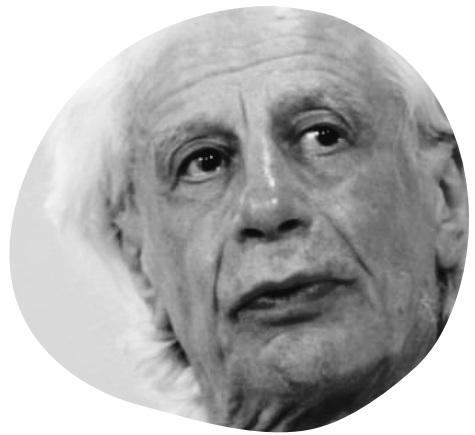


# Viktor Fainberg



**Dear Madam Fainberg,  
Dear members of the family,  
Dear honorable guests,**

On behalf of the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Tel Aviv I bring you condolences from my country, which shares your sorrow and your grief. The Czech Republic has lost one of his most faithful friends. Viktor Fainberg has died at the age of 91.

It is an honor and privilege for me to stand before you today and pay tribute to him.

Who was Viktor Fainberg? It was an extraordinary man, with bravery and courage. On 25 August 1968, Viktor Fainberg, along with seven other dissidents, protested on Moscow's Red Square against the invasion of Czechoslovakia by Warsaw Pact troops led by the Soviet Union. I have to remind you that this occupation lasted more than 20 years and is considered to be the darkest period of our modern history.

This so-called "The Magnificent Eight group" had the courage to support the freedom and independence of Czechoslovakia and its democracy. Viktor Fainberg knew that he would be punished for this heroic act and that his engagement would not have any impact on the further development in Czechoslovakia. Nevertheless he felt his moral and civic duty to condemn these brutal aggression.

(These protesters were holding Czechoslovak 's flag and banners that read "For Your Freedom and Ours", "Long Life Free and Independent Czechoslovakia!", "Shame on the Occupants" or "Hands off the CSSR". Within a few minutes the demonstrators were set upon and arrested. The Czechoslovak flag was destroyed and their banners confiscated. Viktor Fainberg was arrested and locked up in a psychiatric hospital for five years. )

We are here today to remember a legacy of this man, which is still relevant even in these turbulent times. Today, in our vocabulary and so in politics as well, we use the word – pragmatism. As if we were obsessed with this word. Fortunately, the act of Viktor Fainberg was not pragmatic at all. All the participants in the protest, with their actions and personal bravery risked their life to voice his opposition.

For these reasons all these dissidents were awarded in 2018 by the Gratias Agit Award. This price has been created by the Minister of Foreign Affairs for the promotion of the good name of the Czech Republic abroad ever since 1997. This award in 2018 was even more important and symbolic for the Czech Republic, because in 2018 we commemorated the 50th anniversary of the occupation by the Warsaw Pact troops. And I am particularly pleased and honored to meet Mr. Fainberg during the awards ceremony in person (as the then Minister of Foreign Affairs) and I am still keeping very good memories of this unforgettable meeting.

Dear guests, allow me at this moment to bow deeply in gratitude before this brave man. And express my deep respect for him and his brave act which is and always be deeply appreciated by everyone in my country.

**We will not forget Mr. Fainberg. We will never forget. Thank you Mr. Fainberg.**