vaclav Havel masterminded the Velvet Revolution. The author was witness to all these events.

The landlocked Czech Republic is not a large country, but it has a rich history. Known for its architectural treasures, lush forests, and a strong literary heritage, the Czech Republic was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and was united with Slovakia under the name Czechoslovakia before its peaceful independence in 1993. Since then, the Czech Republic has become a stable and prosperous parliamentary republic. Readers will learn more about this complex country and its distinctive culture in this engaging...
and informative book. Provides an overview of the geography, history, government, people, arts, foods, and other aspects of life in the Czech Republic.

Political Action in Vaclav Havel’s Thought: The Responsibility of Resistance, by Delia Popescu, explores the Czech dissident’s theory of individual opposition, resistance to oppression, and individual responsibility. The book contributes to our understanding of both the extreme circumstances of oppression and to the subversive uses of oppression in modern liberal democracy.

A young adult biography of Czech playwright, dissident and politician Vaclav Havel. When Ladislav Holy precipitately left Czechoslovakia for the UK in 1968 he was already one of the leading anthropologists in Central Europe. In the following decades he made important field studies in Africa. Since 1986 he has been engaged in research in the Czech Republic, and he brings to this timely study of national identity the skills of a seasoned researcher, a cosmopolitan perspective, and the insights of an insider.

Drawing on historical and literary sources as well as ethnography, he analyses Czech discourses on national identity. He argues that there were specifically ‘Czech’ aspects to the communist regime and to the ‘velvet revolution’, and paying particular attention to symbolic representations of what it means to be Czech, he explores how notions of Czech identity were involved in the debates surrounding the fall of communism, and the emergence of a new social system.

Looks at the history of the borders in the Czech Republic as a result of political, territorial, and economic disputes, and discusses the Velvet Revolution.

Contains primary source material.

Czechoslovakia has been at the center of some of the most difficult - and tragic- episodes of modern European history: its sacrifice to Nazi Germany at Munich, the Communist Coup of 1948, and the military crushing of the Prague Spring. It has also enacted momentous change almost magically, as in the peaceful overthrow of communism in 1989 and then the negotiated end to the country in 1992. Czechoslovak history has consequently produced enduring political metaphors for our times, such as the Velvet Revolution and Velvet Divorce. This second edition of the Historical Dictionary of the Czech State has been thoroughly updated and greatly expanded.

Featuring a chronology, introductory essay, appendix, bibliography, and hundreds of cross-referenced dictionary entries, this detailed, authoritative reference provides descriptions of the Czechs as a people; the territory they inhabit; their social, cultural, political, and economic developments throughout history; and their interactions with neighbors and the wider world.

Making History: Czech Voices of Dissent and the Revolution of 1989 brings together the personal narratives of eleven former dissidents who, though close associates of Václav Havel, operated without his international celebrity. The narratives, based on interviews conducted by the author in Prague and Berlin, relate each individual’s personal experiences on topics such as growing up in Czechoslovakia, life as a dissident, the Velvet Revolution, and the achievements and failures of the Czech Republic since 1989.

As a playwright, a dissident, and a politician, Václav Havel was one of the most important intellectual figures of the late twentieth century. Working in an extraordinary range of genres – poetry, plays, public letters, philosophical essays, and political
speeches – he left behind a range of texts so diverse that scholars have had difficulty grappling with his oeuvre as a whole. In Reading Václav Havel, David S. Danaher approaches Havel’s remarkable body of work holistically, focusing on the language, images, and ideas which appear and reappear in the many genres in which Havel wrote. Carefully reading the original Czech texts alongside their English versions, he exposes what in Havel’s thought has been lost in translation. A passionate argument for Havel’s continuing relevance, Reading Václav Havel is the first book to capture the fundamental unity of his vast literary legacy.

More than any other public figure, Václav Havel has reflected on the opportunities and dilemmas facing humankind as a result of the Communism’s collapse. His life serves as an example of responsible and moral action, even at the cost of much personal suffering. In the first book to bring together Havel's life and work, James Pontuso examines the Czech president's political philosophy. Pontuso argues that Havel's life as a dissident and political leader, his political writings, and his plays are part of a whole and must be understood as intimately connected to one another. In this engaging work, Pontuso skillfully explores these connections and explains Havel's prescriptions for political life.

Václav Havel is revered as one of the 20th-century's great playwrights, dissidents, and honest champions of democracy. In this study, John Keane reveals a Havel so far unseen, dramatizing the key moments of joy, misery, triumph and tragedy on which his life has turned.

With the emergence of a dissident playwright as the President of Czechoslovakia in 1989, the Czech tradition by which theatre mirrors political life came full circle. Ranging back over the three decades preceding the Velvet Revolution, these four plays show modern Czech writers skilfully commenting on current realities through historical and domestic themes. Published here for the first time in English, Václav Havel's Tomorrow!, written anonymously in 1988, is a historical comedy about the founding of the Czechoslovak Republic. Games by novelist Ivan Klíma shows a house party going badly wrong as old guilts break the surface. In Joseph Topol's Cat on the Rails two lovers wait for a train that never comes. And Dog and Wolf by the leading woman playwright Daniela Fischerová takes François Villon as exemplar of the clash between artist and society.

The vivid portrait of the "Velvet Revolution" describes the dramatic social and political changes that heralded the downfall of the Communist leadership in Czechoslovakia. Bernard Wheaton, one of the few Western observers in the country during the nonviolent change of government in November 1989, and Zdeněk Kavan, himself a Czech, interweave firsthand description with interviews of student leaders, press accounts, and scholarly analysis of the historical antecedents of the revolution to bring the extraordinary events of 1989 to life. The authors also trace the evolution of change in Czechoslovakia, weighing the importance of the May 1990 elections and assessing political and social prospects for the future. The narrative is enriched with political cartoons and photographs.

Václav Havel was an iconoclast and philosopher-king, an internationally...
successful playwright who became a political dissident and then, reluctantly, a president. His pivotal role in the Velvet Revolution, the end of Communism and the birth of a modern, west-facing Czech Republic makes him a key figure of the 20th century. Michael Zantovsky, one of Havel's closest friends, explores his remarkable life.

Written by a Czech local, Frommer's Prague and the Best of the Czech Republic has all the practical details and candid advice you need to explore one of Europe's loveliest and most exciting countries. We've reviewed the very best places to stay and dine in Prague, from historic art nouveau hotels to intimate Castle District guesthouses, from grand cafes to ethnic restaurants and local pubs. With Frommer's in hand, it's easy to explore all the sights, whether you want to stroll the cobbled streets of the Old Town and take in its architectural masterpieces, wander the old Jewish neighborhood, tour the Castle complex, or check out the city's cutting-edge galleries and nightclubs. In addition, the guide details side trips that explore the best of the nearby countryside. Chapters also highlight the best places to visit in the regions of Bohemia and Moravia, including Bohemia's spa towns, the beer-lovers' mecca of Plzen, and the country's stunning castles.

A decade ago, playwright dissident Václav Havel led an almost bloodless revolution against Czechoslovakia's hardline communist regime. In the years that followed, the country split apart into two independent Czech and Slovak states, each taking radically different paths to reform. This book examines the core issues at work in the last decade, focusing on the political, economic, and philosophical underpinnings of the reform process.

Under constant pressure from the regime, and frequently jailed or imprisoned for their efforts, the signatories of Charter 77 went on to lead the resistance and spearhead a revolution: the Velvet Revolution of 1989. For a time it seemed as if a philosopher-king had overturned the forces of totalitarianism, with the future of Czechoslovakia there for the making.

After the Velvet RevolutionVáclav Havel and the New Leaders of Czechoslovakia Speak OutUpa

During the Cold War, the West--especially in the popular media--tended to view communism as a monolithic phenomenon, with little variation throughout the Eastern Bloc. Yet culture and geography contributed to social diversity among and within communist systems. Drawing on interviews with approximately 100 Czechs and Slovaks, the author provides new perspectives on day-to-day life in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. Their recollections paint a more complex picture of the life on the other side of the Iron Curtain, from the Sputnik era reforms of the early 1960s, through the tumult of the 1968 Prague Spring and the subsequent Soviet invasion, to the Velvet Revolution, the collapse of the communist regime and the formation of democratic Czechoslovakia in 1989.

Gain an insight into the local characteristics from the Czech love of nature to their musical inclination to their magical folklore. Be aware of social etiquette when
dining in someone’s home or learn what to expect when attending a traditional wedding. Navigate your way around the complex Czech language, especially its 40-lettered alphabet and sometimes difficult pronunciation. Discover what you should expect to pay for your new home, what your tenant rights are and what documents are required for obtaining a work and spousal visa. Peppered throughout with useful phrases, terms and resources, CultureShock! Czech Republic is a must-have for anyone planning on adapting to life in the Czech Republic.


The “definitive biography” of the poet and political dissident who became the last president of Czechoslovakia—and first president of the Czech Republic (Walter Isaacson). This portrait of Vaclav Havel, iconoclast and intellectual, renowned playwright turned political dissident, president of a united then divided nation, and dedicated human rights activist, is written by his former press secretary, advisor, and longtime friend—and recounts the turbulent twentieth-century era through which he prevailed. Havel’s lifelong perspective as an outsider began with his privileged childhood in Prague and his family’s blacklisted status following the Communist coup of 1948. This feeling of being outcast fueled his career as an essayist and a dramatist writing absurdist plays as social commentary. His involvement during the Prague Spring and his leadership of Charter 77, his unflagging belief in the power of the powerless, and his galvanizing personality catapulted Havel into a pivotal role as the leader of the Velvet Revolution in 1989. Although Havel was a courageous visionary, he was also a man of great contradictions, wracked with doubt and self-criticism. But he always remained true to himself. This “smart and exciting” biography is “both inspiring and filled with lessons for our time” (Walter Isaacson). “Havel was one of the most important intellectual-troublemaking statesmen of his time—a nonconformist, determined to live in truth, who questioned the system, his countrymen and himself constantly. No one is better suited than Michael Zantovsky to describe, interpret, and analyze this moral giant . . . A brilliantly informed intellectual and political history.” —Madeleine Albright “Entertaining, intimate, and moving . . . Zantovsky’s voice—that of a natural storyteller with an eye for the memorable anecdote, a mischievous wit, an easy intelligence, and keen sense of balance and fairness—is so engaging.” —Paul Wilson, The New York Review of Books

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