

## **Abstract**

On 26 April 1986, the worst nuclear accident in human history took place at Chernobyl in Ukraine. In addition to the massive loss of human lives (it is estimated that hundreds of thousands of people died indirectly as a result of radiation), the accident had devastating effects on nature far and wide.

In the first part of my thesis, I use literature to describe the reality of how the accident actually occurred and what its consequences were. Then, through an analysis of articles in the Czechoslovak press of the time (*Rudé právo* - the central daily of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia; *Týdeník aktualit* - published in Czechoslovakia by the Soviet Novosti Press Agency), I present a comprehensive picture of how the Chernobyl accident was presented to Czechoslovak readers in comparison with reality. The depiction of the accident is also examined in contemporary Czechoslovak television coverage. In order to compare the depiction of the accident in the West, I further analyze articles in *The New York Times*.

Part of the thesis also focuses on an examination of the archival holdings of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia to refute or confirm the hypothesis that there is evidence of instructions to journalists on how they should write about the crash.