

An Analytical Study of Prague Spring in Simon Mawer's *Prague Spring*

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Abstract

This study aims at clarifying the relationship between politics represented by the authority and the society, particularly its citizens, and how freedom becomes frail and turns into restrictions imposed on the citizens by the authorities. As an interdisciplinary approach, political sociology identifies politics' influence on society and vice versa. As a result of the condition of the countries, political sociology appeared in the nineteenth century by Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Emile Durkheim. The study focuses on the Prague Spring in examining the relationship between authority and citizens and the effect of the political mess on the citizens and society through Simon Mawer's novel *Prague Spring*. The study is divided into six sections: the first discussed political sociology. The second presents the meaning of the theme 'The Frailty of Freedom'. Thus, the third section discusses the historical background of the Prague Spring. The life of the British writer Simon Mawer is presented in the fourth section. The fifth section shows the analysis of Simon Mawer's *Prague Spring*. The research ends with the sixth section, which presents the conclusions.

Keywords: Political Sociology, Frailty of Freedom, Prague Spring, Simon Mawer.

INTRODUCTION

Each country is formulated from three aspects, political, social, and cultural, and these three aspects must be completely understood to have a clear picture of any country. The interdisciplinary approach, political sociology, interweaves the two aspects and sheds light on the effect of political behaviours on society and vice versa. It also clarifies the relationship between authority and citizens and their endless conflicts to obtain power and comments on these societies' oppression and power struggles during that period. The frailty of freedom results from the authorities' policy in dealing with individuals and their demands. Rather than being out of prison, freedom has a broad meaning. It means the ability to do and say what the individuals want without restrictions.

Prague Spring, the protest that started in Czechoslovakia in 1968, is an example of the unstable relationship between the authorities and citizens. It is examined in the novel *Prague Spring* by Simon Mawer. People in these countries did not achieve their aims of protesting; their authorities put new restrictions and rules to suppress them, frail their freedom, and end their protesting. These strategies of authority affect people's way of thinking and living.

Political Sociology

Political sociology is an interdisciplinary approach that focuses on the political and social aspects of any society. It emerges as a separate field away from the notion of sociology and political science, in which it does not only investigate political or social norms but the combination of both. It also emerges as a distinct approach as a sequence of the aftermath of World War II and societal changes, and it tries to blend social and political facts. The founding fathers who worked to develop the notion of political sociology are mainly the sociologist theorists Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Emile Durkheim (Nobbs et al., 1978: 1). Furthermore, the first picture of political sociology is the family, as Rousseau (1994: 33) asserts that the ruler is the father and the individuals are the children. All individuals are born with the same level of liberty and equality, and no one is superior to any other. He adds that though there is a significant connection, there is a slice of difference between the two. On the one hand, love is a virtual bond between a father and children in a family. On the other hand, people bond by obedience to the ruler's power and rules in a state. It looks to the family as a small picture of society in which members obey their parents' orders, and the parents should set the family's boundaries and system.

According to *The concise oxford dictionary of politics*, the nineteenth century witnessed the emergence of political science and sociology as distinct approaches, which sought to distinguish the study of the political from the study of the social and the economic. Political sociology studies power and authority in social structures and research on the family, the media, universities, and labour organisations (McMillan and McLean, 1996: 635). Many people cannot differentiate between the sociology of politics and political sociology. In his article *From the Sociology of Politics to Political Sociology* Giovanni Sartori (1969: 195) states that the sociology of politics is concerned with the causes of oppression as well as the battles for power that take place inside the political life, while political sociology concerns with the political and sociological explanations of oppression and power struggles, as well as, the commenting on these acts of oppression and power conflicts. Sartori adds that unlike the sociology of politics, political sociology is concerned with all societal disputes, whether political, religious, ethical, or ideological. In contrast, the sociology of politics is only concerned with the economy and class structure. However, political sociology is broader in its concern than the sociology of politics (1969: 207). Laxman Singh Rathore (1986: 122) declares that political sociology attempts to clarify political phenomena by analysing social factors. According to him, it studies the connections between politics and society, social and political systems, and social attitudes and political attitudes. He asserts that political sociology exists by blending sociological and political methodologies. Rather than focusing on political institutions only, it focuses on the connections between political institutions and other social institutions and society. However, political sociology acts as a bridge that connects sociology and political science, which means that political sociology exists through the contact between the two approaches.

Moreover, John Scott (2014: 804-805) defines political sociology as "The branch of sociology that is concerned with the social causes and consequences of given power distributions within or between societies, and the social and political conflicts that lead to changes in the allocation of power." In his definition, Scott asserts that political sociology plays an essential role in defining power limitations in various social areas and circumstances. Their writings centre on the concept of power; the primary concern is the source and use of power and its impact and effect on all of the state's social institutions. Furthermore, Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward (2005: 44) assert that the rule makers obtain power through various strategies, like using the state's ability to dominate people. Rulemaking is a powerful strategy in which a group of people make rules to force others to do what they want, while the rules-breakers use their power to stand against and replace them. People follow the rules, but sometimes they refuse to follow some rules. Both rulemaking and rule-breaking are ways to show power. Here, power is associated with conflict, so political sociology investigates the relationship between society, the rule-makers, the institutions, and the social powers. Political sociology is the discipline that best reflects an ideal image of the rulers, and the political system is the best link between the citizens who are ruled. In certain circumstances, these systems relate to a country or a set of countries, and these ties frequently link rulers as they design and carry out projects for the citizens.

Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, and Max Weber put the basics of political sociology; all significantly influence how we think about society and politics today. They lived during the period of the industrial revolution, social transformations, and the development of Western civilisation that constituted the foundation for the social sciences of the twentieth century to understand how society is moving. Roland Axtmann argues that Weber's perspective on social structure is one of the endless struggles to obtain power and provides several sporadic observations on the relationships between class, status, political parties, and the legitimacy of political systems under various conditions (1998: 34). However, the social system is an era in which individuals interact with each other and struggle to have power. Accordingly, political sociology depends on social and political norms in which each part affects the other. Thus, the connection between the government and individuals should structure so that the government listens to the people. They should adhere to the laws and orders to cease the power struggle and provide stability in the community.

The Frailty of Freedom

Freedom is a renewed concept; its general meaning does not mean being out of prison, but rather people's feelings from the inside that they are free (inner freedom) and not under partial restrictions. In this study, the terms freedom and liberty are used interchangeably. *Merriam Webster Dictionary* (2008) presents multiple definitions of the concept of freedom:

The state of being free: such as a: the power to do what you want to do: the ability to move or act freely ... b: the state of not being a slave, prisoner ... c: the state of not having or being affected by something unpleasant, painful, or unwanted ... d: the right to do something or go somewhere without being controlled". (p. 659)

Furthermore, C. Fred Alford has examined people's perspectives of freedom based on his interviews with people in his book *Rethinking Freedom: Why Freedom Has Lost Its Meaning and What Can Be Done to Save It* (2005). Alford asserts that according to the people he meets, freedom is the ability to do and say whatever they want. Once individuals cannot do that, there is no means of freedom, and they are not free. As a result, they need power that enables them to obtain their freedom (p. 17). According to the Russian-British philosopher Isaiah Berlin, there are two notions of liberty. In *Two Concepts of Liberty* (1969), Berlin compares negative and positive freedoms. Negative freedom means that individuals are not under the effect of external power, able to make their decisions without the interference of others. It is known as freedom from. Individuals are

responsible for their choices based on their thoughts and reasons, which help them achieve their goals (p. 15). Additionally, he illustrates that positive freedom means that individuals are subject to external effects that guide them in how they act, as others will. As a result, individuals cannot achieve their goals or make decisions freely. Individuals wish to operate freely and be the subject, not the object. In positive freedom, individuals want to be the masters of their own lives, known as freedom (1969: 22-23). However, negative freedom does not mean evil and harmful; instead, it is free from external forces.

According to McMillan and McLean, freedom of speech is the condition of not being fearful of repercussions and without impediment when individuals communicate their thoughts and beliefs. Laws controlling provocation, insurrection, defamation, blasphemy, the speech of race prejudice, and conspiracy are among the most visible constraints on the right to speak whatever one wants, wherever one wants (1996: 316). Freedom exists in societies that witness rapid development in their democratic processes. Democratic societies allow citizens to be responsible for their decisions and give them the right to share their thoughts and ideas without fear. However, communities that enable citizens to express their opinions and beliefs freely have fewer problems as individuals shed light on the state's faults and correct them to formulate a stable society. Political sociology studies the relationship between society, people, the state, and government based on rights and duties. Since the government does not fulfil its responsibilities and uses its power to restrict people's freedom, people have the right to rebel against them to live stable life.

The Historical Background of the Prague Spring

The temporary phase of political and social changes in Czechoslovakia from January 1968 to the Soviet Union invasion in August of the same year is called Prague Spring. Alexander Dubcek changed the strategy of ruling Czechoslovakia. The Prague Spring is a reform movement by Dubcek, a Slovak reformer and a member of the Communist Party, to stand against the authority of the Communist Party. The conflict to obtain power led to the resistance of Dubcek and his followers to establish a democratic republic and end the restrictions of freedoms. They aimed to enact political and economic reform (Dowling, 2002: 103). However, the reformation was a way to reshape the relationship between the Communist Party, which represented the state and the Czechoslovakian society by offering new liberties for the citizens. Marc Santora (2018) pinpoints that a new area of a resurgence of freedoms, including political and cultural, was already started inside the Communist Party by the loyal officers of the Communist Party. He adds that Dubcek wanted to create an environment where the free press thrived, and writers and artists had the right to express themselves and criticise the government. He startled the authority officers in the Soviet Union when he explained his vision for the country to create a profoundly humanitarian country and a contemporary free society (p. 1).

Accordingly, Gawdiak asserts that Dubcek had developed and pushed the reform to be a liberal country in which the Czechoslovakians regained the freedoms that the Communist Party restricted. Media sources were the reformers' tools to spread their ideologies to the citizens, like television, radio, and the press, after being banned for an extended period by the Communist Party (1989: 62). The Soviets were discontent with the reforms. They threatened the Warsaw Pact, which contains five countries Poland, Germany, Hungary, Bulgaria, and the Soviet's operations on the Czech lands when the Czechoslovakian government visited Moscow (Murphy, 2018: 96).

Additionally, Santora declares that the troops of the Warsaw Pact crushed the reformers' hopes, broke the nation's morale, and inaugurated an age of tyranny when they invaded Czechoslovakia to control the country, which reflected the Soviet's autocratic strategies of their regime (2018: 1). However, the Soviet Union's success in controlling the country once again and the new authority under the Communist Party cancelled all the reforms that Dubcek illustrates, keeping the country's division into two republics.

Simon Mawer and the path of success (1948-....)

Simon Mawer is a British author born in England in 1948, after the Second World War. He belongs to a military family; his father and grandfather were members of the Royal Air Force, which influenced the family's life, especially Mawer's life. During that period of his life, Mawer moved across many countries. He spends his childhood moving between England, Cyprus, and Malta. As a result of his travels and encounters, he has developed a lifelong passion for the Mediterranean area and a sense of not belonging to any country he carries throughout his life; then, he stayed in Italy. He says, "I have lived in Italy for more than three decades, but Italy is not home. Home is where the mind is, perhaps." (Mawer, n.d.). In his interview with Simon Mawer, Martin Pengelly (2015) argues that many of Mawer's novels are based on reality or influenced by facts, events and experiences in Mawer's life. However, Mawer's life and experiences greatly influenced his writings though he did not rely on them completely but mixed them with events and characters from his imagination.

The Czech city Brno and science are two significant influences in Mawer's life and writing. In an interview on Radio Prague International with David Vaughan (2010), the latter asks Mawer about his interest in Brno, which he talks about in two of his novels, Mendel's Dwarf and The Glass Room. Mawer asserts that Brno is a delightful city, and it contains many things to draw the interest of any person who visits it. However, Mawer does not know much about Brno, as he visited it as a tourist, and then

he kept reading about its historical background. In his paper, *Brno* (2010), Mawer states that he became interested in Czech cultural and social life after his first visit because it is one of the world's industrial and democratic societies, known for its theatre, music, and art. The city represents the country's optimistic future. He reflects his interest in Brno in his literary works (pp. 57–58). Interestingly, in his article *Science in Literature* (2005), Mawer explains his wariness about why scientists cannot use their wit, fantasy, and imagination and why the authors cannot use logic and reason carefully. He argues that science and literature have the same sources, so writing about science in literature is normal. Moreover, the authors insist on reflecting the scientific approaches in their works, such as science in fiction (p. 298). However, science and literature are interested in creating new projects and ideas. Many scientific facts are starting to appear in literary works like novels; as a biology teacher, this influenced Mawer to write about new subjects and themes in his novels.

The Frailty of Freedom in *Prague Spring*

Prague Spring is a novel by the British novelist Simon Mawer, published by Little Brown in UK and Other Press in the USA in 2018. The novel is about the events of 1968, which witnessed the Prague Spring in Czechoslovakia (Mawer, n.d.). In an interview with Jana Krause (2019), Krause asks Mawer whether he depends on his imagination when he writes *Prague Spring* or not. Mawer asserts that he reflects an authentic period of history, so he does not rely on his opinions and imagination; he puts things as they are. He reads a lot to have complete knowledge about the events of that period to reflect it in his novel.

The novel contains ten parts and 52 chapters. The name of the novel indicates its subject; the story is about Czechoslovakia's historical, political, and social events during the reformation of Alexander Dubcek and before the invasion of the armies of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact. Mawer composed a series of events to portray how the freedoms were frail during that period and the change resulting from the uprising. He blends historical events with fictional characters and other authentic characters.

Mawer uses the third-person narrator to narrate the events by commenting on the two couples in the novel and the story's events. The narrator expresses every character's thoughts and reflects a complete picture of the Prague Spring to the readers. The writer illustrates the interwoven lives of four individuals who meet in Czechoslovakia during the Prague Spring. Two couples' love stories are told in the novel's opening chapters: James Borthwick and Eleanor Pike, two British Oxford students from different classes, and Lenka Koneckova, a 25-year-old Czech journalist and student of master in English language and Samuel Wareham, an ambassador and first secretary at the British embassy in Prague who speaks Russian and petite Czech. Sam has a relationship with Stephanie before Lenka, who also works in services before she leaves him and returns to England. Sam reveals the political aspects of the country as he works in the British embassy in Czechoslovakia; he remains in touch with the political changes that happened. In contrast, Ellie and James reflect the social and cultural characteristics as they meet the Czechoslovakian people and interact with them.

Mawer describes the country before the reformation to give a complete picture of the changes during the Prague Spring. He portrays how Czechoslovakia suffers a lot under the regime of the Communist Party that follows the Soviet Union to the extent that officers of diplomatic services of other countries prefer to send to Africa rather than Czechoslovakia due to the gloomy and deplorable condition of the country as the authority suppress people's freedoms and the condition of the country is horrible, the political struggles to obtain power affect not only the politicians but the social life of citizens and frail their freedoms. At the same time, with the coming of socialism with a human face and the reforms that Dubcek sets, it becomes the target of everyone to serve under their regime as a vast space of freedoms exists. People believe that a new period has started with Dubcek, which changes the country into, as the narrator says, "some kind of earthy paradise" (Mawer, 2018: 33-34). For the first time, it appears as if nothing is beyond bounds behind the Iron Curtain after Dubcek controls the country. The Czechoslovakians lived in a liberal country where they could freely express themselves after a long period of persecution of their freedom.

Mawer technically repeats the names of many cities to deliver a complete picture of the country. He mentions many places throughout the novel to portray an accurate image for the reader, like the Old, New Towns, and Wenceslas square, where people gather to stand against the invaders and refuse their invasion. Furthermore, many names of Czechoslovakian leaders are mentioned, like Alexander Dubcek, Brezhnev, and Tomas Masaryk. Mawer portrays how Sam drives around the city down Resslova as he has a meeting in the New Town with Zdenek and his wife, Jitka. Zdenek says that now Czechoslovakia citizens live a period of complete liberty. He states, "We bring freedom to Czechoslovak people," and he announces, "Freedom will be compulsory" (p. 34). Mawer shows people's belief about the reformation that no more restrictions will impose on their liberties, and they live in a new period of freedom that Dubcek and his followers started.

Furthermore, Jitka, his wife, completes his sentence by elaborating that a new phase of freedom comes with Dubcek's reform. This liberty is not under the control of any party or country anymore as they spent an extended period being a satellite country for the Soviet Union and Russia. She says, "we will not be slaves to capital any more than we will be slaves to marxism" (p. 34). Mawer elaborates through this conversation that Czechoslovakia remains under threat from many countries, including America and the Soviet Union; the interference in Czechoslovakia policy is no more since the reformations have started in the

country. The Czech people stand against any interference from foreign countries and refuse any party's control. He reflects that by showing how the people in the meeting reject the help of America or any other country as they think that America is guilty as Russia, so they refuse any external interference.

The meeting of Sam and Lenka for the first time in the Czech students' gathering reflects the situation in the country, in which they discuss the general condition of the country after the reformation. Mawer shows how people now have the right to criticise the government and speak about politics. The restrictions that the Communist Party leaders put on writing and expressing opinions no longer exist and are abolished by the new government. In a conversation between Lenka and Sam, Lenka expresses her confusion about whether the Soviets let them live in a country with full freedoms. Mawer emphasises the new period of liberty that comes with Dubcek and shows how the citizens start a new way of living during the uprising, which gives people the right to speak and express themselves without fear from the authority after they have suffered under the strict authority of the Communist Party, where people are either killed or tortured if they utter their opinion or criticise the authority. Abolishing the restriction of the freedom of expression is one of the fundamental reformations that Dubcek and his followers set. Czechoslovakia's people like the changes that come with Dubcek; they follow the new administration and support it, as they never differentiate between the Czech and the Slovak people. They all have the same rights and the same freedoms. Mawer portrays how the people deal with the officials during the Prague Spring. He refers to Josef Smrkovsky, a politician and reformer in Dubcek's reformation, who meets with the citizens in a musical performance. Sam and Lenka discuss how people welcome Smrkovsky, and they listen to his speech and applaud loudly; at the same time, he listens to them. Mawer pinpoints a contrasting picture of the officials before the Prague Spring, when a politician meets his people and listens to them for the first time like Smrkovsky does, which is impossible under Novotny's authority during the Communist Party regime. People do not have the ability and right to say their opinion or express their views concerning the government or the party.

Mawer discusses more than one aspect during the novel; when Lenka tells Sam that the Czechs can have a visa for travelling for the first time, he shows the conditions of travelling after the end of the Novotny regime and the coming of Dubcek reformation. The writer shows the situation during the Prague Spring; many things changed. A new phase started with Dubcek and his followers. Reforms existed in every aspect of life, including travelling. The Communists' leaders put extensive requirements to allow citizens to travel and give them a visa. After the reformations, it became easy to have a visa to travel abroad or even study at university as Dubcek set a new standard of living. In the same vein, James and Ellie live in a vast space of freedoms in England that enable them to decide for themselves as they agree from the first meeting in the bar to start a journey and spend the spring vacation around Europe reconnoitre Italy and Greece. At the same time, the Communist Party officials impose severe travel restrictions, and residents are unable to move freely across the country. The result of the flip of a coin determines the trajectory of the young British citizens. "let's toss, she suggests. I've always liked the idea of running your life by the toss of a coin." (pp. 103-104). This action leads them into the turmoil of the Prague Spring. They go to Czechoslovakia, where Dubcek institutes reforms to reform the country that Russia rejected, resulting in the country's invasion and the suppression of people's freedoms. Mawer shows the contrast between European people and Czechs during the same period. The flipping of the coin is a metaphor for the luxury of the European living condition. The authorities in Europe and specifically in England do not restrict the freedoms of their citizens; they give them the right to decide for themselves. In contrast, the Czechoslovakians never had the right to determine their needs or express their desires as they were frightened of the authority.

While the two couples are enjoying their life, the Warsaw pact armies and the Soviet Union Red army are standing outside the borders of Czechoslovakia, waiting for the proper time to invade the country and end socialism with a human face. Mawer mentions Brezhnev, the primary secretary of the Communist Party, who arranges meetings to agree with Dubcek to find a solution before declaring the infestation of the country. Although culture may be disruptive, politics in any country significantly influence the condition of living of the citizens.

Sam's meeting with Lenka's mother, Katerine Koneckova, explores how any country's political condition affects its citizens' social life. The mother believes that something is worrying in the diplomatic who speaks Russian and speaks as good Czech as Sam, so she has suspences concerning him. She argues with Lenka about the Russian invasion while Lenka makes sure that Dubcek will find a solution. Their speech shows that the young generation believes in Dubcek's ability to build the country with socialism with a human face and eliminate the Russians. In contrast, the old generation sees that things will worsen depending on their experience, in which their ambitions of building a free country were previously devastated by the Communist Party. The mother believes that history will repeat itself.

Moreover, Mawer mentions the story of Milada Horakova, the mother and her husband, who were party members. Milada Horakova faces the party and calls for people's freedoms and women's rights, leading to her death. The authority arrested her twice in 1940 and then in September 1949 by the Communist Party and killed her as she resisted their policy. Mawer mentions stories of notable names in Czechoslovakia's history to elaborate that history repeats itself. It indicates that the Communist Party never changes its way of dealing with the resistance and does not accept people's opinions of their policy or criticism of

the government. They either arrest the resisters or kill them; the mother worries about Lenka because she knows their strategy of dealing with those who call for liberty. Although the young generation live with vast freedoms under the regime of Dubcek, the Soviet Union destroy these freedoms, and the country returns to the age of suppression.

Lenka's mother mentions many names for Sam besides Horakova, including Czech Communist politicians like Rudolf Slansky and Rudolf Margolius. She argues that the Communist Party first gets rid of its enemies and then even its men by arresting those who seek to change and develop the country's trade; her husband is one of them. Many Czechoslovak politicians leave the country because of the Communist Party regime. Mawer shows how these actions affect society and the future of the citizens and family members. After the party arrests Lenka's father, the family suffers a lot as they are forced to change the family name to live in Prague and have jobs; the children cannot study in universities since they hold their family name. The mother is forced to change her family's name from Vadinsky to Koneckova, her name before marriage. Then, Lenka is forced to sell her body when she is fifteen to grant a position at the university; she has a relationship with Comrade Rovnak, an official in the Communist Party and a friend of her father. Mawer directly criticises the authority and the Communist Party, which forces the citizens to get rid of their principles to have simple rights like education and uses them to fulfil their desires. The Communist Party does not only has political corruption but social as well. Mawer portrays how the events during that period affected many people's lives psychologically and changed their perspectives and thoughts.

Mawer describes the period before the Prague Spring as a bad dream that people do not want to return to as they now live in reality and fully have their freedoms and rights. During and after the reforms, people enjoy the freedom to express their thoughts and make decisions without government interference. Still, they are afraid of the invasion of the Red Army, which aims to end the reforms. Lenka tells Sam during their meeting. The writer reflects how the Communist Party controls all life aspects, which all Czechoslovakian people consider a horrible dream that affects people's lives. The authorities misuse their power to suppress people's freedom of expression, speech, and travel and torture those who face them. Mawer keeps mentioning the difference between the conditions under the Communist Party authority and after it ends to stress the importance of the Prague Spring and its effect on people's lives, which give them the right to say and do what they want.

Occasionally, the Russian army does its best to enter the Czechoslovakian lands and end the reformation while Ellie and James enjoy their trip. Mawer illustrates that the young couple meets a famous musician, Birgit Eckstein, who will perform in Prague beside the Russian musician Gennady Egorkin. Once again, Mawer mentions well-known people to portray a realistic picture to the readers. Ellie insists on following her to Prague rather than completing their journey to Italy.

All people from different countries look to Czechoslovakia as the spirit of the new period. Their speech reflects the spreading of the news of socialism with a human face to other nations. Prague's pains, ambitions, and passions profoundly influence people on the opposite side of the world, like France. Although socially, the country witnesses a stable period as people have the liberties they want and need, still politically, it does not. The soldiers who pick up Ellie and James argue that the Russian is waiting for a suitable time to enter the country and end everything as Ellie tells them that the country is different now. She confirms that this will not happen as the condition differs from the past and argues: "there's freedom. They've abandoned censorship. They're allowing political meetings. And foreign travel" (pp. 193-194).

The narration takes a different direction to narrate different time zone. When James and Ellie arrive, they cross the Czechoslovakian boundaries. Mawer describes the country's borders throughout history, the Iron Curtain, chain link fencing, barbed wire and free-fire area during the 1960s. He discusses the boundaries from 1919 to show its borders through history. The country is surrounded by different boundaries as if it is a giant prison; then, it gets rid of them all. It reflects how the Czechoslovakian people have lived surrounded by borders like a prison. Mawer mentions it from 1919; when Czechs and Slovaks combined to formulate the state in 1945, the boundary developed into political and language impediments. While in 1989, the Soviet empire crumbled, and its boundaries were destroyed, finally, by 2007, it no longer existed.

The meeting of the two couples represents a new phase of the novel. Ellie and James enter Czechoslovakia and meet Lenka and Sam on their way to Prague; Lenka invites them to stay in her flat. The description of the buildings indicates that when the Communists controlled the country, there was no development of the country's infrastructure; all buildings were old and classical. They do not try to solve social and economic issues as they are only interested in political issues. The country does not witness any development during their regime; in contrast, they destroy the economic system, as well as the social life of the citizens. "The flat is cramped and, despite being up under the roofs, cave-like. The ceilings slope, things are stacked in the awkward space where the ceiling meets the floor, the doors are low their heads" (pp. 208-209). This description is almost for all the flats in that area. Portraying the new condition of social life in that period is a prominent part of the novel.

Throughout the novel, the writer talks about the recitals; the two couples attend the musical parties. Mawer implies that before the reformation, the government puts high restrictions on all sorts of art, like drama. Only musical parties are allowed as music does not threaten the country's stability. Many writers were forced to leave the country during the Communists' regime to speak freely and criticise the government's suppression. The reformation of Dubcek breaks all the restrictions and the censorship of

meetings between writers and journalists. Jitka says, "Here in Prague there is much music. More than New York or London, I think. The government puts money into music because you cannot see the politics in music." (pp. 211-212). Since Ludvik Svoboda becomes the president, he has supported the reformation. New freedoms exist for writers to talk about what they want in their writings and meet with other philosophers and writers in the socialist republic. By portraying the writers' conditions, Mawer wants to show how the writers suffered for an extended period from the frailty of their freedom which made them unable to write what they wanted and criticise the weak points of the authority to the extent that the authority prevented any gathering. He presents the changes during the uprising that granted all the citizens the freedom of expression and speech.

The writer mentions many authentic events, which he reflects through the novel. He illustrates the country's historical background through these events to make the story out of imagination by relying on the actual history of Czechoslovakia. Leonid Brezhnev receives a letter that he uses as a pretext for their invasion from the anti-reform to end the reform. Notably, in the argument between Sam and Eric, he mentions that this is not the first time other countries have left Czechoslovakia alone and betrayed it throughout history. Sam says, "Munich 1838 and now Prague 1968. Do you see the pattern? Nineteen eighteen the state is created. Nineteen thirty-eight it is betrayed by the Great Powers, 1948 the Communists grab power. And now here we are in 1968. It looks ominous." (pp. 247-248).

Sam and Lenka attend the recital that the Russian musicians Gennady Egorkin and Nadezhda Nikolayevna hold; after their performance, Egorkin asks Sam to do him a favour as the Russians prohibit him from travelling to the West due to his critical opinions. He wants his help as an ambassador to travel to the West to eliminate the Russians' restrictions upon them. Through this event, Mawer reflects the Russian ideology in suppressing the freedoms of expression for the Czechoslovakian people; they put high restrictions on them not to express their views and opinions. Additionally, they follow the same policy with their citizens, especially the outspoken activities, musicians, and writers. They impose high restrictions on those who threaten their authority and have an influence on the citizens despite their nationality, whether Russian or Czechoslovakian.

Lenka is known as a journalist who writes in a newspaper for the people who join the meeting. She introduces herself to Dubcek using her father's surname for the first time. Since her father's death, Lenka has never introduced herself by using his name. However, as Dubcek changed many things and ended the control of the Communist Party and the Soviet Union, she proudly says it without fear. He promises her that things will never be like the past, but Lenka has worries as the Russian forces are still considered a danger to the country. Using her family's real name indicates that she is no longer afraid of the Communist Party. However, Dubcek refuses the party's ideology and the killing of citizens even if they are Jewish. She represents the young generation who can stand in the face of everyone to express their opinion. She is an example of the political mess's effect on the citizens' social life and society.

Although the headmaster of the British embassy refuses to help the Russian musicians avoiding any argument with the Russians, Sam, the British ambassador, hides them in his flat to help them; he works to arrange their travel to the West to escape from the authority in Russia. All countries avoid any critical arguments with Russia as they have the capacity to start a Third World War with the Warsaw Pact armies and occupy any country. Sam says, "There had been reports of troop movements both inside and outside the country ever since the spring maneuvers. Half the bloody Warsaw Pact had been sniffing around Czechoslovakia for months now," (p. 316). While the Czechoslovak people are busy with their new freedoms, attending concerts and meetings, the Russian military and the Warsaw Pact armies have been standing around the country's borders from the German and Poland sides to invade the country and end the reformation. Several times in the novel, some scenes reflect historical lessons, for example, when Sam and Lenka hear the sound of aircraft and receive the news that the Red Army has invaded the country. The writer reflects the whole situation during the invasion to clarify to other countries the way the Russian army and the Warsaw Pact armies have dealt with the people's peaceful resistance. The troops use fire to separate the passive resisters, although they follow the announcement of their president and never use violence. Obtaining the power to control the country is the Soviet Union's primary concern; they show no remorse for the citizens. The government's primary tool to communicate with people is the radio; they declare the invasion on the national broadcast, but the sound disappears as the invaders control the situation. By using their podcast to deceive people, the Soviet Union said that they invaded the country as a response to the request of the Communist Party leaders. The narrator says, "personalities of the Czechoslovak Communist Party requested military aid from the Soviet Union because our republic was threatened by counterrevolution and anti-socialist elements..." (p. 323). Mawer describes the events during the invasion; the invaders used fire to separate the peaceful resisters with the help of the Soviet Union armies. Many innocent people were killed or injured by the fires of the Soviet Union armies. Lenka sees James and Ellie in the middle of Wenceslas Square, where the young generation, the intelligent and students, gather to resist peacefully, and the armies use fire to separate them.

Lenka has injured while attempting to run through the streets to help James and Ellie, the young British couple. Lenka's situation is complicated; she is a young, innocent citizen whose father and grandfather were killed by the party and the Nazie armies when they occupied the country. Now she is injured by the fires of the Soviet Union troops without a reasonable reason. Like Lenka, many innocent people were wounded or killed during the invasion. Russia's authority gave the armies orders to shoot

any possible threat. In his review of the novel, Roberta Silman (2019: 1) asserts that the tragedy of existence is when liberty and democratic values are insufficient to endure. After the Prague Spring, she states that, like Lenka, many citizens were disappointed, deceived, and even tortured or killed by the invaders.

Particularly, Lenka at first represents the hope of the young generation to start a new period in Czechoslovakia. Ultimately, she represents the collapse of liberties and the reforms of socialism with a human face. Her unknown future reflects the future of Czechoslovakia, the frail freedoms and conditions when the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact invaded the country. The gloomy atmosphere of Czechoslovakia symbolises the situation and its people as they lose the freedoms and liberties which fight to obtain for centuries. After being admitted to the hospital, Lenka remains in severe and critical condition; she neither survives nor dies. Her condition symbolises the country; it is neither free from the invaders nor entirely captured by the Russians and the Soviet Union. Jitka answers James and Ellie's question about Lenka: "Lenka lies on the borderline between the living and the dead, neither one thing nor the other, like the country itself, neither free nor captive" (pp. 362-363). To show the struggle of the authorities to obtain the power and control of Czechoslovakia, Mawer portrays the manner of the troops with the pacific resisters and citizens and the tanks surrounding the streets.

Interestingly, the hope to turn the country into a liberal one where individuals have the freedom to express their opinions and speak freely turns out to be a feeling of frailty and destruction; freedoms become frail when those who speak and criticise the party or the government faces many obstacles. Additionally, Ellie and James represent freedom; Sam successfully sends the young British lovers out of Czechoslovakia after a demanding experience in Prague. The two young British lovers forget all the hardness they go through and flip the coin again to decide their new direction. The two couples' future stays pending, like Prague and Czechoslovakia's future after the invasion and control of the Russian and the Communist Party. The country suffers from the frailty of freedoms and conflicts between peaceful protestors and the government to obtain power. Mawer reflects this through his novel to deliver a complete picture to the readers of the situation in the phase of the Prague Spring in which people changed their way of living and thinking and the life of many citizens affected by the political mess.

Conclusions

Political sociology is an interdisciplinary approach that shows the relationship between the rulers and the ruled and the effect of politics on society and vice versa. Political behaviours significantly affect the social behaviours of individuals, and as a result, problems in political institutions affect citizens' lives. The study concludes that political mess leads people to arrange demonstrations against the authorities to call for their freedom and liberties and stop suppressing their freedom. In contrast, the authorities persecuted the freedom of speech and expression to keep their powers and control citizens' lives. The study shows that in the novel Prague Spring, Mawer portrays the events of the Prague Spring by mixing reality with fiction in a historical novel and showing the situation when the authority suppresses the characters and kills those who call for their freedom by protesting in the period of Prague Spring.

In this sense, the study concludes that political behaviours and mess affect the social lives and the stability of citizens' conditions. The study finds that some events in Prague during the uprising had affected people's relationships and led them to a negative psychological way of living and thinking, as well as changing their perspectives as a result of the country's condition. Lenka and Sam in Prague Spring and other characters' lives have been affected by the political mess and problems during the period of uprisings.

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