



Socialism Realised

Life in Communist Czechoslovakia, 1948-1989

Negotiations

Československý filmový týdeník, č. 32, 1968/

The Czechoslovak newsreel, no. 32, 1968

A few years ago in this place, there were swamps full of mosquitos and a little station, which has greatly expanded in the past twenty years. At the end of July and in the first days of August, the name “Čierna nad Tisou” began to be heard in all the world’s languages. On the 29th of July, two particularly closely watched trains arrived here, one with Czechoslovak national emblems, the second with Soviet.

Going into the little city was not allowed, and going onto the little square was less so, as there were two buildings around it.

This is location X, where the highly anticipated Czechoslovak-Soviet negotiations took place. For the whole four days, not a single word from this spot leaked to the public, besides notifications of the meeting’s launch and its continuation and unconfirmed accounts from international agencies. Czechoslovak Radio was without information. Not even people a few hundred meters away from the location of the negotiations knew anything.

Our cameraman, who had been on location from the very start, was only allowed to start filming on the second day. This was Tuesday, the 30th of July.

The negotiations end at dusk. The Soviet delegation comes out first.

Ours come out behind them, greeting faraway people.

Socialism, togetherness, sovereignty, freedom. That was the mandate our delegation received from both the Czechs and the Slovaks. In these days, perhaps all of the inhabitants of our whole republic were interested in how the negotiations in Čierna nad Tisou would turn out.

The regular evening departure of the Soviet train across the border line.

Our people were always discussing the common approach long into the night.

And again in the morning.

The meeting was very difficult. Originally, they expected that it would last only one day. Tensions at home and in the world kept growing. International journalists were not allowed into Čierna nad Tisou. There was a ring of Public Security members a few kilometers around the place. An English journalist from the Times tried to wade through the swamps so that he could get to his goal; just before the station, however, he was caught and sent back to Košice.