

I'm Proud and Happy That I Experienced It

Vlasta Kunovská

I'm proud and happy and filled with pleasure that I experienced it – those three evening with the secret police and communist member, but also with Jozef Ciller and Ladislav Chudík and other of my unnamed personal friends in my beloved SNP Theater in Martin. Our friendship with many from those times has even grown firmer and still lasts and thrives through the common experience of the Velvet Revolution. And also during those evening when demonstrations that had started in Prague and Bratislava took root also in our SNP Square. We would go there with a fresh mother until then our trusted friend and even more trusted since then. She would go out the revolutionary streets of Martin with her little barely two-month-old daughter Zuzanka in a stroller decorated with a large and clearly visible tricolor band....I was in SNP Square in Bratislava on that snowy and freezingly warm evening when our fear got disenchanted. In my own life I make decisions only on my own behalf so fears do not touch me, but there in that square I saw such beautiful harmony of people who maybe really stopped being afraid...And then I was also among the audience in the National Theater together with one worker from the Martin Printing Works that evening when Václav Havel (or as I call him Vašík Havlů) and singer Marta Kubišová were there...It was that very evening when the leading role of the communist party was abolished, and the Slovak communist government resigned. This was announced to the packed theater by happy actors who were listening to the radio.

The second, and perhaps even more important, thing I have in common with many close and less close people of the same "blood type" who would meet in those November squares is that I firmly believe in the highest value of FREEDOM...

In the days of the 20th anniversary of the Revolution I heard that things like freedom of speech and democracy were good but not for everyone. That's so true! For instance the current Head of the Parliament should shut up about November '89 for the rest of time. Amen. It's more than enough what he does in the free parliament when he is accidentally there and not somewhere else taking care of his private business. He clearly presented his hatred of every different opinion during commemorations of the Revolution. He didn't even shy away from relativizing November '89 in Slovakia and attacking those who had been standing on the tribunes or gathered in the squares when nothing was clear and safe. Democracy allows him to say whatever bullshit he wants and we all hear it...

So how is it with that VELVET revolution of ours? It's simple! Thank god it happened and that we – our little state and little nation – have arrived where we are. Now it is important not to get three big steps backwards - if we do not put on the brake in the right time; each of us in our own place, through our personal initiative and vigilance. I do firmly believe that we'll never go backwards. Just that road on which we must go forwards will not be smooth and

easy for a long time. Just like our everyday, ordinary roads in our towns and villages through which we move today and everyday in our – as I believe – irreversibly free lives.

Translated by **Eva Riečanská**

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