Vol. I (2013)

# Czech Journal of Contemporary History

**Czech Journal of Contemporary History (ISBN 978-80-7285-172-0)**

Published by
Institute for Contemporary History
of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic
Vlašská 9
118 40 Prague 1
Czech Republic

Envelope Aleš Lederer, Ondřej Huleš
Translations Anna Bryson Gustová
Resumé Derek Paton
Typesetting David Weber
Printed by Tiskárna Protisk, s.r.o., České Budějovice

Contact Vít Smetana
smetana@usd.cas.cz

# CZECH JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY HISTORY
# Vol. I (2013)

INSTITUTE FOR CONTEMPORARY HISTORY

ÚSD

# Contents

# Word from the Editors

Welcome to the first volume of the Czech Journal of Contemporary History (CJCH), published by the Institute for Contemporary History of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic.

The overall aim of this journal is to publish articles, essays and other contributions written by leading scholars in both the Czech Republic and abroad in the field of contemporary history, with a particular focus on Czechoslovak and Czech topics in a broader international or transnational setting. The texts that have been included in this issue of CJCH have previously been published in Czech in the journal *Soudobé dějiny* (Contemporary History), the leading Czech-language academic journal in the field of contemporary history that already has a twenty-year tradition. Their translation into English was done with the purpose of making them accessible to a wider audience of readers and thus to strengthen and promote international academic discussion. This will also be the case of the future volumes, but as a supplement to texts translated from Czech we will be more than happy to occasionally include excellent, previously unpublished texts in English, which can then be translated into Czech and appear in *Soudobé dějiny*. As of now, the journal is intended to be primarily an online platform, with just a limited number of copies being printed for each volume.

To ensure the high quality of the contributions and editorial work, a representative editorial board has been set up, gathering together scholars from prestigious universities and research centres primarily in Europe and North America. Institutions in the Czech Republic other than the Institute for Contemporary History are also represented. All of the members of the editorial board specialize in various

areas of the contemporary history in Czechoslovak context. It is our belief that this will contribute not only to maintaining high quality of the texts published in the CJCH, but also to their diversity, thus ensuring that a wide range of topics is covered. It is also our goal that the CJCH will gradually become a valid part of the international discourse on contemporary history and that readers interested in these issues will find it of interest.

Jan Bečka – Vít Smetana

# The Czech Twentieth Century?

Vilém Prečan

I have chosen the title for this text[1] to be "The Czech Twentieth Century?", and the title is definitely challengeable on grounds of precision. It will be largely about history that took place in the Czechoslovak (and also Czech–Slovak) state, and so it might seem appropriate to speak about Slovaks too. The trouble is that would mean dealing with two twentieth centuries, one Czech and one Slovak, for these are two quite different stories.

My focus is on the mutable forms of Czech politics in a century of wars, two extremely devastating and hot and one cold: how "the Czechs" exploited the chances that arose to develop their *genius loci*, their independent identity, and how they threw the chances away; how they built on the legacy of previous generations, how they tried to secure themselves from outside threats, to find their place in the world, to be not just an object but a subject in European politics. Of course, in the time allocated I will not even be able to name most of the issues in what is a whole great complex of questions.

As a historian I often recall of the words of Milan Šimečka, written while he was cut off from the world in prison in the years 1981–1982 in a philosophical letter about the nature of reality. He observed that seeing and perceiving the world, including the past, is as individual as fingerprints. So if I speak about the Czech Twentieth

1 This text was originally presented as the opening address at an international conference "Fateful Eights in Czech History: Historical Anniversaries of 2008 and Their Significance for the Czech Republic Today". The conference was co-organized by the Embassy of the Czech Republic in the United States and the George Washington University on 23 and 24 October 2008 in Washington, D.C. For the purpose of publication, footnotes have been added to the text, but only in the minimum extent necessary.

Century, it will be the Czech Twentieth Century as seen by Vilém Prečan. This is no lack of humility; it is an admission of the limited nature of my view. I make no claim to an "objective" or unbiased perspective.

All the same, is there really something that can be coherently defined as the *Czech* Twentieth Century at all? What does "Czech" really mean, when we know that a nation is a fiction or an ideological construct? Can we always use the term "Czech politics" in a clear and unambiguous way given our knowledge of just how complicated and divided or even fragmented the Czech political milieu has been? After all, there have been times when we can speak of *two* parallel Czech politics or political scenes: the Czech politics represented by Masaryk's activities abroad during the First World War and the Czech politics of the government in exile during the Second World War existed in contrast to the Czech domestic politics of their times, in the first case very cautious and for a long time pro-Austrian politics, and in the second case under the German occupation a politics of collaboration – a point to which I shall be returning. To make things even more complicated: in the three postwar years (1945–1948) government policy was partly formed by the communists, who were inspired by Moscow and submissive to her, a fifth column of Soviet imperialism; then for long decades Czech politics was represented and implemented by people who were essentially governors under Moscow, while once again on a parallel line and against the domestic political scene the Czech politicians in exile tried to maintain democratic continuity.

(The policy of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia /KSČ/ was derived from Soviet interests from the very beginning of its existence; it was only briefly independent in 1968 when it tried to introduce reforms from above. Indeed, it only behaved genuinely and unreservedly in line with the interests of the majority of citizens for five days, when it opposed Moscow: from the 21 August to the midnight of 26 August when the Moscow Protocol was signed, the night proclamation of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the KSČ on 21 August was tacitly forgotten, and the verdict of doom pronounced on the Vysočany Congress.)

Despite my awareness of all the semantic and factual historical pitfalls, however, I am going to use the terms "Czechs" and "Czech" – at the very least as abstractions that one cannot do without even as one has always to keep in mind their inadequacy and take care to contextualise them sufficiently in every historical moment or situation.

My use of the term "century" is also not to be taken literally. The years 1901 and 2000 are arbitrary and do not coincide with the beginnings or the culmination of processes that formed the historical milestones, basic crossroads or caesuras in the state framework of the life of society, the rise and fall of political regimes, or the living conditions in which Czechs earned their daily bread.

For these reasons, we would probably agree that the principal milestones were two dates: 1918 and 1989. The Czech Twentieth Century started during the First World War with Masaryk's diplomatic campaign, successfully crowned by the birth of Czechoslovakia, the establishment of a republican constitutional framework and a parliamentary democracy. This triumph, as the restoration of an independent

state after three centuries of Austrian supremacy was perceived by contemporaries, had been preceded by six or seven decades of development from 1848 to 1918, the period in which modern mass Czech society emerged. This society showed often outstanding abilities in the cultivation of everyday life, in building up modern industry and in the organisation of the economy on all levels, in the creation of democratic habits in the life of political parties, interest organisations and associations, in everyday education in formal schooling and beyond, in the development of a modern literature, painting and sculpture, in architecture, music and science.

When did the Czech Twentieth Century end? Let us for the moment stick with the year 1989, when the Czechs seized the chance offered by wider developments to open up their own road to freedom and the opportunity to take the governance of their affairs back into their own hands. The question of whether the Czech Twentieth Century really ended then, or whether it in fact still continues, presents an issue to which I shall return at the end of my commentary.

The two key dates – the last step to independence in 1918 and the seizing of the chance of liberation towards the end of 1989 – were both associated with international conditions that were ever most favourable to "Czech" aspirations for practical assertion of their identity, achievement of state sovereignty and the full realisation of political and civil liberties. In the first case the international conditions were favourable only temporarily: The two great powers between which the Czech territory was historically situated were both temporarily excluded from making decisions on the form of state entities in Central and South-Eastern Europe: Germany was defeated and weakened and its ally the Habsburg Empire had collapsed. Neither postwar Hungary, now miniature as compared to the former Hungarian Lands, nor the Austrian Republic, was in any serious position to object. Russia was in the turmoil following the Bolshevik Revolution. A Hungarian military campaign in Slovakia was suppressed by the newly formed Czechoslovak army with the help of France. Defeated at Warsaw, the Red Army retreated to the fronts of the Russian Civil War.

Seventy years later, at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s, international conditions were even more favourable for "the Czechs". In the near half-century since the Second World War the whole of Europe west of the Iron Curtain, supported by alliance with the United States, had become a zone of peace. Germany had ceased to be a threat because the new, democratic Germany – the Federal Republic – had become part of the European communities and had first de facto and then also formally abandoned any kind of territorial or other claims against its eastern neighbours. The Soviet Union was crippled by Gorbachev's reform experiments and opening up to Europe and the world, and both these factors accelerated the general crisis of Soviet communism and ended with the disintegration of the Soviet Empire, while the largest post-Soviet state formation – the Russian Federation – set out on the road to democracy.

It would be possible to say that the Czech Twentieth Century was bounded by these two milestones and that it in fact lasted a mere seventy-one years. This is short for a century, but only in terms of years. Measured by what "Czechs", Czech

society, went through in the accelerating time of the 20th century, those seven decades saw the greatest concentration of upheavals, political and social changes, the rise and fall of social classes and segments, and discontinuous processes, since the times of the Thirty Years War (1618–1648).

How many regimes, upheavals and revolutions did the Czechs experience during these seven decades? Purely statistically: the collapse of Austria-Hungary leading to the First Czechoslovak Republic, which lasted twenty years; then six months of the post-Munich Czecho-Slovakia, followed by the six years and two months of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia; then the short three years of the "socialising" National Front people's democracy; and then forty-one years of a satellite existence in Soviet bondage, interrupted right at the halfway mark by twenty months of the explosion of the longing of the majority of the people for a life in freedom and human dignity, and of an attempt at reform from above, all of which was throttled by the August invasion in 1968.

Upheavals, occupations and revolutions brought the emtying and ethnical homogenisation of the country: the Nazis eliminated most of the country's Jews, and the Czechs ethnically cleansed the Germans. The constitutional marriage and then ultimately divorce from the Slovaks was a different and less one-sided matter, for the Slovak's desire for a state, as well as a national separate identity was a major active factor in the division of the Czechoslovak Federation in 1992. All the same, Czech paternalism and then the centralism of the communist era suggest that in their Twentieth Century the Czechs did not show any great ability to sustain a state that extended beyond their own ethnicity.

As a legacy from the culminating period of the national movement in the later 19th century, the Czechs brought to their new state the ability to function as a modern, mass industrial society with a fully developed party political pluralist system and level of democratism in everyday political life and great democratic culture that was well above the norm for Central Europe of the time. Yet they also fatefully lacked political maturity. The Czech political elites had no experience of running their own state, and lacked any skill cultivated over several generations in handling all the instruments of state power, especially in the area of foreign policy. Drunk with success, they failed to "tune down" Czech triumphalism and do everything possible to secure the state by the means of an active foreign policy or generous policy to national minorities inside the country. Their limited political horizon, stunted self-confidence and consequent inability to act independently (for example like the Israelis some decades later) reflected the social origin of these elites.

During negotiations of the borders of Czechoslovakia in the years 1918 to 1920 the Czech negotiators achieved the maximum. The state territory and its borders were based both on historical right, as far as Bohemia and Moravia were concerned, and with an eye to the strategic and economic interests of the state in the south of Slovakia and in the Těšín region in Silesia: the new state even took over responsibility for Sub-Carpathian Ukraine (Ruthenia), which was incorporated into Czechoslovakia. This was a high mortgage, negotiated with illusions

about the state of Slovak politics and in the belief that the Czechs were and would continue to be the darlings of the Entente. In the second volume of his *Building of the State*, Ferdinand Peroutka dryly and also perhaps with a warning note wrote that, "….the triumph of the Czechoslovak cause in Paris in 1919 was so great, that we still cannot imagine, even now, a time when the states and nations affected by it will finally be reconciled with it."[2] And of course they were not.

Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk had believed that fifty years of undisturbed development were a prerequisite for garnering the necessary political, administrative and other experience. Far fewer years had gone by when Czech politics, Czech political elites, were confronted with a changed balance of forces in Central Europe and the broadly conceived aggression of Nazi Germany, while at the critical moment the Hungarians and Poles staked their own hostile claims. The result was the loss of state sovereignty, and in a manner that did not even create a tradition of fighting for the state among the population as a whole.

How many Czechs actually fought with weapons in their hands in their Twentieth Century? Numerically the most fought on the fronts of the First World War. First in Austrian uniforms, and then as Czechoslovak legionaries on many battlefields (most famously when they fought their way through Siberia during the civil war in Russia). The feats of the legionaries contributed to the good international position of the emerging Czechoslovakia. After the end of the war, in 1919 they defended the integrity of the new state against Hungarian forces in Slovakia. In the latter half of the 1930s there were Czechs who fought in the International Brigade on the side of the Republican government in the Spanish Civil War. In the Second World War there were Czech airmen fighting in the Battle of Britain, the six hundred "Tobruk rats" – members of the Czechoslovak 11th Infantry Battalion, and the parachutists who assassinated Heydrich and heroically held out to the penultimate bullet in the crypt of a church in Prague's New Town. There were also the Czechoslovak brigades fighting in 1944 and 1945 in Western Europe and the Czechoslovak army corps on the Eastern front, whose troops were for example deployed and decimated in the Dukla operation in the Carpatian Mountains in the autumn of 1944. In Slovakia Czechs who had managed at the end of summer 1944 to get out of the Protectorate and into insurgent territory fought and died, as did members of the 2nd Czechoslovak Parachute Brigade sent there in September and October 1944. Finally there were the partisans in Moravia, the members of the uprising in May 1945 in Prague and other Czech and Moravian towns and villages, and after the war the soldiers deployed in 1947 against the Bandera forces in Eastern Slovakia.

Is that all? More or less, if we don't count the policemen and gendarmes who defended democracy and state sovereignty against the Nazis in the Sudetenland in September 1938, the soldiers defending the barracks in Frýdek-Místek on 15 March 1939, and the units under the command of General Lev Prchala in Sub-Carpathian Ukraine fighting against the Hungarians, the Czechs in the French

2 PEROUTKA, Ferdinand: *Budování státu* [The Building of the State], vol. 2: *1919*. Praha, Nakladatelství Lidové noviny 1991, p. 715.

Foreign Legion deployed at the beginning of the 1950s in combat in Indochina and finally the spontaneous actions of young civilians on 21 August 1968, who set fire to several Soviet tanks in the streets of Prague, and the shots fired by members of the people's militia in August 1969, which extinguished a few Czech lives.

* * *

Let us now turn to three great milestones within the Czech Twentieth Century – the famous eights, which have haunted the Czech historians this year [2008 – translator's note] from conference to conference and which mark the dramas as well as tragedies that the country went through: 1938, 1948, 1968.

The autumn of 1938, that ill-famed Munich, which led to the greatest caesura in the previously more or less continuous development of the late liberal political legacy. One of the contemporary witnesses, Ladislav Feierabend, a member of the post-Munich, first Protectorate and then exile government in London, was later to write: "Munich did not just change the borders, it changed the whole life and the whole mentality of the nation. Munich was the flood that swept away much of what had been inseparable from the life and spirit of the pre-Munich Republic. Suddenly much that had been held sacred in the previous twenty years was discarded. Suddenly the nation looked at everything happening from a different angle and saw events in a different light."[3]

February 1948 was the sequel – the continuation of the discontinuity process begun ten years before. The subsequent decade of sovietisation changed the country out of all recognition politically, mentally and in terms of social stratification and the composition of elites.

These first two eights – 1938 and 1948 – ushered in two periods of bondage. The first lasted at least six years. It began with the policy of internal appeasement after Munich: the restriction of democratic liberties, the dissolution of political parties, the de facto abolition of parliamentarism, and the first wave of anti-Semitism. All this paved the way for the German occupation regime and made its work easier. After 15 March 1939 the elites of the former democratic parties were decimated in one way or another: either they succumbed to persecution as members of resistance networks, or they wore themselves out as so-called realists in the game of Czech autonomy forced on them by the Nazis and in the tragic contradictions of the policy of "the lesser evil". By the end the domestic branch of Czech politics had degenerated into a mere appendage of the Nazi occupation government. Developments immediately after the war confirmed the prophetic words of the prime minister of the Protectorate government Alois Eliáš, an honest patriot who co-operated with the resistance abroad and was executed by the Nazis, that the "nation" would turn even on those who had tried to save what could still

3 FEIERABEND, Ladislav: *Ve vládách Druhé republiky* [In the Governments of the Second Republic]. New York, Universum Press Co. 1961, p. 60.

be saved – condemning "them" with the utmost harshness so as to defend its own morality and be able to feel clean itself.

We might perhaps say that the "Czechs" we have been discussing had lost their earlier identity in this historical gale, and so after the war succumbed easily to the temptation to shrug off the burden of history, cut historical Central European ties, and in the desire to forget a recent past that had ended so badly, looked only to an alluring future that they saw in the distorted mirror of national triumph.

The second period of open thraldom, which lasted forty-one years, started in a way that differed from the situation of 1938, but we can still find many basic similarities. The road to February 1948 was lined with the slogans of national unity and the policy of the National Front – nationalising the property of "Germans, traitors and collaborators" and redistributing what had belonged to the forcibly transferred Germans. The partners in the National Front vied with each other in anti-German chauvinism and in declaring the strongest possible alliance with the Soviet Union as the guarantee of Czechoslovak security. In this attitude the politicians of the non-communist parties were at one with the communists. They followed President Beneš in his optimistic but mistaken assessment of the democratic prospects of development in the Stalinist Soviet Union and in the fixed idea that Czechoslovakia lay – and must therefore decide – between Germany and Russia rather than between East and West. They failed to realise that they were driving out the German devil with the Soviet Beelzebub, and even swallowed Stalin's diktat on the matter of Czechoslovak participation in the Marshall Plan. On his return from economic talks in Moscow in December 1947, Minister Hubert Ripka warned his immediate circle of colleagues from the Ministry of Foreign Trade against anything anti-Soviet. On what proved to be the last meeting of the still original "unpurged" Central Executive Committee of the Czech National Socialist Party, Prokop Drtina even defended the rejection of the Marshall Plan as correct from the viewpoint of joint responsibility "for the fate of the nation" and proclaimed on 24 February 1948, that "the most important guarantee of safety and the strongest security lies in close co-operation with the USSR."[4] Jan Masaryk said much the same just six days before his death on 4 March 1948. At a meeting of officers of the Czechoslovak army he explained and stressed why he considered that the security of Czechoslovakia could be safeguarded only at the side of the Soviet Union. He used an argument that precisely encapsulated the fatal dilemma in which the democratic Czech politics of the time felt (rightly or wrongly) trapped: "Germany was, is and will be our eternal enemy… Our salvation is an alliance with the Soviet Union and our place is at its side. We must be grateful if it permits us to be there."[5]

The postwar Czechoslovak state was not a parliamentary democracy in the full sense of the word. There existed only a government coalition, no parliamentary opposition

4 See KAPLAN, Karel: *Pět kapitol o Únoru* [Five Chapters about February]. Brno, Doplněk 1997, p. 464.

5 See KOSATÍK, Pavel – KOLÁŘ, Michal: *Jan Masaryk: Pravdivý příběh* [Jan Masaryk: The True Story]. Praha, Mladá fronta 1998, p. 309.

and a closed, not open plurality of political parties. The parliament could not raise the question of confidence or non-confidence in the government, and the parliamentary plenum was just the background for deals between the leaderships of the political parties. This meant the weakening of the control mechanisms essential for the functioning of parliamentary democracy.

By its very nature the system was vulnerable, offered a seductive opportunity for one of the components of the postwar National Front to exploit or more precisely abuse the situation to acquire a monopoly of political power without a bloody revolution, perhaps by mere electoral victory. It was enough for a component with a programme of usurpation of political power to exist within the system and for it to be able to manoeuvre its original political partners, who opposed one-party rule, into the position of splitters of the National Front, "peace-breakers of the nationwide work of renewal" while exploiting all the possibilities offered by its government and political position. There was indeed such a party in the National Front, even though it had democracy always on its lips and it worked its way to power under the banners and slogans of the defence of national interests. This was the KSČ, which had already achieved the position of strongest arbiter of the future by the spring of 1946.

The communist period of bondage took a completely different form to that of the Nazi dictatorship. For fifteen years at least it was also a totalitarian dictatorship, but with other goals, driven by a different ideology. The criterion for exclusion and liquidation was class not race, and the utopia of a just society and the ideals of communist humanism had not yet been shown by practice to be lies. The regime also had different mechanisms for controlling and maintaining consensus with key segments of the population. The communist regime in Czechoslovakia was not trying to de-ethnicise, but to sovietise. One side of the process of sovietisation was the incorporation of Czechoslovakia into the Soviet power bloc and its total subordination to the interests of the great power politics of the Kremlin. This involved giving Czechoslovakia tasks in the penetration of Soviet influence into the Third World and Latin America, and in arming Soviet allies in the Arab sphere. The victors of "February" could no longer even pretend to be sovereign Czechoslovak politicians, for in the last years of the Stalin era their very lives were in the balance.

A second aspect of sovietisation was the creation of the internal conditions for adoption of a social system of Soviet type. The doctrine of constant approximation to the Soviet example was a freely accepted straitjacket in the founding period of the Czechoslovak communist system and was to leave deep marks on the country and its future for long decades.

We can list the different aspects and associated features of internal sovietisation: the smashing of democratic structures, the fatal conception of Czechoslovakia as an engineering great power, the destruction of the independent farmers and small tradesmen as social strata, the declassing of large parts of the old elites, the suffering of hundreds of thousands of people, systematic interference in all other spheres of social life. Yet something even worse happened – a change that would affect generations of people long years after the collapse of Soviet communism.

The penetration of Soviet power into Central Europe and consequent sovietisation of a constituted modern state and advanced economy meant that Czechoslovakia was shifted into a different circle of civilisation where other values were applied and promoted. For the Czech society the consequence was a still greater technical and cultural lag behind those European countries with which it had still been comparable even after the Second World War.

The Czech Twentieth Century was then not only a time of catching up, in which the Czechs were the most successful in the first ten years of the independent state, but later also a time of falling behind, of time lost, which the Czechs are making up for only slowly and with great difficulty (if one can make up for lost time at all).

Other aspects that cannot be ignored in any account of the negative features of Czech society include the Czechoslovak or Czech "top of the class" role among Soviet satellites, which was noticed in 1956 by the British ambassador in Prague. One could also call it loss of proportion and sound judgment in the expression of loyalty to the Big Brother. Few still remember the trainload of gifts for Josef Vissarionovich Stalin on his seventieth birthday in 1949, but the great stone plinth above the Vltava river is a constant reminder that the greatest monument to the dictator was built in Prague and finished and ceremonially unveiled two years after his death, paradoxically at a time already ripening to the moment when the "god" would be thrown down into the dust and the sobering-up process would begin. Nor can we fail to mention the similar servility in the period of re-established repression after the defeat of the "Prague Spring", which was manifest in hypocritical gratitude for "fraternal aid" in defeating the alleged counter-revolution. Nor can we pass over the cynicism and moral morass that formed the rotten undergrowth of everyday life in the "normalisation" period of the 1970s and 1980s.

Today we can smile ironically at the gifts and verses for Stalin, and dismiss the monument with a wave of our hand, but we must recognise that in their Twentieth Century "the Czechs" have committed a great many crimes that still stand as a reproach and an indictment of the kind of cruelty of which they were capable. Perhaps in first place there is the execution of Milada Horáková and many other political murders masked as "class" justice. The state security and all the other repressive apparatuses were certainly apt pupils of Soviet and even German teachers. Terror was a part of the sovietisation of the country and often went further than the methods of the Nazi Gestapo, but it was far from a merely imported evil. It had plenty of sources within Czech society, as had already been demonstrated in the atrocities against the German civilian population in the first year after the war.

* * *

After every defeat or other Czech failure the question was asked again and again: Who was to blame? The Czech Twentieth Century was also characterised by the constant pinning of blame on the geopolitical position, on the relatively greater strength of the neighbouring states, on the strategic interests of the great powers, and by the cultivation of the myth of victimhood; there were, however, also frank words

specifying the Czechs' own share in the blame for national misfortunes. In one text from 1988 we find these harsh words: "When you take it all in all, then we, Czechs and Slovaks, have successfully grovelled our way through history."[6]

Any historian familiar with contexts will in fact be irritated by the self-flagellation and demonisation of everything Czech that is so common among Czechs; it is just the reverse side of the megalomania or swaggering expressed at moments when everything is going well, and also an inability to see what is going on over the fence. Compared to the capitulation of France in 1940 the Czech (Czechoslovak) capitulation in 1938–39 was a trifle in European context. The succumbing of Czech intellectual elites to Soviet communist ideology was comparable to what took place among French intellectuals after the Second World War. The trouble is that here too the old Latin proverb applies: *"Quod licet Jovi, non licet bovi"* [What is permitted to Jove is not permitted to cattle]. A small ethnic community cannot permit itself the same as a great power, for by doing so it risks catastrophe; in order to cope, a small man must be twice as vigorous, clever and courageous as a large man.[7]

It has already been said that people should not be too hasty in their judgments of their predecessors if they want their own descendants to be at least forbearing and not to damn them for the state of the world they left behind, often worse than the world they themselves entered. We might put it this way: in their Twentieth Century our "Czechs" have scored more than one "own goal", and were not blameless for the catastrophes that overtook them. By what they did to the Germans of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia, they hurt first and foremost themselves, and it rebounds again and again on their children and grandchildren like a boomerang, almost as an inherited sin.

There is at least one comfort for the actors of those past events and their present-day critics, and it is that Czechs caused problems primarily for their own country, themselves and their descendants. It was not Edvard Beneš that invited Stalin into the very heart of Europe, it was Hitler, who with his war enabled the Soviets to enter Berlin, Dresden and Prague, and who helped to shift the borders of the Soviet Union itself three hundred kilometres to the West. At the end

6 ŠIMEČKA, Milan: Národní viny [National Guilt]. In: ŠIMEČKA: *Konec nehybnosti* [The End of Immobility]. Praha, Lidové noviny 1990, p. 108.

7 In the debate on the text of my lecture the German historian Peter Heumos expressed the view that the Czechoslovak example of so many changes of the system might lead us to consider if it is not appropriate to speak of the history of the adaptation of people to all kinds of political formations rather than to conceive of a long-term perspective of "return to democracy". Heumos believes that such an interpretation is supported by the whole of European development, in the course of which the citizen has become (at the latest from the Second World War) – and above all as a result of the expanding role of the state in care for the everyday needs of the citizen – a "client" of state power, regardless of the kind of political system in which that power is exercised. This would mean that "Czechs" regarded themselves as being short-changed as "clients" of the "real existing socialism" state and desired to be "clients" on the level of the more fortunate West Europeans. They did not realise, however, that to be able to "live on a capitalist level", they would have to do more than "work on a socialist level".

of the war unleashed and then lost by Hitler's Germany, a power vacuum was created in Central, East and South-Eastern Europe, which was filled and for four decades controlled by the Soviet Union.

The various crossroads at which Czechs of all generations have found themselves have been and continue to be marked by reflections with titles such as "On Our Current Crisis" [*O naší současné krizi*] (Masaryk 1885), "What We Are Like" [*Jací jsme*] (Peroutka 1924), "The Czechs Made Sick by History" [*Češi nemocní dějinami*] (Bartošek 1969), "What Are the Czechs?" [*Co jsou Češi*] (Patočka), "What We Are Like When Times Are Bad" [*Jací jsme, když je zle*] (Tigrid 1975) or "Our Permanent Crisis" [*Naše nepřetržitá krize*], as Jiří Dienstbier ironically called his samizdat essay of December 1988, introducing it by a motto allegedly from Machiavelli, "If you don't help yourself, no one else will help you."

Reliance on their own strength, on civic responsibility for conditions in society, on independent civic initiatives, commitment to the indivisibility of freedom and civic and human rights for all without exception: this was the intellectual and political equipment of the people who did not capitulate after the defeat of the Czechoslovak Spring at the end of the 1960s and who drew from this defeat conclusions about the direction of the path to democracy for all. For ten years, 1977–1987, in Czech conditions these people were represented only by Charter 77 and the associated Committee for the Defence of the Unjustly Prosecuted [*Výbor na obranu nespravedlivě stíhaných* – VONS], who publicly carried the banner of the Helsinki civic process and shared in the creation of a European public space.

In 1949, almost forty years before internal conditions had ripened to the point at which Czechs were able to exploit a genuine capacity for self-liberation (if it came), and to share in the creation of such an opportunity, one of the post-February-1949 exiles Pavel Tigrid wrote about the task of the political emigrant community and on the conditions needed for liberation from communist totalitarianism:

"…I don't believe that our political emigrant community … could draw up and realise an ideological, political, economic, social and cultural programme that would be more than a temporary improvisation; I don't believe that our political emigrant community in its composition today could or ought lead the nation after … this last huge gale passes (…)

I see great and real hope in the emergence in domestic conditions of a group of people who will have the best qualifications for the successful moral and political leadership of the nation. This group will grow up in the environment of great, passionate and life-giving *yearning for freedom* which in every totalitarian regime grows stronger in direct proportion to repression in that thin layer of the nation which although tiny in relation to the whole, is still its vanguard, its ethical seedbed. (…) It is to this minority of the nation, doughty and intelligent, that we ought to dedicate our work outside. We should form a work collective of the best of our people abroad

in order to support them … and try to complement their work in places that they themselves cannot reach."[8]

Life confirmed that this was the right direction. Tigrid later used it as the basis for his political strategy as set out in his *Svědectví* [Testimony], and this was the course taken by the later generation of emigrants of "the atomic age" in the 1960s and 1970s.

* * *

What remains to be said? Almost everything! The Czech Twentieth Century has had many more dimensions than those I have been able to briefly mention here. Re-reading my own text after some time, I realise that it has at least two major gaps. My stock-taking of the Czech Twentieth Century fails to include the disintegration of the social-political movement after August 1968, which ended in a "million of private capitulations" and the adjustment of most of society to "the renewed order of real socialism" with all the socio-political, spiritual and moral consequences for the future. I also left out the way communism was overthrown in the Czech Lands at the very end of the 1980s and democracy and capitalism restored in the 1990s, including the attempt to create a class of "Czech Rothschilds" overnight, with all the attendant phenomena such as "tunnelling" (asset-stripping of state companies) and corruption on the one side, and inability to carry out unpopular but necessary reforms – of the healthcare, pensions system and so forth – on the other. As has been said, one could carry on *ad infinitum* in the list of gaps, perhaps by a list of themes not covered.

In conclusion I offer just an expression of my doubts as to whether the Czech Twentieth Century is truly over. These doubts spring from the observation that Czechs today are still constantly confronted by everything within them and around them that has been left behind by the preceding century, including with much that TGM warned them against. The Twentieth Century also reminds Czechs of the losses that they have suffered, and the guilt with which they are burdened, even if very many Czechs have not yet become conscious of either the first or the second.

Two decades after the miracle of self-liberation, it is obvious that getting over the effects of the communist era is going to take longer than even the greatest pessimists guessed at the beginning of the 1990s. Ever clearer is the baneful legacy of the 1970s and 1980s when the majority of those who form the spine of the current political establishment, and political personnel of all kinds, grew to adulthood and entered professional life. (Unfortunately they also have ardent pupils in today's younger generation.)

The historian often just counts the fallen in battles that should never have happened, registers wasted opportunities and posthumously honours those who were

8 TIGRID, Pavel: Limity politického exilu [The Limits of the Political Exile]. In: PREČAN, Vilém (ed.): *Hluboká stopa: Nezávislá revue Skutečnost 1949–1953* [Deep Trace: The Independent Revue Skutečnost 1949–1953]. Praha, Československé dokumentační středisko 2008, p. 106 f.

stoned by the crowds or unjustly forgotten. He is unable to make predictions, because the prognoses of historians are of about as much value as the guaranteed tips sold at horse races (as Donald Cameron Watt wittily observed many years ago).

Yet when the historian looks back attentively he or she sometimes also sees miracles, in which no-one of the time would have dared to believe before they happened, and so he or she can also be a messenger of hopes drawn from the view backwards, and from the contrast between the hopelessness under past tyranny and the chances of today, which freedom has brought.

This is why Czech reality in the year 2008 seems to me ultimately better than it could easily have been if we bear in mind the depths of the defeats and failures suffered, the radical discontinuities, the three great losses of elites (after 1938, in the 1950s and again after 1968), the deformation of the life of entire generations, and repeated isolation from the rest of the world. Despite the fact that I cannot pretend not to see how much Czech society is disfigured – apart from everything else – by dislike and prejudices against those who speak another language or have a differently coloured skin, and by envy and small-mindedness – that legendary small-Czech-mindedness – corruption and indifference to public affairs, and tendency to retreat into private shells for fear that entering the open world is too difficult.

A retrospective view of the Czech Twentieth Century also illuminates starry minutes and hours that Czechs – sceptical, unjust and often unkind to themselves – are incapable of seeing, let alone appreciating as a source of justified self-confidence. I am sure these brighter moments of the Czech Twentieth Century will not escape our attention as historians.

*The Czech version of this artile, entitled* České dvacáté století, *was originally published in Soudobé dějiny, vol. 16, no. 4 (2009), pp. 545–556.*

# Tepluskas and Eshelons

## *Czechoslovak Legionaries on their Journey across Russia*

Dalibor Vácha

This study is an attempt to apply the concepts and methods of the history of everyday life and mentalities to a subject that with rare exceptions has not been approached in this way. The Czechoslovak Legions in Russia have been relatively well-served as far as narrative accounts are concerned, but have not attracted systematic study outside the conventional limits of political and military history. Here I wish to make a start, and in the following pages I shall try to characterise the distinctive way of life of the legionaries, centred as it was on the adapted railway wagons that were their mobile homes.

The historian interested in the everyday life of the Czechoslovak Legions has to find his bearings for himself. The theme is hard to pin down, and to tackle it demands a good knowledge of the sources, literature and the methods applied to equivalent subjects in other periods of history. What is more, the historian must always be aware how easy it is to be carried away by the dramatic power of the most obvious and accessible sources for the theme in hand: diaries, memoirs[1] and what is known as legionary fiction. The abundant novel and short-story literature concerned

1 Apart from book editions of diaries (those used are referenced in the note apparatus), we should mention the invaluable project of the regional Czech archives, which brought out publications about legionaries from the ranks of local citizens and natives including large parts of their diaries and memoirs and visual material. Among memoirs, key texts include František Václav Krejčí (*U Sibiřské armády* [With the Siberian Army]. Praha, Památník odboje 1922), Jindřich Skácel (*S generálem Syrovým v Sibiři* [With General Syrový in Siberia]. Praha, Osvobození 1923) and Jaroslav Červinka (*Trp, kozáče, budeš atamanem* [Suffer, Cossack, and You'll Become an Atman]. Praha, Orbis 1929).

with the Legions (a distinctive form of the Czechoslovak war novel) is of great value for the exploration of Legionary everyday life and mentality.[2] The advantage (but also the pitfalls) of using fictionalised treatment as evidence is of course the subjectivity of the genre, which allows us an insight into the direct experience of individual soldiers. It is also uniquely valuable as a record of the highly distinctive and perishable slang vocabulary of the volunteers [*dobrovolci* in their slang, a typical shortening of the ordinary Czech word *dobrovolníci*, which might be rendered in English as "vollies"][3] as the original legionaries called themselves. Other sources for this study include visual records (especially period photographs and drawings),[4] which enrich our understanding and point out many details, and of course the legionary press, published directly in Russia.[5]

The secondary literature on the theme is as extensive as the source base, but most of it came out before the Second World War. Often these publications were more a matter of collected sources with commentary[6] than of analytic or synthesising work. The most important treatments include the four-volume chronicle

2 Among the most important authors of this genre are the trio Rudolf Medek, Josef Kopta and František Langer, but for the historians the work of less well-known writers, such as Karel Fibich, Adolf Zeman, Václav Valenta-Alfa, Rudolf Vlasák or Pavel Fink (also a journalist) is often more valuable.

3 On this subject see VÁCHA, Dalibor: Legionáři a Rusko [The Legionaries and Russia]. In: *Literární archiv*, no. 40. Praha, Literární archiv Památníku národního písemnictví 2008, pp. 54–57.

4 Apart from the collections of the Military History Archive, other real treasure troves of visual sources include the photographic publications *K vítězné svobodě* [Towards Triumphant Freedom]*: 1914–1918–1928* (ed. Rudolf Medek, Praha, Památník odboje 1928) and *Návrat československých legií kolem světa* [The Return of the Czechoslovak Legions round the World] (Praha, Památník odboje 1921).

5 The most prominent printed periodical was *Československý deník* [Czechoslovak Daily] (which also came out in the shortened Russian version *Tělegramy Československého deníku* [Telegrams of the Czechoslovak Daily]); others were the journals *Československý voják* [Czechoslovak Soldier], *Slovenské hlasy* [Slovak Voices], the literary review *Československé besedy* [Czechoslovak Meetings] (edited by Josef Kopta) and *Československý válečný zpravodaj* [Czechoslovak War Newsletter] (an illustrated monthly with captions in Czech, Russian, French and English). The legionaries of other ethnicities also had periodicals in their mother tongue, the Germans the fortnightly *Heimat* and the Hungarians *Magyar Honfitárs*. Also of interest is the humorous journal *Houpačky* [Swings], founded by people in the circle of *Czechoslovak Daily* in response to criticism from the troops. Occasional or one-off journal prints published on an amateur basis among the volunteers are harder to find, and often only their names have survived; from what was a huge number we might mention for example *Za svobodu* [For Freedom], *Tulák* [Vagabond], *Vrtule* [Propeller], *Kolem světa* [Around the World], *Maxim*, *Kulomet* [Machine-Gun] or *Slovan* [Slav] (even with a supplement with French grammar exercises). The legionaries also published books, in three book series: *Knihovna československého vojáka* [Library of the Czechoslovak Soldier], *Knižnica slovenských hlasov* [Library of Slovak Voices] and the Russian *Čechoslovackaja bibliotěka*.

6 One typical example is ČERVINKA, Vincenc: *Naši na Sibiři*: *Kapitoly vlastní i cizí* [Our Countrymen in Siberia: Our Own and Foreign Chapters]. Praha, Pražská akciová tiskárna 1920.

*Za svobodu* [For Freedom],[7] the work of František Šteidler[8] and the circle around the journal *Naše revoluce* [Our Revolution] under the direction of the historian Jaroslav Werstadt, while *Cesta revoluce* [The Road to Revolution] by the leftist writer Jaroslav Kratochvíl[9] is valuable for the sources it contains. Comment and information on the Legions in the more broadly conceived writings of Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk and Edvard Beneš[10] should not be overlooked by any researcher. Much more recently there was a certain renaissance of research on the first Czechoslovak armed resistance in the 1960s, especially that of Karel Pichlík, who returned to the theme again after the fall of the communist regime.[11]

In the 1990s there was a short-winded revival of the theme in historiography, but it took the form more of a multiplication of traditionally conceived articles and studies on individual themes than of pioneering new works. Honourable exceptions here include the books by the already mentioned Karel Pichlík and Robert Sak, while Jan Galandauer did much to bring a range of questions (including the commemoration of the Legions) to public notice, and Ivan Šedivý tackled the theme of the legionaries in the wider perspective of Czech experience of the First World War.[12] Recently the Czech-born American historian Victor Miroslav Fic has published

7 VANĚK, Otakar – HOLEČEK, Vojtěch – MEDEK, Rudolf (ed.): *Za Svobodu*, vol. 1–4*: Česká Družina* [The Czech Company] *1914–1916. Československá brigáda* [The Czechoslovak Brigade], *1916–1917.* Praha, Památník odboje 1925; *Pod vedením prof. T. G. Masaryka. Československý armádní sbor* [Under the Leadership of Prof. T. G. Masaryk, the Czechoslovak Army Corps] *1917–1918*. Praha, Památník odboje 1926; *Anabase, 1918–1920* [Anabasis, 1918–1920]. Praha, Památník odboje 1926; *Od Volhy na Urál. Magistrála. Návrat do vlasti 1918–1920* [From the Volha to the Urals. The Railway. Return to the Homeland 1918–1920]. Praha, Památník odboje 1929.

8 ŠTEIDLER, František: *Naše vystoupení v Rusku v r. 1918* [Our Actions in Russia in 1918]. Praha, Památník odboje 1923; TÝŽ: *Československé hnutí na Rusi: Informační přehled* [The Czechoslovak Movement in Russia: An Informative Overview]. Praha, Památník odboje 1921.

9 KRATOCHVÍL, Jaroslav: *Cesta revoluce* [The Path of Revolution]. Praha, Čin 1928.

10 MASARYK, Tomáš Garrigue: *Světová revoluce: Za války a revoluce 1917–1918* [World Revolution: During the War and Revolution 1917–1918]. Praha, Orbis – Čin 1925; BENEŠ, Edvard: *Světová válka a naše revoluce: Vzpomínky a úvahy z bojů za svobodu národa* [The World War and Our Revolution: Memories and Reflections from the Battles for the Liberty of the Nation], vol. 1–3. Praha, Orbis – Čin 1935.

11 PICHLÍK, Karel: *Zahraniční odboj 1914–1918 bez legend* [The Resistance Abroad 1914–1918, without Legends]. Praha, Svoboda 1968; TÝŽ: *Bez legend: Zahraniční odboj 1914–1918. Zápas o československý program* [Without Legends: The Resistance Abroad 1914–1918. The Struggle for the Czechoslovak Programme]. Praha, Panorama 1990; PICHLÍK, Karel – KLÍPA, Bohumír – ZABLOUDILOVÁ, Jitka: *Českoslovenští legionáři (1914–1920)* [The Czechoslovak Legionaries (1914–1920)]. Praha, Mladá fronta 1996.

12 SAK, Robert: *Anabáze: Drama československých legionářů v Rusku (1914–1920)* [Anabasis: The Drama of the Czechoslovak Legionaries in Russia (1914–1920)]. Jinočany, H&H 1996; GALANDAUER, Jan: *2. 7. 1917: Bitva u Zborova. Česká legenda* [2. 7. 1917: The Battle of Zborov, A Czech Legend]. Praha, Havran 2002; GALANDAUER: Hrob Neznámého vojína v proměnách času [The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in the Transformations of Time]. In: *Historie a vojenství*, vol. 48, no. 2 (1999), pp. 251–273; GALANDAUER: *O samostatný*

books on the subject, but again these are political-military accounts.[13] The Legions have duly figured in more general histories of the period and key events by Zdeněk Kárník, Jiří Kovtun, Robert Kvaček and Antonín Klimek.[14] Vratislav Doubek and Jaroslav Vaculík touched on the theme in their studies of the situation of Czech emigrants (communities) before the outbreak of the war.[15] Josef Fučík tried to finally put to rest the myth (long abandoned by historians) of the desertion of the 28th Prague Regiment.[16] Jan Gebhart and Ivan Šedivý jointly edited and contributed to a collection of studies offering a comparison between the two world wars from various angles.[17] There was also a scattering of journal articles looking at the First Armed Resistance [the Czech term for individuals and groups struggling for Czech(oslovak) independence during World War I] from points of view other than the conventionally military and political,[18] and among these we should at least mention studies by Dagmar Kutílková and Jitka Zabloudilová.[19]

---

*československý stát 1914–1918* [For the Independent Czechoslovak State 1914–1918]. Praha, SPN 1992; ŠEDIVÝ, Ivan: *Češi, české země a Velká válka* [Czechs, The Czech Lands and the Great War]. Praha, Nakladatelství Lidové noviny 2001.

13 FIC, Victor Miroslav: *Československé legie v Rusku a boj za vznik Československa 1914–1918* [The Czechoslovak Legions in Russia and the Fight for the Establishment of Czechoslovakia 1914-1918], vol. 1: *Vznik československých legií v Rusku 1914–1918. Ruská otázka a boj za svobodný stat* [The Origins of the Czechoslovak Legions in Russia 1914–1918. The Russian Question and the Struggle for a Free State]. Praha, Academia 2006; vol. 2: *Bolševici a československé legie. Počátek jejich ozbrojeného konfliktu. Březen–květen 1918* [The Bolsheviks and the Czechoslovak Legions. The Beginning of their Armed Conflict, March–May 1918]. Brno, Stilus 2007.

14 KÁRNÍK, Zdeněk: *České země v éře První republiky (1918–1938)* [The Czech Lands in the Era of the First Republic], vol. 1: *Vznik, budování a zlatá léta republiky* [The Foundation, Building and Golden Years of the Republic] *(1918–1929)*. Praha, Libri 2000; KOVTUN, Jiří: *Masarykův triumf: Příběh konce velké války* [Masaryk's Triumph. The Story of the End of the Great War and the Czech Question]. Praha, Odeon 1991; KVAČEK, Robert: *První světová válka a česká otázka* [The First World War and the Czech Question]. Praha, Triton 2003; KLIMEK, Antonín: *Velké dějiny zemí Koruny české* [Major History of the Lands of the Bohemian Crown], vol. 13: *1918–1929*. Praha, Paseka 2000.

15 DOUBEK, Vratislav: *Česká politika a Rusko (1848–1914)* [Czech Politics and Russia (1848–1914)]. Praha, Academia 2004; VACULÍK, Jaroslav: *Dějiny volyňských Čechů* [The History of the Volhynian Czechs]. Praha, Sdružení Čechů z Volyně a jejich přátel 1997.

16 FUČÍK, Josef: *Osmadvacátníci: Spor o českého vojáka I. světové války* [Twenty-Eighters: The Dispute over the Czech soldier of the First World War]. Praha, Mladá fronta 2006.

17 GEBHART, Jan – ŠEDIVÝ, Ivan (ed.): *Česká společnost za velkých válek 20. století: Pokus o komparaci* [Czech Society during the Great Wars of the 20th Century: An Attempt at Comparison]. Praha, Karolinum 2003.

18 The military and political events are very much the domain of Petr Prokš, who has written a series of detailed articles about them in *Slovanský přehled* (see e.g. PROKŠ, Petr: Politické rozcestí válečného vývoje Rakousko-Uherska (prosinec 1916 – říjen 1917) [The political Crossroads of the Wartime Development of Austria-Hungary (Dec. 1916 – Oct. 1917)]. In: *Slovanský přehled,* vol, 92, no. 4 (2006), pp. 509–530).

19 KUTÍLKOVÁ, Dagmar: K problematice stejnokrojů československé jednotky v Rusku v letech 1914–1918. [Problems of the Uniforms of the Czechoslovak Unit in Russia 1914–1918]. In: *Historie a vojenství*, vol. 50, no. 4 (2001), pp. 796–815; ZABLOUDILOVÁ, Jitka: Vojenská

Turning to foreign-language works involving consideration of the theme of the Legions, we should note the work of the German scholar Winfried Baumgart or the Anglo-Saxon historians Carol Willcox Melton, Sheila Fitzpatrick and their colleague Michael Carley.[20] Among first-hand accounts by foreign protagonists of the war events on the Russian Front the memoirs of the French general Maurice Janin and the Russian general Alexei Brusilov have both been published in Czech translation,[21] and also important for the theme of the Legions are the memoirs of the British lieutenant-colonel John Ward, the American general William Sydney Graves and the Russian general Anton Denikin.[22]

The history of the Czechoslovak Legions in Russia is very well known from a whole range of publications, but before embarking on our study of their everyday life, it is worth recalling at least the basic historical facts. The idea of creating Czech (later Czechoslovak) armed units as part of the Tsarist army was mooted at the very beginning of the war, when various groups of Czech emigrants in Russia were trying to demonstrate their loyalty to the ruling regime. Initially the plan was for a small unit with mainly propagandist tasks. The result was the formation of the Czech Company [*Česká družina*] originally envisaged as an irregular battalion of two companies. All the senior officers had to be ethnic Russians and were transferred to the Company from regular Russian forces. Originally the Company was not intended for directly deployment in combat, but just to advance with the victorious Tsarist armies into the Czech Lands and function as liaison between the Rus-

spořitelna čs. vojska v Rusku [The Military Savings Bank of the Czechoslovak Army in Russia]. In: *Ibid*, vol. 48, no. 1 (1999), pp. 98–120. See also e.g. HÁJKOVÁ, Dagmar: Role propagandy ve válečných aktivitách T. G. Masaryka od vypuknutí války do ledna 1917 [The Role of Propaganda in the Wartime Activities of T. G. Masaryk from the Outbreak of the War to January 1917]. In: *Ibid*, vol. 49, no. 1 (2000), pp. 14–37; HANZLÍK, František: Legie v Rusku, v Itálii a ve Francii 1914–1918 na cestě k samostatné Československé republice [The Legions in Russia, in Italy and in France 1914–1918 on the Road to an Independent Czechoslovak Republic]. In: *Demokratické principy vzniku Československa: Sborník referátů z vědecko-osvětové konference k 80. výročí vzniku ČSR* [Democratic Principles of the Creation of Czechoslovakia: Proceedings of a Conference at the Occasion of the 80th Anniversary of the Creation of the CSR]. Brno, Ministerstvo obrany ČR – Avis 1998, pp. 23–38.

20 BAUMGART VON OLDENBOURG, Winfried: *Deutsche Ostpolitik 1918: Von Brest-Litevsk bis zum Ende des Ersten Weltkrieges*. München – Wien, R. Oldenbourg 1966; WILLCOX MELTON, Carol: *Between War and Peace: Woodrow Wilson and the Siberian Expeditionary Force in Siberia, 1918–1921*. Macon (Georgia), Mercer University Press 2001; FITZPATRICK: Sheila: *The Russian Revolution*. New York, Oxford University Press 2001; CARLEY, Michael: *Revolution and Intervention: The French Government and the Russian Civil War*. Kingston, McGill-Queen's University Press 1983.

21 JANIN, Maurice: *Moje účast na československém boji za svobodu* [My Part in the Czechoslovak Struggle for Freedom]. Praha, J. Otto [1926]; BRUSILOV, Alexej Alexejevič: *Vzpomínky na světovou válku a vlastní životopis* [Memoirs of the World War and Autobiography]. Praha, Čin – Orbis 1929.

22 WARD, John: *With the Die-Hards in Siberia*. Cassell & Co. Ltd. 1920; GRAVES, William Sydney: *America's Siberian Adventure (1918–1920)*. New York, Jonathan Cape 1931; DENIKIN, Anton Ivanovich: *Ocherki russkoi smuty.* Moskva, Nauka 1991, vol. 1–6*;* Paris, J. Polovozky & Co. 1921–1923; Berlin, Slowo 1921–1926.

sian liberators and the people. The Company attracted Russian Czechs, descendants of emigrants, and also "new Czechs" who had only been in Russia for a short time for work. Among the first "vollies" (*dobrovolci*), we already find the names of men who would later become famous, such as Stanislav Čeček, Jan Syrový, Antonín Číla and Jiří Švec. The colours of the Czech Company were consecrated on 28 September 1914 (11 October by the reformed calendar), and soon afterwards the first contingent of Czech and Slovak soldiers set off in their Russian uniforms for the front. From the autumn of 1914 to the summer of 1917 Czech representatives intermittently held talks with the Tsarist, and later the revolutionary regime, on the expansion of the unit, first to a regiment and later to a brigade. The enlargement of the Czech Company and its successor formations was opposed by some Russians and certain circles in the Czechoslovak armed resistance movement itself. The turning point came with the Battle of Zborov in July 1917, after which it was permitted for the anti-Austrian resistance movement to carry out agitation and recruitment without restriction among prisoners-of-war, some of whom had in fact been swelling the ranks of the Czechoslovak volunteers since 1915.

Not long after the Battle of Zborov, where Brusilov's "revolutionary" offensive collapsed, the Czechoslovak rifles brigade was withdrawn to the rear in the Ukraine, where the influx of volunteers from prisoner-of-war camps meant that other Czechoslovak military corps could be formed, including artillery and rear services groups. Then, following the invasion of the Ukraine by forces of the Central Powers (on the invitation of Ukrainian separatists even before the beginning of the spring of 1918), it was decided that the Czechoslovak army no longer had a useful role in Russia and would be transferred to France to fight on the Western front alongside the other allies. The route chosen – the only possible one in the circumstances – was across the whole of Russia, Siberia and the Far East to Vladivostok and then by ship, effectively round the world.

Everything turned out quite differently. In May and June 1918 the Legions clashed with Bolshevik forces through the entire length of the Trans-Siberian railway, and a conflict broke out that was to last for more than a year. At first the Legions went from victory to victory, occupying large towns like Omsk, Vladivostok, Irkutsk and others. They defeated the Bolsheviks in one battle after another, although the bloody battle of Lipyag (4 June 1918**)** is unfairly forgotten. Then came the late summer and autumn of 1918, and the legionaries experienced their first failed operation (against Kazan in August). The burden of responsibility, and possibly the opposition of his own soldiers, proved too much for the earlier popular Colonel Švec and he committed suicide; his funeral took place rather symbolically on 28 October 1918. From the summer until the end of 1918 the legionaries were fighting in the first line of anti-Bolshevik forces on the Urals Front and many others, but in 1919 they concentrated on the defence of the Trans-Siberian Railway, to which the tired and disgruntled soldiers had been withdrawn. The difficult situation of the Czechoslovaks in the ever more complicated and chaotic conditions of the Russian Civil War led to many tensions and clashes even with their movement and ranks. The soldiers regarded the attitude of the Allies, who sent them only minimal reinforcements,

as a betrayal, while the men and the officer corps began to feel as if they were on opposite sides of a barricade. Idealistic plans for the overthrow of the Bolshevik regime fell by the wayside and the legionaries finally set out on the long journey home, which took until the end of 1920.

## *On Bunks and Around Stoves*

When a historian examines the everyday life of Czechoslovak volunteers in Russia in the almost three years from March 1918 to December 1920, he or she soon encounters a large object of vital importance for the soldiers and their formations. This was the railway wagon known in the period as a *těpluška* [Czecho-Russian slang for "warm place" – pronounced teplushka but for ease of reading used without diacritics for the rest of this article] which despite its mobility paradoxically became the fixed point for the Czechoslovaks in the unstable landscape of the Russian revolutions and civil war. Tepluskas with their inhabitants formed islands in the midst of the huge storm that was changing the face of Russia and the whole world. But what exactly was a tepluska? For Czechoslovaks it was at first nothing special – a converted freight-train wagon of the kind used by the Russian army for the transport of soldiers.[23] The tepluskas and the trains made up of them, which were known as *ešelony* [pronounced eshelon][24] were supposed to transport the legionaries from the Ukraine and right across Russia to Vladivostok, where according to the original plan the Czechoslovak forces were to embark on ships to fulfil the orders of their leader Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk and eventually join the Allied armies on the Western Front. Modification of a standard freight rail wagon into a tepluska was a simple matter. The initial conversion consisted of just two tasks: the installation of *naras*, which were bunk beds mostly on two and three levels, and then the installation of small stoves. Any other adjustments and additions were a matter of individual choice and chance.

After the rigours of the retreat from Kiev and ordeal by fire in the Battle of Bakhmach[25] the Czechoslovak units reached their eshelons in March 1918.

23 Tepluskas were exploited for the transport of captives and civilians. One of our narrators talks about the discomfort of the long transport of POWs to Siberia in the following terms: "We are like monkeys put into boxes, in three layers above each other. Fine soft beds there [in the second class – author's note], and here bar boards, cheerlessly grey, worn." BOUČEK, Bohuslav: *Prosím, aby zápisník byl odevzdán mé ženě jako pozůstalost* [I Ask that my Diary be Given to My Wife as a Legacy]. Praha, Medard 1998, p. 51.

24 Like *těpluška* the word *ešelon* is one of a number of Russianisms that penetrated into ordinary Czech. It had several similar variants: *ešalon*, *šaloun*, *ešaloun*, *kšaloun*.

25 The battle with the Germans started with engagements on 8 March 1918; the first to clash with the Germans was the 7th Regiment north of the Bakhmach–Konotopy railway line, then the 6th (Haná) Regiment, which held the route from Kiev, took the field. At first this was a matter of reconnaissance by combat. Soon (the next day, 9 March), there were more serious clashes and it looked as though the relatively small units of the Czechoslovak army had not chance against several times as large ones. Despite this they managed to slow down

The requisitioned, allocated or stolen wagons were often not yet converted for troop transport in any way at all (and so could not yet be called tepluskas). "It was already getting dark when we reached the wagons, which stood on the track about four kilometres from Chesnokovka.[26] Without speaking we clambered up to join our brothers in a wagon that had not yet been fixed up. It had no stove or bunks and so we just lay down on the floor, and in each wagon there were plenty more than thirty of us. Outside it was freezing again. But when the doors were shut and we were lying on each other's legs, the mud warmed right up and we slept as if we were in paradise. When we woke up the next day we were already somewhere near Konotopy. We were a real sight to see! Faces like chimney-sweeps, and we could scarcely even recognise each other. Our coats were still steaming, but the ends of the coats, which were dry, were hard as boards. We had to put in a lot of effort before we looked like soldiers again," one former legionary recalled.[27]

There were not enough wagons, one reason being that the retreat had been made under pressure of external circumstances and it had been necessary to load the trains with all the property of the army, including heavy weapons, the best horses, offices, supplies, equipment and kit etc. Generally the numbers of passengers in one wagon varied between twenty and thirty, although at the beginning forty was not exceptional. The volunteers were crammed in like sardines, and for some there was no space at all;[28] then they were forced to travel in open (dray) wagons and wait for relative comfort all the way to Kursk: "We warmed ourselves at a fire burning on an iron plate in the middle of the floor of the wagon, but the further side was stiff with frost…"[29]

---

and finally halt the Germans. During bitter fighting on 10 March they succeeded in controlling the situation on the line to the north where the Chesnokovka station served them as the basis for a counter-attack. There were greater problems on the "Kiev" line where the reinforced enemy was advancing fast towards Bakhmach and threatened to break through the defence, which would have caused catastrophe. Most of the legion's trains had not yet passed through the railway junction and if the Germans had occupied the Kruty–Ichna–Bakhmach area the corps would have been divided, seriously weakened and most likely destroyed. A resolute counter attack against the advancing German units brought a temporary victory. This stabilised the situation on the front enough to allow the transfer of the troops to the east to continue. See e.g. CHÁB, Václav: *Bachmač*. Praha, Knihovna Národního osvobození 1948; PICHLÍK, K. – KLÍPA, B. – ZABLOUDILOVÁ, J.: *Českoslovenští legionáři*, pp. 140–143.

26 A village not far from the Bakhmach railway junction.

27 Memoir of Vilém Hojgr in the collection: KOPTA, Josef – LANGER, František – MEDEK, Rudolf (ed.): *Od Zborova k Bachmači: Památník o budování československého vojska pod vedením T. G. Masaryka* [From Zborov to Bakhmach: Commemoration of the Building of the Czechoslovak Army under the Leadership of T.G. Masaryk]. Praha, Čin 1938, p. 196.

28 "In the wagons there are as many of us as can fit in! Any bit of space on the double boards is taken. In the middle of the wagon we have a stove…" (Personal Diary of Jan Falář. In: KREJČOVÁ, Jana (ed.): *Českoslovenští legionáři: Rodáci a občané okresu Prachatice* [Czechoslovak Legionaries: Natives and Citizens of the Prachatice District]. Prachatice 2000, entry of 3 March 1918, p. 64.)

29 NĚMEC, Matěj: *Návraty ke svobodě* [Returns to Freedom]. Praha, Naše vojsko 1994, p. 94.

The fixtures in the tepluskas at first consisted of just the simple uncomfortable beds. Apart from essential kit, the soldiers had not brought much personal property with them – usually just a few small items. Of these the most important to them were photographs, letters from nearest and dearest, trophies, ornaments or souvenirs of their pre-army days in Russia, and last but not least their treasured eating utensils, consisting of a universal kettle/mess-can (*kotělok*) and spoon. Sometimes we might have spied a musical instrument on a bunk, usually a harmonica (*garmoška*), or a book. A pipe (*čibuk*) was a prized and very personal piece of property. Otherwise, in the first phase of its existence a tepluska was a relatively un-cosy space, still waiting for improvements, touches of cosiness, and the laughter and quarrels of its inhabitants. The soldiers slept on the unplanned planks of the bunks and covered themselves with their coats or (if luckier) with a blanket; they could only dream of the luxury of a pillow, and in most cases probably laid their heads on their packs. If we had climbed into an average tepluska in the second half of March 1918, we would probably have found a mess (things tossed around, mud on the floor) and a stink.[30] The officer corps had rather better conditions, since they were allocated *klasňáky*, i.e. former second- or third-class passenger wagons. Another of the few perks of being an officer was the smaller number of people lodged in the wagon; at a later stage an officers' wagon usually accommodated two officers, their personal servants and not infrequently a woman.

Given the freezing weather, the central focus of the tepluska was the stove – a rather poor quality affair with an improvised chimney rising to a hole in the roof. The stove would be burning practically all day and all night, when the temperatures would fall far below freezing point, and the soldiers would organise their own shifts to keep the stove going. Fuel was a major problem, because in the confusion of the chaotic retreat there had been no central distribution service and every wagon had to procure its own fuel supplies.[31] The soldiers got their hands on fuel by any means possible, mainly shameless stealing at railroad stations and their immediate surroundings. As Rudolf Medek indirectly suggests in his memoirs, for example, no pile of wood or coal, or even fence, was safe from the legionaries, and when the legionary eshelons came through it would all vanish in a trice: "There was free space in the middle of the wagon. There stood a small stove, and beside it an older lad/bloke with a drop on the end of his nose, who slowly added thick

30 The low hygiene level of the Russian railway wagons (and barracks) was also noted by members of other Allied armies: Lieutenant-Colonel John Ward of the British army called the tepluskas "wretched looking cattle vans" and complained that "the commanding officer (himself) and his staff were provided with no more than a dirty second-class wagon" (WARD, J.: *With the Die-Hards in Siberia*, p. 8).

31 At this time the Russian railways were already starting to have serious problems, especially worn-out equipment and difficulties with supply of coal and other fuels. The crisis constantly deepened in subsequent years, until railway transport in Russia was almost paralysed..

logs, pieces of all kinds of material, occasionally a lump of black coal and various chips from knocked down railway fences." [32]

There were endless quarrels between the soldiers over the air temperature and its maintenance. Those on the upper bunks would protest angrily because they were stifling with the heat, while those on the bottom fulminated about being cold: "The volunteers slept six or more, one above the other, on each side, and the temperature on the two levels was not the same: if it was pleasantly warm for those on the upper level, on the bottom the soldiers' hair was all but freezing to the wagon wall – the nails and metal were covered with hoarfrost – and if it was warm below, it was unbearably hot up above."[33] Fortunately spring was approaching and as the weeks went by, the stoves in the wagons were left unlit and the soldiers ventured out to steal something other than wood.

## *Images, Smells, Sounds*

The first improvements to the wagons concerned the heating and beds. The soldiers looked for ways of stopping stoves smoking so much, and generally succeeded. Boxes for fuel appeared, and "waste baskets". The beds already looked neater and the volunteers made themselves mattresses out of canvas. They blocked up the numerous holes to prevent draughts and mended the doors. Not content with all this, however, they set about making rifle stands, munitions chests and baskets for hand grenades, coat-stands and so on. Tables of various sizes began to appear in the tepluskas, and it bothered no-one that the table panels were made out of stolen doors from a station lavatory, for example. A nail would be hammered into the wall and the last issue of *Czechoslovak Daily* would hang there, while the older issues either served as material for rolling cigarettes or fire-lighting, or would be hidden away in rough little bookcases where they would keep company with a small but diverse collection of books in Czech and Russian, calendars and various magazines. The tepluska ceased to be such a dark cave, for lamps were brought in, and when reading, playing cards, maintaining their weapons or mending their clothes the soldiers were no longer dependent on the fluttering light of a poor-quality home-made candle, with bootlaces substituting for wicks. The soldiers found glass plates for the wagon windows (earlier just nailed across) and the daylight poured in.

All these improvements needed a great quantity of materials, aids and tools, but everything could eventually be obtained or a substitute found. "The tepluskas, which at first were bare, empty and un-cosy, were gradually fixed up and furnished. Tables and benches were made, a little iron stove, lights and lamps of all possible shapes, 'bakas' (tin bowls) and huge teapots were procured in the most audacious way. No hut by a station, abandoned wagon or warehouse – could be sure that its interior

32 MEDEK, Rudolf: *Mohutný sen* [The Great Dream]. Praha, J. R. Vilímek 1930, p. 38.
33 VANĚK, O. – HOLEČEK, V. – MEDEK, R. (ed.): *Za svobodu*, vol. 3, p. 29 (see note 7).

would not be subjected to a vigilant inspection by volunteers looking for the necessary objects. So slowly the tepluskas were turning into bearable 'apartments'."[34]

At first the wagons lacked any kind of hygiene facilities, but the soldiers found ways to cope with this. Either they would go a little way away from the wagon or they would simply open the door while the train was in motion or at a stop. "Despite the fact that our wagon stands directly opposite an inhabited station building, from the windows of which two elderly ladies peer out every moment, the boys release a 'waterfall' through the slit created by sliding the door a little way open, just as if nothing was happening at all. But they say no-one would know if it was dropping from the roof or a 'knob'."[35] All the same, there were some tepluskas equipped by their industrious inhabitants improved with an improvised "lavatory". "Before we reached Rtishchev, the carved out hole, though which you could see the tracks under the train, had been covered by a lid revolving around a nail. A blue notice on it urged, 'In case of danger please move aside.' The wall of the tepluska bears the chalk inscription: 'Use permitted only when the train is in motion in the most extreme case. Abuse punishable by ejection from the tepluska!'"[36]

As soon as the weather improved, the legionaries decided to clean, wash and tidy their mobile dwellings. They looked for rags, buckets, brooms, cleaning materials of all kinds, and rubbish, mud deposits, soot, and all the mess disappeared. The soldiers also "spring cleaned" themselves and their clothes, and put all possible effort in washing and laundering; they knew there would not necessarily be another opportunity to launder their sweaty uniforms and underwear tomorrow. The mobile homes changed into sweltering laundries, full of moisture and half-dried clothes hung up everywhere.

The visual appearance of the tepluska can be documented on the basis of diaries, memoirs, photographs and sketches, relatively easily, but this covers only one of the senses. We should not forget the smell of the tepluska, its sounds and its surface. Thinking about the odours of these dwellings we have to remember who lived in them. On average around twenty-five adult men had to fit into one wagon, and given the situation those men could hardly have regularly maintained basic personal hygiene.[37] The first olfactory impression of a tepluska would inevitably have been the stink of fresh and old sweat. The second unavoidable element would have been wafts of natural body processes, which often enraged the legionaries or at other

34 ZEMAN, Adolf: *Osvoboditelé* [Liberators]. Praha, Sfinx – Bohumil Janda 1931, p. 129.

35 FIBICH, Karel: *Povstalci* [Rebels], vol. 3: *Povolžská fronta* [The Volga Front]. Praha, Osvětový odbor Družiny dobrovolců čsl. zahraničního vojska 1938, p. 292.

36 Ibid.: *Povstalci*, vol. 2: *Mogila*. Praha, Osvětový odbor Družiny dobrovolců čsl. zahraničního vojska 1938, p. 230.

37 On hygiene in the legions see e.g. PAZDERA, David: „Organizátoři čistoty": K problematice řízení hygieny v čs. legiích v Rusku ["Organisers of Cleanliness": On the Problem of Ensuring Hygiene in the Czechoslovak legions in Russia"]. In: PETRÁŠ, Jiří (ed.): *Československé legie a první světová válka* [The Czechoslovak Legions and the First World War]. České Budějovice, Jihočeské muzeum 2002, pp. 12–21.

times prompted salvoes of laughter.[38] All this was enhanced by the odour of drying clothes (especially strong in the case of the foot-wraps). Laundering underwear in most cases met the same problem as personal hygiene, and so most of the time the underwear hanging on provisional drying frames was not wet from laundering, but sweaty or wet from rain. Mixed in with all this was the soft scent of machine oil, steam from food brought in, or tea, and sometimes the smell of vodka. Entirely typical was the smell – for some people rather the stench – of the coarse Russian tobacco known as makhorka. In this still relatively early phase the visitor would have sniffed in vain for the perfumes of Russian women or the eau-de-cologne of smart volunteers – there would be time for that in the future. The air was mostly heavy and moist, but when the wagon had been aired, sharp and cold again.

How did a tepluska sound? Merry, sad, quarrelsome and only rarely quiet. Twenty-five men in one room probably could never be wholly quiet. If a chance passer-by put his ear to the wall he would have heard a cacophony of voices telling stories, quarrelling, cursing, explaining and giving orders. There was laughter, disputes, memories of home and very often songs, whether Russian or Czech. The passer-by might have heard the fiddle, the harmonica, the crackle of wood in the stoves, the smacking of lips and clatter of spoons in the *kotěloks*. The hinges of weapons of weapons snapping, the sharpening of bayonets, sabres, daggers… The stamping of booted feet. Fairy-tales would be told. The wood of the bunks would creak, someone would read a newspaper aloud, and another would be learning French, Russian or even English. Politics, the war, families would be discussed. And when the train was moving, the hubs would squeak, the wood of the walls creak and the wheels would regularly pound under the floor. To the touch the tepluska was rough and coarse, and it was easy to get a splinter. Rough too was the cloth of overcoats and the poor-quality paper of the news, while the rifle head greasy and the butt was smooth. The metal parts of the door could be icy and the stove usually red-hot.

## *Notices and Decorations*

The unofficial and undeclared competition for the best fitted-out tepluska interior soon turned into a contest for the best looking "box". The soldiers turned their skills to the exterior of the wagon and so started to create successors to the famous ornamented bunkers of 1914–1917. The wagons became exhibition space for the inhabitants, the volunteer army and movement for the joint independence of the Czech Lands and Slovakia. First the soldiers made steps – in some cases just a few ordinary planks, in others well-made folding stairs. Photographs even show

38 "… Dohnal asked once again, bypassing the sleeper who – unconsciously – let his farts out. No-one answered. 'Open a bit, to let it out!' said Končíř, already undressed." VLASÁK, Rudolf: *Houpačky na magistrále* [Swings on the Trans-Siberial Railway], vol. 1. Praha – Čáslav, Za svobodu 1927, p. 19.

one wagon with an exterior handrail made of the emptied wrappers of unexploded shrapnel, making it easier for people to swing themselves up into the tepluska.[39]

Next on the agenda was inscription of the "firm" ("parliament") or list of "tenants". Also "on every wagon a list of the towns and home places of the Czech soldiers present."[40] The idea spread by the law of imitation: "One eshelon – in fact just one wagon – had written on the exterior sides the name of every place from which one of its inhabitants – brothers came: Všetaty, Praha II, Karlín, Mělník, Uherské Hradiště, Olomouc, Strašnice, Žižkov, Beroun and so on were written on the wagon – in chalk. It was a way of looking for home contacts, for wherever this eshelon stopped, a crowd of brothers would come up to the wagon. 'Who is the one from Všetaty?' someone would ask. 'Me!' would come a shout from the wagon… And as soon as that wagon, or eshelon departed, the brothers who liked the idea – of writing the names of towns, places, villages and so on from which the tepluska inhabitants came – would start working. They set to work and after a while the wagons were covered in writing – with the names of brothers and the places they came from, and sometimes also the places where they had been interned as prisoners-of-war."[41]

Inscriptions decorated with garlands and various banners can be considered forerunners of the later more elaborate pictures: "On the wagons [were] greenery, national banners and superscriptions: 'Czech aviators on a journey round the world'[42] and 'Kiev–Vladivostok–Chicago–Paris–Berlin–Prague'."[43] The next step was full-blown pictures, scenery, and even three-dimensional ornaments – all the creations of legionaries finding something to do in the long hours of forced inactivity. We have a great deal of visual evidence testifying to the most common schemes, pictures and decorations. These strongly reflected the roots of the legions and their present concerns. Patriotic and national ideological themes (*"to the Aid of the Homeland"*) predominated, with illustrations of a similar nature, such as a Slovak shepherd with

39 Photographs in the 3rd volume of the publication *Za svobodu*, compiled by O. Vaněk, V. Holeček and R. Medek, show both – a rail made of shrapnel innards and plank steps into the tepluska (p. 17).

40 The personal diary of Jan Čížkovský. In: CTIBOROVÁ, Miroslava (ed.): *Českoslovenští legionáři: Rodáci a občané okresu České Budějovice* [Czechoslovak Legionaries. Natives and Citizens of the České Budějovice District]. České Budějovice 2000, entry of 27 April 1918, p. 65.

41 VLASÁK, Rudolf: *Houpačky na magistrále*, sv. 2. Praha – Čáslav, Za svobodu 1929, p. 203; see also photographs in the publication: PÍSECKÝ, Ferdinand: *Světem za svobodou: Osudy československého legionáře* [Across the World for Freedom. The Fortunes of a Czechoslovak Legionary]. Praha, Ústřední knihkupectví učitelstva československého 1920, p. 149.

42 This was the eshelon of the Czechoslovak aviation section.

43 Personal diary of Jan Čížkovský, entry of 27 April 1918, p. 65.

a panorama of the Tatras,[44] slavdom,[45] a Slovak armed with a traditional hatchet-axe[46] or a dying volunteer accompanied by an inscription in Russian.[47]

There were depictions of historical models "from glorious periods" of the Czech past, especially Jan Žižka[48] and Jan Hus. Hussitism, or rather its modern ideologised form, was very popular in the legions. Other national heroes like the "Dog-Heads", Jan Sladký Kozina or St. Wenceslas were not forgotten. Towns like Prague, Tábor or the castle of Karlštejn had their place. Figures from famous literary works filed past on the tepluska exteriors (*The Lešetín Smith*,[49] *The Piper of Strakonice*) as well as mythical-historical scenes and locations (Přemysl the Ploughman, Princess Libuše,[50] the sacred hill of Blaník). Some trains became mobile exhibitions of Czech history, myths and culture: "... in the morning we made a start on beautifying the exterior of the wagons. Some men brought greenery and made garlands and I painted the goddess of music (a girl with a harp) on the side of the wagon. On the opposite side a quote from Dalibor: 'What Czech would not love music?' Work proceeds apace on all the wagons and you see beautiful artistic pictures by our two academy painters: Žižka with a mace on a war wagon (For You are God's Warriors), 'sokol' with a rapier on guard (Forward, Not a Step Back), and as background a silhouette of Prague, Master Jan Hus at the stake. The Knights of Blaník sleeping under Blaník (the goddess of war draws back the curtain of Blaník and you see sleeping soldiers in French uniforms with a red-and-white ribbon). A wounded soldier and behind him in the mist Charles Bridge and Hradčany. And you see superb work using the greenery too."[51] As material the soldiers used green brush, and white birch bark, and purchased paints, canvases, various ribbons and in fact everything that they could get their hands on. Competitions were held for the best decoration, and although the prizes were not generous (most were small sums of money), they at least provided some agreeable motivation and reward. One distinctive category was that of "mechanical" creations, usually weather-vanes. These weathervanes were quite sophisticated in workmanship, and adorned with painted and costumed little figures (often of the emperors Franz Josef I and Wilhelm II) which would move in the wind. A model aircraft might be perched on the wagon roof.[52]

---

44 *„Nad Tatrou sa blýska, hromy divo bijú…"* ["There is lightning over the Tatras, thunders loudly sound..."].

45 *„Hoj, rodino milá, hodina odbila, žije matka Sláva!"* ["Hey, dear country, the hour has struck, Mother Slava lives!"].

46 *„Kto sa Slovák cíti, nech' sa šable chytí a medzi nás stane!"* ["Who feels himself a Slovak, take up a sabre and come and stand with us!"].

47 *„Lučše smerť, čem žizň raba"* ["Better death than the life of a slave"].

48 *„Bijte, zabijte, nikoho neživte"*, *„Kdož jste Boží bojovníci…"* ["Beat them, kill them, let none live" "You who are God's Warriors..."].

49 On one of the tepluskas, there was even a T. G. Masaryk wearing the costume of the Lešetín Smith.

50 *„Ó, moje město, sláva bude Tvá! Ty cizí chátru nohou rozšlápneš!"* ["Oh my city, glory will be yours! You will tread down the foreign rabble!"].

51 Personal diary of Jan Čížkovský, entry of 17 May 1918, p. 66.

52 See photograph in the 3rd volume of the publication *Za svobodu*, p. 756 (see note 7).

Retrospectively we might suggest that all this exterior decoration had a more than merely ideological and recreational significance. Whether or not the soldiers were fully conscious of it, the practice was an assertion of identity. The volunteers were declaring: here we are, this is us, this is our history, this is our present, this is the way our world is. They were declaring themselves to their surroundings and to themselves, in an act of self-definition vis-à-vis an alien world that was becoming threatening to them. The decoration shows the mental world of the legionaries, including an (ideologised) picture of Czech history. Significantly, the most striking and liveliest pictures were of the Hussites, with which the legionaries identified, as well as other famous figures of purely Czech history, i.e. stereotypical themes saturated with patriotic idealism. The same motifs turn up in other areas of legionary culture, such as propaganda, the printed press, the names of the military units, and festivals.

External decoration of the wagons began with the advertisement of the collective and individual identities of the inhabitants of the tepluskas, but it is notable that towards the end of the story of the legions in Russia, the messages that appear are coded: "Painting it white will be necessary", "Don't give up your brushes, we shall paint it white!" or just "We shall white it!". These messages expressed a single imperative – the need to break a path through to the East in defiance of the Bolsheviks.[53] The verb, *bílit* [paint it white, whiten] was frequent in legionary slang and meant to "clear the enemy out". "Brushes" meant weapons.

## *Workshops, Rumours and Weapons*

It was not just the soldiers that moved on the rails, but the whole Czechoslovak army including materials, for what could not be loaded onto the wagons had been left in Ukraine, where it had been distributed to others, exchanged for more easily storable items, or destroyed. For the soldiers the most important items were weapons, kit and supplies of all kinds. All "services", workshops and most of the stores were moved onto the trains, and this led to the development of "specialised" tepluskas for various purposes. At the beginning they were only primitively equipped and the workshop wagons often doubled as accommodation. As time went by and more wagons were acquired, however, the eshelons came to have a more clearly differentiated structure: they would consist of accommodation tepluskas, officer wagons of the second or third-class, wagons carrying supplies and horses[54] and a large number of various specialised works wagons.

53 It depended on the situation: very often these "telegrams" were written not only on the sides of the Legionary tepluskas, but on those of passenger or freight trains passing through.

54 The Legions did not have many horses with them, since the soldiers left most of their horses in the Ukraine. Feeding those that were left became a major problem. The remaining horses were mainly with artillery units.

Metal-work and repair workshops for modification and maintenance of weapons and other equipment where essential.[55] There were also small carpentry workshops, their most important article (apart from pieces of furniture for the tepluskas) being coffins. Then there were tanning workshops for production and repair of straps, harness and boots, and tailoring workshops where uniforms were made and mended.[56] Army bakeries,[57] kitchens[58] and shops (*lávočkas*)[59] went on the rails, and so too did army staff offices with all their paperwork. One such office and its work is described by Karel Fibich: "The travel office of the military section suffered a due 'blow', dictated by the conditions of the tepluska. The typewriter sits on a bunk bed. You have to sit down with your legs spread out to type on it. A rickety old biscuit chest, full of campaign post, serves brother Ježek as a desk. Jenda attends to business astraddle a plank. Tláskal with his paperwork occupies the upper bunk and stands on Jenda's chair..."[60]

The sick and wounded were taken to improvised sick bays and acquired hospital wagons, but there was not much comfort or proper medical care to be had there: "And our travels! I lie in the sick bay in what was once a third class passenger wagon, as a notice on the outside of the wagon still testifies. The pharmacy doesn't have even the bare essential medicines; men with serious cases of pneumonia lie in the wagon on hard benches, in a cold draft from all sides. There is no help! I can't describe the memories which run through all our minds – but it is mainly one question that hangs over us: what will the future bring us?"[61] At a later date when conditions improved some eshelons could boast such comparatively unusual

55 The photographs are in the 3rd volume of the publication compiled by O. Vaněk, V. Holeček and R. Medek *Za svobodu*, p. 815 (see note 7).

56 A shoe-making workshop is shown in a photograph in *Ibid* (p. 18), and a tailoring and shoemaking workshop in *Ibid* (p. 807 and 818) in the publication *K vítězné svobodě* (p. 118 – see note 4).

57 See the photographs of the exterior and interior of bakeries on the tracks in the publications *K vítězné svobodě* (p. 119) and *Za svobodu*, vol. 3 (p. 811).

58 In photographs in the publication *K vítězné svobodě* (p. 118) we see the kitchen of the staff of the army corps (scrubbing potatoes) and the NCO kitchen of the Third Regiment.

59 *Lávkas* were not very well supplied, and provided mainly supplementary sales. Their range depended on the skills of the "operator": they sold matches, candles, thread, needles, buttons and other small items, but also foods such as sugar, salami, sausages, and of course tobacco. These shops were intended to make up for poor supply organisation with "minor articles" of daily consumption. Initially they functioned thanks to money provided by individual companies, but over time they started to make profits. Different impressions are offered by photographs of a *lávočka* in the two publications cited above: in the photograph in the album *K vítězné svobodě* (p. 119) we see only a sausage and the notice on the door of the wagon looks shabby and slapdash, while the view into the interior of a lávočka in the 3rd volume of the book *Za svobodu* (p. 823) shows full shelves.

60 FIBICH, K.: *Povstalci*, vol. 2, p. 230 (see note 36). Photograph of another tepluska office in the 3rd volume of the publication *Za svobodu*, p. 806.

61 VONDRÁČEK, František: *Husité dvacátého století*: *Deník ruského legionáře* [Hussites of the Twentieth Century: The Diary of a Russian Legionary]. Praha, Československý vědecký ústav vojenský 1922, entry of 9 March 1918, p. 34.

facilities of a barber's "salon"[62] or bookbinding workshop.[63] The diversity of facilities of this "army on rails" increased even more with time. For most of 1918 the legionary campaign offered the unusual spectacle of a modern army constantly in movement with practically all its property.

Printing works and newspaper offices, including the umbrella editorial office of *Czechoslovak Daily* also went onto the tracks.[64] One journalist-legionary remembered: "…and on 10 March we and the paper moved onto a train. At the time Florian Zapletal wrote to us from Moscow that it was lunacy, wanting to publish a journal on a train, especially a daily. But soon he was sending articles to this crazy concern, which came out on the train until the end of August, since it was only then that we moved to ordinary premises. And during that time apart from the normal 'Daily' we published another one or two issues of the professional journal 'Č.S. Voják' [C.S. Soldier] and several numbers of 'Slovenské Hlasy' [Slovak Voices]…"[65]

The volunteers were naturally avid for any kind of news of military and political events. One highly unreliable but omnipresent form of "news" was the gossip known in volunteer slang as *latriny* [latrines] or *sluchy* [hearsay]: rumours and "guaranteed" true reports generated by heated imaginations and the frustrations of uncertainty. These spread like wildfire and could cause a great deal of damage. The most potent rumours were those that were partly based on truth, and expressed the stress and anxieties of legionary life. These parallel information channels often had greater weight with the soldiers than official communications, and paradoxically the army authorities sometimes even contributed to them, as a useful way of preserving their own ambivalence on some key matter of information and planning. As one account put it, "In these days of nervous tension and mental boredom every printed word was read like Holy Scripture, the apparent and secret meaning of every sentence was analysed and commented on with an eye to whatever secret rumour was spreading through the wagons in a kind of inexplicable way. Woe to any word and sentence not chosen with forethought and in awareness of this mood. 'Czechoslovak Daily' failed the test. This newspaper, printed for information for the troops and produced in one of the eshelons was the most peculiar type of journalism during the First World War. It lacked consistent contact with the military-technical command of our army and the political leadership. Because of its excessive independence and lack of information it would then write with strange directness about events and matters which for military and political reasons should have been passed over in silence. Its position was of course difficult. There were no journalistically or politically mature groups, and no contact and no aids…"[66]

62 See photograph in the 3rd volume of the publication *Za svobodu*, p. 810.

63 See photograph in *Ibid*, p. 814.

64 It started to come out in Kiev as the official print organ of the Czechoslovak Movement Abroad in Russia at the beginning of January 1918.

65 KUDELA, Josef: Informačně Osvětový. In: ČERVINKA, V.: *Naši na Sibiři*, p. 51 (see note 6). We also have visual documentation of the *Czechoslovak Daily*'s time on the railway, see MEDEK, R. (ed.): *K vítězné svobodě*, p. 117.

66 ZEMAN, A.: *Osvoboditelé*, p. 142 (see note 32).

Bolshevik propaganda tried to exploit the potential for whipping up dangerous hysteria by distributing distorted information among soldiers. Rudolf Medek spoke out about the then most burning "hearsay" (*sluchy*) in the first months of 1918 in an important article entitled "The Historical Road" in *Czechoslovak Soldier:* "But at other times there are doubts and wavering, even a tendency to believe this 'terrible hearsay' spreading here and there. And the hearsay is this kind of thing: that we have been sold out, that we have been betrayed, that someone somewhere is going to jump on us, that we will all die of hunger and plague, that we're going like 'cannon fodder', that someone or another has sold us to the Germans for one and a half million, that German submarines are waiting for us, that they will immediately drown us and so on."[67] The claustrophobic conditions of the railway wagons created a real sociological laboratory. Rumours, legends and inventions were expressions of stressful individual and collective experience that could not be ventilated outside but only within the closed group. They arose from the desire to anticipate the future and so cope with it, but also from fabulation, lying, boredom, paranoia, black humour, the attempt to grasp the connections between faraway events and to understand the reality of an alien world. Rumours and myths served as a vent for fear and overheated imagination.

In late spring 1918 the level of nervousness was on the rise in the tepluskas, and not only because of rumours. While they cheered themselves up by improving and ornamenting their wagons, they had experienced many disappointments, hunger and cold, and above all they were faced in May 1918 with a tough decision. It had been agreed that they would give up most of their weapons, retaining only a permitted quota, but their distrust of the Bolsheviks was unshakable, they saw their weapons as their security and did not want to hand them over. The rank-and-file and many officers therefore opted for non-violent and silent resistance: they gave up their heavy arms (including a few aircraft) but simply hid hand-arms, machine-gun parts, hand grenades and munitions, and cold and short fire-arms, in all kinds of hiding-places inside the wagons. The volunteers used every bit of free space for the purpose. Weapons containers were placed under the floor, false cambers were created in the walls, rifles were masked as bunk braces or vanished into chimneys.[68] This was not just a matter of precaution and self-preservation, but also an expression of the age-old intimate relationship between the warrior and his weapons. It is no wonder that soldiers (especially veterans) who had given their rifles names and treated them almost as if they were living beings, were not inclined to say goodbye

67 MEDEK, Rudolf: Historická cesta. In: *Československý voják*, no. 9 (30 March 1918).

68 For example one echelon of the 8th Regiment (series number 11. Commanded by Staff Captain – later well-known general – Lev Prchala), which reached Vladivostok before the outbreak of hostilities, managed to smuggle an amazing amount of weaponry through: 13 Maxim machine guns, 8 light Chauchat machine guns, 200 rifles, 250 grenades and 80,000 bullets. Fortunately for the legionaries the Bolsheviks had no relevant lists of the weaponry of the Czechoslovak forces. Drawing up such a list was practically impossible, given the confused situation after the collapse of the Russian Front and retreat from Ukraine.

to them.[69] The handover of arms in Penza and the resistance to it gave rise to one hitherto forgotten element of the external decoration of the tepluskas. These were inscriptions with an easily decipherable, uncomplicated reaction to the demobilisation of the 5th Regiment, whose soldiers decorated the wagons with provocative slogans such as *Odzbrojená garda* [Disarmed Guard] and *Bezbranní emigranti* [Defenceless Emigrants].

## *The Tepluskas in Battle*

The outbreak of hostilities with the Bolsheviks in the early summer of 1918 meant a complete change in the rhythm of life for the inhabitants of the tepluskas.[70] At the beginning of May 1918 the eshelons were scattered at great distances from each other across the breadth of the Russian countryside – from Penza to the Urals, the huge expanses of Siberia, the Far East and right up to the port of Vladivostok. They also lacked the regular communications[71] and general co-ordination that is fundamental in modern warfare. The basic building blocks of the separate improvised groupings of volunteers were not compact regiments and divisions, but companies and eshelons belonging to various different higher tactical groupings. The eshelons now became islands in the middle of the storm. The frenetic energy that the legionaries had previously invested in quarrels, debates, cleaning and tidying, sports, music-making and the decoration of the tepluskas was turned outwards.

War broke out. The tepluskas started to change. Even in just the first days of military confrontation they were losing their cheerful face of patriotic pictures, colours and flags. They became the target of fire, some were engulfed in flame and others completely destroyed in battle. Here and there it was even necessary to abandon them, leaving everything including the wounded.[72] External decoration vanished from the tepluskas; if it was not destroyed in battle no-one restored or repaired it and it became fragmentary and dilapidated. Wind, rain and sun completed the work of destruction, whether of pictures or of weathervanes, sculptures and other decorations.

---

69 On the soldier's relationship to his weapons see PAZDERA, David: Voják a zbraň [The Soldier and His Weapon]. In: PETRÁŠ, Jiří (ed.): *Česká společnost a první světová válka.* České Budějovice, Jihočeské muzeum 1999, pp. 5–8.

70 See ŠTEIDLER, F.: *Naše vystoupení v Rusku v r. 1918* (see note 8).

71 The Bolsheviks controlled the telegraph, and so there was almost no immediate communications between the different echelons on the most important matters – since the legionaries assumed that any such messages would be read by the enemy. They therefore mainly used messengers.

72 After the attack on an echelon at Zlatoust on 27 May the soldiers were forced to retreat on foot over the Urals. A number of wounded would not have survived the march, however, and so they were left in the train in the care of nurses who volunteered to stay with them.

The interior of the wagons changed fundamentally. There was now no time for maintaining even the most basic level of cleanliness and tidiness. If the soldiers had previously tried to make their living space cosy and orderly, with the outbreak of war operations such efforts ended. The men fell into bed in their uniforms and sometimes their boots too, often dirty and covered with mud or a layer of dust. The floor was unswept, and weapons parts, munitions, grenades, bayonets and other objects lay strewn about all over the wagons. Eating implements lay where they were tossed between crumpled pieces of clothing and pieces of kit. The tepluska continued to be full of the acrid odour of fresh sweat mixed with the much more unpleasant stench of old sweat. Clothes were practically never washed because there was no time for it,[73] and personal hygiene was maintained only very sporadically. It was fortunate that the warm weather made it possible to air the wagons, although the soldiers carried the strong smell of the tepluska everywhere they went.

The number of inhabitants in the average tepluska fluctuated, and some bunks were suddenly empty; their owners were either on some sortie, or had fallen or were in the care of the medics because of injury or sickness. The atmosphere would probably have struck us as gloomy. There was less laughter, weariness prevailed and ever more often one would have heard curses against the Russians (allied and hostile), the Allies, the soldiers' own commanders and in fact everything. The *Czechoslovak Daily* hanging on its nail on the wall would be several days or weeks old, because there was no communication between the separate eshelons, and so the papers, like most other information reached them only with considerable delay. The tempo of the combat operations in fact differed between different trains, however, and none fought without interruption throughout the whole summer even though the real war of intervention started with the link-up of the Chelyabin and Penza groups on 6 July 1918. The situation thus gradually stabilised and in free moments the soldiers once again started to make their mobile dwellings more comfortable.

When the Volga Front collapsed at the end of 1917, the Czechoslovak command decided to take over supervision of the railways, since their functioning was a matter of life or death for the Legions. They set up the Rail Transport Section of the Czechoslovak Forces in Yekaterinburg as an authority supposed to take care of the upkeep of the tracks, machine-parts and other associated facilities, as well as transport itself. Legionary officers or NCOs were sent to important stations as Czechoslovak station commanders. They were later joined by other specialists entrusted with checking and putting right anything neglected by the Russian authorities. This effectively became a parallel structure capable of taking over the initiative and control depending on the needs of the command.[74] Originally the Czechoslovak

73 Most soldiers only owned one set of underwear and one uniform, and so when these were laundered they had to wait about in a state of undress. Thus during war operations and a constant state of readiness, there could be no laundering because of the risk that soldiers would be called out for service with nothing at all to wear.

74 The situation was the same in other strategic branches. The Czechoslovaks took over the running of many mines and factories, and so kept part of industry (the part closely connected with the army and railway transport) in operation.

railway organisation not only took care of the Czechoslovak army needs but contributed to securing the smooth running of Russian transport, both passenger and freight. The army could use the services of Russian professionals in stoke-rooms, and on stations and in offices, but from mid-1919 it started to put together a corps engine drivers and stokers from its own ranks. This reflected forward thinking and of course distrust for the Russian railway personnel.[75] The "Railway Section" worked closely with the army's technical companies, whose tasks were connected more with military operations than with "peacetime" operation. The technical companies were entrusted with repairing bridges and tracks damaged in battles or diversions. Each company had a train to transport it through an entire designated Russian region.[76]

With the growing threat in the summer and autumn of 1918 the tepluskas assumed even greater importance in the life of the legionaries. The inhabitants of a tepluska (or whole eshelon) were connected by a certain bond, although this was not necessarily always positive. As the tepluska became home for legionaries, they turned into a kind of family, where there as in any such groups there was no shortage of minor quarrels and irritations. Even so, after the long periods that the soldiers spent in the field outside the tepluska, they would return to it with relief and joy. A moment like this was described for Karel Fibich, for example: "At 3 o'clock the eshelon arrived. The whoops of the boys rang out through an ugly snowstorm. After a month of trekking through various places like Tatar- and Mordva-Sullam, Urustamak and Usman-Tashlem full of tarakans (cockroaches) and similar vermin, we climb back with very great jubilation into our beloved tepluskas, which we hope will finally carry us away to the long promised rest. We light the stove and we're already off. Those who wanted a nap have miscalculated badly. The laughter, shouts and jollity go beyond all the bounds of humanity."[77] In these joyful feelings we can already hear the note of hope that the tepluskas will reach the end of their Russian odyssey, and that the soldiers will reach the sea and the ships that will finally sail with them for their homeland.

Delight at a safe return soon gave way to more negative feelings, however, and sometimes a furious refusal on the soldiers' part to leave their mobile quarters again. Refusal to get out of the tepluskas symbolised reluctance to fight for a foreign cause and a yearning to go home, and was an expression of disagreement with the political leadership or military command. These attitudes among the men were clearly the major cause of the most famous suicide of a legionary officer – Colonel Josef Jiří Švec, whose self-inflicted death as well as his distinguished career made him an icon of the First Czechoslovak Armed Resistance Abroad. The soldiers ex-

75 Up to the end of the spring of 1919 the Russian railway personnel sympathised with the Czechs and Slovaks, but later they inclined more to the left. The legionaries uncovered a series of Bolshevik cells among the railway employees. (See SAIDL, Josef: *Československí železničáři v sibiřské Anabasi* [Czechoslovak Railwaymen in the Siberian Anabasis]. Praha, Památník odboje 1924.)

76 There are photographs of the activities of the 3rd Technical Company in the 4th volume of the publication *Za Svobodu*, p. 696 f. and 699 (see note 7).

77 FIBICH, K.: *Povstalci*, vol. 3, p. 352 (see note 36).

pressed their distrust for this otherwise popular officer by refusing to move from their wagons to barracks in the town, because Colonel Švec was unwilling and even unable to guarantee that they would not be deployed in further battles and would immediately be moved to the rear. On the deeper reasons for this personal tragedy we can only speculate; the truth is probably that the veteran Švec was too emotionally exhausted to bear the "betrayal" of his subordinates, the pressure of his superiors and the responsibilities of his own position. From our point of view here, the setting of both events, i.e. the refusal to obey by the soldiers and the consequent suicide of the commander, is characteristic. In both cases it was a station. Švec took his life in a wagon, an officer's class-wagon, where he did not finish the proclamation to his soldiers that he was writing just before his death. By coincidence Švec's funeral took place on the very day that Prague celebrated the birth of an independent Czechoslovak state.[78]

## *"Circuses", Gardens and "Little Villas"*

Moving forward in time a few months, we find that once again the stage and actors have changed a little. The tepluskas are better furnished, and some are starting to be cluttered with all kinds of junk, often presided over by an immense Russian samovar. In contrast to the spartan equipment of the spring, in the autumn and winter of 1918 the wagons were full of newspapers, half empty bags of sticky sugar, various souvenirs and booty, postcards, dried bouquets of Urals flora, binoculars, revolvers, sabres, bayonets, daggers, kinzhals, caps, coats and Russian shirts. On the walls hang calendars and various pictures, printed or made by the volunteers. The number of inhabitants to one tepluska has dropped, although in some wagons the society is enlivened by the presence of women, whether respectable or what in Russo-Czech slang were known as *ženštinas*.[79] The tepluskas are certainly no tidier or cleaner. Nor are they quieter, although the listener would hear ever less laughter and ever more curses and swearing. The language of stories and quarrels is ever more infused with Russisms and new Legionary slang. The inhabitants have become rather coarser in manners and their hygiene habits have not improved.

78 See SAK, R.: *Anabáze*, p. 86 n. (see note 12); KUDELA, Josef: *Aksakovská tragedie*: *Plukovník Švec* [The Tragedy of Aksakovsk: Colonel Švec]. Brno, Moravský legionář 1932; KUDELA, Ivan: Aksakovská tragedie: Smrt plk. Josefa Švece [The Akskovsk Tragedy: The Death of Colonel Josef Švec]. In: *Vojenské rozhledy*, vol. 12, no. 3 (2003), pp. 151–156. There are also novels on this theme (e.g. ZEMAN, Adolf: *Plukovník Švec*. Sfinx – B. Janda [1933]) and a famous play (MEDEK, Rudolf: *Plukovník Švec*. Praha, J. R. Vilímek 1930). There is also an edition of J.J. Švec's diary (KUDELA, Josef (ed.): *Deník plukovníka Švece*. Praha, Památník odboje 1923).

79 In Russian the word *zhenshchina* is simply the neutral word for woman but in Czech it has rather negative connotations. In legionary slang, these negative connotations tended to predominate.

The wagons ever more resembled "circuses", even literally so as time went by and the soldiers picked up dogs, birds and Ural or Siberian bears, small and large.[80]

The specialisation of wagons in eshelons had now gone even further. Apart from the ordinary tepluskas and officer-class-wagons[81] there were the workshops already mentioned, and now more strictly differentiated. Not that this prevented tailors, armorers, cooks or others from sleeping in their workshops.[82] Separate wagons were reserved for stores (which were especially vigilantly guarded), and these often communicated with the shops (lávka). Special kitchen, laundry and bath wagons were also created.

The composition of the population of the tepluskas had changed with the influx of new recruits from the ranks of prisoners-of-war. The veterans were "diluted" by the newcomers, whose views and attitudes were different and who were often reluctant to identify fully with the way things had worked in the legions up to now. Essentially the volunteer principle was giving place to the obligation principle, and this was gradually causing a fissure between the office corps and the men. The veterans quite often reacted badly to the newcomers, defining themselves against them and accusing them of opportunism, i.e. of joining the army only for the chance to get out of the disintegrating Russia.[83] Some veterans kept their distance from the new recruits and made their sense of superiority very obvious. This shift away from volunteerism and a volunteer ethic as far as recruitment was concerned provoked great disgust not only for reasons of veteran hauteur but because the veterans were used to larger measure of independence. Their attitude as expressed by the saying, "What applies to the mobilised does not necessarily apply to the volunteers,"[84] not only angered many officers, but clearly annoyed the "mobilised" themselves. Quarrels in the ranks grew ever fiercer and more corrosive. Growing weariness frayed tempers and added oil to the flames, and so too did Admiral Kolchak's November coup, Russian disarray, differing opinions in the army, the establishment of Czechoslovakia, the reluctance of the allies to intervene in Russia vigorously, Bolshevik propaganda, simple human envy and personal antipathies. On 1 October 1918 General Jan Syrový wrote frankly to General William Sydney Graves, the commander of the American units in Siberia: "The men

80 See photograph in the 4th volume of the publication *Za svobodu*, p. 297 (see note 7).

81 Class-wagons of this kind would accommodate not just one or more officers, but also their personal servants (*fajfka* or *potinoha*) and they would also use the wagons as offices where they would dispatch official business for the unit.

82 Tailors and shoe-makers in particular would very obviously exploit their workshop tepluskas and the chance to bribe some beautiful woman or other with a product of their own.

83 It is probably superfluous to add that these views were unfair to many of the late-comers. But not only Rudolf Medek in his book *Anabase* (Praha, J. R. Vilímek 1931) remembers the former furious Austrian, the Cadet Macek, who finally joined the legion after the birth of an independent Czechoslovakia. The fictionalised figure of Macek is evidently based on a real soldier of that name, by original profession a teacher, whom Rudolf Medek met during his period in the Austrian army on the Galician Front before his desertion to the Russian side.

84 See FIBICH, K.: *Povstalci*, vol. 3, p. 364 (see note 36).

are at the end of their tether, losses caused by illnesses and injuries have reached as much as fifty per cent. The units of our Eastern Group are no longer capable of holding the front."[85]

With the arrival of 1919 and new duties on the Trans-Siberian Railway the soldiers continued to be wedded to their tepluskas. They stayed close to their modified wagons, always ready to set off down the track. A certain proportion of the tepluskas and soldiers were usually on the move because operations along the track required it, but unlike in the previous year the soldiers were usually able to make lengthy stops, and when they set out on marches and sorties against the enemy in the taiga they usually returned to the same place. Other units stationed in the large Siberian towns sometimes shunted their wagons onto a station siding track, uncoupled them from the engine and removed the equipment that distinguished them from ordinary freight wagons. In many stations, however, it was far from easy to transfer soldiers from the railway wagons to ordinary brick barracks. Many smaller units, especially companies, were scattered in small towns where there was no accommodation for them. The problem was solved by parking the wagons on sidings where they became some kind of fixed houses on wheels (if there was no suitable siding at the station, the engineers or soldiers in the rail formations would build one). After only a few days the place would look like a strange Czechoslovak suburb or village. Once again the soldiers would tidy up, clean, sweep and launder. They would repair the damaged parts of the interior fittings and furnishings of the tepluskas and the other wagons, and if the volunteers had anyone in their ranks with the relevant expertise, they would also set to repairing the axles and other mechanically stressed wagon parts. They restored the already dilapidated and mostly completely destroyed decorations on the external walls of the wagons: pictures, sculptures and slogans. Then, after tidying up the wagon, they would start improving the surroundings of the "anchored" tepluskas.

This was all taking place at the beginning of spring, which prompted an interest in gardening among the legionaries. Close to the railway sidings they created flower gardens with different coloured beds arranged around interestingly designed garden arbours made of birchwood.[86] This timber, so abundant in Siberia, was used to make benches, tables, garden chairs and other objects. The legionaries added artificial rocks and often "mosaics" of different coloured stones, moss and wood to the variously shaped flower beds. These creations offered more poster space for individuals and groups to express their identity and allegiances. The mosaics sometimes featured simple slogans and pictures of the distant homeland or stylised portraits of "outstanding men" of Czech (and Slovak) history including the obligatory Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk. Nor were the soldiers content just to dig and plant beds and sit out in the evenings with a pipe or cigarette and watch the setting sun. To battle boredom they set up skittles, so typical of the Czech prewar rural areas. One interesting venture was the open air theatre of the 2nd battalion of the 7th Regiment,

85 WILLCOX MELTON, C.: *Between War and Peace*, p. 82.

86 See the photograph in the 4th volume of the publication *Za svobodu* p. 285 (see note 7).

built by the Tomsk 2 railway station. Even more unusual was a cinema "in a little wood not far from ... the eshelon", organised by the American "uncle" Mr. Riley.[87] Unfortunately there is no record of the programme of the theatre or cinema.[88]

During 1919 a new word appeared in the Legionary community – *vilky* or *rodinné vilky*, meaning little villas or family houses. The improvement of the surroundings of the tepluskas made sense of this term, but was not the only reason why some of the wagons acquired this name. As time went by the percentage of married soldiers and officers grew. It was quite usual for these married legionaries to have children, although in most cases these children were not their own but brought to them by their wives. The army hardly encouraged family life, but on the other hand created no insuperable barriers to it, and the institution of "little family villas" even proved friendly to it. In relatively quiet periods when there were enough free wagons, it was possible to move married volunteers with their wives into empty wagons that would be divided into two parts to create a miniature flat for two families. Apart from providing marital privacy, this also took the strain off previous wagon-sharers, since the presence of a married couple among the other soldiers tended to provoke uncontrollable disputes, sometimes sparked by the infidelity of a wife with one of the "neighbours" or by the mere jealousy of the husband or simply the overbearing behaviour of husband or wife to the other soldiers. Earlier there had been few eshelons in which married soldiers could have whole wagons to themselves and it was only now that they could set up a more or less regular household. Of course, with contemporary observers of what were quite often problematic relationships we might maliciously note that while this progress diminished the opportunities for quarrels between couples and their "neighbours", the same was scarcely true of disputes between husbands and wives.

It is noteworthy but not surprising that these "little villas" were the target of masses of jokes among the single volunteers. Married couples found themselves under the microscope of the whole community, which avidly sought opportunities and excuses for gossip, scandals and spiteful remarks. Those who suffered most from criticism and quips were married soldiers who were alleged or known to have started to regret their marriages as soon as they left the *cerkev* (church). After glimpses of the secrets of some Czechoslovak-Russian marriages, the originally somewhat prosaic name for family tepluskas, "married with missus" [*ženáčí s bábama*] changed to the more eloquent "purgatory" [*očistec*].[89] The *svobodní* [free, single] would not even leave the children alone, giving them nicknames like "good fortune" [*štěstí*] or "little piece of luck" [*štěstíčka*], which were terms in which anyone familiar with legionary mentality will detect considerable irony, and even derision.[90]

87 See *Ibid.* p. 672.

88 The companies of the 7th Regiment, accommodated in the Tomsk barracks, were even better equipped, having a lecture hall, theatre and club with reading room.

89 See VLASÁK, R.: *Houpačky na magistrále*, vol. 2, p. 237 (see note 41).

90 As once again documented by Rudolf Vlasák in the malicious comment: "…according to that lady who wrote the book 'How to Deal with an Unwanted Conception' – are the 'good

Rudolf Vlasák left a description of one eshelon of a cavalry regiment which can help give us a picture. The eshelon had twenty-seven residential wagons, the last seven of which were reserved for families and known as the "villa quarter". Each "villa" had its own sign on the door or next to it. Vlasák records the little villa names, *"U šťastných"* [At the Happy Couple], *"Malej, ale náš!"* [Small but our own], *"U krásný paní"* [At the Beautiful Lady's], *"Ráj"* [Paradise] and *"U zlatý šavle"* [At the Golden Sabre], inscribed on signs edged with tasteful frames of birch sprigs or green brush. Nor did he forget to comment in his typically engaging and often highly mocking idiom on a family interior: "… [the married soldier] had fixed things up for himself there in 'fancy style'. A wide bed, table, trunk, all kinds of crockery straight out of the Russian journal 'Ogoněk' and similar things adorned his – villa, in which one half comprised the reception salon, guest room, kitchen, bedroom, everything…"[91] Typical furnishings included chamber pots, cradles and much else, mostly made by hand.

## *The Tepluskas contra Štefánik*

If the historian painstakingly compares the tepluskas after mid-1919 with the preceding period, he or she will find a few small differences, but in general from the material point of view there were no basic changes. Various souvenirs and trophies mounted up with almost every new stop. Until the moment of the collapse of the Siberian Front the average number of soldiers in one tepluska continued to drop gradually. More significant was a change of atmosphere for the worse. The volunteer brotherhood, which – although sometimes fractious and obstreperous – had previously maintained solidarity, suddenly fragmented into many groups with different opinions on everything and everyone. The reasons were the stress of guarding the rear of an insecure front, disputes between the men and the command, growing disillusion – and last but not least the gnawing longing for home, which was becoming a chronic illness affecting the behaviour of most of the legionaries.

The termination of the army's volunteer status caused a massive crisis. Milan Rastislav Štefánik's order abolishing the Legionary self-government[92] raised a storm of passion not only in the tepluskas. The order and the changes that ensued had several immediate negative consequences. Here there is no space to comment at length on the real purpose of Štefánik's orders and reforms, but – in a nutshell – he was generally justifiably interested in turning the Legions into a regular army subordinated to the Prague government. The "Oldies" [*Staří*, i.e. the veteran volunteers]

fortune of the family"'. (*Ibid*, p. 237.)

91 *Ibid.* p. 238.

92 "Štefánik's" reorganizational order no. 588, for commentary on the order and its implementation see KRATOCHVÍL, J.: *Cesta revoluce*, pp. 219–259 (see note 9); On Štefánik's time in Russia see SAK, R.: *Anabáze*, p. 111 (see note 12); PICHLÍK, K. – KLÍPA, B. – ZABLOUDILOVÁ, J.: *Českoslovenští legionáři*, p. 239 (see note 11).

felt betrayed: they saw themselves more as citizens than as soldiers, wanted to share in decision-making, and could rarely be persuaded to obey orders they distrusted. Now they were being deprived of the freedom to decide, which they prized immensely. It was different with the men who had been conscripted into the army on the basis of the mobilisation order and were joining a now standard army from which the volunteer principle was vanishing. These new soldiers lacked the ideals of their "elders", saw their role in the legions as ordinary military service and were only confirmed in their views by the grumbling of the veterans. The years 1919 and 1920 in the Legions were characterised by constant conflict and competition between the two principles and attitudes; on the one hand the volunteer who had joined the army with ideals of national liberation, and on the other hand the mobilised soldier for whom those ideals, or even Russophilia, rarely had any tangible value.

Milan Rastislav Štefánik travelled to Russia in November 1918 with the new Supreme Commander of the allied armies, General Maurice Janin. Štefánik, that monarchist visionary and constantly ailing aristocrat of the soul, arrived in Siberia with ambitious plans to turn a volunteer corps of heroes and military illiterates into an elite army, ran into trouble in the form of what can only be called "tepluska politics". Štefánik looked impressive in the uniform of a French general, and reportedly had hypnotic eyes, but his standing with the legionaries, who were obsessed with physical prowess (embracing the ideals of *Sokol* [Falcon, the Czech physical education movement]) was undermined by his weak constitution and pallor. He probably did not realise the harm he was doing to his own authority by his too frequent cancellation of meetings, speeches and welcomes and his abrasive style of criticism. The soldiers were very offended when he condemned the linkage of army and ideology that had been natural to them from the very beginning of fighting.[93]

Štefánik's last act during his stay in Russia was particularly controversial: on 16 January 1919 he signed Order No. 588, one of the most debated orders in the history of the legions. This meant the dissolution of the Assembly of the Czechoslovak Revolution, the abolition of the regimental self-governing bodies, company secretaries and plenipotentiaries of the Branch of the Czechoslovak National Council in Russia [*Odbočka Československé národní rady na Rusi* – OČSNR]… At Štefánik's insistence this order was not published until 28 February 1919, i.e. a month after Czechoslovak minister of defence had practically "fled" Russia on 30 January. On the day of publication of the order it was augmented and elaborated by General Jan Syrový's Order No. 17, which stipulated further details. These related for example to the finances of the abolished self-governing bodies, how they were to be administered in future and the use of their archives. The abolition of these self-governing bodies poured oil on the flames at the worst possible time.

93 For example in a discussion with a military delegation on 11 December 1918 Štefánik declared: "It is also claimed about the Czechoslovak Army in Siberia that it is disintegrating, and that it is forgetting the fundamental fact that military service is one thing and politics is another." Cited in KRATOCHVÍL, J.: *Cesta revoluce*, p. 223.

Naturally, Štefánik had travelled through Russia by the most logical form of transport – by train. The setting for his welcomes, speeches and meetings was the classic Siberian railway station. On the most fundamental matters, such as obedience, Štefánik encountered touch opposition that most probably originated in the gloomy tepluskas, where passions rose in endless discussions and quarrels over politics and the future. Tepluskas, eshelons and stations were the stage for the not very frequent addresses of the subtle general with the weak voice – and later for the hurricane of anger and resentment provoked by his orders in the last days of February 1919. An insuperable wall between the simple legionaries on one side and on their supreme commander the other side was built both in the tepluskas and in minister Štefánik's head. Although at first they had looked to each other with hope, almost with joyful expectation, the final settlement of accounts with reality was a shock and disappointment for both sides.

## *Evacuation to the East*

A brief review of the events of the autumn of 1919 shows how many hopes evaporated and how many plans were frustrated. At this period Kolchak's dominion was already falling apart,[94] General Radola Gajda failed to become the great messiah he had hoped to be and his brief engagement in the Siberian army ended in an acrimonious row and his departure. On 15 November the Red Army occupied Omsk, which had been capital of non-Bolshevik Siberia.[95] The Czechoslovaks once again faced the threat of destruction. The soldiers and their commanders realised that the lightning-fast and brutal advance of the Bolshevik forces could not be stopped, let alone defeated.[96] General Jan Syrový therefore gave the order for evacuation towards Vladivostok, and this overall order, soon worked out in detail, eventually had its effects for the tepluskas. On 16 November Syrový on his own responsibility halted all Russian rail transport in the large area west of Krasnoyarsk to enable the Czechoslovak eshelons to pass through smoothly. It was a decision that earned him condemnations, many reproaches and even a challenge to an old-fashioned duel, although this never took place.[97]

94 See FINK, Pavel: *Bílý admirál: Profil kolčakovštiny. Poznámky a dokumenty ze zápisníku válečného zpravodaje* [The White Admiral: A Profile of Kolchak Culture: Notes and Documents from the Note-book of a War Reporter]. Brno, Družstvo moravského kola spisovatelů 1929.

95 See GAJDA, Radola: *Moje paměti* [My Memoirs]. Praha, Vesmír 1920; KLIMEK, Antonín – HOFFMAN, Petr: *Vítěz, který prohrál: Generál Radola Gajda* [The Victor who Lost: General Radola Gajda]. Praha – Litomyšl, Paseka 1995; KRATOCHVÍL, J.: *Cesta revoluce*; DOTSENKO, Paul: *The Struggle for a Democracy in Siberia 1917–1920: Eyewitness Account of a Contemporary*. Stanford, Hoover Institution Press 1983.

96 A certain percentage of the legionaries sympathised with the Bolsheviks to the extent that they would not have offered armed resistance to them.

97 Syrový was challenged to a duel on 21 December 1919 by General Vladimir Oskarovich Kappel, because the order on the priority movement of the Czechoslovak echelons also af-

The disruption of the Siberian railway system was now at its height and the railways were effectively paralysed. In this chaos on the tracks – the only real link with the salvation of Vladivostok, the Legionary authorities acted very uncompromisingly. Long trains full of desperate refugees and evacuated property (from furniture and quilts to silver to parrots in cages) were stranded in side-lines as the Czechoslovaks pitilessly rode their own trains through. Tensions between the legionaries and the Russian population became acute.[98] Indeed, this moment was the most visible proof that the Czechoslovaks' earlier Russophilia had largely evaporated. In their desire to survive the legions abandoned all their ideals about helping their Russian brothers, and ignored pleas, prayers and what were frequent threats. The crisis caused the soldiers to close ranks, becoming a force that while unable to withstand the immense military power of the approaching Red Army, could at least push through Semyonov's soldiers by Baikal, cope with the aggressive behaviour of the Japanese, and above all overcome the obstacles presented by the confusion in Siberia.

The mood prevailing in the army just before the evacuation – specifically among soldiers experiencing the stormy Christmas of 1919 during the Irkutsk Uprising – is described by Adolf Zeman: "Those were sad evenings that we spent in little groups in spacious barracks. It had started to be dangerous to live in private apartments scattered through the towns. There had been cases of attacks on our brothers whose hearts had drawn them somewhere to the edges of the town. At every place on the track there were reports of the growth of Bolshevism and expectations of a new revolution, this time Soviet. Our mood turned sour and we became sullen, quarrelsome and angry. Political squabbling took hold among us and some brothers turned a little red… Old personal and party disputes flared up again. Our unity from the initial times of our movement … started to fragment…"[99]

For the evacuation of the units located furthest to the west the army command adopted the only feasible: the desperate shortage of locomotives meant that the number of trains had to be reduced, and the number of wagons too. This means that dozens and hundreds of tepluskas, abandoned and empty, accumulated in the stations west of Baikal. The legionaries were literally crammed into the shortened trains, leaving behind part of their personal property and the several months of their lives that they had lived in wagons parked on sidings. There was no time for regret, for the minds of the legionaries were taken up above all with the need to escape from the reach of the approaching danger. (Once in Vladivostok, soldiers who had earlier been reluctant to leave their "boxes" voluntarily now left them joyfully with a sense that one nightmare was behind them.) The reduction of the length of the eshelons by as much as two thirds caused many problems and quarrels, but these were more matters of comfort and fitting in property than of affection for

fected the train on which the fleeing Admiral Alexander Kolchak was travelling.

98 The Russians blamed the Czechs for the fact that hundreds and thousands of Russian civilians were dying of cold, hunger and disease on the halted trains.

99 ZEMAN, Adolf: *Bílý kapitán* [White Captain]. Praha, A. Čížek 1932, p. 290.

old tepluskas. In the jargon of the Legions the emotional tension found expression in the emergence of the term *uplotnyeniye eshelonu*, using the Russian word for "compress" (the first word was soon modified to the characteristic legionary *uplotnění*), meaning shortening of the train.

The command and organisers of the transfer to the East tried to ensure the greatest possible rationalisation. Major consignments of important and expensive material were by this time already in safety or were being loaded up to the last minute under the supervision of nervous guards, armed to the teeth. It was impossible to save everything and so "liquidation squads" were set up; these neither destroyed nor handed out assets worth millions but did what they could by auction and barter to exchange them for cash or for raw materials that would take up less space in the trains. The basic principle, however, was "In first place the evacuation of people, then property!"[100]

Twenty to thirty people, including family members and evacuated compatriots, were crammed into each tepluska. Russians, men and women, would offer large bribes for places in these wagons, or to have their wagon connected to a Czechoslovak eshelon. Even the most elementary hygiene was abandoned, let alone any attempts to make the journey comfortable. People slept crushed against each other in the poorly ventilated wagons as they slowly moved towards the East and safety. "Our tepluskas, earlier our dwellings and generally comfortable by 'Siberian standards' now became a real hell, with as many as 24 brothers squashed into them with their property," recalled Adolf Zeman.[101] The physical discomfort was exacerbated by the uncertain situation along the track, where various bands (not only of Bolshevik-influenced rebels) had been mobilising for a long time. This was the culminating period for rumours, "latrine hearsay", which flew from eshelon to eshelon, from tepluska to tepluska; the rumours alternated between terrifying reports of destroyed regiments and railway accidents and optimistic tales of approaching allies, which nobody really believed.

The Polish Volunteer Division,[102] the rear-guard of the retreating Czechoslovak eshelons, disappeared. The relatively large Polish detachments (travelling in nineteen trains) surrendered to their Bolshevik pursuers (allegedly just three cavalry-

100 FINK, Pavel: *Mezi mohylami: Knihy „Bílý admirál", díl druhý; Glossy a materiály; Ze zápisníku válečného korespondenta* [Among the Barrows: The "White Admiral" Books, Second Volume: Glosses and Materials; From the Notebook of a War Correspondent]. Praha, Čin 1922, p. 19.

101 ZEMAN, A.: *Bílý kapitán*, p. 280.

102 The Polish armed forces in Siberia were formed after the Czechoslovak action against the Bolsheviks in the spring of 1918; but recruitment for them was "carried out draconically" (FINK, P.: *Mezi mohylami*, p. 71). Soon an entire division was in existence, but this enjoyed little trust from either side because of its violent excesses. As time went by it even acquired a reputation similar to that of the notorious "wild divisions" formed of bandits and robbers. See WOJSTOMSKI, Stefan Witold: *O polskiej legii syberyjskej: Artykuly* [About the Polish Siberian Legion: Articles]. Warszawa 1937; BANDROWSKI, Jerzy: *Nepřemožitelné prameny* [Unconquerable Springs]. Praha, Plamja 1924.

men) practically without a single shot fired.[103] Soon the South Slav Regiment ended just as ingloriously. The legionaries had to fight. The Second Cavalry Regiment was eventually forced to leave its eshelons and carry on along the track on horseback so as to defend the slow trains of the other units against lateral attacks. Tepluskas ended up in flames, turned over in drifts, stove in by collisions. The soldiers who just a few months before had worked to keep the railway open now blew up bridges, destroyed tracks, water basins, station points and railway material. During the evacuation the legionaries lost a great many personal effects, often losing all their books, letters, photographs, books, trinkets, souvenirs, booty, purchases, hygiene articles, changes of clothes… They escaped simply with their bare lives.

The acute nervousness of the retreating army showed itself in actual or planned violent actions to get hold of locomotives and wagons and ensure free passage. Not infrequently the Czechoslovaks forced their way through at gunpoint and almost never permitted themselves the altruism that Russians asked or begged for. The general confusion and blood-shed was compounded by the desperate remnants of the Russian Siberian army, which straggled along the track under the command of the seriously ill General Vladimir Kappel[104] (and later the future Czechoslovak General Sergej Vojcechovský).[105] The guide to that turbulent time Pavel Fink vividly described the progress of the last of Kolchak's soldiers: "Ragged, lousy, hungry they go, through the dead taiga, with here and there the cracks of rifle shots, bringing death to the unsuspecting. Somewhere in the misty distance the goal they must

103 Pavel Fink rightly notes that the "capitulation of the Poles" was "conditioned by complete demoralisation" (FINK, P.: *Mezi mohylami*, p. 72).

104 Generál Kappel fell into the water while crossing a river, caught a serious chill, both his feet froze and in the end after long suffering he died on 26 January 1920 at Utai railway station. His refusal to allow the Czechoslovak eshelons to evacuate, because he considered the Czechoslovaks traitors and enemies, is legendary.

105 Sergej Vojcechovský was born on 28 October 1883 in Vitebsk and died a political prisoner, apparently in Tayshet, at the end of October 1951. On 8 September 1917 he became chief of the Hussite Division, and so came into close contact with the Czechoslovaks; on 6 January he was appointed commander of the 3rd Regiment and from 10 June 1918 he commanded the Western Group of the Legions. On 8 December of the same year he returned to Russian service, but on 1 May 1921 he went back to the Czechoslovak army for good. After the defeat of the Siberian forces he had gone to the Crimea in February 1920 to continue the fight against the Bolsheviks, but the "white" forces collapsed there too and their remnants were evacuated to Turkey. In Czechoslovakia he became commander of an infantry brigade in Michalovce (he gained the rank of a General of the 5th Class), later he commanded a division in Trenčín, and then was appointed province commander in Brno (now in the rank of General of the 4th Class). He continued up the ranking to the status of army general. In 1935 he became province general in Prague. He retired on 1 April 1939. The liberation of Czechoslovakia led to his imprisonment. On 12 May 1945 he was arrested by the Soviet NKVD and was taken like many other Russian emigrants to the Soviet Union, where his trail vanishes. (On the theme see BYSTROV, Vladimír: *Osud generála: Komentář k některým dokumentům o životě a tragickém konci Sergeje Vojcechovského* [The Fate of a General: Commentary on Some Documents about the Life and Tragic End of Sergei Voytsekhovsky]. Praha, Academia 2007; FIDLER, Jiří: *Generálové legionáři* [Legionary Generals]. Brno, Books 1999.)

reach at any cost recedes. With no supplies of their own, they murder! They drink blood and try to forget… Burning villages light their way. The smoke from pillaged cabins trails in their tracks. Madness whips the brain, sucks the soul dry… In drifts of snow the corpses pile up, thrown aside as an uncomfortable encumbrance. The screeching of ravens circling under low leaden clouds is the dismal melody of this terrible retreat…"[106] Adolf Zeman, already cited several times here, adds another melancholy picture: "It was painful, the sight of gaunt and emaciated figures, dragging through the snow, of lame horses, with injured and bleeding legs, with pus-filled wounds on their joints and sides, pulling sledges on which whole quarters of meat turned red, sacks of flour turned white, or half-frozen wretches groaned, death already staring into eyes that burned with fever…"[107]

## *Back to the Homeland*

The evacuation office under Rudolf Raše issued a whole range of regulations and guidance for the journey, and even an information booklet on the theme.[108] Army orders stipulated the amount of personal possessions that a soldier could take with him on the ship. All a soldier's property was to be placed in a sturdy lockable trunk, ideally with metal corners, to be stowed in the freight part of the ship; more important and costly items were to be put in hand luggage, mostly in the form of a kit bag or pack. This regulation prompted not only irritation, rumour (how else?) and wonder, but a big demand for skilful carpenters, because it was important that the trunks should not fall apart at the first serious knock[109]and the carefully assembled property be lost: "All the horses were harnessed to carts and driven into town. Any metal (tin) was bought up. Nails small and large, saw, hammers – the 'Orthodox Jew' Khudakov made good money out of the lot… Some brought metal sheets and nails, others planks … and in the morning, when the sun had hardly risen, the space by the railway signals had turned into one great carpentry workshop. And towards evening several pieces already stood by every wagon."[110]

106 FINK, P.: *Mezi mohylami*, p. 78

107 ZEMAN, A.: *Bílý kapitán*, p. 309.

108 RAŠE, Rudolf: *Na cestu domů mořem: Několik rad a pokynů evakuovaným* [On the Way Home by Sea: Some Advice and Instructions for the Evacuated]. Irkutsk, Informačně osvětový odbor československého vojska na Rusi 1919.

109 The trunks were also metal mounted to protect them from the rats on the ships; some soldiers had the whole trunk sheathed in metal and not just the corners.

110 VLASÁK, R.: *Houpačky na magistrále*, vol. 2, p. 231. The legionaries in the rear guard had a quite different problem. These literally brawled with the Bolshevik advance guard (more a pub punch-up than a classic military fight) and most lost their property. Those who still had some money tried to purchase replacements, while the others just packed up what little they still owned.

When a trunk (or ship's chest) was finished,[111] it had to be clearly marked. Some soldiers accomplished this using fine calligraphy, while others were less particular and concerned more with indelibility and clear labelling than artistic impression. The hardest part, however, was deciding what to put in the chest and what to throw away or sell. Some soldiers during their years in Russia had managed to acquire so much property that the idea of just one chest to hold it all seemed a bad joke to them. Each soldier probably had a different view of which property he valued most highly: perhaps only the members of the cavalry regiments – generally known as *jiskráci* ["Jiskra's Boys" – nicknamed after the name of their regiment which showed a connection with a commander of the Hussite forces from the 15th century, Jan Jiskra z Brandýsa] – were clear about priorities: for them it was their uniform, cap, sabre and spurs. These took pride of place in their chests, and were wrapped in various papers and fabrics to try to ensure that they would reach home in all their splendour. Most of the legionaries after their long stay in Russia wanted to bring something back to those waiting for them back home. Some spent a long time looking for presents, others left it to the last minute, and many bought gifts in ports on their journey to Europe. The presents had a place of honour in the chests. Some were large, like a real Russian samovar, and others were trifles: classic Russian makhorka, a pipe or carved souvenir from a Chinese or Korean shop. The married soldiers were given no extra luggage allowance, and this made their packing even more painful, since they had to leave most of their laboriously accumulated household equipment in Russia. We can be sure that the packing of shared property was the occasion for arguments, trivial or serious, between men and their wives.

In the case of some transports the soldiers had to load their luggage onto the ships themselves, a task otherwise happily left to prisoners-of-war or dock workers. Indeed it was strikes by the Vladivostok dock workers that turned the legionaries into dockers themselves. At least on one occasion the net tore during loading and legionaries' trunks fell into the sea; this incident immediately sparked a whole series of rumours about the deliberate destruction of trunks, and how the Chinese workers (*choďové*) were throwing them into the sea to make their work easy, or in revenge for some supposed wrong.

For a certain percentage of the legionaries it may well have been a personal tragedy that nobody prohibited them from loading their wives onto the ships too. Yet it is also to be assumed that in Vladivostok (and not only there), the legionaries left far from small groups of women who had one thing in common. This was a Legionary's broken promise that he would take her back to his "homeland, where there is enough land" [*"ródinu, kde země chvátí"*], i.e. in the distinctive slang of the legionaries the promise of a country where the soldier had a lot of land and property.[112] Adolf Zeman notes drily that on one day a soldier would make

111 Finishing work on the trunks is shown in a photograph in the 4th volume of the publication *Za svobodu*, p. 819 (see note 7).

112 For fairness it should be added that the Russian women also often life about their origins. Usually they presented themselves as desperate high-school girls trying to get back to their

a girl's acquaintance, on the next "conquer her fortress", and on the third day would hear the plaintive demand "*Davaj venčatsja…*" ["Marry me..."].[113] This laconic version of a story that would apply to many a legionary has much truth in it – and sarcastic Zeman allowed himself yet another comment, of a historical nature, that would have amused that other notorious ironist Rudolf Vlasák: "In Ancient Greece it was the rule that a warrior returned from battle either with his shield or on his shield. Some of us returned under a slipper."[114] (This is very much a Czech joke, for in Czech "under a slipper" means "henpecked".)

*The Czech version of this artile, entitled* Těplušky a ešelony. Československí legionáři na své cestě přes Rusko, *was originally published in Soudobé dějiny, vol. 15, no. 3–4 (2008), pp. 607-638.*

families, or later impoverished aristocratic ladies or "captain's daughters" – anything that might impress a soldier. .

113 ZEMAN, Adolf: *Československá odyssea: Dojmy čsl. novináře-dobrovolce z cesty na lodi 'President Grant' z Vladivostoku do vlasti. Tichý oceán, květen–červen 1920* [A Czechoslovak Odyssey: A Czechoslovak journalist-volunteer's Impressions of the voyage on the ship "President Grant" from Vladivostok to his homeland, May-June 1920] . Praha, J. Ota 1920, p. 32.

114 *Ibid.*, p. 34.

# Resistance, Collaboration, Adaptation...

## *Some Notes on the Research of the Czech Society in the Protectorate*

Stanislav Kokoška

Following the establishment of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, the population of the Czech Lands was divided into three basic categories. Germans, the highest category, became full Reich citizens; Czechs, who according to the Nazi legal expert Wilhelm Stuckart "were rather inhabitants of a peculiar kind"[1] made up the second category; and finally in a third category were the Jews, to whom the Nuremberg Laws were soon applied and who therefore had no citizen rights. The fates of these population groups diverged and took different courses depending on the changing character of Nazi occupation policy and the restrictive measures introduced during the war.

Czech historiography has yet to engage with questions of social change during the Second World War in any comprehensive way. For many years Czech historiography of the period focused rather narrowly on the repressive basis and policies of the Nazi occupying power and on the theme of the Czech resistance

1 KÁRNÝ, Miroslav – MILOTOVÁ, Jaroslava: Anatomie okupační politiky hitlerovského Německa v Protektorátu Čechy a Morava [Anatomy of the Occupation Policy of Germany in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia]. In: HERMAN, Karel (ed.): *Sborník k problematice dějin imperialismu* [Collection on the Theme of the History of Imperialism], vol. 21: *Anatomie okupační politiky hitlerovského Německa v „Protektorátu Čechy a Morava". Dokumenty z období říšského protektora Konstantina von Neuratha* [Anatomy of the Occupation Policy of Hitler's Germany in the "Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia". Documents from the Time Period of Reichsprotektor Konstantin von Neurath]. Praha, Ústav československých a světových dějin ČSAV 1987, document no. 2, pp. 4–17.

movement. The first more ambitious attempt to deal with the economic and social developments in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia was Václav Král's three-volume *Otázky hospodářského a sociálního vývoje v českých zemích 1938–1945* [Questions of Economic and Social Development in the Czech Lands 1938–1945] published over the years 1957–1959. Král marshalled a huge amount of material on the topic, especially on the development of industry in the Protectorate and the position of the working class, but he failed to rise above the ideological constraints and clichés of the time and the book has little value as historical interpretation. With the political and cultural thaw in the 1960s, the Czech historiography recovered somewhat from its earlier ideological tunnel vision in relation to the Protectorate and managed to find some new themes and new approaches to method and interpretation. Historians continued to focus primarily on the history of the resistance, but the spectrum of research came to include the history of Protectorate government,[2] the Protectorate press,[3] Czech fascism[4] and the genocide of the Czech Jews.[5] Jan Tesař's articles for example touched on questions of public opinion in the Protectorate,[6] and others developed the theme of economic development in the years of the Second World War.[7]

The study of the topics raised in the 1960s continued, albeit in limited scope and more difficult conditions, during the "normalisation" regime, with the focus on such topics as the education system in the Protectorate[8] or economic history.[9] Furthermore, the research went deeper in some areas and included history

2 See e.g. ŠISLER, Stanislav: Příspěvek k vývoji a organizaci okupační správy v českých zemích v letech 1939–1945 [Paper on the Development and Organisation of the Occupation Government in the Czech Lands 1939–1945]. In: *Sborník archivních prací*, vol. 13, no. 2 (1963), pp. 46–95.

3 See e.g. PASÁK, Tomáš: Problematika protektorátního tisku a formování tzv. skupiny aktivistických novinářů na počátku okupace [The Protectorate Press and Formation of the So-called Group of Activist Journalists at the Beginning of the Occupation]. In: *Příspěvky k dějinám KSČ*, vol. 11, no. 1 (1967), s. 52–80.

4 See e.g. PASÁK: Vývoj Vlajky v období okupace [The Development of Vlajka in the Period of the Occupation]. In: *Historie a vojenství*, vol. 10, no. 5 (1966), pp. 846–895.

5 See especially LAGUS, Karel – POLÁK, Josef: *Město za mřížemi* [City behind Bars]. Praha, Baset 1964.

6 TESAŘ, Jan: O metodě historického výzkumu veřejného mínění společnosti pod nacistickým režimem [On a Method of Historical Research into Public Opinion under the Nazi Regime]. In: *Historie a vojenství*, vol. 10, no. 1 (1966), pp. 83–97.

7 See especially PRŮCHA, Václav: *Změny v sociální struktuře československé společnosti v letech 1938–45* [Changes in the Social Structure of Czechoslovak Society 1938–45]. Praha, Vysoká škola ekonomická 1970.

8 See e.g. PASÁK, T.: Organizační a správní změny v českém školství v období nacistické okupace [Organizational and Administrative Changes in the Czech Education System during the Nazi Occupation]. In: VEBR, Lubomír (ed.): *In memoriam Zdeňka Fialy: Z pomocných věd historických*. Praha, Univerzita Karlova 1978, pp. 215–257.

9 Cf. e. g. GROBELNÝ, Andělín: *Národnostní politika nacistů a český průmysl: Se zvláštním zřetelem k Moravě a Slezsku* [Nazi Ethnic Policy and the Czech Industry: With a Special Emphasis on Moravia and Silesia]. Ostrava, Profil 1989.

of industrial concerns,[10] total labour mobilisation[11] and other general features of Nazi occupation policy[12] including the functioning of the Nazi apparatus of repression.[13] In the 1990s research on the Protectorate broadened out again to include (apart from some specialized urban history)[14] the systematic study of the Jewish experience and the Roma question in the Protectorate period, i.e. themes that in the years of "normalisation" had been pushed back to the margin of historical scholarship. Post-1989, however, the focus was primarily on the subject of the Czech-German relationship and its eventual denouement in the postwar transfer of the Germans out of Czechoslovakia. Only two publications departed strikingly from this prevalent research trend: a collection of originally *samizdat* articles by Jiří Doležal on Czech culture under the Protectorate, now published in book form,[15] and a monographic treatment of everyday life in the Protectorate co-authored by Jan Gebhart and Jan Kuklík.[16] Not even the latter work, however, offered any major methodological advance in research on the history of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. It was a popularising, narrative account of a few themes from Protectorate history, and in any case did not deal with the last two years of the Protectorate and the radical social changes resulting from total mobilisation.

The present state of historical knowledge and current directions in research are tellingly reflected in a synthesis of Czechoslovak history 1938–1945 published in 2006 and 2008, again by the authorial duo Jan Gebhart and Jan Kuklík.[17] The book is clearly dominated by interest in political history, which takes up a major part of the chapters devoted to the domestic and foreign resistance. This is why Detlef Brandes, reviewing the book, not only criticises the authors for lack of chronological balance (as has become a habit, substantially fewer pages are

10 See e.g. FRANĚK, Otakar: *Dějiny koncernu brněnské Zbrojovky* [History of the Brno Zbrojovka Arms Factory Concern], vol. 3: *Koncern brněnské Zbrojovky v letech 1939–1945* [Brno Zbrojovka Arms Factory Concern 1939–1945]. Brno, Blok 1973.

11 See especially MAINUŠ, František: *Totálně nasazeni (1939–1945)* [The Totally Mobilised (1939-1945)]. Praha, Mladá fronta 1974.

12 See e.g. KÁRNÝ, Miroslav: K politické autonomii Konstantina von Neuratha [On the Political Autonomy of Konstantin von Neurath]. In: *Sborník k dějinám imperialismu*, vol. 18. Praha, Ústav československých a světových dějin ČSAV 1985, pp. 241–293 and other articles by the same author.

13 See especially SLÁDEK, Oldřich: *Zločinná role gestapa: Nacistická bezpečnostní policie v českých zemích 1938–1945* [The Criminal Role of the Gestapo: Nazi Security Police in the Czech Lands 1938–1945]. Praha, Naše vojsko 1986.

14 Cf. e.g. the excellent edition of Vojtěch Šustek and Alena Míšková *Josef Pfitzner a protektorátní Praha v letech 1939–1945* [Josef Pfitzner and Prague during the Protectorate 1939–1945], vol. 1–2. Praha, Archiv hlavního města Prahy 2000 and Scriptorium 2001.

15 DOLEŽAL, Jiří: *Česká kultura za protektorátu: Školství, písemnictví, kinematografie* [Czech Culture under the Protectorate: Education, Literature, Cinematography]. Praha, Národní filmový archiv 1996.

16 GEBHART, Jan – KUKLÍK, Jan: *Dramatické i všední dny protektorátu* [Dramatic and Ordinary Days of the Protectorate]. Praha, Themis 1996.

17 GEBHART – KUKLÍK: *Velké dějiny Zemí koruny české* [History of the Lands of the Bohemian Crown], vol. XVa and XVb: *1938–1945.* Praha – Litomyšl, Paseka 2006 and 2008.

devoted to the period from the summer of 1942 to the summer of 1944), but also argues that Czech historiography has still in practice failed to explore "everyday life in the Czech Lands or the opinions and moods of that great majority of the population that neither collaborated nor took part in the Resistance."[18]

## *Protectorate Society as a Subject of Research*

It is generally true that in itself political history does not provide a sufficient explanation of historical events. By its very focus on key figures at the summit of political decision-making it tends to eliminate from the account all other actors, who are consigned to the position of the anonymous homogenous mass. Historical change thus tends to be reduced to a mere clash of ideas embodied in the thoughts, beliefs and actions of leading personalities. Yet it is obvious that only some of the ideas of these personalities resonate in the "anonymous mass", and so become the basis for individual decision-making and potential adherence. For the ideas to resonate, certain social conditions have to be fulfilled, because human action depends not only on purely rational processes but on existing circumstances; the same idea, even expressed by the same person, may by shared and acted on by the masses in one particular situation, but not at all in another situation. Any attempt to understand a historical event, i.e. the way in which it arises from shared human activity, should therefore include a sociological approach. From this point of view man is a changeable being who never reacts in the same way but differently depending on the specific situations and circumstances to which he is exposed regardless of his will.[19]

In relation to the Protectorate, the Czech historiography after 1989 faced great challenges. Historians needed to complete the systematic research on the Protectorate period that had started on a wider scale in the 1960s but had then been crippled by the onset of "normalisation" before any major historical works could emerge. At the same time Czech historiography needed to modernise its research and catch up with other European countries that were obviously far ahead in this respect. The pressure has led to frequent calls at various historical forums[20] and in reviews of new monographs[21] for the adoption of new methods of research.

18 See *Český časopis historický*, vol. 106, no. 3 (2008), pp. 666–669.

19 Cf. DÜLMEN, Richard van: *Historická antropologie: Vývoj. Problémy. Úkoly* [Historical Anthropology: Development. Problems. Tasks]. Praha, Dokořán 2002, p. 11 n.

20 See e.g. the discussion at the 8th Congress of Czech Historians in Hradec Králové in 1999 and its continuation.

21 Cf e.g. brief review of the monograph jointly authored by Jaroslav Hrbek, Vít Smetana, Stanislav Kokoška, Vladimír Pilát and Petr Hofman – *Draze zaplacená svoboda: Osvobození Československa 1944–1945* [Freedom Bought at a Great Cost: The Liberation of Czechoslovakia 1944–45] (Praha, Paseka 2009) penned by Jan Dobeš. The two-volume monograph devoted to military-political aspects of the liberation of Czechoslovakia in the years 1944 and 1945 is characterised by the reviewer as an already rather archaic product of war history. One cannot but agree with Dobeš that modern war "affects the whole population, has an impact on the economy, changes social relations, and is reflected in culture and

Indeed, as Professor Kvaček has wryly noted, in these debates over conceptual framework, new methodology is in danger of becoming a shibboleth, an "academic function offering salvation in itself".[22] Zdeněk R. Nešpor has also been sharply critical of the stampede for modernisation, arguing that after 1989, Western innovative trends were, "more often than not adopted [by Czech historians] mechanically, without deeper understanding or real enthusiasm." In his view it has tended to be a matter of some historians striking progressive attitudes, for example, "historical anthropology remains more or less just an ostentatious label, a way of proclaiming distance from some established approaches to historical research."[23]

Robert Kvaček is even critical of the way in which Czech historians have been using the term "society". He considers that it has been adopted as a central focus of Czech historiography as mere word without substance, and that "scholars are working more with the concept than with real knowledge of the material."[24] "Society" is of course a very ambiguous term.[25] Most often, it is understood as a structured whole, not just the sum of all the people living on a certain territory but the set of more or less codified relations that function between them. It is these relations, or bonds, that ensure that the people form a coherent whole, and that the individual as part of society usually behaves in one way and not another, and identifies with this whole and observes its rules. Society defined in this way can be historically investigated, but we must remember that it is only a sociological construct, and cannot in itself explain the real motives behind human action.

Dušan Třeštík points out in this respect that "people do not act on the basis of rational calculation but on the basis of the models, ideas and values that their culture prescribes for them."[26] Yet in fact neither reference to culture as a historically transmitted system of meanings acquired by individuals through socialisation, or as a system through which people convey their attitudes to life, and maintain and develop them, solves anything. Třeštík was addressing the question of the main mo-

---

the sphere of values", and that "these are impacts that historiography today should be identifying." (DOBEŠ, Jan: Svoboda draze zaplacená, nebo lacino prodaná? [Freedom Bought at a Great Cost or Cheaply Sold?]. In: *Lidové noviny* (22.8.2009), supplement "Orientace", p. 21.) On the other hand, without prior quality factographic work on the course of the war itself, this is not a task that would be easy to fulfil.

22 KVAČEK, Robert: Dvanáct glos o historiografii nové doby [Twelve Glosses on the Historiography of the Modern Period]. In: *Československá historická ročenka 2004.* Brno, Masarykova univerzita 2004, pp. 175–178, cit. p. 176.

23 NEŠPOR, Zdeněk R.: Dvojí život historické antropologie: Interdisciplinární (ne)porozumění mezi historiky, sociology a sociálními antropology [The Double Life of Historical Anthropology: Interdisciplinary (Mis)understanding between Historians, Sociologists and Social Anthropologists]. In: *Dějiny – teorie – kritika*, vol. 2, no. 1 (2005), pp. 87–104, cit. pp. 102–104.

24 KVAČEK, R.: Dvanáct glos o historiografii nové doby, p. 176 (see note 22).

25 Cf. e.g. KELLER, Jan: *Úvod do sociologie* [Introduction to Sociology]. Praha, Slon 2005, p. 10 f.

26 TŘEŠTÍK, Dušan: Dějiny jako dějiny společností nebo jako dějiny kultur? [History as the History of Societies or as the History of Cultures?]. In: *Dějiny a současnost*, vol. 23, no. 4 (2001), pp. 29–33, cit. p. 30.

tives of human action, i.e. whether they are to be interpreted in terms of rational calculation depending on economic relationships, or in terms of culture, which "imports subjective values and other ideological delusions into this whole beautifully objective world."[27] Like "society", however, "culture" is not and cannot be homogeneous. According to the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, the way in which a person acts depends on the social field in which he finds himself. Here the key element is the habitus, the set of individual needs and capacities that not only influences the actions of the actors but also puts these actors into groups sharing a common vision of the world and coherent mode of behaviour.[28]

In a more general sense of the word, "society" is simply the environment in which individual actors move. While clear economic, political and cultural bonds (relationships) exist in any society, in itself it is a dynamic whole that is constantly evolving. This is because it is based on mutual interactions: on the one hand it determines people's behaviour, but on the other hand it changes depending on the way in which people reproduce social structural relations. From this point of view what is characteristic of society is not homogeneity, but on the contrary ambiguity and inconsistency. Although a broad collective identity ensuring social coherence (typically national sentiment) operates within society, as the American philosopher Brian Fay notes, it is certainly not the case that one culture equals one society. Even the most homogeneous societies are characterised by important internal differences, e.g. of religion, gender, class, caste or ethnicity.[29]

Naturally, we need first to define a research subject and only then look for appropriate methods of research. If we want to investigate society under the Protectorate, the first priority must be to understand the social environment in which individual action took place. Only when equipped with knowledge of this environment can we go on to explore other "social themes", whether the strategy of actors, models of behaviour or mentality. In other words, the first essential step to understanding Protectorate society is the history of the everyday. Only when we have tackled this, and gathered the essential amount of basic information, can research be widened to include other sociological or anthropological techniques. One difficulty here is the fact that the structure of everyday life is precisely what disappears most rapidly from human consciousness. Individual actors usually see the everyday as a series of banalities and things that they take for granted. With transformations of everyday life the rationality that governs behaviour changes as well, and earlier everyday behaviour may come to seem entirely irrational even to the actors themselves.[30]

---

27 Ibid.

28 See MONTOUSSÉ, Marc – RENOUARD, Gilles: *Přehled sociologie* [Overview of Sociology]. Praha, Portál 2009, pp. 129–131.

29 FAY, Brian: *Současná filozofie sociálních věd: Multikulturní přístup* [Contemporary Philosophy of Social Sciences: A Multicultural Approach]. Praha, Slon 2002, p. 287.

30 On the philosophical conception of everyday life cf. e.g. Václav Umlauf „Proč spadl Thálés do studny? K filosofii každodennosti" ["Why Did Thales Fall into a Well? On the Philosophy of the Everyday"]. In: *http://www.umlaufoviny.com/www/publikace/publikace/Eseje/Kazdodennost.html*.

## *The Two Faces of Forced Collaboration*

Interpretations of Protectorate society up to now have been constrained and distorted by the concept of this society as an entity that worked on the simple axis defined by resistance/collaboration. It is a concept conditioned by its origin in postwar retributive justice, or the process known as national purification, which was one of the key political themes in the postwar struggle over the future direction of the republic. Later historical research showed, however, that this dilemma (collaboration or resistance) did not simply divide one social group from another, but was present in each individual who was part of the society. This is because the fundamental feature of the Protectorate was what is known as "forced collaboration" arising not from identification with the Nazi regime (this was the case only with the rather small group of Czech fascists, specifically those represented by the organisation Vlajka /Flag/), but from the brutality of the occupying regime, which imposed a policy of exemplary punishments, arbitrary and disproportionate violence to spread mortal fear, paralysing the Czech society.

From the autumn of 1939, a sense of existential threat, and not only to individuals capable of adjusting their individual behaviour but to the whole of national life, was the basic factor affecting the atmosphere in Czech Protectorate society. It is not only very evident in sources of a personal nature, but informed the propaganda disseminated by Protectorate elites. The establishment of the Protectorate, i.e. Hácha's journey to Berlin on 14 Mach 1939, was justified as a historical necessity and co-operation with the occupying power was presented as the only way of ensuring national survival in so-called German space. Even within this frame of forced collaboration, however, from the very beginning there were two distinct strands of thought. For the group in the Czech Protectorate elite epitomised mainly by Alois Eliáš, collaboration was simply a matter of temporary accommodation, a tactical willingness to co-operate with the occupying power in some areas with a view to creating room for the defence of what were known as vitally important national interests. For the leaders of what is known among Czech historians as "activism", i.e. active systematic collaboration, epitomised mainly by Emanuel Moravec, it was a more fundamental strategy of survival, which – to be successful – had to be entirely without prevarication or reservation.

Obviously these two versions of forced collaboration were based on different expectations of the course and final results of the Second World War. This is sufficiently well-known from the development of Protectorate politics, in which relationship and attitude to the Germans was the basic pivot of decision-making. The Protectorate government's initial idea, i.e. that it would defend national interests by making only absolutely unavoidable concessions, turned out to be nonviable as early as the autumn of 1939 and as spring turned to summer in 1940 it was succeeded by a policy of opportunistic adaptation to the occupying power. A year later, even before the appointment of Reinhard Heydrich to the position of Acting Reichsprotektor, Protectorate government policy had lost even this dimension and was already one

of complete self-subordination to the interests and demands of the Third Reich with hardly even a token show of opposition.

The two strands of forced collaboration in government were naturally reflected in different attitudes to the Czech resistance. The exponents of collaboration as a complete survival programme entirely rejected resistance both at home and abroad and saw it as irresponsible behaviour that was an immediate threat to the very existence of the nation. On the other side, for General Eliáš and other adherents of what was known as "retardation" policy, i.e. the tactical approach, the Czech resistance played an important role, but only its branch abroad (in exile) was clearly acknowledged as being of significance. The exponents of retardation had a generally ambivalent and indeed cagey attitude to the home resistance: they were prepared to support only its intelligence activities, or sometimes the departures of Czechoslovak officers into exile with the aim of building up foreign units, in other words only the work that in no way visibly influenced the overall situation inside the Protectorate. This attitude was quite understandable and associated with the conviction that the maintenance of peace and order in the Czech Lands was one of the most valuable "assets" that the Czech Protectorate leaders could use in pursuing their policy of national defence in the face of the occupying power.

To understand Protectorate society as a whole we need always to remember that it was a society functioning in totalitarian conditions with no possibility of truly democratic choice in any instance of decision-making. Those who take moralising views of a society in the grip of a totalitarian system are usually unable to grasp the elementary fact that the rationale of human life is not self-destruction but survival. One problem here is that we are already too distant from the realities described, have lost a sense of their real effects, and so in practice tend to judge them merely by the yardstick of universal abstract ideas of what constitutes moral behaviour. Of course, the problem of Protectorate society obviously was not that moral imperatives had entirely vanished from it, but that as a result of the growing brutality of the occupying regime these imperatives formed an ever smaller component of human decision-making. Man may be a being with conscious choice, but he does not exercise it externally to context, and emotional and rational-choice factors are also involved in his decisions.[31]

In this regard we also need to distinguish between the manifest (demonstrative) and real content of any activity. Typical examples include the Czech gatherings following the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich. In contemporary media discourse these are usually presented as an expression of the Czech collaborationist mentality, a symbol of "spinelessness" and demonstration of typical national cowardice. Yet this interpretation essentially involves swallowing the virtual image created by Nazi propaganda using ordinary manipulative techniques such as pre-arranged public expressions of support and reports of these in the press accompanied by photographic and film constructions of the required "reality". In fact, from the reports of the Nazi

31 See WEINBERGER, Ota: *Alternativní teorie jednání* [An Alternative Theory of Action]. Praha, Filosofia 1997, p. 232.

Security Service (*Sicherheitsdienst* – SD) it is evident that the propagandist form of these assemblies (impressive demonstrations of loyalty to the Third Reich) were at fundamental variance with the truth. At the first assembly, held on 2 June 1942 on the Old Town Square in Prague, the dominating factor was real fear, which then gave way to a feeling of the pragmatic need to participate in these public events. To put it another way, in the first case, present on the Old Town Square was a genuine mass of people capable of collective (authentic) experience as a result paralysing fear. By the end of the whole campaign, however, the gatherings were mere aggregates of individuals connected only by the need to externally demonstrate their loyalty to the Reich regardless of what they were really thinking.[32]

## *Disputes over the Concept of Collaboration and Its Usefulness in the Interpretation of Behaviour*

In the study of Czech Protectorate society the term "collaboration", which is a linguistic import into Czech (in the form *kolaborace*) and not fully adopted until the postwar period, presents a particularly thorny interpretative problem. The original French word *collaboration* (then neutral, as in co-operation) had been the term used for the official policy of the Vichy government, whose leaders were declaring and implementing the need for loyal co-operation with the Third Reich as early as the autumn of 1940.[33] In Allied propaganda during the war it acquired a pejorative meaning and the word "collaborator" was increasingly applied to people who (regardless of motive) co-operated with the occupying power and so committed national betrayal.

In postwar Czechoslovakia the words *kolaborace* and *kolaborant* came into the language only with this derived, pejorative meaning. It was adopted into legal terminology only in the Decree of the Slovak National Council no. 33/1945 on the punishment of criminals, occupiers, traitors and collaborators and on the establishment of people's courts. According to this law a collaborator meant anyone who had

32 Cf. e.g. the following extract from the SD report on the large assembly in Hradec Králové on 23 June 1942: "Outwardly the meeting … gave the strong impression that the participants had been more or less commanded to come… At the end of the assembly only a small proportion of those present raised a hand for a greeting, and only very few sang the Czech national anthem with the music. As far as could be observed afterwards, the assembly had not made any special impression on those present. The following comments were typical of the indifference and lack of much response to the speech [by Minister Emanuel Moravec – author's note]: We could have listened to it just on the radio. Or: You could just read it in the papers." (LINHARTOVÁ, Lenka – MĚŠŤÁNKOVÁ, Vlasta – MILOTOVÁ, Jaroslava (ed.): *Heydrichova okupační politika v dokumentech* [Heydrich's Occupation Policy in Documents]. Praha, Československý svaz protifašistických bojovníků 1987, document no. 56, p. 155 f.)

33 See *The Oxford Companion to the Second World War.* Oxford, Oxford University Press 1995, p. 247.

helped the occupiers or domestic traitors in waging war, in damaging the war efforts of the USSR and Allies or in the struggle of the Slovak people for liberation, who ordered or carried out persecution for racial, national, religious or political reasons or for anti-fascist convictions, who took part in the deportation of Slovak citizens to other countries or holding camps, who by exploiting wartime conditions made themselves unduly rich, or who in public functions helped to maintain the occupying regime or publicly approved it.[34] In practice it meant individual crimes, or categories of persons defined in the presidential retributive decrees simply as abetters of Nazi criminals and national traitors.

Collaboration was defined in similar terms in a dictionary of foreign words published in 1946, but the entry also noted that the act of co-operation with the occupying power was not in itself a sign of collaboration and that other important conditions had to be fulfilled for it to count as such. The journalist Karel Tauš, the author of this brochure, defined the word as applying to people who "readily and superfluously expressed enthusiasm for co-operation with the Germans, who by their application in their work and voluntarily heightened tempo made it easier for the Nazis to bloodily draw out the war, whether for their own material benefit or from genuine inborn treacherous character, lack of courage, or convenience (comfort), cowardice and personal stupidity."[35]

This stress on personal motivation as the second essential mark of collaboration had support in the postwar retribution decrees. For example the Decree of the President of the Republic no. 16/1945 on the punishment of Nazi criminals, traitors and their abettors and on special people's courts, made it impossible for Protectorate functionaries to use the defence that they were merely carrying out service tasks if an accused had "with special eagerness gone significantly beyond the normal framework of his duties."[36] There was a similar approach for example in the administrative legal procedure for issuing confirmations of national reliability, which involved a judgment of the level and voluntary character of the relations of the person concerned with Germans. In his dictionary Karel Tauš also noted that the word "collaborator" in its original meaning had come "to be very much abused, it had been made into an insult, but also a dangerous weapon against inconvenient people."[37] This deliberate smearing with the accusation of collaboration was not only to be found in postwar political journalism, but was reflected

34 See BORÁK, Mečislav: *Spravedlnost podle dekretu: Retribuční soudnictví v ČSR a Mimořádný lidový soud v Ostravě (1945–1948)* [Justice by Decree: Retributive Justice in the ČSR and the Special People's Court in Ostrava (1945-1948)]. Šenov u Ostravy, Tilia 1998, p. 85.

35 TAUŠ, Karel: *Slovník cizích slov, zkratek, novinářských šifer, pseudonymů a časopisů pro čtenáře novin* [Dictionary of Foreign Words, Abbreviations, Journalistic Initials, Pseudonyms and Magazines for Newspaper Readers]. Brno, Karel Jelínek 1946, p. 339.

36 Decree of the President of the Republic no. 16/1945 of 19 June 1945 on the punishment of Nazi criminals, traitors and their abettors and on special people's courts, par. 13. In: *Sbírka zákonů a nařízení státu československého: Ročník 1945* [Collection of Laws and Institutes of the Czechoslovak State: 1945 Edition]. Praha 1945, pp. 25–31, cit. p. 27.

37 TAUŠ, K.: *Slovník cizích slov…*, p. 339.

in a great many actions started under what was known as the Small Decree, punishing crimes against national honour. As the archivist and historian Jan Ryba notes, in Prague alone by May 1945 a total of 34,727 criminal legal actions of this nature had been started, but of these 10,764 had to be immediately halted in the first instance for lack of evidence.[38]

The shameful connotations of the words "collaborator" and "collaboration" have continued up to the present day. Especially in popularising and ideologically tinged journalism it has become a blanket, absolute term, with whole social groups or even the entire Czech nation being branded as collaborators. The fact that it is a highly negative term is one reason why it is used only with considerable caution in historical scholarship. For example, if we want to regard it as a possible model of social behaviour in the years of occupation, then given the character of the regime, we must distinguish between voluntary and forced collaboration. We are caught in the same moral trap as the retributive courts after the war. Under a regime that systematically threatens basic values and securities, it is hard to find some universally applicable boundary line between conduct essential for survival and conduct going beyond forced loyalty to the occupation regime. In a retrospective we can, of course, for example define what was considered a "morally admissible level of contacts between Czechs and Germans" under the occupation, but we face a problem whenever we try to begin to use this criterion to classify and retrospectively assess particular human destinies.[39] In the great majority of cases we come up against the fact that we are *ipso facto* delivering new legal verdicts. As the historian Pavel Večeřa, who

38 See RYBA, Jan: Antisemitské delikty ve spisech trestních komisí nalézacích Ústředního národního výboru hlavního města Prahy (výsledky výzkumu) [Anti-Semitic Torts in the Documents of the Criminal Committees for Findings of the Central National Committee of the Capital City Prague (research results)]. In: BORÁK, Mečislav (ed.): *Poválečná justice a národní podoby antisemitismu: Postih provinění vůči Židům před soudy a komisemi ONV v českých zemích v letech 1945–1948 a v některých zemích střední Evropy. Sborník příspěvků* [Postwar Justice and the National Forms of Antisemitism: The Prosecution of Offences against Jews before the Courts and Commissions of the ONV in the Czech Lands 1945–1948 and in Several Countries of Central Europe]. Praha – Opava, Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR – Slezský ústav Slezského zemského muzea 2002, pp. 136–179, here p. 136. The Prague criminal findings committees only passed judgment in 3884 cases and roughly twenty-thousand unfinished cases were passed on to the district criminal court or some other authority.

39 For one interesting probe in this respect see e.g. the study by VESELÝ Jiří: Spolupráce s protivníkem za druhé světové války na Českokrumlovsku [Collaboration with the Enemy during the Second World War in Czechoslovakia]. In: PETRÁŠ, Jiří (ed.): *Kolaborace. Kolaborace? Kolaborace! Sborník příspěvků z vědecké konference konané v Jihočeském muzeu v Českých Budějovicích dne 5. května 2006* [Collaboration. Collaboration? Collaboration! Collection of Papers from the Academic Conference Held in the Museum of South Bohemia in České Budějovice on 5th May 2006]. České Budějovice, Jihočeské muzeum, 2007, pp. 65–72. Using specific examples the author shows for instance that those switching to German nationality did not do so just for material advantages, as was generally believed after the war, but for instance because of mixed marriages or direct pressure of Germanisation.

has studied the Protectorate press in detail, points out, we cannot explore expressions of collaboration without looking carefully at the individual actors. In the case of Protectorate journalism this is possible, "only in the dialogue of media products apparently fixed as evidence in the printed press on the one side but on the other side with a search for and investigation of the motives of the specific human beings, i.e. journalists and columnists … with an awareness of the complications and ambivalence of human motivations."[40]

If we defined collaboration just as mere co-operation with the occupying power, then simply continued legal existence in the totalitarian system might be considered collaboration. The collaborator – the abetter of the occupying power – would in that case be practically anyone who was employed, thus involuntarily supporting German economic efforts, who held some administrative position, and was thus part of the structure through which the will of the occupying power was transmitted, or who took part, even if just passively, in public social life, because even this sphere was soon full of expressions of ostentatious loyalty to the Third Reich. If the definition is made as broad as this, then the great majority of the members of the domestic resistance would count as collaborators, with the exception only of those who lived in illegality or were permanently members of various partisan units. In fact we would have to deny the fact that a certain degree of co-operation with the occupying power was essential for maintaining the basic life needs of Czech society. In relation to this aspect of collaboration Professor Hans Lemberg has referred to the principle of the common good: individuals collaborated in order to prevent the gross interference of the occupying power in the life of the subjected society, in order to make the basic conditions of the lives of fellow citizens more bearable, or even so that the complicated state mechanism should not collapse.[41]

All historians who have systematically studied the history of the Protectorate have been aware of the complications of the concept of collaboration. In his now classic study of 1968, "'Saving the Nation' and Collaboration", Jan Tesař suggested that the term be used not for ordinary toadies, traitors and informers but to define political groupings for which collaboration in one form or another was a genuine programme.[42] Tomáš Pasák, Tesař's opponent at the time, did not agree, pointing

40 VEČEŘA, Pavel: Ošemetné Scylly a zrádné Charybdy protektorátních novinářů: K projevům pasivní rezistence a kolaborace na stránkách českých tištěných médií za německé okupace (1939–1945) [The Deceitful Scyllas and Treacherous Charybdises of Protectorate Journalists: On Expressions of Passive Resistance and Collaboration on the Pages of Czech Printed Media under the German Occupation (1939–1945)]. In: *Mediální studia*, vol. 2, no. 3 (2007), pp. 252–271, cit. p. 258.

41 LEMBERG, Hans: Evropská kolaborace s Třetí říší okolo roku 1941 [European Collaboration with the Third Reich around the Year 1941]. In: LEMBERG: *Porozumění: Češi – Němci – východní Evropa 1848–1948* [Understanding: Czechs – Germans – Eastern Europe 1848–1948]. Praha, Nakladatelství Lidové noviny 1999, p. 304.

42 TESAŘ, Jan: „Záchrana národa" a kolaborace ["Saving the Nation" and Collaboration]. In: *Dějiny a současnost*, roč. 10, č. 5 (1968), pp. 5–9. The article was also included in the publication of Jan Tesař *Traktát o „záchraně národa": Texty z let 1967–1969* [A Study on "Saving the Nation": Texts from 1967–1969] (Praha, Triáda 2006), as part of Section 3 entitled

out that it was "wholly dubious" to use the common denominator of the postwar term, "collaboration" to include loyalty, activism, collaboration as programme or defence of the nation and Czech fascism. He feared that this would encourage a lack of discrimination between different political currents in Czech society to the point where "we would be unable to grasp the difference between J. Rys-Rozsévač – the leader of the fascist group Vlajka [Flag] – and the representative of collaboration as national defence, E. Moravec."[43]

On the basis of this debate in 1968 a classification of Czech collaboration into two, or sometimes three, ideological strands became standard. Jan Tesař had distinguished between two basic strands of collaboration, i.e. "ideological Nazis" and the political leaders of the Protectorate, who by collaborating with the Nazis were pursuing their own, mostly "oppositional or to one extent or another directly anti-Nazi goals." It was mainly the second category that presented the problems: to define them Tesař proposed an expression from the vocabulary of Czechoslovak exile propaganda, the highly expressive term *háchovština* [which might best be translated as "Háchery" – a derogatory neologism].[44]

Tomáš Pasák opposed this position, arguing that Czech Protectorate politics went through several stages of development and only at the end constituted complete collaboration with the Nazi regime, i.e. that legendary "Háchery". Using the example of President Emil Hácha, Pasák identified three basic phases of Protectorate politics, falling respectively into the years 1939–1941, 1941–1943 and 1943–1945. In his view the first phase of the occupation could be characterised as a "dismal struggle to keep the Czech nation alive" for which he coined the phrase "retardation policy". The second phase was one of total retreat from previous programme positions and of loyalism, which now turned into a "pretended or even seriously intended activism" (i.e. active participation in the politics of the occupying power). In this historical schema (without Tomáš Pasák explicitly saying so), the non-ambivalent concept of the fully collaborationist nature of Czech politics applied only to its final phase in the years 1943–1945, but this was the period when President Hácha, the chief Czech leader of the Protectorate government, was already very ill and just a physical wreck.[45]

Towards the end of what was a prematurely broken off polemic, Jan Tesař argued that there had never been a clear line of division between the resistance and collaboration and that the Czech Protectorate political leadership had been led to collaboration by patriotism, i.e. the idea that it was the only way to "save the nation". This emphasis on the idea that patriotism did not exclude collabora-

"Místo závěru na jaře 1968"" [In Place of a Conclusion in the Spring of 1968], pp. 291–302, here p. 292 f.

43 PASÁK, Tomáš: *Český fašismus 1922–1945 a kolaborace 1939–1945* [Czech Fascism 1922–1945 and Colaboration 1939–1945]. Praha, Práh 1999, p. 385.

44 TESAŘ, J.: „Záchrana národa" a kolaborace, p. 293.

45 PASÁK, T.: *Český fašismus 1922–1945 a kolaborace 1939–1945*, p. 384. Cf. also the same author's fundamental works *JUDr. Emil Hácha (1938–1945)* (Praha, Horizont 1997) and *Pod ochranou říše* [Under the Protection of the Reich] (Praha, Práh 1998).

tion (and also the converse – that collaboration might go hand in hand with patriotism) came to the fore when Tomáš Pasák made the figure of General Alois Eliáš the centre of the argument. Pasák, inspired by the views of the communist Václav Kopecký, presented Eliáš as a modern Czech Konrad Wallenrod, hero of the poem by Adam Mickiewicz, who as the commander of the Order of Teutonic Knights, fighting with the Lithuanians, tried to serve his Lithuanian fatherland, to the point of tragic self-sacrifice. Tesař, on the other hand, was more inclined to see in Eliáš a Hamlet, a tragic figure, who despite all his undoubted services to the resistance cannot be divorced from the political movement that he represented. While he did not explicitly make the comparison, Tesař clearly had the image of Marshall Henri Pétain in mind. He credits Pétain too with patriotism and notes that French historians had adopted the term "attentism" for Petain's type of collaboration, to distinguish it intellectually from that of Laval.[46] There is clearly an analogy here with the development of Czech history of the Protectorate, in which Tomaš Pasák had started to use the term "retardation policy" in connection with Eliáš's government in his scheme of the different phases of Czech Protectorate politics.[47]

This polemic between two Czech historians led the German historian Detlef Brandes to distinguish in his monograph on the history of the Protectorate between the three following kinds of collaboration:

1) ideological collaboration on the basis of fascist, national socialist or anti-Semitic convictions;

2) activism, i.e. unqualified co-operation with the occupying power on the basis of expectation of the victory of the Third Reich in the war;

3) collaboration as temporary accommodation to German interests in an effort to prevent "something worse".[48]

Brandes's scheme found basic acceptance among historians. In 2002 in his summarising work on the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia the legal historian Pavel Maršálek adopted it with the difference that he called Brandes's third form, "the collaboration of forced conformity".[49] The only historian to diverge from this conception has been Miroslav Kárný, who regards collaboration as an essential part of Nazi occupation policy, and so reserved the term for the Protectorate's official Czech leadership, i.e. the president, government and organs of autonomous administration whose representatives bolstered the legitimacy of the Nazi occupation regime and supported its goals. Kárný made a distinction between this political collaboration, and the limited collaboration necessary to secure the ordinary life needs of the population. People who entirely went over to the side of the enemy,

46 TESAŘ, J.: „Záchrana národa" a kolaborace, p. 292.

47 Cf. PASÁK, T.: *Pod ochranou říše*, p. 85.

48 BRANDES, Detlef: *Češi pod německým protektorátem: Okupační politika, kolaborace a odboj 1939–1945* [Czechs under the German Protectorate: Occupation Policy, Collaboration and Resistance 1939–1945]. Praha, Prostor 2000, p. 476.

49 See MARŠÁLEK, Pavel: *Protektorát Čechy a Morava* [The Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia]. Praha, Karolinum 2002, p. 193.

for example Emanuel Moravec, were considered by Kárný to have been not collaborators, but traitors.[50]

In historical scholarship, then, the term "collaboration" has been adopted only in a narrow sense. It has been used especially for the ideological co-believers of the occupying regime (*Vlajka*, *Národní tábor fašistický* [The National Fascist Camp] and suchlike) and for activist journalists, i.e. those "non-governmental" bodies of opinion for which the term "collaborationism" has become usual in France, for example. Tomáš Pasák's approach has become fairly standard for the Czech Protectorate leadership, and the "collaboration" has thus come to be employed very sparingly, and even then often only for the government phase of the years 1942–1945. As has already been suggested, the reason is that in Czech "collaboration" means first and foremost a dishonourable form of co-operation with the enemy power. Hence not only Tomáš Pasák, but other historians after him have found more suitable terms intended to highlight the national defensive nature of Protectorate policy. In their biography of Emil Hácha, Robert Kvaček and Dušan Tomášek took from a period exile document what they consider a better alternative to Pasák's term "retardation": they characterised Protectorate policy as opportunism, "cultivated on a mass scale, from the Prague centre to districts and villages."[51]

Detlef Brandes's article *Vyčkávání, aktivismus, zrada* [Prevarication, Activism, Treason] is an important contribution to discussion of Czech collaboration during the Second World War.[52] Essentially it is a long comprehensive review of several books, but it contains some more general reflections and arguments. What is most notable is Brandes's thesis that the Czech Protectorate leadership's collaboration with the occupying power cannot be defined as "state collaboration". Here Brandes is essentially taking issue with Jan Tesař's brilliant study of Czech Protectorate society, published back in 1969.[53] Brandes argues that the Czech leadership

50 KÁRNÝ, Miroslav: Die Rolle der Kollaboration in der deutschen Okkupationspolitik im Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren. In: RÖHR, Werner (ed.): *Europa unterm Hakenkreuz*, vol. 1: *Okkupation und Kollaboration (1938–1945)*. Berlin – Heidelberg, Bundesarchiv 1994, pp. 149–163, here p. 155.

51 TOMÁŠEK, Dušan – KVAČEK, Robert: *Causa Emil Hácha.* Praha, Themis 1995, p. 96 f.

52 BRANDES, Detlef: Vyčkávání, aktivismus, zrada: Obraz kolaborace v „Protektorátu Čechy a Morava" v české historiografii od roku 1989 [Prevarication, Activism, Treason: The Image of Collaboration in the "Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia in Czech Historiography since 1989"] In: CORNELIßEN, Christoph – HOLEC, Roman – PEŠEK, Jiří (ed.): *Diktatura – válka – vyhnání: Kultury vzpomínání v českém, slovenském a německém prostředí od roku 1945* [Dictatorship – War – Expulsion: Cultures of Remembering in Czech, Slovak and German Environments since 1945]. Ústí n/L., Albis International 2007, pp. 91–137. The collection was also published in a parallel German version.

53 TESAŘ, Jan: Protiněmecká opoziční jednota na počátku okupace [Anti-German Oppositional Unity at the Beginning of the Occupation] In: JANEČEK, Oldřich (ed.): *Z počátků odboje, 1938–1941* [From the Initial Stages of Resistance 1938–1941]. Praha, Naše vojsko 1969, pp. 449–517. This article also came out in the collection by Jan Tesař, *Traktát o „záchraně národa"* (see note 42), as part of the 2nd section entitled "Vlast, národ a dějiny v českém myšlení na počátku okupace (torzo z roku 1967)" [Homeland, Nation and History in Czech Thinking at the Beginning of the occupation (fragment from 1967)] (pp. 77–153).

(in contrast to the Vichy regime) had no desire to carry out a "national revolution" under German aegis and did not believe in the victory of the Third Reich; instead it was banking on a tactic of prevarication and waiting, hoping to survive until the defeat of the German war effort.

I do not find Brandes's argument (backed by reminders of constitutional differences between Prague and Vichy) wholly convincing, however. In my view, in the initial phase of the Protectorate Eliáš's government was in fact undertaking a "national revolution", or more precisely continuing one. In personnel, programme and practical policy that government did not follow the line of the Czechoslovakia of Masaryk and Beneš, but the line of the Second Republic with its ideological change of direction. The almost immediate creation of *Národní souručenství* [National Partnership], a centrally directed economy and other elements of an authoritarian national state were not, from my point of view, just tactical retreats in the face of the occupying power. They were above all measures to implement the new concept of the state that had emerged as a consequence of the Munich tragedy, and the fact of the occupation only speeded up the process in Czech national life.

Overall, however, it is clear from the general direction of his essay that Brandes continues to approach Protectorate politics using the model of collaboration (a wide spectrum), even though he accords it the character of national defence. Then, as the title of the essay indicates, he divides collaboration into three qualitatively distinct attitudes, which he calls "prevarication" – "activism" – "treason". It seems to me, however, that a conceptual framework that allows us to focus on the investigation of concrete behaviour is more viable than blanket use of a concept that has so many potential meanings in the real world. In his article on Protectorate security forces the Austrian scholar Niklas Perzi also takes this approach, suggesting to focus attention to the concrete behaviour of actors, and enabling us "to outline the alternatives and different forms of behaviour in the reality of the time of occupation." In the case of the Protectorate police and gendarmes he asserts that "the spectrum included resistance, passive resistance to the point of retarding behaviour, zeal in service, opportunism, professional ambition and ideological agreement." The general term, "collaboration", is seen by Perzi in the same way as by Miroslav Kárný: it is a form "of interaction between the rulers and the ruled."[54]

54 PERZI, Niklas: Protektorátní policie a četnictvo: Stav zkoumání ožehavé a otevřené otázky, hranice bádání [The Protectorate Police and Gendarmerie: The State of Knowledge on a Tricky and Open Question, the Limits of Research]. In: PETRÁŠ, J. (ed.): *Kolaborace. Kolaborace? Kolaborace!*, pp. 16–26, cit. p. 16 (see note 39).

*Revolt, Resistance, Opposition….*

While the word "collaboration" has provoked so much controversy, the rest of the terminology used to describe and interpret the behaviour of the population of the Protectorate has not provoked similar polemic. This applies to the basic notion of "resistance", in Czech expressed mainly with two alternative words, *odboj* and *odpor*, which despite a number of other commonly employed equivalents or shades of meaning (*hnutí odporu*, *odbojové hnutí* – resistance movement; *rezistence* – resistance; *pasivní rezistence* – passive resistance) have been firmly rooted in Czech language and thus have acquired an unambiguous meaning.[55] As early as 1965, a distinction between *odboj* (armed resistance / organised struggle) and *odpor* (resistance/opposition) was adopted in Czechoslovak historiography and has continued to be recognised with certain variations. The authors of a sketch of a *Dějiny československého odboje* [History of the Czechoslovak Resistance], a large book that was being prepared in the mid-1960s, defined the term *odpor* [resistance], as "a term for all the acts of struggle against the occupiers whether spontaneous or organised."[56] This conception was retained in the dictionary aid *Český antifašismus a odboj* [Czech Antifascism and Resistance] of 1988,[57] but in historical scholarship the term *odpor* has come to be used as a general term for spontaneous expressions of rejection of Nazi occupation and individual forms of civil disobedience.[58] Thus it became the counterpart to the term *odboj* (resistance struggle, the Resistance), traditionally used to denote organised activities, i.e. as an overall term for the activity of illegal resistance groups.[59]

There has in fact been only one significant controversy over use of the concept "resistance", specifically the way it was employed by the German historian Volker Zimmermann in his pioneering work on the history of the Sudetenland Reichsgau. Zimmermann defined it in the same way as the famous German historian Martin Broszat had done so before him, i.e. as resistance to Nazi indoctrination that led individuals or whole groups to refuse, openly or covertly, often only in some spheres of life, to succumb to the pressure to totalitarianise German society. In his research

55 See e.g. VÁŠA, Pavel – TRÁVNÍČEK, František: *Slovník jazyka českého* [A Czech Language Dictionary] (Praha, Fr. Borový 1941, 2nd – reworked edition), which on pages 1016 and 1020 gives the following definitions, here translated for readers: "odboj = revolt, rebellion, revolutionary activity"; "odpor = resistance, opposition, defence against someone, disagreement, objections".

56 *Odboj a revoluce 1938–1945: Nástin dějin československého odboje* [Resistance and Revolution 1938–1945]. Praha, Naše vojsko 1965, p. 54.

57 KROUPA, Vlastimil et al.: *Český antifašismus a odboj: Slovníková příručka* [Czech Antifascism and Resistance: A Handbook]. Praha, Naše vojsko 1988, p 285.

58 See e.g. KURAL, Václav – RADVANOVSKÝ, Zdeněk et al.: *„Sudety" pod hákovým křížem* [The "Sudetenland" under the Swastika]. Ústí n. L., Albis international 2002, p. 180. The authors of the chapter, Josef Bartoš, Ludomír Kocourek and Václav Kural define "odpor" – opposition as "the non-organised forms by which part of the population, usually also spontaneously, took a stand against the Nazi regime and made it clear in a hidden or open way."

59 See e.g. the works cited in notes 56 and 58.

on German-majority society Zimmermann worked with the two terms *Resistenz* (resistence, obstinacy, *odpor*) and *Widerstand* (struggle, taking a stand, *odboj*). With regard to the Czech minority, however, he chose a different approach and did not even keep to the distinction between resistance (odpor) and struggle (odboj) introduced by Czechoslovak historians. According to Zimmermann, the "term resistance" (*odpor*) would be unsuitable in this context, because "Nazi ideology postulated German supremacy in the first place," and so unlike Germans, Czechs "usually rejected much more than just certain parts of the National Socialist system." In relation to the Czech minority Zimmermann used the term "opposition", which he considered an adequate opposite pole to the term "resistance" which he reserved for the German majority in his research.[60]

Czech historians have rejected this approach. They have been generally right to do so, because if we wish to investigate the resistance of social structures to totalitarianisation, the question of whether the resistance had racial, ethnic, religious, social or other motivations should not be allowed to affect fundamental definitions. In one Czech account of the history of the Sudeten Reischgau Zimmermann's term "rezistence" has been criticised as inappropriate largely for reasons of language.[61] It is Josef Bartoš, however, who has been Zimmermann's most trenchant critic, arguing that the terminology is entirely misleading and objecting to the way Zimmerman framed the chapter concerned: "Here the author calls the opposition of the German population 'resistance' (for incomprehensible reasons he includes here the persecution of the Jewish population, foreign workers and prisoners of war), and devotes a separate chapter to the Sudeten German resistance, while he characterises Czech resistance as the 'opposition' of the Czech minority."[62] In Zimmerman's defence it should be said that he probably selected the content of the chapter on the resistance of the German population on the basis of what the Nazis themselves considered dangerous activities against their regime, and this was why he included attitudes to Jews, prisoners of war and foreign workers in the chapter.

Quite recent contributions to these discussions have been the reflections of Jaroslav Kučera and Volker Zimmermann on Czech research of the history of the Protectorate. These were printed in parallel in 2009 in the journals *Bohemia* and *Soudobé dějiny* [Contemporary History].[63] These articles are not the usual overviews

60 ZIMMERMANN, Volker: *Sudetští Němci v nacistickém státě: Politika a nálada obyvatelstva v říšské župě Sudety (1938–1945)* [The Sudeten Germans in the Nazi State: The Politics and Mood of the Population in the Reich (1938–1945)]. Praha, Prostor 2001, p. 519.

61 KURAL, V. – RADVANOVSKÝ, Z. et al.: *„Sudety" pod hákovým křížem*, p. 180 f. (see note 58).

62 BARTOŠ, Josef: Historická terminologie světových válek a odboje [The Historical Terminology of the World Wars and Resistance]. In: GEBHART, Jan – ŠEDIVÝ, Ivan (ed.): *Česká společnost za velkých válek 20. století (pokus o komparaci)* [Czech Society during the Great Wars of the 20th Century (An Attempt at Comparison)]. Praha, Karolinum 2003, p. 114.

63 KUČERA, Jaroslav – ZIMMERMANN, Volker: Ke stavu českého výzkumu nacistické okupační politiky v Čechách a na Moravě: Několik úvah u příležitosti vydání jedné stan-

of long-term research results, but polemic responses to Czech historical scholarship that centre on the synthesis by Gebhart and Kuklík, already mentioned above. Kučera and Zimmermann present their articles as stimuli to discussion, but in my view their claims are often too apodictic and categorical to inspire the necessary positive reaction for discussion. Of course, I agree with Kučera's and Zimmermann's critique that the basic weakness of Czech historical research is the almost complete absence of cultural and social themes, but I consider some of their conceptual approaches highly problematic.[64] In the following text I shall therefore confine myself to a brief commentary on a few ideas directly related to the theme of resistance and collaboration.

Jaroslav Kučera and Volker Zimmermann contend that Czech historiography is dominated, as traditionally, by the history of the resistance, and this "quite manifestly arises from the need to give the greatest possible weight to the positively perceived actions of members of their own (Czech) nation."[65] This critique rests on the quasi-argument that the resistance is the main focus in Gebhart and Kuklík's synthesis: roughly a third of the book is made up of chapters with the word "resistance" in the title, while the term "collaboration" does not have such a significant position at all and there is no chapter devoted primarily to the phenomenon. The reviewers claim that lack of terminological precision means that the book presents a very schematic picture of "ordinary" Czechs, ultimately painting a problematic picture of a "generally resistant Czech society". For their part they see the phenomenon of collaboration, which they claim that Czech authors address only at the political level, as the key to understanding the history of the Protectorate. They point out that in addition to political collaboration there was for example economic or police collaboration, and so "just as with the political groups and

dardní publikace [On the State of Czech Research into the Nazi Occupation Policy in Bohemia and Moravia: Some Reflections on the Publication of One Standard Publication]. In: *Soudobé dějiny*, vol. 16, no. 1 (2009), pp. 112–130; in German in: *Bohemia*, vol. 49, no. 1 (2009), pp. 164–183.

64 As one example we can take the Nazi social policy in the Protectorate. Here the reviewers reproach the authors of the Protectorate synthesis sharply for not exploring the extent to which it was a tool of "pacification, i.e. corruption" (See preceding note, p. 123). In the literature cited on the theme, however, Kučera and Zimmermann leave out works that have shown that Nazi social policy was primarily propagandist in character and had no major effect on concrete social conditions (see e.g. studies by Miroslav Kárný). More importantly, Kučera and Zimmermann do not take into account the fact that it was in the sphere of war production that (apart from resistance activity) that Nazi repressive measures were most concentrated, as is evident from the powers of special courts, setting up of work-education camps, direct supervision of the Gestapo over selected arms factories, the criminal jurisdiction of labour offices etc. If therefore we want to study the theme of pacification and corruption of workers, we obviously need to consider not just Nazi social policy, but the repressive basis of the regime.

65 Ibid., p. 125. In 1999 Detlef Brandes had already taken a different view, arguing that Czech historiography was no longer focused so much on "the resistance and German occupation politics, but on the broad spectrum of the pinnacles of collaboration" (BRANDES, D.: *Češi pod německým protektorátem*, pp. 485 – see note 48).

high-profile politicians, which have so far been the centre of focus, attention needs to be directed to the question of how doctors, policemen, lawyers, businessman or workers behaved during the war."[66]

This critique of Jan Gebhart and Jan Kuklík is in my view only partially valid and often misses its target. The aim of the two authors of the book was first and foremost to compile a "narrative history" of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, and it is therefore pointless to criticise them for not providing comprehensive information on developments in the so-called annexed territory.[67] Above all, given the book's conceptual plan, the titles of chapters give less an idea of its comprehensiveness than the index of proper names. This index provides at least a rough measure of how far Gebhart and Kuklík have fulfilled their ambition, which was to outline for readers "who was who and what was what" in the reality of the totalitarian Protectorate regime.[68] In this respect even Kučera and Zimmermann admit that the synthesis offers a picture of the Protectorate period that is extremely rich in information, and that its authors, "in no case avoid sensitive questions at odds with the generally widespread Czech picture of victimhood."[69]

It remains for us to consider any specific implications of the ideas of Kučera and Zimmermann for future Czech historical research. From the point of view of concrete suggestions, I am rather sceptical about their essay. The two authors seem to have written the section entitled "Resistance and Collaboration" mainly to express their disagreement with the idea of a "generally resistant Czech society", and their belief that the right way to correct this misleading impression is to make a thorough use of the term "collaboration". Their further points do little more than sketch a traditional view of the form of Protectorate society. According to the authors it was not a case of just "resistance" on the one side and "collaboration" on the other, and the black-and-white scheme needs to include a "grey zone". Resistance and

66 KUČERA, J. – ZIMMERMANN, V.: Ke stavu českého výzkumu nacistické okupační politiky v Čechách a na Moravě, pp. 126–128. The authors for the most part ignore the discussions that had taken place in Czech historiography around the term "collaboration". They point out that in some European countries the term "attentism" or "accommodation" have been adopted to denote a certain kind of collaboration with the occupying power, but do not add that a similar term "retardation" also exists in relation to Protectorate history. In the same way they are puzzled at the commonly used term "activism", which they would rather reserve for the attitude of some German political parties in the times of the First Republic, and ask how this term differs from the term "collaboration". In my view, however, it is a sufficiently understandable synonym for the pair of basic terms that they themselves use on page 129 of their essay: "voluntary collaboration" (in "Czech" discourse "activism", "activist collaboration"), and "non-voluntary collaboration" (in "Czech" discourse "the collaboration of forced conformity", "collaborational conformity").

67 See ibid, p. 115 f. In this part of their critique they claim that Gebhart and Kuklík are offering readers "a history of the Czech people, i.e. a national account in the ethnic sense", because the synthesis in its full breadth does not deal with the theme of the Sudeten Reichsgau. But in their short introduction Kuklík and Gebhart clearly state that their framework is the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia.

68 GEBHART, J. – KUKLÍK, J.: *Velké dějiny Zemí koruny české*, vol. XVa, p. 8 (see note 17).

69 KUČERA, J. – ZIMMERMANN, V.: Ke stavu českého výzkumu…, p. 127.

collaboration were both minority attitudes, because between these poles stood the silent majority, with their typically "externally conformist, or unobtrusive behaviour."[70]

I do not, however, believe that the mere thorough-going use of the term "collaboration" will bring any major innovation in historical research. As has been noted earlier several times, this is just a moralising category that can only be safely used in those areas in which we have the evidence to get to know the individual actors. Naturally this means primarily the sphere of public policy, which can perhaps be explored in a sufficiently detailed way both in the frame of different strands of opinion, and at the micro-regional level.[71] As soon as we wish to study Czech society as a whole, in all the spheres of its existence, the approach becomes highly problematic. This is particularly the case with the concept of "involuntary collaboration", to which Jaroslav Kučera and Volker Zimmermann refer in their article, and which in this context could be very misleading indeed. From an objective point of view, the content of "involuntary collaboration" in the everyday life of society would involve nothing more than passive following of the rules and conventions of the time. It is thus just the basic normality installed by the Nazi regime, and simply the notional zero point from which further models of behaviour develop on both sides. If we wanted to see it in terms of the graph, devised years ago by the historian Detlev Peukert to classify the conduct of German society in the Third Reich, then to the right of point zero the following values start to appear: non-conformism, rejection, protest, resistance.[72] If we want to trace the opposite movement (and this might relate for example to Protectorate journalism), then to the left of the zero point we might see a succession of the following terms used in the research of Pavel Večeřa: manifestation of collaborationist behaviour, collaborationist conformism, activism.[73]

## *An Alternative Model of the Behaviour of Protectorate Society*

If our aim is not just to describe but above all to understand the behaviour of Protectorate society, then we should now turn our backs on the terminological critique we have so far made, and look for the necessary inspiration above all in sociology. Sociology is not only able to work with value-neutral concepts, but can generate a more comprehensive model than the so far widely accepted idea of a society

70 Ibid., p. 126 n.

71 On this issue see especially an outstanding work: NIKRMAJER, Leoš: *Činnost a vývoj Národního souručenství v Českých Budějovicích v letech 1939–1942* [The Activity and Development of the National Partnership in České Budějovice)]. České Budějovice, Jihočeské muzeum České Budějovice 2006; PETRÁŇ, Josef: *Dvacáté století v Ouběnicích.* Praha, Nakladatelství Lidové noviny 2009.

72 PEUKERT, Detlev: *Inside Nazi Germany: Conformity, Opposition and Racism in Everyday Life.* London, Penguin Books 1993, p. 83.

73 VEČEŘA, P.: Ošemetné Scylly a zrádné Charybdy protektorátních novinářů, p. 265 (see note 40).

living in a kind of permanent dilemma between resistance and collaboration. It is obvious that for research of this kind we shall need first and foremost clear criteria to enable us to characterise basic forms of behaviour. As regards Protectorate society, i.e. the people who were part of it, we should focus – with respect to their potential attitudes – on two fundamental quantities:

1) level of adaptation – whether the actors adjusted to the conditions brought in by the new regime, abide by its written or unwritten rules, or not at all;

2) level of identification – whether the actors identify with the new regime and see it as theirs, or regard the new state of affairs as unchangeable, or not at all.

Comparison of the two quantities will provide us with an idea of the relationship of individual actors to the occupation regime and we can then classify general, basic attitudes on this basis:

| **Adaptation** | **Identification** | **Attitude to Regime** | **Form of Behaviour** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Adaptation | Identification | Positive | Loyalty |
| Non-adaptation | Identification | Neutral | Delinquency |
| Adaptation | Non-identification | Potentially hostile | Opportunism |
| Non-adaptation | Non-identification | Hostile | Resistance |

The model "adaptation – non-identification" is the one corresponding in Protectorate society to the "silent majority" which outwardly acted loyally to the regime, but internally was full of existential fear, precisely because it did not internally identify with the regime, and was aware of the regime's brutality and did not trust its official, soothing declarations. These people in fact represent the main reserve reservoir of the home resistance, which after the first wave of resistance at the beginning of the occupation once more grew in significance in the last phase of the Second World War. In this context it is clear that not just the wartime loss of society's democratic elites, but also the experience of this "silent majority" during the occupation was a key factor in the spread of socialist ideas and the postwar ascent of the Communist Party to power.

The group of "non-adapting – identified" may seem at first sight counter-intuitive, but only because historical scholarship has not as yet paid any attention to the phenomenon of the so-called black economy. Even in the conditions of occupation there was economic delinquency, whether the black market in larger-scale form, the theft of shortage goods, the forging of food ration books and so forth. Here of course I mean only those acts against the wartime economy whose perpetrators clearly exploited the situation to their own material profit. Just as during the First World War, so in the Protectorate there emerged a social class of war nouveaux riches, characterised by a lack of patriotic and social sense of responsibility.

The general terms "loyalty" and "opportunism" are in my view very useful in the description of Protectorate reality. Unlike "collaboration" they have a clear meaning and are not mere emotive labels, in Czech language or elsewhere. By contrast, to use the term "collaboration" always requires the addition of other

explanatory adjectives (forced collaboration versus voluntary collaboration), or a judgment on which behaviour was still a morally justifiable level of collaboration and what was essentially treason to the nation (see e.g. Brandes's triad of terms, "prevarication" – "activism" – "treason"). I am not trying to expunge the word "collaboration" from historical scholarship, but I see it as meaningful primarily in the field of Protectorate public politics, where we have enough evidence about the individual actors and their motives.

The model of attitudes and behaviour of Protectorate society presented above is of course purely theoretical. At first sight it will be obvious that especially the "level of identification" is a dynamic, changeable quantity, which depended on a range of circumstances. The model is therefore meant largely as a guide, indicating the areas to which further research might be directed in addition to the very necessary mapping of "everyday life in the Protectorate". Czech society was exposed to a strong ideological campaign, to targeted indoctrination intended to influence concepts of individual behaviour. Of course, this propaganda came from more than one side – from the domestic resistance and resistance abroad, and from the Nazi regime and its Czech activist forces, which regarded the state of affairs as immutable. It is clear that the effectiveness of the propaganda depended considerably on the actual course of the Second World War and the response of Czech Protectorate society to war developments. At the same time this was a society confronted with the brutality of the Nazi occupation regime. If we want to understand the behaviour of Czech society in the years of the Second World War (and so its values and attitudes in the period of liberation), we must always bear in mind the elementary fact that this society did not operate on the principle of free choice, but was soon wholly controlled by fear.[74] And naturally this fear took different forms, from feelings of threat to own life to fears for the future of the national community.

*The Czech version of this artile, entitled* Odboj, kolaborace, přizpůsobení… Několik poznámek k výzkumu české protektorátní společnosti, *was originally published in Soudobé dějiny, vol. 17, no. 1–2 (2010), pp. 9–30.*

74 On this theme see e.g. KAMENEC, Ivan: Fenomén strachu a alibizmu v kontexte kolaborácie a odboja na Slovensku v rokoch 1938–1945 [The Phenomenon of Fear in the Context of Collaboration and Resistance in Slovakia in the Years 1938–1945]. In: SYRNÝ, Marek a kol.: *Kolaborácia a odboj na Slovensku a v krajinách nemeckej sféry vplyvu v rokoch 1939–1945* [Collaboration and Resistance in Slovakia and in the Countries in the German Sphere of Influence 1939–1945]. Banská Bystrica, Múzeum Slovenského národného povstania, pp. 21–31.

# "Getting Around to the Human Being in the Next Quarter"

## *Leisure Time in the Czech Lands 1948–1956*[1]

Martin Franc – Jiří Knapík

### *Leisure Time, in the "Epoch of Building Socialism"*

European society in the postwar period has sometimes been characterised as a "leisure society". The term highlights the fact that once the initial acute economic problems of the aftermath of the war had been overcome, in many European countries an overall rise in living standards led to a rapid increase in the leisure time available to the average citizen together with significant expansion of the range of ways of spending it. Like other European states of the Eastern bloc, Czechoslovakia experienced this development with a certain delay. Furthermore, with their goal of moulding a new type of human being in new social conditions, the regimes in these states made much more intensive attempts than their Western counterparts to interfere in people's choice of activities outside working hours. In line with the strong emphasis on educational elements in cultural policy, people were

1 The quotation in the title of this article comes from the film comedy *Hudba z Marsu* [Music from Mars] jointly directed by Jan Kádár and Elmar Klos, which was made in 1955. When the chairman of the factory council of the Mars furniture firm is asked by the resort minister how the factory council looks after "the human being" at the workplace, he answers, "We'll be getting around to the human being in the next quarter." (For information on the film see *Český hraný film / Czech Feature Film*, vol. 3: *1945–1960*. Praha, Národní filmový archiv 2001, p. 98 f. The film is also available on DVD released in 2008.)

supposed to spend their personal free time in culturally improving ways.[2] What this meant in practice depended on a range of circumstances, including ideological demands on culture which changed somewhat over time, but were relatively clear. The demands on culture were that it should be "progressive", and purged of "bourgeois" influences and the decadence that had allegedly afflicted and characterised capitalist society. On the other hand, ultra-enthusiastic tendencies to reject all "bourgeois" customs could be (and from the mid-1950s often were) "unmasked" as mere superficial and essentially also bourgeois radicalism,[3] as became evident for example in attitudes to the culture of polite social behaviour and dress at social events.

In the immediate postwar years these trends were not yet as clear as in the subsequent period. Despite the euphoria of liberation, the postwar republic had to contend with a depressed national economy and serious social problems in many regions. The state naturally prioritised economic revival and the rapid achievement of prewar standards. The situation was further complicated by the expulsion of the large German minority and associated destabilisation in many regions, by the sudden changes in the ownership structures of many firms, and by increasingly intense political rivalries.

Although the lives of citizens outside working hours were affected by the economic problems, the revival of evening and night-life was a characteristic mark of the return to peacetime existence after May 1945. There were plenty of public meetings, but above all there were theatre and film shows and concerts, and nightclubs opened, primarily for members of the economic elite (including the elites of the "grey economy"). In both Czech and Slovak society there was a natural desire to relax and have some fun after the stresses of the war, but this side of ordinary

2 This imperative was vigorously promoted in other Soviet bloc countries as well (see e.g. KÜHN, Cornelia: Grenzen der Unterhaltung: Zur "Hebung der Kulturniveaus" in den 1950er Jahren. In: HÄUßER, Ulrike – MERKEL, Marcus (ed.): *Vergnügen in der DDR.* Berlin, Panama-Verlag 2009, pp. 253–270. Here the author discusses the importance of the reception of people's art in the GDR, and her observations can be applied to Czechoslovakia too, including the insight that the postwar regime derived less from the tradition of communist radicalism in this context than from ideas of social-democratic cultural education and enlightenment.

3 The sociology of the period paid practically no attention to the subject of leisure time in the Czech Lands, which was partially a consequence of its profound decline in the first half of the 1950s. In the Eastern bloc it was not until 1958 that the Soviet research by Stanislav G. Strumilin from the early 1920s on the theme was picked up and developed by the economist German A. Prudyensky from the Institute of the Economics and Organisation of the Industrial Plant at the Siberian Department of the Soviet Academy of Sciences. Research on leisure in Czechoslovakia was also initially much influenced by economists, such as Antonín Červinka. In the Czech Lands there was only to be a boom in the sociology of leisure in the later 1960s, when apart from Červinka, major works on the subject were published for example by Blanka Filipcová, Milada Švigová and Radoslav Selucký. The work of the French sociologist Joffre Dumazedier was enthusiastically received in Czechoslovakia. By contrast, the works of other Western "classics" on the theme such as David Riesman, Georges Friedmann and Helmut Schelsky met with strong criticism.

life was also hampered by the social situation of the time and one result of the currency reform in the autumn of 1945 was a "box office crisis", particularly serious for theatres. Meanwhile cinemas were enjoying a considerable and consistent rise in audiences which continued up to 1949.[4] Even before 1948 various kinds of organised collective forms of spending leisure time were developing, especially among workers and youth. Some institutions and practices from the occupation period were continued or adapted more or less consciously. This was particularly the case with the trade unions, which became massively more involved in organising leisure activities than they had been before the war. There was also continuing use of the structures of the Public Education Service and many elements associated with the Trust for the Education of Young People, despite the fact that in the immediate postwar period the activities of both institutions were condemned because of their pro-Nazi orientation.

At the time of its foundation Czechoslovakia had been one of the first states in the world to introduce an eight-hour working day, but following the Second World War there was no further reduction in statutory working hours until 1956.[5] The working week therefore continued to be forty-eight hours long in total. Although the citizens' right to rest was emphasised, and even enshrined in the Constitution of 9 May 1948, in practice there was a reluctance to consider reduction in working hours because of the potential impact on the performance and competitiveness of the economy. Ten state holidays remained on the calendar for a time after the communist takeover in February 1948, but by a law of 1951 only one was retained – "The Day of Liberation of Czechoslovakia by the Red Army" on 9 May. There were, however, another six non-working days in the year. In the 1950s the basic personal holiday allowance was two weeks. The young, miners and people who had worked in one concern for a long period were entitled to more, but on the other hand, the 1950s saw the gradual abolition of various privileges that had been enjoyed for example by civil servants and other particular categories.

The emphasis on the importance of work to rebuild and build national economies, which we encounter in the second half of the 1940s in practically all European countries affected by the world war, only "got up steam" in Czechoslovakia at the end of the decade, and especially at the beginning of the 1950s. The aim was no longer the restoration of the former level of prosperity, but the building of a new soci-

4 JUST, Vladimír et al.: *Divadlo v totalitním systému: Příběh českého divadla (1945–1989) nejen v datech a souvislostech* [The Theatre in a Totalitarian System: The Story of Czech theatre (1945–1989) Not Only in Dates and Connections]. Praha, Academia 2010, p. 41; PIŠTORA, Ladislav: Filmoví návštěvníci a kina na území České republiky [Film Audiences and Cinemas on the Territory of the Czech Republic]. In: *Iluminace*, vol. 9, no. 2 (1997), pp. 63–65.

5 On the subject of working hours, holidays and vacation see RÁKOSNÍK, Jakub: *Sovětizace sociálního státu: Lidově demokratický režim a sociální práva občanů v Československu 1945–1960* [The Sovietisation of the Social State: The People's Democratic Regime and the Social Rights of the Citizens in Czechoslovakia 1945–1960]. Praha, Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Karlovy 2010, pp. 232–239.

ety and at the same time preparation for a decisive new world war. One defining feature of communist propaganda was constant stress on the ethos of labour for society. This was embodied in numerous campaigns and slogans. Here we might mention the slogan "*Republice více práce, to je naše agitace*" ["More work for the Republic, that's our campaign object"] with which the communists went to the polls in 1946, the "shock-worker" campaign, and the well-known "youth construction projects". Praises were heaped on heroes who gave their jobs precedence over private life and were ready to devote all their time to "work for society"; the theme was a favourite one in the arts and literature, for example in the film comedy *Stalo se v máji* [It Happened in May]. Long working hours were obviously incompatible with more sophisticated and elaborate forms of leisure activity.[6] What is more, the adoration of work as the highest form of human self-realisation led to a certain mistrust towards leisure time as such. In contrast to later periods, in the 1950s the expansion of leisure time was not seen as an important social objective and measure of growth in living standards, and there was even a tendency to see it as just a necessary evil, i.e. the relaxation essential to ensure the desired increase in work performance.[7] The amount of free time available to many people, especially members of the Communist Party, was reduced even more by the more or less obligatory public activism, requiring attendance at all kinds of meetings, gatherings and political training courses.[8] In many cases this entirely swallowed up the personal time of individuals and caused them serious problems in everyday life.

Changes in the organisation of the economy also had a major effect on the amount of amount of free time available to people. In some rapidly developing regions many workers were forced to commute, often for several hours each day.[9] People transferred from work in administration and services to heavy and mining indus-

6 Apart from normal work hours most workers also had to take part in various compulsory "volunteer" labour activities (in mines, agriculture etc. and sometimes various "festival" Sunday shifts in other plants). Often this was physically very exhausting work (as is clear for example in the film comedy *Racek má zpoždění* [Racek Is Late] of 1950 – see *Český hraný film*, vol. 3, p. 266 n. – see note 1). In the atmosphere of economic levelling overtime became an attractive way of supplementing income, often without regard to the real need for the work. In workplaces operating on a 24/7 basis (according to a report of 1956), people sometimes worked as much as 56 hours a week, which means eight hours a day seven days a week.

7 As an example we might mention the fitter Mašek from the comedy *Dovolená s Andělem* [Holiday with an Angel], who is actually unable to rest and must work all the time.

8 One specific form of wholly politicised leisure activities were activities connected to propaganda art campaigns, above all for young people. These usually involved choral, dance or recitation ensembles. Rehearsals and performances with these groups would take up most of their spare time. A period view of these groups and their activity is given especially in the famous musical film *Zítra se bude tančit všude* [Tomorrow People Will be Dancing Everywhere] made by director Vladimír Vlček in 1952 (see *Český hraný film*, vol. 3, p. 375 f. – see note 1).

9 This was by no means an exclusively Czech phenomenon; researchers have encountered similar problems suffered by people in the GDR, for example, especially among employees of the massive chemical plants in Halle and Leipzig (see e.g. NEUMEISTER, Klaus: *Keine*

try often struggled with physical exhaustion, which set serious limits on how they spent leisure time. There were dramatic changes to the lives of many women, who now had to take on full employment. Despite the original promises that the burden of women's domestic work in the household would be greatly reduced through provision of public services, and the use of "advances" in equipment and technology (processed and semi-ready foods), as well as the establishment of comprehensive childcare facilities, the great majority of women now faced what is known as the "double-shift": in addition to full-time work they still had to do almost all the housework and childcare when they came home. The attenuation of the retail network made shopping more difficult and time-consuming.[10] Few men were ready to give up the old cultural model and do much in the way of household and childcare (and in any case many men were over-burdened with public functions outside work hours). For all these reasons the gender gap in leisure time widened still further, and was then to remain practically unchanged for decades.[11] The situation was also difficult for small farmers, who now had to devote all their free time to keeping up their own farms.[12] On the other hand, former small tradesmen now "freed" from the cares of independent businesses, had somewhat more leisure so long as they were not forced to accept other work for which they had had insufficient skills or qualifications. In the same way co-operative farm workers gradually came to have more leisure time, although they spent most of it cultivating their permitted private plots.

Especially after 1948 we can see a rapidly increasing preference for collective forms of leisure and organised use of free time, most of this activity connected

---

*Zeit mehr für die Freizeit? Eine medizinische Betrachtung über Arbeit, Freizeit und Erholung.* Berlin, Volk und Gesundheit 1966, p. 17 and p. 24).

10 The system of self-service stores introduced in 1955 was supposed to improve this situation substantially, but the problem of the thinness of the retail network continued, especially in newly built housing estates, where what was known as "civic facilities network" lagged behind.

11 See the document "Trends in Leisure and its Use", drawn up in 1965 by a group of authors headed by Antonín Červinka for discussion by the ideological commission of the Central Committee of the KSČ [*Národní archiv*, Praha (hereafter *NA*), fund (f.) 1525 (Ideologická komise ÚV KSČ 1958–1968, originally fund 10/5), svazek (file – sv.) 17, archivní jednotka (archival unit – arch. j.) 72, bod (point) 1]. Referring to a survey by the State Statistics Office of 1961 this document states that while for men leisure time represents 16.1% of their total time, for women it is only 7.7%. Men only devoted 9.8% of their time to care for the household, while women devoted 35.5% of their time to it. We can assume that the situation of women was no easier in the 1950s. Although at that point fewer women had permanent employment, running the household demanded more time than it did later (more problems with shopping and getting hold of food and other goods, almost zero equipment of households with appliances etc.), even though hygiene standards in many households were lower than they later became. Furthermore, in the surviving private sector wives often had to give their husbands a great deal of help.

12 People who were building their houses themselves were in the same situation – construction works took up all their spare time. Building as one of the main ways of using free time in the villages was to become an important factor particularly in later decades.

in some way to the work occupation of the individual. Provision for leisure activities was highly differentiated – much greater possibilities were offered to people in priority branches, primarily mining and heavy industry. At the same time there was a trend towards a certain social levelling within concerns: the director or other representative of the management was expected to spend his leisure time in the same way as the ordinary employee. The ideals of the communist regime found application especially in the selective factory-based recreation.[13] Various cultural and sometimes health facilities were set up attached to factories or other concerns,[14] and organisational procedures were developed to encourage new, allegedly "higher forms" of recreation.[15] There was a clear tendency to take leisure activities out of the environment of the family and move them into public space.[16] It was a trend also manifest in the approach to the celebrations of various traditional holidays in such a way as to emphasise their communal character as people's festivities.[17] These festivities were also used as vehicles for the dissemination of elements

13 Levelling naturally had its limits, but in Czech and Czechoslovak conditions it was clearly more successful than in the traditionally more hierarchically organised Polish society, where non-worker "cadres" clearly predominated among users of recreation facilities and there were significant obstacles to full integration between different social groups (see SOWIŃSKI, Paweł: *Wakacje w Polsce Ludowej: Polityka władz i ruch turystyczny (1945–1989)*. Warszawa, Wydawnictwo Trio – Instytut Studiów Politycznych Polskiej Akademii Nauk 2005, pp. 45–49). In Czech conditions the cultural differences between workers and other groups of the population were not so profound.

14 A classic example of a health facility set up for state-organised use of free time was what was known as night sanatoriums, established at some large industrial concerns. The sanatoriums were supposed to provide rational convalescence for workers so that they would be able to give the maximum work performance and not be disturbed by inadequate home environment.

15 The focus of the period on work performance was also reflected in the hierarchy of approved forms of leisure activity. Self-education and generally activities likely to improve work capability were considered the highest form. By contrast at the bottom of the hierarchy were various passive forms of rest and mere relaxation, which were initially admissible only to the minimal extent required by health. During the 1950s, however, this attitude to passive forms of leisure underwent a visible change. Opinions were divided on the question of listening to the radio and later watching television – various informative and educational programmes were acknowledged to be part of self-education, but entertainment programmes (e.g. variety programmes) were less welcome, because these were more a matter of passive relaxation.

16 Family vacations (involving several generations) were undermined in the long-term: if they worked well, adults would go to selective union recreational programmes, while children were sent to Pioneer camps.

17 Apart from the May celebrations this applied for example to the *Děda Mráz* [Grandfather Frost] celebrations. We might consider the potential of the figure of Grandfather Frost to contribute to the collective spending of the Christmas holiday – his use in collective presentations of gifts for example. It should be stressed, however, that people managed to some extent to adapt collective celebrations to their own needs – chatting, telling jokes and so on. The subjective experience of the various celebrations is very hard to identify from the archival materials and the official art and literature of the period also tells us little about it. We

of Marxist-Leninist ideology and state propaganda. In all these developments reference and appeal to the "Soviet model" was an important factor.

Previous cultural stereotypes, club activities and individual use of leisure time were all seen as "bourgeois residues", or even suspicious signs of a negative attitude to the regime itself.[18] Tough measures were taken against cafés and nightclubs, which were regarded as the refuges of "former people", who were unwilling to join enthusiastically in the building of the new society.[19]

Even greater disapproval was reserved for "anti-cultural"[20] use of free time. This included delinquency and alcoholism, which was a problem particularly in Slovakia, and the associated absenteeism. The authorities were also highly suspicious of the non-conformist entertainments of some groups of young people, who were known pejoratively as *páskové* [literally "belts" – roughly equivalent to teddy-boys]. The term denoted young people who adored Western dance music (swing, boogie-woogie, later rock'n'roll) and were generally seen as uncritical adherents of Western lifestyle, although (at least according to the propaganda of the time) they had only very vague ideas of what it was like.[21] The subculture following on from the earlier *potápky* ["dabchicks"] was accused of being a "fifth column" of the West, and of various other vices such as frequent job-changing and of course alcoholism and

---

are therefore dependent on scraps of various recollections and memories of direct participants.

18 For example, an application for permission to found a "Voluntary and self-help club of widowed, single and divorced women and men – the Alone Together – Sami mezi sebou" in Místek was rejected by the Ministry of the Interior in 1950 on the grounds that it could be abused for private financial gain and that "it is completely adverse to today's social order and bears all the marks of bourgeois manners." The ministry official recommended to the applicants that "they devote their superfluous energies instead to one of the work sectors of our five-year-plan". (*Zemský archiv Opava*, f. Krajský národní výbor Ostrava, výměr ministerstva vnitra z 19.12.1950.)

19 Criticism of nightclubs and cafés as places where "idlers" parasitic on the labour of the productive classes (especially the workers) got together of course had very deep roots, as did the idea of solving this problem by re-education through forced manual labour (the same methods were embodied by forced labour camps at the time). On the other hand, even a promising and talented person could be ensnared in these sinks of boozing and partying and would need help to escape them. In conventional spirit, the director Miroslav Cikán's comedy *Pára nad hrncem* [The Steam above the Pot] of 1950 proposed marriage as a suitable remedy (see *Český hraný film*, vol. 3, p. 199 n. – see note 1).

20 This is a later term, used in the Czech environment for example by the sociologist Radoslav Selucký. It was also to be found in Soviet sociological literature (see e.g. GRUSHIN, Boris A.: *Svobodnoje vremja: Aktualnyje problemy*. Moscow 1967).

21 On this phenomenon see KRÁTKÝ, Radovan: *Pásek: Studie na živočichozpytném podkladě* [The Teddy-Boy: A Study on a Zoo-analytical Basis]. Praha, Mladá fronta 1954; see also BOUDNÝ, Jaroslav: Trafouš byl náš život aneb Jak se bavila mládež v padesátých letech [Wenceslas Square Was Our Life, or How the Young Had Fun in the 1950s]. In: *Neviditelný pes*, 23. 9. 2006 (*http://neviditelnypes.lidovky.cz/vzpominka-trafous-byl-nas-zivot-do1-/p_spolecnost.asp?c=A060922_184759_p_spolecnost_wag*, downloaded 2nd June 2010). The writer Josef Škvorecký offers an interesting view on youth subculture at the time in some of his novels and memoirs.

absenteeism. From a *pásek* it was only a short step to the hooligan who came into direct conflict with the law. The basic feature of *páskovství* and hooliganism was organisation in informal groups – gangs, bands – which were regarded as seedbeds of criminal behaviour. The most famous were probably the Vyšehrad Riders, who were tried in 1953.[22] The propaganda of the time gave the problem an added "class" dimension, connecting the *páskové* with "former people".

Especially in the early years of the communist regime, organised forms of recreation were accompanied by the omnipresent obligatory artificial optimism and a certain sterility, which eventually led to the gradual blunting of people's interest and generally to the deadening of popular entertainment. Also very evident was the almost hysterical fear of the spread of American and West European influences, which was most drastically expressed in repressive measures against some forms of modern dance music.[23] In these cases the communist regime adopted and continued – with only small shifts of argument – the approach that had been characteristic of the Nazi occupation authorities, most obviously in relation to groups of young people who adored jazz music. We can also observe this remarkable continuity with the Nazis in the regime's approach to reading, where it launched a huge campaign against "literary rubbish" involving the removal of many thousands of books from public libraries. Apart from politically "harmful" books, the offending literature included popular adventure stories (Westerns or detective novels), rural novels and romantic literature for women.[24] Isolation from Western consumer influences in many respects lasted especially long, well into the 1950s and sometimes even longer.

Although we can observe the signs of retreat from a strongly ideologised model of leisure time from as early as 1952,[25] the communist regime only started to implement a relatively new approach following the proclamation of the so-called "new course" of communist policy in the autumn of 1953. Apart from the general proclamation of the newly appointed government, the character of the change was symbolised in the field of culture by the minister of culture Václav Kopecký's criticisms of so-called Dry-as-Dusts.[26] Leisure time slowly started to become a legitimate part

22 See ZEMAN, Jiří: Skutečný příběh Vyšehradských jezdců [The Real Story of the Vyšehrad Riders]. In: *Reflex*, vol. 15, no. 19 (2004), pp. 32–34.

23 From the mid-1950s Polish society was rather more open to impulses from American popular culture than was Czechoslovakia. Many such influences therefore came into Czechoslovak circles via Poland.

24 On this theme see JANÁČEK, Pavel: *Literární brak: Operace vyloučení, operace nahrazení, 1938–1951* [Literary Rubbish: Exclusion Operation, Substitution Operation 1938–1951]. Brno, Host 2004; ŠÁMAL, Petr: *Soustružníci lidských duší: Lidové knihovny a jejich cenzura na počátku padesátých let 20. století (s edicí seznamů zakázaných knih)* [Engineers of Human Souls: People's Libraries and Their Censorship at the Beginning of the 1950s (with editions of lists of prohibited books]. Praha, Academia 2009.

25 See KNAPÍK, Jiří: *V zajetí moci: Kulturní politika, její systém a aktéři 1948–1956* [In Captivity of Power: Cultural Politics, Its System and Actors 1948–1956]. Praha, Libri 2006, p. 158 ff. and p. 31.

26 KOPECKÝ, Václav: K některým otázkám naší kultury [On Some Questions of Our Culture]. In: *Rudé právo* (13 Dec. 1953), p. 3. See also *NA*, f. 1494 (Zasedání ÚV KSČ 1945–1962,

of socialist reality, and the space for self-realisation and more colourful possibilities for use of free time gradually became larger, All this took place as one aspect of the attempts of the political elite to restore trust in the socialist order. Yet this shift could never have been accomplished merely by the declarations of leaders. Its main driver was the gradually improving living standard of the population, which in turn became the objective of regime from 1954 onwards. In this context we can speak of the beginnings of a consumerist approach to the use of leisure time, associated with a qualified rehabilitation of the middle classes (these impulses were absorbed more slowly by the working class and rural population) and their approach to cultivated ways of spending leisure time.

In the second half of the 1950s we can already see a deliberate expansion of leisure time conditioned by a reduction of working hours. Nevertheless, in internal discussions of the character of cultural life, the communist leadership remained conservative in attitudes, preferring collective forms and an active approach on the part of the workers themselves in various cultural activities to private or merely passive entertainment. A typical view of the matter was expressed in the spring of 1956 by Minister of Education Ladislav Štoll, who declared that the workers should not be just consumers, spectators or listeners, but ought themselves to take an active part in the development of cultural life by joining in the "movement" of people's artistic creativity.[27]

## *Ways of Spending Free Time*

If the communist regime preferred the organised use of leisure time, it naturally had to create suitable conditions for it. Even before the communist takeover, the Revolutionary Trades Union Movement (ROH) had started to found clubs directly at workplaces.[28] The importance of these factory- or work-clubs for the organisation of free time increased, especially at the beginning of the 1950s when they absorbed an immense number of local hobby or interest societies. In a climate of grandiose sentiment about building socialism, the factory clubs, which operated very close to the workplaces, even came to be characterised as the "second homes" of the workers, where they could go after work and not only find cultural refreshment but also learn the correct habits of socialist communal life.[29] In ad-

originally fund 01), sv. 23, arch. j. 35; also f. 1519 (Václav Kopecký, originally fund 100/45), sv. 3, arch. j. 132.

27 *NA*, f. 1494, sv. 47, arch. j. 50, record of a meeting of ÚV KSČ [Central Commitee of Communist Party of Czechoslovakia], 20.4.1956.

28 In the villages, especially in later period, Agricultural Co-operative clubs or village clubs were supposed to be formed.

29 Význam závodních klubů v osvětové a budovatelské práci [The Importance of Works Clubs in Educational and Socialism-Building Activities]. In: *Osvětová práce*, vol. 4, no. 32–33 (1949), p. 13. Generally see POKORNÝ, Jiří: Die Betriebsklubs in der Tschechoslowakei 1945–1968. In: BRENNER, Christiane – HEUMOS, Peter (ed.): *Sozialgeschichtli-*

dition, in some villages and towns model houses of culture were built by local authorities as centres for local cultural and social life. After 1948 lack of funds led to the abandonment of new building projects of this kind and instead abolished private facilities were taken over for the same purpose. Only later, with the "new course" after 1953, did the communist leadership embarked on a new wave of building houses of culture. Here too there was an attempt to influence the use made by citizens of free time, because they were supposed to contribute to the actual building of the cultural centres in their communities by self-help actions (Action Z).[30] We can see a similar development in the founding and building of new sports facilities (Action T, announced in June 1953). From 1950 the actual organisation of hobby, educational and entertainment activities in the houses of culture was entrusted to people's educational societies (*osvětové besedy*) as the basic focus of cultural and adult-educational activities in the communities. To replace the many abolished clubs, societies and associations the communist regime founded new, mass, centrally directed organisations intended to exercise due influence on the cultural use of free time (the Czechoslovak Union of Youth, the Pioneer Organisation of the ČSM, The Czechoslovak Union of Women, the Union for Co-Operation with the Army, the Czechoslovak Society for the Diffusion of Political and Scientific Knowledge, the Czechoslovak Union of Physical Education).

The demand that free time be used in a culturally improving way could be fulfilled quite naturally by visits to artistic performances, museums, galleries and cultural events,[31] whether in the towns or the villages. In the latter, however, such opportunities were much fewer. This was one reason why from 1948 the communist regime made vigorous efforts to develop and implement its plans for the "democratisation of culture", in this context by planned expansion of the network of cultural facilities (including cinemas and public radio systems), and by decentralisation of the theatre network, for example. In the context of changing cultural policy and of the gradual relaxation of social conditions, from the mid-1950s we can see a significant shift in the perception of the function of the arts. This involved the softening of the straightforwardly mobilisational and propagandist conception of the role of the arts and the gradual (re)emergence of entertainment art as a separate branch able to make great headway in the mass media (e.g. popular music). The shift was undoubtedly a small retreat on the part of the regime, i.e.

---

*che Kommunismusforschung: Tschechoslowakei, Polen, Ungarn, DDR 1945–1968.* München, R. Oldenbourg 2005, pp. 263–275. The film comedy *Music from Mars* mentioned earlier criticized the work clubs for over-emphasis on educating the workers and a lack of interest in relaxation and recreation activities. The *Rudé právo* film critic Jiří Plachetka, however, criticised the movie for showing ignorance of the real situation, and claimed that in fact work clubs concentrated exclusively on entertainment, and neglected the promotion of new work methods. (See PLACHETKA, Jiří: Hudba z Marsu. In: *Rudé právo* (3. 6. 1955), p. 3.)

30 See STAŠEK, Jiří – STAŠKOVÁ, Hana: *Kulturní domy* [Houses of Culture]. Praha, Státní nakladatelství technické literatury 1957.

31 Various bombastic exhibitions with a strong ideological message played an important role, for example the exhibition, "30 Years of the KSČ" in 1951.

a compromise between its ideas and the preferences of the majority of society. An observer at the time noted in the magazine *Květen* [May] that the splitting off of entertainment from art was a typical feature of contemporary culture and had to be accepted as a reality; in his view the two were now quite different categories, each of which had to be rated by its own criteria, appropriate to its own different task.[32] The taboo on styles directly associated with American entertainment culture remained, however, and so Western trends that were influential in Czechoslovakia tended to come from France and later also Italy, i.e. cultures with a developed communist cultural scene.[33]

Throughout the period listening to the radio was a very widespread form of individual leisure activity;[34] since the 1930s the number of radio license-holders had been rising fast and in the decade from February 1948 it increased smoothly from 2,100,000 to a historical high point of 2,440,000. In the programming of Czechoslovak Radio we find a certain tension between the cultural-educational component (emphasised still more by village and factory radio programming) preferred by the political organs, and the entertainment programmes such as variety-show and dance music which appealed more to listeners. This was why young listeners in particular often tuned in to foreign stations which offered enough modern dance music, such as AFN Munich or Radio Luxembourg. From the mid-1950s television broadcasting started to influence cultural use of leisure, although it came into its own as a new medium of mass communication and entertainment only rather later. In this early stage we should however note the promotion of collective watching of television programmes in club facilities. This was not a policy motivated just by the relative rarity of television sets in ordinary family homes,[35] but was the natural corollary of the regime's preference for the collective use of free time. In contrast to neighbouring Poland, for example, even in the initial stages of television broadcasting in Czechoslovakia the cultural-educational emphasis was clearly dominant and entertainment played more of a secondary role.

Organised mass trips to artistic performances were an entirely characteristic side of the campaign to democratise culture after February 1948. These trips were at first arranged by the specialised organisation *Umění lidu* [Art for the People] , and later in the years 1950–1952 by the Workers' Cultural Service, before the functions

32 For more detail see FRANC, Martin: *Lid chce zábavu: Konzumní kultura v českých zemích v druhé polovině padesátých let 20. století* [The People Want Entertainment: Consumer Culture in the Czech Lands in the Second Half of the 1950s] (manuscript of 2005).

33 See HAVELKA, Jiří: *Čs. filmové hospodářství 1951–1955* [Czechoslovak Film Management 1951–1955]. Praha, Československý filmový ústav 1972, p. 296; IDEM: *Čs. filmové hospodářství 1956–1960.* Praha, Československý filmový ústav 1973, p. 188.

34 People often listened to the radio just as background both at work and at home. On the political and public role of radio see most recently HOLOMEK, Ondřej: *Rozhlasový odbor ministerstva informací 1945–1953* [The Radio Department of the Ministry of Information 1945–1953], p. 114 (manuscript of degree dissertation, defended at the Faculty of Humanities, Charles University 2007).

35 Especially in the early years of TV broadcasting, purchasing a TV set was extremely expensive in Czechoslovakia.

of the latter were taken over directly by the union organs. In the context of cultural use of free time we should also note the organisation of lectures, systematically developed from the mid-1950s as an important form of adult education. From 1952 the Czechoslovak Society for the Diffusion of Political and Scientific knowledge took the lead in this field, building on the earlier tradition of people's academies. Apart from explicitly ideological goals determined by the needs of the regime (atheist propaganda, correct interpretation of history and particularly modern history), from the second half of the 1950s lectures often focused on the popularisation of scientific advances, primarily in technology and the conquest of space, where Soviet advances caught the popular imagination. Lectures on these subjects enjoyed considerable interest from the general public.[36]

After 1945 and especially after 1948 organised entertainment underwent a series of changes in form and content. In line with the concept of cultural policy following the communist takeover as part of the "education of the people", a campaign was soon launched to get rid of "crass" popular entertainment through which all kinds of traditional popular entertainments were to be remodelled in the spirit of so-called "democratisation".[37] Entertainment and leisure became an integral part of efforts to "build socialism" – and were supposed to become sources providing "new strength for further work", and motivating the masses to greater feats of work performance.[38] (We encounter this concept in the successful 1952 film fairy-tale *The Proud Princess*, in which King Miroslav declares that, "the more people there are at work, the more time will be left for entertainment.") Apart from defining new models of entertainment in 1949 the state authorities proceeded to the direct liquidation of private businesses in the popular entertainment sector and their transfer into nationalised or local-government-run concerns.[39] This process was to be completed only towards the end of the 1950s.

In organised entertainment the "new style of socialist life" was also to be promoted mainly by support for collective entertainment programmes (especially variety shows), often organised with at least some active participation by the workers themselves. Here an important role was played by the National Committees (local government organs – via their local cultural-educational societies), mass organisations and the Music and Artistic Central Office, which from 1950 (under the eloquent slogan "Not even entertainment can be done in the old way") organised the training

36 For more detail see VOLNÁ, Kamila: *Krajský výbor Československé společnosti pro šíření politických a vědeckých znalostí v Ostravě v letech 1952–1965* [The District Committee of the Czechoslovak Society for the Diffusion of Political and Scientific Knowledge in Ostrava 1952–1965] (degree dissertation defended at the Philosophical-Natural Science Faculty of the Silesian University in Opava, 2009).

37 See KNAPÍK, Jiří: *Únor a kultura: Sovětizace české kultury 1948–1950* [February and Culture: The Sovietisation of Czech Culture 1948–1950] . Praha, Libri 2004, pp. 310–312.

38 See e.g. *Kulturní práce*, vol. 4, no. 20 (1949), p. 8.

39 In the field of popular entertainment the state organs distinguished between "programme concerns" (circuses, variety, artistic productions), and "entertainment concerns" (known as "people's technical entertainment").

of variety artists, and courses for the organisers of people's entertainments.[40] Apart from the promotion of leisure entertainment in larger collectives, there was also support for what were known as small forms of popular entertainment, which meant the organisation of social games in public premises. As well as board games (chess, draughts, halma, dominoes), such activities included setting and solving puzzles. Card games, however, were the object of great suspicion and even suppression[41] because of their association with gambling, which the regime considered an illegitimate means of accumulating property.[42] The same attitude was reflected in the problematic status of betting and lotteries in the first period of the communist regime. Generally some grudging and partial toleration for such pursuits came only in the period of the so-called "New Course".

Chess had an interesting place in the field of leisure entertainment. Following the Soviet example, the Czechoslovak communists placed a new emphasis on the cultural-educational value of the game, which could bring together employees of factories and concerns, and citizens of towns and villages of all generations and professions. Chessboards were made available wherever people met in larger numbers, especially in the clubs of the cultural-educational societies and the union (ROH) works clubs. The Revolutionary Trades Union Movement had taken a particularly strong initiative in promoting chess already since 1945. In the mass promotion of chess through the unions the regime even set itself the concrete goal of training 50,000 active chess players and thousands more occasional players by 1953, i.e. over the First Five-Year Plan.[43] As it turned out the year 1953 saw the beginning of the abandonment of this approach; following the establishment of the Chess Section of the State Committee for Physical Education and Sport (the predecessor of the Czechoslovak Union of Physical Education), chess events ceased to be a part of cultural-educational campaigns and gravitated more naturally into the field of physical education and sport. From the mid-1950s at-

40 See DUMEK, Josef: Lidová zábava a osvěta [People's Entertainment and Education], 2. In: *Osvětová práce*, vol. 4, č. 49–50 (1949), p. 14; DUMEK: Pokyny pro uspořádání kursů pořadatelů lidových zábav [Instructions for the Organisation of Courses for Organisers of People's Entertainments]. In: *Ibid*, no. 53–54, p. 21; DROZDOVÁ, Vlastimila: Po staru se nelze ani bavit [It is impossible even to entertain in the old way]. In: *Ibid*; NAUŠ, J.: Hudební a artistická ústředna všem pracujícím [The Music and Artistic Centre to All Workers]. In: *Ibid*, vol. 5, no. 17 (1950), p. 210.

41 DUMEK, Josef: Malé formy lidové zábavy [Small Forms of People's Entertainment]. In: *Ibid*, vol. 6, no. 41 (1951), p. 835.

42 Dislike for games of hazard lasted into a later period – it is not surprising that in the Criminal Code (no. 140/1961) an immoral form of earning characterising parasitism was represented by the instances of prostitution and obtaining money via games of hazard (paragraph 203).

43 See KOTTNAUER, Čeněk: Šach v osvětě [Chess in Education]. In: *Československý šach*, vol. 43, no. 4 (1949), p. 49 ff.; POKORNÝ, Amos: *Pět hodin šachu* [Five Hours of Chess]. Praha, Práce 1950. In this context we should also mention the memoirs of Luděk Pachman *Jak to bylo [How it Was]* (Bělá pod Bezdězem, Aqua Alba 2001).

tempts to produce the largest possible number of chess players was also gradually dropped and the emphasis placed once again on the quality of chess play.

One category of cultural use of leisure time, which of course covered a wide range of pursuits, was that of *citizens' interest activities* – was also partly fostered and financially supported by the state. The rapid development of organised hobby activities after the Second World War may be considered one sign of transition to a modern consumer society, and particularly after the mid-1950s the boom in this sphere was associated with a kind of renaissance of the middle class. Up to this time interest activities had been very seriously deformed by the ideological excesses of the first years of the regime. In this area too there had been artificial imposition of the principles of collectivism, and excessive emphasis on the "people's character" of approved interests – a concept particularly promoted in the hypertrophic "movement" of popular artistic creativity. Great stress was laid on active artistic activity, whether this meant amateur theatre productions, worker poets and writers or factory orchestras.[44] Individual hobby pursuits involving accumulation of property, however, were anathema to the post-1948 concept of proper interest activities – and traditional forms of collecting such as numismatics and philately suffered from an official disapproval that did not soften until the end of the 1950s. There was, however, support for philumeny, i.e. collecting matchbox tops, since this was neither financially demanding nor potentially lucrative and so met the ideological demands of the day.[45] Generally throughout the period the regime preferred citizens to cultivate interests that improved their knowledge (apart from natural sciences and technical skills, national history/ethnography and art), and formed positive attitudes to socialist society, what was known as socialist patriotism and internationalism. For example, this was why after a short period at the beginning of the 1950s, the regime blocked the development of Esperantism and supported People's Russian Courses, which at the time were held on a mass scale.

Hobby activities suffered from the precipitate administrative abolition of a huge number of clubs and associations that had had formed their natural base. Such activities now came under mass organisations (the Revolutionary Union Movement, the Czechoslovak Union of Youth) and adult educational institutions. Soon after 1948 not only the already mentioned chess clubs but also amateur theatre groups, photo-amateur groups, puzzle- and crossword-solving groups, aquarium enthusiasts, angling circles and so on were operating on the platform of the union works clubs and the educational-cultural societies under the National Committees.

44 Depiction of the last example is to be found in the already mentioned comedy *Music from Mars*. One of the characters is the composer and artistic consultant of the factory orchestra Harry Karas (Oldřich Nový), who finds his identity again as an artist in contact with the people and feels socially useful. Artistic sponsorship over districts or firms became usual practice.

45 On this subject see KNAPÍK, Jiří: „Duch Ženevy" a filatelie v Československu: Mezinárodní výstava poštovních známek PRAGA 1955 ["The Spirit of Geneva" and Philately in Czechoslovakia: The International Exhibition of Postage Stamps PRAGA 1955]. In: *Kuděj*, vol. 11, no. 2 (2009), pp. 4–29.

Up to the mid-1950s, however, the state authorities had not got round to clearly setting down the organisational forms for pursuits on the boundaries with the rural economy organs, i.e. breeders of small animals, anglers, gardeners and beekeepers. In this area some traditional associations continued to operate alongside the circles attached to the union work clubs (for example in 1955 the union angling circles, people's angling clubs and the Prague Association of Anglers all co-existed).[46] "Unified" interest unions operating throughout the whole republic were not founded until some years later.

Activities connected with civil defence education constituted a special branch of leisure pursuits. The communist regime supported them as an especially "conscious" expression of loyalty, but it also had a strong interest in thorough-going control of all skills among civilians that related to the defence of the state. The communists therefore first dissolved the Union of Defence (in 1949) and then in 1951 replaced it with the Union for Co-operation with the Army (*Svazarm*). This union was the framework for the activities of motorists and motorcyclists, sports aviators, radio-amateurs, model plane fans and dog trainers. In the field of physical education it took rather longer for organisational clarity to be established, and the Czechoslovak Union of Physical Education was founded as late as 1956.

Despite all the discontinuities (radical shifts in values, organisation and personnel), in the first postwar decade interest activities remained an important and recognised element of the cultural resources of Czech society. This status was evident for example in relatively stable funding in the new organisational conditions and in the publication of a range of specialised magazines or at least internal bulletins.[47] In some "hobby" fields Czechs managed to defend or gain an international reputation at least in Central Europe. In traditional fields we should at least mention the puzzle-solvers and crossword-solvers movement, and also Czech philately, which from the mid-1950s started to regain its international fame. As regards new fields we should mention the achievements of Czech modelling (especially model aircraft), and the activity of dozens of philumeny circles involving several thousand matchbox-top collectors.

The demand for the cultural, or indeed cultured, use of leisure time applied not just to free time in the evenings or on weekends but also to vacation time. In gen-

46 See *Všeodborový archiv Českomoravské komory odborových svazů* [All-Union Archive of the Bohemian-Moravian Chamber of Unions], Praha (*VOA*), f. Ústřední kulturně-propagační oddělení ÚRO, karton (k.) 151, inventární jednotka (inv. j.) 142.

47 Of the classic fields let us mention the magazines *Filatelie*, *Numismatické listy*, *Československý šach*. Other such magazines with a prewar tradition included *Hádanka a křížovka* [Puzzle and Crossword] (published from 1949, after the liquidation of several society periodicals), *Elektronik – Radioamatér* (1948–1951, later *Amatérské radio*) or *Akvaristické listy* (up to 1951, then from 1958 *Akvárium a terárium*). The magazine *Letecký modelář – Aircraft Modeller* (from 1963 under the title *Modelář*) came out from 1950, and from 1961 also také *Železniční modelář – Railway Modeller*. Many activities on the basis of Svazarm were recorded from 1953 by *Obránce vlasti* [Defenders of the Homeland]. The ROH works clubs published a range of bulletins for philumenists.

eral the communist regime tried to ensure that *seasonal vacations* were used not only for physical relaxation but for appropriate forms of self-education and improvement, which were formulated in more detail by state adult-education policy. This principle was very much at work in the approach (typical of the time) to the exploitation of castles, chateaux and other monuments, which offered ideal opportunities to convey the correct ideological interpretation of national history and suchlike to the broader masses.[48] Although the first steps to the opening of castles and stately homes to the public were taken in 1949, the state showed a more systematic interest in opening them up only rather later, in 1952, after the reorganisation of the system of monument care and enlargement of the role of National Committees. Here too, however, the effect of the political changes associated with the declaration of the "New Course" in 1953 was important. Another significant development in this context came in the second half of the 1950s. With the increasing boom in hiking (and internal tourism generally), support for union works recreation and the development of automobilism, excursions to monuments became a strongly promoted element of the new "socialist life style". At this point the regime showed even more interest in the quality and ideological reliability of the guides in castles and chateaux. Indeed, throughout the 1950s these guides had to contend with permanent criticism from the authorities.

In 1945 the Revolutionary Trades Union Movement (ROH) started organising "recreational vacations" in the republic for workers-union members. In the following decade these vacations were to become one of the main forms of cultural life organised by the centralized unions, which took a major part in operating and building holiday facilities in attractive tourist localities. Two basic types of ROH recreational holiday for adults soon crystallised: ROH selective recreation and factory/work recreation. Up to the end of the 1950s selective recreation was provided to chosen employees purely as a reward for work performance, and did not involve family members; each year around a quarter million people were sent on these holidays. Another distinctive feature of ROH selective recreation was that it involved (non-compulsory), full-day cultural and sports programmes arranged by specially allocated officials; these would most often feature organised walking tours, sports, cultural performances, evening dances, film-screenings, meetings/discussions with sports people, members of the mountain service or foresters (organised discussions simply among the vacationers themselves were not unusual). By contrast factory recreation was arranged by individual factories/firms in their own recreational facilities. Unlike selective recreation there was usually no joint programme for participants, and it was left up to the individual to decide whether to spend the time by himself or with family or get together with others for collective

48 See KNAPÍK, Jiří – ŠOPÁK, Pavel: „Procházel místnostmi, ze sešitu četl a rukama ukazoval…" Státní hrady a zámky v letech 1948–1960. Mezi vědou a dovolenou ["He Walked through the Rooms, Reading from His Book and Pointing…" State Castles and Chateaux 1948–1960. Between Science and Vacation]. In: *Acta historica Universitatis Silesianae Opaviensis*, vol. 3, no. 3 (2010), pp. 197–209.

activities (walking tours, cultural programmes and so on). The official allocated for helping with the programme was available if needed. Union recreation vacations were only to become relatively mass in scale later, however, in the 1960s.[49]

## *Leisure Time for Children and Young People*

The communist regime showed special interest in children and young people, since it considered this age group the most easily manipulated and open to the new system of values. At every suitable occasion public officials would laud the coming generation as a kind of advanced guard of socialism, essentially unencumbered by the pernicious "legacy of capitalism". This view underlay the clear tendency to create generationally separate forms of use of leisure time for adults and children.[50] All the free time available to children was considered a potential space for instilling "the calling to building socialism". It is interesting that from the beginning the regime had no hesitation about applying "class" criteria to children, declaring working-class youth to be the elite of the young generation.[51]

The politicisation of children and young people as a group was already evident in the postwar years before February 1948. In these years the most visible disputes had been over rival youth organisations, with the Union of Czech Youth vying with *Junák* [the Czech scouts], *Sokol* and *Orel*. Heated discussion on the character (and so ideological stamp) of children's hobby activities already prefigured the future direction of development. Here we should mention at least the controversy over the profile of the then most popular children's weekly *Vpřed* [Forward], which was criticised (and by no means just from radical leftist positions) for supposedly pandering to vulgar tastes and warping young people's taste.[52] Following February 1948 the world of children was soon invaded by quite aggressive expressions of the new state ideology. The period of greatest pressure at the end of the 1940s and beginning of the 1950s, when Pavel Morozov and Julius Fučík, who dedicated their entire lives to the fulfilment of socialist ideals and gave their lives for the cause, were presented to children and young people as universal role models. This idealised image was then elaborated in a series of fictional characters, espe-

49 *VOA*, f. Předsednictvo ÚRO, k. 75, inv. j. 420; also VEVERKOVÁ, Hana – HRDINA, Miroslav: *Závodní rekreace ROH* [ROH Work Recreation]. Praha, Práce 1964; LABSKÁ, Helena: *Cestování jako alternativa trávení volného času v 60. letech 20. století v Československu* [Travelling as an Alternative Way to Spend Leisure Time in Czechoslovakia in the 1960s] (degree dissertation, defended at the University of Economics in Prague, 2008).

50 Especially at the end of the 1940s and beginning of the 1950s there were major efforts to transfer the upbringing of children and young people from the family to boarding school conditions. The model had been proposed by certain Soviet teachers.

51 See *VOA*, f. Organizační oddělení ÚRO, k. 55, inv. j. 233, Celostátní konference dělnické mládeže 1948 [Nationwide Conference of Working-Class Youth 1948].

52 See PÍREK, Zdeněk: *Čtenářské kluby Jaroslava Foglara* [The Jaroslav Foglar Readers' Clubs]. Brno, Delfín 1990, pp. 120–131.

cially from Soviet literature (for example *Timur and his Band* by Arkady Gaidar), in books which became compulsory school reading for children.

The *activism* demanded of children and young people, which it became the task of the "unified" Czechoslovak Union of Youth and its Pioneer Organisation to inspire and organise on a permanent basis, was exemplified by project-events of the type "*Mládež vede Brno*" ["Youth Leads Brno"] (1949–1950) and the "youth construction", projects with roots that went back into the pre-February-1948 period.[53] Voluntary work on a "youth construction" was considered the ideal use of leisure time in vacations, as is evident on the example from the forced incorporation of this theme into the very popular long-standing comic-strip serial about the *Rychlé šípy* [Fast Arrows] in the last two issues of the (soon banned) magazine *Vpřed* [Forward].[54] Participation in various voluntary work schemes was expected not only of young people, but even of children of school age, who for example would help to eradicate what was called the "American Beetle", i.e. Colorado potato beetle.[55]

From around the mid-1950s the ideological pressures on the leisure time of children and young people gradually became less intense. This was not, however, a complete reversal but merely a dropping of some of the excesses of preceding years, since the regime continued to declare its interest in supervising and influencing all the hobby activities of children and young people. It was in this period, in February 1956, that the Central Committee of the KSČ adopted the resolution, "On nationally directed actions in the sector of work with children", which was accepted as the basic guideline for the organised out-of-school activities of children. At the end of the 1950s, in the context of re-assessment of the question of the leisure time of adults (parents) and gradual modernisation of lifestyles, there were moves to formulate new principles for the activities of the youngest generation as well. One important factor at this point was the changing age-structure of Communist Party membership and resulting greater anxiety about the possible radicalism of young people.

Naturally from the point of view of the state the most significant instrument for influencing the leisure activities of children and young people was the *school,* which party documents saw as the main agent in the "battle for the soul of the youngest generation". The whole process of education instilled new values in children, and taught them to apply them not just in the school but in a variety of out-of-school activities.

53 Viz *NA*, f. 1532 (Odborová komise ÚV KSČ a Odborové oddělení ÚV KSČ 1945–1957, originally fund 40), sv. 15, arch. j. 228; BARTOŠ, Josef: *Československý svaz mládeže v letech 1945–1955*. Praha 1958, pp. 99–102; PERNES, Jiří: Mládež vede Brno: Otto Šling a jeho brněnská kariéra (1945–1950) [The Young Lead Brno: Otto Šling and His Brno Career (1945–1950)]. In: *Soudobé dějiny*, vol. 11, no. 3 (2004), pp. 45–60.

54 See *Vpřed*, vol. 3, no. 44 and 45 (1947–1948).

55 See FORMÁNKOVÁ, Pavlína: Kampaň proti „americkému brouku" a její politické souvislosti [The Campaign against the "American Beetle" and its Political Contexts]. In: *Paměť a dějiny*, vol. 2, no. 1 (2008), pp. 22–38.

The mass reading campaign, Fučík's Badge, launched in the autumn of 1949 and continuing with certain modification in the next decades[56], played an important part in the process. Civic education was also supposed to explain the principles of the new "socialist morality" to the young. Children were taught to apply these principles in the self-government of school classes, and – characteristically for the period – these principles were supposed to be applied outside the school in the spirit of consolidating the ties of the school with practical life. In the effort to influence *out-of-school activities* schools co-operated with the Czechoslovak Union of Youth and its Pioneer Organisation, which soon after February 1948 had gained a monopoly on the organisation of young people and children, and sometimes with physical education and public educational institutions. The aim was to fill all children's free time throughout the week, including Saturdays and Sundays and holidays, "with cultural and joyful collective life, which will strengthen their health and have a favourable effect on the children's attitude to school and learning, to the Pioneer organisation and the deepening of love for country."[57] It should of course be noted that the level of ideologisation of different activities was far from uniform, and was influenced by the approach of the individual adult leader.

By the second half of the 1950s specific new forms of entertainment and possibilities for organised use of leisure time had developed in the Czech Lands. These were formed according to the principles mentioned above with adjustment to domestic traditions, but were often also imports from the Soviet Union. The common denominator of many leisure activities of children and young people was *a collective concept of entertainment and education and emphasis on the mass character of hobby or interest activities.* Especially in the first years following February 1948 success in the promotion of this concept was measured in statistics, and this approach inevitably led to forced participation in projects and obvious multiplication of projects and events merely for the sake of improving the statistics. Both deformations eventually attracted official criticism (from 1952). One typical example was the Youth Creativity Competition, which was started shortly before February 1948 in the Czech Union of Youth, and which served to showcase all kinds of art circles, but also youth work collectives. The violation of the voluntary principle in hobbies and leisure interests, and the excessive top-down direction of these activities contrasted sharply with the pre-1948 years. For example from 1946 the phenomenon of readers' clubs, which had been interrupted by the Nazi occupation, had started to flourish again, and the already mentioned magazine *Vpřed* had managed to appeal to a large section of the young population readers' club idea and to inspire young people to enthusiasm for the poetics of nature, friendship and adventure.

56 For detail on the Fučík Badge see BAUER, Michal: *Ideologie a paměť: Literatura a instituce na přelomu 40. a 50. let 20. století* [Ideology and Memory: Literature and Institutions at the Turn of the 1940s/50s]. Jinočany, H&H 2003, pp. 186–214.

57 O celostátně řízených akcích na úseku práce s dětmi: Usnesení z 9. února 1956. In: *Od X. do XI. sjezdu: Usnesení a dokumenty ÚV KSČ.* Praha, Státní nakladatelství politické literatury 1958, p. 209.

By 1950, however, the idea of readers' clubs had been suppressed and the official substitutes were unable to rival them in terms of spontaneity.

What were known as of *hrátky* ["high jinks"]" and *mevro* [an abbreviation of Mezinárodní výstavy rozhlasu – International Radio Exhibition] were interesting experiments in the creation of a new type of entertainment for the young. "High jinks" forms of variety show in which the demand for a collective concept in which the performer/audience distinction was broken down and young people actively participated in a succession of musical numbers, dance, song, satirical sketches, quiz games, competitions and such like. They were at their most popular at the end of the 1940s and beginning of the 1950s, and after a certain fading of interest were revived as "high jinks for youth", and promoted from the mid-1950s.[58] "Mevro", evenings of entertainment with a cultural programme, drew on the success of the international radio exhibition organised in Czechoslovakia in the spring of 1948.[59]

Apart from entertainment, out-of-school activities for children included a whole range of predominantly educational activities. A major organising role here was taken on by the newly established *školní družiny* [school companies – organisations which provided supervision and activities for children after lessons until parents had finished work and could collect them]. The *school companies* ran a range of *hobby circles*,[60] which were supposed to develop interest in technical and artistic creativity in the children's collective. Children's organised leisure time in the 1950s also included sport, which was regarded as the first step to more demanding military training, regular campaigns for the collection of waste raw materials, which gave the young generation the illusion that it participates in supporting the national economy, or cultivating plants on school allotments. Interest in nature and the countryside, including hiking (a substitute for scouting) developed and gained official support only slowly from the mid-1950s.

Children's possibilities for use of leisure time were of course affected by *differences between the urban and rural environment.* Despite the officially promoted campaign to bring culture to the villages, life in the country only gradually, by fits and starts, came closer to urban life in its leisure opportunities (travelling cinemas, television, range of cultural events, motorisation). In the country and small towns the main aim of the communist regime as regards leisure (and an aim in which its success was only very limited), was to disconnect rural children from church traditions and customs. One of the regime's first steps in this direction was

58 A representative sample of the activities of "high jinks" participants is described in the cyclostyled journal *Hrátče*. See also Lh: Hrátky mládeže. In: *Osvětová práce*, vol. 10, no. 2 (1955), p. 30.

59 See ŠEVČÍK, Jindra: Dělali jsme malé MEVRO [We Made a Small MEVRO]. In: *Ibid.,* vol. 4, no. 6 (1949), p. 8 ff.; Estrády při konferencích [Variety Shows at Conferences]. In: *Kulturní práce*, vol. 3, no. 19 (1949), p. 2.

60 See Družiny školní mládeže [Companies of School-Age Young People]. In: *Naše domácnost*, vol. 6, no. 12 (1951), p. 178. One specific form of the time was what were known as mičurinské kroužky [Micurin circles]; this ideologically coloured name, however, in some cases concealed ordinary natural science circles.

to ban operators of "people's technical entertainment" (i.e. funfair) organisations from attending any church festivals throughout the year.[61] A further step was to concentrate on building up new secular festival traditions that would compete with church festivals on the same dates. All available cultural-educational instruments were employed to this end, including (as an ultra-modern advance) the collective watching of television in clubs. For example in 1956 festivals associated with International Children's Day (celebrated from 1950) were strung out over several days (from the 1st to the 10th of June) in the hope of keeping families and children away from the church feasts of Corpus Christi. From the mid-1950s the communist leadership deliberately ensured that TV programmes for children and young people would be transmitted on Sunday mornings (the time of Sunday mass), and so created a broadcasting tradition that has essentially continued to this day.[62] While in Czech society these steps proved more or less successful, in neighbouring Poland similar attempts on the part of communist power to do battle with the much stronger Catholic faith ran into much greater difficulties.[63]

From the seasonal point of view it was the summer vacation period that was the greatest challenge for the communist regime as far as children's leisure time was concerned. In this context the Czechoslovak Union of Youth and National Committees were supposed to organise a series of whole-day collective activities, specifically hiking trips, sports contexts, campfires, carnivals, variety shows, plays, children's film screenings, trips to agricultural co-operatives, state farms and tractor stations for urban children. Then in the 1950s the phenomenon of summer *Pioneer camps* was developed.

Up to the mid-1950s the system known as "unified summer children's recreation" applied in Czechoslovakia. This meant that children, especially from the towns and industrial areas, would go to camps in groups that more or less coincided with the basic Pioneer collectives in schools. The summer camps were organised by the National Committees. For example in 1951 around three hundred thousand children attended Pioneer camps, two thirds of them from the Czech Lands. This centralised system proved very demanding on the state administration, however, and also very costly for the state budget, and so it was fundamentally reformed.[64]

61 See KACÍŘ, Petr: Lidová technická zábava na severní Moravě a ve Slezsku v letech 1948–1960 [People's Technical Entertainment in Northern Moravia and Silesia 1948–1960]. In: *Acta historica et museologica Universitatis Silesianae Opaviensis*, č. 3. Opava, Slezská univerzita Opava 1997, p. 236.

62 O celostátně řízených akcích na úseku práce s dětmi, p. 210 (see note 57).

63 A major clash was provoked in Poland by 1 May 1949, which fell on a Sunday (see OSĘKA, Piotr: *Rytuały stalinizmu: Oficjalne święta i uroczystości rocznicowe w Polsce 1944–1956*. Warszawa, Trio 2006, pp. 95–102.

64 *VOA*, f. Předsednitvo ÚRO, k. 75, inv. j. 420, recod of the meeting of the ÚRO [Central Council of the Trade Unions] 18.8.1965. Helena Labská in her degree dissertation, *Cestování jako alternativa trávení volného času v 60. letech 20. století v Československu* [Travelling as an Alternative Way of Spending Leisure Time in the 1960s in Czechoslovakia], defended at the University of Economics in Prague, 2008, touches briefly on the organisation of children's camps after 1955. The organisation and concept of Pioneer camps in 1948

In September 1955 the government decided that the organisation of the children's camps should be taken over by social organisations, above all the Revolutionary Trades Union Movement (ROH). This meant that individual firms/works had to use their own resources to fund the camps and increasing use was made of parents as volunteer camp staff. With this reform Czechoslovakia came to partially apply the system already used in some other states of the Soviet bloc, specifically in the German Democratic Republic, Poland and the Soviet Union;[65] Pioneer camps becoming a kind of parallel to the recreation for adults, likewise provided by individual unions, and this is why they were often known as "children's union recreation". From 1956 with the change of organisers there was also a change in the composition of the children's collectives in the camps; children now went to the camps not on the basis of common membership of a Pioneer group in schools, but on the basis of having at least one parent working at the firm that ran the camp. Entirely new collectives were thus created at the camps.

A special form of children's vacation, but one accessible only to a very narrow group of children above all from the new social elites, was participation in international Pioneer camps abroad. The most famous was undoubtedly the Soviet Artyek camp in the Crimea, opened already in 1925. Selective international children's camps were also held in Czechoslovakia. There were some attempts to organise free time in the winter vacations, but these attracted perceptibly less interest from the public.

From the mid-1940s and during the 1950s the *media* was an ever more formative influence on the leisure time of children and young people. The radio and children's press could of course build on earlier traditions. A decree of the Ministry of Education in 1949 made radio broadcasts for schools, which had been introduced in Czechoslovakia at the end of the 1920s, obligatory for schools of the first and second level, but it still retained significant formal quality. In terms of content the broadcasts naturally reflected the demands of the regime which were already expressed in the curricula. On other broadcasts the radio department for children and young people cooperated with the Czechoslovak Union of Youth, and so radio had some impact on the work of the Pioneer groups. 1953 saw the launch of a separate radio programme for children, titled *Pionýrská jitřenka* [Pioneer Morning Star]. Apart from concerts for young people (from 1952), arts broadcasting for the young consisted of a traditional Sunday afternoon fairy-tale and a Saturday drama for young people, usually an adventure story. Hobby and interest activities were promoted

is described for example in the collective work *Jak vést tábory a zotavovny* [How to Manage Camps and Recreation Facilities] (Praha, Československý svaz mládeže 1950) and the collection *Prázdniny pionýrů* [Pioneer Vacations] (Praha, Státní pedagogické nakladatelství 1952). The latter work contains some criticism of the so-called formalism in work with children, especially in ideological education.

65 See *Pionýrské tábory ROH* [ROH Pioneer Camps]. Praha, Práce 1957, p. 5. A translation of the collection *Pionýrský tábor* [The Pioneer Camp] (Praha, Mladá fronta 1954), published in the USSR two years earlier, was supposed to assist in promotion of the Soviet conception of Pioneer camps in Czechoslovakia.

by the travelogue programme *Pohledy do světa* [Views of the World] (from 1951), the programme *U táborového ohně* [At the Campfire] (from 1954) and the scientific and technical broadcast *Paprsek* [Ray]. Magazines for children and young people also stimulated children's creativity, but even these – especially at the end of the 1940s and beginning of the 1950s, were weighed down with a political tendentiousness that made many of the pieces in them contrived and stiff;[66] here let us mention *Mateřídouška* [Thyme] (from 1945), *Ohníček* [Bonfire] (from 1950) and for older readers *Věda a technika mládeži* [Science and Technology for Young People] (1947–1954 under the title *Mladý technik* [The Young Technician]). The beginning of the 1950s saw a rapid development of children's films, including not only cartoon, animated and acted fairy-tales, but also more demanding dramas. Some of the film fairy-tales of the time have remained popular to this day (*Pyšná princezna* [The Proud Princess] of 1952, *Byl jednou jeden král…* [Once upon a Time there was a king…] of 1954). Television programmes for children were a novelty; it took some time for the children's TV section to find a profile but from 1955 *Pionýrský měsíčník* [Pioneer Monthly], and *Pionýrské aktuality* [Pioneer News] were broadcast regularly and the first television drama production for children, *Robinsonka* based on the novel by Marie Majerová, was broadcast in February 1956.[67]

## *Concluding Remarks*

The official propaganda of Czechoslovakia in the first years after February 1948 had a highly specific approach to leisure time and even regarded this area of life with a certain suspicion and unease. In line with the ethos of building a "new society" the regime tried to minimise the amount of free time spent by citizens without the supervision of official institutions and at the same time to exploit free time as a reservoir for improving work productivity, seeing leisure as ideally a matter of physical recuperation and self-education. The authorities strongly preferred collective over individual use of leisure time and created a series of new forms for it.

This basic framework started to change around the mid-1950s. With the adoption of new economic and social priorities, the communist regime in 1956 reduced working hours, which had previously been extraordinarily long. This change was associated with the perceived need for a new concept of leisure time in society

66 For the most recent view of this subject see Štefan Švec's manuscript of degree dissertation *Dějiny českojazyčných časopisů pro děti v letech 1850–1989* [The History of Czech-Language Magazines for Children 1850–1989], defended at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University in Prague 2010 (210 pp. + 2 vols. of card indexes and supplements amounting to 785 pp.).

67 See JEŠUTOVÁ, Eva et al.: *Od mikrofonu k posluchačům: Z osmi desetiletí Českého rozhlasu* [From the Microphone to the Listeners: Eight Decades of Czech Radio]. Praha, Český rozhlas 2003, pp. 268–272; KÖPPLOVÁ, Barbara et al.: *Dějiny českých médií v datech: Rozhlas, televize, mediální právo* [The History of Czech Media in Dates: Radio, Television, Media Law]. Praha, Karolinum 2003, p. 201.

and there was a retreat from some ideologically extreme notions in this respect. There thus emerged a certain space for the individualisation of free time, which in the context of a marked improvement in living standards and some opening up to western influences (developments which intensified in the 1960s) gradually acquired consumerist forms. This process was assisted by the spread of technical advances through the population, particularly the various appliances making household work easier (refrigerators, washing machines, food processors, vacuum cleaners) increasing automobile ownership and media entertainment (television, tape recorder, transistor radios). The need to find new approaches to the organisation of leisure time led the official institutions involved to a certain pro-active policy and they started to see citizens as clients for whose favour they had to compete among themselves in order to defend their position in the system.

Particularly in the case of young people we can see a gradual retreat from the politically and ideologically motivated direction of leisure-time activities, which had often involved their complete formalisation and an emptying out of original content. This development was more or less visible in the other groups of the population as well. The authorities observed the process of depoliticisation, growing apathy and the adjustment of officially preferred forms of leisure activity to individual needs with great concern and tried to counter it in all possible ways. Sometimes, however, they had to find compromise solutions, which reflected more the individual interests. On the other hand, not even these regime elements were immune to social trends and so their view on the significance of leisure in the life of the individual and society was likewise changing.

*The Czech version of this artile, entitled* "Na člověka najíždíme další čtvrtletí." Volný čas v českých zemích v letech 1948–1956, *was originally published in Soudobé dějiny, vol. 17, no. 4 (2010), pp. 613-640. It is a part of the "Leisure Time in the Czech Lands 1957–1967" project supported by Czech Science Foundation (GA ČR 409/09/0326).*

# The Stigma of the Past and the Bond of Belonging

*Czech Communists in the First Decade after 1989*

Michal Kopeček

Every revolution is a historical rupture leading to a major re-appraisal of identities. The modern world, unlike traditional society, is a world of rapid change demanding the capacity to adjust and considerable flexibility of individual and collective identity. From this point of view the democratic Czechoslovak revolution of 1989, which replaced state socialism with liberal democracy, was a genuine albeit non-violent revolution. Yet not even the most radical revolution can sever all ties with the past, and the Central European revolutions of 1989 were not radical. The Czech communists would seem to be an example of a strong connection between the former socialist dictatorship and the capitalist democracy established after the Velvet Revolution. What picture emerges, however, if we look at the nature of this connection from the point of view of Czech communists themselves as actors in post-1989 Czech politics?[1]

The political public in the Czech Republic and abroad usually considers the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSČM) to be an unreformed successor party, a fossil of past times in the new democratic era and an unpleasant stumbling block in a political system which otherwise functions reasonably well. In this context the KSČM plays the role of a party opposed to the system itself, and in some eyes even an extremist party, which has been and still is subject to a "convention

1 I would like to thank Martin Franc, Pavel Kolář and Tomáš Zahradníček for constructive criticism and comments on the text.

of exclusion" from the community of other political actors (but only at state level, since in local communal and also regional politics coalitions with the communists are common practice). This convention is supported and politically exploited by the great majority of Czech non-communist politicians and is accepted as a standard, i.e. acceptable or essential, by most Czech political journalists and commentators. One of the main arguments for the exclusion convention is the adjective "communist" in the party's name, which has been the subject of major debate above all inside the KSČM itself, with the majority of the ordinary membership repeatedly insisting that it be retained. In the eyes of the actors in Czech public life, the fact that the party has not renounced its "communist identity", and so has "not come to terms with its own past" is proof of its allegedly undemocratic character. The repeated assertions of commitment to democracy to be found in practically every more important party document, like the democratic rhetoric of the leading communist party politicians, are regarded as mostly mere camouflage, masking the real interests of the communists. The critics do not usually spell out these interests in detail, but with reference to historical experience with Czech and Czechoslovak communists in the period 1945–1989 the Czech communists are usually suspected of wanting to usurp political power, establish an egalitarian social order, bring in blanket nationalisation and restrictions on private ownership, liquidate political opponents and suchlike.

Czech political scientists as a rule take a less emotional and alarmist view of the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia, but often not even academic efforts at non-partisan analysis are quite able to rise above the tropes of majority political discourse with its potent metaphor of communist political rhetoric as deceit masking the real aims of a dishonourable player. Many political scientists share the view that the KSČM is an anti-system party, and that this creates a potentially dangerous situation for the political system, and in certain circumstances for the party itself as well. Various different ideas have been put forward on how to characterise and situate the party within existing analytical typologies: they have included the definition of the KSČM as mainly neo-communist (Petr Fiala and others), or as a "neo-communist subculture party" (the British political scientist Seán Hanley), or as a special type of post-communist radical socialist party with neo-communist tendencies (Maxmilián Strmiska), as well as the seriously misleading definition of the party as Neo-Leninist, dogmatic, Marxist-Leninist etc. (Stanislav Balík, Adam Drda, Petr Dudek). With the exception of the last, these characterisations are all based on analysis of the successive programmes of the Czech communists since 1989.

By contrast, the "zero coalition potential" of the party is deduced less from the programmes than from the alleged unwillingness of the KSČM to subject itself to proper criticism of its own past and the era of dictatorship ("totalitarianism") that its direct predecessor, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, had on its conscience. It is on this theme that Czech political analysts show the greatest tendency to adopt value-laden assumptions that have their origin in the Czech cultural political struggle of the last twenty years. Thus the self-critical attitude showed

by Czech communists at the turn of 1989/90 as well as occasional critical comments made by some current communist leaders on the party's past, including statements rejecting the nostalgia of some party members for the good old days of the former regime, are often dismissed as duplicitous and evasive manoeuvres primarily intended to mask the inability of the party to reform itself and become a part of democratic life.[2]

Foreign political scientists (András Bozóki, John T. Ishiyama, Anna M. Grzymala-Busse, Seán Hanley) tend to be less fixated on questions of the ways in which Czech communists today interpret Czech and Czechoslovak modern history. They see the factor of the past in political discourse of the KSČM less as the moral problem from which its democratic (un)trustworthiness springs, and more as a practical question relating to the cohesion of the membership and the party's identity, self-perception and self-presentation both to the outside world and internally. Comparison with the relatively successful self-transformation of other former communist parties (the Polish, Hungarian, Rumanian and others) highlights a series of differences, with one of the most important being the failure of the KSČM to "come to terms" with the past because it lacked a sufficiently capable reformist leadership and chose a different survival strategy. This is usually explained with reference to the different position of the Czech communist party in the political conditions of the year 1989, which is in turn related to the different conditions and type of communist regime in the 1970s and 1980s.

The present article looks at the ways in which the party has treated its totalitarian-authoritarian past in the 1990s, especially in the first half of the decade. Unlike analyses by political scientists, it is not intended to define, on the basis of the so-called "coming to terms with the past", the position of KSČM in the political system or stipulate criteria for the party's potential reform in the direction of "normality". The attitude to the past interests me primarily from the point of view of the internal development of the party as a collective political actor, the function of images of the past in this context, and also the function of mental and practical models of "usable past" in the evolution of the intellectual and ideological profiling of the party over the first decade of Czech democracy post-1989. My focus is, then, the past as a factor in the search for an identity, which developed in dramatic negotiations between party leaders and their fractions, the membership base and the external political environment.[3] My premise is that reflection of the party's past,

2 See e.g. BALÍK, Stanislav: The Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia and Its Attitude towards Own History. In: KOPEČEK, Lubomír (ed.): *Trajectories of the Left: Social Democratic and (Ex-)Communist Parties in Contemporary Europe. Between Past and Future*. Brno, Centrum pro studium demokracie a kultury 2005, pp. 140–149; DRDA, Adam – DUDEK, Petr: *Kdo ve stínu čeká na moc: Čeští komunisté po listopadu 1989* [Who Waits for Power in the Shadows: Czech Communists after November 1989]. Praha – Litomyšl, Paseka 2006.

3 Given the considerable range of primary and secondary sources on the theme, this study cannot be an exhaustive treatment of it. My principal aim is to present a concrete analytical perspective and outline the main developmental trends in the framework it provides. As yet the most comprehensive treatment of post-1989 Czech communism as a political and

whether critical in spirit or not, played a fundamental role in the party's ultimately successful efforts to survive in a time of fundamental transformation of the political order.

## *The Struggle for Reform and Images of the Past*

In December 1989, in a special declaration issued by a special congress, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia apologised to the citizens of Czechoslovakia for wrong-doings, repression, suppression of freedom, and errors, mistakes and offences against humanity in the past period of its rule. Yet in the spring of 1990 the Czech communists did not take the path chosen by many other communist parties in Central and Eastern Europe but instead opted for continuity, maintaining the membership and the communist identity, and so inevitably many aspects of the communist past. This decision was the source of the dilemma that has haunted the Czech communists to this day: how to harmonise the party's emphatic communist identity, moreover a communist identity based explicitly on national historical experience (i.e. historical memory, and not just radical left-wing programme), with a critical attitude to its own past.

The Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSČM) was founded at its constitutive congress in March 1990, not as the direct successor organisation to the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSČ) but as a territorial component organisation of the latter, which still existed. The step, which only came at the time the dictatorship crumbled, was a belated federalisation of party structure: the Communist Party of Slovakia had existed since 1930, and the KSČM was conceived as its mirror counterpart, a territorial party organisation in the Czech part of the Republic which was intended to be politically active primarily in the context of the Czech National Assembly. Thus until the dissolution of the federal Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, for a time the Communist Party of Czecho-Slovakia (KSČS) in April 1992, the KSČM was still just a component of the mother party. The man elected as the first chairman of the Czech party, Jiří Machalík, was a rather featureless individual; the choice reflected the perceptions of the time, for the Central Committee of the overall state party the KSČ, headed at this point by its chairman Ladislav Adamec, was still regarded as the main power centre. Soon after the loss of the monopoly on power, and above all after the departure of the party into opposition following the first free elections in June 1990, however, the political centre of party life rapidly bifurcated and shifted to the two national parties. The growing divergence between Czech and Slovak political conditions and views in the first two years after the fall of the old regime also found expression in differences of perception

social phenomenon is a collection of political science articles: FIALA, Petr – HOLZER, Jan – MAREŠ, Miroslav – PŠEJA, Pavel: *Komunismus v České republice* [Communism in the Czech Republic]. Brno, Masarykova univerzita 1999.

of the situation in the two national communist parties, and consequent adoption of very different political strategies.

Formally the KSČM became the successor organisation only after the dissolution of the federal party, its successor status being evident in terms of continuity of property, membership and organisational structure. All the same, the party numbers its congresses from its own first congress, i.e. starting in 1990. The ambivalence surrounding its successor status was strategically useful, and consciously exploited by the new leadership because it facilitated (at least formally) the party's efforts to repudiate many aspects of the "totalitarian past of the party", while at the same time allowing it to retain most of the advantages attendant on successor status.[4] This duality in relation to the party's past and the whole country was encouraged from the outset by other factors too. After 17th of November 1989 the KSČ lost the initiative, and for several months, dragged along in the wake of events, it became a patently passive player in the democratic revolution. The political dialogue between the democratic movement represented by *Občanské fórum* [Civic Forum], and in Slovakia by *Verejnosť proti násiliu* [Public against Violence], and the representatives of communist power was not the dialogue of a popular movement with a tight, organised political structure, as was the case in Poland, for example. On the defensive and lacking self-confidence, the party was incapable of playing a pro-active role in political processes developing at breakneck speed. The negotiations with the opposition were conducted by a few high-ranking government and party protagonists, who represented the more "reformist" and so more publicly acceptable face of the party: the prime minister of the federal government Ladislav Adamec, the minister (and later Adamec's successor) Marián Čalfa and the chairman of the Socialist Youth Union Vasil Mohorita. Yet despite the disarray of the party, the very fact of the round table negotiations, and later in the spring of 1990 the planning and preparations for the first free elections, and specifically the so-called "small law on political parties" recognising the KSČ as a legal political subject, were all considerable sources of support for the party in the hour of its greatest crisis of confidence and identity. This was because in practice they added up to a political and legal guarantee of the legitimacy of the party's existence.[5]

Immediately after November 1989, the basic reaction of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia was one of de facto acceptance of the change of political order and acute awareness of the need to develop a strategy of defensive adaptation as a pluralist political system was born. The Extraordinary Congress hastily convened on the 20th and 21st of December 1989 acknowledged the loss of the so-called "leading role of the party in society" and unambiguously approved acceptance

4 See Programové prohlášení KSČM: Materiál přijatý ustavujícím sjezdem KSČM [Programme Declaration of the KSČM: Material Adopted by the Constituent Congress of the KSČM] 31.3.1990 (see *http://www.sds.cz/view.php?cisloclanku=2008032807*, downloaded 16.2.2009).

5 For an understanding of the overall political situation see SUK, Jiří: *Labyrintem revoluce: Aktéři, zápletky a křižovatky jedné politické krize* [The Labyrinth of Revolution: Actors, Plots and Crossroads of a Political Crisis]. Praha, Prostor 2003.

of the rules and conditions of the emerging Czechoslovak democracy. With a clear reference to the radical policy embraced by reformists in January 1968 the congress adopted an Action Programme with the main stated goal of the transformation of the KSČ into a modern political party that would strive to create a socially just, democratic and humane society, and also expressed support for the creation of a legal state and a pluralist democracy. The congress initiated a policy of critical appraisal of the past inside and outside the party, and this culminated in its election campaign in the spring of 1990, which was largely geared to convincing Czechoslovak citizens that the party had made a complete break with its totalitarian past. This was also the intention behind a special declaration expressing apologies to the citizens of the country for the wrongdoing and repressions in the past, for the violence against demonstrators on 17 November, for repression following the defeat of the "Prague Spring", and for failure to respect human and civil rights. Another "apologetic" document took the form of a letter to former party members purged in the first years of "normalisation" for involvement in the "Prague Spring" reform movement.[6]

Further measures intended as moves towards critical engagement with the party's past included the suspension of the membership of more than thirty former party functionaries and the establishment of a special committee under the chairmanship of the historian Václav Čada, which was supposed to produce an "objective" evaluation of the development of the party in the previous twenty years. The approach of the Čada committee, which ultimately proved incapable of coming up with any conclusions of much consequence, rather epitomises the half-heartedness of the communist's resolve to face up to their past. Essentially its approach was premised on the belief that the ideas of socialism in the form of the so-called scientific doctrine of Marxism-Leninism, borne by the revolutionary proletariat, had lost none of their validity, and all that was needed was to present them as compatible with the vision of a democratic, socially just society. The Čada group saw the main problem as the legacy of Stalinism, which the Czechoslovak communists had first tried to overcome in 1968. This attempt to replace the "Stalinist model" with the model of democratic socialism was considered the best starting-point for a revived communist party at the beginning of the 1990s.[7]

6 Prohlášení k občanům ČSSR; Provolání k bývalým členům KSČ, vyloučeným a vyškrtnutým po období 1968–69 (mimořádný sjezd KSČ 20. prosince 1989) [Declaration to the Citizens of the ČSSR: A Call to Former KSČ Members Expelled and Crossed Out after 1968–1969 (Extraordinary congress of KSČ 20th December 1989)]. See *http://www.kscm.cz/article.asp?thema=4028&item=40623*, resp. *http://www.kscm.cz/article.asp?thema=4028&item=40624*, downloaded 12.9.2008.

7 See Analýza vývoje socialistického Československa [Analysis of the Development of Socialist Czechoslovakia]. In: *K vytvoření moderní levicové strany* [On the Creation of a Modern Left-wing Party]. Praha, ÚV KSČM 1991, cyclostyle, pp. 13–33. Later another committee was established by the 18th KSČS Congress in November 1990 under the leadership of another party historian, this time based outside Prague – Miroslav Grebeníček. As part of work on analysis of the activities of the KSČ and events leading to 17 November the committee gathered the testimony of many pre-November KSČ functionaries, produced

Unfortunately the legacy of "Sixty-Eight" soon proved to be a very problematic side of the envisaged ideological revival of Czech and Czechoslovak communism. One reason was the lack of enthusiasm on the part of prominent "Sixty-Eighters", for example the position taken by the *Obroda* [Regeneration] club and its decision to join Civic Forum. Many former reform communists who had been expulsed in 1969, and who had consciously cultivated the political and ideological legacy of the "Prague Spring", simply did not see a return to the party at the end of 1989 an acceptable solution. This was the case even despite the sympathy and support that quite a few of them expressed for reformist groups inside the KSČ, especially the *Demokratické fórum komunistů* [Democratic Forum of Communists].[8] Another, evidently more important obstacle to revival of the "legacy of Sixty-Eight" (as the later development of the party was to show) was the preponderance among party members of people whose career growth and often much of their political socialisation, was associated not with the "Prague Spring" but with the period of "normalisation" and so with rejection of the Czechoslovak reforms of the 1960s.

The Extraordinary Congress of the KSČ in December 1989 elected a new leadership headed by Ladislav Adamec, which was supposed to symbolise the reformist face of the party. Not only the half-hearted historical analyses, however, but the actual composition of the new leadership, which despite its would-be reformist image was closely bound up with the pre-November period, suggested clearly the limits of potential for transformation of the party. The moderate reformist policy of the new leadership, the pressure from society at large, but also quite robust democratisation and decentralisation of internal party life, led to rapid fragmentation inside the party and later to several confrontations between the reform-minded minority in the higher party positions and most of the membership, who emotionally and politically identified with the era of "normalisation". Outwardly the party continued to declare its resolve to reform itself, and this was also encouraged by newly emerging platforms (ideological groupings inside the party) that sought to deepen reform processes and co-operation with other leftist subjects on the political scene. The best known of these platforms were *Demokratická levice* [Democratic Left] (Vasil Mohorita, Michal Kraus, Ladislav Žák) and *Demokratické fórum komunistů* [Democratic Forum of Communists] (Miloslav Ransdorf), which had evolved out

---

an analysis of the development of KSČ policy from the 7th Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee in 1987 to November 1989, and presented material entitled "The Disintegration of the Society of 'Real Socialism' during the 1980s". The committee however ended its activities with the end of the Federal Council of the KSČM and SDĽ (the Slovak successor Party of the Democratic Left) in 1992 and like the earlier committee presented no general conclusions.

8 See KOKOŠKOVÁ, Zdeňka – KOKOŠKA, Stanislav (ed.): *Obroda: Klub za socialistickou přestavbu. Dokumenty* [Obroda: Club for Socialist Reconstruction. Documents]. Praha, Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR – Maxdorf 1996, especially pp. 191–196; see also the much more critical view put forward by Zdeněk Mlynář in *Proti srsti: Politické komentáře 1990–1995* [Against the Grain: Political Commentaries 1990–1995]. Praha, Periskop 1996, particularly pp. 142–163.

of an informal intra-party group known as the Šmeral Seminar. At this point there was also a conspicuous current of social democratic thinking in the party, most of its exponents coming from academic circles associated with the Prognostic Institute of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, other social science departments at the universities, or the now abolished party institutes. Most of the people from these circles would soon leave the party, but in 1990 nothing had yet been ultimately decided. In autumn of 1990 at the First Congress of the KSČM in Olomouc the pro-reform forces won an important victory with the election of a new leadership headed by the film director Jiří Svoboda.

* * *

In retrospect it is obvious that the first "anti-communist" elections in 1990 were a major turning-point in the relations between the communist party and the democratic movement represented by Civic Forum, and in the evolution of the post-1989 identity of the KSČM. The communists survived the elections, but in the course of the election campaign already found themselves in a social isolation that fostered an atmosphere of a ghetto under siege and impressed on them the need for strong self-definition and a reliable strategy of self-defence.

The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia campaigned on a programme of reforms supposed to lead to a pluralist democracy but not to the return of capitalism. They promised equality for different forms of ownership, but in their programme of "democratic socialism" championed the retention of a decisive proportion of "social, i.e. state and co-operative ownership". Naturally, the pillars of their programme, apart from defence of human rights, were egalitarianism, emphasis on the preservation of social securities and the rights of minorities and disadvantaged groups of citizens. These were political principles that at the time primarily stressed the theme of social solidarity of a relatively homogenised society. The note of nostalgic defence of "normalisation" social policy that was to resonate in their programmes in later years was as yet absent.

The KSČ's decision to field candidates in the first free elections under an unchanged name, and its already emergent populism on social issues, exacerbated the anti-communist moods in society at large. The political leaders of Civic Forum and the more radically inclined students feared that with its still efficient organisation and strong membership base the communist party might do very well in the elections and might even be able to reverse the changes brought by the Velvet Revolution. The Civic Forum leaders therefore centred their own election campaign on vivid and highly emotional depiction of a country desolate, devastated, occupied and now culturally backward as a consequence of forty years of communist rule. They presented the choice between the Civic Forum and KSČ candidate lists as a choice between nation or homeland and a discredited clique of aparatchiks with no legitimacy of any kind. Election posters compared the democratic rhetoric of the communist party to the lying political propaganda of the communists in the first postwar years, and urged voters not to forget the bitter political lesson

of forty years: "What did they promise in 1946 – a struggle for truth, democracy, freedom of conscience, nation, justice … and what are they promising today?"[9]

Another theme to appear during the election campaign was the suggestion that the party be dissolved or banned – an idea which anti-communist groups and their supporters inside and outside Civic Forum had already been pushing for some time. A key role here was played by the initiative of the Prague prosecutor Tomáš Sokol, who announced a plan to prohibit the activities of the KSČ on city territory as of 1 May 1990 on the grounds that they constituted the criminal offence of promoting a movement aiming at suppression of the rights and freedoms of citizens.[10] Even people who considered abolition of the party a legal and political impossibility appealed to the conscience of the communists, asking them to dissolve their party themselves or "do something for their country for the first time and not vote KSČ."[11] In the pre-election atmosphere there were few who heeded isolated voices from the civic-liberal camp that warned of the danger of strengthening the communists by over-zealously ostracising them and so driving all the members of the party "into a single defensive horde."[12]

The reaction of the communists was not to renounce their declared reform goals, but feeling under siege they started defining themselves more sharply against the hostile environment as well as insisting on their right to political existence. They portrayed themselves as the last knights of the policy of national conciliation, which the emergent right had in their view been rapidly abandoning since February 1990, replacing it with the "line of political and social retribution" involving systematic attack on the party with the goal of expunging it from the political map of Czechoslovakia. The chairman of the KSČM Jiří Machalík and others accused Civic Forum of adopting the methods of their own former communist party, i.e. authoritarianism and the application of the principle of collective guilt, making party membership an obstacle to employment.[13] As this defensive political strategy took shape, there were more and more instances of (as yet) timid attempts to oppose root-and-branch anti-communism on the level of historical representations. These included moderate defences of Karl Marx as a thinker mistaken in many respects but still deserving credit as an important historical figure and the founder of modern political economy and sociology, or the defence of Julius Fučík against

9 See *Centrum dokumentace Ústavu pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR, v. v. i.* (hereafter *CD ÚSD*), fond (f.) Volby 1990, box (b.) 7 and 10, KSČ, the text comes from an election poster.

10 See SUK, J.: *Labyrintem revoluce*, pp. 380–400, and his article Politické hry s nedokončenou revolucí: Účtování s komunismem v čase Občanského fóra a jeho rozpadu (1989–1992). [Political Games with an Unfinished Revolution: Settling Accounts with Communism in the Time of Civic Forum and Its Disintegration (1989–1992)]. In: *Soudobé dějiny*, vol. 16, no. 2–3 (2009), pp. 276–312.

11 *CD ÚSD*, Volby 1990, b. 7 and 10, KSČ, the text comes from an election poster.

12 See e.g. SOKOL, Jan: Kam s ní? [Whither With It?] In: *Lidové noviny* (25.5.1990), p. 1.

13 See *Dokumenty I. sjezdu KSČM*. Praha, ÚV KSČM 1990, pp. 2–13; see also *CD ÚSD*, Volby 1990, b. 7, internal party bulletin *Informace KSČ*, no. 13 and 14 (published by ÚV KSČ).

attempts to portray the communist martyr as a collaborator with the Gestapo and a camp kapo.[14]

Yet inside the Czech party the reformist currents, still striving for the transformation of the party into a non-communist formation, continued to have the active initiative. The first regular Congress of the KSČM in October 1990 in Olomouc was the high point of the reformist line in the name of promotion of democratic socialism, but the limits of the party's potential for regeneration became evident with the refusal of the majority of delegates to change or add to its name. The new chairman, the well-known film director Jiří Svoboda, was unable to push through his proposal that the word "communist" be changed to "democratic-socialist" or "radical left". Efforts to change the name of the party became the touchstone of its leadership and after a few years their failure led to the ultimate resignation of the reformists. Looking back several years later, Svoboda was to express the view that the chance for radical reform and transformation into a non-communist socialist party had only really existed at the turn of the years 1989/1990, which was before he himself had any influence in the party.[15] The development of the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia was in clear contrast to that of former communist parties in the other Central European countries. In Poland and in Hungary, they changed their names even though the word "communist" had not figured in the original names, while even the sister Slovak party first adopted the title *Strana demokratickej ľavice* [Party of the Democratic Left], as an additional name, and then entirely dropped the communist predicate.

Despite the failure of the bid to change the party's name and the growing disgruntlement of conservatives in the rank-and-file, at this time the KSČM was still presenting itself as the child of a "radical divorce" from its own "unfortunate past and authoritarian practices." The party's new programme, which came out of the Olomouc Congress, was a first attempt to systematically highlight positive chapters in history with which the party could identify. At the general level the programme stressed continuity with the "humanist message of the pioneers of socialism and the methodological legacy of Marx's dialectics," but at the same time rejected the concept of Marxism as closed system, which had been the mark of the pre-November communist party. In terms of domestic tradition, in its Olomouc programme the KSČM identified itself with those periods in Czech history in which communists "had managed to transcend narrowly class and party horizons and become part of the broad front of democratising forces." Here the programme emphasised above all the ideological legacy of the reform movement of the "Prague Spring", presented as the most important attempt to realise democratic socialism in Central and Eastern Europe. Other positive references to its own history included a mention of the period of the beginnings of the party, its initial mass, working-class

14 See pre-election *Informace KSČ*, no.13 and 14.

15 See the reference to the author's interview with Jiří Svoboda of October 1996 in the publication: GRZYMALA-BUSSE, Anna M.: *Redeeming the Communist Past: The Regeneration of Communist Parties in East Central Europe.* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 2002, p. 96.

and multi-ethnic character, and founding father Bohumír Šmeral (1880–1941), who was closely connected to that particular time period.[16]

Interest in the Šmeralian tradition of Czech and Czechoslovak communism in the 20th century had always been a feature of times when domestic communist politics had tried to appeal to a broader range of social groups and to adopt a more conciliatory attitude to political opponents. It had always accompanied the democratising initiatives that had appeared at irregular intervals inside the party itself.[17] In its bid to secure radical reform of the party and change it into the main political formation of a modern Czech left, the Svoboda leadership deliberately claimed continuity with the Šmeralian tradition, based on the ideal of a mass, democratic, egalitarian, ethnically tolerant, politically radical and revolutionary but not Stalinist destructive party. Besides this historical keynote, there were also references to other important historical traditions of Czech communism, or socialism, be it the period of the so-called Popular Front in the 1930s, the anti-Nazi resistance or the reform communism of the "Prague Spring". Significantly these were all periods when the communists had played an important role in a nationwide movement of resistance or democratisation, and when the otherwise hard dividing line between communists and non-communists had been softened and blurred.

At this time the Czech communists came closest (in their own retrospective view) to the national-communist historical interpretation as formulated by Zdeněk Nejedlý (1878–1962), which cast the communists as the heirs to the progressive traditions of the nation. One example of this approach at the beginning of the 1990s was the already mentioned Václav Čada, who was a former prominent party historian under "normalisation" and the chairman of several short-winded post-1989 historical committees. Building on his earlier work from the end of the 1980s, which had been devoted not just to the history of the KSČ but to the establishment of the First Republic, in his post-1989 popularising articles and pamphlets he tried to locate the roots of the Czech democratic left in a historical conjunction

16 Program KSČM: Za národní charakter strany a demokratický socialismus [KSČM Programme: For the National Character of the Party and Democratic Socialism]. In: *Dokumenty I. sjezdu KSČM*, pp. 16–23.

17 The revival of interest in Šmeral could be observed from the end of the 1980s, with the formation of the Šmeral Society or Šmeral Seminar, transformed in November 1989 into the Democratic Forum of Communists and the Šmeral Library. From the beginning of the 1990s the central KSČM library at its HQ in the Politických vězňů street bears his name. In 1991 the newly founded communist daily *Haló noviny* for several years identified with his legacy by carrying the subtitle "The continuer of the daily which Bohumír Šmeral helped to found". The return to the intellectual legacy of the founder of the party picked up on an earlier renaissance of the Šmeralian tradition by the KSČ in the democratising period of the 1960s. (See e.g. KÁRNÍK, Zdeněk: *Socialisté na rozcestí: Habsburg, Masaryk či Šmeral* [Socialism at the Crossroads: Habsburg, Masaryk or Šmeral]. Praha, Svoboda 1968; MLYNÁRIK, Ján: Dr. Bohumír Šmeral a slovenská národnostná otázka v počiatkoch komunistického hnutia [Dr. Bohumír Šmeral and the Slovak National Question at the Beginning of the Communist Movement]. In: *Československý časopis historický*, vol. 15, no. 4 (1967), pp. 653–666.)

between Czech Šmeralian radical socialism and the traditions of the First Republic portrayed as essentially left-wing. In this context he made much of the symbolic figure of Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, whom he depicted as a socialist, a pugnacious advocate of the poorer classes and doughty defender of the interests of the nation state.[18]

As has been noted, in 1990 the legacy of 1968 seemed even more promising as a new reference point. Even though by the end of 1990 the timid flirtation with the "Sixty-Eighter" group Obroda was over, hopes (if generally fading) that the tradition of reform communism might be a significant support for or usable source of contemporary communist identity lasted deep into the 1990s in the minds of several prominent representatives of Czech communism.[19]

Such hopes were definitely not shared by the ranks of the conservative membership core of the party, who were as averse to expressions of self-critical historical discourse as to the repeated attempts to change the party's name. They regarded both as an unconscionable erosion of the communists' own positions in a situation of political ostracization and a climate of prevailing anti-communist political rhetoric in public debate. One episode which greatly intensified the communists' feeling of being excluded and misunderstood was an affair that erupted just before the Olomouc Congress of the KSČM. A hard-hitting speech made in defence of the communists by the vice-chairman of the federal party Vasil Mohorita at a plenary session of the Central Committee of the KSČ a week before the congress was interpreted in the non-communist press as a rejection of the policy of "national conciliation" and a nostalgic call for the return of old times. The aggrieved Mohorita, at the time representing the reform wing of the party, made a furious speech about the smear at the congress. In his view it was not the communists but the "government of national sacrifice",[20] that had fundamentally undermined the policy of national conciliation by declaring a "second revolution" just after the election, by passing laws aimed against current and former members of the KSČ and stepping up the anti-communist campaign. According to Mohorita the purpose of the attack in the newspapers was to paint him as an "incorrigible communist" and so de facto discredit the reform potential inside the party.[21]

18 See e.g. ČADA, Václav: T. G. Masaryk trochu jinak [T.G. Masaryk in a Slightly Different Light]. In: *Haló noviny* (30. 4. 1993), p. 4; ČADA: *28. říjen 1918: Skutečnost, sny a iluze [The 28th of October 1918: Reality, Dreams and Illusions]*. Praha, Mladá fronta – Naše vojsko 1988.

19 See RANSDORF, Miloslav: *Nové čtení Marxe* [A New Reading of Marx], vol. 1. Praha, Futura 1995, pp. 3–17; RANSDORF: O naší přijatelnosti [On Our Acceptability]. In: *Naše pravda*, vol. 4, no.19 (1993), p. 2; but also see e.g. GREBENÍČEK, Miroslav: *Prameny naděje* [Springs of Hope]. Praha, Futura 2001, pp. 5–10.

20 The first federal government after the Velvet Revolution lead by Marián Čalfa was called the "Government of National Conciliation". In an allusion to this the subsequent Čalfa's federal government after the June 1990 elections called itself (due to its transformation program) the "Government of National Sacrifice".

21 Speech by Vasil Mohorita. In: *Dokumenty I. sjezdu KSČM*, pp. 43–47 (see note 13).

The "Mohorita Affair" was one of the milestones in the development of the political profile of the Czech communists. Reaction to politically active anti-communism, at least as it was perceived by the communists, became the dominant factor shaping the identity of the party. It led not just to a further reinforcement of defensive positions, but to increasing doubts about the way in which the reformists had been meeting the non-communist political leadership half-way, even as the latter simply abused the goodwill and repaid it with blanket defamation of everything communist. Within the party, and even among reformers, there was ever more vocal criticism of what was considered extreme anti-communism, the artificial isolation and segregation of the party, and the indiscriminate accusations made against all members of the KSČM regardless of differences of responsibility and with no effort made to identify real culprits.

Initially the communists reacted relatively moderately especially to the first laws tackling the injustices of the past, such as the law on extra-judicial rehabilitations or the restitution law, and had merely emphasised their "concern" over the proper legal grounding of the laws and the just course of their implementation. It was a different matter with the law on lustration. The communists were outraged by its overall wording and the preceding political debates, which even the reformist leadership condemned as unacceptable collective stigmatisation, turning ordinary members of the party into second-class citizens. In their resistance to lustration and the increasing tendency of right-wing politicians to "settle with the past" by legal means, the communists were now able to find some support in the emerging broader opposition on the left and in part of the academic community which saw the right-wing politics of history as an attempt to establish a hegemony over political discourse using the pretext of the threat of the influence of exponents of the "old regime".[22] The quarrel over the post-1989 memory politics first came to a head in the summer of 1993, when the Czech Parliament passed a law on the lawless character of the communist regime and on resistance to it. For Czech communists this was the final proof of a sinister political agenda behind this kind of legislation, reinforcing them in their by this time clearly negative attitude to all attempts at any nation-wide settling of accounts with the past.[23]

One important factor in the increasingly critical view of post-1989 developments was growing distrust of an economic transformation conceived and conducted as so-called "shock therapy". This distrust was not confined to communists, but it was significant that in Czechoslovakia expert critiques of the neo-liberal transformation inspired by contemporary academic disputes for example in the American economy

22 See e.g. SVITÁK, Ivan: *Levý blok: Dialektika voleb* [The Left Bloc: The Dialectic of the Elections]. Praha, Sakko 1992; MLYNÁŘ, Z.: *Proti srsti* (see note 8); DVOŘÁKOVÁ, Vladimíra – KUNC, Jiří – RANSDORF, Miloslav: *Staré struktury a lustrace v novodobých dějinách* [The Old Structures and Lustration in Modern History]. Praha, Sakko 1992.

23 See e.g. MILATA, Zbyšek: Tak už to tu máme: Není to zákon, ale politický pamphlet [So Now It's Here: It's Not a Law but a Political Pamphlet]. In: *Naše pravda*, vol. 4, no. 29 (1993), p. 2 f.

were published only by publishing houses close to the radical left.[24] These publications were marginal in the Czech public space of the time, but were popular among the communists and had a marked influence on their perception of the present. They contributed to the hardening of attitudes and anger against the one-sided negation of the preceding forty years of socialism – a negation which according to the communists not only predominated in the politics of the right-wing parties, but was embraced by much of the liberal centre of the political spectrum.

The communist reformists, represented at the time primarily by the so-called Democratic Left, clashed with the conservatives for the first time on a party-wide basis with the internal referendum on the name of the party in December 1991. The referendum was meant to end proliferating and rather unfruitful debates on the subject. The supporters of the communist name, and so identity of the party, won by a clear three-quarters majority, with the result that most of the members of the Democratic Left resigned from the party. The referendum was a warning to the party leadership, but a warning that the leadership refused to heed.

It may seem paradoxical that the basic, principled internal democratisation and decentralisation in the years 1989 and 1990 should ultimately have undermined the position of the reformists. Yet as later comparative political research has shown, the key to the successful transformation of a successor party and integration into an emergent political spectrum, as in the case of the Hungarian or Polish socialists, was not democratisation but on the contrary centralisation. Consolidation of unity on the basis of a strong reform programme, and flexible and pragmatic leadership embodied by politicians like Rezső Nyers or Alexander Kwaśniewski with the experience to conduct a fast and centrally directed internal transformation of the party: these were the basic preconditions for the success of successor parties.[25]

Another important factor in Czech conditions at the time was the visible, if not yet high-profile, resurrection of the Czech Social Democratic movement, which from the outset took a very critical attitude to communists and saw itself as part of a broad anti-communist coalition of the historic democratic parties. The communists' need to define themselves against the centre-left and non-communist programme of the social democrats, who with their rhetoric and symbolic representation (Valtr Komárek) sought to appeal to a substantial section of communist voters, intensified in the election campaign period in the late spring and early summer of 1992.[26] At the same time all attempts at the building of a party reformist base proved vain, largely because of the continuous exodus of members with reformist attitudes, either in the form of individual defections to other parties or

24 See e.g. ZELENÝ, Milan: *Ještě je čas: Obávám se o osud této země* [There is Still Time: I Fear for the Fate of This Country]. Praha, Alternativy 1991; MATĚJKA, Milan*: Spor o reformu: Rozvojová transformace versus léčba šokem* [The Dispute over Reform: Progressive Transformation versus Shock Treatment]. Praha, Alternativy 1992.

25 See above all GRZYMALA-BUSSE, A. M.: *Redeeming the Communist Past* (see note 15).

26 See ZAHRADNÍČEK, Tomáš: Rozděleni minulostí: Česká sociální demokracie v letech 1989–1992 [Divided by the Past: The Czech Social Democracy in the Years 1989–1992]. In: *Soudobé dějiny*, vol. 16, no. 2–3 (2009), pp. 333–358.

by the secession of groups with different programmes which, however, in all cases failed to take with them any substantial part of the party membership.

In the years 1991 and 1992 the party press became an important institution of party life and a platform with a major role in contributing to the creation of a concrete form of communist identity. In this context the key organs were the daily *Haló noviny* [Hallo News] and the weekly *Naše pravda* [Our Truth] which became the central party print media after the decision of the editors of *Rudé právo* [Red Right] in the spring of 1991 to transform that former press organ of the central committee of the KSČ into an independent daily. *Haló noviny* in particular tried to represent the spectrum of opinion in the party in the broadest and most open way, and served as an important communication channel for the party as a whole. In its very effort to faithfully represent the balance of views in the communist *milieu,* it gradually but ever more obviously inclined to the conservative majority and lent its weight to criticism of Svoboda's leadership.

Even after the unsuccessful referendum Jiří Svoboda did not lose hope in the transformation of the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia into a socialist or social-democratic party of "European type". One route to this end was the idea of a unified Czech left that would incorporate also non-communist political groupings in taking a stand against the restoration of capitalism and the neoliberal economic reforms. Initially this plan for bringing the KSČM out of social isolation met no great resistance from the more conservative party circles, but their implicit condition for accepting it was that efforts towards unity with other leftist groups should not threaten the identity and cohesion of the party. The strategy culminated in 1992 when the KSČM shared a candidate list with two other minor left-wing parties as part of the electoral group known as the *Levý blok* [The Left Bloc], in which the philosopher and left-wing activist, and not-so-long-ago radical critic of "bureaucratic communist dictatorship", Ivan Sviták, played a prominent part.[27] Paradoxically, however, the marked success of the Left Bloc in the June elections of 1992 did not increase support in the KSČM for the non-communist variant of the party's future development, in which its chairman Jiří Svoboda placed his hopes, but led to a further strengthening of the influence and activities of the conservative part of the party, which rejected this alternative.

Such was the mood of the Extraordinary Congress in Kladno in December 1992, which testified both to the growing self-confidence of the conservative majority, and to the perceived urgency of the need for the communists to develop a distinctive profile to differentiate themselves from the Social Democrats. The congress proceedings bore the imprint of the introductory speech by the deputy chairman of the party, Miroslav Grebeníček, standing in for Jiří Svoboda who was recovering from an assassination attempt just a few days before the congress opened. Grebeníček pre-

27 See *CD ÚSD*, f. Volby 1992, Parlamentní volby (PV) 1992, k. 15/111, Lepší budoucnost pro naši zemi: Společný volební program KSČM a DL ČSFR – Levý blok [A Better Future for Our Country: The Joint Electoral Programme of the KSČM and DL ČSFR – Left Bloc]; *Volby 92: Levý blok – KSČM – DL ČSFR … pro tuto zemi*. Praha, Futura 1992.

sented himself as a loyal member of Svoboda's leadership, but his political rhetoric was considerable fiercer, whether in criticism of post-November developments or in the defence of national interests against alleged threats from outside, particularly from Germany. Grebeníček's Kladno speech already prefigured the direction that the policy of the KSČM would take under his leadership in subsequent years. He criticised the post-November "property revolution" and the laws that in his view discriminated against a large number of citizens (i.e. communists), and were the work of the conservative right in the leadership of Civic Form. He presented the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia as a "state-forming" force resolved to resist the invasion of foreign capital, the threatening economic expansion of Germany, the demands of the "revanchist forces of the Sudeten German *Landsmannschaft* and racist extremism – the forces that in his view had been filling the power and economic vacuum in Central Europe since 1989.[28]

The congress recommended the setting up of an academic centre integrated into the KSČM institutional system; this would take up and continue the work of the Committee for the Analysis of the Activities of the KSČ and the Question of 17 November, which had been established as part of the federal party in November 1990. The interest in understanding the past as the key to the present identity of the party, however, clearly took a back seat to immediate questions, above all the perceived need to close ranks and defend the communists' right to exist in the allegedly reactionary, restoration environment of post-1989 Czechoslovakia (soon just the Czech Republic). The official report on the party's activities portrayed the referendum on the party's name at the end of 1991 as proof of the desire of most of the membership "to defend its existence in the present time and its continuity with all that has been positive in the communist movement," and as "a conscious verification of the communist party's right to exist in a system of pluralist democracy."[29] The election results of June 1992, when two and a half times as many voters as there were members of the KSČM voted for the Left Bloc, raising certain hopes of the potential of the communists to be an integrating force for the left side of the political spectrum, were presented as an endorsement of the right to exist. Increasing political self-confidence was reflected in a vision of future political strategy formulated in strongly nationalistic and populist terms, which aimed to "stimulate national and social self-defence," make clear the legitimacy of the socialist alternative, champion the principles of self-government in politics and the economy, and step

28 GREBENÍČEK, Miroslav: Úvodní slovo k předložené písemné zprávě ÚV KSČM o činnosti strany od 1. sjezdu KSČM a její nejbližší úkoly [Introductory Address on the Submitted Written Report of the Central Committee of the KSČM and Its Immediate Tasks]: *Dokumenty II. sjezdu KSČM: Kladno 12.–13. prosince 1992*. [Praha,] ÚV KSČM [1993,] pp. 1–6. The brochure came out as an internal party publication.

29 Zpráva ÚV KSČM o činnosti strany od 1. sjezdu KSČM [Report of the Central Committee of the KSČM on the Activity of the Party Since the 1st Congress of the KSČM]. In: *Ibid*, pp. 7–34, here p. 18.

up the battle to defend rights and freedoms including social rights.[30] Proposals to set up a Committee of National Culture as a foundation to resist the allegedly on-going Germanisation of the Czech language and Americanisation of culture had a hysterical air. According to the communists, at a time when the right-wing was jeopardising "our very existence as a nation" ideals of social justice, national freedom and independence were regaining their relevance and urgency. These ideals should be the bedrock of the continuity of left-wing, humanist-orientated culture with the deep-rooted traditions of Czech national history – a continuity which the communists wanted to embody.[31]

The Kladno Programme of 1992 signalled the clear identification of Czech communists with ideals of socialism as an alternative to the on-going "capitalist restoration". The different wings of the party, however, continued to ascribe different meanings to these ideals with regard to the historical experience of Czechoslovak communism. Interpretation of the Kladno Programme and the political attitudes deriving from it became an apple of discord in the following year, when a clash between the reformist leadership and the increasingly disgruntled majority of the membership and middle-rank officials became inevitable.

The Svoboda leadership's strategy after the second congress was premised on the apparent success of the bid to present the KSČM as the initiator of a broader left coalition, but the project of turning the Left Bloc into something like the Polish Union of the Democratic Left was intended to achieve more than an enlargement of support for the party in the political sphere. The idea was that co-operation at the level of civic society would gradually bring about society-wide changes and at the same time overcome the traditional rifts between the communist, social democratic and Christian-social left in Czechoslovakia. Furthermore, by merging the left under communist direction Svoboda hoped to convince his own members of the need for further reforms. He made this task difficult for himself, however, by his own black-and-white view of the situation, which he framed as a straight choice between reform in the direction of social democracy or Stalinism. Hence the question of the identity of the party – represented above all at the symbolic level, by the party's name – was crucial for Svoboda and his immediate circle.[32] His impatience and principled refusal to bend on symbolic issues seriously weakened

30 Úkoly KSČM v nejbližším období 1993–94 [Tasks of the KSČM in the Immediate Future 1993–94]. In: *Ibid.,* pp. 44–47, here p. 44.

31 Ibid., p. 46. Also see *Hořké plody sametové revoluce: Analýza ekonomického a kulturního vývoje 1991* [Bitter Fruits of the Velvet Revolution: An Analysis of Economic and Culture Development in 1991]. Praha, Futura 1992, p. 43. The National Culture Commission started its work in August 1993, the president of the managing committee was the teacher at the Academy of Performing Arts Jarmila Vrchotová-Pátová and its spokesman was the poet Karel Sýs (see the commission's web pages *http://www.vnk.ezin.cz*).

32 See SVOBODA, Jiří: Obhajujeme a rozvíjíme občanskou společnost [We are Defending and Developing Civic Society]. In: *Naše pravda*, vol. 4, no. 4 (1993), p. 2 f.; SVOBODA: Strana na rozcestí [The Party at the Crossroads]. In: *Ibid*, vol. 4, no. 9 (1993), p. 2; SVOBODA: Všechny důvody k ofenzivní činnosti [All the Reasons for Offensive Action]. In: *Haló noviny* (8.3.1993), p. 4 n.; SVOBODA: Dopis delegátům [Letter to the Delegates]. In: *Ibid*

his position, and in the face of conservative resistance the reformists were driven to even sharper criticisms of the party's past. They went as far as to say that with the exception of the "Prague Spring" the previous forty years had been a time of "unforgiveable violation of human rights", and they condemned the "normalisation regime" as a completely unacceptable and unappealing model, from which the party undergoing reform should distance itself unreservedly.[33]

In the first half of 1993 the latent conflict in the party boiled over. The massively and genuinely democratically represented membership base finally rejected the reforms that Jiří Svoboda had unwisely presented in too uncompromising and emphatic way. The increasingly assertive rhetoric of the party reformist elite with its leaning to social democracy provoked a reaction from ultraconservatives, many of whom had only been accepted back into the party in January 1993. These ultras founded the "For Socialism" platform which under the leadership of former prominent politicians of the "normalisation" era, Miroslav Štěpán and Jaromír Obzina openly identified with the "old regime", and the surviving communist dictatorships in China, Vietnam, North Korea and Cuba.[34] In turn, largely in reaction to Štěpánian dogmatism, what was known as a "neo-communist" wing of the party finally emerged, represented by Miloslav Ransdorf and Vratislav Novák, and backed to some extent, but with much less radicalism, by Miroslav Grebeníček. In the neo-communists' view the reformist leadership had made a great mistake by pushing a programme of social democratic type intended simply to reform capitalism instead of a communist battle for a change of system. They believed that the task of the KSČM should be not reform but "transformation of the transformation". The neo-communists considered the change of name to be a secondary matter, which had diverted the party from its basic tasks and had in any case been forced on it from the outside. The retention of communist identity was none the less important in demonstrating that the communists were not on their knees. Ransdorf considered Svoboda's efforts to transform the party to be undemocratic, top-down attempts to impose a pre-established concept of change on the party without the membership being asked whether they agreed.[35]

---

(26.6.1993), p. 2; MEČL, Josef: Název strany by měl odpovídat jejímu programu [The Party's Name Should Correspond to Its Programme]. In: *Rudé právo* (8.6.1993), p. 2.

33 MASOPUST, Zdeněk – MEČL, Josef: Česká politika: Prostor a výzva [Czech Politics: Space and Challenge]. In: *Haló noviny* (5. 3. 1993), p. 7; MASOPUST – MEČL: Proč KSČM transformovat? [Why Transform the KSČM?] In: *Ibid* (19. 6. 1993), p. 5.

34 See the Declaration of the KSČM opinion platform "For Socialism". In: *Naše pravda*, vol. 4, no. 4 (1993), p. 4; see also OBZINA, Jaromír: Socialismu se nezříkáme, věříme v jeho renesanci [We Are Not Renouncing Socialism, We Believe in Its Renaissance]. In: *Ibid*, vol. 4, no. 6 (1993), p. 4.

35 See RANSDORF, Miroslav: Nesvoboda pod Svobodou [Bondage under Svoboda]. In: *Ibid*, vol. 4, no. 12 (1993), p. 1 n.; RANSDORF: Chybí koncepční politika [There is No Basic Conceptual Policy]. In: *Haló noviny* (6.3.1993), p. 1 and 4; GREBENÍČEK, Miroslav: Přání otcem myšlenky [The Wish Is Father to the Thought]. In: *Ibid* (12.3.1993), p. 1; GREBENÍČEK: Jsem přesvědčen, že lidé potřebují stranu našeho typu [I Am Convinced People Need a Party of Our Type]. In: *Naše pravda*, vol. 4, no. 21 (1993), p. 3; NOVÁK, Vrati-

In early summer 1993, with the Third Congress looming, the rifts in the communist party and by extension the whole radical left camp widened to the point of causing fears for its very future. In fact, the crisis ultimately affected more or less only the political-organisational top ranks, and not the broader mass of the party membership base, but even so, the uncertainty and fear of the party's possible disintegration at this point made a strong impression on the minds of the next political leadership, and was a factor behind many of its future decisions. The defeat of the reformist wing and the fall of Jiří Svoboda led not only to the resignation of the leading reformists from the party but also to the final disintegration of the Left Bloc electoral coalition. The name was taken by a small group of KSČM parliamentary deputies led by the former chairman of the coalition parliamentary club of the Left Bloc, Jaroslav Ortman, and Marie Stiborová; this group abandoned its mother party and in August 1993 founded a political organisation of the same name. Meanwhile Josef Mečl, the most important ideologue of the reformist wing and up to then a member of the Central Committee of the KSČM, founded the Party of the Democratic Left. In 1997 these two groups finally merged to form the Party of Democratic Socialism, which remained a marginal political organisation but was notable for its promotional and intellectual activities designed to revive interest in the concept of democratic socialism in Czech society.[36] Yet the defeat of the reformists in the summer of 1993 did not deliver victory to the Štěpánian conservatives. The activists and supporters of the "For Socialism" platform were forced out of the party and they founded a new group of the orthodox, called *Strana československých komunistů* [Party of Czechoslovak Communists].[37]

## *Returns to the Past as Part of the Development of Political and Ideological Profile*

At the congress in Prostějov in June 1993 a new leadership of pragmatic politicians around Miroslav Grebeníček took over. Having learned the lesson of the complicated and ultimately futile conflict between the leadership and the membership base, they introduced an unwritten rule of two zones game. Externally, they made no break with the policy of Jiří Svoboda and presented the KSČM as a democratic party in the role of radical opposition in a parliamentary democracy. At the time and after, Miroslav Grebeníček emphasised that he had no wish to define his overall position in opposition to Jiří Svoboda's, but that he had been very much aware of the need to introduce new modes of communication inside the party. This was a kind of code for the second zone of the new leadership's policy, consisting in ideological shifts

slav: O nebezpečích ohrožujících stranu [On the Dangers Menacing the Party]. In: *Haló noviny* (28.4.1993), p. 1.

36 See the informative and often updated web pages *http://www.sds.cz*.

37 For a detailed analysis of the splits in the party in the first half of the 1990s see FIALA, P. – HOLZER, J. – MAREŠ, M. – PŠEJA, P.: *Komunismus v České republice*, pp. 99–149 (see note 3).

in an internal direction, and a specific politics of identity geared to the membership base. This reorientation of identity politics to the membership base was, however, accompanied by a consolidation of internal party rules which suited the needs of the political leadership, strengthened centralised decision-making, stiffened party discipline and eventually led to the abolition of the intra-party platforms, which in Grebeníček's opinion gave too much space to minority views in the party at the expense of the majority opinions of the membership. The pragmatic policy of the two zones did much to reduce the tension between the demands of political strategy and tactics on the one hand and the increased need for a sense of solidarity in the "hostile" environment of Czech post-communist politics on the other, although the strain could never be eliminated entirely.

Practically from the outset of the 1990s the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia made efforts to present itself as a competent political subject, and as is evident from numerous planning and theoretical groups attached to its central committee, as well as from conferences, lecture series, detailed programme documents and analyses on economic and social policy themes, there were always plenty of sympathisers from academic and expert circles close to the party ready to lend a helping hand without demanding financial remuneration. This ferment of research and planning activity was quantitatively far more impressive than the equivalent efforts of the other Czech political parties, and was predicated not only on the enduring favour of what was still quite a large circle of sympathetic intelligentsia inherited from the preceding period, but also on the party's continuing need to defend its right to exist. It needed to demonstrate that it was not a party living in the past but that it kept up with current affairs and was striving to actively remake the present. Towards the end of the 1990s, after a number of electoral successes which gave the KSČM greater confidence, these activities were further encouraged by the desire to present the party as a potential coalition partner and an organisation capable of participation in government.[38]

The proliferation of all kinds of theoretical associations and intellectual groups naturally found expression in the field of political history. The Prostějov Congress, held on 26 June 1993, charged the leadership with "reviving work on drawing up an analysis of the causes of November 1989 and the subsequent development in the party, including an analysis of the postwar development of the ČSSR."[39] To this end the party set up a *Teoreticko-analytické pracoviště* [Theoretical-Analytical Centre, TAP] attached to the Central Committee of the KSČM, and it was here that the leading neo-communist activists, like Jiří Dolejš, Josef Heller or František Neužil, found their niche. *Samosprávný klub komunistů* [The Autonomous Club of Communists] also continued to exist in the party as a tolerated remnant of the earlier platforms,

38 See STRMISKA, Maxmilián: The Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia: A Post-Communist Socialist or a Neo-Communist Party? In: *German Policy Studies / Politikfeldanalyse*, vol. 2, no. 2 (2002), p. 230.

39 Usnesení III. sjezdu Komunistické strany Čech a Moravy [Resolutions of the 3rd Congress of the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia]. In: *Dokumenty III. sjezdu KSČM.* [Praha,] ÚV KSČM [1993], p. 46.

with Miloslav Formánek becoming its chief spokesman. The work of these groups resulted in all kinds of seminars and brochures on the problems of the "past system", for which the theorists tried to find a term which would suitably express Czech and European experience with communism. Some favoured the term, "proto-socialism", while others preferred "historically the first forms of socialism", but regardless of such differences the common denominator of these efforts was the need on the one hand to point out the limits and deformations of the socialist idea that occurred in the 20th century, and on the other to make it clear that true socialism was still possible, and still awaited its realisation in the future.[40]

If the communist party of the time could boast any major intellectual who stood out as unique phenomenon, then it was the gifted, erudite and intellectually ambitious Miloslav Ransdorf, but it is notable that he pursued a path of his own, building on his historical and philosophical research in previous decades. The first volume of his *Nové čtení Marxe* [A New Reading of Marx], a monumentally conceived neo-Marxist reinterpretation of not just Marx (primarily his epistemology) but the whole European Marxist tradition, came out in 1995, and clearly departs not only from the everyday political rhetoric of the party, but from the work produced by the Theoretical-Analytical Centre.[41] The theorists were very fond of referring to "A New Reading of Marx" in their conceptual proposals and summary reports, and of praising it as an original Czech contribution to Marxist philosophy. All the same, it remains a question whether this lengthy philosophical text provided much inspiration for even a few contemporary communist intellectuals.

Other seedbeds of discussion in the party, particularly with regard to economic and social history, included the Club of Economists (publishing its own bulletin), the Club of Left-wing Sociologists and a similar Club of Psychologists. These were loose associations of leftist intellectuals with or without party membership, and in the 1990s their meetings and seminars attracted many former academics from the Prognostic Institute, and "Sixty-Eighters" but also contemporary academics and researchers. Some papers from their lecture series, for example the series "Why Socialism without the Mistakes of the Past?" organised by the Club of Economists in 1995 and 1996, were published on the pages of the central party press organs *Haló noviny* and *Naše pravda*.

All the same, these and the many other results of the theoretical-research activities closely associated with the KSČM (more than twenty expert groups worked in association with the central committee, and a number of others existed at regional or municipal level) had relatively little impact on broader party circles and

40 See Informace o postupu prací na projektu „modelu socialismu" [Information on the progress of work on the project of "a model of socialism" (see *http://www.kscm.cz/index.asp?managepreview=ok&thema=3108&category=&language=1&item=25403*, downloaded 12.9.2008).

41 RANSDORF, Miloslav: *Nové čtení Marxe* (see note 19). See also Ransdorf's similarly monumentally conceived, and as yet likewise unfinished project of analysis of modern Euro-American revolutionary thought *Hledali spravedlivější svět* [They Sought for a Juster World], vol 1: *Od Luthera po Jeffersona* [From Luther to Jefferson]. Praha, Panok-Knight 2000.

the character of their discussions of history, which were remote from the critical, analytical debates of theoreticians on the recent past. From 1993, as a consequence of the policy of two zones game, in broader party circles the line that was soon widespread was reinterpretation of "real socialism" with a stress on its benefits, i.e. the "social advances" (welfare) of the old regime and the universal homogenisation of society, in other words relative social equality. The overall resistance of political culture inside the party to discourse in the wider society was further encouraged by the confirmation and consolidation of an anti-capitalist outlook. Thus the documents of the Third Party Congress again made glowing reference to Marx and Engels, for example as prophets of global capitalism and its inevitable demise. In the context of reference to the national communist past of Czechoslovak state socialism one can also observe increasing emphasis on traditional nationalist Czech *topoi* in party policy, and repeated stress on the "deep national roots", envisioned as the long years of alleged communist struggle against not just social but national (ethnic) oppression.

The new leadership of Miroslav Grebeníček, who had earlier been associated mainly with the emergent neo-communist wing, brought a definitive withdrawal from the notion of democratic socialism in favour of the new concept of a "modern socialist society", characterised as democratic, self-governing, politically and economically pluralist, prosperous, and founded on the idea of social justice. For a time the Grebeníček leadership continued to see itself as in some sense "neo-communist", but in the mid-1990s it abandoned this self-identification because (so some political scientists argue) the concept implied too critical an attitude to the old regime and too much of a break with traditions.[42]

* * *

As the end of the century approached, this stress on continuity and tradition did not preclude a further radicalisation of the party towards the left; it was just that this radicalisation now included not only a search for contemporary alternatives in radical leftist policy against the background of critical historical analysis, but also an ever warmer attitude to the past of state socialism. The Fourth Congress of the KSČM in Liberec in December 1995 clearly expressed the shift. The keynote of the political declarations of the congress and the programme that it adopted was anti-capitalism and greater emphasis on the Marxist origins of the political doctrine of contemporary communists. Lenin was reinstalled alongside Marx and Engels in the pantheon of Marxist classics. The new programme declared it a basic goal of party policy to change the socio-political system in the direction of socialism, with the logical and natural eventual outcome in the future being communism – i.e. a historical stage representing "the fulfilment of humanity's age-old dreams

42 See HANLEY, Seán: The Breakthrough or Breakdown? The Consolidation of KSČM as a Neo-Communist Successor Party in the Czech Republic. In: *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, vol. 17, no. 3 (2001), p. 114, note 27.

of progress and social justice and the condition for the maintenance and development of a humanist-orientated civilisation."[43]

At the congress and subsequently, however, the communists took care to distinguish between the revolutionary nature of the "scientific" doctrine of Marxism and revolution as political tactic, emphasising that they did not identify with the concept of violent takeover of power, but only with the revolutionary character understood as the ability to achieve deep, fundamental social changes by the parliamentary-constitutional road.[44] The neo-communist elements in party programme documents and self-presentation were nonetheless accompanied by the incontrovertible growth of the influence of the conservative wing and by attempts to clearly differentiate the communists from other left-wing subjects on the political scene. This was particularly urgent vis-à-vis the Social Democrats, who by this time were taking the wind out of the communist sails by their relative success in adopting the role of radical opposition party to the right-wing coalition government. The communists therefore added a nostalgic repertoire of themes to their own radical oppositional rhetoric, putting greater emphasis on presentation of the party as the defender of the interests of those who had lost out in the post-1989 transformation. They redoubled their already sharp criticism of privatisation, restitution, the ideology of *laissez-faire* and the lack of sufficient re-distribution to help socially weaker groups and classes.[45]

The two-track character of left-wing radicalisation should not be interpreted as a simple manifestation of the tension between the conservative membership, reinforced in their identity by part of the party press (for example the journal of orthodox Marxist-Leninists *Dialog*) and the production of some communist publishing houses (specifically Orego and the JUDr. Jaroslav Weber Press) on the one hand, and neo-communist theorists and parliamentary politicians in the leadership and party "think-tanks" on the other. During the 1990s a more conservative wing, concentrated around the leading politicians of the Prague party organisation Václav Exner and Marta Semelová, crystallised in the leadership itself. In contrast to neo-communists of the Miloslav Ransdorf or Jiří Dolejš type, these conservatives agreed with part of the orthodox Marxist-Leninist journalistic line; they unambiguously side-lined the need for a critical view of the party's past, were unwilling to open the question of communist crimes at all, rejected any consciously revisionist histori-

43 Politická deklarace IV. sjezdu KSČM [Political Declaration of the 4th Congress of the KSČM]. In: *Za občanskou a sociální spravedlnost: Socialismus – šance pro budoucnost* [For Civic and Social Justice: Socialism – a Chance for the future]. *Dokumenty IV. sjezdu Komunistické strany Čech a Moravy. Liberec, 2. prosince 1995.* (Supplement of the daily *Haló noviny* of 11.12.1995, pp. 2–6, here p. 6.)

44 From the point of view of revolutionary Marxism, and not only the Leninist version, such an approach would of course be regarded as social reformism and opportunism. This naturally plays to the hands of political opponents, making them all the more likely to see the old Leninist doctrine of violent seizure of power by a party of professional revolutionaries lurking behind the democratic rhetoric of the Czech communists.

45 See the Political Declaration of the 4th Congress of the KSČM.

cal narrative defined in opposition to prevailing political discourse, and supported the nostalgic aspects of communist identity.

In communist policy and ideology of the second half of the 1990s both basic tendencies, the neo-communist and the conservative, were to find expression to one extent or another, but with the conservative tendency progressively gaining the upper hand in practical politics. The influence of the neo-communists was evident in a series of programme documents of the time produced by the Theoretical-Analytical Centre, which for example recommended that KSČM policy should give up the idea of blanket nationalisation of the economy in favour of the model of worker self-government. This was a re-appearance of the Yugoslav model (popular in Czech Marxism of the 1960s) in which the self-organisation and self-government of workers, farmers and the under-privileged classes was posited as one of the main characteristics of a future socialism. In terms of political strategy the revival of the idea was supposed to go hand in hand with a turn (in practice with negligible effects) to civic social activism. The political declarations of the communists at this time were full of appeals for the establishment of co-operation between local party organisations and civil society in the interests of protecting and furthering the interests of the poor, pensioners, women, young people and other under-privileged social groups, arguments about the need to encourage democracy from below, or direct democracy, specifically in the form of referenda and stiffening social resistance to the "multi-party nomenklatura" of the ruling parties.[46]

This apparent embrace of grass-roots, however, did not deter the same party leadership from emphasising the need to restore a strong role to the state in the economy and social policy. In direct contradiction to the ideas of a self-governing society, this theme became prominent in the policy of the KSČM under the influence of the conservatives. The latter preferred the statist traditions of Czechoslovak communism, the state as the fundamental guarantor of economic development, social stability and also the national interest, as attested for example by the central programme documents of the party in 1999. The Fifth Congress in 1999 in Žďár nad Sázavou was the culmination of the tendency to leftward radicalisation, but now fully in the spirit of national-communist statism. One of the main themes colouring the whole course of debate at the congress and its conclusions was that despite all its mistakes and shortcomings the pre-1989 form of socialism has been beyond any doubt superior – in terms of social justice, the level of redistribution of wealth, social security, provision for most of the population and generous support of culture – to the restored capitalism of the 1990s. The congress report on the activity of the party in preceding years supported the theme with the claim that the Pithart, Klaus and Tošovský governments had lived off the achievements of the earlier Czechoslovak (or Czech)

46 See the concept of "active social self-defence", which the neo-communists had already started to promote in the time when their fraction was just emerging (see HANLEY, S: The Breakthrough or Breakdown? – see note 41); see also the electoral programme of 1996, promoting the concept of the "people's state" (*Socialismus – šance pro budoucnost: Volební program KSČM 1996–2000.* Praha, ÚV KSČM 1996), and other election campaign materials (see *CD ÚSD*, f. Volby 1996, PV 1996, k. 11/48–52, KSČM).

economy and its (alleged) successes in the later 1980s (according to statistics set out in the report GDP had grown in the years 1985–1989 by an average of nine per cent, while in the transformation period it had consistently fallen). Speakers at the congress fiercely criticised the "fundamentalist ideology of neoliberalism" and "reactionary" policies of all the right-wing governments since 1989, the continuing social polarisation of Czech society, the alleged omnipresent corruption, political manipulations, increased bureaucracy, sell-off or pillaging of the Czech economy and uncontrolled influx of foreign capital. The communists expressed deep disillusionment with the government of the Social Democrats, which in their view just continued the previous "policy of kowtowing" to the Sudeten Germans and Americans.[47]

The congress was thus the continuation of the trend towards a policy of sharp self-differentiation from the Social Democrats, yet at the same time in one respect it saw the beginning of the "Europeanisation" of the party, which for the first time acknowledged that European integration had some positive social, economic and ecological aspects. The communists still had strong reservations about the process of European integration and never stopped warning about the menace of the hegemony of certain nations in the European Union, especially Germany. On the other hand they increasingly saw the main problem of the time in the "imperialist character of the capitalist concept of globalisation", which it was necessary to fight through the international unification of the left, including exploitation of the institutions and mechanisms of a Europe in process of integration.[48] At the same time the party constantly tried to present itself as a modern leftist political organisation ready and able to participate in government – a goal which perhaps explains what was the first official condemnation of incorrigible dogmatic groups within the party since 1993.

* * *

47 See the Report of the Central Committee of the KSČM on the activities of the KSČM in the period after the 4th Congress of the KSČM in Liberec (December 1995 – December 1999). In: *Dokumenty V. sjezdu KSČM*. Praha, ÚV KSČM 2000, pp. 15–68; see also KSČM na přelomu tisíciletí [The KSČM at the Turn of the Millennium]. In: *Ibid*, pp. 15–69; Program Obnovy: Programový dokument V. sjezdu [Programme of Renewal: Programme Document of the 5th Congress]. In: *Ibid*, pp. 141–154. (The documents are also available on the web pages of the KSČM: *http://www.kscm.cz/article.asp?thema=3765&item=33802*; *http://www.kscm.cz/article.asp?thema=3765&item=33798*; *http://www.kscm.cz/article.asp?thema=3765&item=33799*, downloaded 12. 9. 2008).

48 See HANDL, Vladimír: Transformace komunistické strany: Od „strategie levicového ústupu" k evropeizaci [The Transformation of the Communist Party: From the "Strategy of Retreat to the Left" to Europeanisation]. In: GJURIČOVÁ, Adéla – KOPEČEK, Michal (ed.): *Kapitoly z dějin české demokracie po roce 1989* [Chapters from the History of Czech Democracy after 1989]. Praha – Litomyšl, Paseka 2008, pp. 91–115; HANDL, V.: Choosing between China and Europe? Virtual Inspiration and Policy Transfer in the Programmatic Development of the Czech Communist Party. In: *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, vol. 21, no. 1 (2005), pp. 123–141.

From the rise of Miroslav Grebeníček to the position of party chairman in 1993 until the end of the 1990s the basic political strategy of "retreat to the left" was characterised by two rather incongruous tendencies: on the one hand there was a return to the models and identities of pre-1989 state socialism and on the other there were efforts to formulate a positive, neo-communist policy, defining itself critically vis-à-vis "restored capitalism" and resting on the notion of "self-emancipation by means of civic society" and important social movements. This duality was inevitably reflected in treatment of the past, which in the years 1993–1999 – in contrast to the immediately preceding period when the whole identity of the communists had been in many respects shaken to the core – acquired a very effective and pragmatic form. Images of the past appeared in party discourse on two basic levels: the general historical and the national. On the first level the predominant role was played by party theorists, while on the second level it was by contrast a matter primarily of conservative-nationalist stereotypes, or their political exploitation.

At the general historical level, as part of the consolidation of an anti-capitalist orientation, starting in 1993 there was a new emphasis on the continuing "methodological forcefulness" of the classics of Marxism including ever more frequent mentions of Lenin. Marxism was supposed once again to form the basis of the social analysis and programme of the KSČM. Although in the case of the chairman Grebeníček, for example, we would look in vain for thoughts on the current meaning and interpretation of historical materialism, in this respect the party left space for neo-Marxist theorists in expert groups and for prominent individuals such as Miloslav Ransdorf. Even in this period the party did not entirely abandon "critical reflection" on its own history, but it engaged in such reflection in a spirit quite different to that of the earlier reformist Svoboda leadership. The Theoretical-Analytic Centre of the Central Committee of the KSČM was entrusted with the "thorough analysis of the past" to be conducted on basis of "strict scientific historiographical methods". Neo-communist theorists mused over the problems of the past system not because of any perceived urgent necessity of change in the very identity of the party, but simply to analyse what were "historically the first forms of socialism" with a critical eye as to their limits and relative deformations. The goal was to draw from the past the kind of lessons that could provide a foundation for a new radically left-wing alternative for contemporary society. Analysis of the past – with reference to Marx's classic works on historical materialism – was regarded as the key to formulating the policy of the future, but definitely not as a means of moral judgment on, let alone a form of apology for, the crimes and wrongs committed in the past.[49]

At the same time, against the background of growing social differences in Czech society and negative judgement of the results of the transformation, there was an ever recurrent tendency to express positive views of the "social advances of real socialism",

49 See Informace o postupu prací na projektu „modelu socialismu" (see note 39); RANSDORF, M.: *Nové čtení Marxe* (see note 19).

and by extension the whole historical experience of state socialism.[50] In 1998 (with its plethora of anniversaries of the key years in Czech history which so often end in 8), the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia marked the 50th anniversary of the communist takeover in 1948, presenting it as an important historical opportunity for non-capitalist, socialist development that had been progressively wasted because of shortcomings in the policy of the KSČ. The curiously abstract language, avoiding "controversial" terms such as Stalinism, as well as the later disputes over the historical role of Klement Gottwald which erupted in 2006 on the centenary of his birth, show how sensitive the communists were and remain about judgments of the period of Czechoslovak Stalinism. In a similarly vague, but generally positive idiom, in 1998 the communists celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of the "Prague Spring" as an attempt to combine socialism and democracy. The Central Committee issued an official statement praising the efforts of the reformist "members and leaders of the KSČ with the support of the majority of society", to overcome previous shortcomings and achieve a broad democratisation of society.[51] On the other hand, the fact that this official statement was only published in *Haló noviny* four years later, moreover leaving out a paragraph criticising the Soviet invasion and its unfortunate effects, is an eloquent testimony to the still problematic attitude of the party to the heritage of the "Prague Spring", and the party's anxiety not to open the door to critical discussion of the origins of the "normalisation" with which a substantial proportion of its membership is still closely associated.

The second level of the party politics of history is, as noted, the "state-forming" tradition of the Czechoslovak communists. The communists are indeed the party with the longest history of rule in a formally independent Czechoslovak state, and the beginnings of their revived "state-forming" position can be found in their principled objections to the disintegration of the Czech-Slovak federation. At that time the communists were the only important political party in the parliament to launch a full-blooded attack on the policy of dividing the state, blaming the chauvinism of the Czech Right and calling the policy a profanation of the legacy of the founders of the Czechoslovak republic in 1918. Later they used even stronger language, branding the division an "act of treason", which "seriously weakened the state and abrogated the civil rights of both nations".[52] From 1993 they embellished this "constitutional" line with nationalist rhetoric stressing the deep national roots of the party. For example, as part of long-term communist criticism of the policy of Czech-German reconciliation, and especially the attitude of President Václav Havel who was alleged to be damaging Czech national interests, chairman Miroslav Grebeníček repeatedly warned in the 1990s against the reinterpretation of Czech history on the lines of the First Republic Right-wing or the Sudeten German Landsmannschaft: he claimed

50 See e.g. *Za společenskou a sociální spravedlnost: KSČM 1996* [For Social and Welfare Justice: KSČM 1996]. Praha, ÚV KSČM, pp. 11–16.

51 See KSČM on the Anniversary of the 21st of August 1968 (see *http://www.sds.cz/view.php?cisloclanku=2008022301*, downloaded 16. 2. 2009).

52 Zpráva ÚV KSČM o činnosti KSČM po IV. sjezdu v Liberci, p. 20 (see note 46).

that "Hussitism and the national revival are again being undervalued" while the German factor in Czech history was being overvalued and the results of the transfer of the Germans and the land reforms of the First Republic and so on were under challenge.[53] Miroslav Grebeníček was himself a historian by training of a rather hardliner profile. In the last years of the state socialist era as history was being reassessed in the spirit of perestroika he had not only defended the postwar transfer of Sudeten Germans from Czechoslovakia as a supremely just historical act, but also glorified the communist collectivisation of agriculture as a proof of progress and the "brilliant victory" of the 1948 February Revolution.[54] Thus he himself is a prime example of the deep anchorage of the Czech national-communist historical imagination, associated with the name of Zdeněk Nejedlý and the policy of the postwar KSČ, in the broad ranks of contemporary Czech communists and their supporters.[55] It has been the power of tradition and these deeply anchored structures of historical consciousness in the party rank-and-file that Miloslav Ransdorf has targeted with his critical evaluation of the heritage of Czech national communism.[56] In this respect, however, the impact of Ransdorf's views seems to have been even more negligible than his influence in the field of Marxist theory.

## *Conclusion*

In the first decade following November 1989, questions of the interpretation of the past of the party and its role in Czech and Czechoslovak history were a key element in the development of the KSČM. The first stage of the search for identity and disputes over the past had a divisive effect, contributing substantially to internal splits, and to rifts within potentially broader coalitions between the communists and other left subjects. This fragmentation then *de facto* created the conditions for

53 See e.g. GREBENÍČEK, Miroslav: Většinu členů nezviklaly účelové dezinformace [Most of the Members Were Not Shaken by Tendentious Misinformation]. In: *Ibid*. *Prameny naděje*, pp. 103–107 (taken from *Haló novin*, 7. 8. 1993; see note 19); GREBENÍČEK: Speech in Prague on Old Town Square on the 9th of May on the Occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the Liberation of Czechoslovakia. In: *Ibid*: pp. 171–179 (taken from *Haló noviny*, 11.5.1995). See also e.g. KVASNIČKA, Václav: *Nepolepšitelní: Od Henleina k Neubauerovi* [Incorrigible: From Henlein to Neubauer]. Praha, Futura 1996; *Co bude následovat? Dokumenty k česko-německé deklaraci (prosinec 1996 – únor 1997)* [What Will Happen Next? Documents on the Czech-German Declaration (December 1996 – February 1997)]. Praha, Haló noviny 1997.

54 See GREBENÍČEK, Miroslav: *Cestou k Vítěznému únoru: Břeclavský region v letech 1945–1948* [The Path to Victorious February: The Břeclav Region in the Years 1945–1948]. Mikulov, Regionální muzeum v Mikulově 1988.

55 See also DVOŘÁK, Jaromír: Socialistický buditel českého národa [Socialist Revivalist of the Czech Nation]. In: *Naše pravda*, vol. 4, no. 6 (1993), p. 6.

56 See e.g. RANSDORF, Miloslav: *Zdeněk Nejedlý*. Praha, Horizont 1988; RANSDORF: *Čechem volbou: Militantní racionalista Kurt Konrad* [A Czech by Choice: The Militant Rationalist Kurt Konrad]. Praha, Orego 1997.

later consolidation and the attainment of a new self-confidence. To this day, images of the past play a fundamental role in the process of moulding and consolidating political-cultural identity inside the party, although their potential to cause rifts has been diminishing. Without an appreciation of this operative aspect of historical memory it is impossible to understand the policies and behaviour of the strongest party of the Czech radical left. Themes of identity clearly play a more important role among Czech communists than with the other major parties (perhaps with the exception of the People's party – Christian Democrats), often at the expense of substantial political themes and problems. At the same time the role of the past in the policy of the party and its internal evolution should not be exaggerated. The direction and concrete development of party policy, although deeply rooted in the conscious traditions and less consciously examined social practices of the pre 1989 era, were from 1993 formulated on the basis of the political situation and context of the moment.

The Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia, as it defined its profile over the second half of the 1990s, was no mere historical relic surviving into the post-communist era by pure inertia, and so no mere historical anachronism with limited political viability. Whether political theorists characterise it as a subcultural neo-communist, programmatically anti-systemic, socially populist or neo-Leninist party, its development during the 1990s was clearly determined by both the long-term internal party struggle and by the continuing efforts of successive party leaderships to find an effective political survival strategy. The initial, social-democratising, reformist strategy aimed at attracting the maximum number of voters and so eventually securing a share in government was by stages replaced by a strategy of "retreat to the left" (Vladimír Handl), or "voter representation" (Seán Hanley) based on the consolidation of political-cultural identity, emphasis on communication between the membership and the leadership, and continuing efforts to find an ideological profile. In view of the overall emergence of the Czech leftist political spectrum, especially the rise of the Czechoslovak Social Democrats led by Miloš Zeman after 1993, these tactics as adopted by the Grebeníček leadership proved more realistic than the original Svoboda approach.

For the communists, "coming to terms with the past" progressively acquired quite different connotations than those for the majority Czech society. Grebeníček's pragmatism to a considerable extent pacified but did not solve the basic dilemma of the KSČM, consisting as it did in the contradiction between the "logic of electoral struggle" and the "logic of representing its voters". After the fall of the reformists the first kind of logic was represented primarily by the neo-communist theorists, who strove to formulate a society-wide socialist alternative acceptable to the broader left-wing public. This aim also underlay their conception of history as a critical discipline, or critical reading of the party's past, accompanied by systematic efforts to find theoretical inspiration in domestic and foreign left-wing thought and academically grounded research. The second kind of logic, i.e. the "logic of representing its voters", centred on the retention and enhancement of a strong identity for members and supporters of the party, was the logic dictated by the enduring

conservative majority of the rank-and-file membership represented by local activists, the party press and some members of the political leadership. All these preferred a programme of political and social populism appealing to a broad spectrum of the public, and saw history mainly as an instrumental "politics of history" – i.e. as source of support for own identity and a tool of resistance against the hostile outside environment and cultural hegemony of the neoliberal anti-communist capitalism which they considered to have reigned supreme in the Czechia since 1989.

Response to anti-communism – whether systemic, and expressed for example in legislation, or spontaneous, manifest in the prevailing tone of Czech political journalism and various anti-communist initiatives – remained one of the main if not the most important unifying factor for the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia through the 1990s and beyond. From the perspective of the Czech communists the accusation that they have "failed to come to terms with their past", is irrelevant, and nothing more than a tendentiously moralising tactic used by political opponents, who seek to control the discourse of history by exploiting anti-communist themes. Another reason why the charge lacks credibility with the communists is because they are well aware that – in their own way – they have to come to terms with the past all the time, day in day out. They therefore remain the inconvenient shadow of Czech post-communism, a constant reminder of the otherwise repressed consciousness of the deep social roots of Czechoslovak "normalisation". Morally black-and-white schematic claims that the communists have "not come to terms" with the past, are more symptomatic than analytical. They are symptoms of the fact that Czech society as a whole, and its elites – which by original political and professional socialisation are for the most part still integrally linked with the two decades before November 1989 – has not itself "come to terms" with the past that the KSČM constantly brings to mind by its apparently paradoxical existence.

*The Czech version of this artile, entitled* Stigma minulosti, pouto sounáležitosti. První desetiletí českého polistopadového komunismu, *was originally published in Soudobé dějiny, vol. 16, no. 2–3 (2009), pp. 313–332. It was written in the framework of grant project of the Czech Science Foundation (GA ČR), registration number 409/07/1189.*

*Prague Chronicle*

# An Unending Story with a Sudden End – and Its Immediate Consequences for East-Central Europe

## *The Numerous Impulses from the Prague Conference on the Cold War*

Vít Smetana

The upcoming 25th anniversary of the fall of the Iron Curtain draws attention to the roots and causes of the seminal events of 1989. Perhaps it is also a good opportunity to look back on one of the remarkable historical conferences that marked the previous round anniversary, in 2009, and dealt with the broader topic of the role of East-Central Europe in the Cold War.

On 19 to 21 November 2009, the international conference "*The Iron Curtain – Dropping, Maintaining and Breaking the Iron Curtain: The Cold War and East-Central Europe Twenty Years Later*" was held in Prague to mark the twentieth anniversary of the collapse of the communist regimes in East-Central Europe. The event was organized by the Institute for Contemporary History of the Czech Academy of Sciences in collaboration with the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic and the Institute of International Studies of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles

University in Prague.[1] Thirty historians from the United States and eleven countries from both sides of the formerly divided Europe took an active part in this meeting of leading experts on the Cold War. Their aim was to take stock of various changing interpretations of this recent historical period in the light of the progressively increasing number of accessible documents. It is appropriate to review this important conference – according to several participants the most important of all the conferences held to mark this major anniversary – by reflecting on its general course and the key discussions.[2]

## *The Origin of the Post-Cold-War International System*

The conference commenced on the late afternoon of 19 November in the Straka Academy (which houses the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic) by the then Minister for Human Rights Michael Kocáb, who offered his personal reflections on the legacy of the Iron Curtain and the limits of the freedom achieved twenty years after it was torn down. The conference then proceeded, somewhat against the current of time, with an introductory panel discussion entitled *How Well Did the Cold War Experience Prepare for Membership in NATO and EU?*, devoted to the period in which the post-Cold-War world, which we still live in today, was formed – i.e. the first months and years that followed the end of the Cold War, above all with a focus on the enlargement of NATO and the European Union. The participants in this "focused, structured discussion" as it was characterised by its chairman, probably the internationally most famous Czech-born historian of contemporary history, Vojtěch Mastný (The National Security Archive, Washington) were Anne Deighton (Oxford University), Georges-Henri Soutou (Paris Sorbonne), Mary Elise Sarotte (University of Southern California, Los Angeles), Petr Luňák (NATO Public Diplomacy Division, Brussels) and László Borhi (The Historical Institute of the Hun-

1 The conference was made possible thanks to the sponsorship from Mr. Marek Jelínek, The Office of the Government of the Czech Republic, The Konrad Adenauer Foundation and the Heinrich Böll Foundation. Apart from a number of employees of the Institute for Contemporary History of the Czech Academy of Sciences (particulary Vít Smetana and Oldřich Tůma), the conference was co-organized by Lucie Wittlichová from the Office of the Government and several students from the Institute of International Studies of the Charles University's Faculty of Social Sciences, among whom we should mention in the first place Kathleen Geaney, and among others at least Tomáš Kristlík and Petr Balla.

2 A number of papers presented at this conference were published in Czech, either separately, sometimes in abridged form (see footnotes throughout this summary) or in two special volumes of the scholarly journal *Soudobé dějiny,* published by the Institute for Contemporary History of the Czech Academy of Sciences (vol. 18, no. 1–2 (2011); vol. 19, no. 3–4 (2012)). See the webpage http://www.usd.cas.cz/en/pages/en-soudobe-dejiny for more details. Towards the end of 2013, the following book that includes the extended and updated papers presented at the Prague conference was published: KRAMER, Mark – SMETANA, Vít (ed.): *Imposing, Maintaining and Tearing Open the Iron Curtain. The Cold War and East-Central Europe 1945–1989*. Lanham (Mar.) – New York – Plymouth, Lexington Books 2014.

garian Academy of Sciences, Budapest). The academic analyses were juxtaposed with the memories of Jiří Dienstbier and Alexandr Vondra – two people with a key influence on the formation of Czechoslovak foreign policy in the years 1990–1992.

At the beginning of the 1990s the international scene was experiencing fundamental processes of transformation that would eventually have a far from foregone outcome in the form of the stabilisation of the region by the later integration of new members into the western structures.[3] In her introduction, the British historian Anne Deighton recalled Jiří Dienstbier's visits to the United Kingdom in the years 1990 to 1992, during which the then Czechoslovak foreign minister realistically did not ask for British money (the British repeatedly emphasised that they had none), but appealed to the UK not to forget his country and to offer at least *soft power* in the form of teachers of English, commercial exchange and other ties. The European Community had already been undergoing a process of enlargement since the beginning of the 1970s; in 1989 preparations for the accession of Austria and three Scandinavian countries were already under way. There were also preparations for a so far unprecedented deepening of internal integration. In such a situation the question of how to react to the revolutionary changes in Eastern Europe posed a major challenge. Georges-Henri Soutou pointed out that in the long term, the French diplomacy did not even envisage the opening up of the European community to East Europeans; President François Mitterrand instead offered a project of European confederation supposed to include the Soviet Union, but conversely to limit the influence of the United States. For a long time Paris also opposed the enlargement of the North Atlantic Alliance, and the fears of French politicians that the enlargement of the European Community, later European Union, would put brakes on the European federalisation process persisted throughout the 1990s. László Borhi reminded the panel how extremely unprepared the East Europeans were for membership of the European Community, given their experience from the clumsy and inefficient Comecon (Council for Mutual Economic Assistance) based on bilateral clearing agreements with the "convertible rouble" as an artificial central currency of practically unknown value. Conversely in 1989 the Western politicians had all kinds of anxieties about the future: in their mental maps they tended to see Eastern Europe as being solidly attached to the Soviet Union and they also felt the need to protect their markets from the small quantity of competitive products from the countries of Eastern Europe (from which they were soon expecting the complete liberalisation of own markets…). Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia deserve the credit for the unification of Europe because they dissolved the Warsaw Pact on their own initiative – after having liberated themselves in the framework provided by Gorbachev.

Taking issue with an article by Zbigniew Brzezinski,[4] Petr Luňák argued that there was nothing inevitable about the enlargement of NATO either: with

3 This part of the text rests primarily on an audio recording made on 19 November 2009.

4 BRZEZINSKI, Zbigniew: An Agenda for NATO: Toward a Global Security Web. In: *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 88, no. 5 (Sept. – Oct. 2009), pp. 2–20.

the end of the Cold War the organisation itself had no clue what to do, and in reaction to panic reports of its imminent dissolution in 1991 the Secretary General Manfred Wörner even called a meeting of employees in order to reassure them that they need not fear for their jobs. The enlargement of the Alliance happened on the initiative of the countries of East-Central Europe, but it was not a straightforward matter. In the 1970s and 1980s dissidents had tended to see NATO as an instrument of petrification of the *status quo* – and the withdrawal of the Soviet troops and dissolution of the Warsaw Pact were seen more as the expression of emancipation and the restoration of sovereignty than as a step on the road to the Alliance. The American historian Mary Elise Sarotte, however, observed that Bonn and Washington saw in the expansion of NATO to the east a means to transform NATO – a transformation that they considered essential for the preservation of this organisation, born in the times of the Cold War with the main purpose of combatting a Soviet threat that was now a thing of the past. It is true that in February 1990 the US Secretary of State James Baker assured Gorbachev that the Alliance would not shift towards the east (which would mean a united Germany, but with only its Western part in NATO), but he never put this undertaking in writing and in the first half of the year 1990 the Secretary of Defence Dick Cheney, Bush's National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft and other American officials held the first talks on opening up the Alliance to the Eastern Europeans. These talks were put on ice by Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, but were resumed by the Clinton Administration two years later.[5]

Vojtěch Mastný then asked Jiří Dienstbier and Alexandr Vondra if they could comment on three episodes relating to the future existence of NATO. The first of these was the statement made by the then Czech Prime Minister Václav Klaus in the period just after the signing of the agreement on Partnership for Peace (1994): during a visit of the highest placed man in the American military, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General John Shalikashvili, Klaus declared that Czech membership of NATO depended on whether NATO would continue to exist at all, on the internal Czech politics and also on the situation in the former Soviet Union. Alexandr Vondra, who was then the deputy foreign minister, did not remember this episode, but doubted that it had any major significance.

The next question concerned Václav Havel's visit to the United States in February 1990, when the Czechoslovak president surprised American diplomats by his suggestion that NATO and the Warsaw Pact both be dissolved in parallel and a new security architecture be constructed based on the Commission on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE). Alexandr Vondra remarked that in the 1980s the dissidents had had no foreign policy conception, and that for a part of the population behind the Iron Curtain the CSCE had represented an important instrument through which to claim enforcement of human rights. Václav Havel's rather

5 See the brilliant monograph by Mary Sarotte, which – rather despite the title of the book – is largely devoted to this theme (SAROTTE, Mary Elise: *1989: The Struggle to Create Post-Cold War Europe*. Princeton – Oxford, Princeton University Press 2009).

improvised speech in the Congress should nonetheless be seen primarily as an attempt to put Czechoslovakia back on the map of the West. Furthermore, Czechoslovakia and Poland still had Soviet troops on their territory at the time, and so tactical discretion was necessary because their departure was the main foreign policy priority. In this respect Hungary was in a better position. Thus it was the Hungarian Prime Minister József Antal, who was the first to come up with the idea of membership in NATO; he was rapidly followed by the Czechoslovak leaders at the end of 1990, and at the beginning of the next year they were already discussing "certain potential guarantees" with NATO representatives. The year 1993 was decisive because in the Copenhagen Declaration the European Union to a certain extent accepted the concept of enlargement, and even more important was the fact that the US president (the Democrat Bill Clinton), decided in favour of the enlargement of NATO.

Vojtěch Mastný's third question concerned Mitterrand's project of a European confederation, which ended in failure, indeed here in Prague. Alexandr Vondra said he was proud of the fact that, together with President Havel, he was one of the people who had helped to block this initiative. He explained that this was because its evident aim was to maintain the Western core of Europe, to leave the Soviet Union free of any kind of pressure, and to create a *cordon sanitaire* in the middle, the fortunes of which would be subject to discussions between the Western European governments and Moscow. According to Vondra this was something completely unacceptable, while a continuing American presence in Europe and the trans-Atlantic bond were considered the best guarantees that such a scenario could not occur. On the second question Jiří Dienstbier added that before 1989 the dissidents could not imagine the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact without the simultaneous dissolution of the North Atlantic Alliance and the creation of a new security structure in Europe. The person who had best understood what had happened in 1989 was in fact the Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze; this was why it proved possible to sign the agreement on the departure of the Soviet troops so fast, within two months, and despite the problems that Shevardnadze created for himself in Moscow especially with the Soviet generality (high command) but also with the hesitant Gorbachev, who supported the transfer but was playing his own political game. By contrast when James Baker came to Prague in February 1990, the US Secretary of State was embarrassed by Dienstbier's declaration that Czechoslovak diplomacy wanted to dissolve the Warsaw Pact as soon as humanly possible. This was because of Baker's practical concerns with the on-going negotiations between NATO and the Warsaw Pact on specific armaments and weapons systems in Europe and related issues. In response to Dienstbier's declaration that it would be unacceptable if after the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact NATO remained a closed club of sixteen members leaving the restored democracies of Central and Eastern Europe outside the western structure, Baker proposed – according to Dienstbier – the creation of a new pact composed of the German Democratic Republic (!), Poland, Czechoslovakia, Austria (?) and Yugoslavia. The negative Czech reaction meant that further debate on a new security architecture was put off, but in the summer of the same year Manfred Wörner, while on a visit to Prague, could still report-

edly ask the Czechoslovak foreign minister, in private, a question that he himself had shortly before been asked in Washington, i.e. whether it would not be possible to exploit the Warsaw Pact to tackle ethnic problems in Eastern Europe… Jiří Dienstbier branded the idea that the Red Army would tackle national problems in Eastern Europe a total fantasy. Evidently, clear conceptions were lacking.

And so – in the words of Vojtěch Mastný – in 1989 Mitterrand's project for a European confederation was actually the most coherent plan on the table for the possible organisation of Europe. Georges-Henri Soutou provided more detail about it on the basis of relevant French Foreign Ministry documents.[6] The proposed name was new but the idea of a European-wide security framework to overcome the Cold War division was not: Charles de Gaulle came up with a similar concept in 1965. At the beginning of December 1989 Mitterrand visited Gorbachev in Kiev and told him that if Germany was to be re-unified (and at this time it was still unclear whether this would take the form of a confederation of the two German states or some more integrated arrangement), then this could only happen within a new European security framework. Mitterrand was realistic and thus conscious of the fact that German reunification was inevitable unless Gorbachev set his face strongly against it. He therefore decided to kill two birds with one stone: with his plan for a European confederation he offered the Soviet leader the realisation of his plan for a "Common European Home" (which Gorbachev had first presented in October 1985 in Paris), while by the same token proposing a way in which Germany after its assumed reunification could be controlled or kept on a tight rein. Mitterrand sought to accomplish this through three instruments: 1) by further West European integration, ultimately including a unified Germany; 2) by pushing through the kind of German unification that would preserve the greatest possible "distinctiveness" of the GDR (up to the elections in March 1990 the French president believed, like many others in the West and in Germany itself, that their result would not necessarily mean that the Federal Republic would simply swallow the GDR, but that a new Germany might be born with a new constitution and state organisation); 3) the idea of a broad European security framework in accord with the Soviet Union and minus the United States (it was here that there were resonances with De Gaulle's concept of a "Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals"). And who would be the head of such a new security system? It was clear that it would not be the tandem of Andorra with Lichtenstein, but much more likely Moscow and Paris. The plan would have allowed Gorbachev if not to build the "Common European Home", then at the least to play a significant role in the new European security system even after the fundamental changes in Eastern Europe. And for understandable reasons this made the proposal unacceptable for the East Europeans. Furthermore, past experience with the French involvement in European security

6 This is a series of documents from the Quai d'Orsay devoted to German unification, which is accessible at http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/ministere_817/archives-patrimoine_3512/chute-du-mur-berlin-ouverture-anticipee-archives-diplomatiques_19850/index.html.

from the perspective of Prague and including memories of the years 1938, 1948 and 1968 were not of the kind to lend Mitterrand's plan any credibility at all.

According to Anne Deighton, Mary Sarotte's book about the year 1989, based on archive materials, presents a theory already outlined in a book by Philip Zelikow and Condoleezza Rice,[7] i.e. that the collapse of the bipolar division was above all an American-Soviet-German affair, while at the time not only the French but also the British ability to influence the events was fading. Paradoxically, then, two of the main European players did not play much of an important role in the creation of the new Europe. Two volumes of British documentation on 1989 published in the years just prior to this conference make rather sad reading for the Britons: they show Margaret Thatcher as a prime minister able to foresee the chaos that would fall on ordinary people if the situation in Germany, Europe and of course in the Soviet Union got out of control – but otherwise her judgments were not especially cogent.[8] (On the other hand, as Anne Deighton pointed out in a later phase of debate, Thatcher and her whole foreign policy team were on the threshold of German unification exposed to a plethora of foreign policy challenges, such as Kuwait and Iraq, South Africa, the hostages in the Lebanon and so on, and thus over-load was a really serious problem.) Meanwhile the European Community faced the basic dilemma of whether proceed slowly after 1989, with the aim of coping at leisure with the revolutionary changes, or whether history might not be on the side of European unification, and so it would be better to act faster than they otherwise wished for the fear of possible consequences. The old problem of differentiating between the countries of East-Central Europe was very acute in this context: Should they be seen as a bloc? As a group? Should only the best be accepted? And what about the weak ones – especially if these were at the same time the largest? It must nonetheless be stressed that the citizens of the GDR were offered their own special path to membership of the European Community, and so in that sense there was differentiation from the beginning. The European Community had not fully appreciated the fact (despite previous cases of enlargement – note V. S.), that expansion involves transformation of the institution itself, economic readiness – not as an act of imperialism but as a "process of expanding the internal". "This dilemma is indeed very serious and we already seem to have forgotten it. But perhaps it is a piece of history it would be quite good to forget," Anne Deighton concluded.

László Borhi was even more critical of the West and especially French diplomacy. In September 1988 Mitterrand told the chairman of the Hungarian Communists, Károly Grósz, that Europe belonged to Europeans – and so let us squeeze the Americans out of it – not only militarily, but also culturally and technologically. He proposed attracting the Japanese into Europe to enable it to compete with the United

7 ZELIKOW, Philip – RICE, Condoleezza: *Germany Unified and Europe Transformed: A Study in Statecraft*. Cambridge (Massachusetts) – London, Harvard University Press 1995.

8 HAMILTON, Keith et al. (ed.): *Documents on British Policy Overseas*, vol. III/6: *Berlin in the Cold War, 1948–1990*. London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office 2008; vol. III/7: *German Unification, 1989–1990*. London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office 2009.

States! Later entry into the European Community became the clear aim for all the former Soviet satellites because Eastern Europe was not economically viable on its own. At this time Borhi as a member of an advisory group to the Party of Young Democrats (Fidész) for foreign and security policy attended several conferences and experienced first-hand the sense of frustration at the way the representatives of the European Union kept reiterating that enlargement was impossible because the candidate countries were not ready for it. Of course that was true, but the economic crisis at the beginning of the 1990s was very serious in these countries, comparable with the economic crisis of the 1930s, and so the wait felt very long indeed. If we look at the current economic situation of these countries, a significant chance was probably wasted here. As far as the Warsaw Pact was concerned, its dissolution was the *sine qua non* for the enlargement of NATO, but as Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev once said: "Good space does not remain empty." In other words, the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact created a power vacuum, but from the Western point of view entry into NATO was not a natural choice for the states of Eastern Europe. What NATO meant and the terms of the fifth article of the Washington Treaty had to be explained to members of Fidész (who later in 1999 signed the Alliance agreement for Hungary), because they had no knowledge of it. Instead they talked about the CSCE, about neutrality, about Western European Union and about regional co-operation – about the Visegrad Four, about the Pentagonale (in an attempt to ally with Italy – i.e. the return of the old diplomacy of the 1930s). When Antall visited Washington in 1991, he talked with George Bush about terrorism as the greatest threat to Western civilisation but according to the record he did not say that Hungary would like to join NATO. Nor did Bush say that the Alliance was a possibility for Eastern Europe, but instead emphasised regional co-operation. What led Hungary and most probably other post-communist countries to start pushing for entry into the North Atlantic Alliance was the Yugoslav tragedy, the genocide and the fact that no one was capable of stopping it – except NATO. Of course there were widespread fears of the reaction of Russia, but Yugoslavia was an experience of the kind that meant there was essentially no alternative.

Petr Luňák agreed that this most terrible tragedy in Europe since the Second World War was the main impulse for the enlargement of NATO. Moreover it came at a time when there were no longer any alternatives because all the others had already been tried: in 1990 Jiří Dienstbier proposed the establishment of a European Security Commission associated with the CSCE – an idea that the West rejected because this project involved the dissolution of both the Warsaw Pact and NATO. Another possibility was the European Community, but membership was not on offer there… The enlargement of NATO remained an open question for the Bush Administration, which discussed it (for example the Assistant Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger mentioned it a few times), but during his last visit to Warsaw in the summer of 1992 Bush refused to say anything about it. For Clinton, paradoxically, the enlargement of NATO was not one of his priorities (which included coping with the consequences of globalisation, cultivating relations with Boris Yeltsin and

the attempt at engagement with Russia and so on), but in the end it turned out to be his greatest foreign policy success.

According to Mary Elise Sarotte it was important that the contest over which security model would prevail in Europe in fact started immediately following the collapse of the Berlin Wall – and the events of the year 1989 can be followed through this prism. Soon two main directions had crystallised – the model with the United States and the model without it. The first had clearly prevailed. Taking issue with some of Anne Deighton's comments, Mary Sarotte argued for differentiating between British and French policy in terms of impact, with the French eventually showing themselves to be highly adept at influencing international processes. In Bonn it was clear that Germany could not reunify itself without French agreement, for that would be politically unacceptable. At one point Horst Teltschik, one of Chancellor Helmut Kohl's closest advisors, invited a top journalist from the daily *Le Monde* and told him: "We Germans would like to unite. That puts you, the French, in a position where you can ask whatever you want with respect to European unification. If I were a Frenchman, I would exploit that." This offered the French a strategy they later exploited successfully. As far as Margaret Thatcher is concerned, the documents show her almost hysterical reaction to German reunification, and in this respect do not place her in a good light, but on the other hand this reaction was somewhat balanced by some penetrating strategic insights. The British prime minister had three wholly justified fears: 1) From the point of view of the West Gorbachev was the best possible Soviet leader, and so the West needed to be very careful that a rapid unification did not threaten his position. Whoever came after him would be worse for the West, regardless of what Thatcher thought about the Soviet Union. 2) Thatcher feared that Helmut Kohl was reunifying Germany with no deeper thought given to the potential economic consequences for European currencies, i.e. that massive loans to cover the costs of German reunification would push up German interest rates and this would affect the other European currencies that were linked to each other in a "currency snake". In fact the currency crisis of 1992 showed that she was right – with tragic effects for Britain. 3) Thatcher told Hans-Dietrich Genscher (she and Kohl could not stand one another, and so regardless of the rules of protocol she usually spoke with the foreign minister) that if Kohl were allowed to change European borders, there would be a problem in Yugoslavia. In general then, despite her hysterical reaction Thatcher had at least three strategic reasons for being alarmed at the prospect of the reunification of Germany.

In response to a question from her American colleague William Taubman, Mary Sarotte made further comments about the immensely interesting question of the American promise to Gorbachev that NATO would not be enlarged towards the east.[9] There was a certain rift between James Baker and George H. W.

9 Soon after the conference Mary Sarotte devoted a separate article to this theme: SAROTTE, Mary Elise: Not One Inch Eastward? Bush, Baker, Kohl, Genscher, Gorbachev, and the Origin of Russian Resentment toward NATO Enlargement in February 1990. In: *Diplomatic History*, vol. 34, no. 1 (2010), pp. 119–140.

Bush at the time, and Baker was talking more to Genscher than to his own president. Genscher persuaded him that it was necessary to help Gorbachev by giving him guarantees that NATO would not expand eastward. In February 1990, then, Baker flew to Moscow and according to his written blueprint and the testimony of participants told Gorbachev that the Alliance would not shift "even an inch" to the east. A skilled lawyer, Baker saw this as only a kind of hypothetical thought – and as a suggestion left behind in the course of further talks. Gorbachev saw it as a more concrete assurance, however, but failed as a defender of the interests of his Soviet Union when he did not manage to extract this promise in written form. The next day (10 February) brought even more problematic moments when Helmut Kohl appeared in Moscow and used the same words – despite the direct intervention of President Bush, who tried to persuade him out of it. Gorbachev thus apparently had an assurance from both the US secretary of state and the German chancellor – and this at a time when Washington and Bonn, as is evident from documents of the time, were in a position to lead NATO without effective opposition from the other members. The Soviet leader received the assurance in exchange for his agreement to German reunification. In this respect his meeting with Kohl had immediate practical results: Gorbachev told the chancellor that Germany could start internal unification in the sense of economic union, monetary union and so forth, and Kohl immediately called a press conference before flying home and within a few hours starting intensive preparations for a monetary union, which was implemented long before the political union. The problem was that the promise not to enlarge NATO in the east was given "merely" as a gentlemen's agreement and not a legally binding undertaking.

Instead of a final summing up Vojtěch Mastný answered a question from the Czech-born historian Alex Pravda (Oxford University), who asked which politicians (if any) today stand out as genuine formative influences, with well thought-out plans, on the events under discussion. Mastný thought that one example was Jacques Delors, who was the President of the European Commission in the most important period of the history of European integration (1985–1995), when the European Community first accepted the Single European Act of 1986 and then changed into the European Union. In the end it turned out to be this organisation that actually brought the former communist countries back into Europe. The result has not been as good and has not been achieved as smoothly and fast as it might have been – but it is still significantly better than the situation before 1989.

## *Academic Interpretations of the Cold War*

The discussion of immediate post-Cold War development was followed in the next two days by a total of six thematic panels (not interpreted into Czech). The first focused on the question of whether rivalry over East-Central Europe was the primary cause of the Cold War (*The Struggle for East-Central Europe as a Primary Cause of the Cold War?*). Michael Hopkins (Liverpool University) analysed the transformation

of American policy from rapport with the Soviet Union at practically any price as practiced by Franklin D. Roosevelt to Truman's progressive rejection of mutual relations as a one-way street of American concessions to the Soviets. The next three papers were devoted to the different routes into the Cold War taken by countries with a common Habsburg past. László Borhi convincingly argued against the conventional view of Hungary as the "shop window" of Soviet good will, since in his view it was a matter of very traditional imperial annexation. On this basis he argued that one cannot look for a causal relationship between the offer of the Marshall Plan and the Sovietisation of Eastern Europe, for the latter was almost under Moscow's absolute control in the summer of 1947.[10] One theme of my own paper was how even before the end of the war Czechoslovakia had started to be considered especially in Moscow, but also in some political circles in the West (largely thanks to the Czechoslovak leaders in exile) a bastion of Soviet influence in Central Europe.[11] The specific development of Austria from the end of the war to the State Treaty of 1955 was outlined by Rolf Steininger (University of Innsbruck), who underlined its close connection to the development of the German Question.[12]

Following this panel the conference participants were greeted by the then Czech Prime Minister Jan Fischer, who presented seven scholars with a Karel Kramář Commemorative Medal for major contributions to the understanding of modern Czech or Czechoslovak history on the international scene. Those presented with this award were Vojtěch Mastný, Thomas Blanton (Director of the National Security Archive in Washington), Alex Pravda (Oxford University), Mark Kramer (Harvard University), Vilém Prečan (Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Czechoslovak Documentation Centre in Prague), and William Taubman (Amherst College, Massachusetts). The medal conferred to Saki Dockrill (King's College, London), who before her premature death had planned to deliver a paper entitled *The Lingering Controversy over the 'End' of the Cold War* at the conference, was presented to her husband Michael Dockrill.

In a panel devoted to strategic planning and nuclear arms (*Plans for a Major War in Europe and the Role of Nuclear Weapons*), Timothy Naftali (Director of the Nixon Presidential Library and Museum in Yorba Linda, California) drew attention to the important role of prestige in the Cold War: for example the Soviet generals supported the project "Open Skies" (proposed at the Geneva Quadrilateral Summit in 1955 by President Eisenhower), but the Kremlin leader Nikita Khrushchev opposed it because he feared it would mean that the West would discover Soviet weakness in strategic arms. According to the Irish-born historian David Holloway (Stanford University) nuclear arms helped the West to offset the Soviet

10 For more detail see BORHI, László: *Hungary in the Cold War 1945–1956: Between the United States and the Soviet Union*. New York, CEU Press 2004.

11 See e.g. SMETANA, Vít: Czechoslovakia and Spheres of Influence towards the End of the Second World War. In: *Central Europe*, vol. 5, no. 2 (2007), pp. 125–134.

12 For more detail see STEININGER, Rolf: *Austria, Germany and the Cold War: From the Anschluss to the State Treaty, 1938–1955*. New York – Oxford, Berghahn Books 2008.

conventional superiority, but at the price of the heightened danger of unleashing an unimaginably destructive war; the international system following the end of the Cold War, even with all its risks and deficits, is after all much safer. Warsaw Pact plans for offensive war against the West, which seemed not to take much account of the destructive potential of nuclear weapons, were assessed by Petr Luňák.[13]

For long decades attempts to break the Cold War *status quo* foundered on opposite concerns with stabilising the existing system. A panel entitled *Attempts to Break the Cold War Deadlock versus Efforts to Stabilize the Existing System* opened with a symbolic contribution devoted to the famous Stalin Note of March 1952, which still remains a cause of dispute between historians, namely on whether it belongs to the first or second category. Peter Ruggenthaler (Ludwig Boltzmann Institute, Graz), however, persuasively showed, on the basis of extensive archival research in Russian and other funds, that the Note was not sincere and was intended not to overcome the division of Germany but to divide Europe.[14] Csaba Békés (Director of the Budapest Cold War Research Studies Center) classified Cold War crises into the genuine (such as the Berlin or Cuban Crisis) and "pseudo-crises" (in 1953, 1956 including the Suez Crisis, 1968), which in his view were the internal affairs of solidly formed blocs. In the discussion Mark Kramer challenged this classification using the example of events in the GDR in 1953, which in his view had very explosive potential for East-West relations. Be that as it may, Dariusz Stola (Collegium Civitas, Warsaw) demonstrated with many examples how the "stability" achieved in the period of *détente* strengthened the influence of state structures on everyday life in the Eastern Bloc. According to Oldřich Tůma (Director of the Institute for Contemporary History of the Czech Academy of Sciences), even the year 1968 failed to shake the international system, although like the years 1953 and 1956 it can be considered a milestone in internal political or "intra-bloc" development. Vilém Prečan then argued that the outcome of 1968 was at the roots of the paralysis of Czechoslovak society, which was still evident well into the Gorbachev era.

The panel devoted to Germany – its division, the building of the Berlin Wall and reunification – and likewise to parallels with Eastern Europe (*The German Question – the Pivotal Point of the Cold War*) was particularly brilliant with regards to the high quality of contributions and the subsequent debate. As part of her treatment of the theme Anne Deighton showed how the British ability to influence the situation progressively diminished, and this weakness then became fully apparent in the years 1989–1991 in relation to the German reunification question. Georges-Henri Soutou focused on the view from Paris, with an emphasis on the end

13 For more detail see LUŇÁK, Petr (ed.): *Plánování nemyslitelného: Československé válečné plány 1950–1990* [Planning the Unthinkable: Czechoslovak War Plans 1950–1990]. Praha, Dokořán 2008; see also LUŇÁK: The Warsaw Pact War Plan of 1964 (Parallel History Project on Cooperative Security web page, see http://www.php.isn.ethz.ch/collections/coll_warplan/intro_lunak.cfm?navinfo=15365).

14 For more detail see RUGGENTHALER, Peter: *Stalins grosser Bluff: Die Geschichte der Stalin-Note in Dokumenten der sowjetischen Führung*. München, R. Oldenbourg 2007.

of the Cold War and Mitterrand's ideas about a merely confederated Germany and new European security system – minus the Americans. Hope Harrison (George Washington University, Washington) assessed the state of research on the symbol of the Cold War, the Berlin Wall, in all its dimensions. For Khrushchev, the building of the wall was a desperate improvised measure as soon as it became clear that he would be unable to dislodge the Americans from Berlin. By contrast, as only recently (at the time of the conference – V. S.) released secret archive materials in Moscow and Berlin show, the role of the Secretary General of the East German Communist Party Walter Ulbricht in the building of the wall and subsequent imposition of a cruel border regime was absolutely crucial.[15] Oliver Bange (Mannheim University) considered the German Question in the context of bipolar rivalry. For most of the time it was more of an obstacle than a catalyst on the road to the "year of miracles". Only with German self-liberation, which in the case of West Germany was by gradual emancipation together with *Ostpolitik* in the 1970s and in the case of East Germany by mass popular uprising in November 1989 – did the notion of German self-limitation achieve credibility in the eyes of the rest of the world, thus making German reunification possible. Bernd Schäfer (The International Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars, Washington), focused on the implosion of the East German communist regime in international context, drawing attention to the way in which the allied regimes in Poland, Hungary and finally even Czechoslovakia literally cut the ground from under the feet of Erich Honecker and his comrades, although each in its own different way. On the exodus of East Germans through the West German Embassy in Prague Bernd Schäfer also mentioned the East German leadership's bizarre suggestion that their Czechoslovak comrades should surround the embassy building with a wall.[16] At the end of his paper he reminded the panel that a unified Germany became a reality particularly thanks to the unrelenting pressure "from below" – i.e. from the East German society, which was kept up from 1989 to the autumn of 1990.[17]

15 For more detail see HARRISON, Hope M.: *Driving the Soviets up the Wall: Soviet-East German Relations, 1953–1961*. Princeton (New Jersey) – Woodstock, Princeton University Press 2003.

16 See PREČAN, Vilém (ed.): *Ke svobodě přes Prahu: Exodus občanů NDR na podzim 1989. Sborník dokumentů* [Toward Freedom via Prague: The Exodus of GDR Citizens in the Autumn of 1989. Collection of Documents]. Praha, Československé dokumentační středisko 2009, p. 73 n., document no. 31 – Velvyslanec NDR Ziebart ústřednímu výboru SED a ministerstvu zahraničních věcí v Berlíně, 29.9.1989 [GDR Ambassador Ziebart to the Central Committee of the SED and Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Berlin, 29th September 1989]. Here the ambassador reports to Berlin: "The idea expressed in Berlin, i.e. to build a wall around the embassy, is apparently not acceptable to Prague."

17 Schäfer's paper has already been published in Czech translation: SCHÄFER, Bernd: Jak podtrhnout soudruhům z NDR stoličku: Střední Evropa a zhroucení východního Německa [How to Cut the Ground from Underneath the Feet of the Comrades in the GDR: Central Europe and the Collapse of East Germany]. In: *Dějiny a současnost*, vol. 33, no. 5 (2011), pp. 35–38.

The panel devoted to the end of the Cold War (*The Ending of the Cold War and the Role of East-Central Europe in the Process*) was clearly the high point of the conference in terms of presentation of the then most recent results of archival research. In a brilliant paper, practically peerless in form and presentation, Thomas Blanton analysed American policy towards the Soviet Union. He pointed out a fundamental paradox: Ronald Reagan, despite his reputation as a tough cold warrior, practically from the outset of his presidency repeatedly appealed to the rapid succession of Soviet leaders to co-operate on nuclear disarmament – although until the rise of Gorbachev there was no response. By contrast the new George H. W. Bush Administration (among other reasons out of jealousy of the international popularity of the Soviet leader) – for much of 1989 took a somewhat "hawkish" attitude to Gorbachev. Thus at this point the disarmament negotiations received no further impetus and Bush met Gorbachev only after almost a year in office, in December 1989 in Malta – at the tail-end of the main events. The next three papers were devoted to Gorbachev – the man who at the very least made possible the massive changes in the Soviet Bloc. According to Alex Pravda, Gorbachev for a long time failed to pay enough attention to the situation in Eastern Europe: perestroika was supposed to take place in these countries, but Gorbachev gave no significant support to reformists there and his policy bears all the marks of improvisation. William Taubman presented Gorbachev as a man with a vision who did not want to take the road of revolutionary transformation of the Soviet Union or liberation of East-Central Europe but nonetheless tried to modernise socialism at home and abroad and end the policy of diktat to his allies. He began with an effort to "accelerate" Soviet economic and social development, but in the years 1987 and 1988 started to incline to genuine democratisation and at the same time entirely transformed the Soviet foreign policy. This exposed him to enormous pressures from all sides (his wife was also an important influence, to the disgust of all his advisors, as William Taubman and Svetlana Savranskaya noted in discussion). These pressures more than once led him to basic mistakes and irrational behaviour – starting with the counter-productive anti-alcohol campaign and ending with the decision to let himself be made president on the basis of voting by the Supreme Soviet of the USSR instead of standing for the post in general elections.[18] Svetlana Savranskaya (The National Security Archive, Washington) argued that although the East European countries had been the jewel of the Soviet Empire (said together with László Borhi), for Gorbachev they gradually became a burden at a time when the Soviet economy was sinking and he was being exposed to increasing criticism on the domestic scene, especially Yeltsin's pressure from the right. Gorbachev placed great emphasis on the project of the "Common European Home": this involved the transformation of the security structure on the continent so that the central role would be taken by the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe while the two military blocs, NATO and

18 Taubman's paper has already been printed in Czech translation: TAUBMAN, William: Gorbačov a konec studené války: Předběžné postřehy jeho životopisce [Gorbachev and the End of the Cold War: Interim Comments of his Autobiographer]. In: *Ibid.*, pp. 28–30.

the Warsaw Pact, would be dissolved. The last panel paper was a political analysis of the beginnings of the period of transition to democracy with a specific stress on Slovakia from Soňa Szomolányi (Comenius University, Bratislava).

There followed an immensely interesting forty-five minute discussion. In the context of the American foreign policy Mark Kramer talked about the "art of doing nothing" so long as events were developing in the right direction from the American point of view (a different kind of passivity from that of 1968, for example) and a more active policy from the Washington side might "de-rail" them. Kramer suggested that this was the way many American diplomats were thinking at the time. László Borhi put forward an argument suggesting that the arms race really pushed the Soviet Union into a corner, pointing out that in 1988 Eduard Shevardnadze had said that the Soviet Union could no longer carry the burden of the arms race and so agreement had to be reached with the West on any terms. (According to Thomas Blanton, however, this was mainly a matter of overall economic decline, since in fact Soviet arms expenditure had not risen under the American pressure in the 1980s.) Borhi went on to say that on the other hand Bush's claim to have changed the priorities of the Cold War and put the fate of Eastern Europe in first place is not true: in fact Bush had returned to the American approach of the 1960s, seeing Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe as an aid to European stability. László Borhi cited a directive of the US Department of State of 1966, which ran, "The reunification of Europe will not necessarily lead to a better future, but to a return to the futile past." According to the records of American-Hungarian meetings in Hungarian archives that was precisely the attitude of the Bush Administration. In the case of Mikhail Gorbachev, Borhi doubted that Eastern Europe was a burden for Moscow. On the contrary, a document of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party drawn up at the beginning of 1989 still considered this area militarily and economically valuable; furthermore, in 1989 Hungary owed the Soviet Union one billion two-hundred million convertible roubles. However different Gorbachev was from his predecessors, and even though he opened up a "window of opportunity" for the nations of Eastern Europe and certainly deserves credit for that, in 1989 he repeated three principles behind closed doors: 1) The Warsaw Pact must be preserved; 2) any changes must take place within the framework of socialism; and 3) we will not tolerate Western intervention – the Brezhnev Doctrine must not be supplanted by the Bush Doctrine. Csaba Békés then offered his own interpretation of why Moscow did not announce a political strategy towards the East European countries: first of all the Brezhnev Doctrine continued to "float" above Europe, and even though it had not in fact applied since mid-1988, not alluding to this fact publicly was a brilliant tactic against "precipitate" changes, since it had a pacifying effect on governing parties and oppositions. (According to Svetlana Savranskaya, however, the tactic was aimed more at the dissidents, since in 1988 and 1989 the East European leaders were repeatedly informed that they could not count on Soviet military intervention.) Second, the Soviet vision was "regional Finlandisation" of East-Central Europe, i.e. internal democratisation but within a continuing Soviet sphere of influence. What is interesting is that this "maximum concession" from

the Soviet side corresponded with the aim of the West including the United States, which from mid-1988 practically to the end of 1990 saw in such an arrangement the best possible outcome for the East European countries, i.e. liberation from the communist rule, but not from the Soviet control.

In the final section entitled *Varying Interpretations of the Cold War and Its Historical Importance* the discussion focused on more general reflections on the Cold War and communism. Silvio Pons (Tor Vergata University, Rome) outlined the gradual long-term de-legitimisation of communism, a process that had already begun in the 1950s. Although the series of unsuccessful rebellions in Central and Eastern Europe cannot be considered a factor inevitably foreshadowing the year 1989, for European communism these social and national reactions against Sovietisation were undoubtedly a constant source of challenge to legitimacy.[19] According to Mark Kramer, Stalin himself regarded his regime as vulnerable as early as 1946, while in 1953 and 1956 communism in the German Democratic Republic in practice broke down. Kramer went on to make two points fundamental for the theme of the whole conference: 1) the imposition of communist regimes on Eastern Europe was of key importance for the outset of the Cold War; 2) Soviet relations with Eastern Europe remained the central theme of the Cold War throughout its course. Richard Ned Lebow (London School of Economics and Political Science) drew attention to the many stimuli that the end of the Cold War brought for the theory of international relations: for example, it became evident that structural change of the international system could be the product and not just the reason for the behaviour of actors – contrary to the claims of the realist school. James Hershberg (George Washington University, Washington) focused on a remarkable new stage in the history of modern historiography, which he explored using the example of international historical conferences in Athens (Ohio) in October 1988 and in Moscow in June 1989; this involved the coming generation of Soviet historians (represented by the rising stars Vladislav Zubok and Konstantin Pleshakov) who were radically shaking off the tradition of deliberate disinformation and ideologised interpretations of the Cold War.[20] The experience of the conferences encouraged several American historians to expect a breakthrough in the opening up of Soviet

19 Pons's contribution has already been printed in Czech translation: PONS, Silvio: Problém legitimity [The Problem of Legitimacy]. In: *Ibid*, pp. 31–34.

20 In 1996 these two very young Russian historians jointly published the first synthetic work on Soviet foreign policy in the first phase of the Cold War to genuinely make use of the now accessible Soviet archives (see ZUBOK, Vladislav – PLESHAKOV, Constantine: *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev*. Cambridge (Massachusetts) – London, Cambridge University Press 1996). 11 years later Zubok added a brilliant synthesis of Soviet policy in the whole period of the Cold War (ZUBOK, Vladislav M.: *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev.* Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press 2007). With the twentieth anniversary of the "year of miracles", Konstantin Pleshakov then published an interesting essay concerned with the main developments of post-war communism in Eastern Europe, with an emphasis on the final catharsis in 1989 (PLESHAKOV, Constantine: *There Is No Freedom without Bread! 1989 and the Civil War That Brought Down Communism*. New York, Farrar, Straus & Giroux 2009).

archives, and together with the hopes raised in this context by the anti-communist revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe were the impulses behind the founding of the key *Cold War International History Project*.[21]

In his closing speech for the conference the Norwegian historian Odd Arne Westad (London School of Economics and Political Science) praised the high quality of the papers and of the event as such. He also pointed out the need to explore the history of Central and Eastern Europe in genuinely global context. His appeal is very much to the point, as we can see from Westad's fundamental work on the Cold War in global context, dealing with the policy and especially the interventions of the two superpowers in the Third World and their influence on the world after the Cold War. All the same, one might note that East Europe can easily be mistakenly side-lined in this context: paradoxically Czechoslovakia for example is only mentioned in Westad's book twice, as victim of Soviet intervention in 1968, despite the fact that there can be no doubt of its very active role in several regions of the Third World.[22] In this respect, little more is offered even by the immensely important three-volume Cambridge synthesis of the history of the Cold War, published in 2010 by an international team of leading Cold War historians (ten of them attended the conference), for in this magisterial work Czechoslovakia appears as an active player in the Third World only in one sentence referring to the sale of arms to Egypt in September 1955.[23] The Czechoslovak role in the developing world has been the subject of a few important Czech publications,[24] but there is still a great deal of room for further Czech research, and especially for publication in a language accessible to the international research community and other interested readers abroad. It is a field that ought to attract above all young researchers hungry for knowledge – and with the appropriate institutional funding and base. Indeed it is precisely these young scholars who by their participation in the Prague conference (in marked contrast to some established "capacities" in Czech academia, who

21 Hershberg's paper has already been published in an abridged version in Czech translation: HERSHBERG, James G.: Příběh dvou konferencí: Konec studené války a proměna její historiografie [The Story of Two Conferences: The End of the Cold War and the Transformation of Its Historiography]. In: *Dějiny a současnost*, vol. 33, no. 5 (2011), pp. 39–43; his text in unabridged form and with footnotes is accessible at the web page http://dejiny.nln.cz/archiv/2011/5/pribeh-dvou-konferenci.

22 WESTAD, Odd Arne: *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times*. Cambridge – New York, Cambridge University Press 2007, pp. 195, 214.

23 LITTLE, Douglas: The Cold War in the Middle East: Suez Crisis to Camp David Accords. In: LEFFLER, Melvyn P. – WESTAD, Odd Arne (ed.): *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, 3 vols. Cambridge – New York, Cambridge University Press 2010, vol. 2, pp. 305–326, here p. 306 f.

24 ZÍDEK, Petr – SIEBER, Karel: *Československo a subsaharská Afrika v letech 1948–1989* [Czechoslovakia and Sub-Saharan Africa 1948-1989]. Praha, Ústav mezinárodních vztahů 2007; IDEM: *Československo a Blízký východ v letech 1948–1989* [Czechoslovakia and the Near East 1948–1989]. Praha, Ústav mezinárodních vztahů 2009; ZÍDEK, P.: *Československo a francouzská Afrika 1948–1968* [Czechoslovakia and French Africa 1948–1968]. Praha, Libri 2006.

either believe to know everything already or feel that international context might upset their research on Czechoslovakia…), demonstrated their keenness to listen to new findings and interpretations from an elite group of world historians whose meeting in Prague was quite unique, and whom Vilém Prečan in a TV interview on the conference rightly called quite appositely the *crème de la crème*.

*This is an updated version of the article* Nekonečný příběh s náhlým koncem – a jeho bezprostřední důsledky pro středovýchodní Evropu. Mnohačetné impulsy z pražské konference o studené válce, *which originally appeared in Soudobé dějiny, vol. 18, no. 1–2 (2011), pp. 11–31.*

*Review*

# The Sudeten Germans and the Twilight of the First Republic

Petr Kaplan

BRANDES, Detlef: *Die Sudetendeutschen im Krisenjahr 1938.* (Veröffentlichungen des Collegium Karolinum, vol. 107.) München, R. Oldenbourg 2008, xvi + 399 pp.

In his monograph the well-known German historian Detlef Brandes focuses on the position of the Sudeten Germans in interwar Czechoslovakia and their role in the destruction of the young republic. His basic hypothesis is that the causes of the catastrophic development between Czechs and Germans in the Czech Lands, which ultimately led to the postwar expulsion or transfer of the Germans, must be sought in the years 1935–38, especially in the period between the Anschluss of Austria and the Munich Agreement. The theme is one that has been the subject of a great deal of historiographical treatment, but Brandes tries to approach it from a new angle: he considers the fortunes of the Sudeten Germans not as the single story of a homogenous population group but as the history of many social groups and their relationships.

The rise and radicalisation of the Sudeten German Party (SdP) cannot in his view be grasped without an understanding of the internal and external influences affecting the everyday life of German inhabitants in the First Republic. He therefore considers moods in the borderlands, explores the conditions inside the community

of Sudeten Germans, and describes their growing support for the policy of the SdP and counter-actions by the local social-democratic and communist groupings, who up to the last moment kept trying to win German voters back to their side. Nor of course does he forget the problematic relations between the Germans and the "borderers" (*hraničáři*), i.e. the Czech inhabitants of the borderlands, who did not wish to concede any form of German autonomy. Brandes documents these levels of social relations using local cases and so shows the differences between individual regions and at the same time the common phenomena that applied to the whole Sudeten German territory. The book is therefore a history of the border regions of the Czech Lands (not only of Sudeten Germans, as might appear from the title) in the context of the tense internal political situation and growing threat to the republic, with a stress on the "crisis" year of 1938 when the German-populated territories were annexed by the Reich.

The book rests on an extensive foundation of sources. The author has explored and studied the funds of many Czech archives, including the Archive of the Czech National Bank, the Archive of the Office of the President of the Republic and the Prager Presse Clippings Archive. He notes that the fund of the Beneš Presidential Archive has not been preserved in its entirety. The funds of the former Archive of the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic (now the Security Services Archive), which contain detailed and concrete reports from the police and border guards on investigated incidents but also complaints submitted and mutual legal actions by the inhabitants of the Sudetenland, turned out to be particularly valuable material. The Czechoslovak police sent their men to all SdP actions to supervise maintenance of order and to present reports on the events. Brandes tested their reliability by comparing them with articles by foreign and above all British journalists. As another control source he also used the reports of the exiled German Social Democratic Party whose members found a temporary refuge in Czechoslovakia. In these reports the German Social Democrats comment on events in Germany and in Czechoslovakia and offer useful comparisons. Brandes has also exploited editions of Czechoslovak, German, British and French documents, and has not overlooked the autobiographies of important actors of the political life of the time, for example Edvard Beneš, Kamil Krofta and others.

The approach is chronological and the book divided into five chapters followed by a final summary and appendices. The first chapter, "The Mutual Tackling of National Issues in the First Republic", traces the development of the German political parties in Czechoslovakia up to 1937. This is a very densely packed account of events starting with the first parliamentary elections in 1920, when seven supra-regional and ten smaller German parties were standing. Brandes emphasises the fact that these parties (with the exception of the communists) wanted to share in the running of the new state and were seeking to develop an activist (as opposed to rejectionist) policy. It was the economic crisis in the 1930s that brought the major rupture. In the eyes of the German population the Czechoslovak government was to blame for the slow recovery from the recession, which had caused a steep increase in unemployment. The loss of jobs affected Sudeten Germans proportionately more than

the rest of the inhabitants of the Republic, as Brandes shows using many statistics and tables. Comparison of their own situation with the fast recovery of Germany just over the border led Sudeten Germans to the first formulation of demands for separation from Czechoslovakia. According to Brandes's findings, Henlein's party did not enjoy equal favour in all the border regions (just as in the case of the Nazi NSDAP in Germany itself), but in the time of crisis it succeeded in gaining the upper hand with the forcefulness of its policies. Apart from high unemployment Brandes sees two other factors behind the radicalisation of the German population. The first and foremost was in his view the rather unsuccessful nationality policy of the Prague government, which by its insistence on the concept of a Czechoslovak nation state contributed to whipping up Sudeten German nationalism and made it impossible for Germans and the other minorities to identify with the Czechoslovak state. The second factor according to Brandes was discrimination against the German inhabitants in comparison with the Czech *hraničáři* in the fields of language, schooling, employment in state service, the allocation of state contracts and suchlike. Brandes considers that it was these three factors that led to the rise of the chairman of the German *Turnverband* Konrad Henlein and to the victory of the Sudeten German Party over the other German parties in the parliamentary elections of 1935.

The second chapter focuses on the year 1937 in the course of events preceding the disintegration of Czechoslovakia. Brandes looks at the attempts of the "activist" parties, which participated in the functioning of the government coalition but in 1935 lost the support of the majority of the German population, to weaken the rival SdP. Following the elections the SdP gained influence in a range of Sudeten German organisations and in the German press, and this proved an ideal instrument for spreading party propaganda. Brandes emphasises that while the Sudeten German Party was built on the Führer principle from the outset, at this point it distanced itself from Hitler's National Socialism (to avoid possible misunderstanding Brandes translates the Czechoslovak National Socialists as *Volkssozialisten*). Christianity was another attribute of the SdP and so Brandes argues that expressions of antisemitism in the Sudetenland should be understood as more religiously than racially motivated. By a policy of concessions (in the field of language, in the employment of Germans in the state sphere, in support for German firms with government orders and suchlike), which were contained in the so-called February Agreement (*Feber-Abkommen*) of February 1937, the Prague government tried to bolster support for the rest of the German parties against the SdP, but implementation of the agreement met with resistance from the Czech inhabitants of the borderlands. Fearing the ever-stronger Sudeten German Party, the *hraničáři* refused to cooperate with any of the German parties. Brandes ends this chapter with Konrad Henlein's offer to Adolf Hitler to use the SdP as an instrument for the breaking up of Czechoslovakia after the postponement of the municipal elections in which Henlein's party was expected to reap further success.

The third chapter is entitled "From the Anschluss of Austria to the Municipal Elections", which indicates its major content. Brandes begins by highlighting

the enthusiasm with which the merger of Austria with Germany was greeted by the Sudeten Germans. This was because the Anschluss was regarded by the supporters of the Sudeten German Party as the prefiguration of the expected solution to the "Sudeten Question", and added to their self-confidence. The party organised recruitment campaigns and used coercion to try to get new members. Here Brandes identifies another aspect of the success of the SdP. Henlein's party had the support of the employers, who based on the Reich model wanted the workers to leave left-wing parties and unions. One way of motivating them to do so was, for example, offering protection to SdP members during forced lay-offs. The new self-confidence of the Germans was also expressed in the boycott of Czech and Jewish shops. Brandes condemns the failure of nerve of the non-Marxist German political parties, who out of fear of "levelling down" decided to voluntarily dissolve themselves or become affiliated to the SdP. Whether this was really a matter of fear or of opportunism, after Henlein's public speech in April 1938, in which he openly identified with the ideas of German National Socialism, there could be no doubt as to how the Sudeten German Party was planning to deal with the opposition. Although at this point its policy was already very intransigent, Brandes remains critical of the Czechoslovak government. For example he regards the exclusion of the last activist minister Ludwig Czech from Hodža's cabinet as a mistake.

In the fourth chapter Brandes described the campaign leading up to the municipal elections in May and June of 1938, their course and results. The Sudeten German Party waged an aggressive election campaign including attempts to intimidate non-party members. The government decided to respond to the growing pressure by partial mobilisation, which temporarily calmed the situation down. In the longer term, however, it did not manage to intervene effectively against the violence in the borderlands, and this discredited it in the eyes of many of the inhabitants. Events in the Sudeten regions thus took on a dynamic of their own. Brandes quotes the observations of Czechs who after visiting the Sudetenland at this time said that they saw no difference between the Czechoslovak borderlands and the Third Reich. At this moment President Beneš, under pressure from the Western great powers, tried to solve the problem by a proposal for the creation of a German state within the framework of Czechoslovakia, which would thus have had to be changed into a federation. Brandes considers this proposal to have been an error, because it was not only unconstitutional but prioritised the maintenance of territorial integrity over the preservation of democracy. Henlein however responded by breaking off negotiations with the Czechoslovak government.

The final chapter concentrates on the last three weeks before the signing of the Munich Agreement. The violence in the borderlands intensified after Adolf Hitler's speech at the Nazi party congress in Nuremberg on 12 September, in which he crudely attacked President Beneš. A state of emergency was declared in the most affected areas. Most of the leading members of the SdP fled to Germany, from which paramilitary units of their Sudeten German volunteer corps (*Sudetendeutsches Freikorps*) engaged in raids against state institutions in the borderlands. The German Social Democrats tried to exploit the SdP's temporary loss of control

of Sudeten territory but the Munich Agreement meant the end of hope for solution to the conflict by any means other than ceding the German areas. Brandes gives a region-by-region account of the hand-over of the administration to the Germans and the withdrawal of the Czechoslovak army from the border fortifications, basing the description on local police reports.

The book is equipped with an index of names and index of subjects, and a lengthy list of primary and secondary sources. The appendices include a table of the results of municipal and parliamentary elections from 1929 onwards in selected Sudeten-German voting districts. These are mostly records from larger towns and are unfortunately in many cases incomplete. One very interesting and in relation to Sudeten German themes almost essential feature is the topographical index, in which the author gives the Czech equivalents of the Czechoslovak town names. It is a pity, however, that the book contains no maps, since these would have been helpful especially given the author's emphasis on describing events at local level. The book also lacks a clear definition of the "Sudetenland"; originally the term meant only the north Moravian territory west of Opava and only by later extension came to mean all the borderlands with a preponderance of German population.

Brandes's monograph is logically structured and readable, although at some points the reader may find the sheer number of facts and statistics indigestible. This is particularly the case with the first two chapters in which the author tries to summarise the almost twenty-year history of the German parties in prewar Czechoslovakia. Brandes's work with the sources is admirably thorough, as is evident from the more than 1500 footnotes. The Czech reader is helped with orientation in the text by the author's insertion of several terms in Czech as well as German (e.g. *Gauverbände – župní svazy*). However, the book assumes at least an elementary knowledge of the basic features of the First Republic and international context in order to avoid a black-and-white view of the situation in interwar Czechoslovakia.

Altogether Brandes's account is at many points rather impersonal – also as a result of the extensive use of sources – but in the interpretative passages the author shows himself to be quite strongly critical of the Czechoslovak government. First he criticises it for a fixation on the concept of a Czechoslovak nation state that inhibited efforts to find a *modus vivendi* with the minorities, but we find no explanation of the possible reasons for this government attitude either in the text or in the abundant footnotes. Brandes argues that the disproportionately small representation of Germans in the state sphere and their low level of participation in the running of the state were the factors which together with the economic crisis led to growing antipathy between Germans and Czechs and the radicalisation of the Germany minority. In other passages of the book Brandes criticises the government for failing to ensure order on its territory, but it is not clear what steps he believes it was supposed to take. After all, Brandes himself shows convincingly that the Sudeten German Party took an uncompromising position as regards Czechoslovakia and was not interested in any kind of agreement.

Brandes argues that the whole period the First Czechoslovak Republic carried in itself the auguries of its own bitter end. The Germans did not for the most part man-

age to identify with the new state while the majority Czechoslovak population saw them as foreigners living in Germanised Czechoslovak territories. Thus Brandes does not see the reason for the postwar wild expulsion of Germans in the Nazi occupation, but in the deterioration of the relationship between Czechs and Germans on the eve of the Munich conference.

*The Czech version of this artile, entitled* Sudetští Němci a soumrak první republiky, *was originally published in Soudobé dějiny, vol. 17, no. 1–2 (2010), pp. 205–209.*

*Review*

# An American Monograph on the Protectorate

Francis D. Raška

BRYANT, Chad: *Prague in Black: Nazi Rule and Czech Nationalism*. Cambridge (Massachusetts), Harvard University Press 2007, 378 pp.

The young American historian Chad Bryant gained his doctorate at the University of California in Berkeley and is now lecturing at the department of history at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. He specialises in the social and cultural history of Central and Eastern Europe in the 19th and 20th century and in what is his first monograph focuses on the period of the German Protectorate over the territory left of Bohemia and Moravia after the cession of the Sudetenland to the German Reich in the autumn of 1938. *Prague in Black* with the subtitle *Nazi Rule and Czech Nationalism* is a solidly documented and readable account of life in the occupied protectorate. The author interprets and maps the subject primarily as the culmination of the long ethnic-national conflict between Czechs and Germans and the brutal pressure to solve it definitively under the German occupation, while also (more briefly) considering the subsequent radical answer of the Czechs, i.e. the expulsion of the Germans. The book analyses the Nazi plans for the Germanisation of the Czech people but also the latter's efforts to defend their identity, and Czechoslovak plans for the creation of an ethnically homogeneous state after the end of the war.

In the introduction Bryant emphasises that while Czechs regard "actions in the national interest" in the period before, during and after the Second World War as entirely natural, the definition of nationality/ethnicity was not fixed but changed at different periods. In the second half of the 19th century language and national symbols were already the basic elements of Czech and German mutual self-definition. Political and cultural life in the First Republic was organised along ethno-national lines. The situation came to a head after March 1939, when Czechoslovakia ceased to exist, the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia was established, and an independent Slovak Republic was formed. The ethnic struggle between Germans and Czechs had reached a phase where for one side what was at stake was survival itself, and from which there was evidently no road back.

According to Bryant, it did not initially seem that the direction of events would necessarily prove so tragic. In the first chapter he claims that many Czechs saw the establishment of the Protectorate more or less as a return to the old Habsburg system and reacted accordingly. The autonomy Hitler proposed to Hácha was not clearly defined within the political structure of the Protectorate. The Czech population exploited this manoeuvring space to unite in various cultural organisations and strengthen national solidarity at public meetings. Often there were even minor forms of discrimination against Germans in employment, trader or services. By contrast, the Germans in the Protectorate surprised the Nazis by their failure to unite. The situation changed after student demonstrations in November 1939 and the closure of Czech universities. The Czechs abandoned open protests and (apart from the resistance) chose to express their dissent passively.

The second chapter describes the increasing oppression of the Czech population in 1940 – a development connected to German military successes. The Nazis arrested a number of leaders of the resistance and successfully integrated the Protectorate economy into the Reich economy. The attempt to strengthen German rule was expressed in administrative decrees, for example that official documents had to be in both languages or just in German. At first the Germans seemed to be making great headway in their efforts to Germanise Bohemia, because the number of applicants for Reich citizenship grew, but serious problems were encountered with what were known as "amphibious people" who successfully manoeuvred between Czech and German nationality. As a result, new and stricter nationality criteria were introduced in the Protectorate, but tougher German measures fuelled increasing hatred for the occupation, and this was encouraged by radio broadcasting from London. It was at this time that the Czech domestic resistance came up with the demand for the postwar mass transfer of Germans out of Bohemia and Moravia and passed it on to President Edvard Beneš and his government-in-exile. According to Bryant, the Czech people became united in this view and Czech thinking rejected its earlier acceptance of some form of coexistence with Germans, replacing it with radical plans to create a homogeneous Czech nation state. Here Bryant rightly points out that the brutality of the war led populations in other countries of Europe to similar conclusions.

In the third chapter Bryant concentrates on German plans to destroy the Czech nation. The Reichsprotektor Konstantin von Neurath and the state secretary Karl Hermann Frank proposed to Hitler that half of the Czechs be Germanised and the rest transferred elsewhere, but these plans were at odds with the practical needs of the war economy because there were not enough Germans in the Protectorate for work in the factories, and so they were put "on ice". Nonetheless, things got worse for the Czechs under the brutal rule of the acting Reichsprotektor Reinhard Heydrich, which the fourth chapter describes in detail and in its consequences. Heydrich hated Jews and Slavs and relied on harsher methods in an attempt to subjugate the Czechs in every way, including denying them any public expressions of national sentiment. The repression and humiliation inflicted on Czechs after the assassination of Heydrich was the final bitter drop in the Czech cup of hatred for Germans, and at the same time the extermination of the village of Lidice caused a wave of solidarity for Czechs across the whole non-occupied world.

The fifth chapter deals with conditions in the Protectorate up to the end of the war. According to Bryant, the Nazi use of terror secured a relatively calm situation, workers had decent wages and armed resistance was minimal. The deteriorating German fortunes on the front made the Czech labour force irreplaceable. Despite growing aversion to the occupiers, the Czechs were generally careful not to get into trouble with their authorities. Resistance often took the form of a reluctance to use German. The passivity of the people did not, of course, please Beneš's government-in-exile, which urged the home population to a greater resolve, although this did not find expression until the Soviet and allied armies were closing in.

In the final chapter Bryant looks at the development of plans for the transfer of the German minority, their realisation and their long-term consequences. From 1943 it was already clear that the Czechoslovak government-in-exile had adopted and was pressing for the mass transfer of the Germans. The exile authorities in London encouraged the Czech population to hate everything German in the hope that fear of retribution would force at least part of the Germans to flee the country even before any official implementation of transfer. At the end of the book Bryant describes the postwar atmosphere in liberated Czechoslovakia and emphasises how the communists exploited nationalist demagogy and social policy in the borderlands before their putsch in February 1948 which was to lead to forty years of communist rule. The long shadow of the transfer still falls on the democratic Czech Republic too, which to this day struggles with the moral consequences of the means used for the ethnic homogenisation of postwar Czechoslovakia.

Bryant's monograph is a solid account of the history of the protectorate, and especially for American readers offers a useful view of distant and tanged events in Central Europe before the middle of the last century; Bryant's judgments are generally persuasive, the argumentation precise and based on study of archive materials and knowledge of a broad range of academic literature. I consider the main virtue of the book to be the rare balance of the author's description of conditions in the Protectorate. As a minor criticism, however, I think that Bryant might have paid more attention at the end to the "properly organised" transfer of the Ger-

mans which – despite his opinion to the contrary – for the most part respected internationally valid norms and even earned praise from the military commands of the Western powers.

*The Czech version of this artile, entitled* Americká monografie o Protektorátu, *was originally published in Soudobé dějiny, vol. 15, no. 1 (2008), pp. 151–153.*

*Review*

# Czechoslovaks on the Battlefields of Indochina

Jan Bečka

KUDRNA, Ladislav: *Bojovali a umírali v Indočíně: První vietnamská válka a Čechoslováci v cizinecké legii* [They Fought and Died in Indochina: The First Vietnam War and Czechoslovaks in the Foreign Legion]. Praha, Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů – Naše vojsko 2010, 400 pp.

The Second World War and the subsequent communist takeover in February 1948 had dramatic effects on the lives of many citizens of Czechoslovakia. The impact is particularly evident in the fortunes of those Czechoslovaks who illegally left their country, for various reasons joined the French Foreign Legion and later found themselves on the battlefields of Indochina, where many of them perished. Ladislav Kudrna's book traces the fates of twenty-one of these young men, showing the terrors and rigours of their journey from Czechoslovakia to Vietnam and back, the dangers that members of the Foreign Legion had to face, the harsh regime to which they were subjected, and the treatment to which they were exposed after their repatriation to their native land.

The theme has never before been tackled in this manner in the academic literature and so from this point of view the book can be considered pioneering. There are works devoted to the Foreign Legion as a whole, with some making just

marginal references to the role of Czech and Slovak legionaries and their deployment in combat. Kudrna's book is by contrast a detailed probe into the life of these legionaries, which convincingly documents their initial motivation for leaving their country and joining the legion, their growing disillusionment with the conditions prevalent in the legion, and their different perceptions of the Indochina conflict. The author has made a very detailed study of the accessible Czech archival sources[1] and memoirs of former legionaries, and where possible has interviewed legionaries who are still alive. By integrating these sources into a larger whole and linking and juxtaposing the evidence they offer he has managed to produce a relatively faithful reconstruction of events while also tracing the effects of the increasingly tense and polarised international political atmosphere of the early 1950s on the lives and fates of the legionaries.

Since Kudrna has chosen to concentrate his research on just twenty-one of the legionaries who survived the war in Indochina and were later repatriated, we have to ask to what extent this group is a representative sample of the Czechoslovak community deployed in these battles as part of the Foreign Legion. Kudrna states that more than two thousand legionaries from Czechoslovakia fought in the First Indochina War, and more than five hundred of them died in that conflict. The experience of the legionaries who survived and returned to their homeland is specific and it is possible that the other Czechoslovaks may have seen the conflict through different eyes and may have held diametrically opposed opinions. On the other hand it should be noted that these twenty-one young men came from different areas of Czechoslovakia and different social classes and had different reasons for escaping. This diversity gives reasonable grounds for considering that the sample may be basically representative. Even the experiences that they had with training in Africa and in combat deployment itself in Indochina are quite diverse (they served in different units, arriving in different transports) and so all in all these experiences provide a certain basis for generalisation. In this context, however, the title of the book ("They Fought and Died in Indochina…") seems odd, since not a single one of the men whose stories form the core of Kudrna's narrative actually died there.

The book can be divided into several larger thematic sections. In the first of these (pp. 7–66) the author introduces the group of young men whose fortunes he will describe in the book, and explains their various motivations for leaving Czechoslovakia. It emerges quite clearly from Kudrna's research that economic or personal reasons often predominated, and that in most cases the fight against communism was not the decisive factor for emigration. In the same way many joined the Foreign Legion only after they discovered that it was one of the few ways of escaping the wretchedness of the refugee camps in a Germany devastated

1 These are primarily sources from the Archive of the Security Services, the Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the CR and the National Archive, which contain for example the materials of the international department or political secretariat of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party (ÚV KSČ).

by war. The often rather prosaic reasons that finally took young Czechoslovaks to Indochina rather weaken any view of them as members of the anti-communist resistance movement,[2] but at the same time undermine the claims of the communist propaganda, which tended to present their deployment on Indochinese battlefields as the work of western secret services and which attributed much of the responsibility for "press-ganging" Czechoslovak citizens into the legion to the exile movement abroad, especially Petr Zenkl, who from 1949 headed the *Rada svobodného Československa* – Council of Free Czechoslovakia (RSČ). In the first part of the book Kudrna then goes on to also describe in detail the training of the recruits in North Africa and the often very harsh and even brutal treatment to which they were subjected there.

In the next short chapter Kudrna gives an outline of the first Indochina conflict and its main aspects and turning-points (pp. 67–95). Although brief, this excursus is useful because it enables readers unfamiliar with the Indochinese war theatre to get a better idea of the basis of the conflict and its wider contexts. The author should, however, have kept the use of internet sources (especially Wikipedia, which is not a suitable source of information for an academically oriented work) to a minimum or left them out altogether and kept to the existing academic literature on the theme,[3] particularly when this is widely available and the author himself has used it on some occasions. Likewise, in the case of passages that are almost literally taken from other works, it would have been appropriate to give a precise reference directly in the footnotes even though Kudrna does list the cited publications in the bibliography at the end of the chapter and at the end of the whole book. Nonetheless, this outline gives a readable and rounded overview of the First Indochina War, and one that is necessary to the book and can serve interested readers as a useful basis for further study.

After this excursus Kudrna analyses in detail the deployment of Czechoslovak legionaries in military operations in Indochina (pp. 96–210). All the twenty-one Czechoslovaks who are the protagonists of the book eventually ended up in Vietnamese captivity – some deserted, while others fought for the French cause to the end and only surrendered when there was no other choice. The distinction between "captured" and "deserted" later had consequences in the repatriation of the young men to Czechoslovakia and their interrogations by the Czechoslovak security organs. Among the "deserters" the career of Ervín Páleš is particularly striking: he managed to escape to China and then fought in Mao's mounted divisions and in North Vietnamese units. The testimonies and memories of almost all the legionaries show the lack of knowledge they had of the character of the conflict into which they were drawn and their distorted ideas of the enemy, but this was only to be expected, since often their only sources of information were their superior officers, who for

2 This is how, for example, the Czechoslovak exile organisations abroad tried to present them (p. 278).

3 Wikipedia entries are in any case mostly based (at best) on accessible academic literature and therefore have no extra information value.

obvious reasons painted the Vietnamese in the worst colours and the whole war as the battle of an advanced western civilisation against uncultured "barbarians". Violence against the civilian population was an integral part of the war and a number of the Czechoslovaks took part in it (and often had to do so). In many cases this violence was even more brutal and ruthless than later during the Second Indochina War but has received much less media coverage[4] – it seems almost as if it was taken as a natural accompanying phenomenon of war, and this attitude is reflected in the testimonies of many Czechoslovak legionaries. The author very rightly draws attention to the fact and to this difference between the first and second conflict in Indochina.

In a separate chapter Kudrna deals with the attempts to reclaim Czechoslovak citizens from the Foreign Legion (especially those who had joined it while still underage), and their meagre results (pp. 214–233). In this context it is important to be aware, as Kudrna notes, that despite a clear tendency to exploit the reclaimed Czechoslovaks for propaganda purposes, the government in Prague undoubtedly also took into account the tragic human dimension of the whole matter, which was testified to by the urgent requests and letters of the parents and relatives of legionaries to the responsible government organs. Negotiations with the French side were, however, very difficult from the beginning and Paris set often unrealistic conditions which slowed down and even almost entirely blocked the process of repatriation.[5] In view of its own interests the French government had little reason to take energetic action on the matter and another problem was the special status of the Foreign Legion and stress on the anonymity of its members, which was exploited as a useful excuse for rejecting a series of Czechoslovak requests (for example for the determination of the real age at which a legionary had joined). At the same time it should be remembered that relations between Czechoslovakia and France and the West in general were at freezing point in the first half of the 1950s and the will to find a compromise was minimal on both sides.

In a chapter entitled "The Way Home" and the following postscript "How They Ended" (pp. 234–306) Kudrna describes the dreadful journey of the former legionaries through the POW camps of the Viet Minh, China and the Soviet Union back to their homeland, and then their similarly toilsome path from Czechoslovak prisons to freedom. There is a very good account of the rather embarrassed attitude prevalent on the Czechoslovak side in its approach to the repatriated men. On the one hand there was a tendency to exploit their cases for propagandist glorification of the communist regime and the struggle for socialism and fierce attacks on "rotten capitalism". On the other hand, however, there were some who thought that the returning legionaries should be punished because by crossing the border,

4 In this context we should mention for example the massacre of Vietnamese civilians by the American army in the village of My Lai in March 1968 and the consequences for public opinion in the USA and throughout the world when the details came to light a year later.

5 One example was the demand that every request for repatriation be accompanied by a certificate of the state citizenship of the underage (p. 228), or photograph, which the family of the individuals concerned often did not have (p. 226)

escaping abroad and serving in a foreign army they had violated the laws.[6] It seems somewhat paradoxical that it was above all the Vietnamese themselves, against whom the legionaries had originally been fighting, who did the most to urge lenient treatment of the repatriated legionaries. At the same time this is not so puzzling when we consider the situation of the Viet Minh and its need for wider international recognition. Anything that could have propaganda value for the North Vietnamese cause (and the capture and later release of legionaries from socialist countries was certainly in that category), was enormously important for Ho Chi Minh and his colleagues. Their attempts to extract the maximum good publicity from repatriation of prisoners are thus not so surprising. Another interesting aspect highlighted by Kudrna is the comparison with the surrounding communist countries (for example the German Democratic Republic), which evidently chose a relatively liberal approach to their own legionaries repatriated from Indochina: this underlines the marked rigidity of the Czechoslovak regime in matters of this kind. The interrogations and investigations of the twenty-one returning legionaries culminated in September 1953 (a year and a half after their arrival in Czechoslovakia and immediate arrest), in a trial after which all were soon released and then joined in "building socialism". This, however, happened only after an intervention by President Antonín Zápotocký, and the propaganda campaign following on the release seems not to have been as intensive and well organised as the communist leadership and North Vietnamese side had envisaged. Nor were attempts to take the theme up on the cultural level and turn it into drama particularly effective (among several attempts mentioned by Kudrna is the 1958 film *Černý prapor* [The Black Banner] directed by Vladimír Čech).

In the final section of the book Kudrna describes the development of relations between Czechoslovakia and Ho Chi Minh's Viet Minh in the period of the First Indochina War (pp. 310–358). Like the outline of the course of the Vietnam War earlier in the book this excursus too deserves praise. Although the legionary affair has only been a marginal factor in relations between the Czechoslovak government and Ho Chi Minh's communists, this sketch of the Czechoslovak attitude to the situation in Vietnam is helpful for an understanding of the wider contexts of the whole theme. From the point of view of the Czechoslovak communist leadership, support for Ho Chi Minh was rather complicated by the unclear situation inside the Vietnamese communist movement and fears about its future direction and "ideological purity". Of course, as in almost all other questions in this period, the attitude of the Soviet Union was crucial. After Moscow had expressed support for Ho Chi Minh, the other "people's democracies" followed suit, including Czechoslovakia. Aid from Prague was not negligible, although it was clear that especially at the beginning mutual cooperation would be one-sided and Ho Chi Minh's Vietnam would be accepting assistance without being able to provide adequate compensation. From the point of view of North Vietnam, the support of the "people's democracies"

6 In the 1950s these crimes were among the most serious and quiet often subject to severe punishments.

was crucial, both materially and psychologically. After 1949, of course, communist China became more intensively involved in the conflict but for Ho Chi Minh this was a mixed blessing. He could not manage without Chinese aid, but given the historical animosity between the two countries,[7] he did not want to be automatically assigned to the Chinese "sphere of influence".[8] This made it very important for him to do all he could to develop relations with the other socialist countries and to try to ensure the involvement of the Soviet Union and its satellites in Central and Eastern Europe in the conflict and later the reconstruction of the country to at least partially counterbalance the influence of China.

In conclusion we can say that Ladislav Kudrna's book *They Fought and Died in Indochina* is a valuable contribution to research on postwar Czechoslovak history, and specifically one episode in that history which has not hitherto been adequately addressed in academic literature. The book is based on a thorough study of archival materials and other primary sources, appropriately augmented by selected secondary literature. It is high in information value, and is written in an erudite yet readable style. Also appealing is the sensitive approach to transcription from Asian languages, which is still far from the rule in this part of the world. The book can be unreservedly recommended to readers interested in the First Indochina War or the French Foreign Legion and the Czechoslovak part in it, and to the readers who want to gain a better understanding of the Czechoslovak involvement in the Third World after the communist takeover.

*The Czech version of this artile, entitled* Čechoslováci na válečných polích Indočíny, *was originally published in Soudobé dějiny, vol. 17, no. 4 (2010), pp. 713–718*.

7 This animosity became sharply manifest after the end of the Second Indochina War with the conflict between Vietnam and China in February and March 1979.

8 A certain evasiveness and caution in relation to China is evident from an interview given by Ho Chi Minh in 1949, in which the North Vietnamese leader quite resolutely rejected a comparison between the Chinese and Vietnamese road to communism (p. 313).

*Review*

# In Praise of Roots

Karel Hrubý

KOPEČEK, Michal: *Hledání ztraceného smyslu revoluce: Zrod a počátky marxistického revizionismu ve střední Evropě 1953–1960* [In Search of the Lost Meaning of Revolution: The Birth and Beginnings of Marxist Revisionism in Central Europe 1953–1960)]. Praha, Argo 2009, 386 pp.

Michal Kopeček has already contributed with several excellent studies to our understanding of the revisionist movement in Czechoslovakia.[1] This time he has tackled the birth and beginnings of Marxist revisionism after the Second World War not only in Czechoslovakia but in neighbouring countries as well. His chosen method is analysis of the philosophical and political discourse of communist intellectuals during the 1950s in Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary. Discursive

1 KOPEČEK, Michal: Obraz vnitřního nepřítele: Revizionismus v Otázkách míru a socialismu 1958–1969 [The Image of the Internal Enemy: Revisionism in Questions of Peace and Socialism 1958–1969]. In: KÁRNÍK, Zdeněk – KOPEČEK, Michal (ed.): *Bolševismus, komunismus a radikální socialismus v Československu*, vol. 1. Praha, Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR – Dokořán 2003, pp. 225–253; KÁRNÍK, – KOPEČEK: Za čistotu marxisticko-leninského myšlení: K problematice tzv. revizionismu v české marxistické filozofii druhé poloviny 50. let [For the Purity of Marxist-Leninist Thought: The Problem of So-called Revisionism in Czech Marxist Philosophy of the Second half of the 1950s]. In: *Ibid.*, vol. 2. Praha, Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR – Dokořán 2004, pp. 172–212.

analysis is a method focused primarily on conceptual development and the reconstruction of the linguistic context of the thought of a period. In Kopeček's own words: "It gives an idea of the intellectual world of someone in a given historical situation and helps us to gain a closer understanding of the potential and limits of his social and political imagination." (p. 30f.). Since this method has its limits, historiography is also interested in the specific historical, social, political and cultural context in which the texts under study were written. "The core of the study is then an attempt to reconstruct the inception and formation of the language of 'Marxist humanism', which in the period after Stalin's death in 1953 played a key role in differentiation of views inside the party and became the basis for the specific political language of Marxist revisionism, and later communist reformism," Kopeček writes. (p. 42).

This intellectual awakening did not come about spontaneously. After years of unqualified approval for Stalinism as the obligatory model of Marxism-Leninism the impulse for revisionist critique came from external events: Stalin's death in 1953, and the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party. There had been no significant criticism of Stalinism among communist philosophers in the first postwar years despite the fact that the earlier dissenting reactions of some communist intellectuals for example to the Moscow trials and the regulation of art in the latter half of the 1930s were well-known. The revisionism in the West European Social Democratic parties, which had emerged at the end of the 19th century from the views of Eduard Bernstein and later had been modified by Karl Kautsky and others was no secret either. On the contrary, the basis of this kind of revisionism was the constant target of furious criticism by the Communist International, in which communist philosophy in the countries of Central Europe readily took part. Kopeček mentions this pre-history of revisionism only on the margin, taking as starting-point for his study the year 1953 and the first cracks in what had been the unqualified dependence of communist intellectuals on the "Soviet model" and theory. The term "Marxist revisionism", which he uses for this period, does not in this case mean critique of Marx's opinions. Bernstein's revision had been directed at individual theses of Marx's theory, and had claimed to identify mistakes in it (for example in the theory of the progressive impoverishment of the proletariat and the "inevitable" collapse of capitalism) and had come to new conclusions on this basis (for example on the advantageousness of the parliamentary struggle for the workers movement). The "revision" of the 1950s and 1960s on the contrary sought to *confirm the correctness of Marxist theory and to cleanse it of the silt of Stalinism*. The real aim of this revisionism was to purify the original doctrine from the excesses of the Stalinist interpretation of "Leninism". Given the enduring authority of Lenin, it was mainly the "deformations" forced by Stalin on the theory and social system that were the foreground targets of "revision".

Kopeček's book traces and painstakingly analyses the revisionist project mainly in the fields of philosophy and sociology; he registers expressions of revisionism in economics, legal science, literature – even in historiography – but does not analyse these. As he states, his book is thus on the interface between research on political

ideologies and the history of political thought. The analysis remains inside the borders of the political language canonised by the regime, showing the progressive internal differentiation of that language through the actions of the revisionists. This is because anyone who wanted to publish at the time, i.e. anyone who wanted to be taken seriously, had to adapt himself to this language, "to respect its boundaries and rules without at the same time having to believe in its basic ideological premises" (p.28). In this intellectually and linguistically closed system of Marxism-Leninism there was no room for any kind of non-Marxist opposition. It was only by virtue of staying within the borders and rules of the regime language that the revisionists were able to express their – sometimes just esoteric, at other times generally comprehensible – difference in expression and opinion *on the ground of Marxist-Leninist theory.* In the political sense, however, participants in this discourse – despite some divergences of opinion – unanimously contributed to the consolidation of the legitimacy of the communist regime. The majority of those who launched the debate on Marxist-Leninist philosophy in 1956, out of which the main theses of the Czechoslovak reform movement later grew, were loyal members of the Communist Party: "They were not interested in the overall reform of the people's democratic system, still less in any kind of alternative political vision. The essential impetus to the debate was the attempt to return to the ideological starting-points of Marxism, and not an attempt to revise them. This revived Marxism was intended as a tool with which to understand previous deformations of the doctrine as well as the contemporary reality of socialism" (p. 309). Here Kopeček rightly points out that the intellectual movement in all three countries compared did not develop in a domain consisting of nothing but the privileged Marxism-Leninism itself; even after taking power by the communists it was still saturated with elements of views and values derived from prewar intellectual and political life. Kopeček aptly observes in the introduction that, "for the whole duration of the socialist dictatorship … autonomous forces with origins obviously at variance with the ever repeating confrontation of the language of power (the state) and of community (national, professional, family), were operating and regenerating themselves, often in synergy" (p. 41). Indeed, the language of revisionism emerged from the tension between these coexisting different forms of consciousness and different positions of people within the system, as a way of making it possible for differences of opinion to be expressed even with the retention of the jargon of Marxism-Leninism.

In his introduction Michal Kopeček outlines the conceptual frameworks used to analyse ideas in their particular historical context. He ultimately inclines to the method formulated by Quentin Skinner and John Pocock,[2] which investi-

2 SKINNER, Quentin: Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas. In: *History and Theory*, vol. 8, no. 1 (1969), pp. 3–53; POCOCK, John G. A.: The Concept of a Language and the métier d'historien: Some Considerations on Practice. In: PAGDEN, Anthony (ed.): *The Languages of Political Theory in Early-Modern Europe.* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1985, pp. 19–38; POCOCK, John (ed.): *Languages and Their Implications: The Transformation of the Study of Political Thought in Politics, Language and Time. Essays on Political Thought and History.* London, Methuen 1972.

gates not simply *what was expressed* in a text or speech, but also *why and how it was formulated* and finally *what effect it had* on the reader or listener. He shows how in contrast to the hegemony of Stalinism and the binding character of its terminology, a process of differentiation of "political languages" of Marxism began, opening the way to the "internal polarisation of public discourse in the framework of the closed system of the socialist dictatorship" (p. 116). Unlike the Stalinist language the language of the revisionists allowed differentiated concepts and evaluations of traditions (in Czechoslovakia for example the Hussite tradition and praise for the legacy of the radical democrats), and individual aspects of Marxism. It offered a diverse, or more precise interpretation of terms, stripped away the obfuscating expressions of a dogmatic language more normative and judgmental than communicative in function, and was also characterised by a more tolerant attitude to non-Marxist philosophies, no longer regarding their concepts as taboo and sometimes even modifying them in a "Marxist" spirit. Thus the revisionists could foreground questions that included not only the relationship of the social "superstructure" to the "base" and the concept of praxis as the knowledge- and history-creating function of man, but also the autonomy of the individual and the subjective and moral dimensions of his existence. Also evident were the revisionists' efforts to reduce the dependence of culture and the social sciences on the direction of the Communist Party – an aspect that particularly impressed many artists and intellectuals. The basic features of the existing system (the leading role of the Communist Party as the vanguard of the proletariat, state ownership of most of the means of production, the repression of the bourgeoisie as a class and the building of socialism, or communism on the principles of Marxist-Leninist theory) were supposed to be retained. The book should be read with all this in mind.

After giving a brief overview of the situation in philosophy at the start of the 1950s, marked in all the countries concerned by the clearly decisive influence of Soviet philosophy deeply grounded in Stalinist dogmatism, Kopeček turns to the origins and development of revisionism in Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. He describes the conditions (including the political) and intellectual trends in each country separately, giving each a separate chapter and making overall comparisons only at the end. Kopeček is more concerned to pinpoint differences in the character and development of revisionism in the three countries than in tracing mutual influences between them. The latter subject – generally more philosophical in nature – still awaits a more detailed treatment.

## *Poland*

The most extensive and in my view the most valuable part of the book is devoted to the development of revisionism in Poland. Here already after 1953 a polarisation of forces and opinions occurred within the communist elite which led – especially during 1956 and in the following two years – to the most radical expression of opposition to Stalinism and the most striking "thaw" in the whole

of East-Central Europe, whether in literature, journalism or philosophy. The political conditions for the thaw started with the rise of Władysław Gomułka to the head of the Communist Party, which involved not just a change of some of the members of the ruling elite but a shift of economic policy with the adoption of the model of a still planned but decentralised economy. The core of the destalinisation attempts was the idea of the democratisation of the current socialist system, which should have been retained in its basic form. One particularly important initiator of the change was the former social democrat Julian Hochfeld, lecturing at Warsaw University, who argued that socialism without democracy was doomed to degeneration. Hochfeld influenced an entire generation of Marxist sociologists, many of whom became leading Polish revisionists. Kopeček traces the intellectual development of the "Warsaw School", whose most prominent representatives were Leszek Kołakowski and Bronisław Baczko. In their attempts to overcome the legacy of Stalinism the members of this school went back to a rediscovered "young Marx", explored the philosophy of Hegel, and even established dialogue with non-Marxist philosophies, especially phenomenology and existentialism. They found inspiration in Neo-Kantian historicism and in the works of German sociologists of the Weberian tradition. In all this they had fruitful clashes of opinion with their critics.

Kopeček devotes particular attention to Leszek Kołakowski, who in his judgment "in comparison with the other revisionists and reform communists in Poland and the whole of Central Europe … clearly went the furthest at this time in the radicalism of his critique of Stalinism, and his positive democratising proposals" (p. 167). He stresses that "Kołakowski's article in the daily paper Życie Warszawy of February 1957 is to this day considered one of the most striking symbols of the democratising reform movement inside the party and as a kind of manifesto of the entire reform movement"(p. 154). In the article Kołakowski demanded that the whole socio-political system be overhauled in the spirit of democratic socialism, which he regarded as the only alternative to both capitalism and Stalinism. He also called for constant supervision and criticism of the political apparatus from society at large. Unsurprisingly this earned him criticism from Gomułka himself, and he was then branded a leading representative of undesirable revisionism by party ideologues. According to Kopeček Kołakowski also went the furthest in his emphasis on the individual as an autonomous and responsible historical actor, a view which brought him close to the existentialists (p. 190). For all these reasons his philosophical opinions are reproduced in the most detail in the book. Many themes of Leszek Kołakowski's at the time, and analogous ways of treating those themes, can be found in the work of Czechoslovak revisionists, especially Karel Kosík, even though the latter does not mention the Polish philosopher by name even in his later major work *The Dialectics of the Concrete*; at the time Kołakowski was already a dangerous critic in the eyes of regimes of Soviet type, just like the Yugoslav revisionists whose names it was not advisable to cite. This means that it is unclear to what extent their ideas of the time were known to Czechoslovak revisionists and the intellectual supporters of reform of the ruling system, and to what extent they influenced the direction of their opinions.

Kopeček also looks at the ideas of other Polish revisionists, specifically Bronisław Baczko, Tadeusz Kroński, Zygmunt Bauman and Marie Hirszowicz, but the chapter on Polish revisionism is clearly dominated by the figure of Leszek Kołakowski and his progressive self-distancing from Marxist-Leninist dogma. All the same, Kopeček has managed to give a comprehensive picture of Polish philosophical thought in the 1950s which will illuminate very clearly the formation of Marxist revisionism in neighbouring states for the Czech readers, including social science specialists.

### *Hungary*

In Hungary as in Poland more visibly revisionist opinions initially appeared only in 1956. The first to publicly criticise the consequences of Stalinism in philosophy was Béla Fogarasi, who as early as May 1956 attacked the conception of the intensification of the class war, claiming that it mistakenly exaggerated the doctrine of the struggle of opposites at the expense of the principle of their unity. With the policy of the so-called "new course", launched by the new Prime Minister Imre Nagy, conditions relaxed in culture as well. The Petőfi Circle in particular then became the main platform of criticism, in which the leading representative of Hungarian Marxist philosophy György Lukács soon came to the fore. His philosophical and political renown allowed him to put himself at the head of critics of the dogmatism of Stalinist thinking. During 1956 he contributed greatly to the emergence of a movement of destalinisation even though in the past he himself had conformed to Stalinism theory and paid homage to the party dictatorship. Kopeček draws attention to the fact that Lukács's aim was never revision of Marxism-Leninism, but simply a return to its true principles cleansed of Stalinist silts (p. 256). His starting-points were the Hegelian studies of earlier years, through which he influenced both Polish and Czech revisionists, but he remained an enthusiastic disciple of Lenin.

Kopeček highlights numerous contradictions between Lukács's theory and his political behaviour, which led him more than once into conflicts with the Communist Party from which he extracted himself by humble self-criticism. He concludes that for Lukács Leninism was indispensable as a theory of political action, and so he strove not to purge Marxism of the legacy of Leninism, but "on the contrary to provide a justification of Leninism that in the profundity of its philosophical dimension and historical insight would match the greatness of Hegel and Marx" (p. 284). Despite this he became for many the symbol of Hungarian revisionism, which earned him attacks from the communist intellectuals loyal to the regime. The most comprehensive critique of his opinions was paradoxically offered by his former pupil József Szigeti, himself a party functionary. On the other hand the fact that after the suppressed uprising in the autumn of 1956 Lukács was not forced to perform another of his exercises in self-criticism testifies to the ambiguity of his significance for Marxist philosophy in Hungary, of which he was undeniably the most prominent representative.

## *Czechoslovakia*

In Poland and Hungary, Marxist politicians of the Władysław Gomułka and Imre Nagy style were in the role of challengers of the Stalinist regime, but in Czechoslovakia intellectuals had no political support in their effort to cleanse Marxism of Stalinist deformations. Even after 1956 the communist party leadership remained practically unchanged (only Alexej Čepička was removed). Some earlier communist victims of injustice were rehabilitated, the theory of intensification of class war was abandoned and the "cult of personality" was verbally condemned, but the line of the building of socialism, the "leading role of the party", and the principle of so-called democratic centralism were further entrenched. Unlike in the two neighbour states, in Czechoslovakia conservative forces maintained their ascendancy in the leadership, especially after the Hungarian revolution was bloodily suppressed by Soviet intervention. Already in June 1957 the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party agreed that apart from dogmatism the enemy of the party (and "socialism") was the ideological revisionism that had been spreading amongst communist intellectuals since the condemnation of Stalinist methods. The Marxist philosophers who attracted particular criticism were Karel Kosík, Ivan Sviták, Robert Kalivoda, Jindřich Fibich and from the end of 1958 also Ladislav Tondl (p. 302).[3] In March 1959 the Central Committee of the Communist Party published the notorious "Report on the Current Situation in Philosophy", which branded the separation of science from ideology and the non-Marxist critique of bureaucratism in the socialist state as revisionist "errors". This put the brakes on the ideas of the revisionists for a while, but they were to revive in the 1960s and later in the decade contributed to the Prague Spring, cut short in August 1968 by the invasion by Warsaw Pact forces.

According to Kopeček the emergence of Marxist revisionism in Czechoslovakia was signalled by the discussion in *Literární noviny* [Literary News] on the relationship between ideology and science initiated by Ivan Sviták in its 16th issue in 1956. Here Sviták argued that the dialectics of social process had been mistakenly replaced by a dialectics of concepts. At the end of 1956 Karel Kosík joined the debate, claiming that with the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the USSR the supremacy of ideology in Marxism had ended to make way for scientific theory. Both authors directed the force of their critique to the present. Sviták pointed out that in Stalinism

3 The inclusion of Ladislav Tondl in the current of Czech Marxist revisionism as a leader of so-called positivist revisionism is in my view rather problematic. Despite the markedly apolitical character of Tondl's texts and the distinctive positions that distanced him from the "Kosíkians", Kopeček justifies this inclusion by arguing that Tondl "in a general sense reached similar conclusions that indirectly confirmed the need for the distinct, if not absolute autonomy of scientific activity, i.e. a position at the time unacceptable to the party leadership and its effort to consolidate the party intelligentsia" (p. 331). Positivism, however, was at this time ostracised – not only in philosophy but in other sciences – primarily as a *methodological* sin (cf. positivism in historiography, of which e.g. Josef Polišenský was accused), whereas philosophical revisionism from the outset had a strong *political* charge.

the category of truth had become hierarchical, in the sense that "the highest-ranking person always had the most truth." Kosík considered it the task of Marxist philosophy to discover "why and how the dogmatic way of thinking had arisen." Both conceptions essentially threatened to start a process that would compromise the existing party chiefs and their ideology. Robert Kalivoda on the basis of Marx's original standpoints then entirely rejected the ideological thinking that prevailed in the Communist Party and stressed that Marxism was an ideology purely by virtue of its socially critical *function* while by virtue of its *content* it was unambiguously science, which had nothing in common with ideology (p. 307). In this way the question of the "base" and "superstructure" as defining categories of the Marxist theory of society came to the fore.

Discussion highlighting the need for the autonomy of culture and social sciences and their claim to independence of party guidance alarmed party leaders and their subservient ideologues. The efforts of the Czechoslovak (above all Czech) Marxist revisionists aimed at a *return to Marx* and his *social theory* whereas the party ideologues were concerned primarily with a *return to Lenin* and his *theory of political action*. This does not mean that the revisionists entirely rejected Lenin's conception of Marxism. Some of them even based their work on Lenin and his gnoseological views set out in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*. Here they were influenced by György Lukács, whose *Existentialism or Marxism?* defending Lenin's philosophy had come out in Czech translation as early as 1949.[4] The Hungarian philosopher's influence is particularly clear in the case of Karel Kosík, who had an especially high regard for Lukács's *History and Class Consciousness* of 1923 and his Hegelian studies.

Kopeček confines his book to the period 1953–1960 when especially Czechoslovak revisionism was still damped and muffled by party criticism. The attempts of communist intellectuals to come to terms with the Stalinist past of their party and often their own cultural-political involvement in it was still relatively tame in Czechoslovakia, and less consistent than particularly in Poland. As Kopeček observes, "In Czechoslovakia the Marxist revisionism of the latter half of the 1950s did not develop to the stage of a socially relevant alternative political language as in the Polish case. Just as in Hungary after the suppression of the revolution, so in Czechoslovakia there was little room for the extrapolation and social representation of political-philosophical principles at the practical political level." (p. 341) Kosík's revisionism in its full-blown form, as expressed in *The Dialectics of the Concrete* of 1963 and especially in his articles and essays of 1967–1969, is beyond the horizon of Kopeček's book. In this later work Kosík developed a conception of man in whose being it is not merely social reality that is produced but *spiritual being* is reproduced in its totality.[5] His starting point here was "social praxis", fulfilling itself in his view not only in the objective activity of man, which

4 LUKÁCS, György: *Existencialismus, či marxismus?* Praha, Nová osvěta 1949.

5 KOSÍK, Karel: *Dialektika konkrétního: Studie o problematice člověka a světa* [The Dialectics of the Concrete. Studies on the Problem of Man and the World]. Praha, Československá akademie věd 1965, p. 172 (2nd edn; 1st edn in 1963).

remoulds nature, but also in the formation of the human subject.[6] This later led him also to greater tolerance towards some non-Marxist Western European philosophies, especially phenomenology, existentialism, and positivism, and also towards Christianity, all of which he considered it fruitful to juxtapose and compare.[7] Likewise Ivan Sviták, Robert Kalivoda and other revisionists (each in his own way) fully developed the critique of Stalinism and the subservient role of communist ideology only during the Prague Spring of 1968. Kopeček's account of Czech revisionism, which stops on the threshold of the 1960s, describes only its early phase and nascent tendencies, but he at least sketches out its further evolution and flowering, so whetting the reader's curiosity.

## *Revisionists*

Kopeček regards Marxist revisionists as in a certain sense continuers of the destalinisation process initiated by Khruschev at the beginning of 1956. Unlike the Soviet ideologues, however, in their retreat from Stalinism the Central European revisionists did not stop at return to Lenin (even though they continued to respect Lenin's theoretical and political performance) but went right back to Marx and above all to his early philosophical period. Their re-evaluation of the recent past and indeed the whole tradition of the communist movement and its intellectual principles was according to Kopeček "driven by efforts to rediscover the meaning of communist revolution not only in the individual Central European countries but to a certain extent world-wide" (p. 353). Defining their positions against party orthodoxies they worked their way to the core of political philosophical principles and values most eloquently summed up by the term "Marxist humanism". Kopeček argues that this intellectual trajectory "reflects the emphasis of most of the revisionist philosophers on humanism as an irreducible value and its grounding in Marxism, in the same way as their attempt to rehabilitate the idea of the relative autonomy of the human being as a moral being defining himself vis-à-vis the social collectiveness and the historical process" (ibid.). The revisionists thus remained on the ground of Marxism and claimed for it a decisive role in the realisation of the humanistic perspective of humanity. In this they did not cross the border of self-enclosed communist thinking, even though they found a greater tolerance for some aspects of non-Marxist philosophies.

Kopeček emphasises that most of the intellectuals characterised as revisionists considered themselves "not as revisers of Marxism but as its restorers to its original … form" (p. 45). These groups were not striving for overthrow of the political

6 *Ibid.*, p. 156.

7 See LIEHM, Antonín J.: *Generace* [Generation]. Praha, Československý spisovatel 1990, p. 330 (interview with Karel Kosík). This book of interviews with intellectual protagonists of Czechoslovak culture in the 1960s was originally swept away and only came out in 1988 when published by an exile publishing house Index in Cologne.

power structure but largely mainly for the building of a new culture and so a new man, for his rehabilitation as a moral being. Their main weapon was philosophical critique of the ideology and political practice of the party leadership, which in their view was losing the humanist character proper to genuine Marxism and so deforming the latter. This critical intellectual approach had still to be formulated as a political programme – only in 1968 did some Czech Marxist revisionists try to sketch out a plan of reform of the regime (specifically the already mentioned Kosík, Kalivoda and Sviták).[8] In any case, most of the philosophers who started the debate on Marxist-Leninist philosophy in 1956 – from which the main theories of revisionism (and also Czech reformism) were to grow – had earlier been involved in the process of the Stalinisation of the Communist Party. It was not until the years after the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party that revisionist thinking led them to a basic re-evaluation of their own individual and collective identity. And it was even later, in the 1970s, that many Marxist revisionists finally renounced their former identity, especially those who found themselves in exile (for example Leszek Kołakowski, Ivan Sviták, Lukács's pupil Ágnes Heller).

While the revisionism of the second half of the 1950s seriously unnerved the political leadership and its ideological servants, the danger it posed for the communist regime should not be overestimated. In his conclusion Michal Kopeček puts this aspect into perspective with the words, "Although they did not agree with the current policy of the party and criticised the present and past state of society and the political order, at the same time they helped to legitimise the existing political order and in their basic attitude to political power, however problematic, they defined its form at the least up to 1968" (p. 351). After the revelation of the Stalinist deformation of Marxist socialism their idea of the meaning of revolution also collapsed. This meaning could no longer be seen just in the revolutionary social break itself, in the replacement of the hegemony of the bourgeois class by a society based on the (allegedly) leading role of the proletariat. Now the theorists were far more concerned with the humanist mission of the new system, as "original" Marxism had promised. The authentic meaning of revolution – and the revisionists' own personal part in that revolution – was thus to find rehabilitation in so-called *Marxist humanism*. The revolution itself did not lose meaning in their eyes, and they could continue to see it as a historically indispensable act. It was just that its consequences for the lives of human beings should have been changed, and the post-revolutionary system should have been "humanised". Marxist revisionism of the post-Stalin period remained above all a serious attempt to legitimise "Marxist humanism" – but while still retaining the leading role of the communist party and

8 See HRUBÝ, Karel: Politické rozpravy intelektuálů za „pražského jara" [Political Debates of Intellectuals during the Prague Spring]. In: *Soudobé dějiny*, vol. 15, nos. 3–4 (2008), pp. 545–574 (especially the short chapter „Marxismus a demokracie: pojetí filozofů" ["Marxism and Democracy: The Conceptions of philosophers"], pp. 557–560); see also HOPPE, Jiří (ed.): *Pražské jaro v médiích: Výběr z dobové publicistiky* [The Prague Spring in the Media: A Selection of Period Journalism]. (Prameny k dějinám československé krize v letech 1967–1970, vol. 11.) Praha – Brno, Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR – Doplněk 2004.

the dominant position (even if now more tolerant to other philosophies) of Marxism in public discourse. Of course, in the face of the rigid authoritarian centralism of the 1950s, this was certainly no small thing.

* * *

Kopeček's book has great value for the explanation and clarification of terms that in the dogmatic language of the time had a more incantatory than communication function, for its rich documentation (and extensive note apparatus and list of sources, an index of names, painstaking editing and graphic design), and especially for its clear identification of the differences between the conditions under which Marxist revisionism developed in the three Central European countries concerned, which, while they had a similar political system, had different traditions and social atmospheres. The degree of progress made by revisionist thinking in public discourse differed in each case. Poland provided the most favourable conditions for its development, and there it spread even to the lay public above all thanks to the so-called Warsaw School and several journals. In Hungary it became a potent accelerator of the revisionist demands of the mass movement of resistance to the government and Soviet occupation in 1956, which led to an armed clash with the political and military power, unique in Central Europe at the time. In Czechoslovakia cautious tendencies towards the revision of Marxist-Leninist theory appeared as early as 1953–1956, but their language was still almost impossible to tell apart from the language of Stalinism. Only after the breakthrough 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party did revisionist ideas find a more adequate language, and so become more clearly distinguishable from official party norms. When the crackdown of 1959–1962, forced by political pressure, eased, there was a second revisionist wave which helped to bear up the movement for reform that culminated in the Prague Spring. This second wave is still waiting for scholarly treatment. Kopeček's earlier studies of Marxist revisionism in Czechoslovakia, also carried over into his most recent comparative work on Central European revisionism, provide a good starting point for it.

*The Czech version of this artile, entitled* Chvála kořenů, *was originally published in Soudobé dějiny, vol. 17, no. 1–2 (2010), pp. 222–231.*

*Review*

# Rock and Politics in Communist Czechoslovakia

Přemysl Houda

VANĚK, Miroslav: *Byl to jenom rock'n'roll? Hudební alternativa v komunistickém Československu 1956–1989* [Was It Only Rock'n'Roll? The Musical Alternative in Communist Czechoslovakia 1956–1989]. Praha, Academia 2010, 639 pp.

Miroslav Vaněk's monograph *Was It Only Rock'n'Roll? w*ith the subtitle *The Musical Alternative in Communist Czechoslovakia 1956–1989* is an attempt to present a comprehensive view and interpretation of the chronologically and thematically wide-ranging subject of rock and rock-based music and subculture. The title question is not just a catchy device to attract readers, but above all expresses the topic that the author constantly makes in his text, using the facts he has gathered to address it, and structuring the chapters so that each offers, in its own way, a partial answer. The book is not a musicological analysis but a purely historical interpretation. Vaněk has been very thorough in the breadth of his documentation and skilfully combines different kinds of sources (State Security documents, other official archives, records of interviews, song lyrics, periodicals of the time and so forth) without privileging one over others.

The book is structured into nine thematic chapters. Vaněk defines basic terms (alternative, underground, rock, punk, new wave and others), describes the emergence of the corresponding musical genres and their spread to Czechoslovakia, documents

the attitude of the ruling regime (in the Eastern bloc and in the West) to the coming musical trends and later concentrates on the difficulties faced by rock'n'roll (musicians and fans) and its younger musical successors in communist Czechoslovakia. The final chapter "Rock and Politics" extends a kind of an umbrella over the preceding text, generalising and extending its implications into the present as well.

To start at the end – Miroslav Vaněk writes in his conclusion that the young rockers (although he does not want to generalise and acknowledges many exceptions) were apolitical. All they wanted was the freedom to play, entertain people and themselves, and they had no ambitions to change the government or perhaps even the whole system – for the simple reason that they stood outside it. They manifested their independence or tangential position not just by their music, but by their whole lifestyle (behaviour, dress). The young rockers were not a political generation (their parents were that), but just interpreted the world in their own way, which of course as a secondary effect put up a mirror to their elders, which their elders did not necessarily like.

Vaněk therefore speaks more of the politicisation of rock, which was caused from the outside under the pressure of the system (*de facto* the generation of parents). He speaks of something that could be called the totalitarianism of the community, which has rejected the unconscious rising protest of its own youth and even has alternatively used more or less radical means to "moralise" youth. The question then arises of whether forced "politicisation" may not suck the essence out of rock music, like a weasel sucking out the contents of an egg – i.e. whether the programmatic protest against a hostile surrounding system does not marginalise the musical aspect that was the whole point at the beginning. This question can be extrapolated into the present, i.e. whether the present emphasis on the consciously oppositional character of alternative (and underground) music does not blur its real essence.

This framework frees the author's hands, and he provides a convincing analysis of the predominantly negative attitude toward the emerging alternative music genres both in the West and in the East, where the objections had much the same source (indicated above). Thus Miroslav Vaněk shows that although they stood on opposite sides of the barricade, in this context a certain kinship between the two systems can be sought and found. Since communist regimes were comparatively less restricted "masters" of society than capitalist governments, however, they took steps against alternative music that were fundamentally more systematic, harsher and more wide-ranging.

Of course, Miroslav Vaněk is concerned primarily with the alternative music scene in Czechoslovakia. Apart from describing the genesis of its various genres he concentrates on changes in the ideological approach of the communist regime to the more independent musical activities. He begins with an account of the hard-line Soviet texts of Andrei A. Zhdanov and Viktor M. Gorodinsky (not forgetting the first condemnations of jazz from the pen of Maxim Gorky), continues with the Czechoslovak followers of Soviet models, describes the gradual evaporation of ideological dogma in the 1960s and goes on to describe the more politically pragmatic than ideological approach of the authorities in the period

of so-called "normalisation". He documents the failure of ideological solutions by referring to the campaign surrounding the notorious article, "A New Wave with an Old Content" in the ideological journal *Tribuna* in March 1983, showing in his analysis the reserved attitude of the very leaders of the regime to the ideologically clear-cut message of the article.

Vaněk naturally also considers the laws related to music at the time. He describes the emergence of the network of music agencies, the way they operated and the qualifications that musicians had to have in order to play professionally. Here he devotes specific attention to what were known as "requalification" or purges, used by the "normalisers" in the first half of the 1970s to drive all troublesome and potentially more independent musicians out of the agencies. Rather surprisingly, analysis of the amateur music scene is given conspicuously less room in the text. In the 1970s and 1980s rock bands that had not tried to get requalifications or had failed them could retain legal status only if they accepted the status of so-called people's musicians. Miroslav Vaněk provides only a partial sketch of this type of musical group and production, which was subject to a different form of institutional supervision, and for example he neglects the position of what was known as the head of the band and his communication with the organiser and relevant district national committee.

Vaněk also uses State Security documents. He criticizes the occasional police "hunts after agents", which from time to time appear in the spotlight of the media, because he considers them relatively unimportant. The State Security materials, however, provided him an excellent basis for a description of the communist regime's repressive measures against non-conforming musicians, especially in the 1970s and 1980s. He solidly maps the State Security campaigns and actions of this kind and highlights their peculiarities, from the famous (Operation Jazz) though the lesser known (Operation Kapela) to the hitherto almost undocumented (for example the Operation *Odpad* [Rubbish]). In his account he also mentions other themes that would be worth deeper analysis, such as the way the Young Music Section of the Czechoslovak Union of Musicians functioned.

*Was it Only Rock'n'Roll?* is a good historical synthesis. Every synthesis has good and bad points; it makes possible a wide-angle view, a more rounded analysis of a longer period and the identification of longer-term trends, but also inevitably leaves out a great deal of facts. In this context one might criticise the author for the erroneous claim that in 1970 the band The Plastic People of the Universe refused to undergo requalification (p. 240). In fact requalification was not introduced until the autumn of 1973 and the band underwent the process but of course failed to pass. In this context we might pose an important question of whether the underground was from the outset defined in opposition to all officialdom, as Ivan Martin Jirous later claimed as a deliberate programme, and as musicians associated with or sympathetic to him agreed, or whether this attitude was formed only under the marginalising pressure of the regime. Also, the author might have been more precise in his assertion that the Young Music Section published a book about the singer-song-writer Vladimir Vysotsky (p. 267). Vaněk is evidently thinking

of the book *Koně k nezkrocení* [Untameable Horses] which contained Czech translations of the songs not only of Vladimir Vysotsky, but also of Bulat Okudzhava. We could find more inaccuracies in the book, but these would only be minor marginal comments.

Miroslav Vaněk's book is inspiring, readable and radiates the author's erudition and enthusiasm for his subject matter. What is more, it is a challenge and stimulus to other researchers in the field of popular and alternative music and culture in communist Czechoslovakia to produce more detailed, elaborate and more compact studies (for example of the Young Music Section, the phenomenon of the magazine *Melodie*, the everyday life of the organisers of music groups and of their concerts and so on).

*The Czech version of this artile, entitled* Rock a politika v komunistickém Československu, *was originally published in Soudobé dějiny, vol. 18, no. 3 (2011), pp. 475–478.*

*Review*

# A Crazy Century of Memories

Doubravka Olšáková

KLÍMA, Ivan: *Moje šílené století* [My Crazy Century], vol. 1 and 2. (Series Paměť [Memory], vols. 17 and 32.) Praha, Academia 2009 and 2010, 526 + 369 pp. illustration supplements.

The end of the twentieth century can justifiably be considered the age of the culmination of the cult of memory. While the earlier centuries had laid the foundations of this phenomenon by the means of hagiographic writings, the last century – above all because of the experience of Nazism and the Holocaust, became the era of witnesses.[1] To give testimony became a duty to humanity. The fall of the Iron Curtain brought another great wave of personal accounts and memoirs redefining the history of the second half of the 20th century, and from there it was but a short step to the progressive transformation of testimony into memory. This transformation fittingly highlights the triumph of the liberalism of European society: subjective experiences of the individual became memory that in aggregate is often considered to constitute the memory of the nation. Significantly the term "recollections", with its implication of the uncertainty of the narrator who remembers, is no longer used for memoirs. Yet an aggregate set of memories is not what creates the memory of the nation. The model of the functioning of the memory of society as presented in his interpretation of the behaviour of collective consciousness by Maurice

1 See WIEWIORKA, Annette: *L'Ère du témoin.* Paris, Hachette 2002.

Halbwachs[2] and other sociologists after him, excludes such a view. The memory of society is formed in dependence on its present needs. Memory is neither abstract nor objective, and "memoirs" often say more about the contemporary society than about the time those authors are describing.

All the same, for the historian memoirs and recollections remain important sources. Today the classic format of memoirs is being rather marginalised by *oral history* interviews, but written memories retain their charm. This is why in 2007 the Academia publishing house decided to expand its list with a new series entitled *Paměť* [Memory] featuring mainly the memoirs, recollections and diaries of important scientists and scholars, but also including similar titles by well-known or even famous writers such as Pavel Kohout,[3] Ivan Klíma or the Hungarian writer Sándor Márai.[4] This is a very rare publishing series in the Czech Republic. In terms of the numbers and importance of the titles its only serious competitor on the market is the series *Edice osudů* [Destinies series] from the Brno publishing house Doplněk, which does not have the same conceptually balanced series policy as Academia but has been bringing out very interesting books in the series.[5] The publishing house G plus G, has also struck out in the same direction, specialising in publishing the memories of people of Jewish origin.[6]

It is testimony to the strong headway made by the *Paměť* series in the Czech market that while the first volume of Ivan Klíma's *My Crazy Century* has the series number 17, the second volume, published just a year later, has the series number 32. What is more, Klíma's memoirs, and also for example the memoirs of the political scientist Zdeněk Slouka, show very clearly that Academia has a vision and well thought-out conception of work with authors. Much of the credit must undoubtedly go to the director of the publishing house Jiří Padevět, who initiated the series and often personally approaches authors and invites them to write memoirs.

The incommensurability of the memories of different generations in the second half of the 20th century is reflected in the very circumstances that led Klíma to write his memoirs. He had the idea after an interviewer from the Czech service of the BBC asked him, "Why don't you write about how you could ever have come to be a communist in your youth?" (vol. 1, p. 7). The question is typical of a generation for

2 HALBWACHS, Maurice: *Les Cadres sociaux de la mémoire.* Paris, Félix Alcan 1925. This book recently came out in Czech under the title *Kolektivní paměť* (Praha, SLON 2010).

3 KOHOUT, Pavel: *Můj život s Hitlerem, Stalinem a Havlem* [My Life with Hitler, Stalin and Havel], vol. 1. Praha, Academia 2011.

4 MÁRAI, Sándor: *Deníky* [Diaries], vol. 1 and 2. Praha, Academia 2009.

5 See e.g. VERKIJK, Dick: *Od pancéřové pěsti k pancéřové vestě: Šedesát let (ne)žurnalistických vzpomínek* [From the Armoured Fist to the Armoured Vest: Sixty Years of (Non)journalistic Memories]. Brno, Doplněk 2002; KAVANOVÁ, *Rosemary: Cena svobody* [Freedom at a Price]. Brno, Doplněk 1997; *Vlasta Chramostová.* Brno, Doplněk 1999 (2nd edn. 2003).

6 See e.g. GOLDSTÜCKER, Eduard: *Vzpomínky* [Memories] *(1913–1945).* Praha, G plus G 2003; GOLDSTÜCKER: *Vzpomínky (1945–1968).* Praha, G plus G 2005; BERNHEIMOVÁ-FRIEDMANNOVÁ, Ráchel: *Jak jsem přežila* [How I Survived]. Praha, G plus G 2002.

which the possibility of not being a communist is as natural, taken for granted and indeed necessary, as it was to be a communist a generation earlier. This later generation discovers with a kind of sincere wonder that – to paraphrase Ferdinand Peroutka – their much trumpeted identity as children of the generation of the unhappy and heroic year 1968, is completely unimportant compared to the momentous and sensational discovery that they are also children of the respectable citizens of the 1950s.[7]

The question posed with such self-confidence, springing from different historical experience (after all, something like that could never happen to us!), opened up a burning theme for society as a whole, and so for the author himself: the theme of the treason of the elites (the intelligentsia, the educated). The crucial importance of this theme is evident in Klíma's memoirs in the way that the author constantly returns to it in his ruminations. "The treason of the elites" is even the title of one subchapter of the first volume (pp. 310–321), and another passage on the function of the elites in the Czech nation from the 19th century to the present appears in the second volume (pp. 314–320). Here Ivan Klíma defines for himself the difference between a communist and a cultured human being: "Certainly, one could remain a communist even faced with the mass graves of the murdered (after all they were enemies of that better and more humane society), and one could remain a communist even on the gallows (whether as the condemned man or the hangman or the bystander), but one could not remain a man of learning or a cultured human being. For the treason of the intelligentsia is the road to the barbarisation of all."(vol. 1, p. 321)

One reason why Klíma's memoirs are distinctive in the context of the other memoirs mentioned above is because the passages reflecting on the perverted character of the times are not integrated into the text but in most cases take the form of separate subchapters. In these the author presents a great many quotations, and with some literary license analyses historical developments or tries to uncover the different layers of historical memory. In this sense the biggest difference between the two volumes of *My Crazy Century* is that the first volume is more narrative while the second volume is more carried away by reflections on themes of the time and their effects on humanity. Themes characteristic of the time are very often introduced by an excursus in the 19th century, including quotations from Ján Kollár and other Czech national revivalists. In these long passages Klíma's memoirs are reminiscent of the memoirs of the Czech literary scholar and resister against both Nazi and Communist oppression Václav Černý. Yet Klíma tells his story with a certain amount of resigned acceptance of his destiny. The memoirs are not aggressively explosive or embittered and often just wryly gloss the circumstances, but in fact the unuttered judgments are much more potent than the explicit condemna-

7 See PEROUTKA, Ferdinand: Jací jsme [What We Are Like]. In: PEROUTKA: *O věcech obecných: Výběr z politické publicistiky* [On General Matters: Selected Political Journalism], vol. 1. Ed. Daniel Bohdan. Praha, Státní pedagogické nakladatelství 1991, p. 19 f. Peroutka was of course referring to the generation of 1918.

tions in Václav Černý's memoirs (see e.g. vol. 1, p. 317). The rhythm of the writing differs somewhat between the two volumes: in the first volume it is flowing, with narrative and reflection overlapping but in the second volume the tempo speeds up and very often short sequences of life story alternate with longer passages of more general reflections. One of the most interestingly handled themes here is that of the Czechoslovak emigrant community, which Klíma considers in a subchapter entitled "Emigration or Life in Unfreedom" (vol. 2, pp. 116–120). The quality of this brief but for that very reason all the more appealing passage shows his stay in London in August 1968 and his spell as a visiting professor in Ann Arbor in Michigan provided Klíma a basis for a very informed and judicious approach to the theme.

The author narrates his life story subjectively, as it flowed and as he experienced it, but also reflects on the point of view of those compelled by circumstances to behave differently. Ivan Klíma makes no apologies for the sins of his youth, and his account is not confessional; he simply talks about his life as it turned out against the background of two totalitarian regimes. He writes about his approach in the introduction: "I do not intend to write the usual sort of memoirs, among other reasons because since childhood I have had a terrible memory, especially for the literal words of conversations or details that while they were not important have a special appeal for readers or listeners. Also in many cases I didn't want to be personal and in the process of recollection and reflection I have tended to concentrate on the circumstances that in this crazy century sometimes led a person astray, or at other times forced him to fateful decisions." (vol. 1, p. 8) Klíma's memoirs thus contain everything that makes memoirs such a highly valued source for the historian.

In fact Klíma does have the ability to captivate with a detail. Thus recollecting a child's viewpoint, unburdened by awareness of the historical crimes of the Nazi regime, after describing his return from concentration camp, he comments on compulsory school attendance with the surprising sentence, "it hadn't occurred to me that peace would bring a lot of disagreeable things too" (vol. 1, p. 54). He suggests the creeping but inexorable rise of communist ideology in society by the change in his father's newspaper subscription: in the 1930s his father used to read *Lidové noviny* [People's News] and *Národní politika* [National Politics] (vol. 1, p. 9), but only in 1946 did he start to subscribe to *Rudé právo* [Red Right] in 1946 (vol. 1, p. 86). The postwar shift of opinion in most of the population to the left, which historians usually analyse primarily in the context of the results of the May 1946 elections, is here pinpointed by Klíma in that simple statement. After all, his father was a loyal Czechoslovak citizen, a former legionary, and even more, an honourable man.

On the rise of communism to power Ivan Klíma writes: "I was blind, but I persuaded myself of the opposite: that I could glimpse the outlines of a new liberated humanity." (vol. 1, p. 155) He notes that at the time the badge of KSČ [Czechoslovak Communist Party] became a metal fetish just as the badge bearing a swastika had been a few years before (vol. 1, p. 123), and observes that this comparison, in its time unthinkable, today functions and dominates discussion of the character of to-

talitarian regimes. Nevertheless – or perhaps for that very reason – the subchapter on university studies and growing to adulthood is entitled "Abused Youth". His gradual discovery of the shortcomings of the regime and its dark side, like the disappearance of people (vol. 1, p. 230) or the "purges" (vol. 1, p. 266), together with the imprisonment of his father, progressively eroded Klíma's faith in the teleological progress of society to brighter tomorrows. The regime showed its limitations in its inability to reflect critically on its own rhetoric and demands – criticism and self-criticism were seen not as ways to learn from one's own mistakes but as a proof and confession of guilt. "The basic problem did not lie in how a person answered or who answered, but in the fact that the answer had no point, because it had no weight in any decision about anything but was just a part of a vile power game." (vol. 1, p. 484) Words were losing their meaning, just like the behaviour of the conformist masses.

Klíma's first official job, on the magazine *Květy* [Blossoms], brought his illusions up against reality as he discovered that the editorial team was dominated by malice, mediocrity, backbiting and political profiling (vol. 1, p. 292), but this was still counter-balanced by his faith in the necessity of work for the "party". In his narrative he goes on to describe his rapid succession of other jobs, in the 1960s for example on the staff of the magazine *Tvář* [Face] (p. 482ff.), in the Československý spisovatel [Czechoslovak Writer] publishing house, and on the staff of the papers *Lidové noviny*, *Literární listy* [Literary Newspaper] and so on. By this time his communist faith was fading. The first volume ends with a description of the disciplinary proceedings taken against the protagonists of the writers' revolt of 1967, which had erupted at the Fourth Congress of Czechoslovak Writers and with Ivan Klíma's expulsion from the Czechoslovak Communist Party (vol. 1, pp. 514–516). The second volume carries on chronologically with the founding of *Literární noviny* [Literary News] and the circumstances of the civic manifesto "Two Thousand Words" campaign (vol. 2, p. 22) but its main centre of gravity is of course description of the author's life as a dissident and his activities in samizdat culture up to the end of the communist regime.

The description of the everyday life of a dissident in the second volume is particularly valuable and fascinating. The need to show he was in regular employment led Ivan Klíma to work as an ambulance driver, and to a series of other unskilled manual jobs, which earned him his living. Klíma's everyday life was moulded "from the outside" by the state with its regulations, restrictions and the repressive practices of the secret police, but it was formed above all by the environment of dissent, with the publication and dissemination of samizdat literature, in meetings and discussions in circles of friends, but also in the complications of love affairs which Ivan Klíma does not avoid describing. He also describes contacts – direct or mediated – with foreign publishers whose publishing policy influenced to a certain extent the creative work of dissident authors. Frustration at the impossibility of publishing normally at home was intensified by the occasional "betrayal" committed by those who – like Bohumil Hrabal – won the chance to publish at the price of painful concessions. Klíma speaks of such chances as "traps".

Visits from world-famous writers who were not afraid to meet dissidents were exciting changes from everyday reality. The real results and reflections of these visits are hard to judge, but from the book it is difficult not to get the impression that despite their condemnation of the communist regime (especially after the occupation in 1968), the visitors expressed views that in their way resonated if not directly with communist then with socialist ideology. The first famous writer that Ivan Klíma met as a dissident was Arthur Miller, whose descriptions of his problems with McCarthyism, when he was unable to publish books in the United States and his screenplays could only be filmed in Europe, are recalled by Klíma with the fitting but rather embarrassed comment, "I think Miller wanted to encourage us when he told us about his experiences from the time of McCarthyism…" (vol. 2, p. 165). In discussion with dissidents William Styron criticised America for its rat race and said that he saw Eastern Europe as the opposite pole to the consumer world. These views too rather amazed his listeners (vol. 2, p. 167).

The memory retains first and foremost the experiences by which it is formed. It seeks to structure and insert events experienced into distinct models of behaviour and thought that allow a sense of the continuity of a human life to be sustained. Reading the diaries of Franz Kafka, Ivan Klíma noted Kafka's comments on the first day of the First World War: "Germany has declared war on Russia. This afternoon I went swimming." He reflects that "this parataxis between the importance of world and personal history is the indelible mark of modern literature" (vol. 2, p. 14). It is the same with Klíma's own memoirs. Their strongest passages are those that start from a hierarchy of experienced events in which the author is not moved to embark on long general reflections and where he tells his own story. All the same, Klíma's memoirs will endure for years as a unique source of critical reflection on two totalitarian regimes, written primarily for readers for whom the convulsions of the "crazy century" are an alien and indeed an incommunicable experience.

*The Czech version of this artile, entitled* Šílené století pamětí, *was originally published in Soudobé dějiny, vol. 18, no. 3 (2011), pp. 449–453. The reviewed book has recently been published in English as* My Crazy Century. A Memoir *(New York, Grove Press 2013).*

*Review*

# Ideological Literature in Non-Ideological Perspective

## *The First Modern History of Czech Literature of the Socialist Era Comes Out Twenty Years after 1989*

Alessandro Catalano

JANOUŠEK, Pavel et al., *Dějiny české literatury 1945–1989* [A History of Czech Literature 1945–1989]: vol. 1: *1945–1948*; vol. 2: *1948–1958*. Praha, Academia 2007.

In journalism (but not only there), the twentieth century has been undergoing a rapid process of deletion of memory, resulting in a simplistic and one-sided view of the past that inhibits real critical thought on what happened even just a few decades ago. As an aspect of this problem, the valuable theoretical concept of "totalitarianism" originally developed by Hannah Arendt (and many after her), has progressively turned into an obstacle to the detailed analysis of individual totalitarian systems. The Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek is right at least in this case when he claims that the "the notion of 'totalitarianism', far from being an effective theoretical concept, is a kind of *stopgap*: instead of enabling us to think, forcing us to acquire new insight into the historical reality it describes, it relieves us of the duty to think,

or even actively *prevents* us from thinking."[1] As a consequence of the mechanical use of this term the twentieth century is falling victim to a general simplification, which is progressively changing it into an "unexplained" century virtually without a history. A period of abundant debates on history and politics has been turned into a long (and boring) totalitarian era in which internal movement is rendered ever less visible. This has naturally encouraged a situation where with even greater simplification this period is being characterised as a "short century" of failures and blind alleys, while historical continuity is asserted between the present and the pre-totalitarian periods, to which "democratic traditions" are attributed not always entirely persuasively (the case of Czechoslovakia in the years 1945–1948 is ever more arguable in this context).

This state of affairs is naturally significantly reflected in the study of the literature of the communist period and it is a real piece of good fortune that an exhaustive and well-structured book has now been published as a basis for further debate, potentially of a polemic kind. After years of reprints of brief overviews intended mainly for secondary-school students, nearly twenty years after 1989, we at last have a solid work devoted to the development of Czech literature after the Second World War: the four-volume *History of Czech Literature 1945–1989* (overall nearly 2,500 pages) has appeared in Czech bookshops. This work has come out at a time when the genre of histories of national literatures is in deep crisis caused by ever more widespread awareness of the impossibility of reconstructing an ideal historical and literary past in a form that would be both neutral and objective. Some literary historians even take the view that if it were not for the essential didactic role of the genre (although even this role is being compromised by the constant "devaluing" curricula reforms in recent years in many European countries) today the histories of national literatures would most likely not be written at all.

Although debate on the limitations of and pitfalls of reconstruction of the past (especially the literary past) has in recent years been going on everywhere to some extent, it has had very different results in different countries in terms of concrete impact on the writing and publication of wide-angle historical overviews. For example, even a cursory investigation will reveal that in Italy a considerable number of histories of Italian literature intended both for secondary-school pupils and university students are available, and the most important Italian publishing houses and leading Italian literary scholars still consider the production of histories of Italian literature to be one of the main tasks of literary scholarship.[2] By contrast, in the Czech cultural world especially in the last few years there has been a very vigorous and radical discussion on the canons, methods and the very possibility of writing

1 ŽIŽEK, Slavoj: *Mluvil tu někdo o totalitarismu?* [Did Somebody Talk about Totalitarianism Here?]. Praha, Tranzit 2007, p. 5.

2 See the most recent (and discussed) "The European History of Italian Literature", by Alberto Asor Rosa, who earlier, at the beginning of the 1960s, wrote "A Synthesis of the History of Italian Literature", and then edited the monumental several-volume work published by the Einaudi Press in the 1980s and 1990s: ASOR ROSA, Alberto: *Storia europea della letteratura italiana*, vol. 1–3. Torino, Einaudi 2009.

a history of literature today, and the number of sceptics has been surprising.[3] Without wishing to detract from the force of their arguments, which are often inspired by American "new criticism" and deny that any valid linear and unambiguous reconstruction of literary history is possible, from the point of view of anyone who lectures in Czech literature (especially abroad, where students master the language laboriously over five years of study), discussion of whether or not literary history is necessary seems rather a luxury that no teacher can afford to take too seriously.

I can therefore only welcome with satisfaction the speedy publication (starting in the autumn of 2007) of all the volumes of the *History of Czech Literature 1945–1989* produced during a ten-year project carried out by the Institute for Czech Literature of the Czech Academy of Sciences under its director Pavel Janoušek (the original conception of the project also owed a great deal to his predecessor Vladimír Macura, who died sadly prematurely).[4] This is the first work to deal with the development and fortunes of Czech literature from the end of the Second World War to the fall of communism in a systematic, comprehensive and non-ideological way and to offer readers a reliable reference book that will undoubtedly play an important role in the teaching of Czech literature in years to come. Additionally, the *History of Czech Literature 1945–1989* project was accompanied throughout by the publication of many related materials, including important collections of papers,[5]

3 See at least PAPOUŠEK, Vladimír – TUREČEK, Dalibor: *Hledání literárních dějin* [In Search of Literary History]. Praha – Litomyšl, Paseka 2005 (discussion articles on this publication by Pavel Janoušek, Dalibor Tureček, Vladimír Papoušek and Tomáš Glanc can be found in the monographic section of the journal *Česká literatura*, vol. 54, no. 1 (2006), pp. 29–76); WIENDL, Jan (ed.): *Hledání literárních dějin v diskusi* [In Search of Literary History in Discussion]. Praha – Litomyšl, Institute of Czech Literature and Literary Theory of the Philosophical Faculty, Charles University – Paseka 2006; FEDROVÁ, Stanislava (ed.): *Hodnoty a hranice: Svět v české literatuře, česká literatura ve světě* [Values and Borders: The World in Czech Literature, Czech Literature in the World], vol. 1: *Otázky českého kánonu. Příspěvky z 3. kongresu světové literárněvědné bohemistiky* [Questions of the Czech Canon. Papers from the 3rd Congress of World Literary Czech Studies]. Praha, Institute for Czech Literature of the Czech Academy of Sciences 2006; WIENDL, Jan (ed.): *Literatura a kánon* [Literature and the Canon]. Praha, Institute of Czech Literature and Literary Theory of the Philosophical Faculty of Charles University 2007; SLÁDEK, Ondřej – BLÁHOVÁ, Kateřina (ed.): *O psaní dějin: Teoretické a metodologické problémy literární historiografie* [On Writing History: Theoretical and Methodological Problems of Literary Historiography]. Praha, Academia 2008.

4 Here we should at least observe in a footnote that in view of the projects completed in recent years by the Institute for Czech Literature of the Czech Academy of Sciences (alongside the *History of Czech Literature 1945–1989* the fundamental *Lexicon of Czech Literature* was produced at roughly the same time), the prospect of financial cuts in support for the institution must inevitably cause indignation and embarrassment.

5 HRUŠKA, Petr (ed.): *Rok 1947: Sborník materiálů z konference* [The Year 1947: Collection of Materials from a Conference] *(Praha 11.–13. 6. 1997)*. Praha, Alfaprint 1998; SVOBODA, Richard (ed.): *Populární literatura v české a slovenské kultuře po roce 1945: Sborník referátů z literárněvědné konference 40. Bezručovy Opavy* [Popular Literature in Czech and Slovak Culture after 1945: Collection of Papers from the Literary Research Conference – 40th year of Bezruč's Opava] *(16.–18. 9. 1997)*. Praha – Opava, Institute for Czech Literature

a four-volume anthology of Czech thought on literature[6] and a large number of critical articles that have contributed significantly to the more accurate assembly of the various pieces of the jigsaw of the Czech literary past, which in preceding decades had been seriously jumbled and distorted by ideological, political and aesthetic pressures of various kinds and degrees. The final result has definitely not disappointed many of the hopes raised by this ambitious project from the outset.

The publication of the first two volumes of the *History* was particularly important. These deal with the new organisation of the cultural system and the heated literary and aesthetic debates in the first three years following liberation (1945–1948) and then the initial "building of socialism" phase, the development of the great utopia and the crisis of the system (1948–1958); i.e. a period that hitherto had lacked any objective treatment taking into account the complicated social situation that had such a profound impact on literature. While in the first volume we find a particularly worthwhile reconstruction of the debates on the essence of Czech culture (although it might have been worth giving more emphasis to the role played by the expulsion of the Germans in the general ideological shift towards identification with the Soviet Union), so in the second volume there is a no less important painstaking analysis of the mechanisms and forms by which the great utopian project of socialism was constructed on the field of literature as well, especially in the years 1949–1951. Without these essential cultural historical reconstructions (and many other examples could be mentioned), those first literary "discussions" after Stalin's death (one example is the debate on the poet's right to grief) and then the crucial moment of the crisis of the utopian project in the years 1956–1958 would seem entirely unintelligible.

While it had been obvious for some time that the whole cultural system of the 1950s, and literature above all, played a major role in the attempt to build a socialist utopia, especially at the level of student textbook there had been no clear and as far as possible neutral presentation of a period which people too often

---

of the Czech Academy of Sciences – Philosophical-Natural Science Faculty of the Silesian Universityy 1998; FORMÁNKOVÁ, Eva (ed.): *Návraty k velkým: Sborník referátů z literární konference 42. Bezručovy Opavy* [Returns to the Great: Collection of Papers from the Literary Research Conference – 42nd Year of Bezruč's Opava] *(14.–15. 9. 1999)*. Praha – Opava, ÚČL AV ČR – Filozoficko-přírodovědecká fakulta Slezské univerzity – Slezské muzeum 2000; DENEMARKOVÁ, Radka (ed.): *„Zlatá šedesátá": Česká literatura, kultura a společnost v letech tání, kolotání a ... zklamání. Materiály konference pořádané ÚČL AV ČR 16.–19. června 1999* ["The Golden Sixties": Czech Literature, Culture and Society in the Years of Thaw, Whirling and... Disappointment. Materials of Conference Organised by the ICL CAS 16–19 June 1999]. Praha, ÚČL AV ČR 2001; MATONOHA, Jan (ed.): *Život je jinde...? Česká literatura, kultura a společnost v sedmdesátých a osmdesátých letech dvacátého století. Materiály z mezinárodní mezioborové konference* [Is Life Elsewhere...? Czech Literature, Culture and Society in the Seventies and Eighties. Materials from International Interdisciplinary Conference] *(Praha 13.–15.6.2001)*. Prague, ÚČL AV ČR 2002.

6 PŘIBÁŇ, Michal (ed.): *Z dějin českého myšlení o literatuře: Antologie k Dějinám české literatury 1945–1989* [From the History of Czech Thought on Literature: Anthology to Accompany the History of Czech Literature 1945–1989], vol. 1–4. Praha, ÚČL AV ČR 2001–2005.

seemed to wish to erase rather than study in depth and detail.[7] On the other hand, although there are still many issues that need to be identified and explored in more depth, and new work will appear that that will give us a better understanding not only of the mechanisms governing the literary system in the 1950s but also of the relationships between individual authors and works, one could not and cannot but notice how fast the situation has been changing in recent years, although the change was more apparent on the academic than the journalistic level. Apart from many initiatives associated with the *History of Czech Literature 1945–1989* project, the publications of competent researchers (above all Jan Šulc and Michal Špirit), and the precise and comprehensive archival researches carried out by Michal Bauer, Jiří Knapík a Pavel Janáček,[8] have been of fundamental importance. Thus the first two volumes of the *History* represent both the culmination of a process of reinterpretation of the past which started in the 1990s, and a new starting point by which all future studies will have to be measured.

Chronologically the work begins from the end-point of the now already classic four-volume history of literature edited by Jan Mukařovský (known as the "academy" history), which after publication of the first three volumes in the years 1959–1961 remained unfinished for a long time. As is well-known, the publication of the fourth volume, devoted to the first half of the 20th century and ready for printing in 1969, was halted at the beginning of "normalisation" after the military intervention had put an end to Prague Spring reforms in 1968 and did not see the light of day until 1995.[9] Probably to ensure that the organic project of a history of Czech literature should be completed in a unified form (despite the strong ideological limitations in some sections the volumes edited by Mukařovský remain an essential

7 The first result was the *Slovník českých spisovatelů od roku 1945* [Dictionary of Czech Writers since 1945], also edited by Pavel Janoušek, which came out in two volumes in the years 1995–1998; today it is also accessible online at *http://www.slovnikceskeliteratury.cz/*.

8 See at least BAUER, Michal: *Ideologie a paměť: Literatura a instituce na přelomu 40. a 50. let 20. století* [Ideology and Memory: Literature and Institutions at the Turn of the 1940s/50s]. Jinočany, H&H 2003; BAUER: *Tíseň tmy aneb Halasovské interpretace po roce 1948* [The Pressure of Darkness or Halasian Interpretation after 1948]. Praha, Akropolis 2005; KNAPÍK, Jiří: *Únor a kultura: Sovětizace české kultury 1948–1950* [February and Culture: The Sovietisation of Czech Culture 1948–1950]. Praha, Libri 2004; KNAPÍK: *V zajetí moci: Kulturní politika, její systém a aktéři 1948–1956* [In the Grip of Power: Cultural Policy, Its System and Actors 1948–1951]. Praha, Libri 2006; JANÁČEK, Pavel: *Literární brak: Operace vyloučení, operace nahrazení, 1938–1951* [Literary Rubbish: Operation Exclusion, Operation Substitution, 1938–1951]. Brno, Host 2004.

9 MUKAŘOVSKÝ, Jan (ed.): *Dějiny české literatury*, sv. 4: *Literatura od konce 19. století do roku 1945* [The History of Czech Literature, vol. 4: Literature from the End of the 19th century to 1945]. Praha, Victoria Publishing 1995. The same year saw a reprint of one of the most famous histories of Czech literature: NOVÁK, Arne: *Přehledné dějiny literatury české od nejstarších dob až po naše dny* [An Overview History of Czech Literature from the Earliest Times to Our Day]. Brno, Atlantis 1995. Two years later a useful compendium was published for high schools: LEHÁR, Jan – STICH, Alexandr – JANÁČKOVÁ, Jaroslava – HOLÝ, Jiří: *Česká literatura od počátků k dnešku* [Czech Literature from the Beginning to Today]. Praha, Nakladatelství Lidové noviny 1998.

text to this day), the arrangement of the material in the most recent *History* follows Mukařovský's project in some feature, if in a modern structural and terminological context. Thus although the chapters are of different lengths, each volume starts with a detailed reconstruction of the political, cultural and literary context (specifically in two long chapters, "Literary Life" and "Thought on Literature", with an additional chapter on "Literary Life in Exile" in the second volume), which is followed by more traditional sections devoted to poetry, prose and drama, and then somewhat more innovative chapters focused on the literature of fact, popular literature, literature for children and young people and literature in the mass media. Both volumes conclude with an abundantly glossed résumé of the basic literature and sources (also meant to make up for the absence of footnotes in the text). One radical change from the structure of the previous project, however, is the complete abandonment of the monographic chapters that were characteristic features of the "academy" history. Unfortunately, although the amount of space reserved for monographic chapters in the fourth volume of Mukařovský's *History* certainly seems excessive,[10] the effects of abandoning them completely in the new project are not very persuasive either. Just to give an example, one consequence is that Bohumil Hrabal almost disappears from the Czech literature of the 1950s: apart from a few scattered quotations, in the second volume his poetry receives scarcely two short paragraphs (p. 238 f.) and his prose only one (p. 319 f.), and this is by no means compensated for in the third volume on the 1960s, when some of Hrabal's texts written in the preceding period were published for the first time. Other writers who published their works "belatedly" are by contrast given much greater space (for example Vladimír Holan, pp. 218–221). Without wanting to get involved in complicated and controversial judgments, I considered the insufficient visibility of a number of key figures to be confirmed by the analogous case of Josef Škvorecký (p. 320 ff.) and to a lesser extent Milan Kundera; for a comparison we might consider the much greater space devoted in the second volume to the debut of Jan Skácel (p. 254 f.) or the theatre of Zdeněk Kalista (p. 390 f.). A better highlighting of the real importance of a few selected writers (more detailed separate profiles of Bohumil Hrabal, Josef Škvorecký, Milan Kundera, Vladimír Holan, Jan Zahradníček, Jiří Kolář, Zbyněk Havlíček, Egon Hostovský and Egon Bondy) would probably have helped to minimise the distortion of their roles and significance in period literary context.[11] I do not think that this distortion can be justified by the principle of ac-

10 Vladimír Macura was particularly critical of these chapters in comments made as early as 1996: "I have doubts, however, about the accepted principle of including selected monographic chapters devoted to specific writers. Especially in the field of modern literature it no longer seems viable to choose a few 'emblematic' literary figures and use them to represent this or that period. (...) The fact is that at this point a construction elaborated with the material of older literature ... in the case of modern literature definitely calls for a change." (MACURA, Vladimír: Akademické Dějiny české literatury [Academic History of the Czech Literature]. In: *Tvar*, vol. 7, no. 2 (1996), p. 7.)

11 This is the way in which I arranged my own book on the 1950s (CATALANO, Alessandro: *Rudá záře nad českou literaturou: Česká literatura mezi socialismem a undergroundem* [Red

cording the same amount of space to each individual author (which in any case is not, as noted above, invariably respected).

If the main formal virtues of the work, to which more than fifty scholars contributed, include the very low number of factual errors (which tend to be legion in this kind of publication but here the editing has clearly been very painstaking), and the lavish illustrations, then in terms of content what is particularly important is that the authorial collective has abandoned the traditional notion of a single sovereign (high) literature, which in Czech context has often encouraged the traditional over-estimation of poetry at the expense of prose. I entirely commend the decision to describe the literary system defined in a broader and more subdivided way than in the past, including the categories of popular literature and literature for children and young people. With a few exceptions (such as the sections by Přemysl Blažíček on poetry and by Pavel Janáček on prose) the sections focused on literary questions in the wider sense (cultural politics, censorship, publishing houses, journals and so on) seem more successful than the literary analysis itself, which is sometimes encumbered by the effort not to forget any single author and so there is as tendency, so characteristic of this type of work, to become a list of names with shorter or lengthier commentary attached. Inter-media studies and analyses of the film adaptation of literary texts are among the most interesting chapters of the book. It will come as no surprise, based on what has already been said here, that in both volumes more space is still devoted to poetry than to prose, but it is question-begging to find that in the second volume drama is accorded almost as much space as prose. Despite the praise-deserving attempt to broaden the horizon of the literary system the decision is evidently not as unequivocal as it might seem. In any case, it is rather patent that although the chapters on theatre are the most balanced sections of the work, they do not seem truly integrated into the whole. Even though the history of theatre has traditionally been considered an integral part of literary history, during the second half of the 20th century literature and theatre diverged from each other to such an extent, perhaps even more than literature and film, that one wonders whether it would not have been better to put these chapters (in substantially shortened form) into the sections on the relationship between literature and other forms of art (where by the way probes into visual art would have also been useful) and to leave it to theatre historians to map this part of the recent Czech cultural heritage in their own publications.

Given that there is often discussion of the pointlessness or even distorting effects of sketchy introductory chapters on historical and social background in works of this kind, the decision to provide an unusually detailed reconstruction of the political, cultural and publishing situation of a cultural system ever more distant from our own seems appropriate (and for the 1950s even essential). A return to sources and a re-reading of the cultural phenomena most buried by the silt of later critical reaction (I am thinking in particular of the novel of "building socialism") is truly

Glow over Czech Literature: Czech Literature between Socialism and the Underground]. Brno, Host 2009).

the only way of avoiding further ideologically distorted interpretation of the past. In this context it seems right that the editors of the *History* decided to gear their narrative to the change in the target readership of this kind of work, i.e. to the fact that as the years go the readers will be ever less familiar with the events described.[12] Furthermore, study of the Czech literature of the 1950s cannot *a priori* neglect a number of basic problems, such as the need for constant awareness of the different points of view from which the subject has been regarded in the past (in the introduction Janoušek speaks of the narration of three different stories: that of official Czech literature, that of the struggles against the schematic, that of the refusal of any kind of collaboration).[13] Anyone who studies the literature of the 1950s is faced with the need to tackle the vexed question of the discrepancy between the moment of the reception of the work and the moment of its creation. The decision in this work to start from a precise diachronic reading that prioritises the moment of the publication of the work seems a good one, even though in some cases – as in Hrabal's mentioned above – a more sensitive and flexible approach would be better. The collective of authors of the *History of Czech Literature 1945–1989* were aware of all these peculiarities of the period and have comprehensively reconstructed the journey of Czech literature through the years of Stalinism and the following phases of partial "thaw".

Of course as time goes on it will be essential to outline new research hypotheses and to reconstruct the form of the Czech literary past in different ways: I mean for example the possibility of a text in which the material would be structured as it is in the fifth volume of the *Dějiny českého výtvarného umění* [History of Czech Fine Art][14] or the possibility of a clear account of the complicated events that led to the publication of the same work sometimes after a gap of several decades. Nonetheless, the *History of Czech Literature 1945–1989* will certainly satisfy the demand, ever more pressing since the beginning of the 1990s, for a reliable handbook offering information about the socialist literary past without ideological constraints – and doing so in a way that counter-balances the interesting but often only partial reconstructions provided by the large number of authors of memoirs of the period including authors who were on one contending side or other of the events described (see for example the work of Jaromír Hořec).

In some cases one can agree with the criticisms levelled by reviewers of the *History* and other commentators (for example on the chapter "Poets outside the Programme" in the first volume, p. 198 ff.), or differ on certain particular questions (for example in the first volume the importance and connections of the young poets' literary evenings in the autumn of 1947 seems to me to be exaggerated,

12 In the introduction Janoušek clearly emphasised that "this history presented here is intended above all for readers whose personal experience with life under socialism will be ever smaller". (JANOUŠEK, Pavel: Preface. In: JANOUŠEK, P. a kol.: *Dějiny české literatury 1945–1989*, vol. 1, p. 15).

13 Ibid., p. 14 f.

14 ŠVÁCHA, Rostislav – PLATOVSKÁ, Marie (eds): *Dějiny českého výtvarného umění* [History of Czech Fine Art], vol. 5: *1939/1958*. Praha, Academia 2005.

while in the second volume the chapter on "The Response of the Parallel Culture", p. 152 ff., would deserve a more thorough approach). On the other hand, the criticisms made by Jaromír Slomek (based on the absence of Josef Váchal),[15] who seemed to be just looking for a pretext, and by Jiří Brabec, who presented his objections in much more elaborate form (arguing primarily that the work lacks an adequate methodological foundation),[16] are definitely exaggerated. All the same, in the case of Brabec it is perfectly natural that so careful and precise a literary critic, who has written several works of theoretical analysis of totalitarian literature, should express doubts of this kind, and I think that a methodologically tighter introduction might have spared the *History* numerous misunderstandings.[17] Of course these are questions that will stimulate further debates between literary scholars,[18] inter alia because (as Aleš Haman wrote in his review of the first volume) "the first volume of the *History of Czech Literature after 1945* may be regarded as a challenge to contemporary scepticism about literary history."[19]

In this context I believe that the collective led by Pavel Janoušek has presented a coherent and organic working hypothesis by trying to give an account of the literary past in a voice as neutral and impersonal as possible. In fact for some time now there has been, in the critical treatment of history of literature, a general trend away from works presented in a personal style and from an individual angle and towards collective works of an encyclopaedic character. There is no doubt that

15 SLOMEK, Jaromír: Děravé dějiny: Pro akademické literární historiky Josef Váchal neexistuje [History with Holes: For Academic Literary Historians Josef Váchal Does Not Exist]. In: *Týden*, vol. 15, no. 5 (2008), p. 80.

16 Although I respect the sacred right to criticise, I do not know how far it is admissible to say in academic debate that the project coordinator, "ought to have a knowledge at least on the level of an inquisitive high-school pupil", (BRABEC, Jiří: Krize vědeckého myšlení? [A Crisis of Academic Thinking?]. In: *A2*, vol. 4, no. 16 (2008), p. 6 ff.). See also the reaction of the coordinator to the attack (JANOUŠEK, Pavel: Úskalí předneporozumění: Odpověď Jiřímu Brabcovi na jeho kritiku Dějin české literatury [The Pitfalls of Non-understanding in Advance: A Response to Jiří Brabec on His Critique of the History of Czech Literature]. In: *Tvar*, vol. 19, no. 10 (2008), p. 8).

17 What the editor said regarding this seems truly inadequate: "We started from the premise that our duty was to try to free ourselves from previous ideological schemas and interpretative frameworks, and this led us to return to the sources, to the attempt to assemble the material again, read it again through contemporary eyes and only then on the basis of this renewed experience construct the text of the *History.*" (JANOUŠEK, P.: Preface, p. 13.)

18 For a summary of the state of debate at the time of the publication of the volumes see ADAMOVIČ, Ivan: Česká literatura v dějinách zachycená [Historical Accounts of Czech Literature]. In: *Národní 3*, vol. 1, no. 3 (2008), pp. 50–53; there follows Pavel Kosatík's interview with Pavel Janoušek (Ibid., p. 54 ff.). See also PLATZOVÁ, Magdaléna: Žádné drama: Nové Dějiny české literatury jsou obdivuhodně kompletní, nekladou ale žádné otázky [No Drama: The New History of Czech Literature is Admirably Complete but It Asks No Questions]. In: *Respekt*, vol. 19, no. 52/1 (2008/2009), p. 72 f.

19 HAMAN, Aleš: Výzva skeptikům [A Challenge to Sceptics]. In: *Tvar*, vol. 19, no. 3 (2008), p. 7. The same critic has reviewed all four volumes successively (see at least the text devoted to the second volume: HAMAN: O zpožděné literatuře [On Belated Literature]. In: *Tvar*, vol. 19, no. 7 (2008), p. 7.

the *History of Czech Literature 1945–1989* is an unambiguous stride in this direction, since it shows features more typical of encyclopaedias than of traditional histories of literature. This is obvious for example from the particularly striking attempt to keep literary judgments to a minimum. The move from one author, who is a partisan in the literary process and inevitably offers sometimes unfair verdicts, towards the collective work, in which each scholar writes on a theme within his competence and is given roughly the same amount of space as all the other co-authors, has certainly already diminished the arbitrary character of traditional literary histories (although we cannot but point out that in some cases it has been that very arbitrariness which has helped earlier histories to retain their interest even after several decades).

In *The History of Czech Literature 1945–1989* the individual voice has in fact been so suppressed that it is hard to make out. In extreme cases, the difficulty of identifying the specific author of particular statements may even cause trouble in academic controversy. The attempt to unify the different parts of the work is understandable, but the decision not to indicate in the text (even by initials) who it was that actually wrote the words (and made the judgments) is unusual and ultimately not very defensible.[20] It only takes a small inaccuracy, as in the case of the second volume where the chapter on censorship (pp. 61–68) has been accidentally omitted from the index of authors (p. 5) for it to be completely impossible to track down the identity of the author(s). Incidentally, it is interesting to find that although at first sight literary judgments are virtually absent and the work is presented as non-partisan depiction that vivisects each literary phenomenon on the same operating table (this feature is even more evident – and debatable – in the last volume devoted to the years of "normalisation"), at times this approach has the paradoxical effect of a heightened normativity.[21] One reason is that the mere assignment of space between individual authors implies a quite precise process of choice, which naturally will not be shared by all scholars (not to speak of readers). In this respect it must be noted that in both volumes the attempt to avoid any form of judgment in places results in excessive homogenisation and standardisation of the phenomena concerned (for example qualitative differences between the so-called "Catholic authors" are insufficiently highlighted and reflected in the text).

In the rather thin range of available literary historical texts of a general character the *History of Czech Literature 1945–1989* has definitely won itself a central position, both as an educational aid and a handbook. It is now up to critics of this work to demonstrate by concrete new work the potential for the development of an alternative but equally organic and comprehensive conception. Of course, when that happens, we shall be delighted, because it is only from the competi-

20 For specialists this information is at least partly verifiable because many authors had already published their texts in journals, often long before the publication of the book.

21 On this aspect see the remarks of Jakub Češka „Politické dějiny české literatury" ["The Political History of Czech Literature"] (see *http://www.narodni3.cz/cs/aktuality/politickedejiny.html*).

tion and juxtaposition of methodologically different works that a real academic debate can emerge – a debate that does not get lost in abstract theoretical discussions as has happened too many times before in the past.

*The Czech version of this artile, entitled* Ideologická literatura v neideologickém provedení. Dvacet let po roce 1989 vyšly první moderní dějiny české literatury socialistické doby, *was originally published in Soudobé dějiny, vol. 16, no. 2–3 (2009), pp. 456–465.*

*Review*

# A British View of the Czech Right

Adéla Gjuričová

HANLEY, Seán: *The New Right in the New Europe: Czech Transformation and Right-Wing Politics, 1989–2006*. London – New York, Routledge 2008, xiv + 276 pp.

The British political scientist Seán Hanley, a senior lecturer at the London *School of Slavonic and East-European Studies*, has been writing academic articles and an internet blog about Czech politics for many years now. His new monograph *The New Right in the New Europe: Czech Transformation and Right-Wing Politics 1989–2006* is ultimate proof that he understands Czech politics – and that that he enjoys it. As far as I know, he has not undertaken extensive archival research or recorded hundreds of interviews, but he has an admirably broad knowledge of the published political texts. He is not then enriching Czech debate (and not only the academic one) with sensational new facts, but with a liberating straightforwardness that does not arise from political sympathies, and with methodological discipline and European context.

His main purpose is not to assess the actors or trends of real Czech politics but to shake up fixed ideas and theoretical models of the formation of parties of the centre right since 1989 as they have become established in West European and American political science. The book is full of criticism of the influential theories and typologies of communism and post-communist party systems developed by Herbert Kitschelt and

his circle.[1] The latter derives a typology of communism (for example bureaucratic-authoritarian in the Czech case) from processes of modernisation in the different states, and then interpret the political currents and subjects in the post-communist era as phenomena born out of the legacies of these different types of communism. Hanley criticises the whole model for grafting development in the countries of East Central Europe onto Western theories, for being static and deterministic and for entirely neglecting several other factors – for example the national question, and in the Czech case 1968 as a fundamental crisis that helped to determine all that followed, and he highlights the autonomy of elites that have not, after all, been just the maintenance men of the legacies of modernisation.

Unlike existing Czech works on the post-1989 right Seán Hanley takes seriously the question of "Where did all these right-wingers come from?" In his view the Czech right did not come into existence by a simple process of coat-changing nor did it form along the conventional modern lines of socio-economic cleavages. Instead, it emerged from the debates and trajectories of elites in 1968 and under what is known as "normalisation". In an excellent chapter on the small groups that formed the so-called proto-right under "normalisation" Hanley refutes two widespread and entrenched beliefs. First, he argues that the right did not emerge one-sidedly from opposition to dissident anti-politic, but from the debate about it. He argues that "antipolitics" should be regarded as an "inconsistent mixture of anti-political elements and a range of more conventional ways of understanding politics, including elements of the proto-right" (p. 47). Second, even in the case of groups influenced by British conservatism, as it was imported here from the mid-1980s by Roger Scruton, we need to be aware of the selectivity of its reception. Czechs took from it certain ordinary British conservative ideas, like the need for historical continuity, the unchanging basis of human nature, the need for social cohesion and the role of law and pragmatic non-ideological government, but ignored the anti-liberal, socially authoritarian side of Scruton's attitudes. Moreover, from his own perspective Hanley sees clearly that Scruton himself politically instrumentalised his impact among Czechs, using it as an argument in the British debate of the time on the New Right.

From all this it will be clear that Hanley goes beyond the "institutional" and technical descriptions presented by the Canadian political scientist Barbara Day,[2] and tries to identify the transformation of the mood in dissident circles and the development of its *conservative sensibilities*. Surprisingly he finds the connection between the moods in dissident milieux and the "grey zone" (the Prognostic Institute, reform attempts in the Czechoslovak People's Party) primarily in how little, compared to Poland and Hungary, they drew on the traditions of the interwar period.

Reading the first pages on the birth of the Civic Democratic Party [*Občanská demokratická strana* – ODS], one anticipates that for Hanley this theme will be just

1 See e.g. KITSCHELT, Herbert – MANSFELDOVÁ, Zdenka – MARKOWSKI, Radoslav – TÓKA, Gábor: *Post-Communist Party Systems, Competition, Representation, and Inter-Party Cooperation*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1999.

2 DAY, Barbara: *Velvet Philosophers.* London, The Claridge Press 1999.

another nail in the coffin of the Kitschelt *legacies* model. But the text conveys a drama: in 1990 and 1991 the party formed from immensely heterogeneous sources, practically without drawing on historical traditions, and furthermore formed unexpectedly, on the initiative of regional managers of Civic Forum [*Občanské fórum* – OF]. Added to this was the specific combination of personal charisma and technocratic legitimacy of Václav Klaus, who skilfully masked the contradiction that from the outset dogged the debate on economic reform – between the feeling that "something has to be done fast" and fear of the social impacts of radical steps. Klaus also did not embark on the path of rapid de-communisation, as the regions wanted, but with his energetic campaign conjured up a sense of radical change and the rationalisation of the structure of Civic Forum. After being elected chairman of OF in October 1990 he struck: he was no longer just concerned to make OF more effective, but to achieve a qualitative change in its political identity He started to oust "leftists" from its ranks and – in his own words – instead of an excessively broad Civic Forum, fixed on the past, offered a standard, normal, tried-and-tested Western European form of political party. With this the road to the institutionalisation of the right opened up.

The era of the dominance of the right in the years 1992–1996 has up to now been interpreted mainly as the consequence of the weakness of the left. Hanley, however, emphasises the mechanisms of this dominance (because the weakness of the left does not automatically mean the ascendancy of the right): the advantage of the division of Civic Forum for ODS (the overwhelming majority of managers went over to ODS), the successful "holding back" of the liberals, Christian democrats and anti-communist competitors (or integration of some of these), the effective presentation of ODS as the author of transformational changes, the interpretation of transformation as above all an economic matter, and last but not least the specific way in which internal stability was achieved. According to Hanley the Civic Democratic Party was not a standard hierarchical party, but a looser "stratarchic" party in which different "faces" of the party co-existed, almost as franchises of a central brand; although only the parliamentary and political elites could formulate state-wide policy, they created programmes that enabled members at lower levels to satisfy their entrepreneurial and other interests – and in return to maintain the locally established network of party organisations.

These are the quite surprisingly formulated specifics of the success of the Civic Democratic Party, and with it the whole Czech right: the pillars of Czech transformation policy – de-communisation, privatisation and local government reform – were in Hanley's view the result of political compromises of the years 1990–1992 and ongoing compromises in the government coalition, and not the implementation of some consistent right-wing ideology. Hanley considers it evident that although the Christian Democratic Union – Czechoslovak People's Party [*Křesťanskodemokratická unie – Československá strana lidová*] rhetorically pressed for a social-market economy while on the contrary the Civic Democratic Alliance [*Občanská demokratická aliance* – ODA] criticised the ODS from premises of liberal principle, the realisation of the reform steps was providing the governing parties with considerable sources and chances for organisational and power consolidation.

In the section devoted to analysis of the ideology of the Czech Right the author rightly challenges the earlier interpretations of the success of "Czech Thatcherism" which claim that it was based primarily on the macro-economic stability of the Czech Republic. How, in that case, can one explain its popularity in 1991, for example, which was the moment of deepest drop in living standard? The issue is not just economic prosperity, or other sociological or historical preconditions. The Czech right managed to mix a much more interesting cocktail with a special ideological appeal. After the collapse of communism, right-wing ideology had to be an ideology of transformation in the general sense of the word, a project of fundamental change. In addition to new institutions it had to bring a new understanding of politics and new political identities that would create a meaningful context for political action. In the same way Thatcherism had been more than just a swing of the pendulum for Britain, and had been a project of extensive radical transformation of the relations between market, state and society on the basis of a strong populist ideology, and indeed there too people had authentically felt it was an answer to their questions, and that they agreed with it.

The first ingredient of the Czech recipe was exclusivist, dichotomous thinking about reform, which rejected the "third way" as a hidden communist threat and offered a straight choice between two alternatives: "the communist" and "the Western, tried and tested". This concept was not used for analytical purposes, but only as a way of rejecting "experiments" and ostracising old enemies. Even many years later Václav Klaus was to see the terrorist attacks of 9/11 as fitting into a "certain whole" arising from lack of respect for success, performance, property and wealth – the same lack of respect allegedly felt by ecological activists (p. 167).

The second ingredient of the rightist strategy was the definition of the "civic" as a "secular liberal concept of the politics of individual participation in the economic and political (electoral) market, supported by the local community and served by the professional party elite" (p. 185). This kind of "society of free citizens" stood in opposition to the concept of civic society or elements of direct democracy, which allegedly tend towards the corporative state. In this concept civic virtue means economic participation and independence, not discussion and collective decision-making. Technocratic, managerial discourses for a time drowned out anti-communist discourse, liberal and democratic.

Finally third, conservatism to a considerable extent ceased to be the subject of intellectual debates and started to be politically instrumentalised. The neo-liberal reform was not supposed to be about just the promise of an economic miracle – and this was to be brought about with the help of the "Hayekian idea of the market and market society as a 'spontaneous order' which will enable the emergence of a stable, well ordered and moral society on the basis of individual action and not the pressure of the state" (p. 171). The discourse of "revolutionary conservatism" was additionally supposed to overcome the contradiction arising from the fact that there was "nothing to conserve". At the same time, however, it involved two assumptions: first that communism represented an unnatural order, a deviation from tradition and historical continuity; and second that the market and liberal institutions were – apart from

being normal, standard and tried-and-tested – traditional values in the Czech Lands too. One notable exception here was the journalist and political scientist Bohumil Doležal, in his time an advisor to Prime Minister Klaus, who claimed that the only tradition that could be drawn on was nationalism, and that this needed to be remoulded into active patriotism. The Civic Democratic Party expelled Doležal because at this point – even with the chosen "Czech path" of privatisation excluding foreign investors and so forth – it was pretending that it was drawing exclusively on Western sources and not on provincial Czech thinking.

Given this background the explicit return to the theme of national identity after the government and party crisis of 1997–1998 seems all the more crass. The Civic Democratic Party started to use the Czech nationalist paradigms that it had earlier rejected: Czech national interests were suddenly defined in antagonism to Western Europe, especially Germany and the European Union, no longer in antagonism to post-communist neighbours. Czech national identity and the free market were linked once again, but this time through the alleged threat posed to both by a class of supranational bureaucrats who did not believe in the market and wanted to regulate and plan. This critique is now neither liberal nor Doležalian liberal nationalistic, for it sees the multiculturalism of Western society as a threat, ploughing up social capital based on shared identity. Thus in the post-transformation ideology of ODS, right-wing politics is no longer the instrument of economic reform but of the protection of the statehood that represents Czech national identity and autonomy in an inhospitable, German-dominated Europe.

Hanley traces Klaus's criticism of the European communities, and then the European Union as inefficient, over-regulated structures geared to the interests of dominant states from 1992, and shows how it becomes more prominent from the mid-1990s. Only at the end of the decade, however, was this conflict-based perception of the individual national states in Europe related to the model of European integration and the accession of the Czech Republic to the European Union. Hanley characterises the *Manifesto of Czech Euro-Realism*, drawn up by a group around the vice-chairman of ODS Jan Zahradil in the spring of 2001 as the fullest but also the most sceptical evaluation of European integration from the workshop of any major political party in Central Europe and highlights the question of how a text of this degree of radicalism could seriously and in the long-term mould the policy of ODS, including the recommended "Yes, but…" in the referendum on entry.

In his following attempt to offer a deeper explanation of Czech Euro-scepticism Hanley makes what is his most problematic generalisation, i.e. given that in his view the People's Party is Eurosceptic as far as the possible entry of Turkey into the European Union is concerned, he talks overall of the "Euroscepticism of the Czech Right". Yet while this may be challenged, he goes on to provide what is the most significant interpretation of the Euroscepticism of (only – in fact) the Civic Democratic Party that has so far been put forward.

In this account Hanley abandons what has so far been the commonly accepted division of Euroscepticism into soft (rejecting some aspects of integration) and hard (rejecting integration as such), with all Czech scepticism assigned to the first category.

In his analysis of Czech Eurosceptic discourse he refers to the three-path model proposed by Nick Sitter and Agnes Batory,[3] which interprets Euroscepticism via the factors of long-term socio-economic disposition to Euro-scepticism, middle- to long-term strategic orientation of political party, and short-term tactical considerations, such as the need to form a coalition with someone, but shows that while it applies in the rest of Central and Eastern Europe, it does not apply to the Czech Civic Democratic Party. Eurosceptic parties usually represent those who have lost out by the transformation, which is certainly not the case of ODS with its young, affluent and educated voter base. In the same way the strategic consideration does not work: constructive parties close to the centre and often in government are not usually very Eurosceptic, and not even the hardening of Euroscepticism of ODS in opposition in the years 1998–2004 was really strategic, because it tended only to distance the party from its electors. Thus according to Hanley the Euroscepticism of the Civic Democratic Party is an anomaly, as in the case of British conservatism with which ODS has been identifying long-term. Evidently then it is indeed just an ideological product of party elites, i.e. above all an intellectual reaction to the dynamic of integration.

There are certainly many places where Hanley's account could be fuller: to take a random example, an explanation of the connections of the KDU-ČSL with pre-communist People's Party politics might have suggested that more weight be attached to the attempt by Václav Benda's Christian Democratic Party to forge a "different" Christian Democratic policy. What is much more important, however, is that overall Hanley's picture of the Czech right "fits" and in many places is the best that has yet been offered on the theme, moreover with an understanding of the difference of terms in the Czech and English political language. For Czech political and historical science, which is only slowly finding theoretically grounded ways forward with regard to how to write about post-communist politics, Hanley's book is an illuminating bolt from the blue. It shows that a theorising interpretation can be fascinating, and that it is far from adequate just to adopt established theories and simply to connect the deeper structures they imply with short-term electoral strategies. When dealing with political identities as specific as the post-communist identities, it is necessary to patiently seek new ways of describing them, with great sensitivity and gusto.

*The Czech version of this artile, entitled* Česká pravice vnímavým britským pohledem, *was originally published in Soudobé dějiny, vol. 15, no. 2 (2008), pp. 404–409.*

3 See SITTER, Nick – BATORY, Agnes: Cleavages, Competition, and Coalition-building: Agrarian Parties and the European Question in Western and Eastern Europe. In: *European Journal of Political Research*, vol. 43, no. 4 (2004), pp. 523–546.

# Summaries

## *Essays and articles*

### The Czech Twentieth Century

Vilém Prečan

This was the Opening Address at "Fateful Eights in Czech History: Historical Anniversaries of 2008 and Their Significance for the Czech Republic Today", an international conference organized by the Czech Embassy in Washington, held at the George Washington University, Washington, D.C., on 23–24 October 2008. In this essay the author provides a basic overview of twentieth-century Czech history, weighing the gains and losses, the victories and defeats, the ups and downs of the Czechs, the Czech nation, Czech society, on the way from gaining independence in a democratic state to loosing it, and the German occupation, to the renewal of Czechoslovak independence and the destruction of democracy under the Communist regime, to the failed attempt at the reform of that regime, and the victory of the democratic revolution – all marked by the historical milestones of the years 1918, 1938/39, 1945–48, 1968, and 1989 – as well as the author's reflections on the long-term changes in the mentality of the country.

### Tepluskas and Eshelons
### *The Czechoslovak Legionaries on their Journey across Russia*

Dalibor Vácha

Using specialized sources such as legionary literature (a vast sub-genre of Czech fiction between the two world wars), memoirs, diaries, photographs, and personal effects, the author seeks in this article to portray the everyday life of the Czechoslo-

vak legionaries in Russia from 1918 to 1920. To a considerable extent their lives were linked to their being moved about by train. At the centre of this were the *tepluskas*, furnished and heated box cars, part of the *eshelons* (troop trains), which served as the makeshift homes in which they spent most of their time. The Czechoslovak volunteers boarded the *tepluskas* in the spring of 1918, after retreating from the troops of the Central Powers in Ukraine. They then headed for Vladivostok, where they were meant to board ship and sail to France. As things turned out, however, the legionaries remained in Russia far longer, and fought in battles against the Bolsheviks, at first to save themselves, but later, on the side of the Entente, in support of Masaryk's foreign policy and the creation of an independent Czechoslovakia. The author concentrates more on the living conditions, activities, and customs of the legionaries in *tepluskas*. He discusses the furnishings of them, the way they were decorated, and their adaptation to the current needs of the legionaries. Last but not least, he attempts to describe how the legionaries experienced their milieu and how it influenced their lives together. The author seeks to provide a vivid picture of the "army" on wheels, which changed considerably over time.

**Resistance, Collaboration, Accommodation...**
***Some Notes on the Research of the Czech Society in the Protectorate***

Stanislav Kokoška

In this article the author raises several theoretical questions connected to an insufficiently researched topic, Czech society in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia (15 March 1939–8/9 May 1945). He considers, on the one hand, possible theoretical starting points, which he sees as residing in the thorough application of sociological approaches to historical research, and, on the other hand, the debates over the terms "collaboration" and "resistance". The term "collaboration" (*kolaborace*) was imported into the Czech milieu, and is generally used to mean dishonourable work with, or for, the enemy. The author therefore sees the use of this term as being chiefly in research on public policy, in which the extant sources usually provide enough information to form a reliable picture of the individual actors and their motives. In this respect the author also refers to the views of some Czech historians who have already pointed out that when discussing the behaviour of Czech society in the Protectorate it is extremely difficult to set a clear, universally valid boundary between resistance and collaboration.

For actual research on Czech society in the Protectorate the author prefers semantically neutral terms, free of moralizing connotations. He sees inspiration in sociology, whose approaches enable the development of a more complex model than the hitherto widely held view of a society that lived in some kind of permanent dilemma between resistance and collaboration. Apart from research on everyday life in the Protectorate – the milieu which the individual actors moved about in – the author recommends exploring also the "extent of adaptation" (the way the

actors accommodated themselves to the conditions of the new regime) and the "extent of identification" (whether the actors identified with the new regime and to what extent they considered it something unchangeable). From a comparison of both factors the author then deduces the actors' basic attitude to the regime (positive, neutral, potentially hostile, hostile) and their basic modes of behaviour (loyalty, law-breaking, opportunism, resistance). The "extent of identification" in particular constitutes the dynamic factor whose value was dependent on a whole range of circumstances. In researching Czech society in the Protectorate one must therefore consider other important topics, for example, the effect of Nazi and Allied propaganda, the responses in Czech society to the news about the course of the war, and, last but not least, fear, an integral part of Protectorate reality. To understand the behaviour of Czech society in the years of the Second World War (and therefore its values and orientation at the time of Liberation), one must in historical research devote sufficient consideration to the elementary fact that this society found itself in the grip of a totalitarian regime and was consequently not operating on the principle of freedom of choice.

**"Getting Around to the Human Being in the Next Quarter"**
***Leisure Time in the Czech Lands 1948–56***

Martin Franc and Jiří Knapík

The authors consider the changes in the conception, organization, ways of spending, and forms of leisure in the Czech Lands from the establishment of the Communist monopoly on power in early 1948 to the second half of the 1950s. (After this point leisure time here began strikingly to change under the influence of consumerist trends.) They consider the topic in the context of the dominant ideology and changes in economic, social, and arts policies. The authors take into account gender differences, contrasts between town and country, and special features of social groups. They pay particular attention to leisure amongst young people and children. The authors do not, however, see the Communist takeover of February 1948 as a watershed in the sphere of leisure. Instead, they demonstrate both the continuity and differences between the period of limited democracy, from May 1945 to February 1948, and the years that followed. In some cases, they highlight features that were identical in Nazi German and Communist approaches to leisure activities (the rejection of jazz, "trash" (*brak*) in the arts, and Western influences in general).

The authors discuss how the Communist regime intervened intensively in the way people chose to spend their free time, in its endeavour to shape a new type of man and woman in the new social conditions. At the same time, particularly in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the State so emphasized the importance of the work of building socialism, that leisure was seen as a "necessary evil", since it used up valuable physical and mental energy that would have been better spent on increasing productivity. For the same aims, but also with regard to the idea of somewhat

democratising the arts, the regime gave preference to activities such as political and vocational self-education as well as the study of selected arts and cultural values. In keeping with the subordination of the individual to the interests of society, collective forms of recreation and the leisure (holidays spent with groups of co-workers, mass group visits to plays, films, concerts, museums, galleries, and, later, Pioneer camps) were given priority. Traditional club activity and individual leisure were seen as "bourgeois survivals". Some young people's non-conformist leisure activities met with suspicion from the authorities or with outright repression. Amongst the models of leisure that the regime held worthy of emulation were the Socialist youth construction projects (*stavby mládeže*), "volunteer" work, and additional instruction or training. The new organizations, such as the Revolutionary Trades Union Movement (*Revoluční odborové hnutí* – ROH), the Czechoslovak Union of Youth (*Československý svaz mládeže* – ČSM), and the Union for Co-operation with the Army (*Svaz pro spolupráci s armádou – Svazarm*), which took the place of the earlier clubs and associations, comported with the new ideology and provided the required forms of leisure. The authorities endeavoured also to support considerably developed and differentiated hobbies, such as making art, playing board games, and collecting. Special facilities were established to run these activities, including the enterprise-based clubs of the ROH, houses of culture (*kulturní domy*), and people's educational societies (*osvětové besedy*). Forms of universally accessible activity, like chess and phillumeny (collecting matchbox labels), were supported, whereas financially more demanding hobbies or those linked to private gain, such as philately or numismatics, were marginalized. A slight retreat from the ideologised conception of leisure came with the so-called "new course" of 1953. But more striking changes were made in the second half of the 1950s. These years, which saw shorter working weeks, a higher standard of living than before, and the emergence of consumerist trends, are described by the authors as a period of the planned expansion of leisure and its gradual individualisation.

**The Stigma of the Past and the Bond of Belonging**
***Czech Communists in the First Decade after 1989***

Michal Kopeček

This article is concerned with the attitude that the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (*Komunistická strana Čech a Moravy* – KSČM) has had towards its own past. It examines the subject from the perspective of the internal development of the Party and its search for a political and cultural identity in the Czech political system. The interpretation of the past and the role of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (*Komunistická strana Československa* – KSČ) in Czech and Czechoslovak history were key elements in the ideological development of the Party in the first ten years of Czech democracy after the changes beginning in November 1989. And they played a central role in the Communists' efforts to respond to the new

democracy's systemic and rhetorical anti-Communism. In this article the author seeks to demonstrate what effect debates about the past had in causing divisions in the Party in the first years after 1989. On the one hand they contributed to cleavages within the Party, but on the other hand they also created conditions for its later consolidation and new self-confidence. The initial reformist strategy inclined roughly to the ideas of the Social Democratic Party and sought to win the maximum number of votes and ultimately a share in government. It was supported by the film-maker and chairman of the Party, Jiří Svoboda (b. 1945) from 1990 to 1993, but was gradually superseded by the strategy of what one Czech expert on international relations, Vladimír Handl, has called the "left-wing retreat", and what one British political scientist, Seán Hanley, calls "voter representation", based on the strengthening of political-cultural identity and the emphasizing of communication between the rank-and-file and the leadership of the Party.

As the author demonstrates, the idea of "coming to terms with the past" gradually acquired a meaning amongst the Communists that was markedly different from the meaning it had for most Czechs. The pragmatism of the subsequent leader, Miroslav Grebeníček (b. 1947), to a certain extent attenuated, but did not solve, the fundamental dilemma faced by the Party, which consisted in the conflict between the "logic of the electoral struggle" and the "logic of voter representation". The first trend after the downfall of the reformists in 1993 included, in particular, neo-Communist theorists (like the political thinker Miloslav Ransdorf, b. 1953), who sought to formulate Socialist alternatives acceptable to most left-leaning Czechs. That also led them to attempt a more critical analysis of their own past than the majority of their rank-and-file members would have done. The second trend, the logic of voter representation, oriented to preserving and strengthening the strong identity of Party members and supporters, was linked with the continuing conservative majority of the rank-and-file represented by local activists, the Party press, and some members of the Party leadership. All of them preferred the programme of political and social populism. They tended to understand history as the "politics of history" – in other words, as a means to support their own identity and to resist the hostile environment outside the Party. For both trends in the Party, however, the challenge presented by anti-Communism – whether systemic or spontaneous – remained, to the end of the 1990s, an important, if not the most important, unifying motive. But it considerably limited their possibilities to raise sensitive questions about their own past and to hold a potentially critical debate.

# *Prague Chronicle*

## An Unending Story with a Sudden End – and Its Immediate Consequences for East-Central Europe

### *The Numerous Impulses from the Prague Conference on the Cold War*

Vít Smetana

The author returns to the history conference *Dropping, Maintaining and Breaking the Iron Curtain: The Cold War and East-Central Europe Twenty Years Later*, which took place in the Straka Academy and in the Lichtenstein Palace, Prague, from 19 to 21 November 2009. He provides a detailed report on the conference proceedings. It was organized to mark the twentieth anniversary of the collapse of the Communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe, by the Institute for Contemporary History of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, together with the Office of the Czech Government and with the assistance of the students from the Institute of International Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences of Charles University in Prague. About thirty historians from eleven countries of the formerly divided Europe and the United States took part in this meeting of top historians of the Cold War to discuss the records that are gradually being made accessible to scholars and the public and also the changing interpretations of this history. During the conference the then Czech Prime Minister, Jan Fischer, awarded seven historians – Vojtěch Mastný, Thomas Blanton, Alex Pravda, Mark Kramer, Vilém Prečan, William Taubman, and, *in memoriam*, Saki Dockrill – the Karel Kramář Memorial Medal for the important contributions they have made to our knowledge and understanding of modern Czech history on the international level.

In the introductory panel discussion, the historians, together with two important actors in the events, Jiří Dienstbier and Alexandr Vondra, discussed the forming of new order in Europe in the early years after the end of the Cold War. The key processes here were the reunification of Germany, the dismantling of the military-political institutions of the Eastern bloc, and the eastward expansion of Western integrating institutions – NATO and the EU. The dynamically forming reality, at the same time, put an end to conceptions developed by some leading politicians (François Mitterrand's idea of a European confederation and Mikhail Gorbachev's "Common European Home"). In a fruitful exchange of views it was repeated several times that the form of the European order which had developed after the Cold War was not something obvious and the eastward expansion of NATO was not something that any of the actors had expected.

In the subsequent panels, the participants discussed the matter of whether competing for Central Europe was the main cause of the Cold War, as well as considering the role of strategic planning and nuclear weapons and the counter-efforts to maintain or to overturn the Cold War status quo. The highpoint of the conference, according to the author, was the panel discussions devoted to Germany – the division of the country, the existence of two German states side by side, and then

reunification – and particularly the end of the Cold War. The conference closed with more general reflections on Communism and the Cold War.

## *Book Reviews*

### The Sudeten Germans and the Twilight of the First Republic

Petr Kaplan

Brandes, Detlef. *Die Sudetendeutschen im Krisenjahr 1938* (Veröffentlichungen des Collegium Carolinum, vol. 107). Munich: Oldenbourg, 2008, xvi + 399 pp.

In his latest monograph, Brandes, an important German historian, focuses on the position of the Sudeten Germans in interwar Czechoslovakia and their role in breaking apart the country. The reviewer praises Brandes's extraordinarily thorough work with primary sources. He sees the fundamental contribution of the book in its observing the lives of the Sudeten Germans as the history of many social groups and their mutual relations and interactions with the outer milieux (Czechoslovak and German), rather than as one single story of a homogeneous stratum of the population. The author is manifestly critical of the minorities policy of the First Republic, which, in his view, made it difficult for the German minority to identify with the new state. He believes the main cause of the "uncontrolled expulsions" of Czechoslovak Germans after the war stemmed from the tensions that had come to a head in Czech-German relations on the eve of the Munich Agreement.

### An American Monograph on the Protectorate

Francis D. Raška

Bryant, Chad. *Prague in Black: Nazi Rule and Czech Nationalism*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2007, 378 pp.

This monograph by a young American historian is, according to the reviewer, a solid depiction of the history of the German Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, viewed as the brutal result of the conflict-fraught relations between the Germans and Czechs. His arguments are thoroughly convincing, precise, and founded on analysis of original archive records as well as knowledge of the broad spectrum of the relevant secondary sources. The main contribution of the work, the reviewer believes, is the author's balanced view of the situation in the Protectorate.

**Czechoslovaks on the Battlefields of Indochina**

Jan Bečka

Kudrna, Ladislav. *Bojovali a umírali v Indočíně: První vietnamská válka a Čechoslováci v cizinecké legii* [They Fought and died in Indochina: The first Vietnam War and Czechoslovaks in the Foreign Legion]. Praha: Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů and Naše vojsko, 2010, 400 pp.

The book under review is about Czechoslovaks in the French Foreign Legion fighting in Indochina against the movement for national independence in the first half of the 1950s. The book presents this historic episode by discussing the fates of twenty-one Czechoslovaks in the Foreign Legion, which the author discusses in the context of the war in Indochina and relations between the Czechoslovak Communist regime and the movement led by Ho Chi Minh and the government he established in North Vietnam. The author also discusses the Czechoslovak legionaries' return to their native land and their lives afterwards. The reviewer considers the work a useful contribution to the history of a previously ignored topic.

**In Praise of Roots**

Karel Hrubý

Kopeček, Michal. *Hledání ztraceného smyslu revoluce: Zrod a počátky marxistického revizionismu ve střední Evropě* [In Search of the Lost Meaning of the Revolution: The Birth and Beginnings of Marxist Revisionism in Central Europe]. Praha: Argo, 2009, 386 pp.

In a detailed review-essay of Michal Kopeček's book, the reviewer assesses the theoretical roots of Kopeček's interpretations, the subtlety of his analysis of terminology, and his broad range of sources. He notes that "revisionism" already had a long history in the 1950s, and points out that in addition to the author's analyses of revisionist tendencies in philosophy and sociology one could trace it in their application to economics, jurisprudence, and *belles-lettres*. The part of the book that makes the greatest contribution to our understanding is, according to the reviewer, the discussion of the development of revisionism in Poland, where the ground was best prepared for revisionism and where, in the intellectual activity of Leszek Kołakowski, it reached its apex in Central Europe. Of similar importance was Georg (György) Lukács, in Hungary, but he sought mainly to justify Leninism in theoretical terms. In Czechoslovakia, unlike in these two neighbouring countries, revisionism lacked political support and had to wait till the second half of the 1960s to become fully developed. But that part of the story is beyond the scope of the publication under review.

**Rock and Politics in Communist Czechoslovakia**

Přemysl Houda

Vaněk, Miroslav. *Byl to jenom rock'n'roll? Hudební alternativa v komunistickém Československu 1956–1989* [Was It Only Rock'n'Roll? A Musical Alternative in Communist Czechoslovakia, 1956–89]. Praha: Academia, 2010, 639 pp.

This book provides, according to the reviewer, a comprehensive discussion, including the international context of the field of rock music and the music and subculture developing out of it in Communist Czechoslovakia, covering a large span of time and topics. Rather than a musicological analysis, the publication is a purely historical interpretation in which the author draws on a wide range of primary sources and deftly combines them. He examines the relations between politics and the efforts of forms of musical expression to provide an alternative to state-supported pop music, and raises the cardinal question of whether rock music was indeed a useful weapon of opposition to the regime, and if so, to what extent.

**A Crazy Century of Memoirs**

Doubravka Olšáková

Klíma, Ivan. *Moje šílené století* [My Crazy Century], vol. 1 and 2 (Series Paměť [Memory], vols 17 and 32). Praha: Academia, 2009 and 2010, 526 + 369 pp., illus.

The reviewer first acquaints the reader with the extraordinary publishing project called *Edice Paměť* [The series Memory], which has not only published a great many remarkable memoirs, mostly by important Czechs in the arts and sciences, but has also inspired them. In the two volumes of his memoirs, Ivan Klíma (b. 1931) provides a vivid account of his life as a Jewish boy deported to a concentration camp, an enthusiast young builder of socialism, an intellectual reformist in the 1960s, and a dissident writer in the subsequent twenty years. According to the reviewer, Klíma's memoirs are chiefly a unique testimony about life under two totalitarian regimes of the twentieth century. The strongest parts of the memoirs are Klíma's accounts of his own life rather than his lengthy essayistic digressions.

**Ideological Literature in Non-Ideological Perspective**
***The First Modern History of Czech Literature of the Socialist Era Comes Out Twenty Years after 1989***

Alessandro Catalano

Janoušek, Pavel et al. *Dějiny české literatury 1945–1989* [A History of Czech Literature 1945-1989]: vol. 1, *1945–1948*; vol. 2: *1948–1958.* Praha: Academia, 2007.

This thorough review is mostly concerned with the first two volumes of the four-volume history of Czech literature in the years 1945–85, which was published in 2007 and 2008. The history is the culmination of a ten-year project at the Institute of Czech Literature, Prague, in which more than fifty authors took part, led by the director of the Institute, Pavel Janoušek. As the reviewer notes, in this collective work of 2,500 pages the ups and downs of Czech literature from the end of the Second World War to the collapse of Communism are systematically, comprehensively, and non-ideologically dealt with for the first time. The result is a fundamental work on the topic, and is a convincing response to recent debates in Czech literary studies, in which the very possibility of writing a history of literature today has been problematised. It is also a challenge to those who would come up with alternative conceptions. The reviewer praises the great reliability of the facts presented in this work and also, despite certain pitfalls, their maximally neutral and dispassionate presentation. He also stresses the high quality and suitable length of the sections devoted to the broader social and cultural-political context of literature in the years of its mass ideologisation. He points as well to the useful summary of genres on the boundary of literature included in this history, and argues that some of the published criticisms of this publication are unfair.

**A British View of the Czech Right**

Adéla Gjuričová

Hanley, Seán. *The New Right in the New Europe: Czech Transformation and Right-Wing Politics, 1989–2006*. London and New York: Routledge, 2008, xiv + 276 pp.

This work by a political scientist is, according to the reviewer, in many respects the best book to have been written on the development of Czech right-wing politics since it emerged at the beginning of the 1990s. The author shows himself to be well informed about the Czech political environment, with a remarkable knowledge of the literature. He successfully pokes holes in some Western theoretical models of the post-Communist transformation, and offers his own well-considered, sometimes surprising, interpretation.

# Authors

**Jan Bečka** (1981) is the deputy head of the Department of International Cooperation at the Ministry of Defence of the Czech Republic, and he also lectures at the Department of American Studies in the Institute of International Studies at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University, Prague. His chief research interests are American foreign policy (particularly towards Asia) after the Second World War, the Cold War in Asia, and contemporary political, economic, and social developments in Southeast Asia.

**Alessandro Catalano** (1970) graduated with a degree in Czech Studies from Sapienza University, Rome. He lectured on Czech literature at Florence and Pisa, and is now Professor of Czech Literature at Padua. His chief areas of research are early modern Czech history, Czech-Italian relations, and modern Czech literature. He has also translated works from Czech, for example, by Bohumil Hrabal, Jiří Kolář, Vítězslav Nezval, and Michal Viewegh. Together with Simone Guagnelli, he edits the internet journal *eSamizdat*. His publications include *Sole rosso su Praga: La letteratura ceca tra socialismo e underground (1945–1959)* (Rome, 2004; in Czech: *Rudá záře nad literaturou*, Brno, 2009) and *La Boemia e la riconquista delle coscienze: Ernst Adalbert von Harrach e la Controriforma in Europa centrale (1620–1667)* (Rome, 2005; in Czech: *Zápas o svědomí*, Prague, 2008).

**Martin Franc** (1973) is a senior research fellow at the Masaryk Institute and Archive, Prague, as well as at the Institute for Contemporary History of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic in Prague. His main scholarly interests are the cultural history of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, particularly the history of dining and consuming, the history of "lifestyles" after 1945 and the history of science and scientific institutions. Apart from a number of articles, his publications include *Řasy, nebo knedlíky? Postoje odborníků na výživu k inovacím a tradicím v české stravě v 50. a 60. letech 20. století* [Algae, or Dumplings? Attitudes of nutrition experts on traditions and innovation in nutrition in the Czech lands in the 1950s and 1960s]

(Prague, 2003) and *Ivan Málek a vědní politika 1952–1989 aneb Jediný opravdový komunista?* [Ivan Málek and Scientific Policy 1952-1988 or The Only True Communist?] (Prague, 2010). Together with Jiří Knapík, he published the two-volume *Průvodce kulturním děním a životním stylem v českých zemích 1948–1967* [Guidebook to cultural development and lifestyle in the Czech lands in 1948–1967] (Prague, 2011), and the monograph *Volný čas v českých zemích 1957–1967* [Leisure time in the Czech Lands, 1953–1967] (Prague, 2013). He also co-authored the monograph *Dějiny Ústavu organické chemie a biochemie AV ČR* [History of the Institute of Organic Chemistry and Biochemistry of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic] (Prague, 2013).

**Adéla Gjuričová** (1971) is a senior research fellow at the Institute for Contemporary History, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, in Prague. Her primary academic interest is the changes in the ideological discourse of the Czech right-wing from late 1989 onwards. She heads a working group researching Czechoslovak parliamentarism in the period of the post-Communist transformation. Together with Jaroslav Cuhra, Jiří Ellinger, and Vít Smetana, she is the co-author of the fourth volume of *České země v evropských dějinách* [Czech Lands in European history] (Prague and Litomyšl, 2006), a textbook covering the period 1918–2004, and, together with Michal Kopeček, Petr Roubal, Jiří Suk, and Tomáš Zahradníček, she is a co-author of the monograph *Rozděleni minulostí: Vytváření politických identit v České republice po roce 1989* [Divided by the past. Formation of political identities in the Czech Republic after 1989] (Prague, 2011).

**Přemysl Houda** (1981) is a historian and political scientist. He lectures on contemporary Czech history at the Faculty of International Studies at the University of Economics and the Faculty of Humanities at Charles University, Prague. His chief research area is culture, both alternative and sanctioned, in Communist Czechoslovakia. He is the author of *Šafrán: Kniha o sdružení písničkářů* [Šafrán: A book about an association of singer-songwriters] (Prague, 2008) and the textbook *Československo v proměnách komunistického režimu* [Czechoslovakia in the changes of the Communist regime] (with Jan Rataj; Prague, 2010).

**Karel Hrubý** (1923), a former political prisoner, is a sociologist. Since 1968 he has lived in Basle. In 1983–91 he was Editor-in-Chief of *Proměny*, the arts and politics quarterly of the Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences, published in New York. He was a leading member of the Czech Social Democrats in exile and their last chairman from 1989 to 1993. He is interested primarily in the sociology of changing political systems in the Hussite period and the present day. He is the co-editor of many essay volumes, including, with Milíč Čapek, *T. G. Masaryk in Perspective: Comments and Criticism* (Ann Arbor, 1981).

**Petr Kaplan** (1985) has graduated in Security Studies from the Institute of International Studies at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University, in Prague. His

chief research interest is the foreign policy and security policy of the German Federal Republic.

**Jiří Knapík** (1975) is the head of the Institute of Historical Sciences, Silesian University in Opava. The focus of his research is policy on the arts in Czechoslovakia after 1945, about which he has published a biography *Kdo spoutal naši kulturu: Portrét stalinisty Gustava Bareše* [Who tied our culture: A portrait of the Stalinist Gustav Bareš] (Přerov, 2000), a dictionary *Kdo byl kdo v naší kulturní politice 1948–1953* [Who was who in our cultural policy 1948–1953] (Prague, 2002), and two monographs: *Únor a kultura: Sovětizace české kultury 1948–1950* [February and culture: The Sovietisation of the Czech culture, 1948–1950] (Prague, 2004) and *V zajetí moci: Kulturní politika, její systém a aktéři 1948–1956* [In bondage of power: Cultural policy, its system and actors] (Prague, 2004). He has also published on twentieth-century Silesia, *Slezský studijní ústav v Opavě 1945–1948* (Prague, 2004) and, with Jaromíra Knapíková, *"Slezský konzulát" v Praze: Od Slezanu ke Slezskému kulturnímu ústavu 1906–1945* [The "Silesian consulate" in Prague: From Slezan (The Silesian) to the Silesian cultural institute, 1906–1945] (Opava, 2010). Together with Martin Franc, he published the two-volume *Průvodce kulturním děním a životním stylem v českých zemích 1948–1967* [Guidebook to cultural development and lifestyle in the Czech lands in 1948–1967] (Prague, 2011), and the monograph *Volný čas v českých zemích 1957–1967* [Leisure time in the Czech Lands 1953–1967] (Prague, 2013).

**Stanislav Kokoška** (1959) is a senior research fellow in the Institute for Contemporary History, Prague. He also works in the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes. His principal areas of research are the home resistance, the liberation of the Bohemian Lands in spring 1945, and the history of intelligence services. Among his recent publications is *Praha v květnu 1945: Historie jednoho povstání* [Prague in May 1945: The history of an uprising] (Prague, 2005), which was also published in German as *Prag im Mai 1945: Die Geschichte eines Aufstandes* (Göttingen, 2009).

**Michal Kopeček** (1974) is a senior research fellow at the Institute for Contemporary History, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, in Prague where he heads the department for research of the period after 1989. He is also a lecturer in the Institute of Czech History at the Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague. His central research interest is the comparative history of political and social ideas in the countries of twentieth-century central Europe, the history and theory of historiography, the democratic transformation of post-socialist society, and political memory. In addition to numerous articles, he is the author of *Hledání ztraceného smyslu revoluce: Zrod a počátky marxistického revizionismu ve střední Evropě 1953–1960* [In search of a lost meaning of revolution. The birth and beginnings of Marxist revisionism in Central Europe, 1953–1960] (Prague, 2009), a co-author, together with Adéla Gjuričová, Petr Roubal, Jiří Suk, and Tomáš Zahradníček, of the monograph *Rozděleni minulostí: Vytváření politických identit v České republice po roce 1989* [Divided by the past. Formation of political identities in the Czech Republic after 1989] (Prague, 2011) and a co-editor, together with Zdeněk Kárník, of the five-

volume *Bolševismus, komunismus a radikální socialismus v Československu* [Bolshevism, Communism and Radial Socialism in Czechoslovakia] (Prague, 2003–05).

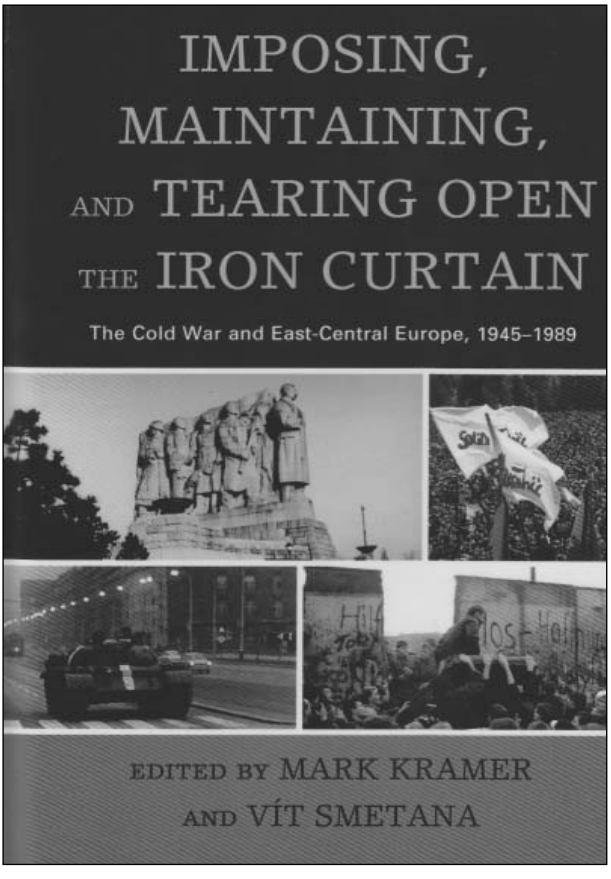
**Doubravka Olšáková** (1977) is a researcher at the Institute for Contemporary History, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, and a lecturer at the University of Jan Evangelista Purkyně in Ústí nad Labem. She obtained her PhD. at the University of Paris-Sorbonne and Charles University in Prague. In collaboration with other Czech historians and philosophers, she published books on Czech-French relations: *Ernest Denis: Život a dílo* [Ernest Denis: Life and work] (Prague, 2003); *Leo Thun a Alexis de Tocqueville: Korespondence 1836–1856* (Prague, 2012). She also co-edited books on Czech historiography after 1948–1989: *Husitský Tábor: Sborník Husitského muzea* [The Hussite Tábor: Collection of essays by the Hussite museum] (Ústí nad Labem, 2004); *Niky české historiografie: Uherskobrodská sympozia J. A. Komenského v ofenzivě (1971–1989)* ["Nikas" of the Czech historiography: Comenius symposiums in Uherský Brod] (Červený Kostelec, 2012). Her current research project deals with the problem of "sovietization" of Academies of sciences in East-Central Europe (Czechoslovakia, GDR and Poland). Together with Markéta Devátá, she participated in a project that resulted in a publication *Vědní koncepce KSČ a její institucionalizace po roce 1948* [Science policy of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia after 1948: institutional history] (Prague, 2010).

**Vilém Prečan** (1933) is a Professor of History. Till 1970, he was employed in the Historical Institute of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences. In 1978 he defected to Germany, where he founded the Czechoslovak Documentation Centre for Independent Literature. After returning to his native land in 1990, he founded the Institute for Contemporary History at the Academy of Sciences, and was its director until 1998. At present he is Chairman of the Board of the Czechoslovak Documentation Centre. His chief academic interest is Czechoslovak history in the European context, from the Munich crisis of 1938 to the present days, particularly the Slovak National Uprising in 1944, Czechoslovak relations with the Great Powers and Czechoslovak Communist Party politics from 1945 onward, Czechoslovak dissidents in the 1970s and 1980s and the postwar exiles. Among his publications are *V kradeném čase: Výběr ze studií, článků a úvah z let 1973–1993* [In the stolen time: Selection of studies, articles and reflections from the years 1973–1993] (Prague, 1994) and a number of editions of documents, including *Slovenské národné povstanie* [Slovak National Uprising] (Prague, 1966), the complete documents of Charter 77, in three volumes, *Charta 77: Dokumenty 1977–1989* (together with Blanka Císařovská, Prague, 2007), *Prague – Washington – Prague: reports from the United States Embassy in Czechoslovakia, November – December 1989* (Prague, 2004), *Hluboká stopa: Nezávislá revue Skutečnost 1949–1953* [A lasting impression: The independent periodical Skutečnost (Reality) 1949–1953] (Prague, 2008) or *Ke svobodě přes Prahu: exodus občanů NDR na podzim 1989 – sborník dokumentů* [Towards freedom through Prague: The exodus of the GDR's citizens in the autumn of 1989 – a collection of documents] (Prague, 2009).

**Francis D. Raška** (1971) is an Associate Professor in the Department of American Studies of the Institute of International Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University, Prague. He also teaches at Anglo-American University in Prague. Raška's research interests include Czechoslovak exiles in North America and Western Europe, American immigration policy, American national security policy during and after the Cold War, and various forms of dissent in the United States during the Cold War. He has published the following monographs: *The Czechoslovak Exile Government in London and the Sudeten German Issue* (Prague, 2002), *Fighting Communism from Afar: The Council of Free Czechoslovakia* (New York, 2008), and *The Long Road to Victory: A History of Czechoslovak Exile Organizations* (New York, 2012).

**Vít Smetana** (1973) is a senior research fellow at the Institute for Contemporary History, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, and teaches modern international history at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University in Prague. His areas of expertise include the history of international relations during the Second World War and the first phase of the Cold War, particularly the international role of Czechoslovakia in this period. In addition to numerous articles, he is the author of *In the Shadow of Munich: British Policy towards Czechoslovakia from the Endorsement to the Renunciation of the Munich Agreement (1938–1942)* (Prague, 2008), together with Jaroslav Cuhra, Jiří Ellinger, and Adéla Gjuričová, he is the co-author of the fourth volume of *České země v evropských dějinách* [Czech Lands in European history] (Prague and Litomyšl, 2006), and, with Jaroslav Hrbek, he is the main co-author of the two-volume *Draze zaplacená svoboda: Osvobození Československa 1944–1945* [Dearly paid freedom: The liberation of Czechoslovakia 1944–1945] (Prague, 2009). Together with Mark Kramer, he edited the book *Imposing, Maintaining, and Tearing Open the Iron Curtain. The Cold War and East-Central Europe, 1945–1989* (Lanham – New York – Plymouth, 2014).

**Dalibor Vácha** (1980) has obtained his PhD. at the Institute of History, part of the Faculty of Arts, the University of South Bohemia, České Budějovice, and he currently teaches at two schools in that city. His chief research interests are the history of everyday life, the history of the mentalities of Czechoslovak legionaries in Russia, and the history of comic books.



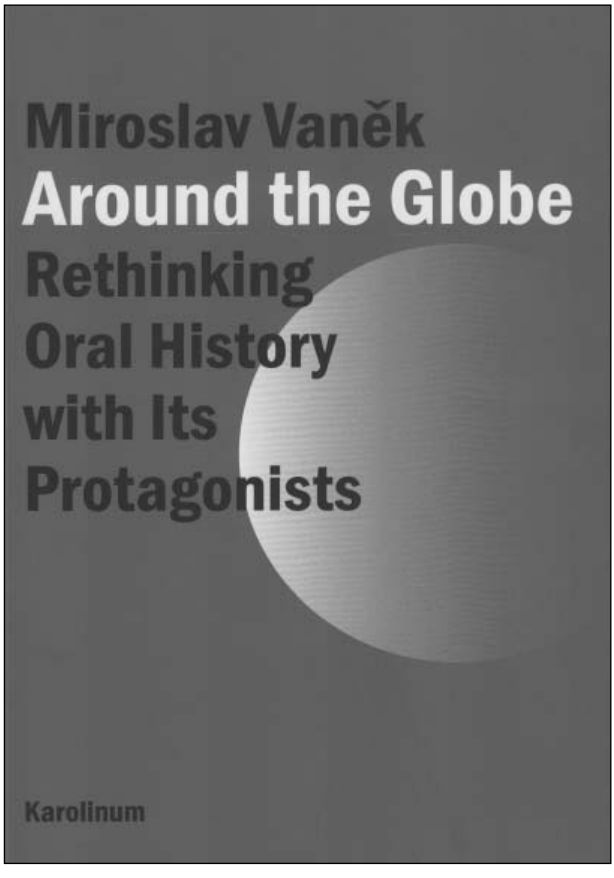

**Mark Kramer – Vít Smetana (ed.):** ***Imposing, Maintaining, and Tearing Open the Iron Curtain. The Cold War and East-Central Europe, 1945–1989*****. Lanham – Boulder – New York – Toronto – Plymouth (UK), Lexington Books 2014.**

This book consists of cutting-edge essays by distinguished experts who discuss the Cold War in Europe from beginning to end, with a particular focus on the countries that were behind the "Iron Curtain". The contributors take account of structural conditions that helped generate the Cold War schism in Europe, but they also ascribe agency to local actors as well as to superpowers. The chapters dealing with the end of the Cold War in Europe explain not only why it ended but also why the events leading to that outcome occurred almost entirely peacefully.

**Contributors:** Oliver Bange, Csaba Békés, Thomas Blanton, László Borhi, Anne Deighton, Hope M. Harrison, James G. Hershberg, David Holloway, Michael F. Hopkins, Mark Kramer, Richard Ned Lebow, Silvio Pons, Alex Pravda, Peter Ruggenthaler, Svetlana Savranskaya, Bernd Schaefer, Rolf Steininger, Vít Smetana, Georges-Henri Soutou, Soňa Szomolányi, and Oldřich Tůma.


**Kateřina Čapková: *Czechs, Germans, Jews? National Identity and the Jews of Bohemia*. Translated by Derek and Marzia Paton, New York – Oxford, Berghahn Books 2012.**

The phenomenon of national identities, always a key issue in the modern history of Bohemian Jewry, was particularly complex because of the marginal differences that existed between the available choices. Considerable overlap was evident in the programs of the various national movements and it was possible to change one's national identity or even to opt for more than one such identity without necessarily experiencing any far-reaching consequences in everyday life. Based on many hitherto unknown archival sources from the Czech Republic, Israel and Austria, the author's research reveals the inner dynamic of each of the national movements and maps out the three most important constructions of national identity within Bohemian Jewry – the German-Jewish, the Czech-Jewish and the Zionist. This book provides a needed framework for understanding the rich history of German- and Czech-Jewish politics and culture in Bohemia and is a notable contribution to the historiography of Bohemian, Czechoslovak and central European Jewry.




**Miroslav Vaněk:** ***Around the Globe. Rethinking Oral History with Its Protagonists.*** **Translated by Daniel Morgan, Prague, Charles University – Karolinum Press 2013.**

In this important work Miroslav Vaněk interviews thirteen experts on oral history to discuss the current status of this medium within the social sciences in light of recent breakthroughs in technology. *Around the Globe* addresses many of the challenges of oral history, from its inherent subjectivity to whether it should be treated as a discipline or simply a method for research. The interviewees also include their own accounts of how they began to study oral history, giving each section of the book a personal element that makes it a unique handbook for anyone using oral history in their research.

**Czech Journal of Contemporary History**
**Guidelines for Contributors**

1. The articles published in the journal vary somewhat in length. Typically, they have approximately 30 pages[1]; they should not be shorter than 10 pages and longer than 50 pages. The reviews should be 4–10 pages long, although in exceptional cases longer reviews would be accepted as well. Annotations are normally 1–2 pages long. No specific restrictions are placed on contributions intended for *Prague Chronicle*.
2. The fee paid to authors is in general between 200 and 300 CZK (depending on the quality of the contribution) per printed page[2] for the articles; 300 CZK per printed page for the reviews. For the fees to be processed and paid, we need the following information: permanent address of the author, date of birth (personal identification number for the Czech and Slovak authors) and bank account number.
3. Please send the manuscripts in electronic form to the email address smetana@usd.cas.cz.
4. If at all possible, please use footnotes rather than endnotes.
5. When quoting from an archival collection, please use the following form of reference: the name and location of the archive [if quoting from the same source repeatedly, the abbreviation commonly used for the archive is sufficient], name and signature of the fund [collection], document number, name and/or description.
6. When quoting from publications, please use the following form of reference: **Monograph:** Name of the author [in this order: SURNAME /in capital letters/, given name /initial(s) only if quoted more than once/] – co-authors [following the same pattern]: *Title: Subtitle* [in italics]. Place of publication, publisher year of publication, page(s) quoted [if applicable]. **Paper published in a volume of proceedings:** Author/authors of the paper [written as above]: Title: Subtitle. In: Editor of the volume [similar as for the author of monograph] (ed.): *Title: Subtitle of the volume*. Place of publication, publisher year of publication, pagination, page quoted. **Article in a journal:** Author of the article [written as above]: Title: Subtitle. In: *Name of the journal*, volume, number (year), pagination, page quoted. **Article in a newspaper/magazine:** Author of the article [written as above]: Title: Subtitle. In: *Name of the newspaper/magazine*, date of issue, pagination, page quoted.
7. Please enclose a summary of 15–30 lines in length together with your article.
8. For reviews, please include information about the author(s) [translator(s), editor(s), author(s) of preface and afterword, illustrator(s)] of the publication under review and other publication data [publisher, edition/series, indexes, bibliographies etc.].
9. In the short information about yourself as an author, please include the following: year of birth and a brief summary of your scholarly activities [current position, areas of specialization, your key published works with the place and year of publication].
10. The authors of texts published in the *Czech Journal of Contemporary History* are entitled to receive a complimentary copy (two copies in case they have published an article) of the relevant issue of the journal. The complimentary copy will either be sent by mail or can be picked up in the editorial office of the journal.

1 In this context, the standardized page numbers 1 800 characters including spaces.

2 Two printed pages are usually equal to three pages as defined in footnote 1.

ÚSD