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Traditions and Present Problems of Czech Political Culture

Czech Philosophical Studies, I

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Preface

George F. McLean

This book is a good place to begin for anyone interested in the rebuilding of Central and Eastern Europe after forty years (seventy years for the states of the former Soviet Union) of Marxism as the official philosophy. For many it will be a surprising book.

It does not contain a blueprint for the future; such would be immediately suspect after the dark 20th century experiences with utopia. Neither does it contain a round condemnation of the Marxist past.

Instead, it does three very important things--not completely, but exceptionally and well. First, it enables one to see Marxism, not merely as an external imposition, but as a personal and social engagement by many in the past. Second, it illustrates how Marxism continues to have impact in shaping the mode of thinking of many--even among present authors who would criticize its effects--and points thoughtfully to important social concerns which continue to shape the electoral map of Central and Eastern Europe. Finally, the volume takes the reader to the root vision which shaped the Charta 77 movement, while at the same time illustrating the difficulties of translating that into effective political practice.

Part I begins with a most unlikely theme, namely, the history of anarchism as the supreme individualism. A history of the broader socialist movement in Czechoslovakia would, of course, be interesting, but this is well known and this history of the anarchists serves present purposes surprisingly well. What makes Professor Tomek's study so important is that he shows in detail the complex steps by which even a group so antithetic to collectivism could come over time to support the introduction of the Marxist regime at the end of the second World War. It is a long history, marked by engagements with trade unions and socialists, the development of a party and finally adherence to The Party. It illustrates one of the paths by which Marxism gathered sufficient adherents before and at the end of the second World War so that the history of the last forty years was not a merely foreign affair in which Czechs were but manipulated objects. Václav Havel has advocated wisely that Czechs (and all) must assume their degree of responsibility for the past, for only then does their recent history become a human affair and enable them to take up the real challenge of building their future.

The following two chapters add important facts to the history of the Czech engagement in Marxism. Chapter II reflects Marx's influence upon what is termed the young "searching" or socially committed generation of the late 40s and their subsequent history. Professor Slejska provides extremely important statistical results of sociological inquiries over this entire period. These bring out the important role of the views of those who were young and idealistic at the end of the second World War, describing the broad euphoria with which Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria, in contrast to Hungary and Poland, turned toward Marxism in the decade following 1945. This included a search for a philosophy which emphasized values and had social or collective concerns; in time these preoccupations would provide the basis for a long and painful corrective process. The strong social orientation complements the individualist orientation of the anarchists described in Chapter I. Nevertheless, both chapters illustrate the compromises into which philosophers are drawn when their initial horizon is not adequate to integrate both the community and its individual participants--in this they echo the classical philosophical problem of the one and the many.

Chapter III by Professor Bystrický describes brilliantly the mechanics of public life in a spiritual void. Fear generated a process of hiding reality in the past. This, in turn, was ideologized and made the possession of those who ruled and for whose sole benefit all decisions were made. What is perhaps most surprising is that, looking toward the future, no alternative system is envisaged or called for, but only that any new system reduce the responsibility of decision-makers lest the cycle of fear, suppression, ideologization and privilege by a faceless bureaucracy be repeated. But was not the reduction of responsibility the key dynamic of the nightmare Bystrický describes so well--and which Professor Herzogova will trace to the spiritual void which evoked the velvet revolution. Thus, Part I points, to the radical infeasibility of turning back.

Professor Herzogová moves the search for the origin of the contemporary problematic a step further by arguing that, in terms, e.g., of the level of material goods or of the number of political prisoners, the situation in the late 80s was not so bad as to explain the level of dissatisfaction. Indeed, she cites statistics from early ‘89 which do not reflect general interest in greater freedom. Of course, the fact that freedom had been so long denied might well have made such a preference at that time seem less realistic; Professor Slejska described this as a resignation, rather than a saturation type of devaluation. The failure of the surface polling data he cited from as late as 1988 and 1989 to indicate the vast pool of value commitment about to be unleashed suggests that the real dynamics must be sought at the spiritual and moral level studied below in Part III.

Professor Herzogová points in this direction in situating the reason for the present problematic in a void of spiritual values. She recognizes the value context of the younger Marx (as Professor Slejska had for the "searching" generation), but sees this as having been compromised in his collaboration with Engels, and especially in subsequent practice, up to the point of constituting a painful void in recent society.

The last half of this same chapter begins to assess the possibilities for future Euro-political development. Here, anomalies appear, such as materialist theory being considered to imply personal dependency, whereas the non-materialist options generate material dependency. This again suggests that the question needs to be rethought on the basis, not of the quantity of freedom made possible by a certain quantity of goods, but of the quality of freedom in interpersonal, social relations.

The need for a new basis continues to emerge in the following chapter which analyzes future possibilities. There Velek recalls the reading of November ‘89 as a restoration of Leninism, a view already abandoned at the time by the proponents of *perestroika*. Like the preceding chapter, it continues to read the egalitarian and material security concerns of the 40s as most fundamental, while considering the November ‘89 concerns as unrealistic and ephemeral, as rhetoric and nothing more.

But there may be more in the recognition in these chapters that it is now impossible to go back. The reason is not the difficulty of changing the rhetoric, but the fact that there simply was nothing there, that it had become a spiritual void, as Professor Herzogova noted. This, in turn, implied a lack of the creativity required to generate a basis for the material security for which people earlier had turned to extreme egalitarian approaches. Electoral results in Eastern Europe since 1992 suggest that this concern for security in the chapters of Professor Herzogová and Velek are important reflections of the deep concerns of large numbers of people, that the change in thinking is by no means simple and un-directional, and that these concerns require attention and considerate response if the further dimensions of the human spirit are to be realized. In this light Professor Velek’s contrast of the neo-conservative and the social democratic paths, each with its

special requirements and difficulties at this juncture, shed important light on proximate options and their implications.

Part III is an exploration of this deeper, more spiritual dimension. The chapter of M. Bednár on "The Character of the 1989 Revolution in East-Central Europe and Czech Political Traditions" reflects the new spirit unleashed in the past by the Prague Spring of ‘68 and Charta ‘77. It suggests, not merely disillusionment with the past strongly hierarchic, deductive and oppressive rationalist movements from top down, but follows the emergence of the contrasting model of liberal organizations through free groupings of citizens in their various professional or civic interaction. This renewal or--after centuries of empires--this re-creation of a civic society was reflected well in the name "Civic Forum". M. Bednár reflects the great hope that this creative expression of free citizenship can point the way to a new era in which freedom might replace power as the stuff of public life.

Bednár turns also to the international level, for the term "forum" was adopted intentionally in order to reflect a whole pattern of similarly named movements in East-Central Europe which were brokering a move from totalitarianism. This he traces to the shift from confrontations between powers to the signing of documents on human rights. This done the situation changed radically from power to morality.

This is precisely the focus of M. Bednár in the present and the following chapters which trace the shift back to Patocka’s phenomenological foundation of Charta 77, to Herzogová’s critique of utilitarianism in favor of an ethical religious foundation of politics, to the significance of the Reformation over the French Revolution, and seminally to Plato who founded upon the perfection of the soul the classical view of the polis.

Bednár considers this Greek foundation to have been, not substituted by the Judeo-Christian tradition, but enriched thereby. Together both exalted the view of man as image of a God who both as triune was Unity, Truth and Love Itself, and as three persons lived these as an originating community. Masaryk saw the importance of this for philosophy, but saw as well how this was lived in society through religion. In this he placed his hopes for the transformation of Europe. Bednár shows how his vision was delayed, but not thwarted, by the totalitarianism of Fascism and Communism, its forceful phenomenological articulation by Patocka founded Charta 77, which ultimately brought this vision to fruition in ‘89.

Here lie the rich and profound sources of the Czech spirit which can add much to the political life of Europe for the future. At present, however, they open many issues which must be confronted, and by which the genius of the Czech people is strongly challenged.

This is reflected in the concluding two chapters. The first on the Czech national character by Radim Bures notes the negative side of what Bednár has praised, for if history is seen as the inevitable unfolding of a given truth it could generate passivity. This, in turn, gives birth to a destructive criticism of any initial realizations which come to be seen, not as amazing achievements by limited humans struggling against massive forces, but as defective realizations of a transcendent ideal. Positively, however, this vision also can stand against violence and give birth to hope and inventiveness. The success of this generation will lie in its ability to take this latter road.

Vejrazka looks more closely into this course of creativity by focusing on its artistic dimension, the way in which it was suppressed under utilitarian categories and how it reemerged. As to its future he looks not to a central power or even a "common sense" which would exclude, but to an expression of popular taste which would affirm new and multiple approaches. Whether these will

reflect a distinctive Czech content or would enter simply into the mainstream of Western Europe he does not predict. In any case the approach he suggests will be deeply Czech in the tradition of Patroka and Masaryk and broadly human within the heritage of Plato. How, in fact, this will be realized in the future is not clear from this volume. Indeed, the lesson of this century is that, if philosophy is to respect and promote human freedom it must not attempt to foresee or to determine the decisions of a free people. Nevertheless, it can do much that is the highest importance for the human project. It can identify the material needs of human society, the relations of the exercise of human freedom to productive relationships, and the perdurance of material concerns for employment. After the failure of earlier attempts to organize everything in a too simplistic response to material needs, it must not only reaffirm the importance of caring for these needs in the future, but articulate more effectively the multiple human dimensions involved in such a project. The authors of Part I of this volume have done an outstanding job of bringing these past and future material concerns to the fore.

As can be seen from Part III, philosophy must unveil also the further spiritual levels of human life and meaning where truth lies and which human dignity reflects. This is a special strength of the Czech national heritage of Masaryk and Patocka, as it is of all who would look to Western philosophy in Whitehead's terms as a series of footnotes to Plato.

How the burden of parts II and III of this volume will come together in the future will be the work of freedom by which the Czech people carries forward its tradition. To avoid a repetition of the road XXXX in Part I leading from anarchism to totalitarianism, Czech political philosophy must draw upon its past, transforming it in response to present needs, and thereby constructing its future. To this work the present volume--and hopefully others to follow--is a crucial contribution.

Introduction

Miloslav Bednár

The present volume provides instructive evidence of the present situation in the field of philosophical and social research in post totalitarian circumstances the authors are in Prague at the Institutes of Philosophy and of Sociology at the Czech Academy of Sciences (CAS) and at the Philosophical Faculty of Charles University. The following major elements constitute the three parts of this volumes:

(a) an analysis of problems of power and freedom, in the earlier totalitarian context;
(b) the socialist project for human welfare; and
(c) the spiritual ethical foundations of the East-Central European revolutions of ‘89, its meaning for the future.

Part I begins with Václav Tomek’s examination of the tradition of the Czech anarchist movement in its historical development towards the end of l9th century and the eve of our time. Resembling the anarchist attitudes in other European countries at the time, the movement did not tie its anti-authoritative, anti-statist declarations and activities to any defined organizational form, hierarchy or discipline. In this way anarchism generated immediate, unhampered revolutionary terrorism by individuals and groups who were against any authority.

Such individualism as a principle of emancipative efforts was motivated by a notion of "free society" and "free individuals". It was a consequence of the idea of "human self-determination" in a society of free individuals not directed by interests of state, class or party. It set individuals against all centralization of political, social and spiritual life, i.e. against any "despotism whatsoever". The prior condition for this kind of political thinking was an essential anti-traditionalism. Its spiritual consequence implied a refutation of all ethical and philosophical systems and concepts. The exclusive philosophic standpoint of anarchism was therefore the absolute primacy of individualism in morals and philosophy.

The final outcome of Czech anarchism spelled an apparent logical paradox. It underwent a self-correction of its ideas so profound as to mean a denial of its own identity as the outstanding representatives of Czech anarchism became authoritative supporters of Leninist Marxism and totalitarian movement of communism.

The second paper, by Dragoslav Slejska, attempts to describe the development of a mutual relationship between the values of freedom and power in the Czechoslovak Society. The author draws upon the results of sociological research in order to arrive at more general conclusions.

The obvious readiness of Czechoslovak citizens in the 1989 revolution to take part in politics, i.e., in activities involving political power, appears strongly dependent upon the new possibilities of freedom of speech and behavior. The stronger the emphasis placed by a citizen on his own personal freedom, the greater the search for a personal share in political power.

This was a considerable step for many supporters of communism, including many intellectuals. They had not acknowledged that their work was instrumental in supporting the monopoly of power, radical suppression and considerable economic exploitation--in some countries more barbarian, and in others somewhat more "civilized". This kind of value blindness was fateful for the generation in Czechoslovakia toward the end of World War II.

Nevertheless, this generation of fanatic young communists is well characterized being in search of value orientation. Thus, the entire process of the constitution of communist totalitarianism in Czechoslovakia proved that there is no more absurd historical situation than the one in which violent power defines values and *eo ipso* annihilates freedom.

Finally, the author criticizes emphatically the economic reform in Czechoslovakia after '89 for being too liberal, and without the social security measures guaranteed in a number of countries with a prevailing capitalist economy. Here the latest research results show that the value structure of the Czechoslovak public tends towards a combination of personal freedom, group tolerance and social security.

Jirí Bystrický examines the problem of decision-making in a decentralized society. The decades of the past political system created conditions for the origin of a social phenomenon called the system of participation networks. This developed into an elaborate advantage offer distribution system. Those participating in such networks used them to bring into harmony their priority interests, including their personal advantages gained from these networks. Gradually, there developed into a machinery of administration which strengthened their power and provided for their security.

He maintains that the communist system created such sufficiently strong sanctions that erroneous decisions brought about a loss of advantageous position in the political power system. This led to a paralysis of decision-making. Hence for the contemporary decision-makers, Bystrický maintains that a change in the rules of the game is required to allow for more cooperate decision-making that reduces personal responsibility and hence fear of possible mistakes.

In the Part II the paper of Zuzana Herzogová defends the Marxian philosophy of history, stripping it of its Leninist interpretation. The present collapse of Marxism is, in the view of the author, not so much a collapse of Marxian philosophy as a collapse of the notion that it is a prophetic revelation of truth about the human future. The fall of socialism returns Marx to his appropriate position in the history of philosophy, namely, to the 19th century.

The meaning of the upheaval which occurred in Eastern Europe in the latter half of 80's consisted in the liquidation of a social system which reduced human freedom to a point at which human life ceased to be one of choice and decision-making, but where, on the contrary, the total disposal of one's life was carried out independently of the person's will or desires.

The people of Czechoslovakia in November-December 1989 rose up in the elementary hope of once again becoming free masters of their own abilities and possibilities. The long absence of any liberty was followed rather by an illusion of unlimited freedom than by a sense of the real possibilities and limits of a free life in a given concrete historic environment.

The chapter concludes with a critique of capitalism in Czechoslovakia as based on the unfounded belief that during the transition period people will be willing to make the necessity material sacrifice.

This is echoed in the paper of Josef Velek which examines the 1989 revolution from a social democratic point of view. The final breakdown of real socialism may put an end to the specifically communist critique of pluralist democracy and of capitalist market economics, but it does not allay the deep concern of people for a broad range of securities in changing times.

The present situation of European nations in the former Soviet Bloc is marked by the fact that while the civil society is becoming emancipated, the legitimacy of the democratic system of government is threatened. Its duty consists in simultaneously guaranteeing political freedom and, creating conditions favorable for social welfare. This is threatened mainly because the balance

between the socio-economic, political and cultural transformation of Czech society remains fragile. The precondition of a transition period from the closed to the open society is the consensus of a differentiated civil society which legitimizes the progress and results of a socio-economic transformation of society.

It seems now that at least in the Czech Republic a liberal-neoconservativist and a socialist-reformist projects of transition from a closed to an open society can be distinguished. What underlies these different projects are different concepts of the meaning of the emancipation-enlightenment of modern society which is to be sought following the breakdown of real socialism. Velek sees the legitimacy of the liberal-neoconservativist project as being compromised by the fact that there is *no homogeneous socio-economic subject* within the existing socio-economic structure of society whose immediate interests would be achieved by this project.

On the other hand, social reformism could gain legitimacy, if a developed capitalist market economy, which is now absent were to gain ground. Consequently, during the transition period the social democratic project can rely only on an autonomous political public being capable of critical self-reflection, since only this public can legitimize the transformation from a closed to an open society.

Part III looks more deeply into the current changes in East Central Europe focus on its spiritual, moral and cultural roots. These are identified in the democratic traditions, and as the bases of the democratic resistance and opposition to the communist totalitarian regime before and during the revolution of ‘89.

The chapter of Miloslav Bednár "The Nature of Revolutions in Eastern-Central Europe in 1989 and the Czech Political Tradition" maintains that Masaryk’s concept of democratic politics founded upon morality much influenced the Prague Spring 1968 and the subsequent action of the Czechoslovak democratic opposition. This concept deeply characterized all the East-Central-European revolutions in 1989, except Romania. The long morally and spiritually grounded tradition of Czech political thought was deepened considerably by Jan Patocka’s philosophical foundation for Charter 77. It was a proclamation, and indeed an institution, of a sovereign morality for political and social reality.

The typically non-violent anti-totalitarian revolution of East-European nations had two common denominators; on the one hand, a prevailing non-violence; on the other hand, revolutionary free political associations clearly differing from classical political parties. These were popular institutions of political freedom and power, without party ideology, political guidelines or organizational hierarchy. Their specifically post-totalitarian feature was a healthy distrust of all uniquely correct solutions.

With this kind of moral politics, which is politics par excellence, prevailed over its contradiction, whose essence consisted in the elimination of responsibility for public affairs and of individual moral conscience. Insum, the revolutionary events of 1989 show clearly that revolution is first of all a moral question, one of conscience. The meaning of political revolution is grounded in the transcendental efforts of human beings.

The following paper by the same author presents the philosophies of Thomás Garrigue Masaryk and Jan Patocka from the related point of view of their Platonism. In Masaryk as in Plato, political values are founded on ethical values. The primacy of ethics over politics appears in democratic political institutions. These establish an exterior framework for the exercise of democracy as the meaning of life. Thus, Masaryk developed a philosophico-religious concept of democracy as a focus of political action. From the phenomenological point of view this was a

special kind of inter-subjectivity created by a plurality of individual *Lebenswelts* (life worlds) in terms of their meaning *as seen sub speciae aeternitatis*. Masaryk's unpolitical foundation of politics thus deepened the tradition of Czechoslovak political philosophy. After Masaryk the greatest personality was Jan Patocka whose interpretation of Plato lucidly showed how his concept of care for one's soul is foundational for the rise of Europe.

The late Patocka's philosophical reflections stress the fact that, in contrast, totalitarian regimes represent the predominance of technique. The outstanding human reply to this is a "solidarity of the shaken", of those who are able to say "no" to the measures for mobilizing our technical age according to the manner of Socrates' *daimonion*. In this context Patocka explicitly examines the phenomenon of sacrifice, i.e, the action showing that something prevails over so-called strength, power, etc., and that this is no thing whatsoever. In this respect, Charter 77, as the source of the anticommunist revolution in 1989, was founded by Jan Patocka as a community manifesting that it is not man who arbitrarily determines what morality is, but that morality defines man.

The following chapter by Radim Bures tries to answer the question whether Czechoslovak political development is bound up with the traditional traits of the Czech character. He compares the present political situation with similar turning-points in Czechoslovak history, especially the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic in 1918. The author shows that Czechoslovak political prudence and democratic attitudes do not act independently and in isolation, but are part of a more complex character conceived as a relatively stable *modus operandi* in specific situations. Consequently, this character frequently appears to be contradictory, uncertain and determined by outside influences.

The chapter of Michael Vejrazka compares the problems of Czech artistic culture at present and in the communist period. He sees the contemporary situation as a turning point for art suddenly has been liberated from the ideological supervision of the totalitarian regime and many works of art, prohibited for dozens of years, are now being returned to Czech culture.

During the totalitarian regime an unofficial "shadow" culture in Czechoslovakia developed in various ways outside the borders of the official cultural institutions. This culture took up in the relay-race of the tradition of Czech art. The shadow culture became one of the few factors of real self-identification, particularly for the younger generations who were searching for their own identity. During the 80s, the efforts to create a culture not according to an outer model, but according to inner conviction gradually became pervasive. This was even by means of certain official institutions which somehow managed to avoid the notice of the party bureaucrats. In principle, this culture became a sort of basis for opposition to the totalitarian communist system. It was from among the people working in this culture that the inspiration or support sprang for organizing various acts of protest. It was not by chance then that the artists quickly responded to the students' demonstration against the regime in November 1989, and took a significant part in the following political revolution.

Now, as the toppled totalitarian ideology is being replaced by the dictates of a free market Czech society is not yet prepared and a certain degree of danger is felt from the loss of cultural structure. M. Vejrazka expresses the hope that despite a danger of provincialism, Czech artistic culture will fulfill its traditional role as an environment of national, free self-identification on a qualitatively new level responsive to the requirements of contemporary life.

In sum, and looking towards the future, this volume of the philosophical and social thought regarding the contemporary radical changes in East-Central Europe reflects the present situation of intellectual reflection in the Czech Republic. Till the end of 1989, public adherence to Marxism was a requirement for participation in the academic philosophical sphere; all others were either

officially banned or otherwise excluded. Those hitherto excluded now enter the field long populated by "Marxists" and the new spirit of Czech philosophy, developing the tradition of Thomás G. Masaryk and Jan Patocka, probably will prevail in the long run.

Nevertheless, for now the difficulties of the Czech transition to a full-fledged democracy of its own reflects an important conflict with reformist Marxism. Its social-economic power and the intellectual prestige of its proponents is beyond dispute, the social reformist current has no genuine spiritual or ethical foundation. Hence, a combination of sociological and politological theoretical concerns seem to be the basic frame of reference. More or less unreflected Marxist prejudices create this quasi-philosophical (ideological) foundation, whereas all other factors appear to be tools of persuasion only, not a true *philosophical* standpoint.

Consequently, the crucial mission of philosophy in the contemporary Czech Republic, and perhaps in the entire Central and East-European region consists in a perpetual struggle of philosophical thought and life to combat the form of sophistry now appearing in the guise of neo-Marxist liberalism and postmodernism. The classical philosophical situation emergent in East-Central Europe now seems to require an examination of the problematic intellectual life of Western civilization in this century of technique, totalitarianism, world wars, perils for the whole globe, on the one hand, and of freedom, human rights, dignity, decency and the tradition of justice, on the other.

What the tradition of Greek philosophy can offer the Czech Republic at this juncture is a profound, philosophically ethical sense of community life for those sufficiently shaken by totalitarianism to be able to live as free and responsible individuals in a community of truth and justice with a courageous and brave love.

What proved true in Czechoslovakia to be the nucleus of its democratic revolution against the totalitarian communist regime could be important for the whole area between Germany and Russia. This region is the most pluralistic territory in Europe. This underscores the crucial position and mission of this peculiar zone of minor nations where the borders of states and nations are not as clear as are most in Western Europe.

Looking at the course of world history from the standpoint of the philosophy of history, the dominant moves are discernable. On the one hand, is a bias towards a "world centralization" (F. Palacky), i.e., a drive towards an increasingly intense communication, interrelation and integration of the entire block. On the other hand, there is undoubtedly an opposite but complementary tendency (articulated by Palacky as well), i.e., individualization as a prospective answer to the drift of modern age towards uniformity. The principal tension and conflict in historical development reached its climax in the region of Central European national pluralism between Germany and Russia. Right there, two hot and one cold war had their origin. Consequently the historical necessity of this area is to harmonize the centralizing and individualizing trends of history. Till this objective is achieved, Europe and the whole world will not be peaceful. A solution to these problems of justice depends upon the philosophical foundations engaged. Jan Patocka, founder of Charter 77, stated this conclusion cogently: "It is not a mankind who, following its needs, wishes and biases, arbitrarily defines what is moral, but the moral itself which defines humankind."[1]

Precisely the same is true of nations, states and politics. Were this spiritually moral, philosophically-anchored, principle to be realized in East Central Europe, all of Western civilization would take a decisive step towards truly global awareness and recognition.

[1] J. Patocka, “O povinnosti branit se proti bezpravi,” in *Charta 77, 1977-1989* (Praha, 1990), 32.

Part I
Totalitarism and the Problems of Power and Freedom

Chapter I
Freedom and Its Fate Among Czech Radicals

Václav Tomek

In modern Czech socio-political thinking the radical-anarchist element has been neglected thus far. After it vanished from the socio-political spectrum it did not suit even in retrospect any of the other orientations--including those most politically akin to it. Even less was it considered in the period in which only one socio-political orientation monopolized the socio-political field.

But how did it come about that radical Czech anarchism, from the end of the 19th to the beginning of the 20th century, was included in the scale of socio-political tendencies, then concealed, and finally vanished as a hope for radical emancipation? Are we faced with Orwell's or Bradbury's vision that what is not thought or written down does not exist?

What separates us from the efforts and thoughts of Czech anarchism is not impenetrable. Its ideas, their content and fate, are not merely a document from that stage of development of Czech society but reverberate with the present issue.

The History of the Czech Anarchist Movement in the 19th-20th Centuries

In the material and ideological circumstances of the last third of the 19th century the ideological orientation of anarchism represented a specific intellectual and practical socio-political alternative in the Czech region. Inspired by the idea of radical emancipation, anarchism first arose in the European socialist movement of the 19th century from several representatives (P.J. Proudhom, M. Stirner, M. Bakunin, P. Kropotkin, E. Reclus, E. Malatesta, among others) and became a distinctive social and political alternative within that movement. International cooperation in the International Workers' Association was finally determined by two crystallizing and opposing socio-political movements. These championed the emancipation of man and society: the path to freedom for the individual and the organization of future society, the one anti-authoritative and anarchistic, the other authoritative and Marxist-oriented. The central concept of the freedom of the individual, the social realization of anarchy, and the longed-for absence of authority (*Herrschaftslosigkeit, Abwesenheit von Herrschaft*) were the decisive and differentiating moments for the two alternatives, not only in ideological terms but also in the organizational forms of workers' associations.

In the Czech environment socialist thinking (as opposed to the European workers' movement) developed with a certain time-lag. This idea was formed through experience in the conflict between the authoritative direction of the socialist movement as a political party and the anti-authoritative direction on the basis of a trade union movement. It was not a finished, crystallized ideology, but rather was formed through a process of ideological identification and self-reflection.

The Polarization of the Radical Alternative on the Social Question

The first signs of Czech anarchist tendencies are found in the 1880s when socialist workers' movements were without a complete anarchist ideology, but only more or less elemental reactions to the problems of the workers. After its initial development in the 80s, it polarized ideologically over the question of the future of the movement. The differences between the moderate and radical

elements finally led to a split. The "radical" standpoint came close to anarchism and provided a favorable ground for anarchism as a solution to the social question.

Gradually it became clear that the differing standpoints in the socialist movement concerned not only questions of tactics but also the content of emancipation, the manner of achieving it and ideas about the organization of future society. The "radicals" evolved differentiated standpoints: the elimination of the authority of the state, the central idea of a free society, and the struggle toward these ends by the revolutionary minorities and individuals. This led to the emergence of the anarchist movement from the related ideological stimuli and influences.

The future idea of a free society was to be the decisive moment in the emancipation struggle of the workers. This did not include the formation of a political party, party discipline and organization, parliamentarianism and the fight for a general right to vote, or the achievement of political power, even were that to be declared socialist.

In this elemental stage radicalism had corresponding elements in European movements. At the London Congress of Anarchists (1881) principles were formulated which were broadly welcomed by the Czech anarchists.[1] These included as an accepted tactic individual terror. The anarchist principles were meant to be spread not only by words, but especially by deeds: "*Die Propaganda durch die Tat*" was emphasized in the radical anarchist press distributed from abroad.

The elemental radicalism especially among the Northern Bohemian workers (miners and other proletarian strata in Czech regions) represented fertile soil for the implementation of the radicalist tendencies represented by European anarchism. On the one hand, the anarchist propaganda of Johann Most[2] found a reception in Austria at that time. On the other hand, there was further anarchist propaganda from abroad in the journals distributed in the 80s from London (*Freiheit, Zukunft, Rebell*), Budapest (*Communist, Radikal*), or through the body of Czech anarchists in the U.S.A. (*Budoucnost* [Future] from Chicago or *Proletáian* published in New York), and, finally, in the form of illegal papers and pamphlets with strongly formulated attacks.

Radicalism "enjoins the revolutionary party, the most immediate aim of which is destruction, i.e., to declare at a suitable time (apart from propaganda in word and letter) a social revolutionary deed as a practical means of action. The declaration must be followed by action."[3]

"Anti-authoritative" individual terror at this time was a distinctive criterion of anarchism as distinct from other socio-political ideas. From a negative attitude toward the social system there emerged the requirement to "disturb, damage or even directly eliminate" its representatives: "We vote for attempts at the political and active elimination of private ownership in the social field."[4]

The sector of the Czech workers' movement in the 80s was made up not only of moderates and radicals, but also of anarchists. Its "propaganda of action" (*Propaganda der Tat*), though in verbal rather than active form, was in keeping with the broader tendency of the European anarchist

[1] The London Congress resolved, *inter alia*, "the destruction of all rulers, ministers, nobles, churchmen, leading capitalists and other exploiters by any means is permitted," E.V. Zenker, *Der Anarchismus* (Jena, 1895), 189.

[2] Johann Most, originally a German social democrat, promoted an extremely revolutionary, individually terrorist form of anarchist struggle against the representatives of the existing social system. The revolutionary core of society was to represent a force which by individual acts against the representatives of the government and the bourgeoisie would incite the exploited masses to a revolutionary change in the social system.

[3] "Die Propaganda durch die That," *Dreiheit*, III (1881), 42.

[4] "Kampf mit Allen Mitteln," *Freiheit*, IV (1882), no. 32.

movement. "The revolutionary idea is, however, best broadcast by action", says the Chicago *Budoucnost* with regard to conditions in Austria.

Therefore, people must be shown that a quite insignificant little group of daring and devoted men can terrify the entire tyrannical regime to such an extent that the latter takes up the most nonsensical means against the people as a whole and thus becomes the true mother of the new revolutionary forces. . . . Against such villainy over the working people there is no other weapon than terror.[5]

During the 80s in the Czech regions the socialist movement recognized the ideological influences of European socialism, accepting and at the same time changing not only the theoretical, but also the practical forms of their promotion. This was the beginning of a process which continued in subsequent decades, the effects of which extend far beyond the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries.

What form did anarchism take in its beginnings in the 80s? It shaped itself on the basis of the social democratic movement (or some refinement thereof) and under the influence of the changes taking place in Europe. Initially, it polarized regarding the requirements, procedures and final aims of the movement. At first, from the radical extreme of this polarization, it gradually moved against the social-democratic split which, in any case, was bridged over in the course of a decade. In contrast to a party-organized procedure, the anarchist orientation adopted a radical view of the revolutionary struggle, unlimited by parties or association. This anti-authoritarian attitude was demonstrated through individual revolutionary struggle and propaganda.[6]

Rather then linking up its anti-authoritative attitude, activities or anti-étatism with any defined organizational form or hierarchy, anarchism opened the possibility for direct revolutionary terrorism by anti-authority oriented individuals or groups. It did not consider itself bound by the political means of struggle of the various parties, parliamentarianism or the requirements of political freedoms and rights with regard to authority: "It will hardly ever be possible by a legal path . . . to achieve anything really valuable."[7] Here anti-étatism took the form of a simple non-historical elimination of the state, its institutions and representatives of its power. The expansion or improvement of the political institutions of the state and of political powers was not within this horizon. "If the society of the future is to be and to remain free, it must not force itself into forms which hitherto entailed the curse of non-freedom in the entire historical age of humanity. The main form of this type is the state. . . . Freedom is ensured only in a commune, not in the state."[8]

The anarchist viewpoint became unequivocal:

Each state is the representative of the ruling class power. And just as there are people who believe in the possibility of a truly popular state, we, on the other hand, declare that we should avoid all misunderstandings and declare our program directly as follows: Absolute elimination of the state in all its forms.[9]

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[5] "On Conditions in Austria," *Budoucnost*, I (1884), no. 13. At that time it meant Austria as the monarchy, of which until 1918 the Czech lands were a part.
[6] "Die Propaganda durch die Tat," *Freiheit*, III (1881), no. 42.
[7] "Oesterreich—Ungarn," Ibid., III (1881), no. 24.
[8] "Die Staatsgefahr," Ibid., III (1881), no. 46.
[9] "The State and Free Society," Ibid., III (1885), no. 92.

The changing platforms of the social-democratic and anarchist movements meant also contradictory approaches to the emancipation effort: on the one hand, being against competition between political parties and, on the other, directly stimulating the revolutionary action of individuals and groups. Individualism as the principle of emancipation is motivated by the idea of a "free society" of "free individuals" which should not be complicated by authoritatively organized forms of struggle through political parties. Rather, autonomous groups or their mutual federation were proclaimed in which the freedom of the individual would be preserved untouched. This is why

our groups must be truly independent. If a group is made up of adherents of anarchy, then the activity in this group must be in keeping with the principles of anarchism. An anarchist does not admit any other organization to be beneficial than one in which a member is not forced into anything. Anarchist agitation groups must be permeated with the spirit of true freedom. There must not be cultivated in them any authoritarianism; they must be an association of free men for the cause of free action to achieve freedom.[10]

In the socialist movement this constituted a quantitatively smaller and persecuted part, which professed defiantly that "only in anarchy is there true justice and fraternity, is progress and civilization possible."[11]

The humble form of Czech anarchism in the 80s represented an experiment in radical emancipation, both regarding the path and the sense of liberation, namely, anarchy. "We want to make the working class independent as soon as possible, to liberate it from the present capitalist system."[12] At the beginning it would not place on the individual even preliminary regulating conditions; its only appeal was for activity which would negate all subjects and forms of authority. This found its niche as a more or less anonymously articulated and accepted alternative in the socialist movement: the possibility of active radicalism oriented it in an anti-authoritative direction.

Independent Socialism, Its Sources and Its Polarization

In the 1890s the idea of anarchy became not only a radical orientation within the socialist movement, but an ideological trend based on the original personality of European anarchism and the conscious reception of its ideological stimuli.

In one form, anarchism had the characteristics of an independent socialism which not only expressed ideological and organizational independence from social democracy, but also concealed verbally provocative anarchist intentions. This combined parts of the elemental radicalism of the 80s and the programmed radicalism of the younger generation (radical working-class youth and young intellectuals) of the 90s for whom active individualism meant opposing the organized discipline of a political party. In this stage, Czech anarchism developed as a current in the relatively wider base of the radicalized socialist movement and the radicalized intelligentsia. This independent socialism was in a sense a practice-oriented alternative to the anarchist movement. It aimed at economic and social struggle and provided the ideological horizon for radical means in

[10] "On the Organization of Groups," Ibid., (1884), no. 13.
[11] "The Future of Society," Ibid., III (1885), no. 92.
[12] "Die Fabrikgesetzgebung," *Zukunft* (1883), no. 82.

the everyday practical effort. From this basis there also emerged a program of individualism, anti-étatism and the postulates of complete freedom of the individual and the emancipation of society.

In a second form, mainly among the younger generation (members of the intelligentsia, artists, students, working-class youth), independent socialism became a politically, socially and culturally motivated radicalism which was consciously anarchistic. It presented itself to the world as a radically individualist ideology and proclaimed revolt against authoritarian state centralism and other aspects of the Austrian and Czech politics of the time (conservatism, clericalism, nationalism) and "official society" in general (S.K. Neumann). This concentrated on questions of individual creative freedom, literature, art, ethics, morality, etc. On the one hand, there was anarchism in terms of elemental individualistic forms seen through the lens of direct interests (especially in the areas of the already traditional anarchist influence of the Northern Bohemian miners and workers). This regarded itself as a radical, direct path to emancipation through direct economic struggle (economic terrorism, strikes, sabotage). It fought against clericalism and religion as having an ideological aim and sought the elimination of the authority of state, church, economic power and exploitation in order to achieve individual freedom in a free society of individuals.

On the other hand, anarchism as seen through the lens of individualism was a denial of both material and spiritual authority. This was represented in particular by two orientations among the younger generation of the 1890s. The first was the movement of working class youth (the workers' youth movement, *Omladina*) which originally emerged from the program of civil democracy and gradually overcame it in the direction of anarchism. The other was a student movement which through its radicalism and individualism was open both to the influences of German individualism and voluntarism and to French anarchism. This was gradually transformed from the individualistic concepts of Stirner and Mackay to the collective ideas of Bakunin and Kropotkin's communist anarchism.

As "independent socialism", it first formed a negative platform with regard to social democracy drawing together the radical oppositional currents of socialist thinking and the Czech workers' movement. In opposition to the social-democratic program, the radical anarchist standpoints were represented in the journal *Omladina*[13] which proclaimed itself to be "in favor of radical socialism" (in 1891), criticized the Hainfeld program of social democracy, and supported the "progressive programme" of "complete freedom of the person". It favored the organization on a "federalist basis" and the understanding of human society as "the sum of single, independent, honorable and reasonable individuals".

To our aim, which is freedom or liberty, leads unification with the preservation of individuality, not an engulfing unification such as centralism, but a preserving unification or federation. We therefore prefer federation to centralization, we want autonomy and therefore are in favor of national organizations in the international association and of independent production cooperatives in the production community (Communism).[14]

[13] In the years 1891 to 1893 one can follow this ideological process of orientation toward anarchism. Some years later K. Vohryzek recapitulates that the journal *Omladina*, led by F.V. Lorenc, "having definitively freed itself from the yoke of social democracy, places its main emphasis upon the very first issue of the autonomy of the individual, the nation, and humanity. Not long after the Zurich congress Lorenc returned from Switzerland already completely saturated with anarchist ideas." *Komuna*, I (1907), no. 33.

[14] "Czech Youth Meeting in Kladno," *Omladina*, I (1891), no. 1; "What Is Our Aim?" *Omladina*, II (1893), no. 4.

The ideas presented by *Omladina* found wide acceptance among working-class youth and young intellectuals (not only in Prague, but also in other areas of the Czech region, especially in North Bohemia); it drew together the radical socialist movement and the student progressive movement. "This is also why the *Omladina* movement bears the seal of the anarchist spirit", wrote *Komuna* later.[15]

The socialist ideas promoted in the progressive movement were accepted through the prism of political radicalism: "Progressiveness from 1893 . . . had to be politically radical because it wanted something more than ordinary political trade."[16] Thus the distance increased from the policy and ideology of Czech social democracy in which the younger generation saw "too little socialism and too much class envy and hatred."[17] This was fertile soil for the mediation through German literature of individualist anarchism, especially that of Stirner. For the generation of the 90s, Nietzsche, with his individualism, subjectivism, voluntarism, attacks on the state, and atheism represented a symbol of revolt. He symbolized the negation and the destruction of existing values. For this generation he expressed the effort to promote freedom against bourgeois society.[18]

A strong role was played by the *Moderní Revue* (Modern Review) (from 1895) and Neumann's *Nový kult* (New Cult) (from 1897), through which the movement became acquainted with the European anarchists (not only Stirner and Bakunin, but also P. Kropotkin, J. Grave, E. Reclus, and others). Radical and somewhat elemental and abstract anarchism was already taking on clear ideological contours of its own. It not only proclaimed the emancipation of the individual, but projected it onto the general social level of the future free society as an intellectualized world-view.[19]

Finally, the opposition from the originally "moderate" social democrats also turned in an anarchist orientation through *Nový vk svobody* (New Age of Freedom), (1892). V. Körber presented anarchism as a non-literary, non-doctrinaire individualism which in no way limits any other. "The individualist moment of anarchism teaches the anarchist to see in his ego the center and main matter of his life which raises him above morals, religion and altruism."[20] This is summed up in the brochure, *Ethical Anarchism* (1895). Its prerequisite is a certain degree of

education of human nature which would not allow someone consciously to undertake something which would harm another, even though the one undertaking it would have the greatest personal benefit. Education is also the essential condition of the individualist ideal; therefore this ideal is what one might call the summit of the cultural development of human society.

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[15] *Komuna*, I (1907), no. 33.

[16] S.K. Neumann, *Writings*, X: Memoirs (Prague, 1948), 26.

[17] Ibid., 32.

[18] The anarchist *Komuna*: "German communist literature was originally repulsive due to its authoritarianism, so that, if we consider…that Nietzscheanism was just coming into fashion at the time (even the revival of Stirner is due to this alone)," then "we can easily understand the paths by which individualism came to us." *Komuna*, I (1907), no. 36. "Individualism claimed a voice, the ideas of Nietzsche and aesthetic anarchism were accepted and the harmonization of aristocratic and democratic tendencies took place." S.K. Neumann, *Writings*, X: Memoirs (Prague, 1948), 67.

[19] Neumann describes this situation, "I had not yet notice…this movement, I was interested in ideology," *Writings, X: Memoirs* (Prague, 1948), 84. Characteristically, this approach in the later, self-reflective movement was called "literary anarchism." Cf. *Komuna*, I (1907), no. 39.

[20] Quoted by K. Vohryzek in *Komuna*, I (1907), no. 39.

This is also an argument against the principle of parliamentarianism, because "free will and reason are the most precious gift of nature; it is a sin to give up these gifts, to entrust them to others, or to allow another to husband them." The achievement of such individualism would then guarantee a society of free individuals: "individualism would also act in an educational, civilizing manner and through its influence . . . would convince everyone that other people have the same rights as they do."[21] Finally, "education and awareness are the basic condition for the acquisition of freedom," writes Körber, "but education and awareness are the defenders of these freedoms."[22] Though this finally turned into collectivistically oriented anarchism, it continued to be an important source for the first half of the 90s.

The Idea of Individualism and Its Consequences

The concept of independence not only differed from the centralism of the social-democratic movement, but it was also an attempt at a positive definition of the "principle of the greatest possible independence". This was in contrast to

a certain programmed precision, it is the proclamation of progressive development because it's capable of implementing this within itself, without a set of doctrines. It was constantly evolutionary in its views and it principles, which were constantly becoming more complete and more certain. Independence . . . is not centralist but leads to individualism; . . . it does not recognize rules and programs like the centralists. . . . Therefore, it does not demand that its supporters should blindly accept as true everything coming from some center, being well aware that such leadership makes people of whatever part into unthinking machines, dependent on their leaders in their reason, judgment and actions.[23]

The idea of independence is, then, not an authoritative program or world-view, but the prerequisite of one's practical self-confidence.

It is necessary that *every individual* should not only understand individual independence, but also that this should become the main factor of his life, otherwise, he . . . would remain a supporter of centralism and that authoritarianism of the leaders who ascribe to themselves infallibility, which is the basis of authoritarianism. The people who do not have the *self-confidence* for action support authority: not being independent they support centralism which deprives them of their self-confidence and results in governing from above![24]

Hence, the accent is upon the individual:

[A]narchism in individualism is the supreme emancipation of man; it is higher in its freedom than collectivist socialism which must have executive power so that the minority is forced to obey the majority. Anarchism requires that everything should take place with the consent of everybody, that

[21] Introduced by K. Vohryzek, Ibid., no. 40.
[22] Ibid., I (1907), no. 42.
[23] "Sketch on Independence," *Volny duch*, I (1895), no. 5, 1.
[24] Ibid., 1-2.

there should be no forcing of requirements here because in such an association everything is controlled without a government: that is anarchy.[25]

The fear of domination led to a distancing from "collectivist socialism" and "state socialism" and grew into a positive accent on the freedom of the individual as a starting-point for the resolution of the social question. "We are far closer to the individual man than to society or the structure of society and wish to work for the development of *each individual*," the journal *Volný Duch* (Free Spirit) declared of its policy. The emphasis is placed on the role of the "individual against despotism of any kind" and on full personal freedom "to do everything which the laws of Nature permit"--with the Kantian proviso: "Not to do anything to another which would not please him and, on the contrary, to do to him what I myself would like others to do to me; this is the basis of true freedom."[26]

Anarchism "desires for man full individual freedom. . . . It does not want the state, law, morals or executive power (government) to watch over the keeping of these regulations, but wishes morality to grow from reasoned recognition that one is fulfilling an obligation beneficial to oneself and others." This conflicts not only with traditional forms of social organization, but also with the ideals of "authoritarian socialism" since "*Individualism is an effort to overturn all prior customs and states of society*. The custom of allowing oneself to be represented, the recognition of authority, must necessarily hinder the individual principle." Consistently this individualism takes on a radical form: "Individuals of independent spirit, self-confident in nature, break up the existing herd instinct and exclude authoritarianism. They are natures in themselves . . . above the masses who allow themselves to be led and chased according to the wishes of the authorities."[27] This

evokes the self-confidence of the individual . . . so that in this way individuals, according to their reasoned awareness, might live their life. . . . [E]ach individual can join any social organization or association which will best be in keeping with his efforts, or it is also possible to form a new association so that the members might more easily implement self-government according to their views.[28]

This radicalism is simultaneously also a methodological individualism, lacking historical continuity in its intention. Its extension to the historically unfounded future necessarily introduces a moment of illusoriness and utopianism, for a future without historical foundation remains a field of chance and speculation. From the negation of existing authorities, it moves to the expected future forms of achieved freedom of the individual and social emancipation. This is derived first and foremost from negation of the present, and paradoxically, in this sense, its ideal is closer than the steps of its realization. The missing links to the future are indicated simply as "encouraging the individual to action" or by the conditional: "If only the capitalists did not have power, you would then see what you would do."

Economic independence is the first requirement of anarchism: to eliminate the exploitation of man by man. Exploitation is eliminated by: the voluntary capitulation of banking, which is freedom in contracting the means of exchange, . . . the giving up of credit, . . . the giving up of markets, . . .

[25] A.P. Kalina, "Chapter of Individualism," Ibid., I (1895), no. 12, 2.
[26] "Social Consideration," Ibid., I (1895), no. 4, 6.
[27] A.P. Kalina, "Chapter of Individualism, III" Ibid., I (1895), no. 12, 2-3; no. 13, 3.
[28] A.P. Kalina, "Chapter of Individualism, III" Ibid., I (1895), no. 13, 4.

i.e., the freedom of free exchange of agreed values from hand to hand, from country to country; the giving up of lands and soil, i.e., the freedom to take over soil for personal use, as long as they were not taken from others for this purpose; or, if I am to sum up all these requirements, the exploitation of man is made impossible by the freedom of work.[29]

Any integrating social activity, whether negotiation or decision-making, became a form of rejected authority. "Individualism knows only the personal freedom of intellectual development and logical judgment." Each individual should have complete freedom to come to recognize his own needs through his own judgment; individualism is negated by even the slightest suggestion of supervision by another.

If individualists discover that it is necessary in the social aspect to have the cooperation of several individuals in order to achieve that which one person could not achieve, then certainly their cognition will also arrive at the consideration of effective means. It cannot be thought that this would restrict the personal freedom of the individual if a second, third or more persons used the same means or used them jointly for the achievement of a recognized need.

The result of such an individualist attitude is realized only on the basis of general consensus:

If such recognition comes to general opinion, there is no need to fear that the matter will not be successful. There will be no need for orders and prohibitions to pursue any other kind of action . . . for the organization of independent persons will have no need for regulations, formulas and formalities as we see in all the political and social parties. They will need clear knowledge of the basic principles of the struggle of the proletariat. Without magnificent slogans, the independent man rallies to a firm, uncompromising and loyal organization, and in this lies the guarantee of success.[30]

Organization does take the form of a general consensus, but is limited by the "struggle of the proletariat" or the "class benefit of the people."[31]

The consequences of methodological individualism led in the end to ideological paradoxes. On the one hand, there were emphasized the "ideals of human self-determinism", "the idea of anarchy"; on the other hand, any philosophical concepts whatsoever are rejected as authoritative dogmas. Although "we do not recognize the need or benefit of . . . seeking in history the ideological connection of our efforts,"[32] there is allowed at the same time a conscious ideological continuity with the ideas of J.J. Rousseau's *Social Contract* and M. Stirner's *The Individual and His Property*.

Anarchism at the Turn of the Century

[29] "From the Writings of John Mackay," Ibid., I (1895), no. 13.
[30] V. Korber, "Guarantee of the Organization of Independent Socialists or Anarchists," Ibid., I (1895), 6-7.
[31] "The people are almost always in favor of truth and justice only when they are to the benefit of their class; for which reason it is not enough to show the mere rightness of something, but also the benefit and need of it." "On the New Life," Ibid., I (1895), no. 15, 1.
[32] A.P. Kalina, "A Plea for Anarchy," Ibid., II (1896), no. 1-2, 6-8.

The Manifesto of Czech Anarchists[33]

The recognition of anarchist ideas, the confrontation of opinions, together with the acquisition of practical experience from their own movement as independent socialists in the first half of the 90s, found an ideological culmination in the *Manifesto of Czech Anarchists* of 1896. This constituted an independent alternative to the other emancipation concepts and efforts in the socialist movement, especially social democracy. Its orientation espoused an unequivocally negative standpoint with regard to social-democratic principles and practices. From this position many of the ideas of the Manifesto were formulated, such as the rejection of the political organization of the proletariat ("We are convinced that the political organization of the proletariat in the state will not lead the proletariat out of its humiliating economic dependence on capitalism and out of the repulsive slavery in which it is situated today with regard to government and state authority"); the rejection of the existing practical activity of social democracy ("The political actions of the social-democratic party arouse useless and harmful illusions concerning the possibility of achieving the class emancipation of the proletariat through the application and enforcement of political rights"), and the consequent rejection of social-democratic political activity. This rejection was motivated not only by opposition to existing forms of parliamentarianism, the self-determination of the individual and the preservation of his uniquely revolutionary spirit. It was based as well on the view that

in enforcing the general right to vote we see the blunting of the revolutionary efforts of the proletariat leading to blind dependence on infertile parliamentarianism, as well as the preparation . . . of the social-state efforts of social democracy. We reject the struggle for achievement of the right to vote as an unsuitable means, wiping out the individuality, self-confidence, and independence of individuals.

The political actions of social democracy threaten to deprive the proletariat of all individual freedom by the fact that they are trying to change the idea of the socialist collective state set up against the authority of the present state and capitalism. In the present conditions this would bring economic, political and cultural dependence and lead to a humiliating dependence of the individual upon the socialist state.

An intermediate link, which not only would not oppose the anarchistic idea of organization, but actually would represent its prospect, is the trade union. In the trade unions we shall try to lose sight of the narrow-minded efforts at agreement between capital and labor . . . and to introduce the principle of the complete dissociation of labor from capital. It will be an effort for independent leadership of production and for changes on the part of the working class. We welcome the trade union movement as strengthening class solidarity.

Individualism is implemented as a starting point and as a motivation and practical effort "to achieve the emergence of a strong, uncompromising character, the independence of the individual, so as to limit the possibility of dependence on authority, the cause of which is the intellectual

[33] "The Manifesto of the Czech Anarchists of 1896" was published in the journal Ibid., II (1896), nos. 1-2, 9-11. Its author was A.P. Kalina. "The manifesto was read and discussed at the April Conference in the presence of all active comrades among the workers in the Czech lands." The text of the Manifest was reprinted in the anarchistic *Komuna,* I (1907), no. 45, 2-4.

weakness of the suppressed." This echo of Nietzsche's influence goes beyond individual revolt to radical social emancipation: "We are working for the liberation of the people, the liberation of all human individuals so that the results of their labor, material and cultural wealth should benefit only their lives. . . . [W]e are working to change the present social order, as the only means to introduce social equality and freedom."

The goal is not only the individualistic negation of private ownership, but a positive idea of anarchy with a social intent: "We are in favor of a free grouping according to free inclination in free associations for the purpose of achieving more easily the implementation of intentions and requirements for which the strength of the individual is not enough, or where special advantages, moral and material, arise for individuals from this grouping." Because governments and the state are one of the most important factors which make for the exploitation of the disinherited by the rich. "we recognize the need to change these (by) . . . implementation of the principles of self-government and thus to achieve complete anarchy." "Neither nations nor individuals [should] vanish in this." This is termed a revolution (first of all an "intellectual revolution" and only later a "material revolution"), but it avoids forms of individual terrorist propaganda or action: "Revolution should arise from need and not from mere naked violence".

The 1896 Manifesto of Czech Anarchism was, on the one hand, meant as the transformation of a not always clearly delineated socialism into an unequivocal declaration of anarchism "as an independent current with its own distinct principles". Thus, to a certain extent it concludes the period of independent socialism (first half of the 90s). On the other hand, it represents the first step towards overcoming the limitations of individualism, thereby opening a wider basis not only for further ideas from European anarchism, but also for a wider social reception. At the same time, however, the Manifesto was not a matter of promoting intellectualism (as had been, for example, the literary anarchism of the early years, and later, the*New Cult* from 1897). Rather, this individualism was the implication of the basic idea of the emancipation and self-determination of the individual.

The Double Emphasis of Emancipation

In the second half of the 90s and later at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries the economic and ideological platform was expanded, deepened and challenged. Each "extreme" in the anarchist cause emphasized one aspect of its ideology, thereby creating mutually complementary forms, such as practical versus more ideological anarchism.

According to the nature of each, there was emphasized the social or organizational aspect of the practical movement. On the one hand, the chasm between it and social democracy deepened because "anarchism called for complete personal freedom and the removal of the state", whereas social democracy emphasized the economic rather than the political struggle: "Anarchism is the only people's party; not only do they want freedom from intellectual and physical slavery, but they work towards this not only with words, but also, wherever they can, with deeds."[34]

On the other hand, it was a popular orientation with emphasis upon the emancipation of the individual from the restrictions of the social conditions and the intellectual atmosphere. This orientation was close to the intellectual and literary/artistic movement from which it emerged first and foremost.

[34] J. Opletal, "Anarchism, Socialism and Social Democracy," *Matice delnicka*, III (1898), nos. 15 and 21.

Our self-confidence was lit up by a marvelous idea. It was once again necessary to discover the significance and value of man as an individual, to clean up the concept of freedom, to re-evaluate the socialized spirit; this gave us the strength to build individual freedoms in that cathedral, Anarchy! . . . The ranks of its army are filled from all the spheres of society with those who believe in themselves and in the future, and who have the will and the strength.[35]

This popular form emerged first and foremost from the expression of the radicalism of creative individuals and secondarily from the attitudes of revolt planned in a general, abstract and social context. "Society will only become entirely healthy, strong and free," writes Neumann, "when the equal freedom of every person in society is guaranteed." This is the basis of the new individualist system, on this lies the sum total of all social and moral findings based on the requirement of individual freedom, which in sum is called Anarchy."[36]

Both orientations preserved their specific nature as complementary organizational forms of the movement. However, they cooperated and were manifest as different points of view, emphases or standpoints in the single reality of Czech anarchism. Because of this, their efforts tended to coalesce.

In the future no use should be made of descriptions of individualism or communism, but only of the ideas and principles of anarchism, *which is the sole objective. Individualism is the intellectual/philosophical side, free communism is the economic base*. Both trends have the same basic principle and therefore neither of them should be suppressed or pilloried.[37]

The ideological and practical base of the anarchist movement was expanded. The original emphasis upon programmed individualism was overtaken by forms of collectivist, communist or syndicalist orientation of the anarchist movement. Their introduction did not signify the liquidation of one emphasis by another, but an enrichment of the spectrum of views: (a) from an emphasis defined as "anarchy" to a broader social viewpoint: "whether worker or student, wealthy or proletarian,"[38] their interest included the orientation of anarchism; and (b) from individual freedom to a broader practical movement: "Coming out in search of fellow-fighters . . . we consider it our prime responsibility to put the skills of the intelligentsia at the service of the independent workers' movement";[39] and (c) from an original intellectualist attitude to a working-class movement: "Our times demand more urgently that the intelligentsia should stand firmly alongside the working class."[40]

The move from an ideological emphasis to a practical one led finally to a program: "[T]he aware and uncompromising worker is one of the bravest pioneers of anarchism and . . . is still the most important base of the Czech anarchist movement."[41] The idea of an organization of free, independent, but often isolated groups was also transformed so that the movement found a

[35] S. K. Neumann, "The Poor Painter," *Novy kult*, I (1897), no. 3.
[36] S. K. Neumann, "The Individualism of Art," *Rozhledy*, IX (1899), no. 3.
[37] *Matice delnicka*, II (1898), no. 20. Similarly emphasized is the unitive viewpoint in the appeal: "Olmadinist, individualist, communist (i.e. according to Kropotkin's communist anarchism) all must feel themselves members of a single anarchist party." "To Our Comrades," Ibid., IV (1899), no. 1.
[38] "Our Paper," *Novy kult*, I (1897), no. 1.
[39] S. K. Neumann, "Our Task in the Czech World," Ibid., III (1990), no. 1.
[40] S. K. Neumann, "The Miners Strike," Ibid., (1897), no. 2.
[41] "Patriots and the North of Bohemia," Ibid., (1900), nos. 1-2.

common base in the federative association of trade unions. It is "for them to be a school for the future, for them to be able to take over the reins not only of all production, but also of consumption as capitalism ceases to play a necessary part."[42] In spite of their converging ideological standpoints, the two orientations retained their specific nature and organizational form. On the one hand, there came into being the Czech Anarchist Federation (1904) as a "free association of workers in the Czech anarchist movement." It wanted to spread the idea of anarchism through agitation among the working class and the intelligentsia.[43] On the other hand, there was the syndically oriented organization of the Czech Federation of All Trade Unions (1904) with a tendency to expand its organizational base on the principle of the political neutrality of the trade unions.

The Idea of Emancipation and the Elimination of Authority

To what extent was the anarchistic ideal of emancipation fulfilled; what was the objective of the anarchist effort; who was its subject and what was the content or aim of its effort; and finally, how was its future shaped?

The Objective of Anarchistic Emancipation. The objective of anarchistic activity was defined negatively as the rejection of existing historically developed social systems; their values; their social, economic and spiritual hierarchical structure; and their determining principle of authority which culminates in the authority of state power, private ownership, militarism, clericalism and religion.

"You are the object of exploitation not only by capitalists, but to a greater extent by the state":[44] "[C]apitalism, the Church and militarism are a trefoil which works for the preservation of bad social conditions."[45] The subject of authority in its concrete form was gradually identified, first of all, as the state and its institutions, and more basically, as capitalism as both the basis of their authority and their historical culmination thus far. The manifestations and functions of authority were also identified in the forms of existing political parties. Hence, it was more than useless to hope to achieve the emancipation of society with the aid of parliament, and an illusion that the general right to vote could be a step on that direction. Thus, the rejection of parliamentarianism was unequivocal.[46]

The rigorous anti-parliamentarianism narrowed the social and political orientation of the movement because it did not allow sufficient differentiation among the concrete historical forms of existing ruling systems. It simplified itself into an all-inclusive rigorous radicalism. In place of

[42] "Anarchism and Professional Associations," *Matice delnicka*, III (1899), no. 1.
[43] "The Programme of the Czech Anarchist Federation," *Prace*, I (1905), no. 1.
[44] "A Sincere Word to My Brother Miners," *Matice delnicka*, III (1899), no. 10.
[45] "Politics," Ibid., III (1899), no. 15.
[46] "Parliaments are the concentration of big capital which lead and control the whole of world politics. It is therefore nonsense to demand of parliaments the execution of measures beneficial to the working class." Ibid., no. 12. "Subterfuge, evasion, lies and deception are the means to parliamentary operations. The parliamentary struggle is waged only by side roads…The parliament is a political market." "Politics," Ibid., no. 15. "Parliamentarianism is humbug…for power goes before right," writes K. Vohryzek, "Parliamentarianism is humbug!" *Omladina*, I (1903), no. 5. "Capitalist society, built up by the previous development of mankind, is, as far as its organization is concerned, a system of very perfect exploitation, all the improvements in it which favor the working class will serve only to consolidate it…[C]apitalist slavery cannot in any way be reformed in favor of the working class, and all such reforms either have not right effect or only serve to strengthen the fetter of the workers." *Prace*, I (1905), no. 5.

parliamentarianism as "indirect action" in the struggle with capitalism, anarchism advocated "direct struggle with the capitalists" through such various forms of "direct action" as boycotts, sabotage, strikes and general strikes.

Another manifestation of authority is the military which "protects the government, throttles nations, disputes freedom and introduces slavery."[47] In the context of the anarchist ideal of the emancipation of man, the embodiment of the violence committed by the state or central authority is its military organization whose power, range and results weigh upon the individual and society as a whole.[48] Military power was the expression of the brutal denial of individual freedom. This form of authority became increasingly palpable at the beginning of this century, and from the anarchist view-point justified their opposition.[49] Anarchist anti-militarism was more than a mere advocacy of the elimination of authority; it was an expression of a concrete historical experience in which the individual, associations of individuals and national or state units were confronted by the central authority in a direct material and spiritual form. Through militarism the authoritative system was implemented against the individual, denying his autonomy and degrading his longed-for unlimited freedom to the status of a mere object of manipulation.[50] As a principle which deforms and destroys the individuality of man, it is the opposite of his emancipation.[51]

The elimination of authority as the constitutive element of anarchism, in turn, motivates its anti-étatism. "We are opponents of the principle of the universal mastery of others by those who have political power--the principle which is embodied in the organic form of the state

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[47] "Down with Culture," *Matice svobody*, II (1901), no. 9.

[48] Militarism "is the last stand which protects capitalism," *Omladina*, II (1904), no. 22. Military strength "is the last argument of the ruling classes;…all the forces of the people fighting for the removal of the present social inequalities must be concentrated in the anti-militarist sense." "Attacks and Ideas," Ibid., no. 42. "The state will always be the state and if you want the state you must put up with war!" Ibid., no. 47.

[49] "The internal base…the cause of all results, the root of all evil and the axis of the bubbling of all social injustices is the principles of authority substantiated by social morals, sanctioned and fed on all means of supremacy…Only the elimination of this basis can bring about the splintering and absolute destruction of the institution of militarism...Destroy authority! You will thus destroy the condition for the endurance of all social evils and lies, among which militarism is in first place…The elimination of the military can be carried out only by the absolute removal of all authority." "The Nature and Anti-militarism," *Bezvladi*, I (1905), no. 6.

[50] "One of the greatest acts of violence visited by the state on the freedom of the individual is militarism. Militarism is soldiers and what they may and must do. A soldier is a male, human unit forced under certain circumstances to play the part of an object. Where is the difference between the way recruiting commissions handled recruits and the way a new cannot is tested? Where is appreciation of the man I the one appreciated here?" F. Sramek, "Against Militarism," *PraceI*, I (1905), no. 5.

[51] "Here is the state, against which we are making a stand and which we deny the right to violate through deception and deceive by violence…Through militarism there are at present murderers being trained for a future moment, the decision for which is determined by diplomatic jugglers," warns F. Sramek in the decade before the world conflict of societies manipulated by authority. "Does not the very training encumber patriotic murderers with desire? What a strange evaluation of values…Visit barracks; …you will find there a whole series of details showing the horrible deformation of humanity…Obedience on a chain and loyalty beneath a strap; …everywhere you will find only deformed stumps of humanity." F. Sramek, "Militarist Baccilus," Ibid., I (1905), no.22.

system."[52] The basis of this anti-étatism is abstract, unconditioned individuality, with a view to the emancipation of man.[53]

The historical antagonism between the individual or community of individuals and the power of the state is the criterion of the overall negative attitude of anarchism towards the various forms of power structure: "The state! Everywhere you come up against its monstrosity in social and individual life, . . . we feel its influence in all cases of our existence as men."[54] For anarchism it is pointless to differentiate between the forms of implementation of power, which in any case is very difficult. On the socio-political level it is always dangerous when an original ideal becomes a doctrine. Authority took the form of the determining element in political parties where it intermingled with their internal structure. Thus it represented the potential threat not only of old state or military power, but also of newly developed authority. Authority also has spiritual power after the dominant religious world-views which act as with the authority of God. In the hierarchy of spiritual values the ideal picture of the free individual remains secondary as a conditional subject under authority.

The Subject of Emancipation. The projected picture of the emancipated subject (the free individual or the community of free individuals) and the main agent of the negation of authority were brought more closely together in the concrete forms of the radical movement.

Antagonism to authority took on an abstract form, or rather that of the original ideal of free and unlimited individuality according to which man was "created by nature for freedom"--as opposed to history in which there appear "the forms of suppression of the free human person."[55] Thus, emphasis upon the liberation of the individual led as far as "emancipation of the individual *from* society."[56] This simplified historicism--understanding liberation as the elimination of the historically occurring forms of authority--took on a non-historical character outside of time in the form of a "decision from". "Man is born free and all people come into the world in the same way. This is also why he can only agree with a social system if he feels comfortable in it. He can do away with it immediately if he does not find it to his liking."[57] The abstract idea of the emancipation of the individual (or of free association of free individuals) as the central idea and viewpoint of the anarchistic orientation took on the concrete conditions and modalities of the Czech anarchist movement in two ways.

On the one hand, there was a practical emphasis responding to the concrete needs, especially of the Czech anarchist working class. On the other hand, the originally ideological intellectual emphasis of Czech anarchism corresponded to a more abstract and ideal form of the emancipated subject as a free individual. This looked at the requirement of the emancipation of man through the lens of his uniqueness and creative freedom, i.e., through the lens of individualism.[58] Here the

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[52] "About the State," *Bezladi*, II (1906), no. 4.

[53] "Authority is power and the sum of the means serving to force someone into acts which he is to carry out at the will of another. To have power is a necessary part of authority. And this power is the possibility of forcing one's will on another through violence. The state is just such an instrument of violence par excellence." "What Is Authority?" *Omladina*, II (1904), no. 46.

[54] "About the State," iBezvladi, II (1906), no. 4.

[55] "Socialism and Anarchism," *Atice svobody*, II (1901), no. 16.

[56] J. Holub, "Art and Anarchy," *Matice delnicka*, III (1899), no. 14.

[57] *Matice delnicka*, III (1899), no. 23; *Matice svobody*, I (1900), no. 6.

[58] With the clear influence of Nietzsche's individualism, Neumann formulates the characteristics of that ideological orientation of anarchism and that individualistic prism of emancipation: "A blessed idea

individualism of the Nietzschean revolt is projected onto a social base and takes the form of an anarchistic orientation in which is emphasized "freedom and the right to freedom of those who know how to be free."[59]

From this individualistic intention of Czech anarchism, there emerged a "new individualist system": "Society will be completely healthy, strong and free only when *each of its members, every individual,* will be healthy, strong and free. This is the basis of the new individualist system. . . . The sum total of all social and moral findings . . . [is] known as Anarchy."[60] Here the free individual is not only the ideal as an intention for the future, but also an imperative for revolt against present conditions.

Only later in the context of the ideological emphasis of Czech anarchism is the subject of one's own emancipation identified also as a subject of social change. This derived from the effort to bridge the "interest of the individual" and the "interest of society", because both "their interests and their benefits should be smoothed out and brought into agreement."[61]

Both the practical and the ideological emphases were in keeping with the different orientations of their credo. The practical orientation was mainly an effort to win over directly all "suppressed" and "exploited" workers as potential participants in the battle against existing authoritative conditions: the "fight against capitalism", "the defense against thousands of enemies,"[62] the discovery of a common base for joint action in the movement.[63] This emphasis was aimed mainly at the immediate present.

The ideological orientation devoted attention to the individual as an ideal. This limited individual freedom and revolt to the principles of the ethical programme built on the basis of individual freedom,"[64] "We are revolutionaries mainly in ethics." Hence, the revolt was aimed at the future.[65] The emphasis was upon finding a wider social base, overcoming programmed individualistic isolation[66] and the wider practical movement of the "independent working

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enlightened our self-confidence. It was necessary again to find the significance and value of man as an individual, necessary to clean the concept of freedom, to re-evaluate the socialized spirits and give us the strength to build this shrine of individual freedom. Anarchy!...the ranks of its army are filled from all circles of society with all those who believe in themselves and the future, those who have the will and the strength," S.K. Neumann, "The Poor Painter," *Novy kult*, I (1897), no. 2.

[59] S.K. Neumann, "The Right of the People," *Novy kult*, I (1897), no. 2.

[60] S.K. Neumann, "The Individualism of Art," *Rozhledy*, IX (1899), no. 3.

[61] "The Fall of Anarchism," *Novy kult*, I (1897), no. 1.

[62] "Anarchism and Professional Association," *Matice delnicka*, III (1899), no. 11. "To Our Comrades," Ibid., IV (1898), no. 1.

[63] "We are the extreme socialist wing, we suggest the most from the beating of the retrospective capitalist waves and therefore we need a strong organization." "On Organization," *Matice svobody*, II (1900), no. 8.

[64] S.K. Neumann, "Our Task in the Czech World," *Novy kult*, III (1900), no. 1.

[65] "Anarchy today is the broader and most simple, most beautiful and most just basis for the life of the present, providing at the same time a directive for the most distant future. Its basis is a strong and free person, strong and free in all tendencies of a many-sided life," S.K. Neumann said in his "The Individualism of Art," *Rozhledy*, IX (1899), no. 3.

[66] "Omladinist, individualist, communists (i.e., supporters of Kropotkin's communist anarchism—[note Tomek]) must feel themselves members of a single anarchist party." "To Our Comrades," *Matice delnicka*, IV (1899), no. 1.

class."[67] In contrast, for the practical orientation the focus was upon the direct requirements of the movement.

Anarchism in the 20th Century

Mediation Between Authority and Its Negation

The two emphases in the movement were moving closer together and found a common denominator in the idea of anarchic revolutionary social change: "overturning existing conditions so that the desired order could arise immediately from their ruins."[68] The idea of "direct action" implied a range of direct economic measures (as opposed to the indirect parliamentary struggle of the political parties) culminating in a general strike whose nature underlined the importance and extent of social change. "To the anarchist the general strike means more than just a weapon in the struggle against capitalism and the bourgeoisie; it means a social revolution itself or the exchange of the capitalist system for a system of equal and general justice and freedom."[69] Mediation between the existing authority of past and present and the future without authority which is being striven for (Herrschaftslosigkeit, Abwesenheit von Herrschaft) suffers from both extremes. Either it is exhausted by short-sighted radical strikes[70] emphasizing immediate solidarity with the everyday trade-union struggle and results in "neutral trade unions" without the anarchistic ideal, or, on the contrary, the idea of revolution suffers from the illusion of non-historical direct social change.[71]

In the ideological orientation of Czech anarchism with an emphasis on the individual, radical negation meant first and foremost rejection of existing forms and authorities with regard to the idea of freedom "which should in any case be the natural state of the individual."[72] This orientation originally was happier with a description of the existing antagonisms, and lacked a more realistic practical form for future emancipation. It was expressed more by decisive rejection and the projection of intention, than by concrete resistance.[73]

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[67] "Coming out to find fellow-fighters…we consider it our foremost responsibility to put skilled intelligence to the service of the independent workers' movement," S.K. Neumann, "Our Task in the Czech World," *Novy kult*, III (1900), no. 1.

[68] "Socialism and Anarchism," *Matice svobody*, II (1901), no. 32.

[69] "The General Strike," *Novy kult*, VI (1903), no. 7.

[70] "We anarchists must without exception agree with every attempt at a general strike (even if this has been called, for instance, for the purpose of winning general strikes or military exercises) as much as possible, so that we approach the decisive general strikes as mature and seasoned revolutionaries." S.K. Neumann, "Why and How Are the Anarchist Workers Organizing Themselves?," *Prace*, I (1905), no. 6.

[71] "Nature does not worry about the way in which people want to arrange their mutual relations; it is up to people when they arrange their social conditions according to their will. Anarchy can be realized just as well in a month's time or in a hundred years. If we expand our ideas around the world, we shall turn the world into a commune." "Stage," *Komuna*, II (1908), no. 35.

[72] "What Are Anarchists and What Do they Want?" *Omladina*, II (1904), no. 42.

[73] "Dissatisfaction is the source of our ideas," writes R. Tesnohlidek. "My Notes," *Prace*, II (1906), no. 23. "Anarchism is not an exclusively working class movement, it is the expression of the desire for general freedom." Tesnohlidek, "Agriculture," Ibid., no. 19. "In a movement as ideologically eminent as anarchism, the ideological basis must constantly be improved; the basis on which it rests must be clean and clear." Tesnohlidek, "Promptitude," Ibid., no. 23.

However, with the gradual drawing-together of practical programs, radical rejection took the form of revolt, and the orientation towards a broader social basis focused more tightly upon the practical side of the anarchist movement. Through this, both orientations arrived at the same conclusion, namely, that the requirement of the elimination of authority is expressed in terms of the "oppressed classes", and can be intensified[74] through the confrontation of the "ruling terrorism" by the "defensive terrorism of the oppressed and exploited classes and estates." This turns into "revolutionary terrorism."[75]

This union of the two orientations of Czech anarchism found an expression and starting point in a common agreement on the tactic of "direct action" with the help of which "the basis of contemporary social injustice would be undermined by . . . economic terrorism . . . not only against the individual capitalist, but against a whole section of society."[76] This is expressed also in the effort to expand the social basis of the anarchist movement to the trade union movement, which exceeded the former limited framework of anarchist groups or only anarchist trade unions.

Thus, antagonism against society which formerly had emphasized freedom as the natural state of the individual and the preservation of its individual form, acquired in both orientations the dimension of social anatagonism: the struggle of "class against class."[77] In this way anarchist radicalism found its own path to its concretization of freedom versus authority in the social categories of class warfare.

Our struggle is a class struggle and aims at the expropriation of capitalists by social revolution. The bourgeois class of capitalists with all its institutions [is] the most serious obstacle preventing the preparation of humanity to accept a new organization of production and allocation of products.[78]

Naturally, the role of anarchists as the bearers of the idea and its promoters is not dissolved in the broad mass of "neutral trade unions"[79] or in the anonymous mass of the class. The role of the

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[74] Editorial article "The Society in Which We Live," Ibid., I, (1905), no. 1.

[75] "The ruling classes and estates exercise their violence to an extreme extent and with unconcealed brutality. It is then…quite natural that also the defensive terrorism of the classes and the estates of the suppressed and exploited become sharper and try to rally their forces for the final attack. On the one hand, then, the terrorism of the violent ruling forces in a wild desire for power at the expense of anyone and everything; on the other hand, revolutionary terrorism, the self-defense of the disinherited…which logically grows into a struggle for social freedom and harmony." S.K. Neumann, "Ethical Anarchism?" *Anarchistsicka Revue*, I (1905), no. 3.

[76] L. Knotek, "The Principles of Anarchist Struggle," *Omladina*, III (1905), no. 46.

[77] "The struggle for the revival of the entire human race, the whole of humanity and all its parts, takes on the form of a class struggle; and becomes the struggle of class against class; class warfare is an inevitable condition of the success of our struggle." L. Knotek, "The Principles of Anarchist Struggle," Ibid., no. 45. The article "The Class Struggle" is devoted to the question of the anarchist concept of the class struggle, *Prace*, I (1905), no. 19.

[78] Editorial article of *Omladina*, IV (1906), no. 1. S.K. Neumann expresses a similar opinion: "The only way is uncompromising class struggle to disinherit the privileged class. The waging of this struggle will form the main subject of training in organizations." "Organizations," *Nova omladina*, I (1906), no. 79.

[79] "For how could a handful of anarchists associated in specialized anarchist trade unions—a tiny fraction of the working class—wage any economic struggle, and how could they implement a general strike? This cannot be realized without a wide, working class base." "On Tasks of Organization in the Division of Labour," *Komuna*, II (1908), no. 15.

anarchists is to incite initiatives by revolutionary minorities which are to promote these ideals on behalf of the masses--"the silent majority."[80]

Thus, from the level of individual revolt and the rejection of authority, anarchism moved to the level of social categories in which social revolution represents the appropriate "middle term" to emancipation. This, however, was but a conditional and practical undertaking; it left a vague oscillation between the efforts of a free, but limited, association of the bearers of the idea ("the initiative-taking revolutionary minority") as the active principle of social emancipation and the potential for an engagement of the masses ("the indifferent majority"). This oscillation shows in another form the difference between the two emphases in Czech anarchism: between the almost ideologically indifferent neutralism of the trade union masses, on the one hand, leading to syndicalist economism and reform, and, on the other hand, the ideological revolutionizing initiative with the masses as a base. This was reflected particularly in the stagnation and limitation of the socio-political activity of the movement and the abandonment of the notion of the all-powerful general economic strike as an act of social revolution directly removing the capitalist state.

The Debate: To Be or Not To Be a Party

In the younger generation of Czech anarchism there arose a fresh attempt at practical activity, bridging the gap between the idea of a minority and the potential masses as a base. This included not only an effort to transform the movement into a special political party different from the traditional political parties, but also a criticism of this effort. This conflict between "basic causes" or principles and "practical causes" or the requirements of the historical situation called for a compromise.

In 1914, on the one hand, there was the idea that anarchy must be regulated by practical reasons, by which the anarchist principles came to be superseded by the attempt to establish a party (the Party of Czech Anarchist Communists), albeit "completely different from the organization of other political parties" (B. Vrbenský). On the other hand, there was a defense of "basic causes" or principles against practical ones, because "a party is a non-anarchist formation": to the degree "the majority dictates . . . the minority loses its rights and the majority becomes naturally dictatorial and therefore authoritarian." Because "political activity is merely trading and compromising with existing conditions, a party cannot promote autonomy; for its nature is to be centralistic. Hence, for the anarchist movement to strive to constitute a party means "to reject the moral principle of

[80] L. Knotek characterizes the implementation of the "initiative revolutionary minorities, composed of fully cognizant individuals, sufficiently intelligent, capable and strong, to win over the indifferent majority with their will." Here, however, the traditional idea of rejecting anarchism (considering the right of each individual to unlimited freedom) and the democratic submission of the minority with regard to the majority, even changed to the contrary in the interest of achieving revolutionary interests. The subject of emancipation not only identifies himself as the "revolutionary minority," but even as a consequence of this intention declares himself almost as an elite: "Do we have the right to make use of the masses?—It does not matter. If we do not have it, we shall take it so as to win through our revolutionary interests to our own benefit; not, however, at the expense of the masses, but to their own benefit because their interests overlap with ours," writes L. Knotek, "Principles of the Anarchist Struggle," *Omladina*, III (1905), no. 46. The result of such an approach is the antidemocratic statement that "we deny the large mases and the majority the ability and will to act for the fates of persons in the revolutionary progressive sense." S. Nacht, "Democracy and Anarchism," *Prace*, I (1915), no. 10.

anarchist solidarity and replace it with the discipline and formation of fanatic dogmatists." Because every party "is centralist, we are for a more free autonomous federation formation" (M. Kácha).[81]

Both standpoints were confronted not only by actual questions of ideology, but also by the attempt to project Czech anarchism in a broader context of political and social life by introducing their ideological platform in the form of a political party. This was seen, of course, as just the "practical reasons" or compromise for which Vrbenský's proposal was striving and which Kácha's criticism considered unacceptable.

A proposal was submitted for coordinating the Czech anarchist movement under the "common name of the Party of Czech Anarchist Communists" with a joint program. The aim was formulated as anarchistic communism,

or the organization of society without state formation where the economic basis would be agricultural communes in the countryside and organized units of other fields of useful human work with a political basis in social agreements between the most varied fields. All property in this new society . . . should belong to society; there would be no room here for private ownership in any form.

The proposal formulated the political tactics of the proposed party with reference to M. Bakunin on two points: 1) a general economic strike, and 2) basic anti-militarism (even against the People's Militia). "With these two truly socialist tactical means, we acclaim and implement a true social policy aimed, on the one hand, against state organizations and, on the other hand, against the components of present states: capitalism and the bourgeoisie."

In the proposal there is also formulated a nationality program "completely synthesized with the anarchist politico-economic aim . . . against state organizations and therefore also against Austria . . . [W]e are in favor of the principle of nationalization for present and future political national action. This means that individual national bodies living in Austria should join together as independent national units. It is therefore necessary for us to work for the political and economic freedom of our nation."

However, in the proposal the basic anti-parliamentarian attitude is also preserved. The anarchist party "recognizes only the tactic of direct action, not legislative tactics: legislative tactics are indirect and hinder the progress of humanity." The economic program is based on the idea of the "organization of the nation according to the principle of the anarchist communism or socialization of all objects of production and consumption, of absolutely all property and the elimination of the wage system." The idea of the emancipation of society as the primary intent is pursued "by evolutionary means, i.e., by a revolution in thinking, the winning over of people for the ideas of a 'general economic strike' and of consistent anti-militarism." The consequence of this idea, however, leads straight to practical results: "evolution must necessarily become revolution." This was to be expressed basically in the form of an "original" political party.

However, from the opponents' viewpoint, the vagueness and basic unacceptability of a path emerging from changing conditions and based on compromise made it necessary to point out that a mere change in name would not make the movement any stronger, and to warn of the dangerous precedent of adapting a principle "to a tactic which was, perhaps, the result of a change of circumstances."

[81] Both standpoints, Vrbensky's proposal and Kacha's criticism, were submitted in manuscript form to groups of the Czech Anarchists for discussion. The Anarchist Congress in April 1914 was to express its decision.

Thus, the opposing emphases continued to accompany the movement of Czech anarchism: on the one hand, the practical, flexible attitude which adapts to circumstances and wants to revive the traditional idea, to bring it up to date and to modernize it; on the other hand, an emphasis upon the protection of principles, the justification and continuance of the anarchist ideal of anti-authoritative emancipation as a "current of thought" and "moral alliance". "Anarchy is a wide emotional and ideological current which cannot be enclosed within the narrow framework of a party" (Kácha). Hence, what according to Vrbenský should have been combined in the new quality of a viable anarchist party was considered by Kácha to be incompatible if it were to remain anarchist in its ideological quality.

The emphasis upon the national question in Vrbenský's proposal meant a loss of the traditional idea of anarchist internationalism. Submission of a modernization proposal for the revival of the ideal of anarchism meant not only repeating the ideology of Czech anarchism of the pre-war years, but also dissatisfaction with its limited extent and therefore also an effort to find the next step for the anarchist movement. Thus, the extensive criticism of the proposal and the resultant discussion constituted fruitful self-reflection and revival. The direct practical result of the conflict was the acceptance of Vrbenský's proposal.[82] The revival of the movement, however, could not take place due to the circumstances of the then imminent World War I. Hence, the standpoints in the conflict did not settle down in a new form, but remained unsettled.

The conflict between the two standpoints foretold a modernization of the movement which resulted in the first compromise at least on what was foreseen as a provisional basis. The traditional ideological anarchist idea of "moral alliance" and unlimited freedom of the individual was no longer sufficient for the mobilization of the movement; a retreat from principles for "practical" reasons and an attempt to establish the movement as an effective modern political force threatened to undermine the foundation of anarchism. Thus a compromise ensued, aimed at further transforming the movement for practical reasons at the cost of anarchistic principles. This was the case in both spheres of anarchist influence. Thus, in the Czech Federation of All-Trade Unions, the North Bohemian anarchist working class promoted syndicalist economic reformation. The ideologically accented revolutionism of the Federation of Czech Anarcho-Communists turned into a political party. Anarchism underwent a transformation of the existing ideas of emancipation under the pressure of historical circumstances.

The Transformation of the Anarchist Movement and the Destruction of the Idea

The idea and the expectation of direct revolutionary changes at the end of the World War led to a situation which pulled even anarchism into the wake of the revolutionary events of the day. This meant taking some steps which made the former anarchism impossible and necessitated further correction of the anarchist platform. The fury of the War, the revolution in Russia and the post-War revolutionary wave in Europe, promoted an authoritative approach contrary to the former anarchist ideals of the emancipation of the individual, a non-authoritative path for society, and elimination of authority.

The immediate revolutionary reality and anarchist revolutionary impatience corrected anarchist expectations to such an extent that the anarchists themselves were willing to allow--albeit apparently temporarily--the authority of the state to be the connecting link to its emancipation, i.e.,

[82] The Anarchist Congress in Prague from the 11th to the 13th of April, 1914, adopted Vrbensky's proposal and decided on a commission which would elaborate the proposal and submit it to the subsequent congress.

"transition through the socialist state seems to be essential."[83] This correction was a fundamental moment in the anarchist ideal of freedom: revolution had become so dominant a concern of the anarchists that they were willing to identify their own idea of emancipation with such completely contradictory forms as those used in Russia during the war.[84]

Only from the perspective of historical distance is it obvious that those realities which then were seen as "correcting somewhat the opinions of Kropotkin" led to a "correction" of the basis of anarchism which finally put into doubt its essential nature. The pre-War ideological confrontation finally resulted in an open revision of anarchism itself. The ideological orientation of Czech anarchism led to compromise within its own framework, to attempts at reconciliation with, and acceptance of, authoritative forms of Leninist communism. For anarchism this meant in reality a choice between anarchism or Leninist communism. In the post-War period, the ideological (and also the practical) situation resulted in the supporters of Czech anarchism (at first only in part) "finally reconciling themselves with forms which had very little in common with the old ideas and ideology," S. K. Neumann declares euphemistically. In other words, they accepted the concepts of power and state authority, allegedly as a means to the practical achievement of liberty.[85]

Thus, in contrast to the original stance which had emphasized distance from the "rigid dogmas of state Marxist socialism," there followed an effort to introduce Czech socialism "from the ideas of the socialists--Proudhon, Kropotkin, etc.--whose moral ideas are far closer to ours."[86] At the same time and almost paradoxically, under the clear influence of the accepted revolutionary reality it allowed the "proletarian policy or the so-called dictatorship of the proletariat to become a means to socialist freedom, equality and fraternity.[87]

The original pre-War conflict of principle and practice foreshadowed the compromises of the overall liberation from authority. This idea was confronted in historical reality by problems first of practical adaption and later of implementation in terms of conditional authoritative emancipation.

Here a turning-point was reached as had been suspected and expressed in Kácha's warning against the path of compromise and retreat from principles. Whereas originally historical reality was to be seized and controlled by the subject of emancipation, now, on the contrary, pressing

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[83] The translator of Kropotkin's "Anarchist Morality" notes: "The experiences of the war and Soviet Russia somewhat correct Kropokin's opinions, not concerning (as the author mistakenly thinks) their core, but, to the extent that the transition through a socialist country would seem essential." P. Kropokin, "Anarchist Morality," *Prague* (1919), 87.

[84] The euphoria of anarchist revolutionary impatience, the nonhistorical expectation of the direct possibility of social change and the reality of revolution in Russia in the postwar context of Europe, made of it the phenomenon of the "light of knowledge." In this sense, then the war did not continue "only with blood and iron, but also with taught and enlightened brains. The people at last saw clearly;…in this maturing a great part was played at the time by the second epoch-making event of the present historical five-year-period the Russian Revolution…the war opened the eyes of the working people, but the Russian Revolution awoke their ability to make decisions." The dominant moment was quite clearly the Revolution. S.K. Neumann, "From May Speeches," *Cerven*, II (1919), no. 10.

[85] "Such is the bourgeoisie all over the world and this is why socialism rose up against it all over the world. Against the interest of the class of property owners is the interest of the class of all those conscientiously working. And the interest of the workers says that work should be liberated from the rule of capital, that capital should become the servant of labour…and that all power in the state should be only in the hands of those who work productively." S.K. Neumann, "From Speeches to Voters," Ibid.

[86] The revolution of the "Congress of Czech Anarchist Communists," Ibid., no. 1.

[87] S.K. Neumann, "Proletarian Culture," *Cerven*, II (1919), no. 18.

historical reality (revolution) becomes dominant. The turning-point meant that the strength of the originally unconditional intention of the anarchist idea of emancipation and freedom in the end became conditioned and relativized by the strength of the historical circumstances which suggested a quite opposite alternative, namely, authority as a special form of emancipation.

The radicalism of anarchism, inclining and leading to revolutionary impatience, provided fertile soil for the internal tension between the unlimited emancipation of the individual and society, on the one hand, and a hasty and direct revolutionary realization, on the other. This tension was fed simultaneously by two circumstances: the minority status of the idealists and the basis for the shift. The strength of this tension undermined the radical "direct path" and made possible an apparently temporary shift in means. However, not only did these not correspond to the anarchist's goal, they were in direct opposition thereto. Nevertheless, the expected provisional character of this change enabled this difference to be bridged under the themes: "The dictatorship of the proletariat can be a means to socialist freedom, fraternity and equality" and "The new order can be begun only by communist dictatorship."[88]

The changes in values of the Russian Revolution strengthened revolutionary impatience and class conflict between the interests of the property-owning class and the productive workers (although somewhat "correcting the opinions of Kropotkin"). Nevertheless, they promised to fulfill expectations by revolutionary "actions and acts". Those pre-War "practical causes" of Vrbenský's efforts to transform the movement into a political party which began with the Federation of Czech Anarchist Communists were implemented at the expense of basic anarchist principles.

The ideological situation of Czech anarchism exposed their ideas to the historical realities: "It was not easy for anarchists to accustom themselves to the new situation when the socialist revolution, for which they all longed, appeared in forms which they all condemned." In this confrontation, the anarchist idea of a free society, of "free-thinking communism", was modified by the conditioned, mediated idea of revolutionary action: "the present time, as a period of revolutionary action after a long period of ideological development, brought to the surface opinions whose strength was manifested in the tactics which this development evoked and sanctified": the ideological situation was aptly titled "Grey Theories and Dead Principles."[89]

Such "corrections" were justified by: the "experiences of war and Soviet Russia", the "epoch-making event of the present historical five-year period--the Russian Revolution", the "proletarian policy or the so-called dictatorship of the proletariat", the "results of the vital, clear and essential progress of the Russian Revolution which overcame all scruples" and "actions and acts", so that "at least something of true socialism would gradually be realized " which "appeared to be essential because forced by life and struggle". "We cannot deny the rights of reality" which are proceeding towards the socialist state. The emphasis on the "education of the crowds to a certain form of authoritarian socialism was opposite to the end and cast doubt on the aim itself. Through the "revolutionary revival of socialism and the basic success of the Russian Communist Revolution . . . reality finally conquered dreams, facts conquered illusions. *Reality overcame us*: the time for action had come, the time of the socialist revolution."

The provisory character of this confrontation in the anarcho-communist view was reflected as the "intention to find conciliation between authoritarian (state socialist) communism and free-thinking (anarchist) communism."[90] Of course, this attempt at conciliation was in reality only one-sided, as was clear right from the beginning. "Even if our free-thinking feeling shied away from

[88] Ibid., "Anarchists and the Third Internationale," Ibid., no. 6.
[89] Ibid., II (1919), no. 23.
[90] "Bolshevism," *Kmen*, III (1919), nos. 24-26.

this as much as possible, we cannot deny the rights of reality."[91] Coming to terms with existing historical reality as seen through the lens of radicalism meant the acceptance of revolutionary events and the suspension of those ideals which, not corresponding to it, appeared as unrealizable, "beautiful dreams", and even as "grey theories and dead principles". The change culminated in "authoritarian" communism: "the new order can begin only with communist dictatorship . . . the proletarian socialist state will be an essential stage on the path to socialist society."[92]

The original conflict of "principle" and "practice" in Czech anarchism after the World War took on the form of a confrontation of ideas with historical reality and finally exceeded the original basis of anarchism as an ideology of emancipation and the freedom of man. In the final stage, this conflict changed into surrender to practical needs and the suspension of the former principles as being "[U]topian dreams and scientific theories", a "beautiful social dream of a future paradise, God's Kingdom on Earth", the "anarchist's ideal of freedom, justice and mutual aid which will remain the longed-for picture of the future over the ages of human development."[93]

"Practical needs" had undermined the original purposes. Motivated by the radicalism of revolutionary impatience and the euphoria of the revolutionary nature of the times these needs became the basis and the prism of the acceptance of the revolutionary events: "the birth of the Third Internationale and everything which preceded and followed it--the Russian Revolution, the establishment and successes of the Soviet Republic, the revival of revolutionary socialism in the theses of Bolshevik, Spartakovian and other types of communism, all these caused great turmoil and stress in the minds of anarchist communists." This view of revolutionary events became the decisive corrective of anarchist ideas.

At the same time, in this view it was not a matter of the mere factual reality of historical events, but of seeing reality through the anarchist radicalism of the revolutionary commitment. Events acquired their significance as a correction and actually as the self-destruction of anarchist ideology: nevertheless, "it was not easy for anarchists to come to terms with the new situation where the socialist revolution which they had all longed for appeared in forms which they all condemned." Indeed, "it was born from the womb of the hated Marxism, arrived with an uncompromising dictatorship, considerably confused all suspected and true freedoms, introduced intrusive discipline, etc." Thus, radicalism managed to suppress the basic anarchist ideas and helped the acceptance of their opposite: "the crises in the minds of these anarchists sharpened until in the end reality was victorious over dreams, facts over illusions. Today the majority of anarchists are in the camp of the Third Internationale, which is communist." The original idea of anarchy was thus degraded to the point of fundamental correction and denial. "Those who were interested mainly not in the letter of the theory of socialist ideas, but in facts and actions, in some gradual realization of true socialism, those who placed greater store by deeds than words, finally became reconciled with the forms which, although they did not correspond to the old ideas and ideology, nevertheless appeared to be essential because forced by life and struggle."[94] In the end, revolutionary reality became the basis of the destruction of the anarchist ideal.[95]

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[91] S.K. Neumann, "Ideal and Reality," Cerven, III (1920), no. 27.

[92] Ibid.

[93] S.K. Neumann, "Anarchists and the Third Internationale," Ibid., no. 6.

[94] Ibid.

[95] This was also shown practically by the historical peripetia of supporters and representatives of Czech Anarchism after the First World War. First of all they cooperated with the Czechoslovak Socialist Party whose revolutionary program (1918) represented for anarchist communists a promising base for the promotion of their ideas about social changes. Soon, however, differences occurred between the anarchist

The radicalist intention of Czech anarchism--even before its later neglect in the spectrum of socio-political trends and its final silencing by the monolithic trend of the ruling socio-political intention--went through a stage of self-correction of its ideas. This correction was so basic that it became the denial of its own specific nature and identity. The very core of the supporters of Czech anarchist ideas finally sought their goal of emancipating man and society through strongly authoritarian means, accepting hitherto totally contradictory principles and forms, and through what was at first only temporary provisional "delay". Finally, the transformation or abandonment of anarchist ideals in exchange for their Leninist denial which militantly rejected anarchism[96] made it all the easier for the ideas of anarchism to be neglected later and more easily silenced in a simplifying retrospective critical reflection.

In historical retrospect, the original ideological development of the Czech anarchists did not remain open-ended, but at a certain stage of the movement suspended its anti-authoritative idea of emancipation for a revolutionary authoritative and authoritarian form which was seen as a special form of social emancipation.

This suspension of the idea of emancipation, or its actual destruction under the force of historical reality, was not merely an historical statement but, in retrospect, was deeply symptomatic. The transformation of the movement at the cost of its own destruction of its ideas not only throws doubt on the movement, but over a longer perspective tells us much about the importance of ideas and of intellectual consistency. In the present situation of change in Czech society this question arises once again in relation to our traditions and their meaning.

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and the socialist parties and also among the anarchists themselves. First of all, the leftist core of the anarchists around S.K. Neumann and the journal *Cerven* (1918-1921) left the Socialist Party. With the ideological transition to Leninist Marxism this was organized in the Uion of Communist Groups and finally joined the Communist Party (1921). The second part of the anarcho-communists, grouped around B. Vrbensky, underwent a similar development. At first it remained in the Socialist Party until 1923, then it became independent in its own party of Independent Socialists (1923-1925), and matured later to the idea of an organization platform in the Communist Party (1925).

[96] In spite of attempts at some kind of conciliation with Marxism, the anarchists understood Lenin's intentions for the state and revolution; they promoted his ideas and translated his *State and Revolution* (1920) before the later Leninist-oriented founders of the Communist Party.

Chapter II
The Conflict of the Values of Freedom and Power in the Development of Czech Society

Dragoslav Slejska

Categorical Dynamic Definitions

Freedom, along with such basic and general philosophical values as the traditional ones of goodness, truth and beauty,[1] is promoted by the exalted nature of its principles and its universality. At the same time, the value of freedom clearly demonstrates that, even at this level, values have dynamisms which imply mutual conflicts.

It is impossible to define the value of freedom completely and statistically; it is better that it be described through a series of graduated elements which formulate the functional nature of this value in a time sequence. Axiologically, we define freedom as:

1) the possibility of personal choice among a number of alternatives available for value selections;
2) the possibility of actively influencing the actual creation of these alternatives;
3) the possibility of acting in accordance with selected value alternatives;
4) the possibility of developing public social activities in accord with them; and
5) the possibility of influencing through these values and activities, a larger or smaller circle of social relations.

The fifth element of this sequence indicates the transition from the value of freedom to that of power as a certain axiological potentiality. Freedom and power are in their way opposite values, but mutually transpose one into the other.

The fourth element in the series (development of social activities) plays a decisive part in the maintenance of the homeostasis of freedom and power. Its strengthening maintains the homeostasis in functional operation, whereas, its weakening, on the other hand, undermines this balance.

Empirical Verification

The process of the value of freedom spilling over into that of power and the reverse influence upon freedom by power can be documented by empirical sociological data. In research on workers in automated workplaces in the engineering industry (Spring of 1989),[2] the value of personal freedom was represented by items regarding the possibility of living freely according to one's own ideas and of speaking the truth. The value of power was represented by the possibility of

[1] D. Slejska, "The Freedom of Values and the Values of Freedom," *Filosoficky casopis* (no. 1, 1990), 270-271.

[2] *Socialni roznoj pracovnich kolektiva ve strojrenskych vyrobach s vyssim stupncm automatizace* (The Social Development of Working Collectives in Engineering with a Higher Level of Automation), A. Rasek, Klicperova, D. Slejska, Portova, Kratky, et al. (Prague, 1990). Elaborated here directly from computer data.

influencing public affairs and implementing one's own will. The possibilities of influencing public affairs were very strong and held statistically significant connections with the possibility of speaking the truth (R = 0.34<0.001), and only slightly less with that of living according to one's own ideas (0.24<0.01). The correlations on implementing one's own will were similarly connected with both items of personal freedom. Their connection with living freely according to one's own ideas was R = 0.29<0.001 and their connection with of speaking the truth was again R = 0.34<0.001. These correlations are among the strongest connections of the entire value correlation matrix in the research, which included 60 value correlations (i.e., out of 1,770).

In representative research on a sample taken from the entire population of Czechoslovakia in 1984,[3] they were among the strongest correlations along with the values of social activity, social recognition and social influence (R = 0.41; 0.40; 0.44, all<0.0001).

The real significance of these connections is manifest in group correlations. Especially significant is the parallel in the increases in all these values in the younger generation under thirty. In 1984 this generation was ahead of the older age group as concerns the importance that life be lived according to one's own principles (index of 2.79, compared with 2.71 for the older generation), on social activity (3.26 - 3.18), on social recognition (2.76 - 2.61) and on public influence (2.33 - 2.23).[4] It is in these differences that we must seek the latent prerequisites for the assumption of initiative by the young in November, 1989, which so surprised the public as a whole. Sociological research showed that in comparison with the general population the young were better able to recognize the latent tendencies for the formation of social attitudes.

These relations between freedom and power, and the corresponding potential and actual changes, can also be shown from history. A leading contemporary Czechoslovak historian of antiquity noted initial ambivalent signs in the Athenian democratic systems as represented by the Constitution of the Cleisthenes. Its basic weakness was that "in it the freedom of citizens could be misused to deprive citizens of freedom. An ambitious man could always be found who, with the help of hired soldiers or with the support of the seduced masses, would carry out a state coup and become a tyrant." They sought to prevent this by the ostracism of potential tyrants considered dangerous to the freedom of citizens.[5]

For Aristotle, "The prerequisite of a democratic system is freedom . . . whose first prerequisite is that one alternately obeys and rules."[6] This simple lesson is a directive for the homeostasis of both freedom and power for all further history. Though perfectly clear, this directive is disrupted so continually, systematically and incorrigibly that a modern form must be formed to heal this split.

The Dangers in an Axiological Transition from Freedom to Power

Let us return to the five characteristics of the value of freedom where the fifth item involves a paradoxical inversion which puts the value of personal freedom into genetic contact with that of social power. What is meant by the strong correlations which emerge from this?

The subject, with his value selections, intellectual creativity, decision-making and value-conditioned activities, penetrates the chain of social determination, where he becomes an active

[3] *Setreni tridni a socialni struktury obyvatelstva CSSR* (Investigation of the Class and Social Structure of the Population of Czechoslovakia) (Prague, 1984). Elaborated here directly from computer data.
[4] Ibid.
[5] V. Zamarovsky, *Grecky zazrak* (the Greek Miracle) (Bratislava, 1990), 200.
[6] Aristotles, *Politika* (Politics) (Prague, 1939).

agent. The greater the possibility of the subject for influencing through his free behavior this or that circle of social relations, the stronger his possibilities for acquiring a share of social power. At the same time, however, the stronger the value placed by the citizen upon his own personal freedom, the greater the striving for his own personal share in power.

A part in this is played by the overall value-orientation structure of the personality. In this sense the following is true: the more well-considered, strong and open be the value structure of a personality, the more purposeful and free the value choices it presupposes and enables; and the more purposeful and free the value choices, the more positive the changes they bring about retrospectively for the actual value structure of the personality. Moreover, the more active the personality, the more one influences through ones value creativity the change in the value climate of society,[7] which value influence, in turn, is a prerequisite of moral authority. Hence, the more democratic the society, the more frequently moral authority is identified with power.

Here, a part is played also by such impulses as the ambition to do something, to be independent in so doing, to be in charge, to have contacts and money, to be outstanding in some way. This can become the pathway to the fulfillment of the ambition for power. But, in itself, the striving for independence need not mean pride in power. It can become such if it becomes absolute as a reflective concern for self on the part of the subject and if the independence of all other subjects is forgotten.

This concerns both the relation between civic subjects in the wider sense of the word and also between subjects at certain levels of social power. Social relations are not mere objects of this influence, for the subject of power itself takes on a social character. Existing power is the result of socially given and realized possibilities of power and influence which combine with a personal desire for power. The genesis of power, then, has both social and individual aspects.

The heading of this chapter is not intended to imply that every existing transition from freedom to power as such is dangerous. It means only that such a transition conceals within it the danger of abuse of power and thus becomes a test of the loyalty to values on the part of public figures, and thus a test of their strength of character.

Power is perhaps the most extremely instrumental value and hence is essentially a lower value than the target value of freedom. This is true as well, for example, in comparison with such values as culture, conscience, order and justice. Furthermore, it can be functional not only as an instrument, but as a directly menial value, whereas if it be separated from a sense of service it ceases to be a positive value and becomes negative.

Particularly in the social spectrum, it can be seen clearly that the realization of the possibility of influencing social relations through one's behavior is not unequivocal. There are two possible implications of the value of freedom upon public influence and thus also upon power which determine the present division between eufunctional and dysfunctional power.

The first implication fulfills the libertine sense of value movement. That value is eufunctional and axiologically legitimate which, while ensuring order, maintains complete loyalty to the value of the freedom from which it emerged. This means that it can be used for measures expanding the freedoms of social and individual subjects. Thus, in public life it expands the possibilities of free value choices by citizens and takes them into account. Such is the power of a consistently democratic government or the minimalizing power of self-administrative bodies which can promote freedom. As a basic value-policy homeostasis this is a marked developmental tendency of the present time.

[7] D. Slejska, op.cit, 263.

With the second implication there occurs a definite change in which the value of freedoms, which had served as a spring board for the acquisition of authority, is suppressed and replaced by the negative value of "naked" despotic power. Such power is dysfunctional and axiologically illegitimate. In the name of "order", it considerably limits and tries to liquidate the possibilities of free value choices in public (and sometimes also in private) matters. Such power becomes absolute in contrariness, limiting the freedom of social and individual subjects. It minimizes and negates freedom, and thus disrupts the present basic value-policy homeostasis.

The realization of one or the other result depends not only on the objective historical situation, but also on the nature of the power ambitions of the appropriate subjects and possibly also on whether or not they have any such ambitions.

If the battle for the value of freedom becomes a battle for the value of power and finally for power itself, this enables the value of freedom to transfer its dynamism to the value of power thus generated.

Not all power, of course, was generated in this fashion, and not only in past centuries when indeed the generation of power by such free-thinking was rather exceptional. Even modern times have not escaped power generated in a usurpatorial, anti-democratic and anti-humane manner.

Passing on and especially maintaining the value of freedom by power is not a matter of course, even in cases where the power was generated by the freedom, for even here acquiring a share in social power is not unequivocal. The extraordinarily strong correlations between the values of personal freedom and public influence only underline the danger which these ambivalences conceal within themselves. Because of this strong connection the hypertrophy of the reality of power at the expense of the value of freedom is not always immediately recognizable. In the value sphere, complicated and painful processes take place before values "mobilize" against swollen power--especially if there is a change in the power which was originally supported or which proclaimed itself to be "popular and democratic". Problems of recognition work cunningly and sometimes can cause long-term backwardness in social reactions right up to the time the causes become absolutely evident. The litmus test by which one can recognize which of the two movements of power prevails is the level of opinion and value tolerance. Real or potential power which is intolerant, whether in totalitarian demands or through party power struggles, either cannot be legitimized by the value of freedom or its legitimacy constantly weakens.

In accordance with this, there emerge as criteria for recognizing the two movements: the possibility of combining the support of a democratic government with critical public complaints against any of its bodies and activities, freedom from fear of the consequences of such criticism, and the ability to dismiss representatives who have lost the confidence of citizens. The basic instrument for ensuring the free-thinking genesis of the attributes of power are, of course, free elections. If value choices play an essential part in the creation of the prerequisites for the free development of personality, the function of political elections is freely to choose other persons for the implementation of public power. This simple confrontation also describes the relationship of freedom and power as a union of opposites. The voter in fact transforms the effect of his freedom into a share in the power of another person whose authority he recognizes. Thus presumes a certain consensus of values between himself and the one he supports.

The Seeking Generation

A paradoxical transition to the state is possible where influential power subjects limit the freedom of those who submit to their influence. This enables the representatives of opposition

movements, speaking on behalf of the interests of the masses (of the exploited, the workers), to attain uncontrollable power based upon the support of these masses.

The legitimacy of the workers' political movement from its beginnings in the 19th century depended upon applying the value of freedom to the labor sphere. Its ideal became free work without exploitation and the right of workers to influence the conditions of their work. This was a mighty revolutionary force, attractive also to a considerable part of the intellectuals who later considered Communism, in comparison with other socialist trends, to be the most consistent form for ensuring free work.

The supporters of Communism did not manage to recognize the moment when the value of free work acquired the nature of an instrumental (agitation and propaganda) factor of support for the power monopoly. This entailed support for profound political non-freedom and factual economic exploitation, even though in some countries this was somewhat more barbarian and in others somewhat more civilized.

This value blindness became fateful for the generation maturing in Czechoslovakia towards the end of the second World War and which "dragged" along the same path as several immediately subsequent generations. The first generation was characterized by a search for value orientation often combined with personal sacrifices in the interest of well-being of mankind, justice, freedom, emancipation, human dignity and human rights. This seemed not very far distant from instrumental utilitarianisms, but in actuality was quite the opposite. Those seeking value orientation were not satisfied with the values they acquired in childhood or in youth, subjected them to internal criticism, and were accessible to the influence of those social forces which they expected could offer them and the whole society higher or truer values. Their approach was reflected in the independent creation of a structure of value orientations.

In the revolutionary historical period of the 40s individual processes combined in a unified search for values. Wide circles of young people who under the influence of family and school had been brought up in the 30s in the spirit of religious or liberal democratic values, or possibly the synthesis of these represented in Czechoslovakia by Masaryk's philosophy could no longer be satisfied within the framework of these values in view of the events at the end of the 30s and in the 40s. In their search for a higher value mooring they changed over to Marxist theoretical and political positions and participated actively in the revolutionary effort of power and economic construction which followed. Many of them temporarily even agreed with the illegal and inhuman trials of the first half of the 50s which, of course, were the first invasion of the consciences of this value seeking generation. In the end these and other cruel power acts caused a critical reaction with constantly expanding effect.

One must not forget that a number of outstanding creative artists of the older generations (the poets J. Seifert, J. Hora and J. Kolár, the aesthete K. Teige, the historian Z. Kalandra, to mention but a few of the most important) became aware even before the second World War of this change. Through their critical approach to what was happening in the USSR, especially the mass arrests and trials there, these artists gradually drew away from their earlier Communist political convictions. Socially, however, this remained in the shadow of the threat of Fascism and especially of the battles of the second World War which led to euphoric illusions concerning the Soviet Union.

This euphoria and its corrective in the arrival of a new power danger were captured by two of the most important Czech writers of the younger "seeking" generation. Milan Kundera (personified by the character Ludvík) wrote:

What most enchanted or even drugged me about the movement was the *wheel of history* in the proximity of which (whether in truth or in imagination) I found myself. At that time, you see, we really were making decisions about the fates of people and things. . . . In the first years the universities were virtually run by the Communist students themselves, deciding on the appointment of professors, the reform of tuition and on the syllabuses. The intoxication which we experienced is normally known as the intoxication of power, but (with a little goodwill) I might even select less severe words: we were bewitched by history; we were intoxicated by the fact that we had jumped up on the back of history and could feel it beneath us. Certainly, later it did indeed mostly develop into an ugly desire for power, but (as all human matters are equivocal) there was in this (perhaps especially among us young ones) at the same time a quite idealistic illusion that it would begin the era of humanity when man (every man) would not be either *outside* history or *under the heel* of history, but would direct it and create it.[8]

P. Hrubý comments that this equivocation marked the subsequent "transformation of love into cruelty, positive values into negative ones and humane ideals into inhumanity." He explains what drove these misguided young people "to purge thousands of democratic professors and students and to replace them with dogmatic idiots against whom later reforming Communists would have to lead a systematic and frustrating fight in the late 50s and 60s."[9]

Ludvík Vaculík (in an imagined dialogue with his father):

Question: "When you had to give up to the cooperative the meadow which we had received only a short time before, how did it feel?"

Answer: "It was a far more important plan than my own plan for that meadow. What I wished for was that free people, free of niggardliness, not distorted by hard labour, should work their combined fields in generous fashion. How could I justify that if I were incapable of such a small sacrifice and discipline?" . . . I was governed by my own desire to benefit human society and I was governed by the tasks which I partly received and partly undertook towards this aim. . . . I more easily found scope and freedom for my impulses and tendencies towards evil than towards good. Wherever the worse side of my human nature appeared it always found understanding and excuses, rather than when I was otherwise obedient. But where I had the best individual intent the way for it was not clear and everywhere there were barriers in negotiating the obstacles.[10]

To complete the picture of the post-war euphoric pro-Soviet atmosphere it may be added that contributions were made also through the odes to the Soviet Army by leading poets who were always very far from Communism both ideologically and politically.

This euphoria was considerably stronger in Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria than in the other then people's democratic countries: in Bulgaria, this was caused by the hitherto unsullied traditional links with Russia; in Czechoslovakia by the awareness of the fact that the victory of the Red Army was a condition of free national life. In Poland and Hungary, on the contrary, this was the affair of a small minority of the public.

[8] M. Kundera, *Zert* (Joke) (Prague, 1969), 70-71.
[9] P. Hruby, *Daydreams and Nightmares, Czech Communist and Excommunist Literature 1917-1987* (New York, 1990), 242.
[10] I. Vaculik, *Sekyra* (The Axe) (Prague, 1969), 126-127.

Czechoslovak conditions evoked after the war wide social participation in the revolutionary transformation of the country. Both together resulted in the absence of that value watchfulness without which it is impossible to perceive when power becomes abuse of the value of freedom.

This entire process took place in Czechoslovakia in such a way that Engels' thesis of freedom and recognized necessity seemed to be "ideally" realized. The arbiter who judged what it is necessary was, of course, the centralized leadership of the ruling Communist Party-- especially the Soviet Party and then also the domestic one. This leadership prescribed the shape of the value of "freedom" for the population. The entire process proved that there is no more absurd historical situation than the one in which power defines value and *eo ipso* limits and annihilates freedom.

The Generation of the 40's Gradually Becoming Clear-Sighted

The seeking generation of the 40s gradually became convinced in the course of the 50s and 60s of the illusory nature of these value "securities" based on a Stalinist type Communist regime. It passed through a complicated process of fresh seeking, the main milestones of which can be characterized as: enchantment - committedness - reservations - disillusion - humiliation - despair - terror - and overcoming these.

The social process of a value-based victory over "recognized necessity" essentially emerges from criticism of the abuse of power. In Czechoslovakia after 1956, this process overcame the post-war euphoria only very slowly. Gradually, it broke out of its enclosure in the circles of writers, social scientists and other intellectuals which were still characteristic of the first half of the 60s. The fact that this process, with much retardation, developed in the second half of the 60s that led to the "Prague Spring" is undoubtedly connected with the fact that the abuse of power under Czechoslovak conditions was also identified with the abuse of the confidence which the vast majority of the public originally invested in the ruling party. Power calculated on this confidence and trust; in the end it over-calculated. Based on the value structure of the majority of people it was ordained that, even though delayed, there could be no other result from the severe policy of the liquidation of even small semi-private enterprises, general collectivization, bureaucracy, purges, limitation of access to studies, as well as forced resolutions approving the trials of the 50s with a view to undermining the collective conscience. Discussions in the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party were limited to party organizations alone and to only the month of April in 1956 (known among the populace as "the month of open gab") so that these discussions should not evolve into criticism of the policy of the Czechoslovak Communist Party and the trials. In any case, it was the source of increasingly anti-democratic power measures.

In the long run these measures had an effect opposite to that intended by their authors. The weaker the social movement which originally underlay the socialist changes and the more it was replaced by the power aspect of the new structure, the less the members of the seeking generation were satisfied with its level of values. The search for higher values which would make it possible to find one's bearings in these problems became the main content of the gradually intensifying value-ideological processes in our country. The period of the years 1956-1968 was marked by the gradual separation of the creative intelligentsia from the official ideology and the increased influence of this intelligentsia on other strata of society. This manifested itself in changes in the value trends in literary, dramatic and social-science creativity, discussions on culture, science and ideology (as early as 1956 in *Literární Noviny*), and finally also the renaissance of sociology as a science which even then was not dominated by class interpretations.

In the course of the 60s the searching majority of this generation carried out a basic political-value self-correction. This was not merely a criticism of the "Stalinism within us," but recognition that the political system had irreparably disrupted those values by which it attempted to legitimate itself. It annihilated not only the values of democracy, humanity, personal freedom and public activity, but also those of free labor itself, social justice, equality, and thus also socialism in general.

This was realized by the seeking part of the post-war generations in all its nakedness in August 1968 and after the coming to power of Husák's team of "normalizers" in 1969. This awareness became the value basis of their latent and later--through the Charta 77 movement--even evident opposition with regard to the neo-Stalinist regime of these normalizers.

The entire period of the "Prague Spring" was the zenith of this search. In this brief period it did not have time to culminate in a clear, value-based program, but it pointed to the concept of democratic socialism based on self-administrative elements which gradually minimize the power sphere. This would create the historical prerequisites of a free self-administrative society, or what the old theorists of socialism formulated as the "decay of the state".

The public personality was schizophrenic, standing between the ideal of a society without exploitation, with class-free humanity, social justice and a society of free people on the one hand, and the reality of monopolistic power and party dictatorship on the other. The path to the resolution of the split faced numerous conflicts between agreement with the ideas of Communism and disagreement with the practical policy of the Communist Party. This was echoed tragically in 1970 by the suicide of the poet Stanislav Neumann, Junior, who took leave of this world with the words:

I have decided to take my own life because I see more and more clearly that the ideals--which made me support the Party and for which my closest friends were executed on May 2, 1945, by the Nazis--are not being realized but, on the contrary, are being trampled underfoot by the political methods of today.[11]

If we consider the laborious pilgrimage of the value-seeking generations, how can we judge the voices which today ignore everything and reject political cooperation not only with present, but also with all former Communists, including those who 20 or more years ago were expelled from the Party, persecuted, sometimes even by illegal imprisonment, and of whom some emigrated. These voices cannot be judged otherwise than as power-motivated denials of the essential prerequisites of democratic policy. The more consistently the new democratic power overcomes them and rejects them the more legitimate it will be.

The Devaluation of Public Life and the Value--Latency Resulting from the Monopoly of Power

In the period of the "Prague Spring", socialism was valued very highly. According to public opinion research of July, 1968, a full 89 percent preferred the further development of socialism, only 5 percent supported the path of capitalist development and 3 percent did not give their point of view.[12]

[11] P. Hruby, op. cit., 114-115.

[12] Results of public opinion polls on certain political problems (internal materials of the UVVM CSAV) (Prague, 1968).

In the course of the next two decades this majority dropped to such an extent that today, with the exception of a few leftist newspapers and magazines, socialism is presented by the mass communication media as something without content or even as pejorative. This is entirely due to the "normalization" powers of that period when those in power sadly rejected the very value which once played the main role in the workers movement and which this power itself had most prized, i.e., the value of socialism. Later, it came to light that this marked also the beginning of the devaluation of what was undeniable in that value and confirmed by centuries of tradition.

This devaluation began in the August '68 occupation with their liquidation of the democratic-reform wing within the Communist Party, the deprofessionalization of a large number of competent specialists, and the rapid forcing into conformity of the entire public sphere in the neo-Stalinist spirit. Everything was clear from the start; no complicated processes of gradual development of awareness had to take place; the power did not even expect any value justification from creative people. Characteristic of such a period of stagnation is the overall devaluation of official social relations and attitudes thereto. This influenced a wide spectrum of social values, first and foremost, of course, that of public activity itself.

The Prague Spring of 1968 represented a certain peak of emphases upon the public activity of citizens. This is shown, directly and indirectly, by a whole series of data from public opinion polls of the time. The public emphases were stronger in March than analogical emphases upon the standard of living. Whereas in the middle of February only 11 percent of citizens among all the social measures preferred the effort to intensify the process of democratization (including criticism regarding leaders who were incapable, the fulfillment of words with deeds, rehabilitation, civic freedoms and free elections). By the end of March this proportion had risen to 32 percent. On the contrary, the proportion preferring tackling questions concerning the standard of living in the same period dropped from 38 percent to 18 percent. At that time, too, 74 percent of citizens were more or less systematically following the discussion of internal political problems, and a further 23 percent sometimes or in part. Interest in information on public events was almost universal.[13]

The opposite trend is demonstrated by a secondary analysis of scales of values which the author carried out on the basis of research on active wage earners in Czechoslovakia in the 70s and 80s. A summary of the results of 15 inquiries in the 70s shows that the value of public activity was 20th in order in a series of 21 values (preceding only the value of technology and innovation). An analogical summary of 13 inquiries in the 80s shows that the value of public activity had actually shifted to the last place. The weakening of this value continued throughout the 80s: in 1984 only 11 percent of the actively earning population considered it very important to actively influence public affairs, in 1988 only 9 percent.[14]

The system of monopoly power established after "normalization" which trampled the contribution of the Prague Spring represented, then, a marked resignation-devaluation type. It was valued not by society, but only by itself. In the value scales it showed in the overall, and in comparison with the Prague Spring, an exceptionally strong devaluation of public activity. In the eyes of the majority, the limited and mostly undignified public activity offered by "normalization" policy under the supervision of the single Party lost its fundamental value base; indeed after 20 years the public was an outsider as far as its values were concerned.

This devaluation had a negative effect on the possibility of active and independent public activity within the framework of the given power system, but did not affect the entire system of

[13] Ibid.

[14] D. Slejska, *Vyvojove procesy lidskych hodnot a nase doba* (Development Processes of Human Values and Our Times) (Prague, 1990), 78.

freedom values. In 1975 research on the value of freedom achieved fifth place in a table of 39, after the values of health, family, peace and friendship. Together with them, freedom represented a dominant value considerably in advance of the other values. At first glance it may seem absurd that in a series where freedom is so highly valued the value of public activity, on the other hand, was devalued to last place, 39th on the scale of values.[15] Undoubtedly, this is a sign of devaluation of the resignation, not the saturation, type. It did not arise through satisfaction of the inner need for public activity, but from longer experience which showed that, under the given unfree conditions, it is useless to expect of public activity anything socially beneficial.

According to a more in-depth analysis, the narrower framework of the resignation effect does not deny the value of public activity, but rather shows that what is critical here is the more general value of freedom, reacting to the completely insufficient general possibilities of its realization under actual conditions. Value resignation of a given possibility comes as the first stage or instrument of value criticism of the level of the target value of freedom. This criticism dissolves the present approach and thus opens a view of values necessary for surpassing the horizon of the possibilities allowed by power.

If the dominant value of the rulers and their supporters is power through which they attempt to maintain their positions by all possible means, then it can be expected that the self-valorization of this power will affect more or less unfavorably the living conditions of the ruled citizens. It is not, however, determined in advance whether the value status of these circumstances (i.e., their recognized importance, not the evaluation of their existing level) under the influence of the ruling policy will weaken, i.e., that they will be devalued (usually in the resignation style) or will, on the contrary, react by their being critically strengthened.

Both critical valorization and resignation to devaluation of certain values are the result of growing dissatisfaction with how a particular value is realized in a given situation. The data shows that both these processes were created in combination in the stagnating "normalization" system. In this way it showed a marked resignation and critical social effect of the self-valorization of existing power. The more the monopoly power bodies promote their value unself-critically, the more there increases in society not only the resignation devaluation of political participation within the framework of the given systems, but also a critical breakthrough from that framework in the direction of basic free-thinking values. This leads to a general view that promotes processes which overturn the given system.

Research from 1988[16] uncovered a whole series of value paradoxes which seemed to portend the eve of the social change which occurred a year later, in November. In the results of this research, on the one hand more democratic conditions for participation in management were in the last place of recognized priorities and, at the same time, lack of interest in public affairs was in the last place of shortcomings for which the former system was reproached. This last place does not, of course, mean that it is the least frequent shortcoming, but that out of all those listed it is the shortcoming which least worried those replying to the questionnaire. As in a whole series of previous researches, it was indicated that, as a result of the stagnation period, the value of participation in public life was considerably devalued.

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[15] D. Slejska, *Hodnotove zebricky nekterych skupin obyvatelstva a souhrnne typy hodnotovych orientaci* (Value Scales of Certain Groups of the Population of Collective Types of Value Orientations) (Pardubice, 1988), 5-6.

[16] D. Slejska, *Spolecenske podminky, potreby a hodnoty* (Social Conditions, Requirements and Values) (Pardubice, 1989).

At the same time, there seemed a veiled awareness that without this participation it is impossible to eliminate any of the other problems and shortcomings mentioned in our society. This is the specific "positively apathetic" criticism where 58 percent of citizens complained of shortcomings in services and supplies, 56 percent of careerism and protectionism, 36 percent about bribes, 33 percent of excessive prices and sales "beneath the counter", and 30 percent of bureaucracy. But only 14 percent of the citizens were worried by lack of interest in public affairs--which makes it quite impossible to overcome these problems.

The devaluation of the value of public activity affected in one blow also such values as the homeland and patriotism, enterprise promotion (not as regards the power elite), personal aspirations, publicity and material interest.

This attitude towards public activity achieved expression finally also in relation to the officially proclaimed reconstruction. There appeared a disjunction of criticism and activity which characterized the deformed potential of the abnormal society. This was characterized by the following main traits: critical opinions of the present system in the autumn of 1988 were associated with strengthened value orientations towards peaceful family life. These were dissociated from the value of public activity, culminating in a skeptical attitude to reconstruction (55 percent of economically active citizens). On the other hand, there existed conformist attitudes to the present system associated with strengthened orientations towards the value of public activity and with active willingness to contribute to the tasks of reconstruction (21 percent). At first glance, these results seem paradoxical, but they were the logical result of the majority lack of confidence in the decision-making sphere of the "normalization period."

The repressive or stagnation period of development can be characterized axiologically as a period with a marked prevalence of devalorization processes over valorization processes. At the same time, mainly activation values were devalorized (public life, attempt to improve education and qualifications) while on the contrary deactivation values were valorized (a quiet life without risks and stresses, adaptation to living conditions, etc.).

This is, however, only one level of observation. The second trend of the value crisis was quite certainly realized by the transition of value criteria to a latent position, preparing there the actualization which took place openly in November, 1989. In this sense the latent period appears to be a phenomenon which prepares for revalorization and a new beginning.

In the process of the general devalorization of the public sphere which occurred after 1969 there was created in a latent position the positive and successful value counterweight replacing defeatism. In this position value potential was preserved. This took on supreme form in the Chartist movement, various other initiatives and in samizdat editions. Their latent effectiveness showed only as the tip of the iceberg, under which was hidden the majority of those not in agreement with the system.

Our own experience and that of sociological research confirms that the main mass of the value potential of the future change was not only maintained, but also was developing in hundreds of thousands of workplaces. Its micro-climate enabled a mutual and completely open exchange of information, value and evaluative attitudes on the social, economic and political situation, including attitudes to the highest level of decision-making. These took on the most varied forms, beginning with basic analyses and ending with anecdotes. Here, too, the samizdat editions found their impatient readers. The active bearers of these processes were in the first place those who after 1969 had to leave their professional employment.

Knowledge of this situation forces one to correct somewhat the absolutist formulation of V. Havel[17] to the effect that in the period of stagnation "biological time proceeded, but social time stopped". The situation could appear thus only on the level of official structures, but the value sphere demonstrates that social time cannot be reduced to this level. In no period can there exist a value vacuum or could value movement cease. In the latent individual and micro-collective form it continued constantly as the stimulation of the pulse of life.

The latent-value sphere of the 70s and 80s considerably exceeded in extent in critical quality and in self-evidence the comparable pre-January period. In the new period large numbers of non-conformist citizens were either not allowed access to public activity or themselves rejected it. This does not mean, however, that all retired into their own shells and avoided any communication on socially important problems. Rather than closed shells, there was a well-functioning network of informal connections open to all citizens with opposition tendencies.

The end of the period of stagnation was indicated by the fact that in its framework the new values could not be seen behind the ruins of the old ones whereas dissident and samizdat initiatives now exceeded the given framework. In their latent or semi-apparent position their value creativeness did not die out, but was even more appreciated than in times of stormy openness. In a situation of political and ideological monopoly this led to opposition-oriented functioning of latent (particularly free-thinking) values which "smoldered beneath the surface" and threatened the monopoly of the decision-making centre.

The Present and Its Prospects

If in November 1989 in Czechoslovakia there occurred peacefully the liquidation of monopoly power and a basic turning point in the direction of the democratization of the social system, this does not mean that since then smooth positive changes have been taking place in the value sphere. This sphere has become generally more dynamic. Together with social differentiation, value tension has also strengthened. There is, for example, the tension between value orientations towards private enterprise and stable work, or between the values of individuality which have strengthened considerably and sociability which, though to a lesser extent, have weakened.

Of particular significance for our theme is the sharpening of tension in the relationship between the value of contributing to social benefit and that of acquiring influential power. This increased value tension also has affected power relations. The first sociological research projects in 1990 showed first and foremost the rapid appreciation of the value of "having the opportunity to influence public affairs". Comparable data (according to a scale of 1 - 4) indicate this rising trend: 1984 - 2.24; 1988 - 2.33; January 1990 - 2.73; May 1990 - 2.78; November 1990 - 2.89. According to the height of the index difference of the total rise (+ 0.65) this value is in third place in the order of 17 comparable values behind the values of "having the opportunity for private enterprise (+ 1.06) and "living for oneself, not being dependent on people and society" (+ 0.97).

If in the 1984-1988 period there was a drop in the proportion of citizens who considered it very important to influence public affairs actively from 11 percent to 9 percent, according to the investigation in January 1990 this proportion rose sharply to 19 percent and in May of the same year (the month of the Parliamentary Elections) to as much as 22 percent.[18] In November 1990 it even reached 28 percent.

[17] V. Havel, *1969-1988*, samizdat typed manuscript.
[18] Ibid.

The valorization of personal activity which occurs in democratically directed social change thus acquired important political effect. The strengthening of the value of public influence undoubtedly responded most sensitively and directly to the popular movement of November, 1989, when new circles of the population and especially young people were drawn into the newly established public activity or democratic foundations.

At present the strengthening of the value of public influence in a sample of the general public is very variable. Unequivocally valued was only the possibility of having one's own influence on public affairs; on the contrary, there was rather a devaluation of the willingness to participate in the development of society through one's own hard and selfless work. The value of active participation in the development of society was devalued according to the same index from 3.19 in 1984 to 3.04 in 1990 (the same value for January and May). Not until the research of November, 1990 was there again a positive trend (3.36).

If we look at the absolute levels of the indices, those processes look as if the former greater differences between the two value dimensions had drawn closer together. The index difference of the two in 1984 was 0.95, in January 1990 only 0.31, and in May 0.26. At first glance this indicates a functional balancing of gains and losses in the value homeostasis of public activity.

In a relative time comparison, however, there appeared here, first of all, public activity as a value from which people, in comparison with the earlier period, expect increased profits for reduced efforts and sacrifice. This showed in the not negligible tendency to reduce the whole of this complex relationship to an effort to participate in power. This was an inevitable result of the lack of political culture after the long period of power monopoly when public activity was disvalued by the marked outsider. This characteristic does not, of course, refer to the honest Cartists students and other social groups who initiated the November events.

These discrepant tendencies were confirmed to a certain extent through small-scale investigations which made it possible in the Spring of 1990 to compare the order of 39 values in groups of technical-economic workers and nurses with analogical orders from 1984. Similarly in both groups the value of freedom there came to the fore (from 6th to 4th place), whereas the value of public activity in both groups dropped to last place (in the case of the technical economic workers from 36th to 19th places, in the case of the nurses from 38th to 19th place).

If we return to the dynamic limitation of the value of freedom, at the beginning there is a clear tendency toward a weakening of the fourth element in the above sequence. This already signals certain unfavorable tendencies in the creation of power relations because the development of public social activities plays a decisive part in the maintenance of the value homeostasis of freedom and power.

There is no doubt that a content analysis of the Czechoslovak press for the years 1989-1991 would also show a value movement along the freedom-power line. Its final realization in the direction of greater freedom or greater power has not yet been resolved. To show that a real danger of the negation of freedom is emerging we present two typical voices reflecting experiences directly from the centre of political events.

The opinion of a leading figure of the Obroda (Revival) club, a deputy of the Czech National Council:

I do not like the fact that the opportunity which the whole of society had for change is being used by a large number of people in a selfish manner, only for themselves: they are elbowing their way to power. This is a left-over from the old way of thinking. They think that it is merely a matter of the exchange of power structures, that up to now one group of people ruled, and now there is a

chance for them to come to power for a time. I think that these people are mistaken, because democracy, which is what we all want, will no longer allow anyone to come to power for a long time. It will not allow anyone to remain in any function and control society without the prerequisites. The subterfuges, the lying and incrimination of other people which we see in some political parties and movements, have upset and hurt me very much and I have tried to stand out against them.[19]

The opinion of the Chairman of the Czechoslovak People's Party:

I was not very pleased by the relations among peoples, namely, that people are against one another, that relations between people are far from what they should be. Many of the problems around us are becoming personal, while the real problems are not dealt with. This arises from the fact that people who lived alongside one another with various opinions were so absolutely convinced that they became enemies. This really must change; we must learn to live alongside one another with differing opinions. We must work and study alongside one another and also smile at one another.[20]

The more profound and intensive valorization of public activity the firmer will be the value bases of the new democracy. This valorization will not be possible without overcoming the development of discrepancies between the expected value gains from public activity and the willingness to sacrifice something in work for the public.

In this direction the following will be particularly effective:

a) the combination of the initial euphoric generation of this value with its critical and especially self-critical generation, without which neither ideological nor political plurality is feasible; to criticism of the past must be added self-criticism of the present;

b) the formation of the culture of public life under the conditions of pluralism, i.e., overcoming the phenomena of power jealousy, party habits, etc. (these phenomena are natural after a long period of devaluation of public activity);

c) political parties seen not only as an instrument for the acquisition of a share in power, but also for participation by people in politics;

d) disvaluation of the slogan: "The end justifies the means", and the value experience of the need for the means to be as democratic as the aims; and

e) overcoming the closed "cabinet" policy through ensuring the widest possible current information before decisions are made.

It is necessary to emphasize that even a democratic revolution does not eliminate the ambivalence of personal freedom and power, but puts them in new positions. Like the devaluation of public activity, a disjunction of criticism and also activity was typical of the period of stagnation directly disrupted by the November events.

In his social committedness, the subject to some extent or another finds himself in a situation of conflict between values confirming the given social-power relations and those which axiologically exceed this state and criticize it in the name of developing higher relations. The value-based criticism of the existing situation usually is not formless. It does not erase it from history but takes prior development into account and evaluates prospectively which of its

[19] V. Kolmistr, *Rude Pravo* (December 27, 1990).
[20] J. Lux, *Rude Pravo* (December 27, 1990).

conflicting aspects can be the starting-point for development at a higher level and what is ripe for rejection as out-dated with regard to value.

What is decisive, however, is to hold values above reality, not to allow oneself to be manipulated into a situation where the only alternative is conformity, even with regard to democratic power. Certainly in one's existential interest one must reckon with reality and when deciding on one's approach to material values, take into account the productive possibilities provided by reality. This approach, however, becomes conformist if the subject is seeking the way to overcome the limitedness of these possibilities and to build for himself a more favorable existence through the adaptation of his values to those who dispose of means of production and, in a wider sense, of social power in general.

Here again arises the problem of relations between target and instrumental values. The freedom (i.e., free-thinking) values have their roots in the human need for self-realization on the basis of one's own free value selections as individuals and as smaller or larger collectives with linked interests. This is why they resist one-sided pressure into an instrumental position. This is demonstrated by the fact that in such a case the utilization of value potentials is far from being complete or that similar intentions can even be completely unsuccessful.

The value potential of freedom is given free rein only if freedom (and thus also democracy, emancipation and other derived values) belongs to the sense of the historical revolution--if it is, then, a target value--and if the mechanism itself of the setting and selection of social aims is profoundly democratized.

This does not exclude, but on the contrary also conditions the effective instrumental effect of the values of freedom--but only until such effect slides into the chasm of manipulation. Any elements of manipulation with democratic values devalues their purposefulness and thus also weakens and makes impossible their effectiveness in relation to economic development. If democracy and self-government are emphasized only as the "lever" for initiative and interest, then the danger of manipulation comes closer. The main target value of the system continues then to be power, which wants to strengthen itself.

In the target concept values come forward as a criterion of the evaluation of the procedure for the realization of programmed social changes. Only respect for these can guard the dividing line separating the true target and their instrumental values from value manipulations, true self-government from manipulated "self-government", the ecological imperative from mere ecological inclinations, etc.

Respecting the mutual standing of target and instrumental values (together with the openness of social relations, pluralism and tolerance in and after the period of social change) is the most certain guarantee that one will not be manipulated even by public opinion. If humanity and freedom are truly target values which have been developing since the beginning of the democratic change, then they cannot be manipulated by man as an instrumental value at all. If we experience in practice the elements of such manipulation, this indicates barriers in the target value functioning of humanity overall and free-thinking values in particular.

Czech society like the societies of the other Central and Eastern European countries, is now at the crossroads from powerlessness to power and from the limitation of freedom to true freedom. The point is whether the new power will be used for measures expanding the freedom of social and individual subjects or whether it will become an end in itself, losing its broader value sense.

The tension between these two alternatives is far from resolved. A number of phenomena speak in favor of the first alternative: freedom to associate, free elections, the abolition of censorship, and the possibility of independents standing for election on their own. A number of

other phenomenal, on the other hand, speak in favor of the second alternative: partisanship, the gradual distancing of the new political élite from the masses of the electorate and the subsequent loss of the essential retrospective connection, the unwillingness of the main revolutionary force to limit its own powers, and the purposeful suppression of democratic elements from the economic sphere. (After the liquidation of the last remnants of self-government there began the liquidation of the ability to participate in management and the reduction of participation to the mere passive information of the workers). In this and in many other matters there appear tendencies to absolutize the value of power in its negative sense. True tolerance is only slowly forcing its way into life.

The Czechoslovak public has all the prerequisites for the promotion of the first of the two alternatives. It is a country which experienced profoundly the epochs of the liberal democratic and the socialist social systems. It is capable of appreciating their positive aspects and of avoiding such negative aspects as are represented in particular by the social insensibility of liberalism and the Stalinist totalitarian political systems which abused socialist relations.

It is natural that the value of public activity also depends on what and how things are resolved in social, and especially in political, life. Research from the autumn of 1988 shows that the majority of the economically active population supported the democratic changes, especially as concerned the selection of capable people for functions, the elimination of careerism, nepotism and bureaucratism. The majority, however, at the same time considered as priorities elements from the former régime: the guarantee of work, education, the ensuring of health care and life-long social security. These are two sides of the same coin traditionally described (in our country since 1968) as democratic socialism.[21]

At the time that these lines were being written the Czechoslovak government was implementing a procedure which practically not only annihilated socialism as regards values, but also the social security which is guaranteed in a number of countries with a prevailing capitalist economy. It was initiating a circular return to the "purest" possible liberalism. Some political scientists (Svitak) characterize this as a return not only to the period between the two World Wars, but to the 19th century.

Such tendencies grossly infringe upon the rules of value dynamics. Value development also preserves opposing traditions without which the homeostasis of the spiral formation of value structures is unthinkable. The latest sociological research shows that the value structure of the Czechoslovak public is tending emphatically towards the dialectal combination of personal freedoms, group tolerance and social security.

The present orientation towards "circular development" creates a reality which somewhat complicates and postpones the above-mentioned homeostasis, which nevertheless it will appear on the agenda sooner or later, for concealed value processes will bring it closer.

Summary

The axiological connection of freedom and power is given in principle by the fact that personal freedom through public activity introduces the public influence of individual and social subjects. This is verified by the strong correlations of the appropriate value symbols. There are two possible implications of the value of freedom into the value of public influence and thus of power:

1) Axiologically legitimate democratic powers, expanding the possibilities of free value selections by the citizens;

[21] D. Slejska, "The Freedom of Values and the Value of Freedom," *Filozofickl casopis* (no. 3, 1990).

2) Illegitimate power, limiting the possibilities of such selections in public matters and thus disrupting the basic relationship of the value-political homeostasis. This is proven by the abuse and subsequent annihilation of the value of free work by the Stalinist system.

The Fascist threat and the battles of the second World War led to euphoric illusions about this system in the Czechoslovak public. The searching generation of the 40s passed from liberal democratism to Communism, from which they expected greater freedom. The political trials and the revelation of the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party led to disillusion which transformed this generation into one of growing awareness. This process culminated not only politically but also axiologically in the "Prague Spring". Its violent interruption led to the gradual devaluation of socialism and of public life, to the transition of freedom values to latent positions and to a value disjunction of criticism and activity.

November, 1989 blew apart the entire value sphere and especially sharpened the tension between the rapidly strengthening value of public influence and committed social activity. Only the basic valorization of this activity can raise the new power to the level of modern political culture and tolerance.

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Chapter III
The Problem of Decision-Making in a Decentralized Society

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There is no doubt that the Czech character . . . has often been expressed--in history as well as in contemporary times--not by what Czechs have done, but by what they have not done in not managing to achieve something. *F. Peroutka*

Introduction

The problem of decision-making in a society which calls for decentralization as one of the conditions for the transition to pluralism in this interim period which can be characterized as one of minor centralization, is charged with various aspects of the burden of the bureaucratic mentality.

We shall concentrate only on those connected with decision-making in the sphere of political power, and assume that this will sufficiently illustrate the subject. We will begin from a preliminary hypothesis, for which we shall be seeking a certain justification through possible empirical cases, namely, that the problem of decision-making in the present stage of social development is marked essentially by fear of taking full *responsibility for one's own decisions*. Present circumstances make manifest an insufficient willpower to achieve the true uniqueness of the act of decision-making which was long rooted deeply within us. The new decision-makers tend to avoid positions that entail fulfilling the duties of previous decisions.

We witness a situation in which decision-making is conducted in various ways and to different degrees with the object of transferring responsibility for the given decision into a space in which it is difficult to find orientation and thus one's share of responsibility. This space is fashioned within an obscure power structure which does not facilitate the implementation of the decisions made. To a certain degree, we can say that those in power have managed to devise a sort of permanent escape into semi-obscurity. Thus, the decisions made serve a purely demonstrative function, a totally untested set of instructions from which it is possible to retreat at any time. The basic guideline for the decision-maker consists in shaking off his share of the responsibility for decisions considered questionable when made. If we add to this the phenomenon of the bureaucratic burden of society as a whole, including the system of so-called *participation networks* (to be treated separately) with the odd effect of *negative solidarity*, we have the basic characteristics of the subject of this paper.

Richard Rorty's remark, that everything that is of basic importance within us is fate, enables us to see the sources of possible fears as emanating from long-term feelings of inadequacy in decision-makers from which flow a variety of incessant misunderstandings.

In harmony with that fate one attempts to create such conditions as would make it possible for that streak of fate not to follow the negative mechanisms of decisions. This may be accomplished by patterns of resignation and fear, as this study will endeavor to show. In the words of Hölderlin: "What we seek is everything," i.e., all that is worth finding. Accordingly, the aim of this paper is to point out the situation which delimits the space of what seemingly is fate.

The Problem of Decision-Making

The Need for Shade

We noted in the introduction that our subject would include selected aspects of the problem of decision-making which are connected to the character of political power. It would be a good thing to indicate the reasons for this.

Manifestations of the problem of decision-making in direct connection with the preceding strictly centralized society obviously are in the sphere of politics, in the broad meaning of that term. As political action has faltered into the sphere of everyday--and often quite private--decision-making, we can follow there the habits formed during the period of rigid centralization. These have taken root to such a degree that it is impossible to draw a dividing line between the pattern of decision-making of those in power and their counterparts in private life. Thus, political decision-making reflects the decision-making mechanisms in the spheres of everyday life. Their richly varied history and well-tested modes are such deeply ingrained methods that they are easy to follow even among decision-makers new to political power.

We can speak thus of the effect of vacuous manifestations of decision-making action. This means that in the majority of cases the given decision is manifested not as a decision about something, but as a decision on something not yet decided upon. In other words, this broadly shared habit lies in the art of presenting as a decision what actually is postponed as a problem for later resolution or directly substituted by another problem. Thus, decision-making becomes a postulate of power, but never its result or effect.

To explain this phenomenon further we have chosen the hypothesis that present-day decision-makers continue the inertia of their previous habits by a method of double *semiotization*. Jacques Derrida describes this phenomenon as the following formula from the moment in which meaning exists, reality consists in its signs. In this respect, the meaning of a given problem is what the decision-makers set in their description and marking.

Accordingly, the mechanism looks like this: problems which necessitate a certain stand and then require a decision as to their solution are, by means of a well-tried ritual of semiotic excommunication, set apart from a realistic context by means of a transfer of meanings, and then "solved" in such a way that the fact of their existence is transferred, with the aid of suitably chosen markings following carefully the transfer of meaning from the plane of real topical phenomena to that of meaning, constructed signs which are subject to manipulation and subordinate to mutually adaptable expectations.

In double semiotization, in the first phase the plane of realistic phenomena is limited by the degree of accepted expectation, introducing a set of rules for delimiting *what* is to be marked. In the second phase, once we know *what* this is, having selected suitable meanings which are capable of bringing into harmony the mutual expectations of the decision-makers, all we need to determine is *how*. Yet, this *how* is directly connected to the effect of the whole operation. The choice of this *how* is necessarily dependent upon the expectations of the decision-makers.

It is then a new semiotic transfer of the already chosen characteristics according to the formula for eliminating disadvantages. The achievement of concord results from a necessary compromise which slowly changes into the optimum variant; that is to say, decision-making is achieved by postponing the decision to a time when the ratio of advantages and disadvantages will be clearer. Substitutions may be made in cases where the model for compensating the expectations is not sufficiently attractive. This, however, brings about an odd phenomena: the topical problem is in large part sufficiently postponed by this non-solution method and taken out of the context of the present time, it becomes the past through the given logic of the course taken.

Here we can observe the spiritual mentality of the bureaucratic decision-making model. If there is a problem to handle, it is allowed to have as few inter-relations to the real working context as possible and transferred into the past as decidedly as possible through the gradual postponement of a decision on the subject. The past--that which is not so urgent--does not require immersing oneself into the given decision in terms of the topical and thus dangerous *now*. It is somewhat over and done with, i.e., something a little safer, that cannot shock us through its ceaseless visibility. Here the habit employed consists in creating a shadow, the place where decent problems should abide until the time for their solution, so as to give the decision-makers their pertinent share of advantages. There is, of course, another advantage that comes with this job: from the semi-darkness of the shade it is not lucidly apparent what exactly is happening or what is supposed to be happening.

This expression must obviously be connected in some deeper way with a need of present-day bureaucrats which could, roughly-speaking, be called a form of "supplementing the past," as if we preferred to project backwards rather than towards the present and near future. The "bureaucrat" has the tendency to create from the past a store for what--in his conception--has not yet had the chance of happening in reality. He needs urgently to supplement this past in harmony with his unfulfilled expectations for it.

That is where a sort of eschatological shift takes place: as a spiritual bureaucrat, the decision-maker is capable of creating a better past than his anticipation of things to come. He thus stops shouldering responsibility for things present and less so for things future, given that future things will always light up the darkened present, while one can "enter" the past only with a lamp. As lamps cast shadows according to the one who holds them, decision-makers become potential contenders for owning the lamps, so that as holders of the lamps they can manipulate anything subject to their light. For this the presupposition is his artificially reinforced need for shade. Thus it is characteristic of the bureaucratic decision-maker to suffer from insecurity when threatened by the nakedness of one who is not protected from the light by means of which one--at will--can simply see.

The Escapes to Irresponsibility

Reality does not forgive contempt. *J.K. Huysmans*

By irresponsibility we understand here the issuing of decisions connected to what we have already transferred to the non-topical, and yet still present as topical. Such a decision is now a mere administrative ruling on what has just escaped us. Irresponsibility is most obvious where through this operation several issues accumulate into one new whole, creating a new and sovereign context, which contains only those matters which are more or less in the past and yet are presented as a present problem. This constitutes an interesting paradox: as society is mostly in a state far advanced when these "belated" decisions are presented as still topical, people can only decipher what they are supposed to do with great trouble and general astonishment: where normally they would "walk", they are expected to walk backwards.

The reason is obviously the irresponsibility for things present, that is, the need to name things or problems so that they can be perceived in a parallel continuity of time. For spiritual bureaucrats, it is characteristic that a problem is essentially liable to becoming invalid if its present time status is removed, and only problems which have lost urgency are treated as present. We seem to have

ears that, with the help of an echo, register problems which have faded away as present and urgent: this is a type of echo-culture.

Such escape into irresponsibility is a certain contempt towards reality. Moreover, in our case it is accompanied by a feeling of resignation towards the present, as a dignified expression of political strategy. In this situation it is, of course, difficult for the new decision-makers to recognize that they are here because there should be something to decide and not in order to keep a clear desk, particularly if things return to that imagined desk mostly only after having been there repeatedly before and having become non-topical through the non-decision-making strategy. What emerges is a certain fixation upon a *stereotype of returns*, that is to say, a perpetual circle of continuous decision-making about issues not decided on in the past. This fixed stereotype is the main gateway through which to enter into the comforting feeling of irresponsibility because it provides a temporary feeling of safety. All that is needed for actual escape is, as we know, to increase speed.

Preliminary Summarization

Primary semiotization is actually an act of disconnecting uncomfortable contexts. It is simultaneously a demonstration of how decision-makers handle reality. Secondary semiotization occurs at the moment when what is left after disconnecting uncomfortable contexts through suitable remarking has to be revived, i.e. must be remarked again with the aim of the decision-makers achieving consensus about what is to be transferred into the non-topical. Because expectations as to things possible in the present are not easy to harmonize, this becomes an act of invalidating the topical. This shows that the non-present things thus created are not ready to be resolved, but are to be "finished-solved". That is, they are ready for another transcription and consensus in harmony with the customary stereotype of return when they can be expected to be solved by way of an acceptable alternative. However, in this situation when the decision-makers are not capable of making decisions, which are linked with expectations of a pertinent distribution of advantages, transfer of the topical into the past is a sort of liberation.

From the point of view of the streak of fate we mentioned at the beginning, the only viable alternative is to avoid such situations through timely decision-making.

The Residue of Firm Centralization

Participation Networks

The stronger the power the more we fear it, and the more willing we are to attempt to win favor by paying tribute to that power. *R. Scruton*

Decades under the past political system created conditions for the origin of a social phenomenon which we shall call here the system of participation networks. Amidst all the routine work activities, there began to appear new kinds of activities aimed at gaining such advantages as higher status, education, or health care. At first this was automatic but then purposely to create an elaborate advantage distribution system. This concerned advantages which were unattainable in any other way than by joining in these participation networks based on a model of qualitative preference. This game balanced differences caused by the rigidity of the political system due to its ideological formulae and ensured advantages only for those in political power. Those participating

in these networks used them to relate their priority in view of their position inside the network to the advantages which they could gain through the help of these networks. It was an elicited system for redistributing the insufficient advantages among all those who were willing to play the game and simultaneously had something to offer. Gradually the participation networks became a machinery for administration and power which strengthened their effect to the same degree as their safety.

The participants in this network created a new "class", difficult to name by any of the classical sociological terms, which influenced decisively the offer and demand in all the important interest spheres of society. This new "class" of society created its own method for protecting its interests.

This was based on the principle of *negative solidarity*, that is to say in cases of maximum danger always to express solidarity with the network participants who were directly threatened, i.e., those in power, instead of with others who might also be directly threatened. Knowing of the insufficiency of legitimate arguments in favor of their own advantages, those in power and the network participants played a game whose rules had been set in advance and in which there were to be no clearly defeated parties. It was absolutely impossible for power and participants to actually face each other in the open. The mechanism could work only because both the participating parties used the same side of the sports-ground and played for the same team.

If we base our explanation on this presupposition, then surely it is obvious why this symbiotic system suffered from only one acute ailment. If the power ever wanted to intervene against its well-fattened offshoot in an effort to revitalize itself, it had to do so in such a way as not to make obvious at first who would be hit by the rectifying decision. Otherwise, when all was too obvious, it could be presumed successfully that negative solidarity with all the pertinent protection mechanisms would follow. That is to say that the possibly affected people would so greatly increase their expression of solidarity towards the power, including offers of participation in advantages not easily accessible then for those in power, that it would become too disadvantageous for the power to make and apply such a decision due to the losses on its own playing field.

Decision-making thus was shaped by the effort to create a sufficiently clever system in which it would not be obvious in advance who would be gaining and who, on the contrary, would be losing--or who would gain by fighting them. Such decision-making later took root in the actual system of participation networks, so that acts of basic decision-making were becoming more and more difficult. On the whole it is probable that the problems of the present day decision-makers have there their inescapable beginnings. Obviously, the acts of decision-making are thoroughly investigated beforehand, even before the necessary personal calculation of advantages and negative sanctions connected immediately to direct responsibility. The fear of losing advantages is stronger than the will to enforce a standpoint.

Let us try and summarize the basic points of the elements of the functional rules for the participation networks, which still burden the decision-making act:

-Decision-making basically is oriented to possible negative sanctions and thus also to a calculation of the actual danger of being dropped out of the current distribution network;

-The principle of negative solidarity as specially-aimed counterplanning, that is to say, as a sort of preventive bow to power as the force which can be gained or won over through such an act of adoration and self-effacement; and

-A self-protective attitude, that it to say, a certain infantile behavior directed toward unimpeachable safety through minimized responsibility for acts of decision-making.

Seemingly Safe Elucidation

Under the supposition of a gradual elimination of the comfortable habits of decision-making, and deviation from the bureaucratic custom of infantile fear and concern for the safety of advantageous positions, it may be possible to move forward to the point at which more adequate concepts of decision-making can be developed. One of the possible tools to be applied for such a change seems to be the introduction of decision-making competence, putting "in parentheses" current immaturity in responsibility for one's own decisions. This competence must be seen as highly attractive for the decision-maker.

There remains, of course, the unanswered question of the desire to return the current decision-making criteria in order to avoid and thus to protect the channel for the distribution of advantages. We can expect a repetition of the above formula in which the acts of decision-making are ground up into fragments, the borderline of their impact is made unclear and a semi-darkness develops which safely conceals them and makes it difficult to elucidate, differentiate or determine anything. There the main role would be played by knowledge of the topography of the power distribution network as a space for mutual refuge in the obscure technology of creating advantageous positions.

By way of conclusion: current developments seem to point to and bear out the old habits, the well-tried methods of decision-making. We must hope that the introduction of the decision-making competence will not be marked with increased fear on the part of people who are now becoming the decision-makers. This fear would bring about a real panic, should things go wrong so that further acts of decision-making, linked to large doses of fear, would be a disproportionate risk. As society seems to be suffering from frustrations that have not yet been removed it seems difficult to eliminate such fears in an adequate way. Every basic political decision should take this factor into consideration. Otherwise, movement in society could become movement round its own axis of experienced disappointment over what we did not manage to bring to life. St. Theresa of the Cross noted this: "If you do not realize and practice virtues, you will remain nothing but dwarfs."

Summary

The problem of decision-making has been linked to that of how to heal situations in the decision-making process connected to fear of responsibility for erroneous decisions. The former social system created sufficiently strong sanctions that erroneous decisions resulted in a loss of advantageous position or direct elimination from the system of political power.

The mechanism of so-called participation networks was a compensatory distribution system of advantages and served to protect against negative sanctions. They were accompanied by an incessant need for a refuge, where responsibility for the given decisions could be hidden. If we ponder what this brings about for present-day decision-makers, we arrive at a change in the rules of the game in which a decision can still have adequate effect, and permits the introduction of decision-making competence without disproportionately increasing the burden of fear for possible mistakes. The question arises of course, whether this is not too little. We are of the opinion that in the present day situation of our society, it would be more to the point to ask if anything could do more.

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Part II
Social Concerns and Socialist Reponses

Chapter IV
The Threshold of a New Path: The Ontological Transformation of Life

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Introduction

To one not acquainted with life in the past conditions of countries of the "socialist camp" the revolutionary changes of recent years in this region must generally appear to be a spontaneous rebellion of people living in a reality closely approximating Orwell's vision. The events of '89 would be in opposition to the economic, political and ideological tyranny of the ruling communists. Even many citizens of the CSFR shared the opinion that the whole history of socialism is nothing but a period in which a gang of malevolent monsters deceived and tyrannized a nation which suffered from the very beginning under the bondage of evil communists and pined after the removal of their abhorred power.

For the most part, the truth is not so obvious and simple. The living conditions in Czechoslovakia were not those of material poverty. Every family owned a washing machine, refrigerator, TV set; every second family had a car and a garden. Housing amounted to less than a tenth of one's family income. In the last decades, there did not exist everyday political terror to which hundreds of thousands would be exposed. In the 70s and 80s there were on the average about fifty political prisoners in Czechoslovakia, and the forms of ideological pressure were also moderated. For a long time nobody believed in the official ideology--neither its creators nor its propagators--and this belief was not required. What was demanded was only a certain taciturn loyalty which no one was obliged to manifest publicly. On the other hand, the state guaranteed the right to work, even to such work as was not useful to the society; there was a guaranteed of a stable standard of living and a broad range of social certainties.

If this was so, and there was no everyday suffering, why did the social order which secured relative material sufficiency and a comfortable life without material anxieties become unbearable for an overwhelming majority of people in the countries of "real socialism?" The standard of living was lower than in the most advanced countries, but the longing for improvement of material living conditions was but one of the causes of a categorical rejection of socialism: it was neither the single reason nor perhaps a main one. For the main cause it is necessary to look above all to the spiritual void in life, to the absence of a system of positive social values in both the social and individual's outlook on life, and finally, to the destruction of the whole of man's active being.

The present paper analyzes these causes. It will try to point out in what way the original idea of human liberation which was the goal of Communism turned to its opposite in the process of its implementation and became a total lack of freedom unbearable for an overwhelming majority of citizens. By way of conclusion, it will look for an answer to the question of the way in which the fall of the myth of real socialism now is influencing the formation of the succeeding system of social values, of the prerequisites for human development, and the fulfillment of human rights.

Utopia Implemented

Ideological Sources

Undeniably, at the beginning of this century, the communist ideology incorporated the hopes and desires of the poorest social strata. There has been an effort to interpret this ideology as being, since the moment of its origin, a criminal instrument of supremacy by evil persons and its creator as an ill-tempered vain man who must be punished by being expunged from philosophy. This is in no way new, but neither is it of interest to one who would grasp the deep sense of historical events.

Nowadays, the reaction to Marxist philosophy is extremely negative in the countries of the former "socialist camp"; many consider this doctrine to be the source of all evil. The Polish author, Kurowski, states that "Marxism--arrogant in its form and usurping in its ambition to solve all the problems of humanity--is in its economic aspect the basic cause of the permanent crisis in our economy." These and similar harsh condemnations express the bitterness ensuing from disappointed faith which regarded Marx as a Messiah on the basis of whose prophecies the world was to be redeemed. As redemption did not occur, Marx was a false prophet. In order to understand the basis of communist ideology, whose proclaimed values at first incorporated and then definitely deceived the hopes of a great part of the world, we must turn to the ideological source of this ideology in the ideas of Karl Marx.

The starting point of the whole philosophical construction of Marx consists in his settled conviction that the realization of human freedom is the meaning and goal of all cognition. This new idea dominated European philosophy in one or another form from the very onset. Let us look first at these beginnings.

The origin of European philosophy is related to the burst of human freedom in the Greek polis when man awoke from the half-dream of spirit, i.e., from myth. This awakening is supported by the nascent natural science which focusses on individual things which it investigates analytically as actually experienced. Herein consists its deep difference from myth for which the present moment is irrelevant: all that happens today is a mere reflection of what took place in the primeval ages when chaos was given order (*kosmos*); this is eternal and cannot be changed by man or god. The present and future are merely events which take place according to the laws of this order and for its maintenance. For one who lives in the grip of myth there is no possibility of change; one’s life is fully predestined. One is bound by tradition and faith to the higher "transcendental" or "supernatural" order, understood as incommensurable with man and superior to him. But this is not yet comprehended as the source of being; on the contrary, it shares with humans the same sphere, a single world in which everything at once both conceals and manifests itself in an undifferentiated way. The individual mythical images do not result logically one from another, but emerge before the narrator and the listeners one after another, without any internal connection except that of procreation.

At the beginning of the sixth century B.C., however, it was no longer possible to view the whole of being through the eyes of the narrator who blindly transmits what he heard as myth. The inquiring mind begins to be pressed hard by the question "why" and is no longer satisfied with an answer such as "because it is the gods’ will."

At that moment, when faith in the world revealing itself to man was shaken, there arose a need to articulate more closely the relation of the transcendental world with that of the beings by which man is directly surrounded. With the Greeks, this articulation is implemented at first by means of human reason. Human cognition is focussed on the whole of being and its order, which originates from the highest principle (*arché*). The foundation and conceptual definition of the highest principle or being (*théion*) is the final goal of philosophical knowledge. Such is the theme of "first philosophy" which later was denoted as metaphysics, and from which follows Aristotle’s

denotation of the doctrine of the highest being as "theology." The task of philosophy is to justify the foundation of human existence (*dasein*) in this highest being. This search by man for the foundation of his existence in philosophical knowledge represents an attempt at human liberation. First it would be a liberation from the way in which the bond to the higher power as origin of the world and one's own being would be given to man merely by tradition and faith, and maintained by will as an unchangeable course of life in a sacred and spiritual way. The liberation from such a blind type of bond opened the space for human liberty and for the beginning of human history in the proper sense of this word. Hence, the origin of philosophy is connected with the pretension of reason to acknowledge only such highest principle on which it would feel dependent, it justifies itself by means of its knowledge. Philosophy has retained this sense from its beginning to Hegel.

Greek philosophy took for granted that the highest principle can be known. The contradiction between faith and knowledge came later with the development of Christian thinking. Kant's doctrine of the inaccessibility of things in themselves is an expression of doubt about the original sense of philosophy. Hegel tried to restore that sense in what one can comprehend as a theological philosophy or a philosophical theology. This, however, is a restoration of the traditional Christian theology, i.e. the highest theme in the spirit of the tradition of western philosophy is the highest absolute being as the origin of the world existing as a whole.

Proceeding from the heritage of Kant, Fichte and Schelling, Hegel formulated the absolute as the presentation and development of the impersonal and unconscious universal, which becomes concrete in nature and human history and conscious in human cognition--it becomes spirit. Hegel did not base the world and history on themselves; what happens in nature and human history is not an activity immanent to nature and history, but an implementation of the ideal foundation of the entire reality--the idea.

The absolute idea which is pure, infinite thinking must become alienated from itself, objectify itself in nature and again overcome its inadequate being in order to implement its internal purpose and become spirit. That is, it must become an idea which is no longer in itself and unconscious, but aware of itself and therefore self-conscious. Only from this perspective is nature comprehensible: it becomes a necessary stage on the way to self-conscious self-realization of spirit. Because spirit finds itself in nature it can be defined as true and infinite freedom, understood as independence from anything else. Spirit is an immanent developmental process which passes through three fundamental stages, among which the absolute spirit occupies the highest position achieving self-awareness that the entire objective world, i.e., nature and history, do not form any independent realities but are only moments of its life.

The circle of West-European philosophy closes and the contradictions become reconciled: all being is comprehended as a moment in the self-development of the absolute and is justified in this way. By knowledge of the absolute to which he feels subordinated, man liberates himself by comprehending himself as a moment of the power which surpasses him. In absolute knowledge, one achieves what was originally sought by philosophy, namely, man's linkage to the whole which is superior to him. At the same time, this linkage is a product of man's freedom as liberation from subordination to an alien, because misunderstood, power.

In this sense all West-European philosophy, from its beginning until Hegel, can be understood as a unity with human liberation serving as the unifying concern. The form of liberation lay in the sphere of consciousness and is based on a rational justification of the linkage of individual existence to a power superior to man. Ludwig Landgrebe stresses that, in this sense, all West-European philosophy can be comprehended as theology.

Only Karl Marx identified this as the entire sense of philosophy up to his time and asked the urgent question: Has not man built for himself a prison by means of his knowledge? Is the power of this knowledge really a means with which man can rule himself? Insofar as man understands knowledge as mediating the linkage to a whole which is superior to him does he not separate himself from his own power? Does he not in this way obscure the fact that his task is not to accept with comprehension the order into which he is placed, but to create this order himself? Only the man who comprehends himself as the creator of his own existence (*dasein*), who places himself as *causa sui* in the position formerly reserved for God, will be really free. Hegel's philosophy is not incorrect in the sense that it is untrue, but philosophy in general is false in principle because it means merely an imaginary liberation, a reconciliation of reason with reality only in principle, not a real liberation in which man himself implements what is reasonable.

In his criticism of philosophy, Marx proceeds from the fact that philosophy is not and cannot be what it requires--namely, the way of man's liberation. Philosophy only brings out the requirement of man's liberation; its implementation however is a revolutionary deed. In this, the first step is the criticism of religion and of philosophy as theology, as had already been done by Feuerbach. Marx stresses that it is necessary to go further and look for an answer to the question: Why does man look for the foundation of his existence with its pervading imperfection in a power which surpasses him, rather than searching for what is intrinsic to him? Man is led to such an explanation by the imperfection of his life; because the world is not such that one feels at home in it, one looks for his achievement of happiness to the world to come. The fact that man looks for refuge in religion and in philosophy is a sign not only that real life relations are imperfect, but also that man is not aware of the fact that this imperfection is his own work This means that man has not yet comprehended himself as a free creature in whose power it lies to make the world reasonable. For this reason the creation of the world is left to a higher power. Due to the fact that man does not duly appreciate the power of his own creativity, he is alienated from his being and has not yet gained possession of himself, his substance. His real liberation does not take place merely in thinking, but is based on mastering the situation in order to get beyond mere abstract liberation.

In his conception of alienation and work, Marx follows Hegel, whom he highly appreciates for his comprehension of the reality of man as resulting from his work and for his understanding of work as a manifestation of the human substance. At the same time Marx rebukes Hegel for not seeing the negative aspect of work and acknowledging only abstract spiritual work.

Marx himself examines work on two levels: on the abstract level as manifesting man's substance and on the concrete historical level where its negative aspect becomes evident.

On the abstract level (i.e., in abstraction from the concretely historical condition of its implementation) work appears as a metabolic process between nature and man in the course of which man transforms the world which surrounds him and simultaneously transforms and creates himself. How does this take place? In the work process, man accomplishes his conscious and anticipated purpose. At the same time, he transfers his powers, discoveries, skills and intentions into an objective form, thereby forming the external object, discovering its formerly unknown properties and changing it into a new object of cognition and transformation. In this, the working man develops in himself new potencies, properties and needs. In work man not only forms the external object, but also forms and develops his own spiritual and physical dispositions and manifests his human substance. In work the concrete worker presents himself as the subject of his work, which is the implementation of his conscious purpose. In work the contradiction between

subject and object is implemented and resolved; the one-sidedness of the objective and the subjective is abolished.

Work thus conceived, i.e., as manifesting the substance of man, differs deeply from gainful occupation which serves workers only as the means of earning their living. The historical form of the process of production which Marx saw around him did not in the least develop and confirm the essential powers of factory workers, but rather deformed and degenerated them. The simple operation, repeated to infinity and for many hours by the worker on the production line in the process of machine production is not that versatile and varied activity which makes man a developed being with abundant needs and helps him to realize himself. On the contrary, present factory work deforms, stultifies and makes of him a working "animal", instead of a creature who would stand in the position formerly reserved to God.

Such work which daily alienates man from the human substance proper to his species, instead of realizing one, is called by Marx "alienated work". Marx identifies four basic features of alienated work in the industrial conditions of capitalist production:

1. The objective conditions of work (its object and means) stand in contrast to live work as an *alien* property, i.e., as capital.
2. As the content of work is set not by the workers themselves but by capital, it appears *alienated* from and against the workers: the worker is not the subject of his or her own work.
3. The social character of work (e.g. human cooperation) appears as a productive force not of the workers but of capital, i.e., as a force *alien* to the workers themselves.
4. The product of work does not appear as belonging to the workers but to capital, and *alienated* from the workers.

According to Marx, the needed revolution consists in the abolition of alienated work and the resulting social relations which make it impossible to realize one's human being in favor of the realization of a society of free, fully developed individuals with abundant needs.

For Marx, the sense of human liberation consists in the abolition of the gulf between man's substance comprehended in the spirit of the Platonic tradition as a superhistorical possibility and the facts of individual human life in its historical individuality. In his historical actuality and individuality, man is explained as a mere implementation of the possibilities of concrete living conditions. Man's liberation means the removal of living conditions which do not facilitate the implementation of his superhistorical permanent substance. For Marx, such conditions were incorporated in the capitalist form of factory production based upon the bondage of the worker.

Other features of the Marxian doctrine are not unrelated to the European tradition, including the idea of a violent change. In the land of the Czech Crown, this idea became prevalent among the masses for the first time in the first third of the fifteenth century with a nation-wide plebeian rebellion within the framework of Czech reformation movement against feudal law, church and all forms of oppression. At that time, people ceased to hope generally that God would bestow upon them the promises of the saints and decided to take their fate into their own hands.

The conception of man as a creatively active being who produces the reality and meaning of his world was not invented by Marx. H. Schrey sees the origin of this idea in medieval nominalism when man's creative power was limited to the naming of things. The idea that man must conquer and rule nature by means of knowledge can be found in the philosophy of Francis Bacon. This was

the decisive shift from *regnum dei* to *regnum hominis*, from God's realm to man's where man is the highest principle and sufficient to himself.

The philosophical conception of Karl Marx was also conditioned by the development of modern science. For this it is characteristic that being ceased to be a problem because it can be apprehended or construed by human reason in mathematical terms. One root of Marxism is rationalism--a pillar of modern capitalism--which rules nature through mathematical formalism and evokes the illusion of unrestricted rule. Our present life can no longer exist in any other way than as a mode of production based on science and technology as rationally ruling and manipulating the world of nature and man. Service to everyday reality is the central motive of such an approach. "Man flatters himself that he takes his life into his own hands and is able to create from the causes he discovers the means for more easily facilitating and multiplying life and its goods. At first, work enslaves but then it progressively "liberates" until man achieves the perspective of "liberating" himself in full."

Such are the motives which combined to create the "practical," profane material reality as an object ruled by our mind and hands. Thus, Marx conceived freedom as that absolute discretion over the possibilities of being which were lost by man in the enslaving bondage of divisions of labor. These possibilities continued to exist for him potentially, and the implementation of that potency is a revolutionary deed.

This was the philosophy of Karl Marx which engaged the hopes of hundred of thousands for decades in an epoch-making manner. The secret of the "unusual career" of this philosophical conception consists in the fact that it was not merely a protest against the injustice of the social order which enslaves and degrades man to a mere draft animal--that is found in other social reformers as well. The secret of the exceptional significance of Marxism consists in the fact that Marx understood his demands as implementing the internal thrust of West-European spiritual history to found human existence (*dasein*) upon philosophic understanding.

The tragedy of Marxism began the moment its author came to be considered not as a great philosopher of the nineteenth century, but as a prophet who foretold once and for all the further course of history. The twentieth century with its horror of two World Wars and numberless regional wars was also an attempt to implement the philosophy of the nineteenth century, namely, to liberate man and install a just order, without wars and suffering. In the following two sections we will try to get to the bottom of this tragedy which began under the banner of the liberation of mankind.

Revision of the Ideal

At the beginning of the twentieth century, it was claimed that Marxist doctrine was a revealed truth about the future; communism became a final goal of history, a synonym of the installation of the terrestrial kingdom of justice, perfection and truth. Lenin's tactics were the only correct and possible way to this communist paradise.

From the beginning of the construction of socialism in Russia, however, it was clear that in the given historical conditions the Marxian conception of revolution could not be fulfilled. The backward, half-feudal Russia which had been shattered by war and revolution differed deeply from the most advanced and developed countries in which it would be possible to assure the social individual's all-round development and realize man's liberation.

There occurred a radical transformation of the idea of liberation. Above all, it was clear that in the given historical conditions it would not be possible to abolish alienated work and replace it

by emancipated work that would develop rather than deform human potencies and possibilities. From the monumental project of man's liberation elaborated by Marx only one item could be implemented, the abolition of private property by means of "rough" communism which removed private property by mere levelling and equalization. Marx criticized such a "rough" communism as early as the 1840s, specifically that it did not develop the intrinsic human powers as the main achievement of the new order.

In connection with the abandonment of the original sense of revolution--man's liberation--the idea of the transition from capitalism to communism changed as well. In his works from the 1850s and 60s (*Capital, Manuscripts of "Grundrisse*"), Marx drew the conclusion that the creation of historical conditions for the full development of the social order is a process of the objective development of the capitalist mode of production. The liquidation of capitalism would be timely only then when this social order exhausts all possibilities for the development of productive forces and becomes an impediment of their further development in the economically most advanced countries. The Russian conception of building up of communism, whose authors are Lenin, Preobrazhenski, Trotsky, Stalin and others, did not stress the requirement of development. Rather, it emphasized the immediate abolition of forms in which the capitalist reproduction process is implemented, i.e., the forms of ownership and value laws, as well as the most diverse social relationships.

The liquidation of the preceding order conceived as its mere negation was deeply historical, but not purely voluntaristic. The reason for such a transformation of the original vision was not so much economic as ideological. It was necessary to evolve an ideology which would manage to engage the broad masses and whose values would be trusted by people on a mass scale. This could not be the original philosophical-economic conception of man's liberation proclaimed by Marx, according to which the capitalism in Russia would have to develop for a few more centuries before it would reach an economic and social level of development that would make realistic any consideration of economic and social liberation. People would remain indifferent to an ideology which would not promise them a radical change for a better tomorrow. What would be the sense of suffering war, of the horror of the white and red terror, if life did not change for the better immediately, if it continued in the same way as before the revolution?

The Christian myth of the kingdom of heaven on earth projected itself on the warped mirror of the consciousness of uneducated people, assaulted by everyday suffering--on their faith in the possibility of an almost instantaneous happy life, rid of all suffering. The hungry, cruel present was bearable only as illumined by the hope for a bright future which would succeed the faster one managed to liquidate capitalism. Weak, underdeveloped capitalism provided an enemy against whom the nation could unite. This was the hydra which sat at the source of communist influence. The way to communism was not that of man's ever more complete development, of an ever fuller satisfaction of his needs (Marx); it was a way of destruction and nation-wide sacrifice. It is necessary to liquidate ruthlessly all principles of the present social order because the "new", "better" communist future can grow up only on the ruins of the past. This Puritan idea of socialism in this first phase of communism meant its absolute incompatibility with the preceding social order; this resulted even in the opinion that in Soviet Russia it was a matter of securing only such security for the working people as is obtainable by non-capitalist means.

The historical variant of socialism which originated in the 1920s had its ideological source in the special spiritual climate of Russia of that time in which different motives were intertwined. This was above all a matter of the widely shared faith of broad masses in the possibility of an early construction of a just and happy society, which was interwoven with faith in the exclusiveness of

the Russian nation whose mission involved taking another route, different from all others and showing a new, correct way to happiness. In this respect, there appeared the typical Russian opposition against the western influence--capitalism was considered as coming from the west and therefore intrinsically alien to Russian roots. This old intellectual idea of the Messianism of the Russian nation, conjointly with the revolutionary impatience of the masses, was the main origin of the ideology of Russian socialism.

The idea of the origin of a harmoniously developing society of free, all-around developed individuals who will become conscious creators of their own life and will not accept being ruled by external and alien powers was also radically transformed. In the historical conditions in which the low level of development of productive forces did not allow for the all- around development and the satisfaction of the needs of all people the ideas of the different social strata regarding happiness differed and clashed mutually so that spontaneous social conflicts arose. As far as the capitalist process of reproduction is to be removed (as the requirement was worded) and replaced by society's planned development, it was impossible for all to share in the creation of this plan. At the same time, those who did not agree with the chosen plan must be deprived of the possibility of manifesting their disagreement in public. Society's planned development required abolishing democracy in society and in the Communist Party as a faithful instrument of movement toward the predestined future. Because democracy is the bearer of the spontaneity of the social movement, the clash of different wills and goals often led to a result which nobody wanted. For society's development without conflict according to a predetermined plan it is necessary to separate the controlling and executive functions. The controlling functions are fully concentrated in the hands of a small group of rulers--the creators of the plan --and completely separated from all other people who are degraded to the role of blind and obedient executors of the will of others. Instead of a total emancipation of man and the installation of a society of liberated individuals (Marx), there was realized Dostoyevsky's and Nietzsche's vision of an "over-man" as a master over the "herd"; thereby the great historical experiment of man's total liberation turned into its total negation.

The ideology of building up a new society on the ruins of the preceding social order accentuates the new system of social values and a new comprehension of the human being. The eschatological feature of Marxian thinking consists in the conviction that the right order lies before man, in the future achievement of creation. But man was never comprehended in that conception as a mere bridge to reach the future ideal. The Russian vision of communism is different. Here, the significance of the future, which is the perfect implementation of communism, is absolutized and hypostatized: the present as well as the past experienced temporality of the individual social being is fully subordinated to the future utopian perspective.

Individual human beings are no longer regarded as sensible and meaningful in themselves, but appear to be mere means for implementing the final goal of building up socialism. The elimination of the problem of actual human beings from the official pseudo-philosophy which was long pursued in the countries of real socialism was only a consequence of the idea of the insignificance of the present as all meaning was transferred to the future. In the "new" conception of social development, the human being ceases to be a problem. The mystery of the human being is resolved priori in the implementation of the communist ideal which removes all the ills of the preceding stages of human development. Due to the fact that the ideal, as is stated in the fundamental postulate of this theory, will be implemented soon, present human life, however bad it may be, does not deserve too great attention, for it will be replaced by a happy life in communism in a short time. The human task consists in the effort to implement this ideal as soon as possible. The sooner communism is implemented, the more devotedly, earnestly and obediently man will

work; he will act more reliably as a part of the immense social mechanism which tends towards the longed-for goal under the leadership of the selected leader in an "infallible" way. The puzzle of human history is solved in such wise that the problem is swept off the table. In view of the implementation of communism, human beings are insignificant and are therefore no problem: all human problems will be solved in the new social order.

The present, conceived as a mere means of attaining this goal, lacks any independent moral meaning. All means serving the "harmonization" of society's interests become usable (i.e., those used for intimidating people of another opinion): fear, terror, treachery, ruthlessness, poisonous suspicion, calumny, and demagogy. Such concepts as truth, justice, good and beauty are filled with a new content. When the future implementation of the ideal is the only light that gives meaning to the present, whatever contributes to as rapid an implementation of the ideal as possible is proclaimed to be true, just, good and beautiful. This is determined not by people through their everyday choices, but by the official representatives of the new regime.

In the light of the final goal, the present suffering of the people appears to be insignificant because it is a mere moment on the way to universal happiness. It is merely a trivial sacrifice which has to be made on behalf of the great goal. In the first stage of building up communism, even human work is comprehended as sacrifice; it is no longer regarded as the self-realization of men and women's individual potencies and their development (Marx), nor as a way of acquiring the material and spiritual means of subsistence by the worker (capitalism). Labor ceases to appear as a commodity whose masterful owner is its bearer, for now he is partly deprived of his right to freely dispose of his labour. In the 20s, there was a return to forced labour in Russia. Its propagator was Lev Trocki who required, among other things, that the working people should be placed in the condition of front-line fighters and subordinated to military discipline--any disturbance was punishable.

This whole utopian, eschatological and in reality, deeply inhuman system was based on faith and hope. As long as people hoped that the communist ideal was realizable and so long as they believed that this ideal corresponded to a certain superhistorical *eidos* of mankind, whose difficult way of implementation we could see in history, the system could exist. The loss of this hope and faith meant the end of the system.

It is now incomprehensible how it was possible that hundreds of thousands of people could accept this monstrous system. They did so in the situation of a destroyed and bleeding Russia, when the people had lost their close relatives, homes and work, when they lived in inhuman conditions of poverty, hunger and cold, and when they were left with mere faith in the new order to deliver them of their present suffering. These people were willing to sacrifice everything, to abandon everything. The sacrifice was not difficult for them, because they had neither property, nor privacy, nor knowledge, nor developed individual needs. They had no past, because they despised it; they also had no present, because it had lost all meaning. The meaning of the word "to live" merged with "to survive" until that time when the future "paradise" on earth would appear.

With few corrections this system became an "example" for the build-up of communism in Czechoslovakia.

Negation of the Ideal by Its Implementation

In the first years of the build-up of socialism in Czechoslovakia, there prevailed a general faith in the possibility of quickly constructing the new, socially just society in which all the present problems of mankind would be solved: the division into the haves and the have-nots, the managers

and the managed. This faith was not shattered by the liquidation of democracy which was sometimes connected with the physical liquidation of those who did not believe in the communist ideal or who were cast in the role of internal enemies. These were used to intensify the revolutionary character, wariness and alertness, in a word, to strengthen the unity of the believing crowd.

In Czechoslovakia, one used the Soviet model of the economic and social route to communism: direct, planned management of the national economy, immediate liquidation of the capitalist relations of production, radical strengthening of discipline in the party and society. The first post-war years were accompanied by economic success. Due to the increase of gross industrial production, the planned economic system succeeded in raising the standard of living of the weakest strata of society, which strengthened belief in the possibility of the ideal's implementation of the ideal.

At the end of the 50s, the problems of stiff centralization and redistribution of the means of national economy began to appear along with other crises in the society; this led to an accentuation of a broad program of socialist reform. In 1968, the rehabilitation of the original communistic ideas (a return to the so-called "authentic" Marx), i.e., an effort to create a human democratic society of free of individuals (or the so-called socialism with a "human face") was unanimously agreed to in Czechoslovakia.

The internal situation in the Soviet Union and the intensifying Cold War frustrated the Czech Spring of 1968. It is difficult to estimate what would have been the result of this attempt to realize the original ideals of socialism if "brotherly" tanks had not occupied the country at that time. One thing is sure: faith in the possibility of installing a humane socialist society definitely died under their wheels. The following twenty year period lacked the support of the broad masses.

In the first years of socialist construction, filled with faith and hope, all difficulties were understood as transitory troubles which had to be overcome on the way to the implementation of the ideal. The 70s brought despair of the original ideal in the consciousness of both the rulers and the ruled. For a society whose sensibilities were based on an absolutization of the future, the loss of faith in the possibility of implementing that future ideal led to an internal disintegration of the whole system. The time horizon of the society broke asunder. The future lost its significance; it was no longer a matter of attaining the ideal but of maintaining the already existing social system as long as possible, of prolonging its agony. When the sense of the future is reduced, when a society is without any future, it is already past for the sense of future is reduced to retaining the present in unchanged form. Such a society enters the period of so-called real socialism.

The Marxian teleological conception of human history is based on the idea of historical progress implemented by historical laws whose meaning derives from its predetermined goal. Its realization ends when its goal disappears in obscurity and all loses intelligibility. The loss of its goal was simultaneously the loss of its future; the horizon of the present swallowed up the future which was to be but an unchanged repetition of the present. Time stopped, the historical movement lost its ascending progressive direction and leveled off. The maintenance of the given status quo became the reason for social reproduction.

In the economy, attempts at reforming the directive, centrally managed national economy were abandoned for it moved in a vicious circle and was not able to compete with dynamically developing economies. A pseudo-humane viewpoint was advanced, namely, that full employment was secured by maintaining technologically obsolete production. The enslaving bondage of the division of labour which, according to the original ideal was to be abolished was, on the contrary, fixed; economic stagnation became the basic economic program.

In contrast to the first phase of building up socialism which was characterized by the faith in the possibility of implementing the communist ideal, the destruction of the individual became ever deeper. As early as the beginning of the socialist era, there occurred a deformation of the temporality of man conceived as an objective flow. In Heidegger's sense this is the man's self-timing, as a constant decision-making choice of possibilities, hidden from man by the nature of his activity. The primary deformation consists in the fact that man's life was not presented as an active subjective creation, but as the anticipated decidedness of service to the ideal. This deformation was bearable as long as faith persisted. When, however, the hope of implementing the communist ideal was frustrated, the void of a spiritless society of blind obedience appeared starkly.

There arose a deep gulf between life and the official ideology which was not trusted even by its heralds. Never had so much been spent on ideological propaganda as in the last twenty years, yet this effort had never been more ineffective. People complied passively to the ceremonies and rituals of power, hardly anybody opposing it openly in a conspicuous way, but the ideological expansion struck up against an insurmountable wall of indifference and apathy.

People who were without the possibility of choice were bereft of an intrinsically human feature, i.e., the possibility of being an active subject, a creator of one's own life. State power, which was deeply alienated from its citizens, concentrated in itself the overall active subjectivity. This power determined in what forms social life would be implemented; the same applied for political, cultural and artistic life. State power differentiated between good and evil, truth and falsity; man was left with the sole possibility of complying with these decisions, at least outwardly. This compliance did not occur on the basis of one's faith in the official ideology or of some long past primitive form of terror (the latter can be used on a long-term basis only for oppressing a minority), but of a certain exchange between the individual and the state power: man exchanged his active subjectivity consciously for a life deprived of material troubles.

The system of social values also corresponded to this way of life. Man's status in society was not conditioned by his work, abilities or diligence, but primarily by his manifested loyalty to the regime. Instead of a society which would create conditions for an all around development of people, there arose a society of equal possibilities for stagnation, apathy, indifference and dissimulation.

Because man's total deprivation of his active subjectivity would equal death, people looked for a compensatory sphere where they could be real masters of their life. One such sphere of escape was, for instance, the care of weekend residences which defied the image of material poverty. These frequently luxurious villas, surrounded by large lots, were not at all an expression of the privilege of a special stratum of the population. Only in one's own house could one manifest and be an absolute master of one's life activity; only here did the decisions prescribed by an external power not exist. Thus, the hunt for amassing luxuries for the family residence became the central meaning and content of life for many people.

Life was degraded; it became flat, one-dimensional, meaningless and useless. According to the words of Jan Patocka, the movement of history led back to where it began--to the reduction of life to self-concern. When man does not face the world "freely, he has no space in it which would be his property and achievement, as well as no purpose and goal which would rise above the maintenance of life." In these conditions, man falls into a certain new a-historicity as a paradoxical result of history.

The great historical experiment of man's implemented liberation ended with his total lack of freedom and, thus, the destruction of his being. How does one justly evaluate the vision of Marx nowadays? Real socialism was not its implementation, but its simple negation. Today we

experience the "collapse of Marxism", not so much as a collapse of that philosophical conception, but as the collapse of overestimating it as a prophetic revelation of truth about the human future. The fall of real socialism does not disprove Marx's philosophy (just as the end of the slavery did not disprove Plato's philosophy), but only places it in an appropriate position in the history of philosophy. That position is in the nineteenth century. In the philosophy of our century, a shift in the interpretation of human freedom occurred. This ceased to be comprehended in the modern spirit as the unrestricted disposition of the possibilities of being, and the individual ceased to be conceived as the implementation of the super-historical *eidos* of man's substance.

The Turning Point

The revolutionary changes and developments during the late 80s in Eastern Europe overthrew a social system under which human freedom had been kept within strict limits. The life of man ceased to be a matter of his choice and decision and fell victim to a deterministic doctrine under which the individual was not allowed to exercise his will or wishes. Thus in '89 the euphoria of hundreds of thousands of people gushed forth as the hope that man would again become the master of his own destiny.

To understand the profound sense of these changes, we must examine them from the angle of a broader, indeed worldwide, historical context. First of all, the illusion, cherished by many, that the changes in Central and East Europe would bring about a transition from the reign of absolute evil to the reign of absolute good must be abandoned. The history of socio-political ideas throughout the 20th century has been that of conflict between bourgeois liberalism and the system of "economic control" exercised by authoritarian socialism. While the former system was based on individualism with its mechanisms of competition and class differentiation between the rich and the poor, under the latter system competition is suppressed and an individual's role is reduced to performing the functions determined by the State. While the first two thirds of our century were marked typically by a retreat of the ideas of bourgeois liberalism, the end of the century seems to be a period of its total victory.

The basic goal proclaimed in all the recent revolutions in the countries of the former socialist camp was to enthrone freedom and democracy, the basic attributes of liberal parliamentarianism. This is why the liquidation of the East European authoritarian regimes was interpreted as a come back for economic and social liberalism. Some time after these revolutionary changes took place it has become obvious that the process of transformation will be a complicated one. The difficulties to be faced in implementing this process relate not only to the differences in the character of the capitalist and the socialist economic systems, but also to the minds of people.

For decades people lived under real socialism and in several respects their expectations and values in life were moulded by that system, despite the fact that, openly or latently, people detested it. The traditions of this past period persist; they radically influence our lives, and will continue to do so in the future. It may seem daring to proclaim this in the present situation for, one says, Communism is dead, it has shamefully and definitively lost its battle with capitalism, so why waste time remembering the cadaver in a time when a "new" future is storming the gates. Under the banner of this future life, the decayed real socialism has been thrown into the dustbin of history!

Yet, history tells us that traditions die hard and do not leave the stage as quickly as do the sacrosanct authoritarians of yesterday. "Even if life changes abruptly and radically, as it does during revolutionary epochs, much more of the old remains and continues to rule, merging with the new in a unity, and much more so than many are willing to admit, despite the apparent

changes."[1] What traditions and values from real socialism are still firmly anchored in human minds and will play a formative role in future history? To find a correct answer to this question, it is imperative for us to choose an appropriate economic and political strategy. Error in answering this question could take one back to the positions of the previous regime.

Of those who, in the late 80s, took to the streets and squares in Warsaw, Budapest, Prague and other cities to demonstrate for a new and better world, and who believed that in the first democratic elections they were choosing between Good and Evil, Truth and Lie, the new and the old world, it is obvious now that many are disappointed with the "newness" of this world. How can we explain the fact that in traditionally Catholic Poland only 42 percent of the constituency participated in a free election of the members of parliament, and more than 20 percent of these voted for the successors of the communists, a number which escalated vastly in 1993? Why are many of the ardent revolutionaries of yesterday losing hope and falling into desperation?

The answer to this question cannot be sought only in the fact that the standard of living has dropped drastically, and even less in the "shock of liberty". As Vaclav Havel put it, this shock caused a "vast and almost blinding outburst of all human evils"--with all kinds of criminality, chauvinism, racism, signs of Fascism, demagogy, intrigues and deliberate lying, outbursts of hunger for power, and fanaticism.[2] A deep discrepancy exists mainly between the image of freedom dreamed by the people during the time they lived in dependence under an authoritarian society and the actual freedom brought about by the new regime.

The Victory of the Market Over the Plan

The outcome of the development of capitalism and socialism during the 20th century is eloquent and unambiguous: capitalism has won the battle in the field of economy and has proved to be the more productive and dynamic system. However, what does this victory actually mean? If we want to understand the essence of this achievement without resorting merely to a glorification of the victory of truth and justice over lie and hate, that trait must be found which makes capitalism radically different from socialism and which makes capitalism the most productive form of social reproduction known throughout all human history.

In harmony with its original aims, socialism was supposed to be a total negation of capitalism. In the sphere of economy unrestrained profit hunting would have been abolished and replaced with a planned production of definite values. It is a sad irony that socialism, pretending to become a more advanced stage of historical development, should become a "predecessor of the capitalist production."[3]

All prior non-capitalist forms of social reproduction, inclusive of the real socialism, were typically ones in which there predominated the production of specific values in order to satisfy certain needs of a given community. In other words, the process was that of reproducing the given community in certain, predetermined forms. Production under these conditions was compliant with the assumed pattern of consumption; demand was higher than supply and production expanded only slowly because the historical forms did not implicitly care to raise the productive power of labour. The reverse was true since the development of productive forces and relations would undermine the economic conditions under which these forms of production could be exercised and often caused their destruction: the restricted form of land ownership in ancient times was broken

[1] H.G. Gadamer, *Istina I metod* (Moscow: Progress, 1988), 335.
[2] V. Havel, *Contemplations in Summer* (Prague: Svododa, 1991), 94.
[3] Karl Marx, “Pre-capitalist Formations,” in *Grundrisse II* (Prague: Svoboda, 1974), 85-130.

up by the development of slavery, the accumulation of landed estates, the exchange of goods and the expansion of banking. In the last forty years, had the results of research and development been introduced into practice, the real socialist reproduction process would have been disturbed; hence the introduction of new achievements was subject to restriction.

In contrast to the other forms of production, the aim of the capitalist reproduction is not to create a certain, predetermined level of the development of productive forces. Each developmental stage of the community's productive forces and/or knowledge is regarded by capital as a challenge to be overcome. Why is this tendency towards the permanent development of productive forces inherent only to capitalism and alien to any other kind of production? The reason is that the final aim of capitalist production is to create value and make money, but not to produce luxury for immediate indulgence.

Production of definite values rather than enrichment is the immediate aim of the non-capitalist forms of production. These specific values imply the existence of a definite type of consumption and forms of social relations. Profit-making, as the final aim of production, does not exclude any of the values nor does it imply, as an absolute prerequisite, any special type of consumption or relations. This is why capital does not pose any limits upon the development of productive forces and relations. Conversely, its reproduction is based on producing riches as such, i.e., on a universal development of productive forces, on constant modification of its intrinsic potential.

What is the mechanism by which capital implements its drive toward the universal development of productive forces? Capitalism is the first and sole social formation in which the surplus produce is generally and intentionally converted into a tool by which value is imparted to the new types of labour. Surplus products did not exist in previous social formations and under real socialism; rather, since the primary aim of reproduction was not to obtain a new profit, the surplus usually ended up as a consumption commodity. Under capitalist expanded reproduction, a new division of social labour comes into play and new branches of production are created; the mere reproduction of the existing forms of labour is unacceptable. Capitalist production as a whole is based on the general tendency towards developing the types and forms of labour. The advent of constantly expanding and more vast systems of labour is parallelled by constantly expanding and richer systems of human needs.

In contrast to real socialism and any other previous formation, the capitalist form of reproduction is typically one in which a tendency exists to produce a universal system of labour which, in turn, is a prerequisite for the emergence of universally developed individuals. It is only capital that, as a great 19th century thinker pointed out,

leads the members of the community to becoming universal masters of Nature and the social context itself. This is where the tremendous influence of capital is rooted; it brings the society to such a level that, by comparison, all the preceding levels appear to be only local stages of the development of humanity, and a deification of Nature.[4]

This high praise of the capitalist form of reproduction was not enunciated by Friedrich von Hayek or any other apologist of capitalism, but by a person who could hardly be suspected of being an overly enthusiastic sympathizer of capitalism - Karl Marx himself. If some of his predictions did not come true, this one did.

The dynamic development of capitalist reproduction during the second half of the 20th century is associated mainly with the progress of science and technology. This progress, by which the

[4] Marx, op.cit., 17.

development of the productive forces is boosted and revolutionized, becomes the decisive productive force. The economy, developing in unison with the progress of science and technology, is subject to fast changes; new branches are being developed, migration of the labour force is commonplace and unemployment appears. These social consequences of technical and scientific progress can be predicted only with difficulty, and disturb the continuity of social reproduction based on a centrally created and administratively controlled plan.

The dilemma between either a planned stagnant economy or the market and the development of productive forces based on rapid commercialization of scientific and technical achievements was, for long years under socialism, resolved in favor of the former alternative. Planned down to the very last detail, the economy from which scientific and technical development was practically eliminated became uncompetitive and was pushed aside by the rapidly progressing capital market. This is true despite the fact that, at first sight, the planned economy seemed more humane and "nobler" than the capitalist production. For the latter was marked by the accumulation of money, and the operator was used as a mere "means" through which money could be procured and produced. In the former, on the contrary, man and his reproductive labour were to develop within predetermined, restricted limits.

From Socialism to Capitalism

As a rule, the changes currently in progress in East and Central Europe are portrayed as a restoration of capitalism. Such characterization is rather loose since the socio-economic system which is supposed to come into being, i.e., the modern, market-oriented society, never existed in this part of Europe. There is no restoration whatsoever to speak of and such a system must be started from scratch. The cardinal problem is the means which should be used to do this.

The person apparently chosen by history to be the parent of this idea of transformation is Jeffrey Sachs, the creator of "shock therapy" in the transformation of a planned to a market economy. Most generally, this transformation means that profit becomes the target of the production process and the corresponding social bonds.

The above processes are a part of worldwide changes. During the post-war period, the development of industrial society was typically one in which private interests, pushing their way ruthlessly and egotistically as the main motive force of economic development, were curbed, made to yield to wider needs and, in several instances, replaced by the economic activities of the State. Several spheres of activities, such as a large part of scientific research and development, were taken out of the sphere of private decision-making. In order to ensure stabilized and rapid growth, the main economic phenomena, such as overall demand, investments, employment rate, GNP, pricing, pensions, etc., were put under centralized control. The tendency was for economic development to be regulated, on a short-time basis at first, but later on a long-time basis. To achieve this a "mechanism of community-oriented economy" was created, first in large monopolies and banks, and later on a more general level as State intervention, and the State sector began to gain ground. The national product was redistributed in developed capitalist economies through taxes and State expenditures in order to stabilize the conditions of economic growth. Viewed from a purely quantitative angle, the scope of this redistribution did not differ greatly from that carried out by the socialist state. The State’s high budgets were used to cover, to an increasing extent, the so-called collective or social needs which were not met satisfactorily by the market mechanism.

Post-war developments oriented towards State interventionism culminated in the 60s. The managerial and entrepreneurial functions were separated from capital ownership. The emergence

of the managerial class, on the one hand, and bureaucratic Party bosses, on the other, reduced the problem of ownership of the means of production to secondary importance. These trends were reflected in a variety of theories on the convergence and progressive merging of capitalism and socialism; some claim that these theories have been refuted at present, while others claim that they have come into effect. During the 70s, a crisis broke out in state-monopolist regulation and the "Chicago school" (Milton Friedman) came to the fore with its glorification of the market mechanism. The past decade saw a widening of the gap between capitalism and socialism; there was, on the one hand, a society falling into a state of planned stagnation, and, on the other, a rejuvenated entrepreneurial and business class with its creative as well as destructive power.

This vigorous capitalism in the process of restoration found the dormant, inoperative socialist economy extremely tempting. Real socialism was shattered not only by people congregating in town squares and calling for freedom and democracy, but also by capital's immanent profit-conscious drive towards reproduction, for which the vast hungering socialist market and its fallow resources constituted an ideal field of action. Obviously, Sachs' "shock therapy" for the socialist economy was hardly initiated by humanitarian thinking. The total deregulation and liberalization of economy and prices according to this therapy brought Czechoslovakia during the initial phase a 22 percent drop in industrial production, a rise of unemployment from zero to 8.5 percent, a 33 percent drop in demand for homes and a 58 percent inflation rate.

The intention behind this method is clear: the stagnant waters of the socialist economy would be agitated by the principal tendencies inherent in the international reproduction of capital. These would reach beyond national borders and political limits in order to satisfy, albeit on a limited basis, existing needs and to reproduce the previous way of life. This reproduction

acts destructively against all this, and it constantly revolutionizes and breaks down all restrictions which delay the development of the productive forces, bar the expansion of needs, the diversity of production and the utilization and exchange of nature's and spiritual forces.[5]

Theoretically, this method can serve to implement a "blitz" transformation of a planned economy into a market economy.

Despite all differences, real socialism and the present-day capitalism do not constitute two radically opposite social and socio-economic formations. These formations were regarded as totally opposite in simplified theories of the second half or so of the 50s. In fact, capitalism and socialism were two alternative ways towards industrialization, two forms of an industrial society of which capitalism proved to be the more efficient and productive. The difference concerned the extent to which central bureaucratic state control was involved. While real socialism was based typically on central, directive planning, the developed capitalist countries represent a conglomerate of state control and free decision-making, only differing in the extent to which these factors are allowed to rule.

The Sachs-type transformation of directively controlled economies is a flash process only up to the point at which it still is carried out through centrally issued directives in zones which fall under the influence of this directive control, e.g., abolishing the centralized regulation of production, or introducing devaluated exchange rates and/or currency convertibility. However, there are areas which do not come under the immediate influence of directive control, such as the

[5] This is not a quotation from a theoretical treatise by J. Sachs although, considering the strong belief in the omnipotence of the capital reproduction, this quotation should be ascribed to him rather than to its true author, Karl Marx, *Grundrisse II*, 17.

orientation of values, or the traditional character of social bonds which have been in formation over long decades; rapid transformation of these can hardly be expected. Sachs' method ignores the conservative character of these bonds; it also ignores the fact that these transformations lag behind those in the primary economic sphere. Economic transformations contrast strongly to the firmly rooted expectations, traditions and established way of life in general of the peoples of Central and East Europe. This phenomenon may place the whole transformation in jeopardy.

"The New Freedom" -- The Way From Personal to Material Dependence

The advent of the capital-oriented form of social reproduction, characterized primarily by the profit-oriented manufacturing process, is inevitably accompanied by the replacement of personal dependence under real socialism by the material dependence typical of a market economy.

An historically defined process of reproduction is always associated with a specific type of social bond and interdependence. All historical non-capitalist forms of social relations thus far could be described as based mainly on personal dependence with the endemic subordination of one individual's will to another's as in slavery or serfdom, or on personal communion within a certain community as in the tribal community or the medieval guilds. Under real socialism, the individual was forced into a state of personal dependence upon the impersonal machinery run by the State's Party bureaucrats. Interpersonal relationships under these conditions were not mediated exclusively by labour materialized in the form of the exchange of values, as was the case of the 19th century capitalism and, predominantly so, of the capitalism of the 20th century. Communities in which social relationships are primarily of personal dependence are typical of underdeveloped systems of exchange.

The exchange of goods can become fully developed only where the manufacturing process is aimed primarily at producing not exclusively useful, but barter values of all the products and activities. In this situation there is established a complete interdependence of producers: the production activities of each individual become dependent upon those of the rest of the individuals, and the transformation of products into useful values is dependent on consumption on the part of all other individuals. A manufacturer can procure his means for living only provided he is successful in placing his product on the market, i.e., entering into a relationship between individuals as established by the individuals' producing exchangeable goods to be traded and, through this exchange, procuring the means to satisfy their own needs. The exchange, or bartering, is possible only if individuals produce a variety of products through a division of labour, and if other individuals have a variety of needs to be satisfied.

The social interrelationships between people become materialized by means of the market and products in the form of commodities. The character of social links established in this way is based on the respect for the person of the owner. Thus, although individual A needs the commodity owned by individual B, or vice versa, he does not take it by force; both individuals respect each other in their quality as owners, as persons whose will is embodied in their commodities. The legislative status of a person and his or her liberty is the main trait of this relationship. Nobody takes the property of the other by force; each individual gives up his property of his own will.[6]

Within the barter relationship, the persons involved interact only as owners, as holders of equivalent values, i.e., as equals. "A worker buying a commodity worth 3 shillings is, for the seller, a person equal to a king interested in the seller's commodity albeit in a commodity worth 3

[6] K. Marx, *Grundrisse I* (Prague, Svoboda, 1971), 205-206.

shillings; any disparity between them is eradicated."[7] The developed system for the exchange of goods inherent in the market economy is the only historical phenomenon so far in existence in which any kind of tribal, caste or party privilege is wiped out. This phenomenon creates the productive basis for equality and freedom, conceived as the personal independence of individuals who interact within the process of exchange and carry out this exchange in their quality as free and independent subjects. "Equality and liberty are, in the process of exchange of goods, not only respected, but this exchange serves as a productive, concrete basis for equality and freedom in general."[8] This freedom manifests itself through the mutual indifference of the trading parties; the trading individuals meet exclusively as holders of equivalent values--all other personal attributes and traits are of no significance to them.

The personal power of one individual over another is abolished, at least formally, under these conditions. Under capitalism the power that each individual exercises over the activities of other individuals or over the social wealth lies in the fact that he is the owner of tradeable values, or money. The social relationships between individuals under these conditions are mediated through tradeable values or money, i.e., things. Social relationships between individuals then act not as their mutual relationships, but as relationships pre-determined by the relationships between things.

Thus far historical forms have been based either on personal dependence, or formal personal independence and material dependence. The lower the social power of a product being traded, and the more closely it is connected with the nature of the immediate products of labour and the immediate needs of the persons trading their products, the higher must be the power of the community which brings together the individuals, as in a patriarchal or antique community, feudalism, guilds and real socialism. Figuratively, in a capitalist society each individual carries his social power, as well as his relationships with the society, in his pocket in the form of a thing. "If this social power is taken away from the thing, persons must be given the power to rule other persons."[9] This came into effect under real socialism.

The same is true of the idea that the "development of private entrepreneurial capitalism with its free market was the *conditio sine qua non* for all our democratic freedom to be established". According to F. Hayek, this idea was first enunciated by none other than K. Marx himself. However, "it never occurred to him that, if this was the case, in the future this freedom might disappear with the advent of the free market."[10]

Socialism had been accepted, by a majority of the intelligentsia, as a legitimate inheritor of the liberal traditions; the promise of greater freedom, which became one of the most potent weapons of socialist propaganda, was true and honest at the start. It was a proclamation of a revolt of man against the impersonal, often ruthless forces which mercilessly subjugated him. In those circumstances, the determination appeared "to do without the forces which had resulted in

[7] Op.cit., 208-209.
[8] Op.cit., 207.
[9] Marx, *Grundrisse I*, 114. Hayek claims the same: "Civilization in the past was allowed to develop due to the fact that people stooped to the impersonal forces of the market. The development would not have been possible without this compliance…If such society is to continue and not to collapse, the only alternative to compliance with the impersonal and seemingly irrational forces of the market is the compliance with the equally unruly and uncontrollable power of other people." *Way to Serfdom* (Prague, Obcansky Institu, 1991), 106.
[10] Hayek quoting from Mar Eastman, *The Reader's Digest* (July, 1941), 39, in *Way to Serfdom*, op.cit., 39.

unforeseeable consequences, and to replace the impersonal and anonymous market mechanism with a collective and conscious channeling of social forces towards chosen aims and targets."[11]

The promise of a new liberty was, in fact, a promise that the people would be freed from necessity, the burden of the circumstances that inevitably limited, albeit to a highly varied extent, the potential of each individual; only part of this promise came true. With the "new" socialist freedom, people were not liberated from the burden of the circumstances; but there was a guarantee that, in the future, each member of the society would carry approximately the same share of this burden. The considerable differences in the potential of individuals were levelled off and approximately the same share of subjugation was imposed on all. After the class-related excesses had been exhausted, the promise of a new freedom became a reality by satisfying the long-standing requirement that all property and wealth was to be distributed more or less equally among individuals.

Under real socialism, the market mechanism was suppressed, together with the profit-oriented character of the production process itself, which lost its dominant role. When labour is sold in a capitalist society, the wage depends on the size of the profit the buyer can draw from this transaction. In the socialist society profit ceased to be the main purpose of production; the purchase of labour no longer existed as a profit-yielding commodity. Over the years, people were receiving from the State something like a pension whose size was not determined by the social usefulness and productivity of their labour.

In the context of socialist relationships, the interactions between sovereign owners of commodities no longer existed and the State became the supreme and exclusive owner. The individual was regarded as a submissive instrument destined to serve a higher, "nobler" cause or entity, such as the Society, State or Party. The role of the individual as a unique and sovereign, self-contained entity was degraded; the individual became an appendix to the State machinery and was reduced to a tool for the execution of the State's will.

Authoritarianism and collectivism became the cornerstones of the socialist morals. The State grasped the authority to act as the supreme subject with a right to mould the fate of each individual. The individual was, to some extent, rid of the responsibility for arranging his own life and, consequently, for his morality. For only the situation in which an individual can decide how to run his life in harmony with his own conscience and self-determination allows the sense of morality to develop and virtues to be exercised in everyday life through the free activities of individuals.

Such traditional virtues as self-determination, independence, self-reliance, individual initiative, willingness to run a risk, and readiness to defend one's outlook even against hostile public opinion--virtues upon which an individualist society is primarily based--were suppressed. Submissiveness and willingness to worship the authority of the super-individual collective organ, the Party, which knew best how to recognize and pursue the Good, were the main "moral" qualities most highly valued and cherished by the authoritarian socialist regime. Careless boredom supplanted the way of life in which competence, activity, eagerness for experience and planning for the future had been the main attributes.

In an authoritarian society based upon personal dependence people become generally much more tolerant of evils, and much more indifferent to unrighteousness. The life of an individual is deprived of its meaning as something through which the individual can manifest himself as a unique entity, to become rather one in which the individual is trapped in an enclosed society--whether class or Party. The discrimination and wrongs an individual or members of some groups

[11] Ibid., 11.

have to suffer in the interests of other groups are regarded as commonplace. The interests of a certain group which had usurped power are placed higher than morality and right.

Several of these repugnant traits of a totalitarian regime become deeply rooted in the minds of both the ruler and ruled, and remain there. However, under the new conditions of economic life, the market mechanism begins to gain ground. It entails a freedom different from that for which people dreamed over the long years during which they were subjected to the "real socialism". This "new freedom" now rouses more resentment and antagonism than the persisting relics of the totalitarian regime.

Life in the socialist society was fenced within predetermined channels; man ceased to be a subject ruling his own life, and a majority of people became intolerably bored and disgusted. Though people were not threatened by material poverty, the loss of prospects and expectations, the monotonous treadmill existence, led them to total renunciation of this kind of existence. A new myth of freedom was born under these conditions, and the overthrow of socialism turned into the negation of all barriers limiting the development of an individual.

In plain words, there is an abysmal difference between the freedom in which only traces of the market mechanism are present and the idea of freedom which penetrates the masses carrying out the revolution. The freedom, whose productive basis is the market mechanism, means nothing more and nothing less than replacing the personal dependence of the individual with the material dependence exercised by means of a developed system of trading. The ideological black-and-white perception of life according to which capitalism is described as a realm of freedom is purely pragmatic and instrumental by nature; this soon becomes manifested as such to the people. The freedom-or-subjugation alternative is not identical with the material-or-personal dependence alternative.

The life of man is a sequence of decisions or choices between possibilities, assessing and materializing the possibilities offered to him by the character of his activities. An individual has a feeling of freedom in situations in which he actually sees that his life follows this line of decision-making. Where the spectrum of expectations is reduced to a single possibility, decision-making loses the taste of freedom and is felt as its absence by the individual. Whether this reduction be done on the principle of personal or material dependency is insignificant.

The society enjoying the highest degree of freedom is one in which an individual has the widest possible free choice of possibilities and can develop and cultivate his physical and spiritual needs. The measure of freedom depends on the actual historical, socio-economic conditions which delineate a given historical form of freedom. Looking at the problem from this angle, one can contend that the measure of freedom enjoyed in a developed capitalist society is greater than that in a society under real socialism. But it would be erroneous and misleading to contend that capitalism is the embodiment and culmination of freedom--equally as erroneous as making people believe that socialism brings a new higher type of freedom.

Today, some years after the revolutions began in Eastern Europe, many people begin to realize that liberation from real socialism has not brought the yearned-for type of freedom. What was the freedom of our dreams supposed to look like? Certainly like the freedom preached by the apostles of freedom: liberation from any enforcement, freedom from the despotism on the part of other people and from the impact of external circumstances, liberation from bonds and links which only make people yield to external force, be it the bosses' orders or immaterial circumstances. In Central and Eastern Europe the idea of freedom for which people took to the streets and squares was rather a utopian vision than the historical form of freedom based on a market-oriented capitalist system.

Looking at the vision of freedom in whose name people have overthrown real socialism, the slowly emerging freedom of economic liberalism seems rather vague. The individual, faced with the fear thus far unknown of losing social security and material riches of both himself and his family, does not feel any freer than he did under the previous regime. What had been regarded as a "freedom road" is actually felt as a "serfdom road" from one type of serfdom to another.

However, it is not the lack of a new liberty, but rather the principle of the new system, that creates strong antagonism. People have become more or less accustomed to substitute a lack of freedom over the past fifty or more years; they learned to live with it as a part of their everyday life. But the character of the market society's freedom contradicts some of their endemic expectations and ideas. Inequality is inherent in bourgeois freedom and competition is the essence of economic freedom. The measure of freedom is directly proportional to the competence and material status of an individual, and these qualities differs greatly. This phenomenon differs from the idea of socialist equality regarded as an indisputable right of all to appeal to the State to take care of its citizens, to satisfy their needs and to distribute roughly equally wealth and property.

Citizens would accept the lack of freedom on condition that all others did the same; however, people will have to become accustomed to economic inequality, and the whole system of priorities of many individuals will have to go through deep transformation. Sachs' method of "shock therapy" is the fastest way to establish a market situation, but its very rapidity does not allow for a slow, spontaneous transformation of the previous socialist priorities. This is a source of real threats of social clashes and conflicts.

A planned economy can be eliminated quickly by directives; foundations can be laid in order for the market economy to become functional. But a market economy will be functional only provided the perduring and predominant personal dependence of the socialist society with its accompanying complex of priorities has been replaced by the material dependencies which are indispensable in order for the market mechanism to function properly. The process will be a long one; any attempts to carry out a "blitz" transformation in the face of the perduring traditions of real-socialism compromise the whole transformation.

Authoritarian Regime and Parliamentary Democracy

Parliamentary democracy is the political structure compatible with the economic liberalism; this structure, backed up by a Constitution, creates the conditions for establishing a given historical type of freedom. This freedom is based on automatic functionality within the limits delineated by the Constitution. In this context, the measure of freedom is inversely proportionate to the quantity of rules which pose limits upon it. According to F. Hayek, the tremendous merit of liberalism is the fact that the number of problems on which agreement is absolutely necessary has been limited to those on which such agreement can exist among the members of a free society. "Democratic rule can only be successful where the activity of the government is restricted, under the pressure of general consensus, to areas in which the majority can reach agreement by free discussion,"[12] i.e., only provided there is common agreement as to the aims to be achieved so that only details need to be refined.

However, in the process of transformation from real socialism to capitalism, the parliamentary democracy established after the revolution in one form or another in all the former socialist countries has made it a point totally to transform all the spheres of social life--economic, state and legislative. This is a task to be implemented rather by autocracy or dictatorship for, because there

[12] Ibid., 36.

is no unity of opinion concerning the aims, the organ in which power has been vested to work towards these aims is forced to choose between mutually incompatible aims. When an aim unacceptable to a certain social group is selected, sooner or later this particular group will be subjected to discrimination. When the State intervenes in spheres where no agreement can be achieved, in time the personal liberty of the individual will be suppressed.

The highly probably danger of a dictatorship has the well-known symptoms which F. Hayek recognized and warned against:

The inability of a democratic assembly to implement what seems to be the expectations and wishes generally accepted by the people will inevitably cause discontent with democratic institutions. Parliaments will begin to be regarded as houses of prattlers', incompetent, inadequate in implementing the tasks with whose implementation they had been charged and entrusted.[13]

In this country, voices are being raised against members of parliament by some tribunes of the people who condemn the members of parliament for their "inability' quickly to pass a Constitution or to vote on whatever issue may appear on the scene. It can only be hoped that the tribunes today are less bloodthirsty than was Marat 200 years ago, who declared that "if, now and then, a head stuck on a lance were carried by a procession round the Convention house, the Constitution not only would be implemented, but would reach a state of perfection."[14] All these trends support the conviction that rule should be taken from the hands of politicians and handed over to professionals or to an enlightened monarch who would quickly and efficiently deal with any problems and disputes to the satisfaction of all.

Vast social change (and, undoubtedly, the transformation from socialism to capitalism can be regarded as such) can hardly be accomplished by only democratic methods. The basic developmental trend of capital reproduction--profit-oriented production--is implemented by means of administrative intervention on the part of the State. At the same time, it is assumed that as soon as this has become dominant the corresponding character of relations of production--impersonal material dependence of individual producers and owners of commodities as a substitute for the personal dependence of individuals in an authoritarian society--will set in automatically.

However, there is question as to what influences should come into play in order for people, who have rejected the personal dependence inherent in real socialism, to be willing to accept and respect the impersonal material dependence of the market. According to F. Hayek, people in the past yielded to ideas which today are regarded as superstition, including the spirit of religious humbleness or the exaggerated respect for the primitive doctrines of the pioneer economists. None of these ideas is acceptable in the contemporary post-socialist countries.

On the contrary, the deep-rooted traditional acceptance of the personal character of all social links and dependencies remains strong. Also strong is the illusion, cherished by an ambitious rationalism that social forces can be controlled in the same manner as the forces of Nature. As a result many people think that the blame for the present-day economic crisis, brought about by the unleashed market forces, is to be put on particular persons, some dark forces behind the scenes, which gather riches as parasites on industrious citizens. Others put the blame on the person who "unleashed the market forces". Can it be seriously hoped that citizens infested with this way of thinking will be willing to accept the rules of play of the impersonal forces which often mar their

[13] Ibid., 31.
[14] J. Michelet, *The French Revolution* (Prague, Odeon, 1989), 142.

efforts and create a world radically different from that in which until recently they have been accustomed to live?

The personal dependence in the authoritarian socialist society was sometimes nonsensical, but it was always easy to reveal. Everybody had a clear-cut idea of what to do in order to avoid conflict with the Power. Even in the case where an individual refused to yield to the dependence ritual, it was easy for him to imagine and anticipate the crackdown that followed. Using a parallel, it was as if you lived in an old, neglected house where there was no happiness, but which you knew like the palm of your hand and in which you could not get lost. This house is now being demolished by the impersonal and seemingly irrational forces of the market economy. On the one hand, they are doing away with the deadly boredom of the predeterminist world of personal dependence, but, on the other hand, this leaves people without the snug feeling of security before the looming uncertainties of the tangle of market relations for which only a few had longed. What people were longing for was that real socialism be replaced by a kind of enlightened system in which the nonsensical do's and don'ts were done away with, while a wise and well-meaning monarch would rule who would strive for the welfare of all and equally distribute this welfare among all.

In the post-socialist society, this sense of personal dependence now plays a significant role and long will continue to do so. This dependence exists in any society, but its impacts are different. The post-socialist society lacks the centuries-long traditions of personal freedom which can be the source of a sound contempt for the Power. For this reason, personal power and authority will be glorified for a long time to come, and will cause those afflicted to resort to actions inconsistent with democracy.

To understand correctly the social role of authority it is necessary to avoid the Enlightenment extremism that regards as absolutely incompatible faith in authority and the use of one's own reason and common sense. As authority makes people abnegate their common sense, faith in an authority would result in blind obedience and worship--the opposite of freedom. As shown by Gadamer, authority need not necessarily be accompanied by such obedience:

The authority of a person does not rest on an act of submission and renunciation of reason; it rests rather upon an act of recognition and appreciation--recognition of the fact that this particular personality is superior to us in reasoning and acuity of judgment, that this person's judgments have higher significance than our judgments and should be accepted preferably. Thus, authority is based on recognition, and on the work of reason itself, which knows its limits and appreciates others as more competent. There is no connection between blind obedience and authority correctly understood and accepted. In plain language, authority has nothing to do with obedience, but is related mainly to knowledge.[15]

The authority of a personality can have a significant unifying power in a society where liberal traditions are lacking and parliamentary democracy appears to be non-functional. In the post-socialist countries the difference between the previous and the present-day regimes lies not in that the previous regime was a totalitarian one, whilst the present regime is democratic, for both systems are predominantly based on personal dependence as long as the attitude towards authority remains significant. The difference lies in that the former regime was based on an authority enforced on the people and accepted due to fear of sanctions, whereas the present regime, at least for now, is based on an authority voluntarily accepted through one's own rational and emotional action.

[15] H.G. Gadamer, *Certainty and Method* (Prague: Odeon, 1989), 142.

Gadamer's thesis saying that "A true authority can do without authoritativeness"[16] is valid only in a society in which impersonal relationships, mediated by things, predominate. Conversely, in a system in which personal dependence predominates--and, undoubtedly, we still have such a system--the tremendous role played by the authority of a person, directly affecting the course of social processes, may soon become a source of great danger. When belief in the uniqueness of an authority has been shattered, the whole system is shattered. And since the authority represents not only itself but, in the first place, the aspirations and material interests of certain groups which have not yet been able to have a decisive say in the free play of the market forces, protection of a leader's authority by force appears to be the sole solution at hand. But, when the necessity arises of enforcing the authority by means of authoritarianism, dictatorship begins, whatever we may call it, whether "freedom of a higher type" or the "protection of democracy against dark forces."

After some years, the countries of the former "socialist camp" are making only the first steps on the long road towards a modern, efficient and productive economy and a humane democratic society. In this progress towards such a society, not only have the scruffy and outdated machines and equipment in our factories to be scrapped, but the same should be done to the "real" socialist traditions in people's minds.

In the first place, we must rid ourselves of the idolatry of an authority and of blind faith in authority. Only then can a sound, critical attitude towards authorities be created. Loss of faith in an authority will then not be regarded as a disastrous disappointment, nor will it create the bitter feelings of deep mental depression now experienced by many--and not only by former Communists. Liberation from one's own prejudices is the first step not towards a chimeric freedom but towards real freedom as secured by the present-day level of social development. But the liberation from deep-rooted traditions is not, and cannot be, a flash process such as in Sachs' methods of transformation.

Developments in the post-socialist countries are open to several hazards, such as economic collapse, social riots, relapses to authoritarian regimes, etc. This danger becomes even greater due to the fact that the changes in the primary economic sphere are not accompanied by corresponding changes in social interactions and in people's thinking. Some traditions, transferred from the era of real socialism, (such as egalitarianism) which still persist in people's minds, are ignored by some, but abused by others in their effort to procure for themselves political capital and credit.

False optimism, deliberate lies or arrogant self-satisfaction will not get us over the stumbling blocks on the way to a modern society. These stumbling blocks have to be analyzed objectively and optimal methods must be sought to overcome them successfully. The present paper was written in an effort to help in finding solutions to this challenge.

Summary

The main question of the present paper is as follows: why did the social order which secured a relative material sufficiency and a comfortable life without material anxieties become unbearable for an overwhelming majority of people living in the countries of "real socialism"? The standard of living in Czechoslovakia was lower than in the most advanced countries, but the longing for improvement of the material living conditions was but one of the causes of the categorical rejection of socialism. It was, however, neither the only one nor perhaps the main one.

For the main cause, it is necessary to look above all to the spiritual void, to the absence of a system of positive social values, to the society's as well as the individual's sense of life, and,

[16] Op. cit., 674.

finally, to the destruction of man's entire active being. The present paper deals with the analysis of these causes. It points out in what way in the process of their implementation the original ideas of man's liberation--that goal whose fulfillment was to have been achieved in communism--turned into their opposite: into man's total lack of freedom which henceforth became unbearable for an overwhelming majority of citizens. By way of conclusion the chapter looks for an answer to the question of the way in which the fall of socialist myth contributes to the formation of a new system of social values, and how the prerequisites for human development, fulfillment and rights can now be created.

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Chapter V
The Meaning of the 1989 Revolution for the Project of Modern Society

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Two Interpretations of Modern European History

The various interpretations of the 1989 revolution invariably have, as their background, the explicit or implicit understanding of the European civilisation and cultural history of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. During that historical epoch, modern and liberal society emerged from the womb of bourgeois revolutions whose paradigm was the revolution of 1789. The sense and aim of bourgeois revolutions is to create a politically free society of citizens enjoying political freedom; the Enlightenment project of a modern society is the legitimization of this aim.

The various interpretations of European history during the 1789-1989 period also gave birth to various interpretations of the relationship between liberal and socialist forms of the Emancipation-Enlightenment project of modern society. The final collapse of Real Socialism, however, brings to the fore the question of the relationship between the socialist concept of the modern society and the Leninist and Stalinist idea of socialism.

We are becoming aware of the fact that the sense of the 1989 revolution can hardly be interpreted without properly understanding West European civilisation and cultural identity as this was constituted towards the end of the twentieth century, and without elucidating the relationship between this and the Emancipation-Enlightenment tradition from which modern European society emerged.

Surprisingly, we are faced with a paradoxical situation: the traditions of modern Europe are being questioned at a time when the Central and East European countries are offered a chance to re-integrate themselves as a part of that history, and when conditions are being created for Europe to become a unified entity in terms of both civilisation and culture. While there is general anticipation that one of the epochs in modern European history is coming to an end, the Enlightenment project of modern society as a whole is placed in doubt, and a multitude of projects for a post-modern civilisation and cultural identity for European society near the end of the twentieth century are being engineered.

The final breakdown of real socialism also put an end to the communist critique of the liberal project of pluralist democracy and capitalist market economics. This criticism was based on the assumption that the capitalist form of modern society had its limitations, and that communist society was the mode within which the Emancipation-Enlightenment project could definitively be implemented. However, the common principles of the communist criticism of capitalist modern society became varied at the turn of the twentieth century. Our experience with the Stalinist form of totalitarianism concerned only one of the possible variants of the criticism of liberal capitalism.

The problem of the civilizational and cultural sources of the Leninist-Stalinist criticism of capitalism and of the Leninist-Stalinist forms of totalitarianism could be elucidated sufficiently only against the background of relationships between European civilisation and cultural traditions, on the one hand, and the Russian cultural and civilisation traditions, on the other. Beginning from the second half of the nineteenth century this relationship was interpreted by Russian philosophers in two ways. In the Westernized alternative, Russia would turn into a modern state integral to

Europe. In the Slavophile alternative, Russia would be transformed into a society autonomous in both culture and civilisation, distinguished from Western society by the very fact that her own traditions would have been implemented.

The above considerations are often taken as a basis on which the attitude of the Leninist-Stalinist totalitarianism towards the Enlightenment project was built. The possible solution to this problem depends on whether Stalinism is regarded as a counter-revolution within the Bolshevik revolution or whether it is regarded as a culmination of the Bolshevik revolution.

Marxism and Totalitarianism

A still more significant problem is hidden behind these consideration. This concerns both the sources of totalitarianism inside the Leninist project itself and the attitude of the Leninist project towards the tradition from which stemmed the original Marxist variant of the Emancipation-Enlightenment project of modern society. The problem is whether the tradition on which the Marxist image of modern society is based contains some inherent factors that might lead to the legitimization of totalitarianism throughout the whole Bolshevik project.

The Marxist form of the process in which the Emancipation-Enlightenment project of a modern society is legitimized is firmly rooted in modern civilisation and its cultural traditions. According to Marx, the political emancipation of civil society in which man would be freed from any form of personal dependence would be carried further by the communist movement towards emancipation in which man could be liberated from any form of material dependence. Such emancipation should enable the liberated individual freely to choose his position in the world he creates and to become owner of the conditions of his free life.

Marx considers civil society to be identical with its economic system; he believes that an economic system is determined by the relationship between labour and the ownership of the conditions and the products of labor. In the capitalist market economy this relationship should be based on economic relations between politically free citizens who interact as private owners of commodities and are equal before the laws recognized by them as citizens. According to Marx, politically emancipated citizens are politically independent, but material dependence underlies this personal independence. Their economic life is governed by the spontaneous action of impersonal laws of commodity production, and their lives are a mere prerequisites for, and results of, this production.

Of no less importance is the fact that, according to Marx, the relationships between politically free citizens are based on one individual serving as an instrument for another. The relationship between labour and capital is one of exploitation, since labour is the exclusive source of capitalist wealth and capitalist ownership is exclusively the product of previous labour. The negative freedom of mutually independent private owners is an inseparable part of the asymmetric relationships, based on power, between the owners of the commodity. Formal equality of politically free citizens masks the actual inequality in access to the prerequisites for, and the results of, this formal equality. At the same time, autonomous mechanisms of the capitalist market economy, which must be based on the political emancipation of civil society, incessantly reproduce unequal and unjust relationships between free citizens. Formal political justice masks this actual economic injustice.

According to Marx, the decisive phenomenon is the fact that capitalist modernization is irrational since the unequal sharing of wealth is inevitably accompanied by destruction of this

wealth during periodic crises. Again, Marx believes imperfect capitalist modernization must be overruled in order to maintain the civilized principles of the development of modern society.

The principles for the development of a modern society are regarded by Marx as exclusive factors of emancipation. According to him, the productive forces of industrial production and the forms of organization of labor for mass production, are areas where the conditions required for building a free community of autonomous individuals are created. In order for the civilized principles of a modern society to develop, the capitalist form of the relationship between labor and ownership must be abolished and a unity between labor and ownership must be established in society as a whole. On this basis man no longer will be manipulated by labor and the conditions for the reproduction of labor; instead he will become master of the conditions of his own life within and through the community. The negative freedom of politically independent and materially dependent citizens will culminate in a positive freedom of citizens who become free through respecting the freedom of their co-citizens. The communal solidarity of autonomous citizens should, according to Marx, create conditions under which the civilized principles of a modern society can develop in an unrestrained manner.

Marx's distrust of the capitalist market economy was associated, from the very start, with a similar distrust towards any commodity production. Together they implied the abolition of capitalist, and indeed of any private, ownership. Commodity production and private property, Marx maintained, are factors spontaneously producing the capitalist commodity production and private ownership. Marx shares the illusion that, under conditions of freedom, a society can be self-formed via the rational administration of things. He called for replacing imperfect capitalist rationalization by a total society-wide rationalization, within which the citizens' needs, as well as the resources from which these needs would be satisfied, would be calculated within the context of a rational society as a whole. Consequently, the abolition of the capitalist form of commodity production necessarily means the abolition of the autonomy of any form of economics.

Inevitably connected with Marx's concept of the economic bases of a politically free civil society was the restrictively functional approach to the idea of a democratic State. In a pluralistic democratic society, he maintained, only the formal political freedom of politically autonomous citizens is exercised, but political autonomy, in turn, is a precondition under which the citizens become, in fact, subject to the spontaneous movement of impersonal material forces. Hence, the formal equality of politically free citizens should be replaced with true equality which, according to Marx, creates equality of opportunity for all citizens creatively to materialize their productive forces and to share in the collectively produced communal wealth. True equality should be the embodiment of social justice. Only on this principle, Marx contended, could the State become an instrument controlled by the civil society, instead of an instrument that controls civil society.

However, it was not possible for Marx to explain the mechanisms of institutional establishments through which such a truly free society could exercise its rights. His idea of the free self-formulation of a society, via a rational administration of affairs, led him to believe that, instead, a free society would assume a form of restored moral totalitarianism in social life. The abolition of the autonomy of economic life would be connected with a complementary abolition of the political autonomy of free citizens. This raised doubts about the civilisation and cultural traditions of European modern society and about the meaning of the political emancipation of a civil society.

The initial project of the Bolshevik revolution envisaged abolition of the democratic State. As the capitalist market economy was supposed to be the final step in producing the Emancipation-Enlightenment project of a modern society, the idea of 1789 should have been implemented in

1917. The sense of the revolution was the liberation of man from all forms of material dependence, and this emancipation should have been accompanied by the individual becoming self-conscious as an autonomous member of a free society. To implement this project, private ownership and commodity production would need to be abolished and property and means of production nationalized.

Under nationalization, civil society would fall under State rule, for the State becomes the true owner of the means by which social life is controlled. Once the autonomy of civil society is destroyed, political power changes into totalitarian State power. Political revolution, whose aim was to abolish the State after a transition period of dictatorship of the proletariat, changes to permanent revolution during which State power constantly increases and the transitional period of the dictatorship of the proletariat becomes a permanent dictatorship of State power. As a result, when the Bolshevik form of the Emancipation-Enlightenment project of a modern society was implemented, it entailed the destruction of the autonomy of a politically free citizen and his political and civil existence.

The 1989 revolution in the Central European and East European countries is a process during which pluralistic democracy and autonomous market economies progressively are being restored. The outcome of this revolution is the final breakdown of the Bolshevik form of the Emancipation-Enlightenment project for modern society, and the undermining of the Leninist interpretation of the 1989 revolution. According to that interpretation, the outcome of the 1917 revolution was, in fact, a Stalinist deformation of the original sense of Leninism because economic life came under State control instead of becoming a democratic and socially controlled process. The year 1989 was to become a symbol of the breakdown of Stalinism, and Leninism was to be restored as an outcome of the 1989 revolution. For this reason the 1989 revolution, viewed from the Leninist standpoint, was regarded as a counter-revolution within the context of the Enlightenment tradition of modern society.

The final collapse of real socialism also put an end to any attempt at reforming the State socialism, so that the Communist reformists' way of interpreting the 1989 revolution lost its legitimacy. Due to the revolution in 1989, no answer will be given to the question whether real socialism could have been revolutionized and whether transformation was possible to a pluralistic democracy with socialist market economy. That would have led to democracy both in economics and politics--a higher form of democracy than under either socialism or capitalism. The idea of a socialist market economy based on the autonomous self-determination of man within the economic system of a society, and the restoration of a unity of labour and ownership in the form of self-government by the working people, had become a myth, though election results show that it still exercises its attraction and that its role in the future is far from clear.

Pluralist Democracy and Capital Markets

The return of the Central European and East European countries to pluralistic democracy and a capitalist market economy marks an historic event by which the liberal project of a modern society has been legitimized. According to this project, the capitalist market becomes the sole basis of an economic rationale; and the autonomous civil society which stems from this basis constitutes a prerequisite for a pluralistic democracy. It has been shown that, in a democratic society, economics and politics become separate entities and must remain so within the context of democratic communities. Any attempt at substituting one for the other constitutes a threat to democracy.

We can agree with R. Dahrendorf that a return to the liberal project of pluralistic democracy and the capitalist market economy implies transformation from a closed to an open society.[1] In the author's opinion, the main point is that such a transformation marks a new form of political emancipation in the history of the civil society, and that the aim of the transformation is to create a post-industrial welfare state.[2]

For Central and East European countries the crucial point is that during this long transition period processes are going to take place which are radically different from those by which the welfare state had constituted itself through development from the liberal capitalism to the State-organized and bureaucratized capitalism.

In the Central and East European countries, the onset of the political emancipation of the civil society was marked by a change in the system of political power. This change was legitimized by a negative consensus in a non-differentiated civil society. This consensus was based on an all-out negation of the legitimacy of the political rule exercised by the State power, and on a general agreement and will to turn to a pluralistic democracy.

The proper sense of the political emancipation of a civil society, however, is to create a democratic system of law exercised by politically free citizens. Within such a system, stable political institutions must be established and legitimized by the citizens' own free will. Stable democratic culture as an organic part of everyday life is another necessary attribute. It is the author's belief that, during a period in which such democratic institutions are only in the course of being established, only a politically autonomous public can be relied upon to support a pluralistic democracy.

Obviously, a truly autonomous and internally structured political public can become a reality only provided the differentiated economic and social interests of various social subjects within the civil society are legitimated politically. The need for such legitimization is the starting point from which emerge the differentiated political projects engineered by the many political parties; these parties legitimize the interests and indirectly establish, through juridical power, the political consensus of the society. This, in turn, is a basic prerequisite for legitimizing the strong executive power capable of rationally directing the socio-economic transformation of civil society. The problem remains, however, that it is only during the socio-economic transformation that a more marked structuring of the political public begins to take place for the various political projects of this transformation become significantly differentiated during the transformation process itself.

The Transition from a Closed to an Open Society

The duty of a democratic system of government is to guarantee political freedom and, simultaneously, to create conditions favorable for the achievement of social welfare. It has become obvious that, while the civil society is becoming emancipated, the legitimacy of the democratic system is under permanent threat, mainly because the balance between the socio-economic and the political and cultural transformations of society is still rather fragile. The *conditio sine qua non* for democracy firmly to establish itself during the transition period from a closed to an open society is a political consensus on a differentiated civil society, which legitimizes the progress and results of the socio-economic transformation of the society.

Economic transformation accompanies social transformation in all Central European and East European countries. The economic transformation, which is expected to produce a stable system

[1] R. Dahrendorf, *Reflections on the Revolution in Europe* (London, 1990).
[2] J. Habermas, *Die Nacholende Revolution* (Kleine politische Schriften, VII; Frankfurt/M, 1990).

of autonomous market economy, can be effected only when a new form of accumulation of capital and labor is produced via transforming the socialist economies to the capitalist market economy, while State property becomes privatized. Doubts are raised as to the legitimacy of a pluralistic democracy at the very start of the early accumulation of capital. Since in this process old and new privileges intermingle in a variety of forms in the system of economic and political power, state administrative power grows in an uncontrolled manner. However, during the transition period there is an acid test for the legitimacy of the political system of a pluralistic democracy. It is the situation in which the social impact of the economic transformation, accompanied by increasing unemployment and inflation, results in a drastic drop of the standard of living of large groups of citizens. A number of problems arise: first how far the economic transformation can go while remaining socially tolerable; and second, how close a connection the members of the civil society will see, rightly or not, between the decrease in the standard of living and both the heritage from real socialism and the transition to a pluralistic democracy and a capitalist market economy.

The transition to a capitalist market economy implies a process of disintegration of which the relatively stabilized social system of real socialism, which had been the cornerstone of the legitimacy of the socialist formula of society. This system was a stumbling block to any marked social differentiation within the civil society, since the citizens, deprived of political freedom, were barred from productively accumulating wealth in the form of capital. At the same time, however, the politically subjugated civil society was appeased by the relatively stable system of social security through which egalitarian social needs could be satisfied, while offering some limited possibilities of a differentiated rise in the standard of living.

In contrast, a capitalist market economy requires that politically free private owners be given a chance to realize their personal aspirations through a free market of both labor and capital. New criteria for marked social differentiation will emerge in the free market situation, and these criteria will make the individual standard of living largely dependent on one's entrepreneurial capabilities. During the period of the primitive accumulation of capital when unproductive consumption will have to be curbed and productive consumption expanded, only limited resources will be produced for the appeasement and smoothing over of social conflicts within civil society. This situation can threaten the social agreement between labor and capital, which is analogous to the compromise between the State and the society in a welfare state. Here, the analogy lies in capitalist modernization being stimulated in a manner enabling capital to grow in harmony with the social interests of civil society.

Two Projects for the Transition to an Open Society

This author believes that, analyzing the different projects of economic transformation, and despite the above-mentioned zero differentiation of civil society, progressive nucleation of the liberal-neo-conservativist and social-reformist projects of transition from a closed to an open society can be distinguished in Czechoslovakia. Underlying these different projects are the distinct concepts of the modern social Emancipation-Enlightenment to be produced after the breakdown of Real Socialism.

The Liberal Neo-Conservative Project

In the liberal-neo-conservative project the autonomous system of a capitalist market economy is regarded as harmonious: though having harsh social impact at the start, it will be inevitably

positive in the long run. Conditions must therefore be created for the market to enjoy a maximum amount of autonomy, while State intervention must be as restricted as possible. In this project the social shock, experienced by the society and inherent to the system changes in the economies, is regarded as the best tool for the cultivation of free citizens. They have accepted, as an historical necessity, both the discipline inherent in the free market economy, and the productive approach in maximizing labor and minimizing consumption.

In the stage of primitive accumulation of capital, the liberal-neo-conservative project is compromised from the beginning by the fact that, within the existing socio-economic structures of society, there is no homogeneous socio-economic subject to whom the immediate interests proclaimed by this project can be referred. This is the reason why the legitimacy of this project preferably must be backed up by the promise of a better future after the harsh present has been endured. Its legitimacy rests exclusively upon a public political consensus.

The liberal-neo-conservate project is based also on two assumptions. First, that during the transition period the cultural identity of the society may revert to the cultural tradition that existed prior to the advent of Real Socialism; second, that the newly discovered democratic tradition can emerge without problems in terms of the existing cultural identity of the Western society of plenty once the socialist tradition has been negated as a whole. However, in the liberal-neo-conservative project there is no willingness to admit that the cultural identity of the Western society of abundance is based on a completely altered structure of the socio-economic life of the capitalist society. Such a change, accompanied by the socialization of liberalism, was a basis on which pluralist democracy and capitalist economies in the post-industrial society could develop further.

Paradoxically, the legitimacy of the liberal-neo-conservativist project will be threatened by the results of primitive capital accumulation in which this project plays a hegemonic role. The intensity of this threat will grow with increasing harshness as a result of the impact of the economic transformation on the social interests of a major part of civil society.

It must be realized that the liberal-neo-conservativist project is based on the assumption that State power will be maximally restricted. However, to implement this project, the administrative system will have to be relied upon to create the institutional base on which an autonomous market economy can develop. As a result, politics may be conceived technocratically as a tool by which the theoretical project, sufficiently legitimized by privileged knowledge, will be implemented regardless of the changing opinions of the civil society. The possible outcome is a de-politization of politics and a demoralization of the public which will be appeased by being permanently reminded of the past heritage, and by permanently seeking scapegoats for the slower-than-expected advent of a better future. A legitimacy crisis of pluralistic democracy and a cultural identity crisis of civil society could be the paradoxical consequence.

The Social Reformist Project

The legitimacy of the social democratic project for moving from a closed to an open society stems from criticism of the communist reformists' attempt to create a unity of pluralistic democracy and the socialist market economics. That would rely on the traditional socialist-oriented call for the universalization of civil rights and the claim, with some reservations, to be a continuation of the socio-reformist tradition. This is why this project does not fall victim to the neo-conservative illusions concerning the democratic cultural traditions of Czechoslovakia between the two Wars. According to the neo-conservative concept these traditions should be

restored in their authentic form--an attitude which is typical of, though contradictory to, the principles of the neo-conservatism.

The legitimacy of the social democratic project can, however, be justified only to the extent to which unity can be established between the political support for the transition to a capitalist market economy during the process of the primitive accumulation of capital and the political support for the socio-economic interests of those who are the subjects of labor during the period in which the capitalist modernization is coming on stage. Social democratic reformism cannot play a hegemonic role in the process of socio-economic transformation, but it can do so in creating the society-state compromise between capital and labor. The social reformism in this project can be legitimized only once a developed capital market economy has gained ground. For this reason, this project will be under permanent threat from the internal tension between its economic rationality and social ethics. The tension may result in an effort to give political protection to the social interests of the civil society, regardless of the economic rational of a market economy. The criticisms which arise regarding the privileges of economic and political power will be assuaged only if accompanied by a search for, and discovery of, suitable approaches to the promised welfare state. During the transition period, the social-democratic project can therefore rely only on an autonomous political public being capable of a critical self-reflexion, since only such a public can legitimize a transformation from a closed to an open society and, consequently, to the goals of the 1989 revolution.

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Part III
The Spiritual, Moral and Cultural Democratic Context of Contemporary Change

Chapter VI

The Character of the 1989 Revolutions in East-Central Europe and Czech Political Traditions

Miloslav Bednár

There is a view, common in the former West and often supported by distinguished scholars, that the anti-totalitarian revolutions of 1989, which ended the Soviet domination of East-Central Europe, were in principle nothing but the return of this part of Europe to an accustomed liberal democratic political order.[1] The apparent assumption behind this line of reasoning is the hypothesis that the totalitarian system of domination, although brutally violent, was merely an artificial and superficial obstacle preventing the free trend of the human spirit and of human action towards democracy. This view does not and cannot grasp the heart of the matter, but remains on its surface. Consequently, it is also unable to analyze the opportunities presented by this historic convulsion, of which we all have been, and still are, the witnesses.[2]

Long experience with a totalitarian regime, and efforts to grasp the nature of its manipulation of human psychology and activity, indicate the validity of the explanations by George Orwell, Arthur Koestter, Hannah Arendt, Kurt Vonnegut and Alexander Solzhenitsyn of this typical spiritual and political phenomenon. In contrast to most Western analysts, these five interpreters had experienced personally the phenomenon of totalitarianism. Czech political philosophers who had been similarly affected, had in addition significant background in a relatively successful liberal democracy and a much deeper tradition of spiritually and morally grounded political reflection. The most outstanding representative of this tradition, T. G. Masaryk, founded the Czechoslovak state.

When, after returning from exile, Masaryk wrote *World Revolution*[3] during those first years of an independent Czechoslovakia, he was convinced of the irreversible superiority of democracy, just as much as he was convinced of the final defeat of dictatorship in Europe. However, this state of enthusiasm soon gave way to a more sober assessment. It was not that he gave up his convictions about the basic trend of historical change, but he saw that the world democratic revolution would have to encounter another conflict with a more barbarian European adversary. Masaryk made a cogent judgement that the adversary was the prevailing cultural and spiritual half-heartedness and semi-education.[4] The Socio-political diagnosis of the working of a totalitarian system--found convincingly in Hannah Arendt's criticism of Masaryk--seemed to have proved him to be wrong, however, for totalitarianism proved to be a much more tenacious system of ruling society than he had presumed.[5]

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[1] R. Dahrendorf, *Reflection on the Revolution in Europe* (London, 1990).
[2] J. Habermas, "Die nacholende Revolution," in *Kleine Politische Schriften*, VII (Frankfurt am Main, 1990).
[3] T.G. Masaryk, *Svetova Revoluce* (World Revolution) (Prague, 1930); in English *The Making of a State* (London: F.A. TVI Stokes, 1927).
[4] T.G. Masaryk, *Nesnaze demokracie, O bolsevicvi* (The Problems of Democracy; On Bolschevism) (Prague, 1990), 40-41.
[5] H. Arendt, *Elemente und Urspr…unge totaler Herrschaft* (Frankfurt, 1955).

He was deeply convinced that all political, social and economic problems are in principle ethical problems. Such a proposition naturally provoked those of a liberal position, primarily those who take the liberal and democratic political environment for granted. However, the nature of the democratic environment is not self-evident, but has deeper moral roots. This became evident recently, when post-totalitarian societies opened themselves fully to contact with developed Western democracies. This post-totalitarian situation revealed, for example, that the obvious inability to adopt the principles of a free market completely and all at once was due primarily to the essentially different moral habits of a people brought up in a totalitarian regime.

The transformation of a previously democratic Czechoslovakia into a totalitarian political system occurred when the moral support of the nation had been removed, leaving it defenseless before the aggressive onslaught, both from within and from without, of the totalitarian left. From that time on, the totalitarian managers tried to create a new society and a new man--what is more, they succeeded. They began by abolishing any true distinction between civil society and the state. Both spheres operated only as systems for transmitting the decisions of the ruling party's center. Both of them were, in reality, thereby liquidated. Terror as the principle of existence and ideology as the principle of the "political" action of totalitarianism penetrated into the very capillaries of society, including its mental habits, thereby decisively influencing the conduct and experience of everyday life.

Communist domination resulted in a radical resignation of individual responsibility for the course of one's life and its moral meaning. The type of ideal human being and social model imposed by the totalitarian system was one response to the increasing complexity of a modern secularized liberal world. In place of the synthesizing power of the religious life, conceived and encouraged by the medieval Church, it offered a relatively easy life of ideological and material compulsion. From the ideological point of view, the awful complexity of life and world suddenly disappeared; everything was supposed to become as clear and simple as it had been in the happy period of childhood.

However, totalitarianism conquered complexity, not by simplicity, but by *vagueness*. This required responsiveness opposite to the moral and political responsibility of the individual; it was rather permanent readiness to comply with every ideological shift. Consequently, every trait of independent individuality should be eliminated: this was the citizen's first and final duty to the Communist regime. Once they accepted the ideology, either as the highest possible knowledge, or as the ruling and compelling reality of power to be respected as the framework of individual careers, all existential problems of human life were resolved. They disappeared once and for all, so that the world was no longer problematic and complex, but became a very simple entity. Anything that did not fit into such a polarity was either wrongly understood, or a remnant from some previous and no longer relevant or realistic time.

The key spiritual meaning and purpose of totalitarian politics consists in the dominating role of vagueness at all levels of society, and, therefore, in the liquidation of all activities independent of the official ideological canon. A considerable part of this was realized in communist Czechoslovakia. People who chose vagueness abdicated thereby all personal responsibility for their lives in exchange for the security of immediate orders. They then began to hold that everything is relative and, therefore, that their obedience should not be blamed because it too can be shown to be right. This kind of totalitarian sophistry became the reasoning of the "new socialist man", *homo sovieticus*, for whom vagueness was the proper meaning of life and of the world. In this respect totalitarianism carried to sinister fruition the spiritual uncertainty of modern Western civilization.

History of Revolutions

The victory of the world democratic revolution in Europe came about only in 1989; in the last analysis, it was achieved in the sense in which Masaryk comprehended democracy. The basis of the East-European political revolutions--with the partial exception of Romania--were not violent military operations, but commonly shared moral rejections of totalitarian regimes. The democratic attitude of the Soviet block citizens in 1989 grew out of their moral orientation. Masaryk's final summary of the meaning of history which closes his *World Revolution*--that symbolic résumé: "Jesus, not Caesar"--was fulfilled. Masaryk's influence was manifest clearly in Czechoslovakia in 1968 and in the actions of the Czechoslovak democratic opposition which followed. It had a very basic, though indirect, share also in the character of the East-European revolutions of 1989: his alleged naïveté had become historical reality.

The revolutionary spring of nations in 1848 was the rebellion of awakening citizenship in continental Europe against the basic certainties and orders of the Holy Alliance. That international pact had been intended to hold back the revolutionary democratic contagion of French origin in non-democratic Europe. The 1848 democratic revolution failed in Eastern and Central Europe mainly because of Russian military intervention. It was not successful until 140 years later, in the year of the 200th anniversary of the French revolution.

The Communist totalitarian system from the Soviet Union was the object of this democratic revolution, which consisted in the pervasive disintegration of the system. Gorbachev's ascension to power had been the response of the totalitarian Soviet leadership to their impasse, which, in turn, had resulted from the conflict of that totalitarian system with the political approach of the oldest modern democracy, that of America. The political failure of the totalitarian system can be understood as the victory of morals and moral politics over totalitarian ideology with its direct dependence upon the allegedly objective laws of natural historical development. The practical side of the ideology was its day-to-day application of these alleged laws to political dealings according to the situation. Such application does not, of course, acknowledge the moral principles which, in the totalitarian ideological view, can provide only an ideological super-structure to the historically outdated phases of historical development.

The Soviet Union's totalitarian approach to the USA was based on this ideological standpoint and presumed, moreover, that its big-power antagonist at best would act similarly--should it manage to overcome its allegedly historically belated moral attitudes. This presumption was correct in the days of the Johnson, Nixon and Ford administrations. However, the subsequent return of American foreign policy to its original moral-political ideals and principles proved fatal to the totalitarian Soviet regime, for anything of that sort went beyond the possibilities of an ideological interpretation of historical reality. As H. Arendt presumed they would, the Soviet totalitarian rulers became tricked tricksters. They had to yield to the pressure inspired by the United States for the observance of basic human and citizen rights, linked to a firm and realistic attitude in the matter of disarmament and economic relations. The result was the arrival of Gorbachev, who presented his policy as a morally principled democratization of the totalitarian empire of his day.

The fall of Brezhnev's Neo-Stalinism began to have an effect in Eastern Central Europe similar to that of the fall of Metternich in Austria. The Hungarians were the first to take this opportunity to change their political system and their position was relatively the most favorable. Their leader, Kádár--upon whom Kruschev and Tito had agreed just before crushing the Hungarian democratic revolution of 1956--directed his efforts toward economic reforms and included a partial

loosening of the ideological clamp upon society. He did this on a continuing basis, even though he adjusted to pressure from the Soviet Union. What was decisive was that Kádár and his people managed to exclude the influence of the Stalinists in creating state policy by forcing them into positions of regional power. After removing their teacher, who had gone about his reforms by halves, Kádár's pupils set about democratizing the social system toward a clear political democracy. That is to say, in Hungary the revolution came clearly from the leaders, which allowed a non-violent revolutionary people's movement, dominated by the non-party Democratic Forum.

Practically simultaneously with Hungary, most of the Poles decided for a democratic, anti-totalitarian revolution, represented by their repeatedly legalized Solidarity, i.e. their political non-Party union. The founding of Solidarity in the summer of 1980 was a truly radical break in the long tradition of violent Polish revolutions. The negative prospects of revolutionary violence had become obvious to the Polish participants in the revolutionary workers' rebellions of 1970 and 1976. The founding of Solidarity was the intended beginning of the non-violent people's supra-party movement for democracy in Poland. A lasting alliance was formed between Solidarity and the Polish Catholic Church to constitute a traditional national organization, spiritual and anti-totalitarian in character.

East Germany's turn came in October 1989 on the occasion of the celebrations of the fortieth anniversary of the totalitarian Communist regime. Gorbatchev's personal instigation of folk demonstrations was obvious. In spite of the usual non-democratic German traditions, the German Democratic Republic became the site of the origin of a mass movement for democracy, in which the New Forum played a fundamental role.

There followed the citizens' movement for democracy in Bulgaria, with a original ecological motive through basically political. Here, too, we see basically a supra-party, democratic political trend.

The number of democratic revolutions in eastern Central Europe in 1989 was supplemented by Czechoslovakia on November 17th. Its relatively belated beginning was the result of the exceedingly thorough restoration and tightening of the totalitarian regime after the crushing of earlier non-violent Czechoslovak democratic movements. The Czechoslovak revolution of November and December 1989 provides an excellent opportunity to study the relationship of morality and politics--that is, of moral and immoral politics. Without exaggeration, it can be maintained that the Czechoslovak revolution was predominantly and quite obviously a clash between the moral attitudes of the citizens and the totalitarian policy whose outer form constituted the explicitly barbarian essence of the totalitarian regime. The Marxist interpretation of history and social movement had proved a failure. The moral rebellion of the people who economically were relatively well-off, was articulated through a political revolution which swept away the totalitarian regime practically overnight and opened the path to democracy. The rapid founding, the character, activity and primarily the massive spread of the political movements, Civic Forum and Public Against Violence, presented a possible future model for Czechoslovak democracy.

The attitude of the citizens' non-violent stance against totalitarian violence had emerged for the first time in East Central Europe in 1968, in Czechoslovakia in the revolutionary democratic reform movement called the "Prague Spring". This included the spontaneous and simultaneously organized reaction of citizens to the military invasion on August 21st and the several months that followed. The Civic Forum, Public Against Violence and originally the Movement for Citizens' Freedom continued the tradition founded in 1968 by the Club of Committed Non-Party Members.

There were other citizens' associations, beyond Czechoslovakia. Non-violent and supra-party civil courage found its organized form of expression in Polish Solidarity, the Hungarian

Democratic Forum, the Bulgarian Citizens' Democratic Movement and to a large degree in the East-German New Forum. With the exception of Romania, the Czechoslovak Civic Forum and Public Against Violence closed the chain reaction of non-violent people's movements for human rights and democracy against the communist totalitarianism from the Soviet Union.

Non-Violent Revolution

Whence did this non-violent revolutionary form spring, and what is its significance for politics and political theory? We would note three sources of contemporary, non-violent supra-party and non-party democratic movements in the European countries of the Soviet block. The first is the Czechoslovak Prague Spring of 1968, suppressed through military violence, but why was it non-violent? The decisive reason for the peaceful course of that democratic anti-totalitarian revolution was the predominant, nearly universal, social consensus which did not seek revenge upon the long-term oppressors. Its reason can be found in the character of that stage of the Novotný regime as a relatively perfect Schweik-like metamorphosis of the previous classical stage of totalitarian terror and class ideology. Ideological supervision over the cultural sphere, the university and sometimes even high school teaching was more liberal and rather decisively relaxed. Moreover, economic activity was marked by more liberal tendencies. All this happened under the outward mantle of socialism and in close connection with the then totalitarian Soviet Union. In Czechoslovakia the majority of the inhabitants did not mind this. The implications of this more liberal culture, which more or less followed the democratic traditions of Masaryk's First Republic, appeared slowly and gradually.

When the inevitable clash came with those in power, the top decision-makers were already aware of the crack in their orthodox totalitarian facade. A certain liberal and universal social consensus existed, from the highest levels to the man-in-the-street. As soon as freedom of expression and assembly became possible, there was no real need of general violence. Thus, the democratic Czechoslovak revolution ran its course non-violently and with a strong element of morality. Its unique form left strong and indelible marks in the memories of those who were able to watch or actually participate in it, whether in agreement or as critics.

The second reason for the contemporary non-violent democratic revolutions in most countries of East Central Europe lay in the origin and effect of Charta 77. The spiritual, non-violent cultural heritage of 1968 in Czechoslovakia and Masaryk's influence were concentrated and deepened in Charta 77, which remolded them into a form as yet unheard of in European and world history. It was an initiative of several hundred publicly named and unnamed citizens who radically criticized the tight totalitarian system which had managed to frighten into obedience and neutralize the majority of the inhabitants of Czechoslovakia. At first sight it seemed a simple idea: that pacts regarding human and civil rights must be applied consistently. This natural demand which hit at the very foundations of totalitarianism was given an existential neo-Socratic philosophical basis by Jan Patocka through a radical contemplation upon the common source of philosophy and politics (see Chapter VII below). This attitude, emanating from a radical questioning of the meaning of life, critiqued seemingly self-evident social and political institutions. Past Czech traditions of political thought, represented in modern times by Havlícek, Palaký and Masaryk, and founded on morals, thus gained a philosophical base for addressing power.

Moreover, not solely an individual standpoint, but a solidarity of thought was founded by this attitude. Patocka called it the solidarity of the deeply shaken, "who are capable of comprehending the meaning of life and death and their consequences in history: that history is a conflict between

minimal life, bare and shackled by fear, and life at the peak which does not concern the details of workaday life, but sees clearly that its life and 'peace' are finite."[6] The criticism of the political regime from the viewpoint of the rights of the human being and citizen is therefore a continuous criticism of the institutions from the viewpoint of the actual meaning of human existence. Charta 77 grew from a philosophically founded moral attitude which asks the meaning of political and social institutions from the point of view of the meaning of human life. The thought of Charta 77 therefore is not limited to criticism of the totalitarian regime, but concerns all political and social systems without exception. Hence, it could never organize a political organization, but expressed a supremely moral standpoint toward political and social realities.

The third source of the non-violent democratic revolutions in East Central Europe was the phenomenon of Polish Solidarity. This presented the immediate and natural metamorphosis of an independent trade union movement into an anti-totalitarian political movement of non-party members developed upon democratic organizational principles. When such a non-violent mass movement is led by political personalities with expert advisors, the totalitarian regime has an absolutely indestructible antagonist. Its superiority can be put off only temporarily by the use of outright violence, as was shown clearly by the Jaruzelski military putsch of December 13, 1981, and by the period that followed.

The mainly non-violent democratic revolutions in Eastern Europe are, from the viewpoint of political theory, in their typology and revolutionary development events which deserve the greatest attention. The bicentenary celebration of the French Revolution brought about an end to the era of revolutions in the French manner, which had been the revolutionary paradigm for modern times. In other words, the Central European revolutions of 1989--with the partial exception of Romania--meant the end of violent revolutions which logically culminated in terror.

Free Political Associations

The recent non-violent anti-totalitarian wave of revolution amongst the nations of East Central Europe had two determining common denominators. The first was non-violence; the second was the clear aim of founding historically proven and typically free political associations which are absolutely different from political parties. It is in these non-party and supra-party institutions that elementary citizenship is applied: the basic political dimension of free and open discussion on public matters and consequent decision-making, that is to say, the principle of initiative as well as referendum.

This is an institution of new origin; it is the effect of political freedom and power unlimited by any party ideology or political regulations of hierarchic organization; instead, its political organizational structure is horizontal. In view of long-term experience with the totalitarian system, these free citizen associations are characterized by healthy mistrust "in any kind of one-and-only correct solution as the way to salvation" (Ivan Fiera). These types of free associations for political action by citizens are a clear expression of elementary civil action: it is politics in the original sense of the word. In this politics par excellence, moral politics became the victor over its direct opposite, totalitarianism, whose profound determinism had eliminated responsibility for public matters and any authority on the part of the individual moral conscience.

To date, the historical fates of free civic associations as places where citizens could apply their authentic will to discuss and determine public affairs have all been temporary, with the exception

[6] J. Patocka, *Kacirske eseje o filosofii dejin* (Heretical Essays on the Philosophy of History) (Prague, 1990), 141.

of the American Revolution. In the violent French Revolution of 1789 the spontaneously so-called free associations did not survive. The same fate befell the councils after the Russian Revolution of 1905, created by members of the coalition of democratic parties. This was true as well in 1917 when, significantly, Lenin saw them as the main threat to the realization of his totalitarian political conceptions. The same applies to the violent suppression of the civic associations originating from the Hungarian anti-totalitarian revolution of 1956 and the Czechoslovak Councils of Workers and Clubs of Committed Non-Party Members of 1968. The real contemporary turn for the better, and in this respect the real success, was Polish Solidarity.

From the historical point of view and for the world political scene the unique case of the United States is noteworthy; H. Arendt analyses it in her work *On Revolution*.[7] There the free civic associations became the basis of political life long before the revolution of 1776, so that the revolution did not end in a reign of terror as was the case in the French revolution of 1789. The incessantly spontaneous creation of political associations of a non-party and supra-party type is a natural and normal state of affairs for contemporary America, as is the relatively small importance of political parties or party machines. A Congressman is primarily the delegate of the citizens, not the spokesman of party organizations and their political coalitions and covenants.

The 1989 democratic anti-totalitarian revolution of nations in East Central Europe bears that out; these were non-violent movements based on horizontal non-party and supra-party types of political organization. Obviously, this was a possible beginning for a new European political tradition of authentic civic life, in which party machines and their coalitions would not play a decisive role.

After the non-violent revolutionary removal of totalitarian Communist domination in Czechoslovakia, the political movement, Civil Forum, which had been started by the previous ethically-grounded anti-totalitarian opposition, itself manifested the complexity and uncertainty inherent in the political order. Activists from previous totalitarian structures, as well as various office-hunters, often succeeded in infiltrating Civic Forum and exploiting some of its politically naive members. Hence, supporters of the classical party mode of politics were strengthened considerably in their conviction that Civic Forum contained an inherent political danger. Since then the Forum has split into a number of political parties. In the contemporary political atmosphere, some politicians have stubbornly refused to take up the demanding Czech tradition of non-political politics, so that a huge crowd of semi-intelligentsia of all stripes now prevails. Democracy as an attitude towards life is now more distant from the majority of politicians than from the considerable number of citizens, who, in a way, regret that Civil Forum no longer exists.

Czech democracy is far from becoming a commonly accepted way of life. It is an open question when, how, and if it will succeed in assuming the moral and spiritual attitudes toward politics in which the regenerated political freedom of Czechoslovakia originated.

By the same token, the removal of the totalitarian management of society spelled the disappearance of its pseudo-moral support of general totalitarian behavior. The people who were used to that became bewildered and more vague, for they had lost all reliable security without any corresponding compensation. As a result, in the Czech Republic those committed to a democratic course for the country constitute the contemporary government coalition. They are the young and middle generations, 45 years of age or under who live in big cities (especially Prague), and are more highly educated. In sum, these constitute slightly over 50 percent of the adult population. The rest are now evenly divided between the indifferent and those who support the present liberal democratic system.

[7] H. Arendt, *On Revolution* (London, 1973).

A promising and lasting change from this dark side of the post-totalitarian Czech democracy can be achieved by stable support for the hierarchy of values anchored in the spiritual principle of individual moral and political responsibility. This democratic hierarchy of humanist values must inevitably grow out of moral judgement and coping with the recent totalitarian past. This task, in fact, is even more pressing than in the case of Germany after 1945, because, there, the totalitarian regime was in power for only twelve years. In the Czech region, after six years of Nazi domination and almost three years of semi-democracy under Soviet surveillance, the Communist totalitarian regime lasted, with the short interruption of 1968, for four decades. This made possible its very efficient transformation into sophisticated social and psychological rule, distinguished by the subtle terror of 70s and most of the 80s.

The first key legislative step in coping with this heavy totalitarian legacy was the so-called lustration law, excluding higher Communist functionaries and agents of the political police from leading positions in the state sector for five years. The repercussion of this law was highly instructive. The strong, radical opposition against it in the first post-totalitarian federal Czechoslovak parliament originated from political parties which were afflicted with the hereditary taint of the Communist totalitarian regime and from some segments of the public in Western democracies. In addition to the Marxist and the "politically correct" strata of intellectuals, many committed to the principles of human rights voiced their protest. It is conspicuous that a similar and even more stringent regulation in East Germany is not criticized, nor is the process of de-Nazification in the Western part of Germany, which is generally considered lawful, recalled. In such cases, human rights are re-interpreted in order to cope with the phenomenon of totalitarian crime.

The second legislative step was the Czechoslovak law defining as a crime the support and propagation of movements aimed at the suppression of the rights and liberties of citizens. The third step, by the Czech parliament in 1993, seems extremely important from the ethical point of view. It comprises three issues. (a) It unequivocally brands the whole period of the Communist regime in Czechoslovakia illegitimate, illegal, criminal and destructive of the entire body of value of European civilization. (b) It proclaims resistance against the Communist regime to have been legitimate and deserving of respect. (c) It removes the statute of limitations from all unpunished crimes committed during the Communist era.

All these laws are indispensable as a foundation for the legal restoration of moral public life in Czech society. The present opposition to them is not so rationally controlled as it is agitated and scared. Its heralds seem to be led by their apparent compromises with the Communist regime and its ideology. In their words, such laws as that regarding the anti-communist resistance would evoke a witch-hunt, promote a search for revenge, and divide people into a first and second class, etc. Czech Communists even claimed that all the Communist crimes were caused by big powers who pressed Czechoslovakia into the Soviet sphere of influence and into the Warsaw Pact, thereby publicly revealing their deeply rooted totalitarian mentality: they own no responsibility; only others are guilty, not we. However, such a mentality is far from being limited to Communists. All who feel affected protest loudly and feel afflicted by the sheer fact of such resistance with its victims and heros. The affected circles try as in the case of the lustration law, to gain an influential support among the Western liberals. In the long run, however, such legal provisions by their unequivocal moral impact will stabilize the radical turn towards liberal democracy in the Czech Republic.

Moral Politics

The recent general turn toward civic life in East Central Europe was a turn toward the institution of moral politics which, particularly in the case of young people, motivated the question of the possibilities and limits of totalitarian systems. A totalitarian social regime obviously could not manage permanently to prevent the origin and articulation of individual uniqueness, by which it is mortally endangered. As Augustine says, and after him Hannah Arendt: "Every new person is a new beginning."[8] The principle limits to the functioning of the totalitarian system are the social psychological consequences of morality. That is why the totalitarian regimes try so intensely, as they say, to form the social consciousness of young people. But the phenomenon of the uniqueness of every newcomer to this world cannot be removed that way, for a totalitarian ideology has nothing to say in this regard. It is here that the ideological faith in allegedly objective laws of historical development meets an insurmountable obstacle.

This basic manner of thinking on the part of totalitarian decision-makers does not comprehend the uniqueness of each human being and the irreplaceability of every newcomer to this world. In the eyes of the totality, the human individual is primarily material to be disposed of according to an ideological attitude regarding social and historical development. Totalitarian ideological thinking, therefore, is incapable of comprehending the essence of history as incessantly surpassing whatever can be planned: as a possible radical crossing-out of any engineering of human souls. On the contrary, the total crossing-out of the totalitarian comprehension of philosophy, history, politics, sociology and psychology is the result of action based on the decisions of specific persons in a specific historical, political, and social-cultural situation. The actions which began the recent democratic, anti-totalitarian revolution of the nations of East Central Europe were morally motivated, with major emphasis on non-violent forms; (the economic and strictly social elements were of secondary importance). The moral meaning of history as such, and of the present stages of the world democratic revolution in particular, were expressed clearly.

The revolutionary movement in this region showed that a unified comprehension of the phenomenon of revolution is indispensable. Revolution is not only a question of social and economic conditions or, for example, of a suitable type of rationality. Rather, it is primarily a spiritual and moral question--one of conscience--because the meaning of political revolution is anchored in the transcendent movement of Man.

As a matter of fact, our century has been an era of world wars: two hot and one cold thus far. Upon their conclusion, these three world cataclysms were succeeded by common enthusiasms and courageous designs for a world organization of nations. Recently, this has meant considerable strengthening of the United Nations organization. Now, similar to the defeat of President Wilson and the breakup of the strange coalition between the Western democracies and the totalitarian Soviet Union after 1945, we experience an unpleasant return to earth, i.e., to the real present situation of humankind.

The lesson of our present disillusion teaches us that the totalitarian menace is by no means an issue of the past. Contemporary chauvinist nationalism in post-communist regions are not comparable to the native nationalism in Western Europe. The essential difference consists in the obvious abuse and manipulation by powerful communist networks of basic national needs in these areas, including the secession of Slovakia from the Czech Lands. Such "post-communist" nationalism is in reality the last stage of communism. It results in preservation of communist power in changed circumstances; by the same token it paralyses any radical political and economic transformation of previously totalitarian regimes toward stable democracy and a free market. The

[8] Augustinus, *De civitate Dei*, XII, 20.

phenomenon of "nation" is being manipulated against the citizens in order to suppress the civic dimension of human existence, for the manipulation consists in an identification of the nation with strong totalitarian authority on the part of the central power, eliminating the personal responsibility of the citizens. In this way, effective neo-communist abuse of the national principle fosters a totalitarian pseudo-citizenship.

Philosophically, the historic rise and development of nations appears to be a specific expression of the trend of the human spirit toward individual freedom. The same pertains to the rise and development of the principles of human and civic rights. Accordingly, positive nationalism and citizenship present two irreplaceable, mutually irretrievable and correlative levels of the human struggle for freedom and equality. In this context it should be noted that the anchor of the historic path of humanity toward freedom and equality by non expendable human individuals consists in the spiritual meaning of life and the world from the point of view of eternity. Only on this condition can freedom not turn into arbitrariness, or equality into uniformity.

Totalitarianism, as a typical phenomenon of our century, represents a systemic incorporation and intensification of vagueness as an inharmonic, oversimplifying, discordant and inorganic mode of rationality. A totalitarian political system can arise, if in a given society such characteristics prevail that a given society is not able spiritually, morally and legally to eliminate political movements of this type. This is true not only of post-totalitarian countries, but also of the democratic world in its confrontation with totalitarian regimes in our century. It is the most important problem of the contemporary Czech Republic and its newly regenerated democracy.

The classical principles of human rights, as the basis of modern democracy, should be thoroughly reflected upon in the light of the experience of our century when totalitarianism appeared to present a real alternative for human existence. Both moral and legal principles should be sought with a view to preventing such arrogant authority from destroying democracy. By the same token, regulations in post-Communist countries, following the precedent of de-Nazification, should be understood against the background of the indispensable spiritual, moral and legal re-founding of human rights. Having experienced the classical liberal period between two world wars, and then forty years of the totalitarian annihilation of European values, Czech democracy--and, *mutatis mutandis*, all contemporary democracies--must not enter the same water for a second time. Czech democracy does not return to itself and to the West like a prodigal son, but with a demand for new moral and political vigilance against the totalitarian disaster of 20th century. This vigilance should become a new source of development for democracy, as well as of its deeper foundation in spirit and in morality.

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Chapter VII

Ethics and Politics in Plato, Tomás Garrigue Masaryk and Jan Patocka as a Topical Issue

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Xenocrates' division of philosophy into logic, physics and ethics was not unfounded, but it reflected a problem which obscures the nature of philosophy. Cosmos, logos and ethos are fundamental and integrally related philosophical terms. The difference between cosmos and logos is that of the order of being and its conceptual representation. Ethos is human behavior and action as it differs from the strictly physical natural order; ethos is subordinate to logic as order is to physics. It was in this basic context that Plato developed his conception of the relationship between ethics and politics.

In *The Republic a* model of an ideal community is constructed in response to the ethical question: How is justice in the soul possible? The portrayal of an ideal community serves as a vivid example of the harmonization of spiritual forces: the community is the human soul writ large. The central task of a just community is to provide for the philosophical education of its citizens. Thus, for Plato the meaning of politics is ethics: as the intended goal of politics, ethics is a responsible life in terms of logos, that is, based on philosophical understanding. The depiction in Plato's *Republic* of the principles of a just polis is a consciously ideal model which is unrealizable due to human nature. Therefore, in the *Laws* Plato introduced a second model for a polis in which a realistic fulfillment of ideal principles is worked out and which includes democratic elements.

In Christian interpretation, Plato's philosophical foundation and the intertwining of ethics and politics became manifest in the decisive European conception of the Holy Roman Empire, which represented a spiritually anchored political rule. The meaning of Plato's philosophical aims in politics was transformed into a realized conception of European unity. Thus, Plato's thought became one of the most important spiritual elements of Europe, a cornerstone and at the same time a stumbling block. The modern response to the Greek legacy, in particular that of Plato and Aristotle, constituted in spiritual terms the insurpassability of the moral individual as a key element of European spiritual life up to our time.

Tomás Masaryk

Plato: Ethics, Politics and Religion

A special case of the modern European interpretation of the Platonic ethico-political standpoint is the Platonism of Thomás Garrigue Masaryk. Masaryk's second and more comprehensive study bears the significant title *Plato jako vlastenec* (Plato as Patriot).[1] This work argues against Niebuhr's charge that Plato was an unworthy citizen of Athens. In Masaryk's interpretation, Plato's patriotism rests on his attempts to achieve a philosophically based radical reform of the polis. Masaryk emphasized Plato's philosophical point of reference, the individual, on which he wanted to transform all of human society; he did not yet separate ethics from politics.

[1] Vlastimil Masaryk, *Plato jako vlastenec* (Uherske Hadiste, 1930), originally published in the anthology *Zora, Almanach moravske omladiny* (1877).

As a result several shortcomings necessarily arose in his State. We would not say, however, that politics should ignore morality. On the contrary, we are convinced that without the science of morality there can be no sociology; only in systematically carrying out the two sciences should they be treated separately.

Masaryk saw a parallel between the close connection between morality and politics and that between ethics and sociology. He understood sociology, like Comte *senso lato*, as a philosophy of society and of history. Sociology as "the science of the existence and life of nations, of humanity,"[2] was, however, still in its infancy, even though Plato had laid ground work for it. Masaryk considered this view of sociology to be absolutely essential for the true politician, just as Plato had thought philosophy to be, so that "statesmen would no longer think in terms of expediency, for their every step will be aimed at the good of the whole."[3] Because of this ethical-political interpretation, philosophy was anything but academic for Plato: "Theory and practice would not be at variance with each other."[4]

From Masaryk's philosophical standpoint, with its emphasis on the integral connection between ethics and politics, his assessment of the *Laws* is worth examining. Masaryk lays particular stress on the fact that, in this late work, Plato,

does not expressly demand that rulers be philosophers, but does want them to be moral and of sound judgment; in general, positive religion plays the role philosophy once did. . . . Plato admitted that his philosophy was not accessible for the general public, which Comte conceded as well; both, however, adhered to religious principles, Plato to mythology and Comte to Catholicism. We are currently seeing that statesmen and philosophers have no idea of the true nature of religion and of the relationship between it and the State; they thus could learn a great deal from Plato and Comte.[5]

Masaryk explored this relationship between ethics and politics in his short study, "Politika vedou a umením" (Politics as Science and Art), written in 1906.[6] Here Masaryk proceeds from the principle that every political aim is subject to an ethical judgment.[7] He points to the difference between political activity and morality, between justice and charity, which, however, rests on the essential connection between the two: "But justice is nothing but the mathematics of love, and any kind of political activity is based in the end upon the principles of humanistic ethics. *Humanitas* is just the Latin term for charity."[8] Masaryk here takes issue with the views of politics which see a contradiction between political activity and moral principles:

These extremist views are known as Machiavellianism or political Jesuitism, which judge every political measure according to whether it advances the aim of the politician. One can only reply that above all else the goal itself must be ethically founded, and further, that only those means are permissible which are also themselves based on ethics.[9]

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[2] Ibid., 41.
[3] Ibid., 40.
[4] Ibid., 40.
[5] Ibid., 50.
[6] *Thomas Garrigue Masaryk Politicke Myslenky*, ed. V.D. Skrach (Prague, 1922), 3-25.
[7] Ibid., 2.
[8] Ibid., 12-13.
[9] Ibid., 3.

For Masaryk political values are derived from ethical ones; in this he has taken over Plato's basic philosophical argument. The primacy of such an ethics over politics is evident also in Masaryk's attitude towards the political institutions of democracy aimed at creating the exterior framework for positing democracy as a world view. In Masaryk's interpretation, Plato's ethical political foundation is updated into a philosophical-religious view of democracy as a goal of political action. From a phenomenological standpoint, Masaryk's basic concept of religious democracy can be understood as intersubjectivity, resulting from the plurality of "worlds of life" aimed at the meaning of their existence *sub speciae aeternitatis*.

In light of his view that religion sanctions ethics, for Masaryk religion is the guiding element of political action. Ethics is based on religion, which is embodied in Jesus Christ: ". . . theoretically theology and ethics--in practice, ritual and morality--religion is in its dictates above all moral behavior, . . . a combination and unity of religion and humanity." Masaryk's ethical conception of religion as the real foundation of politics is anchored in the philosophy of history and is closely linked to what he understands to be the task of modern times. This perception of religion and religious democracy represents his vigorous search for a post metaphysical cultural approach with a legitimate European spiritual foundation. At the same time he sought to surmount positively modern relativistic and subjectivistic skepticism, as well as a widespread halfheartedness. "The halfheartedness of our times is evident in that we are allegedly becoming tolerant and liberal, but in reality we are indifferent. That is the real unbelief."[10]

A specific characteristic of Masaryk's thought and activity lies in his radical Christian transformation of the Platonic ethico-political legacy into the practical ideal of religious democracy. Masaryk is, therefore, bound up with the tradition of Czech philosophy. Behind his ethico-political conception is a philosophy of history which plays a special role in his philosophy of European and world history. The fundamental intention of world history is a nonlinear, but nevertheless identifiable, orientation toward unsupportable individuality and inequality, on the basis of which organic link a nonconformist, but all the more promising, worldwide democratic unity is established. A major milestone on this historical path is the Reformation in which the Hussites in Bohemia played a formative role with their insistence on the authority of religious conscience over the institutionalized authority of the Church.

Comenius and Palacký

The dominant figure of the Reformation in Bohemia is Jan Amos Comenius (Komenský in Czech), whose goal of "emending human affairs" constituted a democratic Christian reworking of Plato's ethico-political philosophical project: "To enlighten all men through true wisdom, to bring them back into order by means of a just State order (*Vera politica),* to unite them with God through true religion so that no one can fail to realize the meaning of his purpose in the world."[11]

With the Christian Platonism of Comenius begins the line of philosophical enlightenment that leads to Leibniz and Herder, a trend of thought rooted in spiritually grounded ethics and placing clear emphasis on the insupportability of the individual *sub specie aeternitatis.* Herder's philosophy of history had a formative influence on the Czech national revival. Masaryk speaks of an historical reimbursement, which still infuriates positivist historians. Herder's philosophy of history was expanded upon by Frantisek Palacký in advancing his ethico-political view of the laws of global centralization and polarities. The trend towards global centralization is based on the

[10] Emil Ludwig, *Gesprache mit Masaryk* (Amsterdam, 1935), 96.
[11] Jan Amos Komensky (Comenius), *Pampaedia,* I, 29.

nature of modern means of communication which, to an extent previously unimaginable, brings together all peoples and states, including the best minds of the entire educated world, and thus facilitates their feeling of community.

According to Frantisek Palacký, another law of the spirit of world history is that of polarity. This has the task of maintaining the equilibrium of the world so that a unilateral shift does not throw off the course of world events:

The more all similar things come together, the more dissimilar things move apart; the more people come together, the more they see, feel, and recognize their differences; and the more the uniting power works, the more stubborn the resistance to it. One can safely claim that a uniform universe has never been a divine law and never will be. Therefore, the national principle has its role in the economics of the world and will keep it for all time, and all the zeal expended and every battle waged against this principle will always be so much tilting at windmills.[12]

Masaryk fully accepts Palacký's philosophy of history, including the importance the latter attaches to the earthshaking spiritual significance of the Hussite movement. Masaryk is particularly interested in the fact that, in contrast to contemporary German liberals, Palacký and his disciple Karel Havliek criticizing the continental liberalism of 19th century did not see the State as the primary instrument of social organization. Both Palacký and Havlícek acknowledged the necessity of the State, including the physical side of its power. However, they justified state power in terms of nationality, religion, and, its ethical and idealistic aims. What primarily divided Palacký and Havlícek from the liberals of French style were their views on the origin of the State in connection with its moral mission. In this respect the two founders of modern Czech political thought are considerably closer to conservative political science, which holds that only at a later stage of its development does a State move away from its original order based on ethics. When Masaryk consciously allies himself with the ethics-based conception of politics of Palacký and Havlícek he then is forced to challenge the continental liberalism as ethically problematic and spiritually superficial.

Critique of Liberalism

Indispensable for an understanding of Masaryk's philosophy of politics based on ethics is his definition of continental liberalism:

Liberalism is in its essence a philosophical rationalism which repeatedly and in a biased manner questions the religious and ethical meaning of life and culture; in social terms it is a philosophy of aristocrats and plutocrats. Liberalism arose in the eighteenth century, primarily in France, and led to the outbreak of revolutions, in particular in 1789 and 1848. The forces of reaction were not able to defeat it each time; at core they were liberal themselves and aimed at a return to the preexisting political order purely for reasons of outward advantage. Thus they actually strengthened liberalism. . . . As far as possible liberalism wants to keep society on the crumbling foundations of the revolution, here and there touching up the structure, perhaps at times laying a hand on a foundation pillar--but just to touch it; no real revision or reform--that is the motto of liberalism in any form.[13]

[12] Frantisek Palacky, *Uvahy a projevy* (Prague, 1977), 343-344.
[13] T.G. Masaryk, *Jan Hus* (Prague, 1923), 12.

Masaryk's ethics-based approach challenges no less than the "current philosophy of our century." The ethical-philosophical radicalism of Masaryk's standpoint, and his bold rejection of the old familiar paths of intellectual half measures, constitute a modern analogue to Plato's fight over principles against the claims of sophistry and rhetoric to be the basic pillars of the Athenian polis. Masaryk holds up the significance of the authentic Czech ethical tradition against the beaten track of political philosophy:

This liberalism is by virtue of its origin irreconcilable with the fundamental idea of our liberal renewal, namely, with the humanitarian idea, insofar as this arose from our Fraternity (i.e. the Post-Hussite Czech Church of the Brethren). Our Fraternity was something quite different from the "Fraternity" of the French Revolution. Our fraternity was based on religious feeling. . . . I value the good things liberalism has done for mankind and for our nation, but I do not wholeheartedly embrace it, and especially not in the form in which it appeared after 1848. . . . The humanitarian Czech ideal historically and factually is rooted in our Reformation and not in the French Revolution; liberal humanism is not the same thing as the humanity of our Revolution. . . . The inability of cosmopolitan liberalism to acknowledge the religious nature of our Reformation is quite remarkable.[14]

Masaryk is clearly among those European thinkers with strong reservations about the nature of Europe's spiritual crisis in the transitional period following the French Revolution. He says that the dominant element of the period is its halfheartedness regarding the spiritual basis of the life of the individual, of society and of political life. In Czech history Masaryk sees a major portent of the later decline in Europe as a whole, but at the same time an indication of a solution: "Our decline was first and foremost a moral decline, we must above all renew ourselves morally--liberalism is unsuited to this task."[15]

The Platonic inseparability of the spiritually based ethico-political theory from its practice was characteristic for Masaryk. Until the First World War he consistently strove for a just, democratic reform of Hapsburg domestic and foreign policy, despite the increasingly dim chances of success. Because Masaryk viewed ethics as an indispensable basis for a successful and forward-looking political life, he could not abandon the existing legal framework. It was only after Austria-Hungary went to war and mutinous Czech troops and civilians were brutally treated that Masaryk became convinced that the Monarchy had to be challenged with force and revolutionary means in defense of the ethical and political democratic principles on which European civilization was based. Thus it came about that Masaryk was the first philosopher in European history to found a State.

In the closing part of the manifesto of Czech and Slovak independence, which he wrote and published in Washington on November 18, 1918, Masaryk explicitly articulated his combination of ethics and politics through the concept of religious democracy as an expression of the philosophy of history: "mankind should be reorganized on the basis of democratic principles. The powers of darkness served the victory of the light--the longed-for age of humaneness is dawning. We believe in democracy, in ever growing freedom."[16]

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[14] Ibid., 13-15.
[15] Ibid., 14.
[16] J.B. Kozak, *T.G. Masaryk a vznik Washingtonske deklarace v rijnu 1918* (Prague, 1968), 70-71.

Jan Patocka

Philosophically basing politics on the nonpolitical, Masaryk expanded Czech political thought. Its next towering exponent would be Jan Patocka. Although he was critical of some of Masaryk's philosophical views, Patocka regarded his predecessor's ethical-existential foundation and the resulting political activity as a radical philosophical achievement, and as a challenge with great significance for Patocka's own time.[17]

The Political Legacy of Platonism

The admiration Patocka held for the philosophical-political aims of Masaryk and his political accomplishment is connected with Patocka's views of the political legacy of Plato. In his remarkable study "Negative Platonism," Patocka offers an original interpretation of the Platonic idea as a fact and experience of freedom: The idea is the true super-objectivity, a pure call of transcendence; the Idea is imperative for an understanding of human life, its experience of freedom, its inner historicity; it is and remains a constant appeal to transcend objectivity.[18] Patocka thus rejects through his radicalization of the Platonic motif of the idea--in line with Heidegger's phenomenological critique--the concept of the Idea as power. The germ of this concept of the idea was already present in Plato.

Patocka's negative Platonism is an analogue of Masaryk's philosophy-base ethical synergism: "The Platonism that is expounded here [shows] not only the dignity of man, but also its final limit; it sanctions the power which man has over objective *Seiende*, but shows that its use is not ruling, but rather serving." Patocka thus reveals the foundation of his philosophy of history: it is the philosophical pendant and extension of Masaryk's religious-ethical concept of politics. At the same time, it is a precondition for the author's subsequent engagement in political activity as the prime theoretician of the Charter 77 human rights movement in Czechoslovakia and its leading spokesman at its founding: Patocka's negative Platonism is an analogue of Masaryk's philosophy-base ethical synergism: "The Platonism that is expounded here [shows] not only the dignity of man, but also its final limit; it sanctions the power which man has over objective *Seiende*, but shows that its use is not ruling, but rather serving." Patocka thus reveals the foundation of his philosophy of history: it is the philosophical pendant and extension of Masaryk's religious-ethical concept of politics. At the same time, it is a precondition for the author's subsequent engagement in political activity as the prime theoretician of the Charter 77 human rights movement in Czechoslovakia and its leading spokesman at its founding:

> It [negative Platonism] shows how much truth there is in the constantly renewed battle . . . against the relativism of values and norms, and this in the simultaneous affirmation of the idea of the fundamental historicity of man and the relativity of his orientation in his environment, of his knowledge and practice, of the impressions of life and the world.[19]

Patocka discusses Plato's philosophy as the determining core of European history, as the explanatory principle of its development and its various manifestations. Later he came to the

[17] Cf. Jan Patocka, *Masaryk* (Prague, 1981, samizdat), 4, 11.
[18] J. Patocka, "Negative Platonismus," in *Ketzerische Essais zur Philosophie Der Geschichte; und Erganzende Schriften*, ed. Klaus Nellen, Jiri Nemec (Stuttgart: Nemec, 1988), 428ff.
[19] Ibid., 430f.

realization that Plato's motif of "care of one's soul" healing is the authentic Idea for the rise of Europe. Patocka particularly emphasizes the ethical element in Plato's psychology:

Plato proceeds from human existence in its fundamental crisis and uncertainty, which is essentially moralistic, i.e., it is about our own existence and nonexistence in partial dependance on us, on our decision, on our *heauto-kinesis*. Plato's point of departure is not *cogito ergo sum*, not a certainty, but rather the primary confusion and uncertainty of existence and its movement. Because its meaning lies in its realization and comes from itself, it will never become independent and definitively clear.[20]

This spiritual-moral conviction, which is conscious of its uncertainty, forms the major philosophical element in the later phase of the repeated waves of opposition to the totalitarian system which prevailed in Czechoslovakia, almost without interruption, from 1948 to 1989. Patocka's Platonism and later his existential Neosocratism had a lasting influence on the opposition movement after the founding of Charter 77. It also intensified a renaissance of the Czech and Czechoslovak tradition of the spiritual basis of politics. It is indicative of Patocka, as of Comenius and Masaryk, that the spiritual pedant with whom he constantly grappled was Plato. At the end of his life Patocka concentrated on the connection between Plato's ontology, his concept of care of one's soul, and his idea of the just polis. By clarifying the structure and context of Platonism, Patocka gained a clear vision of the prime meaning and tradition of European politics and its connection to philosophy: "It remains Plato's achievement that . . . the State is still something separated from the rest of the world by a sharp dividing line, for the State should belong in the context of the 'true' world and from this create the justification for its institutions and deeds."[21]

In his meditations on the philosophy of history Patocka comes to the conclusion that divine transcendence in Christianity does not originate in Judaism, but is instead "the legacy of the 'true world' once beheld by Plato and theologically transformed by Aristotle."[22] On the basis laid by Plato "a new community . . . grows up . . . a community in which all members of the human hierarchy are equal before the last, 'true' reality, and thereby are real participants in the meaning which they have not created, but which they must help to put into effect."[23] Thus Platonism, according to a modified Christian interpretation, is the defining feature and character of European political history.

In Patocka's view, the actual principle of modern technological civilization is explained by the fact that with time the Christian elements derived from Plato "have given rise to a nonspiritual, fully 'practical,' worldly and materialistic understanding of reality as an object of guidance by our thought and our hands." Man flatters himself that he "has taken his life into his own hands and, thanks to the discovery of causes, he does in fact have the means to achieve relief and the outward augmentation of life and its material goods."[24] Patocka interprets this in principle as an ethical problem of the individual regarding the spiritual foundation of European civilization, the outcome of which in the form of technology and modern individualism leads to a fateful tension with its roots:

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[20] J. Patocka, "O smysl dneska," in *Pece o dusi vow* (Prague, 1988, samizdat), 135.
[21] Patocka, "Negative Platonismus," 91f.
[22] Ibid., 92.
[23] Ibid., 93.
[24] Ibid., 138.

Man no longer is a relation to existence, but instead a force, a powerful force, one of the most powerful of all. . . . The view of the world as force makes the bare forces more than simply a correlate of human manipulation. In force is hidden existence, which has not stopped being the light that illumines the world, even if it is now an unholy light.[25]

Modern Technological Civilization

Patocka's radical meditations on the nature of modern technological civilization show the influence of Heidegger. However, unlike Heidegger, Patocka sees the concrete and authentic possibilities contained in the technologically organized outcome of European metaphysics. These possibilities in principle point to the ethico-political alternative posited by Plato, the modification of which presents itself as a consequence of the ontological realization of the principle of force in everyday life. The possibility of understanding this now universally determining historical principle proves at the same time to be a possible solution or way out:

This civilization makes possible something which no earlier human circumstances were able to do: a life without violence and with wide ranging equality of opportunity. . . . But the most important possibility which appears in the context of our civilization is, for the first time in history, the chance of switching from a rather arbitrary rule to the rule by those who know what history is about.[26]

Patocka provides a purely existential basis for his conception of the ethico-political Neoplatonic way out of the contemporary era. He puts forward the idea of "experience of the front". The opposite is daily life, "in which war . . . unavoidably recaptures the individual."[27] This situation could be overcome through solidarity on the part of the shaken:

The solidarity of those who are shaken in their faith in the day--in 'life,' and in 'peace,'--is especially significant precisely in the time of the release of force. Without the released force the 'day' and 'peace' and that human life which is produced in the world of an exponential rate could not exist. The solidarity between the shaken is a solidarity between those who understand. Understanding . . . must also imply the understanding of the significance of science and technology, i.e., that force we are setting free. . . . The solidarity between the shaken has the ability to say 'no' to all mobilization measures that perpetuate the state of war. Rather than presenting positive programs, it expresses itself, like Socrates' *daimonion*, in warnings and prohibitions.[28]

Patocka's Platonism in this reflection on modern history refers to its starting point with Socrates. Existential Neo-platonism is in fact an existential Neo-Socratism. Patocka explicitly treats the phenomenon of the victim. His seminars on the problem of Europe took Andrei Sakharov and Solzhenitsyn as examples. Regarding the former, Patocka explained that "here something

[25] Ibid., 142f.
[26] Ibid., 144f.
[27] Ibid., 162.
[28] Ibid., 162f.

gains the upper hand over that which is viewed as force, power, etc. And what is it that gains the upper hand? Not a thing!"[29]

Patocka's late meditations strongly indicate that a totalitarian regime is the explicit, programmatic manifestation of the nature of technology. The victim and the solidarity of the shaken reveal its nature, and thereby point to the possibility of a responsible solution.

Owing to his radical philosophical insight into the true nature of our time and of the specific period in which he found himself, Patocka was extremely well qualified to lay the spiritual foundations for political action. This exceeds the framework of totalitarianism and enables a philosophically based democratic alternative solution which at the same time addresses the democratic systems of the West. This spiritual-political action was the philosophical and moral basis and definition which Patocka gave to Charter 77, and his own personal sacrifice.

Charter 77

As Charter 77 spokesman, Patocka thoroughly analyzed the relationship between morality and politics. His starting point was the non-technological nature of morality: "no one is capable of putting any kind of morality into effect through technology."[30] Patocka conceives of morality as an inner conviction:

To develop smoothly the possibilities of instrumental intellect, to enable progress in knowledge and skill, mankind must be convinced of the imperative necessity of the unconditionally binding, and in this sense 'hallowed', principles. In other words, to a certain extent something absolutely non-technological is . . . demanded; . . . salvation cannot be expected to come from the State, from power and force, either exclusively or primarily.[31]

Patocka is clearly aligning himself with the Czechoslovak tradition of political philosophy which bases politics seemingly unpolitically on a spiritually based morality, and thereby defines it. Like Masaryk, Patocka wants the actual foundation and goal of political activity to be a life world of inner ethical conviction. The currently ascendant technological world of power and force could not bring about such a conviction. But the moral basis of inner conviction is a precondition for the functioning of any society, even one that is technically well-equipped.[32] On the other hand, the functioning of society is not the aim of morality. Its real purpose lies in defining and representing the humanity of man: "It is not man who, according to his own needs, wishes, and tendencies, arbitrarily defines what morality is, but morality itself defines man."[33]

Ontologically, inner moral conviction is thus ethically based. Patocka then puts the concept of human rights on this philosophical level: this means

that States and social entities as a whole subordinate themselves to the sovereignty of ethical feeling, so that they acknowledge something unconditional above them that is binding, inviolable, and unassailable. This conviction lives in the individual as the basis for the fulfillment of duties in private life, at work, and in the public sphere. Only in accordance with it is there a true guarantee

[29] Patocka, "O smysl dneska," 339-340.
[30] J. Patocka, "O povinnosti branit se proti bezpravi," in *Charta 77, 1977-1989* (Prague, 1990), 31.
[31] Ibid., 31-32.
[32] Ibid., 32.
[33] Ibid.

that people will act not only to secure certain advantages or out of fear, but rather freely, spontaneously, and responsibly."[34]

In this Kantian phenomenological interpretation, Patocka defines the community of Charter 77 signers, who

are acting not on the basis of private interest, but simply because of a duty, a necessity which is higher than political commitments and political rights; this is their true, sole, and only dependable foundation. . . . They do not wish to be a moral authority, the 'conscience of society'; they do not place themselves above anyone and also judge no one. Their efforts are directed only at keeping alive and pure knowledge that a higher authority exists and that individuals have obligations towards it by dint of their consciences; that States are obligated by dint of having signed important international agreements-- obligated not simply out of opportunism, but because their signatures on these agreements mean that politics is subordinate to the law and not the law to politics."[35]

Patocka defines the meaning of the work of Charter 77 as the establishment of a solidarity between the shaken: "The goal of Charter 77 is the spontaneous solidarity, released from all outward commitments, between all people who have understood the importance of ethical thought for society at large and for its ability to function normally."[36]

Patocka sees the activity of Charter members as pedagogical in the original sense of the Platonic *paideia* as education for the essential task of the spiritual determination of politics: "Education means to understand that there is more to life than fear and personal advantage, and that, where the maxim 'the end justifies the means' actually says 'an arbitrary end justifies arbitrary means', there a yawning chasm opens up."[37]

This examination of the relationship between ethics and politics according to Plato, Masaryk, and Patocka has shown how the two towering figures of modern Czech philosophy are spiritual heirs to a tradition stemming from the interrelationship between philosophically based ethics and politics put forward by Plato. They represent a continuation and extension of the long tradition of Czech political thought, which has offered the world a possible response to universal questions concerning the meaning of democracy, of humanity and of history.

Although the historically proven Czech tradition of political philosophy does not seem to be the explicit tenor of Czech political life some years after the Velvet Revolution, with the important exception of Vaclav Havel and the key law on the communist era, it could contribute to and influence the contemporary Western debate on the legitimacy of democracy. The present air of political dissatisfaction in Western Europe and North America is explained sometimes as a result of a normal aging process.[38] In this context, we should note Masaryk's observation that modern democracy is young in comparison with authoritarian regimes which have a history of development of thousands of years. Perhaps the correct interpretation of contemporary Western democracy is that it is still immature, rather than being in a state of decay.[39]

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[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid., 34.
[37] Ibid., 42.
[38] G. Hermet, "The Disenchantment of the Old Democracies," *International Social Science Journal* (1991), 129, 459-460.
[39] E. Ludwig, *Duch a Cin* (Prague, 1937), 183.

The weakening at present of faith in democracy readily suggests a seemingly realistic and mature limiting of democracy to an adaptation of democratic political mechanisms such that they be compatible with the political virtues of the civic maturity of the governed. This defines democracy as a capacity for "maintaining a system of government for the relative advantages it confers, rather than for the metaphysical and magical formula its leaders dish out to prove its legitimacy." This, it is proposed, would "make the democratic and the political more genuine as they should no longer be mistaken for a secular religion". However, in reality, this would seem to be a sophistic final solution to the "enigma of history", for the spiritual and moral roots of democracy can hardly be refuted by the verbal abuse of demagogues.

Moreover, the complex definition of democracy as "the free choice of a government which represents the interests of the majority and respects the fundamental right of all human beings to live according to their beliefs and basic interests"[40] can be taken in a positive way. It can be an "ideal model" for defining an institutional environment which supports the uniqueness of morally anchored souls and deeds. Such an approach to democracy could overcome effectively contemporary inclinations to restrict the concept of democracy to the research spheres of sociology and political science. In reviewing critically the world of traditional democratic mechanisms in respect to its constitutive elements, because of difficult relations with the "cult of objectivity and the statistical average . . . (these) can annul human uniqueness."[41]

At this point when the world is trying to calm and settle itself as it faces the proximate threat of its own doom, the time seems ripe for a radical reversal of habitual political behavior of relying upon allegedly new and better modes of social, economic, and world management. In contrast, the condition for a genuine and hopeful political renewal is a radical change of the foundation of political attitudes to a metaphysics of the individual soul and the world, despite the fact that it has been so commonly denigrated, precisely because it is so disturbing. In other words, it is still possible to turn to the deepest, non-arbitrary foundation of human life itself, that is, to the nature of life in its very questionableness. This is the precondition, its reality and any of its modes. Spiritual life, as the genuine ground of humanity appears to provide a basic level of concord in disagreement or, as Jan Patocka put it, of unity without any firm soil.[42]

Such philosophical legitimacy for democracy may make it possible to find hopeful bearings in the world after the Cold War. It was not accidentally that this philosophy of politics emerged in that part of Europe which is the quintessence of pluralism, that is, in the region between Germany and Russia where, for centuries, a number of small nations have tried to establish their lives in freedom. The organic unity of these individual diverse nations is not only the precondition for a lasting unity of Europe, but also the crucial prerequisite for solving the Eastern question--which implies historically the problem of the unity of Europe, Asia and Africa. This fundamental challenge for Europe and all democracies cannot be solved without appropriate spiritual and moral grounds. In terms of political philosophy, this indicates the need for a profound and cogent legitimization of politics, whose proper core is democracy, even though modern democracy has not yet achieved its full and proper form. In this timely task, a and important contribution should

[40] A. Tournaine, “What Does Democracy Mean Today?” *International Social Science Journal* (1991), 128, 268.

[41] V. Havel, *O lidskou identitu* (Prague, 1990); “Svet in a svou dusi” (Speech at the World Economic Forum, Davos), *MF Dnes* (February 5, 1992), 2.

[42] J. Patocka, “Duchovni clovck a intelektual,” *Souvislosti I* (1990), 15.

be made by the Czech and Czechoslovak traditions of political philosophy, which gave birth to Czechoslovakia, the first European federal unity,[43] and regenerated its democracy in 1989.

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[43] T.G. Masaryk, *The New Europe* (Lewisburg, 1972).

Chapter VIII

The Czech "National Character" and Obstacles on the Road to Democracy

Radim Bures

In this brief work I should like to ask whether the main traits of the present situation are due to the Czech national character and whether our further development is bound up with its traditional traits. For in seeking the optimum direction for further Czech development the question of the factors which influence jointly its development becomes central, and among these factors its so-called national character usually is included.

National Character

Shortly after the political changes in November 1989, the pages of the press, especially in the West, were full of conjectures on the comparative advantages of Czechoslovakia which could enable a rapid and painless transition from socialist totalitarianism to representative democracy and a market economy. The basis for these conjectures was in particular the profound impression made by the speed with which the political changes took place and also, of course, by their peaceful nature. Repeated often was the more witty than exact *bon mot* ascribed to Timothy Garton Ash, that what took the Poles ten years the Czech managed in ten days.

The priority most emphasized was the balanced nature, peacefulness and non-violence of the political changes in Czechoslovakia, which contrasted so strongly with the bloody events in Romania and certain parts of the Soviet Union. This equanimity was identified with a rational approach to politics and a general political culture.

A second key to Czechoslovakia's rapid and successful transition to democracy was identified as the experience of the practical functioning of a democratic state, the democratic tradition. In Czechoslovakia it was sufficient to renew what other states, especially Russia or the Balkan states, must laboriously construct.

These optimistic estimates, mainly by foreign observers, were willingly accepted at home. On the one hand, they became cheap arguments to convince wavering citizens. On the other hand, and in particular, they corresponded to the traditional Czech idea of their own exclusivity which had been prevented from realization only by external unfavorable influences.

Political and economic developments in Czechoslovakia did, of course, throw considerable doubt on these optimistic forecasts, for in spite of the clear and undoubted results and successes on the path to democracy, there were also inexplicable complications, difficulties and slow downs in development. The basic forms of democratic life were established: the first free elections took place very successfully and in a very orderly fashion after more than fifty years; the basic civic and political freedoms are guaranteed; a pluralist society has been formed. On the other hand, however, we come up against what are at first glance inexplicable national conflicts about competence, mutual intolerance of parties, minority parties and their representatives, and especially political irrationality and the inability to settle political problems effectively. Upon evaluation of our development, optimism is replaced by disappointment, surprise and amazement at why, due to their irrationality, Czechs are unable to utilize their gifts.

The newspaper commentaries already mentioned stress two analyses of this difficult and long-term concrete task: one, it is possible to achieve a certain overall view by the study of cultural and artistic works, especially literature, drama and films; two, it is possible to carry out a comparison of the reactions of society in similar historical moments. The first method is necessary in stable times; but in times of upheaval and change, such as the present in Central Europe, the second method can be used, for reaction to basic social changes renders the national character more transparent.

Therefore, I have elected the second method. This is rendered easier by the fact that Czechoslovakia has experienced in the 20th century alone a series of similar decisive social changes: the establishment of the independent Republic in 1918, the occupation by Nazi Germany in 1938, the communist coup in 1948, the Soviet occupation in 1968, and finally the "revolution" in 1989. I shall concentrate in particular on the comparison of the present situation, as I see it today, with the situation in 1918 as captured by the philosopher journalist Ferdinand Peroutka in his monumental work *The Building of the State*.

His work is not strictly historical in nature, like a chronological catalogue of events. It is at once a description and a commentary; it does not succumb so much to frequent idealization, but maintains a sympathetic but critical distance. In Peroutka's work we therefore find a number of very valuable observations which concern the national character.

However highly hypothetical may be the conjectures on the national character, their importance for the analysis of the political reality is significant. They indicate possible structures and formulae essential for understanding apparently contradictory events and point out wider interconnections of facts.

First, they point to the widespread belief that Czech behaviour in a "revolutionary situation", differs considerably from that of other nations in similar situations, that this is an expression of a more general approach by the Czech nation to political events, and that there exist nationwide behavior determinants which continue to influence the political situation.

Second, they point to the problem that either the above attitudes and traits of the national character were mistakenly captured and described, or else that these traits cannot serve in an explanatory and prognostic role for political development. I wish also to contribute to the solution of this problem with my considerations.

I take it to be a fact that there exist certain typical attitudes, stereotypes of behavior, expectations and evaluation in certain situations. For the sake of simplicity we can describe this mutually interconnected complex as the national character. By this concept I do now wish to introduce some metaphysical entity. The national character seems to be a useful concept for the description of attitudes and stereotypes of behavior which have been formed historically during the clashing of national interests and efforts with external conditions. Historically conditioned or even enforced solutions to situations, whether advantageous or the only one possible, become traditional or stable in time. A solution which has arisen in this may be implemented even when it is neither the most advantageous nor the only one possible. The national character, though historically formed, can be influenced by the temperament of the nation or ethnicity.[1]

To submit the national character to a rigorous scientific analysis can also signal the dangers which may threaten rational social development in the future. This brings us to the basic questions:

[1] In this connection, the interesting conjecture offers itself that the Czech character is surprisingly close to the Austrian and partly also to the Hungarian, rather than to the Slovak and Polish, not to mention the Russian, as is pointed out in a number of cases by Josef Kroutvor, *Potize s dejinami* (Difficulties with History) (Prague: Prostor, 1990).

What national character is indicated by a comparison of the present situation with similar situations in Czechoslovak history in the 20th century? Does this character correspond to the above-mentioned conjectures by journalists regarding Czech priorities on the road to democracy? And finally, does a thus-defined national character enable a sensible explanation of the present situation, and particularly a prognosis of future development?

Non-Violence and Rationality

Let us look at the first mentioned priority of the Czech national character as it appeared to Western correspondents after the revolution of 1989, namely, equanimity, peacefulness, non-violence, and perhaps also reasonableness in behavior. The proof was the absolute peacefulness and calm of the demonstrations, the marked self-discipline on the critical days when situations were dealt with calmly and dispassionately.

There is, of course, another explanation for the same behavior. What appears to be political maturity, equanimity and reasonableness can quite easily be extreme caution, perhaps even fear. It can be a matter of weighing things or hesitation leading to entering the political struggle only once everything actually has been decided.

What was the situation like at the moment of the disintegration of Austro-Hungarian empire? Was the "coup" the result of uncompromising political struggle and pressure, or was there rather the above-mentioned caution? Ferdinand Peroutka points to the profound difference between the pro-Austrian opportunism of part of the Czech politicians in 1917 and the strong anti-Austrian opportunism of the same politicians in 1918. As an example, he mentions the Deputies Stank and Tusar:

Both those Deputies were just as convinced opportunists in 1917 as they are now (1918) convinced radicals. Is it possible that the change in them took place only through events inside themselves? . . . This is somewhat unlikely. The change in the speakers corresponds completely to the change in the situation.[2]

In 1989 it was not the leaders of the opposition who acted in a peaceful way, but the broad masses. The demonstrations against communist totalitarianism on October 28, 1989, a mere three weeks before the start of the November events, disappointed everyone by their weakness. Even the famous demonstration on November 17 was officially permitted. The mass demonstrations expanded later when the police no longer took any action and those in power showed increasing signs of weakness. Did the people change, did their patience run out, or did the situation change? I feel it was the situation which changed.

To speak of caution is, however, somewhat vague. Caution can be coolly calculating, emotionally terrified or indecisive. It does not seem that any of this is characteristic of the Czech nature. When a suitable time comes, when a suitable situation develops, caution vanishes and is replaced by flaunted enthusiasm, gestures and the already mentioned radicalism. After caution there appears euphoria based on a romantic sense which often passes into sentimental emotionalism. Considered political action is replaced by celebration of the idea that historical justice has once again been victorious.

Anyone who saw pictures of the Prague demonstrations in November, 1989 and the days and weeks following and compares them with similar actions elsewhere in the world will know what I

[2] F. Peroutka, *Budovani statu* (The Building of the State) (Prague: Prostor, 1990), 61.

am talking about. In the hands of the Prague demonstrators stones are replaced by candles, angry slogans are replaced in their mouths by the National Anthem, and clenched fists are replaced by fingers raised in the V for victory sign. The Prague demonstrations were not a sign of decision to take political action, but a celebration acclaiming a great idea. They are enthusiastic and spontaneous acts of a special type, but they are decidedly not a sign of cool calculation.

Czech caution is unquestionable. One can agree in full with Josef Kroutvor that, "In Bohemia there can never be caution enough; caution is the mother of Czech wisdom."[3] It is, however, a special kind of caution. It is not cool calculation of profits, nor indecision signalling uncertainty of arms. Under an external caution is hidden clear political conviction, historically formed, that it is not worth starting anything which one cannot win in any case. The political act does not take place until the situation is favorable.

We have here caution and also ceremonial sentimental enthusiasm; these two properties or traits of the national character are contradictory and paradoxically complementary at one and the same time. What is important is the relation of these traits to social and political development. To be able to consider the influence of the national character we must relate both mentioned traits to an historical act aimed at the realization of desirable social changes. We are interested, then, in the standing of a political act in the intellectual and practical life of society.

The political act as an expression of basic intellectual value and political orientation has a long tradition in Bohemia. In Czech history there appear as feature examples: Jan Hus, Han Amos Comenius (Komenský), Karel Havlícek Borovský, and, in the 20th century, T.G. Masaryk and V. Havel. Acclaiming the heritage of T.G. Masaryk used to be, and again is, part of the basic political stance of the majority of political parties and of political manifestations of the population. Masaryk was an exceptional case where practical-political and philosophical opinions influenced each other, integrated by a moral attitude.[4] The German writer, Qil Ludwig, described this moral and practical integrity of Masaryk in *The Spirit and the Act*.[5] Acclaiming Masaryk as a civic and political ideal is, of course, far from practically continuing his heritage. In contrast to Masaryk, political action in the Czech nation rarely represents the realization of a social or political idea.

This splitting of the ideal vision of a just and optimally arranged society from the practical political struggle for its realization lies, in my opinion, behind the already mentioned contradictory nature of the Czech national character. The strong proposal of the idea of a just society, whether from a national, social or political point of view, is not backed up by action aimed at its realization. The political act is replaced by faith in the just course of history and in historical necessity.

Romanistic patriotic emotion, full of strong gestures and poses, is then a mere placebo for decisive political action. The more radical it is, the less it is capable of drawing satisfaction and self-confidence from the successful act. The Czech national character thus floats between egoistic caution, arising from the belief that a just historical necessity will come to the fore even without our help, and brazen radicalism which comes late on the scene, usually in the place of creative work for the state.

We have already said that the realization of great values, aims and ideals in the Czech lands is traditionally not seen as a long-term and difficult struggle, but as the realization of historical necessity. The struggle is understood rather in the spirit of Kafka. Peroutka, when he makes little

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[3] J. Krotvor, *Potize s dejinami* (Difficulties with History) (PragueL Prostor, 1990), 61.

[4] More detail on this integration, for instance, in the articles of L. Novy and O. Funda in *Filozoficky Casopis* (Philosophical Journal), XXX-VIII (1990), 61.

[5] E. Ludwig, *Duch a cin (The Spirit and the Act*) (Prague: Cin, 1947), 19th ed. It is perhaps no coincidence that another personality about whom Ludwig wrote was the American President, Abraham Lincoln.

of the armed preparations for the struggle for independence, writes: "faith in the progress of history was greater."[6] And Josef Kroutvor describes it even better: "Truth will conquer. What else is there for a small nation to rely on?"[7] In the course of the "velvet revolution" no barricades were built, the party secretariats were not occupied, nor was there a disorderly and mass deposition of compromised figures. Instead of this, resolutions were written and individuals or collectives put their names to one or another of them. Historical action was replaced by ceremoniously sentimental and proud emotion of participation in an important step in history. Instead of the ability to fight for this "step in history", there is the ability to register that the long-desired, but not much fought-for, idea has attained its realization.

The Czech nation approached important historical moments in the past too in a similar manner. These historical moments were not the expression of the historical will of the nation to achieve something, nor the expression of the patience and self-sacrifice of the nation, but rather the acceptance and confirmation of the order of history. The first Czechoslovak republic was constituted on the basis of historical rights. Similarly, 1948 was often understood as a necessary development leading to supplementing political democracy with a social element, and 1968 as the result of an historically necessary attempt to humanize and democratize socialism. None of these events represented the result of a long struggle and repeated defeats.

The practical political act is replaced by faith that the desirable state will be realized by historical necessity without any great personal contribution. The smaller the determination to act, the greater and stronger the experience of the idea. Faith in historical necessity is linked with faith in general humanist values.

In 1918 it was the idea of the national state and liberation from the economic and political dominance of another state. After the second World War there was the broadly-conceived faith in human progress, understood not only in the communist sense, but also in the sense of Bene' idea of supplementing political democracy with social aspects. In 1968 it was faith in rejoining the social to the democratic and intellectual. In 1989 it was faith in freedom and democracy. As the subtext of all these visions, one finds the idea of justice which must vanquish simply because it is justice.

I have tried to show that these ideas play only a motivating and stimulating role and to a limited extent, that they are not a trigger for action. I am even tempted to say that they are merely a romantic accompaniment to practical life. But if the desired political change is first and foremost the result of external influences and not of one's own political action, then the necessary result is great openness with regard to the world. Reserve and introspection, so frequent for instance among the Germans, are lacking in the Czech character. Openness towards the world means looking at the world through the prism of accepted national values and ideas. Looking around the world through these ideas means looking for forces which realize these ideas and can therefore help to realize these ideas also in the little Czech Republic.

In the past this outward view was represented by idealizing Slavonic Russia in the time of the revival, or mass listening to Western radio at the end of the World War and in the recent past. In its practical form it is a search for a friendly savior, often considerably idealized. In the past this was Russia, France or England, now the USA, Germany or the European Community.

This phenomenon also has its positive side, however, namely a developed sensitivity to justice in the world, the interpretation of a political action as just or unjust, moral or immoral. The separation of the desired political change from one's own efforts and the replacement of political

[6] Peroutka, op.cit., 23.
[7] Krotvor, op.cit., 91.

action by faith in the implementation of historical necessity has significant effects on a number of attitudes. The main ones would seem to be those toward the defense of achieved political results, to shortcomings and economic reform, and to the economy in general.

What is this attitude to the defense of political results? The desirable political and social situation achieved is not welcomed with the pride of a victorious warrior, but with the emotion of the deliberator who knows that something of the sort should have happened long ago. This feeling also acts on the will and on determination for defense. There is a different relationship to that which is achieved after a long struggle and at the price of sacrifice from that which just happened on its own. This is still the case when what has happened has been long expected and is welcomed

Historical progress in the realization of the national and political idea was recently achieved in the Czech lands after decisive interference by external forces. Consequently, the will to defend it is also traditionally weak and wavering. In 1938 no defense was made against Nazi Germany. After the occupation by the Soviet Army in 1968, after the first week of heroism, the will for defense on a mass scale very quickly vanished. When the will of history was not implemented, what can an ordinary person expect!

The attitude to shortcomings in the new political reality is formed in a similar way. Connected with pride in something which has been fought for, there is also the willingness to overlook the initial imperfection of the work and to defend it even when it is not perfect. The result of the long-term struggle for a thing is also patience to wait for its formal completion. Easily won freedom, considered in addition as a matter of course, opens the doors to mass petty dissatisfactions and criticism--criticism which does not concentrate on the fundamentals, but reflects the fact that the new situation is not ideal. That it cannot be ideal is somehow overlooked. The new situation is not understood as the result of the efforts of imperfect individuals, but as the product of perfect history.

The political development in the CSFR after 1989 has been characterized by just this dissatisfaction and impatience. This appears also in the paradoxical situation where, disregarding the quality of health, environment and free time, the relatively high level of consumption, though not in keeping with the efficiency of the economy, is regarded as insufficient and its rise is considered the main aim. The undoubted results which have been achieved, especially the elimination of fear of State Security, and freedom of expression, belief, assembly and the press, are considered to be a matter of course. In other words, they are seen as something which should always have existed and did not exist due only to an unpleasant coincidence, or rather due to negative interference from outside.

Lack of confidence in the strength of one’s own will and in one’s own action, and reliance on an automatic process of external aid appear not only in politics, but also in the economy. The economic results of such attitudes are pointed out by Miroslav Petrusek in his essay, "Are We Really Out of the Cage?", when he writes about the faith:

in the almightiness of impersonal mechanisms which it suffices to set in motion in order for the desired aim to be achieved, by which is meant--best of all, of course, once more and as soon as possible--the achievement of paradise.

In the communist system the role of such self-saving mechanisms was played by central planning or scientific management. In the post-communist society this is taken over by the market economy, interpreted not only trustingly as Adam Smith’s famous invisible hand which will lift us all quickly out of the economic desert into a flowering oasis of well-being, but also as an impersonal "scourge of God" which in itself, by the mere fact of its existence, will teach us or force us (the end result

is the same) to work, to conduct business, make decisions, take risks and undertake responsibilities.[8]

If we add to this tendency the well-developed sense of justice, which due to its vagueness is understood in Bohemia mainly as equality, then dismal prospect opens up before us for the course of economic reform. There is an evident connection to the idea that history is not an accumulation of purposeful political actions, but an anonymous necessary process, and that the economy and the market are the result not of the business efforts of individuals, but of an anonymous mechanism.

I have tried to show in this analysis that the national character cannot be described by one trait, and that its future development cannot be forecast on the basis of this one trait. The characteristic caution which was discussed acts on behavior only in a context with other traits and under the influence of external circumstances.

Stable Political Culture

Let us pass now to the second of the priorities mentioned in the introduction, namely, according to the Western press, the high political culture and practical experience of democracy. Special emphasis is placed on the fact that the first Czechoslovak Republic was the only democratic state in Central and Eastern Europe.

Democratic experience can be understood also as a democratic attitude, as acclamation of the values of democracy, freedom and pluralism. Democratic experience understood in this sense is quite widespread in Bohemia. The given values have a high positive emotional charge among the people. Is this, however, a sufficient prerequisite for desirable and stable political development?

The Czech democratic attitude undoubtedly contains some important positive elements. In the first place there is resistance to the enforced solution of problems. Further there is the ability and willingness to compromise and reach agreement in really serious situations. There is also the almost unequivocal acclamation of the ideals of freedom, democracy and pluralism. It is important that there is also a dislike of fanaticism.

But for a truly democratic functioning of the state all this is far from enough. What probably is most lacking is tolerance. The basis of democracy is respect for others as equal to oneself. For this respect to exist there must be a willingness to listen to the other, an effort to understand him. This respect and tolerance traditionally is in short supply in Czech lands. Connected with this is distrust of the democratically expressed wishes of the majority, and little regard for the rights of the minority.

What seems most serious, however, is the political dispersion, the inability to agree and compromise when it is not actually a question of life and death. A traditional trait of the political life of the Czech nation is this very dispersion, the mutual intolerance of the various groups and parties, and the precedence of narrow party and particular interests over general ones. The result is an inability to deal effectively and rapidly with problems which occur.

But this is not a new phenomenon. Ferdinand Peroutka refers to it in detail when he describes the unrestrainable onslaught of the professional parties after the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic and the vain struggle of the national democratic party to maintain its ideological principles in politics. National democracy, which "as a nationwide party does not wish to limit itself to the defense of the interests of a certain class, but wishes to balance the variety of interests,

[8] M. Petrusek, “Are We Really out of the Cage?” *Pritomnost*, I, no. 3 (1990), 14.

to give that which is general priority over the particular, and to carry out all its political activity from a higher nationwide point of view," as stated in its program,[9] was not successful.

The supposed stability and security of the state replaced the celebrated national unity from the time of the establishment of the Republic with battles between contesting parties. Ferdinand Peroutka writes of the rapid disintegration of the national unity as follows:

In the spring (1919) it could already be observed that national unity, the fruit of the coup, had undergone definitive disintegration and that now only the nationwide government maintained this illusion. In place of voluntary national organization there appeared disorganization. Each group pushed forward under its own power. The demagogy of the socialist left called forth equally gross demagogy in the other parties. The newspapers willingly supported every conflict.[10]

In the days of the coup the nation acted as an entity. Now it has broken up into parties where each wishes the other's political defeat. The affairs of state were considered--mistakenly--to be already completely assured. Now the parties have begun to fight in particular over their share of internal power. There was no hope that, being so abhorrent to one another, they would be able to maintain peace and the polite relations necessary for cooperation. . . . The disintegration did not arise only in the heads of the politicians: it corresponded in general to the disintegration which took place among the people. The deep rift went right through the centre of the nation. The politicians were driven from the rear, they merely reproduced the general mood. The states and classes, fearing for their place in the sun, ordered their political representatives to be angry and intolerant. . . . The formerly clear question of general good and general evil dissolved into a melange of separate interests.[11]

The short period of the Second Republic after the Munich Agreement shows similar developments, although under other conditions. The collapse of unity and the prevalence of particular interests can also be observed in the infamous period of "normalization". Finally, 1990 gave free reign to this tendency. Basically all the unsuccessful parties, instead of trying to give critical support to the ruling Civic Forum, began a disintegration campaign and a series of unrefined attacks, as can be seen from the statements of politicians and an analysis of the press. Similar developments, even though more muffled with regard to positions of power, took place also among the individual streams of the Civic Forum. As F. Peroutka says: the affairs of state (and democracy, we might add) were considered--mistakenly--to be completely assured. The world and the domestic political and economic situation, however, give no grounds for a carefree attitude.

A non-violent nature and the acclamation of the values of democracy are not sufficient in themselves for democratic experience to shape political development. Instead of rational democratic behavior and political culture, there appear repeatedly considerable political irrationalism and a tendency to anarchism. Again there is here a conflict between strong pro-democratic feelings and verbal support for democracy, on the one hand, and a lack of positive action in support of the democratic state, on the other. In such a situation it is exceptionally difficult to achieve the social and political consensus essential for a rapid and successful passage to

[9] F. Peroutka, op.cit., 805.
[10] Ibid., 954.
[11] Ibid., 967.

democracy and a market economy. A democratic attitude is then not an unequivocal trait enabling clarification of the political situation and a prognosis of future development.

Conclusion

The basic question in this text has been whether the Czech national character is a factor determining further political development, whether this development can be explained by the national character.

The discussion of superficially optimistic views that the properties of the national character were sufficient factors for successful and rapid political development in the direction of a functioning democracy concentrated on two traits of this character--caution and political experience and culture. What has come to light is that the national character is not determined by these traits or properties, but is a more complex combination of mutually conflicting, but also mutually supplementary motives and determinants.

The framework of the 20th century which I used is too narrow for any far-reaching conclusions, but the importance of conjectures on the national character is undoubted. They have indicated the one-sidedness and fruitlessness of the concept given in the introduction, which sees some isolated properties as determinative of further positive development. From the sketch made of some character traits there emerge numerous critical areas and potential dangers for Czech political development.

The Czech national character has not shown itself to be unequivocal and monolithic. It contains various traits and attitudes which at times come to the fore or, at other times, retire into the background under the influence of various external forces. The national character appears, then, to be undefined, variable and determined by external circumstances. Even though individual traits can be defined, it is not possible, due to their contradictory nature, to judge which will be the determining trait at a particular time. We can reply to our question that it is not possible from the Czech national character to reliably foretell behaviour and development in the future. If the character is ambiguous, then its manifestations also are ambiguous.

The national character is thus one of the factors creating the context of future Czechoslovak policy. It is possible to define possible individual reactions to the political situation. Due to their contradictory nature and external determination, however, it is not possible to estimate which reaction will prevail. The national character helps to influence political development, but is not in itself decisive.

I have tried to show that there are not many reasons for optimism. Political development in Czechoslovakia will not be any faster or easier than in many other countries. Here, too, many concealed dangers threaten to overturn democratic development, dangers whose roots lie both in ourselves and in external causes.

It was not the aim here, however, to draw a pessimistic picture of the future, but it is well to know the possible dangers and obstacles. This makes it possible to prepare for them and to avoid surprises and disappointments. It is good to see reality in all its complexity. Apart from the danger points, there is much that is hopeful in our nature. There is no need to fear an outbreak of violence and there is a great inventiveness and ability to improvise in the Czech nation. One can afford then to be optimistic, but--how else in Bohemia--also cautious.

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Chapter IX
Self-Definition in Traditional Czech Culture

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Czech artistic culture is now at a turning point. Many types of art which were prohibited for dozens of years, are now re-emerging. Writers, composers, dramatic and representational artists can create freely once again. The developments which are occurring concern not only artists, but also the dissemination, preservation and reception of art. The whole sphere of artistic culture is redefining itself, and the process of this change raises the issue of direction and goals. To move forward, we must reflect--upon both our historical origins and the current situation. Of particular interest from a philosophical standpoint is the problem of continuity and discontinuity--the metamorphosis of traditional meaning in Czech culture and the social context in which this meaning is conveyed.

The Traditional Meaning of Czech Art

Can we speak in terms of traditional meaning in Czech art? Can we even talk about the social aim of so-called authentic art--an aim that is not merely an aesthetic one? Are not such efforts peripheral to real creativity, and is it not therefore unseemly to speak about them? Kant emphasized the autonomy and sovereignty of the aesthetic and proved that the fine arts are ends in themselves without ultimate meaning, a sort of game for spiritual forces.[1] Even if we do not reject Kant's conclusions or other theories of 'art for its own sake', art can both enter the larger social sphere and maintain its autonomous character. Within the historic tradition of philosophic inquiry, artistic culture was never analyzed independently; rather it constituted an integral, functional part of an intellectual framework, a philosophic conception of Man and his world.

In Czech culture, art was considered an integral part of a broader social process. As a consequence, attitudes developed which infringed upon the sovereignty of art and lowered its aesthetic value. This approach was, of course, no mere accident; it had its causes and historic roots. One of the prominent features of Czech society was its awareness that its national identity was not a given. The nation had all too frequently been no more than a pawn on the chessboard of international events; more often than not, its history became the subject of its own history. Over the centuries, it came to lose more than its political independence--its very culture, language, and existence were threatened. Its development was characterized not by continuity, but by discontinuity. For the prominent Czech historian, Josef Pekar, the only continuity and *raison d'etre*[2] of Czech national thought or ideology was the creation of a nation. Everything else was subordinated to this process and became a tool for "national self-justification." As Pekar emphasizes, history itself was primarily used as a weapon in this cultural and educational battle.[3]

These historical and developmental conditions had a significant influence on our collective understanding of the meaning of art and greatly influenced its position in Czech society. Art, as history, was also conceived as a weapon in the attempt to establish a national identity: Czech art

[1] I. Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (Leipzig, 1878), 172.
[2] J. Pekar, *O smyslu eských djin* (The Meaning of Czech History) (Prague, 1990), 402.
[3] Ibid., 400.

was often the only reality with which a member of the nation could identify because it represented a free, unalienated world. This identity-generating character of Czech art can be described from two interrelated viewpoints.

On the one hand, works of art mediated a certain classical educational tradition, elevating the level of culture in a broad strata of the population. On the other hand, they created a community consciousness. The latter was particularly important. A striking example of this is the wave of heightened national consciousness that came about during the latter half of the nineteenth century when the Czech National Theatre was built. Consciousness of belonging to a national community was engendered not only through contemporary artwork, but also by tapping into residual historic consciousness. Works of art which connected with the country's heritage usually were not understood merely as memorable relics of the past. They were viewed primarily as cultural guideposts, as means of providing man a goal for his pilgrimage in life. Czech literary heritage fulfilled a similar purpose, particularly during certain periods such as the time after the Battle of White Mountain, or that of the German occupation during World War II. The enormously important role which these literary monuments played in the development of our national identity is evident in the manuscript "Rukopisy královédvorský a Zelenohorský," the "discovery" of which, in 1817 and 1818, provided a powerful impulse for a national renaissance. Because of its poetic style, the work was thought to have originated in the thirteenth or even tenth century. When it was later determined to be counterfeit, the nation was shocked, because it had been used to prove the age and maturity of the culture. The social impact of art was, and still is, felt in Czech culture--even more strongly than in mature democratic societies whose developmental continuity has not been interrupted.

Socialism's emphasis on the utilitarian functions of art had additional negative consequences. Despite the indubitable significance for the emancipation of Czech society, especially in the nineteenth century, the very immediate and direct integration of art into practical life resulted in lack of attention to artistic details and a devaluing of its aesthetic content. Having reduced its aesthetic domain to a secondary level of significance, Czech culture became a relatively limited space for radical, experimental art. None of the traditions which seem to be necessary for the natural development of artistic culture originated here. Public experimental art was considered for the most part to be suspicious and negative in character, and an emphasis on the pragmatic led Czech art into a degree of isolation. In contrast to other European cultures--Czech art began to display a decidedly provincial character.

From the last quarter of the nineteenth century, i.e. the literary movement of the so-called Lumírovici, there was a clear tendency to move away from this provinciality. People asked whether or not art which was predominantly utilitarian and steeped in local traditions could be really effective. Extensive interest in this problem was provoked by a paper written by H.G. Schauer. In the 1880s, he asked whether or not the effort to preserve national existence was truly worthwhile. Was the cultural value of the Czech nation really significant enough to justify its existence? However, I would argue that Schauer formulated the problem incorrectly. The development of a nation cannot be the primary goal of a culture, rather its national consciousness must be the means by which its cultural evolution occurs. The goal of a nation must be: "from within itself to create its own, new culture, an absolutely new source of light and heat."[4] In other words, its goal must be to create a culture which will assume a unique place in relation to others. Shauer's point of view is clearly too extreme. A nation cannot be defined only by its cultural

[4] H. G. Schauer, "Our Two Questions," in *Antologie z djin eského a slovenského filozofického mylení* (Anthology of the History of Czech and Slovak Philosophical Thought) (Prague, 1989), 220.

mission--it is also necessary to take into consideration economic and political developments. On a practical level, however, Schauer's question may not have been posed so incorrectly.

To demand that art serve utilitarian purposes leads, first and foremost, to a loss of its real meaning. Typically "Czech" works of art of the nineteenth century represent genre pictures and are a mere testimony to their times. They represent a specific, artistic style. They are of only historical significance and are not relevant to national identity. Paradoxically, however, the nation was better served by works of art which were created within a broader cultural context. They did not merely represent an existing tradition, but created new ones. Such works connected with the national consciousness of the past in a much deeper way than did those designed to serve primarily utilitarian purposes. The poet K.H. Mácha wrote his "May"--a work which basically ignored the fashionable patriotism of the times--during the period of national renaissance. He did not intend it to serve any obvious national-ideological aims. But, by its artistic force alone, it still evokes more intense feelings of Czech identity than any other work written during the nineteenth century. As Josef Kroutvor points out, " Karel Hynek Mácha's poetic heritage is one in which the question of the meaning of Czech existence is constantly posed anew."[5] Schauer's work hinted at a problem which characterized the work of several ensuing artistic generations to a great degree. The effort to overcome the provincial character of Czech artistic culture reached a peak during the period between the two World Wars. It arose among the artistic avant-garde, who, in many respects, managed to come to terms with the inspirations of world art and to find a sovereign place for Czech art in the context of European culture.

Czech Art and Communist Culture Policy

However, this movement was soon to be interrupted, first by the German occupation, then by the communist regime. In the spirit of A.A. Zhdanov, representatives of the communist cultural policy were inspired by the art of the 19th century. It provided an example for them in both the aesthetic and social spheres, but they did not realize how anachronistic their approach was. They conceived art as either a form of self-identification or a form of ideology, and simultaneously claimed that the communist tradition was the culmination of Czech tradition. One of the leading cultural ideologues of this early period, Zdenék Nejedelý, maintained in "The Communists, Heirs to the Great Traditions of the Czech Nation," that Czech communists represented the most advanced level of culture in the history of the nation. He also stated: "And, so I could name our excellent writers and artists . . . . from generation to generation, and in every generation we would find excellent examples of artists who, if they were one of us, were and still are so close to us that we rightfully feel ourselves to be their heirs and followers."[6] Although such opinions were often voiced in good faith and sprang from great humanistic ideals, they proved to be absolutely delusory. When practically realized, they became self-contradictory. Provincial values were enforced by a cultural policy which represented a large-scale, schematic conception of history. Even from Nejedly's point of view, there was evidence of a totalitarian future, in particular, a strong tendency to chauvinism--a refusal to recognize what was culturally divergent. As Nietzsche says, tyrants of all kinds, including despotic artists and politicians, like to distort history to make it appear to anticipate their own rise.

Communist functionaries did not allow any form of art to deviate from their concept or to evade their control. Since they viewed ideology as the first and most important feature of art, it is

[5] J. Kroutvor, *Potíe s djinami* (Difficulties with History) (Prague, 1990), 110.
[6] Z. Nejedlý, *O umní a politice* (On Art and Politics) (Prague 1978), 210.

understandable that art was, for them, an ideological "enemy." They supported socialist realism which they called "artistic method," but they defined it entirely in their own ideological political terms. They lauded the social and political characteristics of art as aspects of art and tried to re-interpret and idealize the process of the democratization of culture, since it was one of their main aims. They understood social change not as an occasion to reflect on the riches of artistic culture, but rather as an opportunity to enforce a sort of equality or uniformity of taste. Hence, the educator became more of a censor--and he came to dominate "democratized" public life. He decided which works of art were necessary for the population, which would be given preference, which might be produced, which would be tolerated, which were unacceptable, and which were forbidden. With such an "enlightened" cultural policy, art was not a matter of what the public wanted and needed, but rather what was needed by the ruling party-state bureaucracy to preserve the social system, i.e., to preserve their positions and privileges.

These bureaucratic restraints on artistic creativity resulted from an effort to achieve ideological purity. The natural consequence was that art was demeaned. Unity and homogeneity were seen as consummate artistic values. The communists did talk about various aspects of socialist art, but, in practice, things were different. The Czech culture did, of course, undergo changes during the course of forty years of communist rule. There were periods in which there was a decided loosening-up of ideology, particularly during the 60s, and other periods which were characterized by relative orthodoxy, namely, the 50s and the 70s. But, the initial premise never changed. Traditional forms of artistic culture were always suppressed. An attitude of intolerance toward not only the art of the underground culture, but also the traditionally autonomous, historic artistic cultures consistently prevailed. There was even a certain intolerance toward national culture itself. Although they decisively declared their affinity for the Czech cultural heritage, the communists defined it very narrowly -- limiting it essentially to that portion which reinforced their theory of social classes. Zdenek Nejedly maintained, for example, "that it had always been the working classes which were the real nation, that it was they who took over the old and created new traditions in keeping with new times. Thus they led and are still the ones who lead the nation forward."[7] Art which could not be categorized as the "people's" culture was considered second-rate and superfluous. In the Leninist theoretical context of two cultures in one nation, it became something actually hostile. This approach to art caused Czech literature, for example, to divide over time into two (or perhaps even three) streams over time: official literature, which could be published and was included in school readers, and unofficial literature which was never mentioned and was published either abroad or in so-called "samizdat" editions.

The communist party's focus on cultural homogeneity was reflected in the breadth of the cultural spectrum. If a generational view of the world is characteristic of authentic modern culture, then a class-directed ideology basically denied this generation its art. In his discussion of a publication on literary theory -- a theory which tried to prove that a certain general view of the world was emerging -- Hana Hrzalová wrote that no young generation existed. She further claimed that there was a difference between a poet's and an author's artistic generalization of the respective experiences of a student, laborer, a technical specialist, and a doctor, respectively: the author could depict the character of a young communist;[8] the poet could only interpret it. If it was possible to at least discuss the cultural differentiation that had arisen as a result of the generation gap, then it was practically impossible publicly to discuss the art which had arisen from the "enemy" ideology. The most obvious case is religious art. Its unacceptability was demonstrated not only by

[7] Ibid., 204.

[8] H. Hrzalová, "A True Critical Analysis of the Literature of the Seventies," *Literární msíník* (1983), 70.

ideological arguments, but also by artistic ones, i.e. axiological arguments. Conceived as a free activity and the authentic self-realization of Man, art was seen as directly antithetical to religion; similarly, religion was viewed as a form of estrangement. Jirí Loukotka, a leading philosopher and expert on scientific atheism, was of the opinion that religion can create only a limiting framework for works of art, and that it cannot be a starting point. In his view, a work achieved artistic value only in so far as the artist succeeded in overcoming its religious framework.[9] Real art was always at variance with religion and developed in opposition to it. The practical consequence of this was that religious art was almost completely driven out of public life. It was preserved only inside church buildings. Yet the fundamental incorrectness of the theoretical standpoint described here is obvious. Even if we agree that religion is outdated these days--that it is a mere opiate for the masses--this does not mean that it has not played a positive role in the past. Its historic presence is well established. It did indeed help emancipate mankind, and we cannot therefore maintain *a priori* that it always brought about estrangement. If it is at all possible to speak of a social-theoretical framework which alienates the artist, then it can definitely not be religion, but only church doctrine.

Concrete life, in any form, cannot generate such a framework. It is only through an ideological system that the many-faceted expressions of life are limited--a framework which thus drives art away from its fertile soil. It is therefore the case that not only church doctrines alienate, but communist ideology does so as well. The method employed by socialist realism is the most convincing proof of this fact. In Czech culture, practically the same barrier existed toward world culture as toward religious culture. In the view of proletarian internationalism, the world consisted only of countries friendly to the socialist community--those with only so-called 'progressive' values. In other words, a form of Czech culture developed outside the European and world context. This negative approach applied particularly to modernism and, possibly to a lesser degree, to post-modernism. However, the whole of the Czech avant-garde culture consisted of modernist artists with communist or leftist tendencies. In the eyes of the newly created socialist state, the univocally negative relationship of the modernistic avant-garde towards the artistic culture of the nineteenth century was in no way acceptable. Despite their common ideological standpoints, a clash occurred. The non-conformism of modernism was interpreted in the spirit of Marxist theory of the late nineteenth century in simplistic terms by cultural ideologists. Modernism was viewed as a sort of counter-culture, absolutely foreign to the working classes. Naturalism was described by Lafargue and Mehring as a bourgeois form of art which stands as an obstacle to the great aims of the workers' movement. The socialist policy that later dominated the culture articulated a similar objection to modernism. It was a trend which had no aims other than negation and led fundamentally to nihilism.

The communist avant-garde of the period between the wars was criticized for its "deviation," and the cultural practices of danov were never reconcilable with them. During the most troubled period--the early 50s--the leading theoretician of the avant-garde generation, Karl Teige, was actually hounded to death. Artists like Jirí Frejka or Konstantin Biebl were driven to suicide. Communist ideology approached modernism as its opponent, and its approach was not unlike that of fascism, which saw in modern art nothing but "entartete Kunst."

If the artistic culture of the socialist epoch aimed at creating a uniform social consciousness--and if it attempted to do so in the spirit of nineteenth century ideologies--then it truly did not

[9] J. Loukotka, *Vdecký ateismus a svtonázorová výchova* (*Scientific Aethism* and Education to World Opinion) (Prague, 1979).

succeed. Reality did not evidence itself in a very unequivocal or obvious form in the socialist context, because socialism did not make possible any authentic self-definition. Official artistic culture became, instead, a means of false self-definition. More precisely, it became an object of ideological manipulation.

This resulted in a certain estrangement between the general public and officially endorsed art and culture. When Czech academics analyzed the cultural situation in the late 80s, they stated that

there had been a gradual decline in the general assessment of the standard of filemaking and in the popularity of films, theatre, television production and artistic activities in general. Individual interests had gradually become more private, and social contacts were of a lower quality. The arts, classical music and educational activities could not be promoted among a broader circle of the inhabitants.[10]

The "Shadow" Culture and the Revolution of '89

Simultaneously, the unofficial "shadow" culture was beginning to draw increasing attention. It basically took over in a race with traditional Czech art and became one of the few means of real self-definition available to the populace, particularly to the younger generation. In the course of the 80s, efforts to help sustain and enliven this counter-culture gradually penetrated through to official institutions which had been neglected by party bureaucrats. Folk singers came forward to perform protest songs in various small clubs. Outside Prague, or sometimes in unexpected places in the city's suburbs, there were exhibitions of artwork which were "not comfortably accepted." The ban on publication of censored books was lifted.

First, the small studio-type theaters--and later some of the "stone" theaters, too--began to produce plays which allegorically expressed views about the contemporary situation. It became ever more obvious that the ruling communist bureaucracy was no longer in control of everything. Outward circumstances had forced them to respect a certain pluralism of artistic values, and, from about the mid-80s onwards, there was an increased interest in certain cultural activities, particularly in theatre.[11]The expansion of unofficial, or "anti-official" culture within the framework of the official culture had made this possible. Or, at least, its development had been encouraged--particularly by the signing the "Seven Sentences." It is therefore not a matter of coincidence that it was the artists, specifically, the theatre actors, who were the first to respond to the students' demonstration against the regime in 1989, and whose participation was central to the social revolution.

This revolution brought about an abrupt discontinuity, not only in the political and economic spheres, but in culture itself. The culture which had existed under the dictates of communist ideology had become unacceptable. But this defeated ideological dictatorship has been replaced by another, namely, that of the market, for which the society was, and is not yet prepared. The old mechanisms of the artistic culture are being dissolved and no new ones have been created, i.e. foundations, government subsidies, etc. which would ensure the protection of artistically valuable work do not yet exist. The largely pragmatic aims of this new economic thinking have served only to make the cultural situation worse. Economic shifts are bringing about the fall of publishing houses which, in the past, were able to support large cultural projects. Bookshops are overflowing with titles which do not sell, and no funds are therefore available for the purchase of new titles.

[10] V. Komárek et al, *Prognóza a program* (*Prognosis and Program)* (Prague, 1990), 157.
[11] Ibid., 157.

Painters and sculptors who will probably not be capable of paying the exorbitant sums for rent are worried about losing their studios. Film studios are also limiting the production of Czech films for economic reasons. Theaters and other artistic institutions are losing their audiences. In a certain sense, it can be said that the social revolution in which artistic culture played such a significant role has been boomeranged. The present threat is that the arts will soon become a luxury, and will be replaced by a primitive pop-culture. A sense of danger pervades.

Complete discontinuity with the preceding cultural tradition must be avoided. Past stages in the development of Czech society and culture are not a definitively closed chapter, i.e. they are not a sort of Spenglerian finished civilization' with nothing more to say. We must necessarily retain a number of traditional elements in our revised concept of culture. Of particular interest are the questions of the degree to which traditional Czech cultural values can be maintained, and whether or not they can find their way in this new society. Can Czech art of the future serve as a source of self-definition and freedom; should it?

The November revolution brought about a great boom in what had previously been unofficial art, particularly works by writers from Czech dissident circles. Most of these people were artists and authors of the 60s. Under the more relaxed conditions of that time, they had become powerful agents of social change; they had indeed become the conscience of the nation. This generation, whose artistic work became "mainstream" immediately after the events of November, 1989, is still keeping the faith -- for them the higher mission of art is emancipative. Hence, they wish to prevent an invasion of popular culture. Shortly after the revolution, the leading Czech film director, Jirí Menzel, suggested that a certain amount of censorship was necessary for creating cultural ambiance, that censorship which actually exists everywhere in the world was indispensable. He said: "I do not want a clerk to make decisions and choices for us; I want and call for common sense, without which no free man can do. I can imagine a free democratic regime which is able to save its citizens from terrorism through sensible regulation and laws. Similarly, we should know how to protect ourselves from banality, without suffering under despotic and arbitrary bureaucratic decisions."[12]

Contemporary Issues

What is available to us is an approach to art which is a sort of antithesis to current problematic trends. This is a direction sought by the younger generation. Not finding in art a redemptive purpose, they incline towards post-modern skepticism. They accept with a sense of irony the fact that "tears" are being shed over Czech culture. The director of the Barrandov Film Studios, Mr. Václav Marhoul, said, for example, in a recent interview: "Tears in this case are a metaphor for a certain feeling shared by the generation of the 60s. It is no fault of theirs, but they still live in the past. I do not think them capable of comprehending that times have changed."[13]

We must indeed begin anew by addressing present-day conditions. We cannot presume that the culture of Menzel will be saved by "Mr. Common Sense"--by a man who would censor "unsuitable" literature, and hence define some forms of culture as "unsuitable." But precisely what form should such common sense take? Can art critics or theorists become reasonable judges of the suitability of culture? Can they guarantee any degree of objective correctness in their evaluations? After all, anything can be defended. It wasn't so long ago that our literary theorists viewed some

[12] J. Menzel, "Dear Lidové Noviny!" *Lidové noviny* (1990), 4.
[13] "Sklep, AZ.K.Alona, etc.," *Mladá fronta dnes* (1/28/91), 4.

texts as the epitome of contemporary prose. Scientific, objective criteria for determining the value of a work of art and infallibly assessing its suitability or unsuitability do not exist.

However, there is another problem, and it seems to be even more serious. The non-existence of absolutely objective criteria for evaluating art has as a consequence the relativization of values and value systems. The post-modern world has moved towards emphasis on the plurality of mutually exclusive criteria, i.e. toward a sort of polytheism of values. It has become very difficult to talk about higher and lower forms of art and its mission. The Czech post-modern view of this problem was expressed succinctly by the artist Jirí David: "Just as I'm not willing to go along with that deadly serious piffle about "great art," about "real paintings," about "true beauty," I'm also not willing to go along with equally stupid babbling about futility and banality."[14] The work of this artist and several others (Císarovský, Divis, *et al*) reflects a rather ironic view of the so-called high ideals of the past.

But can we conclude from the above that the post-modern generaon fully denies the self-defining and emancipative power of art? In my opinion, they are interested in a different form of self-definition, one which arises not from belief in common sense, but rather from faith in cultural "self-determination supported by government legislation."[15] By its very nature, this self-determination and self-limitation attempts to achieve a balanced state of affairs in artistic culture, and to avoid "crises." Nevertheless, I would argue that it can also be interpreted in the spirit of Toeffler's *The Third Wave*. He speaks about the process of restructuring the post-industrial society and the relationship of this process to the media. He focuses on the tendency of major media to become subordinate to secondary, more specialized media which increase significantly in number as time goes on. These media no longer appeal to masses of listeners, readers or viewers: "Radio stations adapt to the various groups of listeners, stations thus specializing in hard rock, soft rock, punk, country or folk."[16] When culture is reorganized in this way, the natural identity of man can re-emerge, people can seek and create their own social contexts according to individual needs and interests.

Such an approach to self-definition through art is certainly acceptable. However, we must realize that in places where a certain "matter-of-factness" in social behaviour has not yet become the norm, other aspects of self-definition must necessarily be taken into consideration. One consequence of this is that it is not possible to deny the importance of the culture of the 60s for our newly emerging artistic culture. It can, at least, contribute to the re-establishment of a certain equilibrium after many years of cultural deformation. The question arises, however, as to whether this culture is indeed the mainstream of today, whether it offers any solid prospects for the future, i.e., whether it will create a sufficient foundation for the further development of Czech culture.

In response to this we must first outline the true character of this art. It originated in, and developed out of, the unofficial culture of a totalitarian society, a society in which art was construed as a form of ideology. It is marked by this fact. It was not able to develop in any other form than that of a counter-culture, a means of ideological opposition. It did not establish a human identity by a positive movement of thought, but rather a negative one. When reading many of the literary works by this circle of authors -- and even works by very good authors -- we are forced to keep reminding ourselves of when and where the work originated. They did not have a primarily aesthetic aim, but were intended to advance specific, political ideas. These works are far too

[14] J. David, "An Intimate Report from Bohemia," *Nová intimita* (catalog of the Pi-Pi Art Gallery) (Prague, January, 1991).
[15] "Censorship - For and Against," *Lidové noviny*, no. 11 (1990), 12.
[16] A. Toeffler, *Die Zukunftschance* (Münich, 1980), 173.

colored by the problems of their time. In a certain respect, they perpetuate the nineteenth century tradition. We now see them as mere testimony to the fact that we "suffered for forty years." An exaggerated presentation of them amounts to "blowing at the pain to make it better" rather than to any genuine contribution to culture.

As for the prospects for Czech culture, there is no denying the social function of art. It can, and perhaps should, even now, be comprehended as a means of self-definition--but not in too limited a fashion as was done in the nineteenth century. If Fichte is correct that the "I" is defined by means of the "not I," then man cannot seek his identity by retreating into the self and closing himself off from the world which he must instead confront. A Schauerian turn is perhaps in order--Czech artistic culture must liberate itself from its anachronistic provincialism and move towards greater comprehensiveness and cosmopolitanism. Artistic values should not be merely peripheral, but should have their own sovereign place in the context of longer European cultural processes. Ferdinand Peroutka emphasized the necessity of impressing European ideals upon all that was Czech. Our artistic culture, with its particular standard of values, would then aid us in knowing ourselves as integral to, and yet sovereign within, the European community.

Although there is talk of a return to Europe--which includes an artistic return--this seems very complicated. Is traditional Czech artistic culture capable of overcoming its regional character? We will have to take into consideration the fact that the introduction of our art into the larger European culture does not depend solely on art itself. Politics and economics play a role in this process, as does language. Nevertheless, basic problems must be resolved not outside, but inside the sphere of artistic culture. Provincialism still prevails, even today, and there is almost no clear reason for this. It is characteristic not only of those artists who have never been away from Czechoslovakia for any length of time, but also of many writers who have lived in exile for years. With some exceptions (e.g. Milan Kundera) they oriented their work solely toward Czech culture, and, despite their opportunities for contacts with European and world culture, they never really felt "European."

As long as it is incapable of overcoming this limitation, Czech art will be a confronted with a very serious problem, namely, the meaningfulness of its existence. Schauer's questions are important here: Is our national existence really worth all that much--are its cultural values so unique?[17] Could we not become closely linked to the internal and external spiritual life of a large nation and thereby do more for mankind and for ourselves than we can now do with our limited means?[18] Because they were posed at a general level, Schauer's questions reappear regularly. It was Milan Kundera who reminded us of them over twenty years ago.[19] They were recently reiterated by professor Edward Goldstücker:

As far as Czech culture is concerned, I don't know if many people in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia . . . realize that the present-day situation, which seems so promising, also carries with it certain dangers. One danger is that once again, as at several earlier points in modern history, the Czech nation will be faced with the question of whether the effort to achieve national sovereignty is a worthwhile one, or whether it would not be better to yield to the pressure of this new social and political situation, and integrate, for example, with Germany.[20]

[17] H. G. Schauer, op. cit., 222.
[18] Ibid., 220.
[19] M. Kundera, "The Nation Not as a Matter of Course," *Literární listy*, no. 4 (1968), 6.
[20] "Skies are Drawn over Culture," *Tvorba*, no. 3 (1991), 5.

Let us hope that these questions are merely theoretical with no practical implications for the future. And, let us also hope that we shall enjoy the flourishing of traditional Czech artistic culture on a qualitatively new plane, one which responds to the exigencies of our times.

Summary

The historical context in which Czech society developed greatly influenced our understanding of the meaning of art. Its social content was extremely important, much more so than in the mature democratic societies, whose development has been relatively continuous.

In Czech society, art was often the only reality with which a member of the nation identified, the only thing which represented a free, unalienated world. This chapter was a short review of the historical changes in the self-defining function of art. Cultural isolation and provinciality have traditionally characterized Czech art, but at present it is necessary for it to overcome these limitations and provide the culture with a qualitatively new standard of self-identification. It should continue to shape the identity of Czech society, but this identity should be understood as both integral to, and sovereign within, the European community.

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