Ludvík Černý

(Mayor 1964-1970)

In the protocol of the National Board of Capital Cityy Prague's (NVP) meeting from 11th November 1963 we can read about the changes made in city management just six months prior to the municipal elections. The most serious change concerned the abdication of Mayor Adolf Svoboda (1900–1969) and his replacement by Ludvík Černý (1920–2003) who was twenty years younger.

Prague Spring in Prague Town Hall

For many years Černý worked as MP and the head of the NVP's planning committee. In 1960, he became one of the two deputy mayors. In the national board's elections held in 1964 he was elected Mayor. The elections chose a brand new city management, which apart from the mayor included deputy mayors A. Otradovec, F. Budský, B. Havlíček, secretary Z. Kiesewetter and other fourteen members of NVP. Sixteen councilmen were members of the Czech Communist Party; non-communists were represented just by one member of People's Party and one member of Socialist Party.

The new management wasn't in favour of reforms and didn't support the 1968 Prague Spring reformist movement. Careful and reserved strategies became a distinctive feature of its policy. Developments in the political situation brought about changes in the NVP board though. For the first time at the beginning of 1967 and then again in June 1968, the management members were removed from the office and replaced by more progressive people.

After the so called 'normalisation' swing, the NVP secretary, two deputy mayors and in the end the mayor himself gradually left their posts "at their own request" between July 1969 and September 1970.

Concept of city development

Under the Mayor Černy leadership, the NVP took up very dynamic line focusing on development of the city and its infrastructure. He also managed to secure the necessary investments.

Thanks to that, high-rise prefab settlements, Prosek, Kobylisy, Ďáblice and others, were built from 1964 on a massive scale. In the course of the following two years it was decided to start some big transport projects, such as the metro development, North-South Highway and Nuselsky Bridge, Vysočany elevated road, Holešovice railway relocation and Wenceslas Square subway.

In April 1964, the Government approved the Development Plan for Prague for the period until 1990 and new authorities led by the Main Architect Office started to work on the long-term city development plan. On 30th November 1967, the National Assembly approved Capital City Prague Act that amended the standing of Prague, and 21 neighbouring municipalities were joined with the capital city.

The historical centre of the city finally lived to see better times after three decades of neglect. Houses standing alongside main tourist routes had their roofs and exteriors renovated. Some significant monuments underwent more thorough renovation (Charles Bridge, Smetana Theatre, Emauzy, Martinicky Palace, Picture Gallery of Prague Castle etc.). In December 1964, the NVP board approved the State list of real estate monuments in the territory of Prague that was to become a foundation document for the registration and protection of city monuments.

Stages of Mayor's life

We can't deny that Mayor Černy contributed to the fact that the capital city finally started with conceptual solutions to the problems that accumulated over the previous thirty years. This positive development was, however, hindered by the Warsaw Pact Army invasion on 21st August 1968, and mainly after the Normalisation policies were enforced in April 1969.

When in 1968 the Soviet army besieged the New Town Hall, the seat of Ludvík Černý, Soviets was considered a hotbed of contra-revolutionaries. Černý wasn't deemed as a suitable candidate for new circumstances. One month after his 50 year birthday (he was born on 16th August in Vysočany from worker's family), he left the mayor's office, according to protocol this was on his own request. He ceased to work as the member of city board of Communist Party.

Prior to his mayor's post, he graduated from ČVUT with a degree in economic engineering and worked first in the Čechoslavia insurance company and later in ČKD Stalingrad, at first in the planning department and then as a deputy director. Thanks to his education and work experience, after his resignation to the post of mayor he became a chairman of Czechoslovakian Trade Chamber in 1970 where he stayed until his retirement. He died in Neherovska Street in Dejvice on 12th September 2003.