



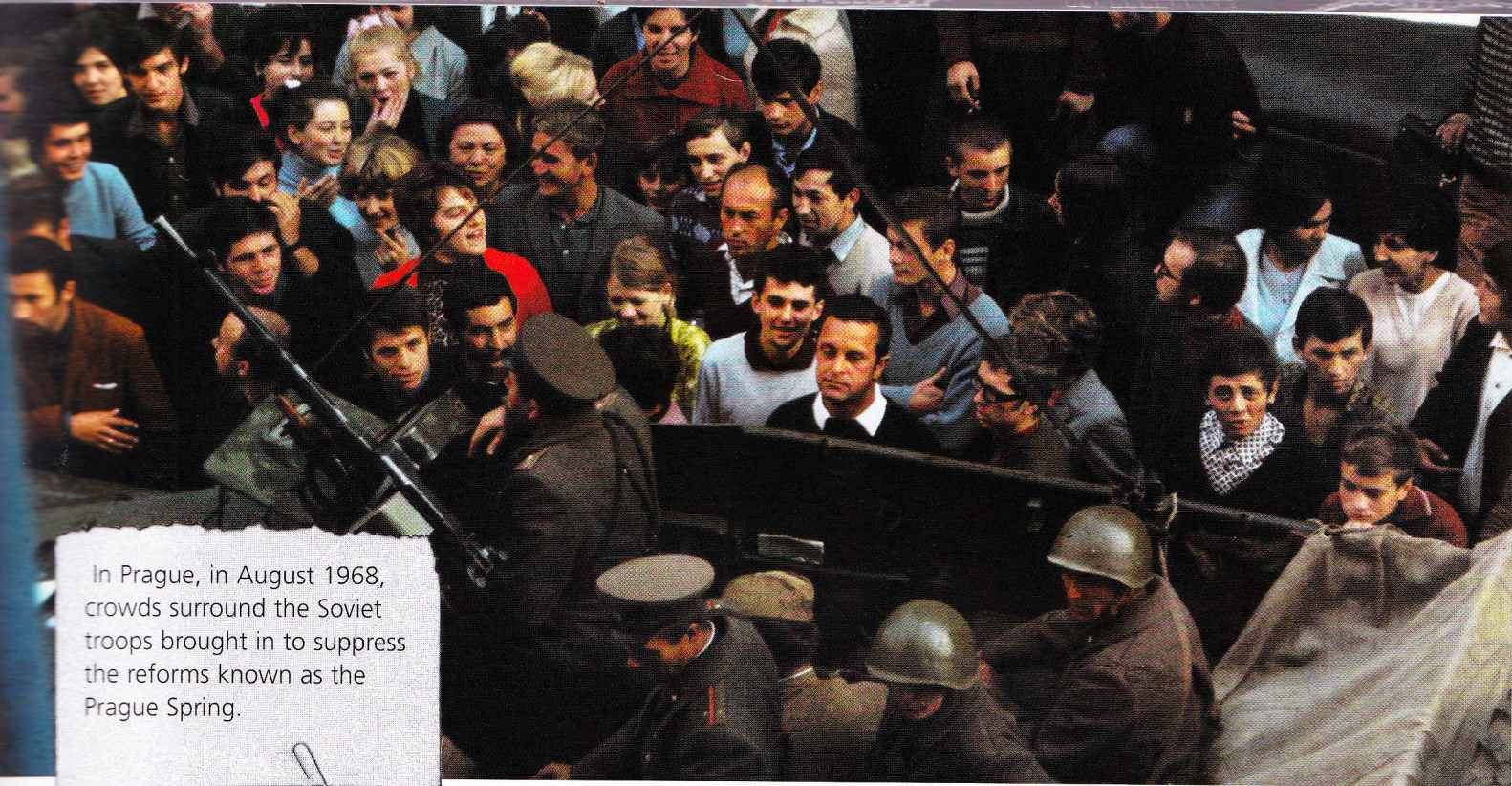
With the wall dividing families, people stood on ladders to wave to their relatives across the barrier.

IN THE YEARS FOLLOWING the building of the wall, Berliners got on with the task of living under its shadow. The West German government encouraged its citizens to live in West Berlin by lowering rates of income tax compared to the rest of the country. Housing was also subsidized in West Berlin, and young people living there were not required to do military service – which was compulsory in the rest of West Germany. The government pumped money into West Berlin, and subsidized hotel rates were used to encourage people to visit the city. As tourists flocked into West Berlin, the Berlin Wall found itself in a new role – as a tourist attraction.

For East Berliners, life also began to improve. They enjoyed excellent healthcare, crèche facilities, virtually free public transport, full employment and subsidized food and rents. With skilled workers no longer deserting to the West, output from factories rose dramatically in the 1960s. Many East Germans genuinely believed that their communist system was fairer than the capitalism of West Berlin, and they grew proud of their achievements.

But East Berliners lacked some of the key freedoms enjoyed by West Berliners: freedom of speech, free elections and the right to leave their country and travel freely to the West.

While Berliners were settling into life with the wall, Soviet attitudes towards the rest of Eastern Europe were hardening. The building of the wall was not the only sign that force was necessary to impose the Soviet system of government. In 1956, 3,000 people had been killed when Soviet troops were sent to put down a revolt against the communist regime in Hungary. In 1968, reforms took place in Czechoslovakia, in what became known as the Prague Spring. The leader of the government, Alexander Dubček, tried to introduce what he called 'communism with a human face'. But his moves towards democracy were ended abruptly in August 1968, when Soviet tanks rumbled into Prague.



In Prague, in August 1968, crowds surround the Soviet troops brought in to suppress the reforms known as the Prague Spring.

In the 1970s, it was the turn of the people of Poland to campaign for more freedoms. Their calls for reform were led by the trade union movement known as Solidarity. But this movement was also put down with force, this time by Poland's own troops. It was clear that the Soviet Union and the communist governments of the Eastern Bloc were not yet ready to tear down walls of any kind.

A Moment in Time

On 26 June 1963, President John F Kennedy, during a visit to express American support for West Berlin, stands on the balcony of the city's town hall. He looks out over a quarter of a million West Berliners, and beyond them to the wall. It has become a symbol of the divisions of the Cold War. To cheers from the crowd, Kennedy makes a famous speech that ends: 'All free men, wherever they may live, are citizens of Berlin, and therefore, as a free man, I take pride in the words *Ich bin ein Berliner* (I am a Berliner).'



President John F Kennedy delivers his famous speech at the Berlin Wall on 26 June 1963.