

“THEY WILL REMAIN SILENT
AND WAIT FOR ‘BETTER’ TIMES”

Paralyzing and Dismantling the Czechoslovak Writers' Union
at the Beginning of the “Normalization Period” (1968-1970)¹

Ines Koeltzsch

The present contribution deals with the relationship between writers and politics, examining how the Czechoslovak, respectively Czech, writers' union was paralyzed and finally dismantled after the “Prague Spring” had failed to deliver. The author takes a closer look first at the mutual dependency of a change of methods as far as “politics proper” was concerned, and a change of assessment on the ideological level which the CPCz leadership made with regard to the Prague Spring and its protagonists as the year 1970 drew to a close. The other focus is on the writers' reactions towards the “normalization policy” which represented an ever greater threat to their professional subsistence. While the CP leadership did not succeed in winning prominent writers over for an active support of the “normalization” cause, by enforcing a ban on certain journals or individual writers and by finally, in late 1970, even disbanding the union it did manage to bring lots of pressure to bear on the writers and to make them silent, at least for the time being.