

acta

2/87

**Editorial • Articles:
Havel, Šimečka, Vaculík •
Jan Patočka's Collected
Works: Scheme II**

**Terminology in Independent
Literature: Kantůrková •
New Thought Trails •
New Books by Kadlečík
and Uhde**

**Samizdat Periodicals:
Contents, About the Theatre,
Slovak "K", Sociological
Horizon, Psi**



**Quarterly of the Documentation
Centre for the Promotion of Inde-
pendent Czechoslovak Literature**

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All texts translated from Czech and Slovak by A.G. Brain except for the article by Marketa Goetz-Stankiewicz which was written in English.

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Price: DM 11 per issue, DM 40 per year

ISBN: 3-89014-039-4

Production: Druck + Papier Meyer, GmbH,
8533 Scheinfeld, Western Germany

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ACTA. Quarterly of the Documentation Centre for the Promotion of Independent Czechoslovak Literature. The chief editor of ACTA is Jan Vladislav in collaboration with Jiří Gruša and Vilém Prečan; John Keane (member of the Academic Council) is responsible for editing the English version. This English version of ACTA, No. 2, has 48 pages, and went to press in October 1987.

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EDITORIAL

To judge from the letters that have arrived so far, both from the free world and Czechoslovakia – but also from Poland and elsewhere – the first issue of ACTA was received with interest and appreciation, which is gratifying. On more than one occasion, expectations were voiced in much the same vein as Václav Havel's comments elsewhere in this issue. We feel duty-bound to do everything we can to fulfil such expectations. But no editorial board can ever manage entirely on its own. It needs the suggestions and critical comments of others. And their contributions, above all. In other words, our proviso is a challenge to all those who have anything to say about the issues covered by ACTA – i.e. the problems of our independent literature at home and abroad – to assist us in this work.

Even though our correspondents have so far refrained from adverse or critical remarks, the editors are all too aware of certain obvious shortcomings. We have battled valiantly, albeit not always victoriously, with a number of technical difficulties connected with the type-setting of Czech texts abroad. It goes without saying that every new periodical needs time to “settle down” and develop its own distinctive style. ACTA is no exception, even though its aims are strictly circumscribed and has no intention of competing with any other of our literary journals, as we made clear last time. None the less, even these very specific ambitions can make significant demands and will take time to achieve.

One of the main tasks facing the editors is to bring the discussion of plans for *Patočka's Collected Works* to a successful conclusion so that work on their publication can start without delay. The editors were hoping that exile publishing houses would also join in the discussion. Since this has not yet happened, we renew our appeal for their assistance and advice, without which the realisation of this urgent project will be even more difficult.

Apart from this, it is ACTA's wish to continue with its flexible approach of publishing different thoughts on the meaning, history and terminology of independent literature. This issue brings our readers more contributions along these lines. ACTA would also like to give wider coverage of samizdat books and periodicals, but here too we chiefly depend on the co-operation of others both at home and abroad. Much the same applies to our retrospective lists of various samizdat book series. In this issue we update the annotated list of the series *New Thought Trails*, and for the next issue we plan to feature a complete list of *Petlice Edice* (Padlock Books).

In conclusion: ACTA faces such an enormous task that it cannot hope to fulfil it unaided. We therefore rely on the assistance of all those who really care about independent culture in Czechoslovakia.

ARTICLES

The following section is made up of pieces by Czechoslovak authors intended for this year's Franken symposium, held on the theme Czech and Slovak books, writers, translators and publishers, at home and abroad, 1970–1987. The contributions were prepared in a variety of ways. Václav Havel telephoned his remarks informally and the recording of them was then edited. Ludvík Vaculík's comments, written in the form of a letter, were the basis for the Imaginary Interview. The most comprehensive text was contributed by Milan Šimečka; as the author did not give his paper a title we have given it a heading of our own which reflects one of the main ideas of his text.

The editors

Václav Havel

JUST ONE POINT

Comments over the telephone

When samizdat came into existence in the first half of the seventies, it consisted of typewritten texts which circulated in various ways and only the odd one here and there managed to reach the outside world, where it got printed here and there by some exile journal or other. Invariably this gave rise to heavy police interrogations about how it got out and who sent it. And the exile journals naturally printed an explanation that the text was being published “without the author’s knowledge or consent” and that it had got out of the country by chance. People abroad felt the need to provide the authors back home with an alibi in case of any repercussions arising from the publication of their texts by exile publishers. That was fifteen – or maybe twelve – years ago.

Since that time, things have changed, even though the stereotypes created in those days for obvious reasons still survive. I recently conducted a small private opinion poll and discovered that everyone I spoke to about this matter belie-

ves that it would be more reasonable to alter some of these stereotypes in line with new developments.

What does this mean in practical terms? Exile journals – some to a greater, some to a lesser degree – reprint a whole lot of texts from the home country, but either out of habit or motivated by the stereotyped attitude that it is necessary to provide a cover for the authors back home, they do not specify the source of their texts or how they came by them. The point is that nowadays there are already dozens of samizdat journals, which there weren’t years ago, and they are journals that have a steady output. Furthermore they have their own editorial ambitions and a regard for their reputations. It is frequently a hard and complicated business for them to obtain contributions from authors, and the subsequent task of editing them is no less complex and time-consuming. Bear in mind that unofficial literature lacks the services of traditional editors, correctors, etc, so writers’ standards tend to decline and increase the need for editorial work – something which is made all the more difficult by samizdat conditions. To cut a long story short, our samizdat journals commission or

obtain texts, work on them, publish them. These contributions then come out in various exile publications without any mention of where they have been taken from. When people come to read the exile press they get the impression that we have no samizdat periodicals here at all, only those journals being published in exile. And in those cases where authors from back home are published abroad, it is because they either wrote specifically for emigré publications or because some text of theirs circulating back home somehow found its way abroad and was published there.

There is nothing wrong, of course, in texts from back home being reprinted that way – it's to be welcomed, in fact. The trouble is that the way it is done is no longer appropriate to the new situation. As I have discovered, all the samizdat journals are interested in making themselves known. Otherwise the optical illusion could well be created that there only exists an exile press and no home-grown periodicals. The point is that exile journals are tending to take as much as a third or even half of a samizdat periodical without even mentioning that the latter exists. Some time ago, for instance, *Obrys* reprinted a text from the samizdat journal *O divadle* [Theatre] as its leading article. It happened to be an eye-catching, well-informed analysis of the recent state of the National Theatre, which could have only been written by someone in an official post who regularly visited it. Getting hold of the text, persuading the author to write it under a pseudonym, not to mention having to edit it, since it was not the greatest piece of writing ever – all this required enormous effort. And then it came out in *Obrys* without any explanation that

it had been taken from the samizdat publication *O divadle*. The reader is left with the impression that *Obrys* has some kind of special network of people back home who write leading articles for it, not to mention well-informed analyses. Of course this was not some evil scheme on the part of *Obrys* to claim the credit for another's work. In fact, in a subsequent issue, it published – as if by way of correction – a paragraph about the appearance of a new Czech journal – *O divadle*.

Such things are commonplace, though. Take the latest issue of *Čtení na léto* (“Summer reading”, the annual literary issue of *Listy* magazine, trans). It also includes several articles taken from *O divadle* without any mention of that journal's existence. Admittedly that section of *Čtení na léto* is headed “O divadle”, but it only looks like the editors' heading for that part of the magazine. That issue of *Čtení na léto* also includes an article by me which I gave it permission to publish. Thus it did not appear “without my knowledge”, but “with my knowledge”, on the sole condition that there be some indication that it was originally written for the samizdat journal *O divadle*. However, no such indication was given in *Čtení na léto*.

I'd like to stress again that I do not suspect the editors of exile journals of wanting to take credit for another's work, or of poaching from samizdat journals in order to pretend that they have correspondents back home. It is merely a relic of the times when it was a sensitive issue and people were afraid of prejudicing authors in the home country. As a result, maximum care was taken to stress that it was not the authors' fault if their texts found their way abroad. I have not the least

intention to indulge in recriminations or accuse anyone of bad faith. The examples I have given are naturally chosen at random, and no personal reflection was intended. My sole concern is to illustrate a situation which should occupy our joint attention. The fact is that the time has come to alter surviving stereotypes.

I can state on my own responsibility that samizdat journals are worthy of publicity. They appear in limited print runs. Their distribution is fraught with difficulties and every little publicity is important. However, apart from the odd exception, the exile press says nothing about them. The exceptions are truly few and could be counted on the fingers of one hand: a brief item on *Paraf* and *O divadle*, an editorial some time ago in *Svědectví* about just two issues of *Vokno* and *Revolverové revue Jednou nohou*, even though *Svědectví* would certainly have no difficulty obtaining every issue of the above mentioned journals and having them properly reviewed by a specialist.

It is to a great extent the fault of people back home who fail to make sure that home-grown journals find their way into the right hands. None the less, the fact is that *Revolverová revue Jednou nohou* includes large adverts for books published by exile publishing houses or for exile journals. We have yet to see any exile publishing house print an advert for samizdat journals let alone any news of their actual existence. They are quite happy to select from them any items they fancy and gaily reprint them without it occurring to them to tell their readership something about the periodicals back home.

We can only hope that things will improve substantially with the appearance of *ACTA* and we look forward to its providing more information of this kind, including regular news about the world of independent/samizdat publishing back home as well as publicity for different periodicals and books. And it is not even necessary to wait until the Documentation Centre receives them, *ACTA* can take the information from *Kritický sborník* which has always diligently informed its readers of all publications received by its editors. Obviously nobody is 100 per cent informed about what there is, nor can they hope to be in the present circumstances. Even so it would surely be possible to provide quite a good picture on the basis of the publicity in *Kritický sborník* and *In-foch*.

To sum up: so far, people who are not in the know must get the impression that, as far as Czech is concerned, there is only the exile press for which some people living in Czechoslovakia also happen to write, and nothing else. Such an impression derives from the fact that there is no regular information about the periodicals published here at home, not even news about the different titles, their main articles, their contributors, and possibly some sort of appraisal. Obviously, no single journal is capable of reviewing everything, but as things stand almost nothing is being reviewed and nobody seems to be losing any sleep over the fact!

And it's not as if the editors of samizdat journals were anonymous any more, even if the names of the publishers are not usually printed. They each have a particular editorial policy, certain clear ambitions and are proud of their crea-

tion when they manage to put together a good issue or establish a particular overall concept and keep it coming out with progressively higher level of professionalism. This makes it all the more frustrating when they see that a lot of the texts which they sweated to obtain, edited as best they could and published in a magazine cobbled together out of nothing, appear in the exile press without the slightest reference to the fact that they were taken from samizdat periodicals or that the latter exist even. Once more, let me stress that we are not touting for praise or tributes to samizdat output. What we need are critical reactions. Let people write and say what they think about it. The main thing is that they should do so.

For our part, we too have had to get out of old habits and abandon stereotypes. There was a time when you were virtually asking to go to prison if you published a magazine. In the end, even *Obsah*, which resisted acknowledging its magazine status longer than any other journal – in spite of its being one of the oldest Czechoslovak samizdat periodicals – finally came round to the view that the situation had changed, that habits of former days were no longer appropriate and that the time had come to admit to being a journal.

This is a general trend. All the samizdat journals have an interest in being known. They want people to write about what they publish. They welcome publicity, reviews and criticism. And when their texts are reprinted elsewhere they want the source to be clearly stated. Statements like “reprinted without the author’s knowledge” are superfluous nowadays. Samizdat journalism

is a public business, so what appears in their pages is *ipso facto* published. Therefore the use of a text published in this way constitutes reprinting something which has already been made public in samizdat form.

In normal circumstances, there would be no need to stress all these things. People could go to any news-agents or bookshop, or find out from any library what titles were being published and either take out a subscription for anything they fancied reading or put in a regular order for it. In our situation, though, each samizdat journal or book only reaches a restricted and – for the time being – small readership. It is impossible for individual readers to have an overall idea of everything that is available. In such circumstances, it is important that people should publicise each other. This is the only way to inform the wider public about things which the individual has trouble with discovering even in fragmented form. Every reader is not going to read everything. People will choose things that appeal to them and suit their taste and interests. But if they are to have that choice, if they are to have any real notion of the whole range of literature in existence, it is necessary to create the basic level of information for which I so desperately plead. Obviously it would still be difficult for the time being for readers to obtain everything they would like to read, but at least they would know what to search for. They would have the basic information and an awareness of the whole gamut of samizdat literature.

What I have said is evidence of a shift in the cultural situation here. Ten years ago there did not exist a single journal. At best, there were

some timid and coded experiments. We must have no hesitation in declaring out loud that the evolution that has occurred is something *normal*. This point must be made quite clear and underscored. In other words, it is necessary to stop creating a sort of aura of semi-illegality around samizdat journalism as if it were something almost conspiratorial, and about which it is better to keep quiet lest anyone get into trouble. The opposite is the case. The best way to help a samizdat journal these days is to make sure people know about it: by writing about it, by treating it as part and parcel of the cultural life of this country. So it looks as if what might seem just a technical matter actually has wider implications. A mutual effort by samizdat and exile publications to publicise each other would constitute further proof that there exists just one indivisible literature, irrespective of whether it is typewritten, cyclostyled or printed, and whether it is published at home or abroad.

Milan Šimečka

LITERARY PLURALISM

I imagine that exile literature after the first wave of emigration in 1948 viewed its situation in much the same way as the emigrants, ie, as temporary and transitional. The home country admittedly looked in a very sorry state but people have a natural tendency to believe in a quick recovery rather than permanent invalidity. Not having been there and not having known what it feels like to be an exile, it is impossible for me to guess at what point the realisation became widespread that literature just cannot abide inaction or temporary arrangements, that it needs to inhabit a world of dignity and plurality in order to

survive. I don't mean to imply that in those days, at the end of the fifties and in the sixties, all the products of that plurality reached us by any means. I, for one, no doubt laboured under the illusion that *Svědectví* represented the extent of that plurality. The point is that people made the most of what they got hold of. The same applies nowadays.

The situation here in the wake of 1968 was similar. Things were happening which created the impression that the situation could not last, that it was only a passing phase. Even though I was there and went through it all, I am still not sure if Vaculík's samizdat version of *Morčata* belonged to an earlier era of literature or whether it marked the beginning of a new one. Or did the latter start with the business in Počernice¹ that time? None the less, the realisation was felt for the second time that literature cannot wait for things to improve, that if it tried to do so it could even perish. It could well be that what happened here was not a question of conscious realisation but actually a strange manifestation of culture's immanence, rather like some biological process in nature. The fact is that the upshot of not having waited for things to improve is what we have today: ie. widespread independent creation here at home, exile magazines and publishers abroad, a whole lot of fine books, the beginnings even of video production, translations – in short, literary pluralism worthy of the name. I also include within this pluralism those works published officially in Czechoslovakia which have managed to avoid the ideological pit-falls. I refer to literature which skilfully side-steps the main ideological sewer and can actually give some thought to standards. Thank goodness for it! Just think of all the

work entailed if every little pot-boiler had to be hand made by alternative publishers.

As I myself once pointed out, in the present state of affairs here – one which otherwise goes from bad to worse – the existence of today's pluralist Czech and Slovak literature is, in my experience, the most encouraging phenomenon at the present time. I should think it would only be a slight exaggeration to talk in terms of a miracle. But enough of such rhetoric! We here are all aware of your complaints and criticisms. After all you are no doubt going to be discussing precisely how to keep this miracle alive. But don't be tempted to believe us too much when we say we understand the problems you have in bringing out books. The fact is that scarcely anyone here has a precise notion of how much it costs to publish a single little book, or what it means to negotiate with printers who have to set books full of weird Czech accents, let alone convince people to buy your book when they have the choice between buying books or a holiday in the Bahamas.

Of course not one of the books I am referring to can be bought in any bookshop here, but you ought to know that even here they enjoy a life of their own. And though I personally witnessed a young woman toss Škvorecký's *Engineer of Human Souls* into the dustbin in panic when faced with an imminent house search (may the good Lord forgive her!) such cases no longer occur here. What is more likely to happen nowadays – and I'm always touched when it does – is that a book I once lent to somebody returns in a really scuffed condition after having passed through the hands and minds of dozens of people. And I actually saw a samizdat edition which had been

bound in cloth by its owner, and whose title was embossed in gold on the cover. Books do not disappear without trace nowadays.

There are two main reasons why we need literary pluralism to continue: one is to preserve a pluralism of language, the other is to maintain a pluralism of human experience – rather than for the sake of any political pluralism or plurality of ideological platforms. The latter are subordinate considerations and changeable. Most people do not need their eyes opening. In fact I would go as far as to say that people in this country know where things are at and have learnt some hard lessons. What I am not so sure of, though, is whether they have the capacity to survive unscathed the mutilation of our language which has gone on for decades, whereby it has been sterilised, impoverished and downgraded along the lines of Newspeak. This applies particularly to the language of the press, radio and television which can engender profound depression after being consumed for any length of time. There is only one way of resisting the prolonged battering of clichés and the absurd repetition of greetings telegrams, communiqués about state visits, news items about meetings of various official bodies, etc, and that is when people have at least something to counterbalance it. The existence of literary pluralism plays an irreplaceable role in preserving normal Czech and Slovak speech. Many people have told me that what distinguishes the aridity of official pronouncements here from ideas freely expressed is precisely the colour and sound of the language. You only need to read the first three sentences to know that what you are reading is prohibited. It is not the voice of the announcer that tells you you have tuned into the

right station, but the feel of the words. This is something that always needs bearing in mind, along with a concern to preserve a plurality of language. Otherwise the risk is that people just change their political spots while keeping their bad habits, such as when they write for exile publications with the same sort of rancour to which we are accustomed from official publications here.

The existence of literary pluralism also helps keep alive the variety of human experience. It helps complement that restricted picture of the nation's life provided by "permitted" literature. Officially available fiction seeks to create the impression of reflecting the whole range of human experience. Their characters include the good and the bad. They love and they hate, have worries with their children, chase after money and careers – and these days they are not even required to be over-enthusiastic about building socialism. In spite of that, the stories are flawed. The very reality of the world in which they are set is mutilated in many ways. And it is conceivable that the authors of such stories are themselves not even aware of the fact. I can recall such self-deception among authors in the sixties, when advance censorship was gradually relaxing and creating an illusion of freedom. But it was no more than an illusion, because the most tragic of human stories continued to be considered unsuitable for public consumption. It is possible that today's official writers are falling prey to the same deception. But what they are doing is pandering to the "eventlessness" of the present day and doctoring reality from the outset by separating their heroes from their country's cheerless story. Havel even goes so far as to declare that

"the onslaught on plurality and 'the story' within the public sphere is not merely an attack on one aspect or field of life but an attack on life as a whole". ("Příběh a totalita" ["The story" and totalitarian power], *Svědectví*, No.81, p.31). This is arguable because one can cite examples of stories totally divorced from major historical events which are none the less capable of gripping the imagination after many centuries. But that is not the case of our official literature. In our situation, the reason why "private tempests" are divorced from history is not because writers have sufficient self-confidence and independence not to have to worry about them, but because in their pathetic situation they are not even permitted to concern themselves with them.

There can never be too great a variety of human stories. We vitally need a rich choice of them if we are to piece together a true picture of the nation's life to serve as a basis for a pluralist future. Even though I should think I have access to a sufficiently broad choice of reading matter, I am pleasantly surprised again and again to discover – such as in Willy Lorenz's book² – that in the geographical region which is my home, someone could have an intellectual experience so very different from any I have known of previously.

However, I am very wary of talking about books as if they could be the forerunner of a pluralist future, because their power is so very limited compared with the totalitarian influence of state television, radio, etc. None the less I regard today's literary pluralism to be a source of hope since, in my view, it is not a relic of what once was, but the beginnings of what is yet to come.

Naturally we each have our private thoughts about the circumstances in which it will be possible to put an end to the present state of affairs and bring our pluralist literature home, lock, stock and barrel. At the same time we are keeping an eagle eye on the events in the Soviet Union, fully aware that, whether we like it or not, we have been a Soviet appendage for the past forty years. We conclude realistically that nothing in particular is going on here, even if it is gradually beginning to look as if the possession of books other than state-approved ones might no longer be regarded as a crime. It does not amount to much, but it is quite a lot if you compare it with the way things have been. The régime's lack of self-confidence and its habit of copying others are so entrenched that it is possible that minor improvements will even come about willy-nilly. Even a bad copy will make things look better round here and even hesitant copies of reforms could pave the way to real reforms. Nevertheless, a lot of other things would need to happen in the meantime, wouldn't they?

But even such a cautiously optimistic vision is still light-years away from the time when it will be possible to end the present divisions within our literature. There is no trusting even the most acquiescent of states so long as it maintains a monopoly of all the means of production necessary for the normal existence of culture. A more promising approach in my view is to go on developing the present forms of literary pluralism come what may. If, after all, things do get a bit better and pluralist literature acquires greater room for manoeuvre here at home, it will represent a giant step forward. This implies, for the time being, that we will have to look after what we have,

while acknowledging, albeit modestly and sceptically, that it is not entirely a negligible achievement. Because when I think about it, with all we have we could virtually hold our own Frankfurt Book Fair in miniature. Whoever would have believed it not so very long ago?!

August 1987

(1) On 1st November 1972, a group of young amateurs performed a new play by Václav Havel, a version of *The Beggars' Opera*, in a public hall at Horní Počernice on the Prague outskirts. This alternative cultural event was used by the police as a pretext for a widespread campaign of harassment against the author, the producer, the actors and even some of the audience.

(2) Willy Lorenz, *Monolog über Böhmen*. Munich, 1964. The book was published in Czech by an exile publishing house in 1987

AN IMAGINARY INTERVIEW WITH L. V.

To my knowledge, Ludvík Vaculík is not one of those people who give interviews readily. Nor, unfortunately, is he someone who writes long letters. Even so, he occasionally does get around to writing a couple of pages which are not so much a letter, more a ready-made interview, with just the questions missing. So we made some up, partly with his agreement. The questions are imaginary, the answers authentic, though slightly abridged and re-arranged in places. Responsibility for the result rests entirely with the editors of ACTA.

A: *You're bound to read at least some exile journals. What is your opinion of them?*

V: We get them so irregularly that any assessment I might make of them would have to be based on fairly random impressions – I'm referring, of course, to journals other than *Svědectví* and *Listy*. For instance, I've often found *Reportér* rather uncongenial and I'm not alone in this respect. On the other hand, in some ways it is unique – such as in the way it provides news about the situation of our exiled compatriots, or in its features and interviews. But it would not be a good idea for it to eliminate the gutter-press tone of some of the minor contributions and letters; after all, they too provide a picture of the readership; the only way for *Reportér* to counter it is by setting a good example in its own articles.

One journal I rate very highly at the present time is *Proměny*, but I feel I haven't known it for long enough. The last issue for instance – on Charter 77 and the national character – should be read by as many youngsters as possible. In general, there is only one answer to the question about whether the books and journals published by the exile community have helped raise the level of information about our modern history, and that is: Yes, very much so!

A: *That's nice to hear. But tell us more.*

V: It's clear that the exile journals have to fight to stay afloat and have to rely on the assistance of the Charta 77 Foundation. It strikes me – and take this for what it's worth because I really have no idea – that the different journals could perhaps make themselves a bit more distinctive – go

for a particular “image” and then find a financial backer in sympathy with that image. How about each journal making a deliberate and patient effort in their particular country to find a sponsor in the form of a cultural body – which would entitle it, of course, to have a say about output and standards? These days, even the proverbial Slušovice Co-operative Farm sponsors its own magazine – and even books (though it's true there has to be some mention of cows in them ...).

A: *You talk about creating an “image”. What do you have in mind exactly?*

V: I mean that people here would increasingly like to be able to distinguish journals for the emigré readership from those intended for our consumption. In this respect, judging from its most recent issues, *Reportér* would seem to be a forerunner. I get the impression that it is geared chiefly to the emigré market and we here find out mostly about the exile community from its pages. There are other journals which would do well to follow the example of *Listy* and *Svědectví* and publish material intended for us with a view to compensating for what we miss here. *Proměny* does this. There was a time when I would get hold of *Studie* more frequently, but nowadays part of that magazine tends to be filled with news items from *Infoch* and VONS statements. It's very useful, of course, but it does make for rather stodgy reading.

To come back to *Reportér* for a moment. It occurs to me I might be doing it an injustice through lack of knowledge. The fact is I've just received its last issue ... and it's obviously the liveliest of the journals we read here. Whereas the

rest basically cover politics and culture in varying proportions, *Reportér* also gives coverage to news, life-stories and events. I notice it has got correspondents and readers all over the world, so it stands a good chance of becoming *the* medium of communication within the exile community.

A: *We'd like to turn to another question of interest to people over here, namely, the problem of the so-called "generation gap" ...*

V: Over here or over there? If it's here you mean, then the most serious factor I can see is the lack of a real exchange of ideas between the generations. As a result, I get the feeling that there is no real scope for us to discover what the younger generation are prepared to accept from us, and what they reject. And this is an area where precisely the exile community can be of great assistance to us, in terms of publishing activity.

Incidentally, while we are talking about this, I've just received a copy of the magazine *Host*, a great thick volume, nicely printed – probably photocopied – that is put together by youngsters in Brno. The most striking impression I have is that it tells one far less about what young people are creating than what they go for, namely: Ladislav Klíma, Havel's latest play, a text by Uhde, etc; etc. Can it be that youngsters in Brno are not up to producing their own literary magazine?

A: *You've mentioned Brno. How about Slovak literature?*

V: That's one of the things that has concerned me for a long time: I mean the fact that nobody

pays any attention to it. But it's not the sort of thing I am able to write about. There are some fine books around, and first rate authors: Hudec, Ferko Jr, Johanides, Sloboda, Puškáš. I've read quite a few of them over the past few years, but I don't seem to be able to interest others in them. I really think that Slovak consciousness could help to enrich Czech thinking. And whereas Slovak literary criticism – such as *Romboid* and *Slovenské pohľady* – takes notice of Czech literature, Czech literary criticism is totally oblivious to the Slovak output. (Of course, not even Slovak criticism is informed of Czech "inédit" literature!) However, Slovak writing about life tends to be much more raw and harsh, but it lacks any awareness of the political implications. It also lacks any transcendental element: "it's only human nature, after all!" And I have the feeling that when it indulges in unadorned description and makes a virtue of realism or even naturalism, literature actually starts to lose its way and deny its mission. It's well on the road to becoming dehumanised. It displays a kind of Páral-esque cynicism. Take Sloboda's *Ursul'a* or Hudec's *Čierne diery*. There's an ease and raciness about their writing, but it lacks literary effort.

So let this be a lesson for you, too! Keep an eye on Slovak writing! Someone should volunteer to lend special attention to it, or otherwise you should get someone to take on the job. It's worth the trouble! On the one hand the Slovaks swank about being more truthful or having a freer hand with the truth, while on the other hand they profane it criminally by their lack of awareness, attention and comment. They're spoiling literature!

Wouldn't it be a good idea if various institutions got together to found some prizes for the study of Slovak literature and its relationship to Czech writing, etc? Give someone a grant to do it. Oh, how should I put it, for heaven's sake?! I just can't seem to find the words to explain it. I see that I'll just have to write a *feuilleton* about it to show that Czech literature and Czech social

awareness in general is stupidly missing out on a whole area of knowledge and even some real gems when it does not pay at least the same sort of attention to Slovak literature that the Slovaks do to our own. The fact is that they have a debt of responsibility to be even more aware of it than the contrary.

JAN PATOČKA'S COLLECTED WORKS

A group of specialists working closely with the Vienna-based Patočka Archive on the editing of the philosopher's literary legacy sent the CSDC for discussion its own scheme for the planned publication of Patočka's Collected Works. We are publishing the group's proposals here in full.

The editors

JAN PATOČKA'S COLLECTED WORKS SCHEME II

Foreword

Nowadays it is quite obvious that Patočka's work will continue to be a fundamental part of the Czech spiritual heritage and exert a major influence on Czech culture. This point was made eloquently in ACTA 1/87 in the introduction to the first proposal for the *Collected Works*. In Czechoslovakia, work is now almost complete on the preparatory, samizdat version, and the eventual editors will soon have virtually all the material available, some of it already processed. The first proposal for the *Collected Works* strove to make maximum use of the texts in their existing state, whether published in samizdat or in earlier prin-

ted editions. While such an approach would admittedly save a certain amount of work, it would render impossible both the standard textual editing which is so urgently required and a re-arrangement of the sections, which is vital, since the samizdat edition was improvised in several respects and its arrangement was frequently dictated by technical considerations or marginal concerns.

We trust that the CSDC will be capable of ensuring the sort of conditions for the publication of these works that enable them to be conceived in a manner befitting their importance and the fact that they will become the definitive, critical edition of the collected works, which is likely to remain for the foreseeable future the only comprehensive source for the study not just of Patočka's philosophy, but also of many aspects of

Czech history and thought. We therefore submit a new draft structure for *Patočka's Collected Works*, divided into 15 volumes, together with a detailed description of their contents. An explanation of the principles which guided us and notes on individual volumes can be found in the Commentary.

Jan Patočka, *Collected works*

Proposed structure

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3. Masaryk, Czech thought and history (1932–1976)	830
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7. Art and philosophy (1935–1975)	530
8. Lectures on ancient philosophy I (1945–1949)	750
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10. Comenius I (1941–1964)	550
11. Comenius II (1965–1970 incl. unpub- lished texts)	680
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14. Correspondence	cca 500
15. Footnotes, translations, bibliographies, indexes	cca 600

The titles of the volumes are provisional. The page count is approximate. The expected overall length of the *Collected Works* is some 10,000 pages.

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Commentary

Patočka's Collected Works undoubtedly need dividing into subject blocks, both for practical and commercial reasons. Apart from the actual concept of the subject groups, which we will comment on in connection with the individual volumes, there is the question of their internal arrangement. We have gone for what is essentially a chronological arrangement (in the case of Volume 12 – *The history of philosophy* – the chrono-

logy is based on subject matter rather than the actual date of a given study). In certain cases, it seemed to us useful to depart from chronological order very slightly in order to achieve a clearer structure of some of the volumes in terms of theme or the relative importance of certain articles. However, we would be reluctant to disturb the unified chronological construction by creating “subject nests” of contributions which would be very disparate or remote from each other in time.

In our view, original texts should form the back-bone of the *Works*. Only these texts were authorised and the language in which the author wrote them no doubt influenced their overall style also. We suggest that translations of them should be put all together in the last volume. Thus, apart from separating them visibly from Patočka's originals, such an approach will gain time for the translations to be worked on without this holding up the entire publication. In the individual volumes we have included either foreign-language texts regardless of whether they were subsequently translated into other languages under the author's supervision; or we have included the author's Czech version where this exists and left out the authorised foreign-language version, unless the text of them was fundamentally re-worked.

THE INDIVIDUAL VOLUMES

PART ONE (volumes 1–7)

Volumes 1 & 2: *Spiritual Welfare*

In the section under this title, we include – partly in accordance with the samizdat edition – those of the author's works relating to the situation of

people in the world and in history: they range from the moral and religious problems of the individual, to the relationship to contemporary historical and political events, and general considerations about the philosophy of history. The title of this section is a Czech translation of the Platonic term *EPIMELEIA TÉS PSYCHÉS* on which Patočka centred his interpretation of the problem. The topics covered by this term form, in a sense, the pivot of Patočka's life-long strivings and rightly occupy the pride of place in the entire collection. Besides, this section, taken as a whole, may serve as a convenient introduction to specialised study of the other volumes.

The internal structure is essentially chronological, though the dating of some of the manuscript studies is only approximate. In contrast to the samizdat edition, *Spiritual Welfare* also includes all the texts which belong in this section and were published originally in the *Art and Philosophy* collection (see below). However, we have excluded texts which would normally belong here under the general heading, but could also be regarded as "Czech studies". These have been assigned their own special volume – No.3.

Volume 3: Masaryk. Czech thought and history
The theme of this collection is closely related to that of the previous two volumes and includes those of the author's writings devoted to questions of Czech history and philosophy.

Volumes 4, 5 & 6: Phenomenology
The author's contributions to phenomenological philosophy. We think it inappropriate to retain the samizdat division into "the natural world" and "pure phenomenology" – a distinction which

has been questioned on more than one occasion and was dictated chiefly by external circumstances. The context and evolution of the author's philosophising will be best conveyed by a simple chronological ordering of the texts. This will also enable the insertion between two volumes of studies and articles (Vols. 4 & 6) of a separate Volume 5 made up of phenomenological lectures from the brief period at the end of the nineteen-sixties, when the author was working at the Faculty of Letters of Charles University.

Volume 7: Art and philosophy

The only difference between this volume and the four-volume collection already published under this title is that it only includes texts which are directly connected with art. The point is, as mentioned in the editorial note, that the original collection was conceived as a representative selection of reading, long before the idea of the *Works* crystallised. We accordingly reassigned those pieces that were only loosely connected with art to appropriate volumes elsewhere. We therefore consider the retention of one specific volume on the theme of art as justified on grounds of subject-matter and reader interest.

We have placed the texts in strict chronological order, avoiding narrower thematic divisions, since their usefulness for the reader would be negligible and they would adversely affect the overall structure of the *Works*.

PART TWO (vols. 8 – 13)

This is devoted to writings on the history of philosophy. In view of the amount of material, Lectures on ancient philosophy (Vols. 8 and 9) are divided into two volumes, whereby we also seek

to reflect the two different periods of the author's teaching activity at Charles University. Similarly, the studies relating to Comenius, which come from the author's years of teaching activity at the Pedagogical Institute of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, are divided into two volumes (10 & 11) because of their size.

Volume 12: *The history of philosophy*

This encompasses occasional studies on various topics related to the history of philosophy, and which are not covered by earlier volumes. Exceptionally, this collection is not arranged according to the text's date of origin, but follows a thematic chronology which seemed to make greater sense from the reader's point of view.

Volume 13: *Miscellanea*

This includes brief texts not included for reasons of subject and form in earlier volumes. The overall amount of material justifies issuing them as a separate volume.

APPENDIX (Vols. 14 – 15)

Volume 14. *Correspondence*

This is not yet sufficiently edited, so it is impossible to specify its length precisely. However, one may assume a single volume of standard length.

Volume 15. *Footnotes, translations, bibliographies, indexes, etc.*

We are leaving the actual contents of this volume open for the time being, pending a final decision on the question of translations of the author's foreign-language studies, and in case any so far unidentified writing of the author should come to light in the mean time.

ACTA's editors submitted the second scheme for Patočka's Collected Works to Jiří Němec who sent us the following brief comments. We hope to conclude the discussion on the publication of the Collected Works in our next issue.

COMMENTS ON SCHEME II FOR PATOČKA'S COLLECTED WORKS

One cannot but welcome the comprehensive scheme for *Jan Patočka's Collected Works* submitted by the group collaborating with the Patočka Archive in Vienna. The group's attempt to respect nuances of subject-matter within a strictly chronological framework certainly has much to be said for it. Essentially, I only have two objections:

1. According to the proposed scheme, individual volumes would contain, in chronological order, drafts, semi-elaborated texts and often final versions of studies, alongside fragments. I would recommend that the contents of the individual volumes be arranged or edited in such a way as to assign the fragments or draft versions to a separate section at the end of the volume.

2. Concerning the texts which Patočka wrote in languages other than Czech, I would recommend that in this "definitive" Czech edition, Czech translations replace the foreign-language originals in the appropriate places. These originals would then be re-assigned either to a special section at the end of each volume (and printed in a smaller type-face) or to the final volume of the *Collected Works*. There are many reasons for such an approach which I do not intend to detail here.

The form in which the scheme has been submitted looks to me like a “copious heap” of some of the most valuable materials for informed researchers seeking texts for their own editions either in Czech or other languages. From the reader’s point of view, however, this proposal for the publication of the *Collected Works* seems overly demanding or, dare I say it: unmerciful.

I accept the group’s arguments in support of their proposals but I feel they are more appropriate to the practice adopted hitherto for samizdat editions of Patočka. They constitute a severe impediment for readers of a *book* edition, particularly where they are not philosophical experts.

Comeniologists, or others who would be looking in such a collection for their own “favourites”, and would obviously have no difficulty in finding them in a clearly chronological arrangement.

However, I rather tend to see the main readers of the *Collected Works* as being Czech intellectuals with broad cultural interests or Czech students engaged in this particular spiritual field of study. For such readers, my own proposals, as mapped out in the last issue of *ACTA*, would also seem to have their merits.

Jiří Němec

TERMINOLOGY IN INDEPENDENT LITERATURE

It would be playing with words if a discussion of the terminological aspects of so-called “independent” cultural activities, particularly literature, made no attempt to explain or analyse the meaning and implications of the matter in question. Without such an effort, even the most apposite of terms could easily remain just an empty shell; equally empty and fruitless could be attempts to burden the epithets “independent”, “parallel”, “unofficial”, “second” – or any others used to describe culture or literature – with excessively complex or philosophical meanings. It is obvious, for instance, that no literature anywhere in the world – including Czech and Slovak literature – can be independent, strictly speaking. One good reason is because it is not created outside of time and space. However, in that respect nothing in the

world is “independent” and strictly speaking the word independent is meaningless and redundant. That does not stop us from using it, though, and we are more or less in agreement that it describes a certain compulsive drive that is characteristic of humanity. In this connection it would not be inappropriate to recall a few lines from Ivan Kadleček’s samizdat collection Rhapsodies and Miniatures. In his very first text, that remarkable author writes: “But if human beings are not to lose their proof of identity or their distinctively human birth-mark and end up no longer identifiably or distinctively human, they have to have their own good deeds and words. It is inconceivable that they should lack them – despite the derision of time which endlessly throws all their ambitions, resolve and promises awry”.

A similar note is sounded by more than one of the replies to the enquiry carried out recently by H. Gordon Skilling on the topic "Independent society in Eastern Europe – samizdat and the second culture". We are publishing abridged versions of some of these replies on the following pages, along with quotations from others.

The Editors

Eva Kantůrková

DEMOCRACY AND INDEPENDENT COMMUNITIES

*From the replay to Gordon Skilling's
questionnaire*

When discussing "independent communities" or activities, it is useful to determine *what* they are independent *of*, *what* they have detached themselves *from*, and what are the implications of their independence. The political, economic and ideological monopoly that exists in our country creates an artificial reality which encases our society. This artificiality constitutes the basis of its power. The original aim of creating a monolithic "communist civilisation" ie. something unnaturally one-sided, could well have seemed magnificent at the outset. But those of us who have to live here and breathe the local air not only can perceive the source of this unnatural stench; we can also actually sense its falseness with all our faculties. The frenzied political somersaults executed here render every official statement about society meaningless; there is no reality which corresponds to the phrases that are bandied about all over the place. Even the word socialism has become dead letter in official mouths. It has

nothing to do with what they are talking about and for which society is being "educated" (as the bureaucrats pompously declare). It has quite simply to do with staying in power, full stop. The creation and preservation of absolute power, like the shameless state domination of everything and the consequent artificiality of society's operation, vary in intensity from one country of the eastern bloc to another, depending on the extent to which reality manages to resist or undermine the implementation of the lifeless ideological canon. (...)

In our country, the monopoly of power is so imbecilic that it effectively destroys society's natural tendency to structure itself. In fact it destroys it to such a degree that within the resultant vacuum it is able to gobble up all human values, thereby preventing them from being used to help create a system of values. They are then superseded by pseudo-values in all areas of life.

Looked at from this angle, therefore, "independent activities" may be seen as a blue-print for natural social structures and value scales. They might also be regarded as a first step in their direction, or even their actual creation. It is social self-defence: a last line of defence against terminal decline. The writer banned from being published by state-run publishing houses who decides to "publish" his works himself in typewritten form, the actress who puts on theatrical performances for her friends in her own home, artists who hold exhibitions in the courtyards of old houses, may well all be persecuted by the régime but they do not suffer the consequences of the vacuum we refer to. Similarly, those type-copied unofficial journals which have the spiritual

stamina to reflect our situation regularly are an embryonic structure within which values can be differentiated and establish themselves and thereby promote a cultural awareness. This is why the barrier between the so-called second culture – artistic or academic works published in samizdat or in exile – and works of excellence produced within the officially dominated sphere is not impermeable. The power of spirituality raises everything of quality to the same common factor: culture. Thus authors and their readers, actors and their audience, creators and consumers form a single cultural environment, defying the official vacuum. The value criteria are being established objectively as much as possible: the idea prevails that not everything created unofficially – “independently” – is *ipso facto* the genuine article.

Though I have chosen examples from culture, the vital desire for naturalness also penetrates the rest of society. Charter 77, for instance, has, in the course of its ten years’ activity, established an identifiable social platform to which people may subscribe, but are not obliged to, one which, nevertheless, has become one of the country’s valid structures and a foil to the present administration of national life. (...)

In this way, all unofficial activities penetrate and imbue the rest of society and ensure that they do not divorce themselves from it. They respect what is positive in it while seeking to share their own positive contribution to it as widely as possible. There is nothing exceptional about certain writers publishing their books both officially and under the Petlice imprint, and the fact that Petlice Books are only too happy to receive their

unpublished manuscripts. By the same token, Petlice’s authors would willingly have their works published by official publishing houses, if the latter were to offer them the opportunity unconditionally. And as far as the Charter is concerned, there is no reason in theory why even a government minister should not be the author of one of its documents, providing the text was truthful. The point I am trying to make is that although independent activities are prosecuted, their organisers harassed and even persecuted in various ways, they do not vegetate on the fringes of an inimical system – thanks to their determination and the available opportunities. The régime is hostile to them, but the régime is not the whole of society. And let us hope that the national community is coming round to the idea that it is not doomed only to hopelessness and life on its knees. (...)

In my view, the purpose (and goal) of “independent communities” lies in the very fact of their *being*. It generates a dynamism other than linear “progress”. Living one’s own life, sticking to one’s principles and preserving one’s identity are all, in themselves, quite ambitious aims – both in the immediate and the long term – in a vacuous society. They involve confronting non-meaning with meaning, destruction with creation, emptiness with substance. The very existence of such independent activities and the nature of their existence serve to push back the frontiers of what is banned and indictable, despite the resistance of the régime. Five years ago people used to go to prison for copying out books. Nowadays far more books are copied out in many more “workshops” and the level of prosecutions is by no means equivalent. The same

applies to the publication of journals or the work of VONS. Even in this connection it is possible to talk in terms of goals: namely, extending the scope and opportunity for independent activity. However, it must be realised that these goals cannot be attained otherwise than through this work, nor can they be postponed. There is no way one can talk in terms of preparing to occupy "positions". The paradoxical goal of Charter 77 is to become extinct. Unofficial journals do not "object" to official publications that are properly printed in enormous numbers. For one thing, almost no one reads them, and for another thing they also serve to create a certain picture of reality. The only regrettable factor is that so much needlessly printed paper should be produced for the pulper. When I consider the ends, I would say rather that the search for new forms of self-expression, new solutions for various problems and situations, as well as the dialogue between different opinions and, of course, academic and artistic creation of different kinds help achieve and preserve a certain level of national culture; and that is something that is difficult to describe as a "goal". Rather it is the purpose of being a nation.

I look on independent communities and activities as a dynamic process of seeking, one which

displays a healthy tendency to poke its way into every nook and cranny in its effort to see to what extent the régime is capable of protecting its vacuum. Meanwhile it is quite possible that through some absurd global political turmoil they will arrest the lot of us and some of us will even be killed; I can just as easily imagine some clumsy oaf dropping the vacuum pump and breaking it. Either occurrence would affect independent activities only indirectly: the only effect would be to restrict or widen their influence. But the moment they sought to govern in any shape or form they would stand to lose their independence. That must remain taboo. Their independence is something that is divorced from the world of manipulation and rule. It would be equally absurd to imagine that someone else could come on a white stallion (or war-horse for that matter) and establish freedom and a democratic order here. Yearning for freedom is more of an undying hope than a goal. I would sum it up as follows: despite all our fear of persecution and imprisonment, we ourselves are creating scope for freedom and democracy by the mere fact of being what we are. There is nothing anyone can give us. And it is probably from this awareness and realisation that the independent activities derive their confidence.

Prague, April 1986

SAMIZDAT PERIODICALS

REPORT ON *OBSAH*

If one included those periodicals that appear irregularly or which fizzle out after their first issue, it would be possible to talk of dozens of Czech samizdat journals. In reality, there are only a handful of truly reputable journals appearing regularly including *Kritický sborník*, *Obsah*, *Vokno*, *Střední Evropa*, *Revolverová Revue*, *Jednou nohou*, *Pražské komunikace*, *Informace o církvi*, *Informace o Chartě*. I should think, though, that the most sought after of these is *Obsah*, a magazine whose authors belonged to the literary élite of the sixties but have been banned from publishing since 1968.

Its first issue appeared in 1980 or thereabouts. Since then it has been appearing once every month except during the summer holiday period. Until quite recently, the way that each issue was put together was by the individual members of a permanent group of writers bringing their contribution in an appropriate number of copies, after which the various articles, essays, stories or poems would be compiled in an agreed order. There was no editing of texts. Each of the authors would vouch for themselves or for a "guest contributor" on those occasions when they brought someone else's text in place of their own. The only duty which the members of the "editorial board" had was to write one contribution per month. The rules were simple due to the

constraints of time, secret police surveillance and the character of the authors who are not particularly practical individuals, having an innate aversion to organisational activity. Over the recent period, though, it looks as if *Obsah* has changed its style. It now has a uniform layout. There are now regular "columns" and a whole lot of new contributors, some of whom only initial their pieces.

The main circle of contributors does not have a fixed number of members, but roughly speaking it includes the following writers and genres: Zdeněk Urbánek (prose and translations), Ivan Klíma (prose and essays), Petr Kabeš (poetry), Karel Pecka (prose), Eda Kriseová (prose), Jan Trefulka (prose and journalism), Milan Uhde (drama, essays and literary criticism), Milan Jungmann (literary criticism), Sergej Machonin (prose plus theatrical and literary criticism), Milan Šimečka (journalism and political comment), Iva Kotrlá (prose, poetry and literary criticism), Zdeněk Rotrekl (poetry), Lenka Procházková (prose and interviews), Miroslav Červenka (poetry, literary theory and criticism), Václav Havel (drama and essays), Ludvík Vaculík (prose and "feuilletons") and Miroslav Kusý (philosophy and journalism).

These will no doubt be familiar names to those whose memory stretches back to the sixties and who followed the literary goings on of those times.

That is about all one can say in a brief news item. *Obsah* is undoubtedly the most important of the samizdat journals and in view of its high literary and intellectual level, it is bound to be the subject of many future analyses. It bears much of the credit for the fact that today's Czech unofficial literature now represents a powerful current of independent thought and creation.

An unsigned article from the Slovak samizdat journal *K* whose subtitle derives from the month of the year, hence *APR. 1987*, April 1987, pp.26–27.

O DIVADLE: FIRST IMPRESSIONS

O divadle (About the Theatre), I, July 1986; II, February 1987. Samizdat, 244 and 450 pp. A4

Imagine this reviewer sitting on an imaginary international "Board for Dramatic and Theatre Arts" which was to assess the value of an equally imaginary, new journal called *About the Theatre*. Imagine also that the nature of this journal was something like this: It has a section on speculative questions (say, a scholar's evaluation of the nature of a 'national theatre' or a theatre critic's essay on the pitfalls of acting). Another section, entitled playfully "What's what on the stage", consists of various comments by dramatists, critics and other 'theatre people' on aspects of the contemporary theatre scene in a given place (London? New York? Prague?). A third section is dedicated to a new dramatist or a new play; another to a certain recent production of a 'classical' text raising issues of cultural history; then comes a *feuilleton* section analysing a contemporary dramatist's *oeuvre* and another called "Connections, Portraits, Reminders", in which

an eminent actor or actress (say, Peggy Ashcroft) muses about life in the theatre, contemporary playwrights (say Harold Pinter and Tom Stoppard) discuss each other's plays, and scholars analyse particular aspects of the theatre.

These sections are followed by one or two translations of topical essays by foreign writers (say, Michel Foucault), and a report about the contemporary theatre scene of a particular country (say, the Soviet Union). Finally we find a formidable section of bibliographical information related to the topics discussed in the journal, plus lists of dates of stage performances under a given director, television and radio broadcasts of a particular writer's works, in other words, material for a theatre archive.

After this Hrabalesque enumeration, in which I have tried to provide the reader with a hasty overview of this imaginary new journal. I must pronounce my vote to be cast on the imaginary "Board": Without hesitation I would welcome and express support for a new journal of this sort and applaud its truly Herculean effort to "cover the field", as my imaginary colleagues on the "Board" would want me to put it. Now, however, it is time to put my cards on the table and admit that – alas – there exists no journal of this kind on the British, French, American, German markets, nor – thank goodness – am I a member of any such "Board". Is this description then a pure invention of wishful thinking? Not at all. Since 1986 there has existed a journal that includes all the names mentioned. You only need to change some names in my previous remarks: "Pinter and Stoppard" to "Havel and Uhde", "Peggy Ashcroft" to "Vlasta Chramostová", and

visualise names eminent in Czech culture (though not appearing in official publications) like Zdeněk Urbánek, Sergej Machonin. Karel Kraus, Otomar Krejča, František Pavlíček and many others.

And so we have *About the Theatre* (O divadle), appearing in Prague as a bi-annual samizdat publication, and – in the mind of this reviewer – able to compete with any international publication of this kind. This, it must be stressed, is significant indeed, because we are dealing with a theatre scene in which the nation's best dramatists have not seen the light of the stage for close to two decades, where eminent actors have been silenced or have gone abroad, where the international theatre repertory is carefully selected by the authorities, while the rest disappears in the recesses of submerged culture which Milan Šimečka aptly calls the “black holes” of history.

Two numbers of *About the Theatre* have appeared to date. The first is 244, the second 450 pages long. This length may surprise readers who are used to much slimmer journals. Three remarks are to be made about this length. First, it proves once again the intense intellectual and artistic movement that is going on outside the bounds of official culture (indeed, hopeful spirits may see it as an extension which, particularly in the theatre, shows signs of the possibility of some kind of integration – though this is a complex topic which is best avoided here). Secondly, the journal should perhaps be looked upon as a bi-annual year-book, and as such have claim to a greater length. Thirdly, if a pragmatic comment is permitted, if some of the contributions were judiciously pruned, a possible plan for a transla-

tion into English (or another language) might have more of a chance, because printers here would seem rather less patient than the devoted and admirable copiers of typewritten manuscripts.

The international calibre of *About the Theatre* is apparent. It avoids narrow professionalism, brings together writers, actors and directors, explores past perspectives but constantly pays sharp attention to the present, permits scholarship and imagination to complement each other, in other words, summons all it takes to make good theatre and think about it in a useful and creative way. As such, *About the Theatre* could compete with *The British Theatre Journal* in London, *The Performing Arts Journal* in New York or *Modern Drama* in Toronto, to name just a few. Of course, it lacks one feature important in the theatre: visual impact. It naturally has no illustrations. But here again, and ironically enough, its illustrations could be provided by the international theatre scene: the Royal Shakespeare Company for Václav Havel's latest play *Temptation* (which is discussed in the second issue), Geneva's *Théâtre au bout du fil* for Milan Uhde's *A Blue Angel*, *Theater heute*, the eminent German theatre journal, for one of Otomar Krejča's productions when he still directed at Prague's theatres; and the archives of Austrian Television for a picture of the actress Vlasta Chramostová.

The editors and contributors of this remarkable publication (for it is a “publication” even in its present form, and will enter the annals of theatre history) are to be congratulated not only on the high quality of their journal but also for ha-

ving shown that Czech theatre culture, though much of it is today denied official standing, is very much alive

Marketa Goetz-Stankiewicz

Annotated contents of Nos. 1 & 2 of the journal *O divadle*

Page numbers are given in the left margin. An indication of the article's subject-matter and contents is given in square brackets. Subtitles in capital letters are the names of different columns.

O DIVADLE I

04–11 Marie Vrbová: Sláva divadla (The glory of theatre) [Editorial]

REFLECTIONS ON: ACTING

12–33 Karel Kraus: Herec a postava (Actors and characters)

34–39 Hynek Rýdl: O přítomnosti a absenci herecké výpovědi (The existence and non-existence of actor's theatre)

39–57 Antonín Kropáček: Herec se vytrácí (The disappearing actor) [on the situation in contemporary Czech theatre]

58–68 aj: S mladým hercem o divadle (A young actor talks about the theatre) [interview about Czech theatre now]

WHAT ON THE STAGE

69–79 Vilém Pojkar: Vystrašená činohra (A terrified troupe) [assessment of the achievement of J. Fixa as head of the National Theatre's repertory company, 1981–1985]

79–107 Zdeněk Urbánek: Porucha není teprv na jevišti (Don't blame the actors) [analysis of the staging and direction of several productions of Shakespeare's *Othello*]

107–116 Milan Uhde: Dutí lidé, vycpaní lidé (Hollow people, stuffed people) [analysis of a production in Brno of Ibsen's *Enemy of the People*]

116–123 Sergej Machonin: Revizor z Ústí (An inspector from Ústí) [on a production of Gogol's *Government Inspector*]

123–127 František Pavlíček: Divadlo poetické – divadlo politické (Poetical theatre – political theatre) [on a production of Calderón's *Life is a Dream*]

128–131 Hana Borková: Klytáimnéstra (Clytemnestra) [on Jana Preissová's performance]

NEW CZECH PLAY: THE TEMPTATION

132–137 Václav Havel: Daleko od divadla ... a v jeho spárech (Far from the theatre, but in its clutches) [excerpts from a longer article]

138–157 Přátelé píší autorovi (Friends write to the author) [from letters about the play *Temptation*]

PHILIPPIC

158–168 /AB/: Řeč o Nové scéně (Words about the New Stage) [critical remarks about the New Stage of the National Theatre]

FEUILLETON

169–173 František Pavlíček: Raději mám svůj zpěv (I prefer my own song) [Recollections of conversations with Seifert about the theatre]

CONNECTIONS – PORTRAITS – REMINDERS

174–181 Václav Havel: Radok dnes (Radok today)

182–192 Václav Havel: Radokova práce s herci (Radok's work with actors)

192–201 vd: Dva francouzští dramatici (Two French dramatists) [Jean Genêt, Samuel Beckett]

SOME OF OUR TRANSLATIONS

202–215 Jean Rousset: Actors and their characters: from *Don Juan* to *St. Genest*

215–222 Danièle Sallenave: Tests of art

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- 223–225 da: Situační zpráva z Francie (Situational report from France)

WHAT'S WHAT IN THEATRE

- 226–231 ŠP: Nesplacený dluh (An unpaid debt) [re Zdeněk Hořínek's book: Drama, divadlo, divák (Drama, theatre, audience)]
- 232–234 a: Divadlo v české kultuře 19. století (The theatre in 19th century Czech culture) [review of a compendium of the same name]

FOR THE ARCHIVES

- 235–239 Soupis režii Alfreda Radoka (List of Radok's productions)
- 240–244 Beckett a Genêt v českých a slovenských překladech, divadlech a článcích (B. and G. in Czech and Slovak translation, stage productions and articles)

O DIVADLE II

- 01–21 Otomar Krejča: Výzva k naději (Appeal for hopefulness)

REFLECTIONS ON: CZECH DRAMA

- 22–39 Marie Vrbová: O českém dramatu (Czech drama)
- 39–86 Dramatici o dramatu (Playwrights on plays) [S.Machonin, M.Uhde, V.Havel, F.Pavlíček and J.Topol answer questions from Karel Kraus]
- 86–93 Hynek Rýdl: K divadlu autorské výpovědi (Author's theatre)

WHAT ON STAGE

- 94–103 Jiří Klos: Příležitostné hrdinství (Occasional heroism) [re a production of Hlaváč's play *Zvláštní řízení* (Special decree)]
- 104–108 Květa Sedláková: Sen o schůzi (Dream about a meeting) [re a production of a play by O.Daněk]

- 108–119 Jaroslava Davidová: K divadelním hrám Jiřího Hubače (J.Hubač's stage plays)
- 120–124 Květa Sedláková: Mácha a Šotola [on Šotola's play *A jenom země bude má* (And I'll return to earth)]
- 125–138 Sergej Machonin: Z pohádky do pohádky (One fairy-tale like another) [review of five recent plays]
- 139–145 Hynek Rýdl: Dramatik groteskního tragismu (Slapstick tragedian) [the plays of Karel Steigerwald]

A NEW CZECH PLAY

- 146–164 Luboš Pistorius: Nový dramatik (A new playwright) [about Daniela Fischerová]

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- 165–175 Karel Pecka: Věk cynismu (The age of cynicism)

FEUILLETON: REMEMBERING LUDVÍK AŠKENAZY

- 176–183 František Pavlíček: Báseň a pravda (The poem and truth)
- 183–188 Jiří Bezděk: Ještě jedna vzpomínka (One more recollection)
- 188–194 as: Z dopisů Ludvíka Aškenazyho (From LA's letters)

CONNECTIONS – PORTRAITS – REMINDERS

- 195–238 Pozdravy Otomaru Krejčovi (Greetings to Otomar Krejča) [on his 65th birthday]
- 238–261 František Pavlíček: V Čelakovského sadech číslo 10 (No.10. Čelakovský Gardens) [interview with Vlasta Chramostová]
- 262–268 Vlasta Chramostová: Z příběhu a vzpomínek (From stories and memories) [Three excerpts from *Zcenzurovaný život* (A censored life)]
- 268–308 Zdeněk Urbánek: Otázky kladené pokoušenými (Questions from the tempted) [thoughts on theatre sparked off by Havel's play *Temptation*]

- 309–333 Milan Uhde: Návštěvy a navštívení Václava Havla (V.Havel's visits and visitations) [about Havel's plays]
- 334–336 sm: O jednom výročí (A certain anniversary) [The 1972 production of Havel's version of the Beggars' Opera at Horní Počernice]
- 337–342 Václav Havel: Dopis Milanu Uhdemu (Letter to M.Uhde)
- 343–350 Jan Kopecký: False fire čili palba naslepo ("False fire" or firing blind) [Uhde's play *Král (King) Vávra*]
- 350–357 JT: Honza z Čech (Honza from Bohemia) [Jan Tříska's 50th birthday]
- 358–360 VH: Pavel z Teplíc (Paul von Teplitz) [Pavel Landovský's 50th birthday]
- 438–439 Bytové divadlo Vlasty Chramostové (V.Chramostová's "home theatre")
- 440–443 Divadelní, televizní a rozhlasové provedení her Václava Havla v letech 1975–1986 (Havel's plays on stage, television and radio, 1975–1986)
- 443 Hry Milana Uhdeho v československých divadlech . (M.Uhde's plays on the Czechoslovak stage)
- 444–445 Soupis divadelních rolí Jana Třísky v českých divadlech (List of J.Tříska's roles on the Czech stage)
- 445–447 Soupis divadelních rolí Pavla Landovského (List of P.Landovský's stage roles)
- 448 Hry Pavla Landovského (P.Landovský's plays) –vpn–

SOME OF OUR TRANSLATIONS

- 361–377 Paul Ricoeur: The evil god and the "tragic" vision of existence
- 378–390 Danièle Sallenave: Tests of art [contd]

THEATRE NEXT DOOR -

- 391–412 Děje se v sovětských divadlech (Happenings on the Soviet stage)
- 412–420 Věra Dvořáková: Nenávist k divadlu (Hatred of theatre) [a survey by the French journal *L'Art du théâtre*]

WHAT'S WHAT IN THEATRE

- 421–424 mt: O Faustování s Havlem (Havel's Faustiana) [on the samizdat collection of the same name]
- 424–429 ptl: Jiří Hájek, jak ho známe (The J.H. we know) [on Hájek's book *Teorie umělecké kritiky* (The theory of art criticism)]

FOR THE ARCHIVES

- 430–431 Hry Ludvíka Aškenazyho v českých divadlech (Ludvík Aškenazy's plays on the Czech stage)
- 431–433 Soupis režii Otomara Krejči 1976–1986 (List of O.Krejča's productions)
- 433–438 Soupis divadelních rolí Vlasty Chramostové (List of V.Chramostová's theatrical roles)

A NEW SLOVAK SAMIZDAT JOURNAL

K, March, April, July 1987, 35 + 42 + 65 pp. A4, Samizdat

I have before me three issues of the journal *K*. It is the latest samizdat periodical to appear in Slovakia and serves to refute the frequent assertion that Slovakia has adapted better to "existing socialism", or that it has somehow come to terms with normalised thinking and state-run culture. This journal is proof that the younger generation in Slovakia has not given up its striving to think freely. Nor has it succumbed to the flood of clichés and half-truths given out by official propaganda.

In the first issue, the editors declare their chief inspiration to be Dominik Tatarka, the Slovak writer silenced for the past twenty years. In their eyes, Tatarka is " ... the greatest figure of contemporary Slovak literature and an eminent representative of Slovak society". They publish his

scathing commentary *Navrávačky* (Cajoleries), shortly to be issued by Index publishers in West Germany. The journal also recalls the case of the writer Hana Ponická who, in 1977, made a forceful defence of persecuted Slovak writers. The editors quote that most powerful passage in *Lukavica Notebooks*, where the writer recalls how the leaders of the Slovak Writers' Union faced her with an ultimatum: if she refused to back down, not only she, but also her relations would suffer the consequences. In publishing a review of Leopold Lahola's fiction, the journal repays an acknowledged debt to this representative of Slovak existentialism. The issue also includes an interesting analysis of two new Slovak periodicals reviewed in the first and second issues. *Mladé rozlety* (Young flights) is the title of a new weekly published by the official Union of Slovak Youth, while *Dotyky* (Contacts) is a supplement to the literary review *Romboid* and is devoted to younger authors. These journals have one main thing in common: they both ape the existing adult publications and differ from them solely in the writers' ages.

One sentence in particular caught my eye in issue No.2. Writing about the persecuted Czech *Jazzová sekce* (Jazz Section), the author declares: "After all, I have to map out reality for myself, so as to find the paths I wish to follow and identify those I have to be wary of" This sentence, I believe, best sums up the situation of young people who are entirely left to their own devices if they do not wish to submit to the norms of existing socialism. Where such subordination leads is shown in a discussion of the works of Lu-

boš Jurík, who rendered unto Caesar more than was necessary in order to get the chance of publishing a few "more liberal" thoughts.

The second issue of *K* also informs readers about the Czech literary periodical *Obsah* whose contributors include reputable Czech writers of poetry, prose and criticism who are currently banned from publishing officially. Original writing in the issue includes a short story, full of black humour, entitled *Ballad about balance* by Milan Šimečka, as well as two stories by Oliver Svišť' (in Nos.1 & 3) which indicate that their author has all the makings of a good fiction writer.

The third issue examines the current state of Slovak culture even more thoroughly. It includes a detailed analysis of the congresses of the different arts' unions (writers, playwrights, film makers and artists) which indicates how the timid debates of the pre-congress period are translated into sterile clichés in the congress resolutions which ignore the fundamental issues of artistic creation. And everything stays as it was: writers go on being banned, and according to the critic V. Mack, there are some 200 films which cinema audiences are not allowed to see.

While recommending the editors to make things easier on their readers by publishing the contents of each issue clearly, we wish them every success in winning a large readership of youngsters claiming the right to think independently.

Michal Kubín

INDEPENDENT SOCIOLOGICAL JOURNAL IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

There has been a new addition to the wide-ranging Czechoslovak samizdat scene in the form of a new sociological journal *Sociologický obzor* (Sociological Horizon). The journal's first two issues appeared this year, and its editors have put together a highly professional product, collecting articles of topical interest from contributors who can write eminently readable prose. Indeed, the country's officially published sociological journals, one Czech and one Slovak, could well learn a thing or two from this samizdat publication.

As to the journal's orientation, the editors of *Sociologický obzor* have said that they will deliberately refrain from taking a binding editorial line that would rule out other views from appearing on the journal's pages.

"What we need above all are some of that celebrate 'drobná práce', or responsible endeavour on a personal basis, that would gradually fill, at least partly, the gap that has opened up in social investigation during the past twenty years. We are not only lagging behind in terms of theory and methodology; we even lack basic information. We have virtually lost contact with sociology around the world, and countries that we viewed several years ago with the benign condescension of those who know better, have now overtaken us. However, this extremely difficult work can be pursued only in a climate of tolerance, a climate that permits the study of diverse concepts that may often appear mutually exclusive. It means not excluding any of them out of hand according to the

discredited criteria of whether or not they belong to the one single licensed school of thought. It means allowing other concepts to flourish here and addressing our own specific social experience which is unique in many respects.

"These unique aspects of our experience are precisely what we seek to reflect using the various methods available to sociologists who, whether they like it or not, are obliged to forego the resources of the 'great' science of computers. However, let us give credence to the saying about 'an ill wind' and get on with the job, because one has to start the work somewhere and in some fashion. The fact is that the path to the horizons of sociological knowledge will only be travelled by those who, to paraphrase a Chinese saying, keep on walking."

Both issues of *Sociologický obzor* have comprised 103 typed pages (double-spaced) and contained about 35,000 words each. Sources are referred to in the body of the text, and short bibliographies of works consulted by the authors are appended to most of the articles. Articles are signed by the authors with their full names (many of which are new to samizdat publications). Short notes and reviews are initialled.

Issue no.1 of *Sociologický obzor* contains five main articles, ranging from a study of "feminised or feminine society" by J.Polehňa, discussions of conservatism (by L.Čep) and the "decline of order" (M.Piluša), to an article by J.Benedikt on Immanuel Kant. The issue also includes several reviews of books and articles, as well as of some Soviet plays. In addition, there are notes, a number of quotations from outstanding thinkers, in-

formation on new publications and a translation of Tatyana Zaslavskaya's article "Perestroika and sociology" which first appeared in *Pravda* (Moscow) on 6 February 1987.

Issue No.2 of *Sociologický obzor* contains an article by J.Polehňa dealing with the topic of "a society where time is 'behind schedule'" It is based on the concept developed by French sociologist G.Gurvitch of "le temps en retard sur lui-même". There is also a contribution on Czechoslovak penal law by L.Čep, and another on the amended abortion law, signed with the initial "z". M.Piluša writes on the humanist sociology of Florian Znaniecki. J.Benedikt discusses the ethos of Chingiz Aitmatov's fiction and M.Piluša looks at the 1960s as a time of "nostalgia, reality and mystification". In addition to the reviews, brief notes and quotations of the previous issue, No.2 also contains two interesting documents. The first, entitled "Conscience and duty", consists of an exchange of letters between a woman doctor (D.K.) and the Czech Ministry of Health, about whether the doctor could or could not refuse to participate in abortions. The second document ("Three statistics") includes three tables of statistics on the crime rate in Czechoslovakia from 1976 to 1985. This is particularly useful information, since crime figures have not been given in recent editions of the official *Statistical Year-book*.

The appearance of *Sociologický obzor* adds to the impression that the promise of reform in Czechoslovakia has already had a favourable influence on the samizdat scene. Other independent journals devoted to political and cultural issues, a new Slovak periodical, the appearance of

economic and historical compendia, the continued publication of Charter 77 documents and religious material, and the various regular and irregular texts associated with the "underground" cultural scene all suggest the development of a strong unofficial culture in a country which many thought had been forced to abandon any aspirations to free expression in the face of dogmatic "normalisation".

VVK

ANYONE KNOW ABOUT PSI?

However extensive and regularly updated the CSDC's collections are, unhappily they cannot hope to be exhaustive. Among present lacunae is a collection published in Czechoslovakia under the title "Psi" (as in the Greek letter). The only information we have about it so far comes from a recent communication from Czechoslovakia. We have decided to reproduce this both to inform readers and to solicit your help should any of you already obtained a copy of Psi. If you have, please let us have a copy. Better still, loan us any issue(s). We will be happy to reimburse any expenses involved.

The Editors

So far, the collections marked with a Greek Psi have come out once a year and numbered some 30–50 single-spaced type-written pages. Technical limitations mean they come out no more than once a year. In more favourable circumstances they would most likely appear more frequently.

Psi stands for *psyche*. The collections published under this title are intentionally monothematic. Each consists of theoretical or practical

treatment of a single anthropological theme which its editors consider topical. There is clearly an effort to respond to “public demand”. The publishers declared aim is to respect the empirical scientific approach to anthropology, while seeking to avoid scientism. Instead they stress the ethical, philosophical and theological relevance of a particular topic.

The collections (and their publishers) share an overtly Christian orientation. The prevailing outlook is one of catholic ecumenism or non-militant catholicism, although protestant and Jewish spirituality have also been known to figure on their pages. It is nice to see that the publishers seem to be making an effort to avoid denominational quarrels.

The collections include both original texts and translations, largely from German and English; the reviews are mainly of German and English/American publications. They are targeted at readers with an arts education, particularly those working with people, eg. social workers, psychotherapists, counsellors. They are apparently published in some 200 – 300 copies. As far as I can tell, they are well in demand and the distributors do not neglect readers outside the metropolis, such as those in Moravia and Slovakia, though supplies to the latter are more limited. I have even come across an instance of the collection being transcribed in Slovakia – also in Czech, interestingly enough.

Though it is a publishing venture aimed more or less at the reading “elite”, it is good to see that the collections are mostly read by people active in those professions – i.e. in “the structures” – and who are in a position to put their ideas into

practice in their particular sphere of activity. It is likely to take some time before Psi’s efforts have any effect, but they could well help sway the attitudes of the collections’ readership in a desirable anti-scientistic, anti-consumerist and, of course, anti-totalitarian direction.

The previous editions have dealt with the transcendental dimensions of Being (“verticals”), psychological and ethical aspects of the question of guilt, and Freudian psychoanalysis. I gather that forthcoming issues plan to tackle the questions of education, sexuality, old-age and ageing, etc. Some time ago, the Rome-based magazine *Studie*, in its triple issue 104–107, reproduced a text originally published in *Psi*.

In my view, Psi is a welcome publication which is worth supporting, particularly if it maintains its past sense of topicality and an ecumenical approach which will assure it a broad audience.

(The author’s name was not disclosed)

SAMIZDAT SERIES

NEW THOUGHT TRAILS (contd)

As we indicated in our first issue, ACTA plans not only to publish complete lists and descriptions of individual Czech and Slovak samizdat book series but also to supplement them when necessary. Accordingly, we bring readers details of seven additions (issues 23 – 29) to the samizdat series New Thought Trails [Nové cesty myšlení] which we listed last time. Once again, the information was compiled in Czechoslovakia.

Editors

23) T.R.Korder, *Konec tradičního Japonska* [The end of traditional Japan]. *Platon v Syracuších* [Plato in Syracuse]. Prague 1986. Typescript B5, stiff cloth binding, 174 pp. Transcript of a home seminar, continuing issue 12: *In search of a modern concept of history*, by T.R.Korder. An interpretation of the character of Japanese historicity and Plato's adventures in Syracuse.

24) Erazim Kohák, *Krize rozumu a přirozený svět* [The crisis of reason, and the Natural World]. Prague 1987. Typescript B5, stiff cloth binding, 157 pp. An outline of the meaning of Jan Patočka's work and the philosopher's processes of thought, published along with a summary of his output. Issued to mark the tenth anniversary of Patočka's death.

25) Milan Balabán, *Bojovníci a trpitelé* [Warriors and sufferers]. Prague 1987. Typescript B5, stiff cloth binding, 162 pp. A short history of the Old Testament and the Jews.

26) *Miscellanea ad honorem OTO MÁDR ad eius 70. annum completum*. Prague 1987. Typescript B5, stiff cloth binding, 123 pp. A collection of writings published to mark the seventieth birthday of the catholic priest Oto Mádr. Contributors include B.Janát, V.Svobodová, A.Janoušek, L.Karfíková, Kalypton, J.Zvěřina, M.Holubová, L.O. and M.R., R.Palouš.

27) T.R.Korder, *Výběr záznamů průběhu bytového filosofického semináře paralelní kultury v Československu*. [Selected transcript of a home philosophical seminar of Czechoslovak parallel culture]. Prague 1987. Typescript B5, stiff cloth binding, 218 pp. Selection from two earlier editions in this series (Nos.13 & 23), centring on questions of the concept of history, particularly in the light of E.Voegelin's and J.Patočka's philosophies of history.

28) Radim Palouš, *K filosofii výchovy* [Towards a philosophy of education]. Prague 1987. Typescript B5 stiff cloth binding, 233 pp. An investigation of the ontological, epistemological, methodological, historical and political aspects of the theory of education or so-called "fundamental agogics". Published to mark the 80th anniversary of J.Patočka's birth.

29) Ladislav Hejdánek, *O filosofii nepředmětnosti* [Towards a philosophy of non-objectivity]. Prague 1987. Typescript B5, stiff cloth binding, 154 pp. Two studies characteristic of the philosopher's philosophical outlook, one from 1981, the other from 1982.

NEW BOOKS – PRO MEMORIA

RHAPSODIES AND MINIATURES

Ivan Kadlečík, *Rapsodie a miniatúry* [Rhapsodies and miniatures]. Edice Petlice [Padlock Books], 144 pp. Prague 1987.

The very length of time it took *Rhapsodies and Miniatures* to come to fruition says much about its calibre. At a time when people chase madly after the things that life has to offer and pursue success at all costs, a book that unassumingly embodies the first of these goals and has no interest in the latter must inevitably stand out from the crowd. Such an author can afford to take his time and let things grow in their own way over a span of twenty years, leaf by leaf, branch by branch, rather like the trees of which Kadlečík speaks with such feeling and, above all, understanding. About half of the book, the author recalls, was written in the seventies and was published in its original version in *Edice Petlice* under the title it bears today. In this latest edition, as Kadlečík explains in an afterword, the slender volume has been extended by a number of texts written “after a short break – to get my breath back? – and on an almost chance impulse, in the period 1984–87”.

Even with those additions, the book does not number more than about sixty pieces of prose. If the time they took to mature is exceptional, then their character is no less so. In fact I am reluctant to characterise these brief texts – mostly one or two pages long – in any precise way, because they do not really belong to any usual literary genre. They are as much intended as apostro-

phes or short homilies as they are prose poems, as much reminiscences as they are credos, as much sketches of nature as they are minute stories – as well as many other things, all of which add up to a unique whole, expressing Kadlečík’s own very special vision of humanity and the world.

Moreover, Kadlečík’s unique view of humanity and the world is undoubtedly the most challenging aspect of *Rhapsodies and Miniatures*. It is also what lends the book artistic unity, notwithstanding the considerable time span over which the individual pieces were written and their great breadth of subject-matter. It matters little, though, whether one reads them in the order they are printed or whether one picks out individual pieces intuitively or at random, such as when one read poetry – or certain works by Friedrich Nietzsche, the only philosopher, I fancy, that Kadlečík – rather unexpectedly – mentions by name. In sum, the individual pieces in *Rhapsodies and Miniatures* are quite capable of standing on their own, but their full significance becomes apparent only when one has read them all.

A major unifying feature of Kadlečík’s prose pieces is their particularity. They all derive from a living and constantly renewed contact with reality, the simple and frugal reality of his daily life, whether in the shape of the earth which he digs, the trees which he plants out or fells, the bees which he cares for, the family, and particularly children, that he takes to christenings or burials.

but also the different ancestors, known and unknown, who represent his roots, his physical and spiritual lineage, his personal and shared traditions which in his case are marked by the unique features of Slovak protestantism. Particular also is Kadlečík's contact with the spiritual world, with scripture, symbolised by his old family hymn-book or with music which is embodied in the organ about which he not only writes with enthusiasm, but on which he also plays and which he even knows how to tune and repair. Such is the subject-matter of his writings. And he writes about it all in a practical, simple and matter-of-fact way with a sure knowledge but also an undisguised enthusiasm. It is precisely this practicality and enthusiasm which firmly links the individual and the cosmic in Kadlečík's prose: his *Rhapsodies and Miniatures* is one of those increasingly rare books which tell us that it is possible to be *at home* in this world.

But Kadlečík is also aware of those things which prevent our being so. These undoubtedly include the ever-increasing supremacy of words over reality. It is a phenomenon to which *Rhapsodies and Miniatures* returns time and again – and rightly so, since it is one of the burning existential problems of the present day, particularly in the country where the book's author lives. Orwell invented the neologism *Newspeak* for it. The French call it – no doubt under the influence of Polish – *la langue de bois* i.e. “wooden speech”. Czeslaw Milosz, in the sub-title of his essay “The enslaved idea”, calls it “logocracy”. Ivan Kadlečík, for his part, dubs it “meta-language”. He goes on to explain what he means thereby: “It would seem that, as primitive tribes, humans can get by with as few as ten or twenty

words. I recall someone in a radio discussion spending almost a quarter of an hour juggling with just a handful of words – like hollow balls (though they assume an air of ceremonial sanctity) – and right up to its lucrative conclusion, the whole statement amounted to nothing at all. By means of an arbitrary number of isolated conjunctions, particles and indefinite pronouns it is possible to stretch out a speech for several hours using a mere handful of words. It has been calculated theoretically on a computer and demonstrated in practice by the most skilled orators and innocent parrots – whom I do not mean to offend in any way, since they do not have the natural capacity to use conjunctions, particles and pronouns independently in a creative fashion. In the course of that broadcast reality disintegrated, dissolved or evaporated; the aqua vitae transformed its substance into an ethereal vapour of buoyant words.”

Like a good teacher and also a bit of a preacher, the author of *Rhapsodies and Miniatures* follows this with a practical example of how even the most basic reality – such as bread – can be transformed in such a language: for radio announcers and other official speakers, bread is “the in-spite-of-ongoing-objective-problems final product of the baking industry”. In a world ruled by the tyranny of mere words, reality truly dissolves into nothing. In such a world anything is indeed possible because everything, including the most enormous lies, wrongs and crimes, can not only be concealed but actually justified by means of a smoke-screen of words. Without fulminating or using drastic examples, Kadlečík demonstrates the mortal danger that “meta-language” represents for all living things.

and concludes by saying: “Meta-language justifies the artificial reality of those who neither have nor are permitted to have any interest in true reality: their jargon describes nothing, but merely skims round the edges of a thick, hot porridge. (...) Meta-language just tries in vain to conceal dire ignorance and a loathing of Mother Reality and Grandam Matter”.

It was certainly not Ivan Kadlečík’s intention to join in the debate about the meaning and justification of so-called independent literature in Czechoslovakia, but he unwittingly contributed to it none the less. His book confirms that the main task and justification of such literature is the defence and celebration of *human* reality in a *human* language.

J.V.

MILAN UHDE’S “ANNUNCIATION”

By an odd coincidence, Milan Uhde’s play *Zvěstování aneb Bedřichu, ty jsi anděl* (The Annunciation, or, Freddie you’re an Angel) made its appearance in the Federal Republic of Germany just at the moment when a three-part serial on the life of Friedrich Engels entitled *The Flight of the Falcon*, arrived from the GDR to be broadcast at peak viewing hour on West Germany’s First Channel (ARD). This gave viewers and critics alike some practice in the history of the “ILM” (as the ideologically-doctored history of the International Labour Movement and its protagonists is abbreviated in Czechoslovakia – and no doubt in the serial’s country of origin, too). It also provided an opportunity to mourn the fact that things would have turned out otherwise and better had the best ideas of the best people re-

mained in the best heads and hands: in the way that Marx’s notions occupied – alas, for all too short a time – the head and hands of his devoted friend from Wuppertal.

Given this spiritual climate, I hardly think that Milan Uhde’s play will enjoy the same sort of success – even if it is on a similar theme. Unlike the big-screen socialist epic from the East German Hollywood, the Czech playwright’s piece deals with just one brief episode from the lives of the revolutionaries. Moreover, Uhde tackles his theme with the experience and courage of an artist who cut his teeth on the realities of revolutionary practice of a country where scurrilous texts like *Dialectics of Nature* or *Anti-Dühring* – which Marx’s erstwhile friend from Wuppertal once penned. These texts have been compulsory reading for generations of students who – without discrimination – have compulsorily studied ... good old “ILM”. And, of course, for generations these gems have frequently been the object of scarcely concealed hilarity. Mind you, Uhde is no political polemicist. It is just that he is totally *au fait* with the ideology whose progenitors and purveyors are the subject of his play. He knows its enticing, Siren-like melodies. He knows its “good” motives and does not ridicule it in the least. What concerns the author is the “concrete inhumanity” of “concrete dialectics”.

The comic nature of the play’s theme serves his purpose excellently. The well-known – albeit artfully ignored – story of Marx’s relationship with the family’s serving-maid during his years in London is the play’s lynch-pin. Revolutionary Max – this subtle modification of the hero’s name suggests that the conclusions to be drawn

have universal application – finds himself confronted with that most real of realities: the maid’s pregnancy. The “angelic” intervention of Max’s friend Engel (a similar nuance), which lets him off the hook, constitutes the play’s non-purgative catharsis. By shouldering responsibility for the paternity, Engel enables the Marxist category of Practice – proclaimed to be the fundamental criterion of truth – to function in what is a most unphilosophical – albeit most likely true – to–life – fashion: the ‘practice’ of deception.

The piece is also a skit on those plays of critical realism, unmasking the “true face” of the bourgeois, which were once written in such abundance. Ibsen used to write such pieces in Max-Marx’s day and the “father of the proletarians” would applaud them with glee. And if he did not actually see the then scandalous *Ghosts*, which deals with a similar *faux-pas*, I expect he read it, at least. Even now, plays of this kind tend to owe their success precisely to the brutal seriousness with which the bourgeois children lecture their parents without themselves abandoning any of the latter’s vices/virtues – apart, that is, from the making of money. Not long ago I witnessed the latest production in Bonn of Ibsen’s spooky scenario which nowadays can hardly be played as anything but semi-farce. Unfortunately, my fits of laughter earned me reproachful glances from the audience in this, my serious-minded new homeland.

Naturally, Uhde does not stray from the path of comedy. The conversational nature of the play allows him to purvey ideological blather in all its untrammelled pristine glory.

Since the subordination of things and creatures is its general characteristic, there is little hope of such an insignificant creature as a house-maid escaping it. The new supremacy stemming from their conviction that they have discovered how the universe works, pupates as a universal method (or technique) for interfering with the originality of human lives. What matters is not the pregnant belly of little L., but the birth pangs of the glowing tomorrows. The Angel Engel brings the paradoxically good tidings – a practical recipe for returning from the “base” to the “superstructure”: from the world of deeds to the world of conjecture. Of course, Engel is also the angel of what, in the jargon of all the Maxes, is dubbed “the dustbin of history”. He disposes of nuisances. He is the man without whom Maxes amount to nothing, in the way that circus acrobats cannot do without their anchor-man. And we laugh. They are presented rather like a ‘Charley ‘n’ Fred’ comic duo, but it is in fact a cautionary tale. And it is cautionary particularly in those parts of the world where socialism is not yet altogether “real”.

Uhde will not have an easy task over here, even though he has authored an excellent text which diverges radically from the sulky self-preoccupation which unlicensed Czech literature displays all too often. The fact is that Uhde talks directly to the public over here, and about unpleasant matters, thus precluding the usual kind of peep-show syndrome which tends to dominate consideration of “East European” issues. And that may be a good thing.

Jiří Gruša

Acknowledgements

The Board of Management wishes to express its gratitude to those whose contributions have permitted the enlargement of the Centre and its collections during last three months.

Helena Goetz, Vancouver, Canada
Dr Marketa Goetz-Stankiewicz, Vancouver
Dr Marie Hrabík-Šámal, Detroit, USA
Dr Vilma Iggers, Buffalo, USA
Dr Miloslav Káňa, Konstanz
Jiří Kolář, Paris
Dr Radomír Luža, New Orleans, USA
Antonín Málek, Cologne
Zdeněk Mastník, London
Oldřich Procházka, San Diego, USA
Dr Jan Rubeš, Bruxelles
Karel Trinkewitz, Hamburg

Financial contributions are administered by "Kulturamt der Landeshauptstadt Hannover". Cheques may be sent directly to the Centre or funds may be transferred to following account: Kreissparkasse Peine (BLZ 252 500 01), Acc.-No. 35 000 595, "Dokumentationszentrum – Spendenkonto". Contributors may stipulate specific projects which they would like to further (eg. Patočka's Collected Works, Catalogue, Annual Survey)

THE JIŘÍ LEDERER PRIZE

In October 1987, the Jiří Lederer Prize – offered by two Paris-based magazines, the Polish review *Zeszyty literackie* and the Czechoslovak quarterly *Svědectví* – was awarded for the second time. It was decided to honour Mr. Petr Pospíchal, Charter 77 signatory and member of the Committee for the Defence of the Unjustly Prosecuted (VONS). Petr Pospíchal (26), whose home is in Brno, can rightly claim much of the credit for the present fruitful co-operation between the Polish and Czechoslovak citizens' initiatives in the fields of civil liberties, literature and art. This activity has led to his conviction and imprisonment on repeated occasions. Last February, the Provisional Committee of *Solidarity* issued a statement praising Pospíchal's contribution "to our nation's struggles for freedom".

Jiří Lederer, after whom the prize is named, was a Czech journalist who worked for years in favour of closer contacts between Poland and Czechoslovakia. He died in exile on 12th October 1983. The prize of five thousand Francs is awarded to Poles, Czechs or Slovaks actively engaged in promoting understanding between the two countries through unfettered cultural and political information.

V. Černý: K výročí smrti T. G. Masaryka
 P. Pithart: Jedno svědectví o Masarykově hledání
 M. Červenka: Ještě jai... "viditelné církve"
 P. Ložar: Země, kterou ti ukážu
 E. Kriseová: Zlatokožec a řeky
 J. Kratochvíl: Plomba
 K. Pecka: Hledači pokladů
 Zb. Hejda: Pobyt v sanatoriu
 E. Kantůrková: Dny mužů
 Zd. Urbánek: Náhoda na krátkých vlnách
 K. Hvidalá-J. Němec: Krok stranou
 M. Kusý: Rozhoduje vlastník
 M. Jungmann: Otvírání pasti na kritiku
 S. Machonin: Záznam /červenec 1987/
 J. Trefulka: Jazykový koutek
 M. Šimečka: Příspěvek do Frankenu
 V. Havel: Setkání s Gorbačovem
 L. Vačulík: Letní tramvaj /červenec/
 Srpnový den /srpen/
 Proč píšu /září

 Příloha: J. Křen, Historické proměny češtiny

Září 1987

Walt Whitman
 Zdeněk Urbánek
 Jiřina Hauková
 Zdeněk Rotrekl
 Viktor Jerofejev
 Miroslav Červenka
 Lenka Procházková
 Milan Uhde
 Jakub Jakobeus
 J.P.
 František Kautman
 Vladimír Pistorius
 Milan Jungmann
 Sergej Machonin
 /Z katalogu výstavy/
 Dopis spisovatelů
 Ústavu pro jazyk český
 Ludvík Vaculík
 J. Kratochvíl a M. Uhde
 o Jaroslavem Šabatou

Téma mého zpěvu...
 Odpověď na výtku
 Spodní proudy
 Cesta do Fanuel
 Život s idiotem
 Psi místa, myší chvíle
 O babě hladové
 Krajina pro zázrak
 Cesty k tobě
 Je Švejk "švejkem"?
 O generačních pocitech...
 Ještě jednou "Stárnoucí literatura"
 Trojí pohled na českou literaturu
 Zpráva o Vojckovi v malém divadle
 Rudolf Němec
 ... a odpověď
 Naše slavnosti
 Kdy už čas oponou trhne?

Ž Í J E N 87

O B S A H

Facsimile of the title pages of two issues of the samizdat periodical *OBSAH*

Obsah appears ten times a year, i.e. every month apart from the July-August holiday period. The individual issues, consisting simply of an unbound collection of texts which is not serially numbered, normally vary in length from 100 to 190 pages, and rarely does an issue contain less than 100 pages. Once a year, a selection of texts from all ten issues of *Obsah* is published under the title *Z Obsahu* (From *Obsah*) followed by the appropriate year. *Z Obsahu* usually numbers some 600 pages, the 1986 collection actually containing as many as 736 A5 pages.

CLÁNKY/STUDIE

- /01/ o naší evropě /czechaw mítosz/
/12/ jiný, a přece tento svět /rudolf starý/
000
000

MÍSTO ROZHOVORU

- /26/ pařížský deník /jan vladislav/
000
000

O KNĚŽÁCH

- /34/ vaculíkův další experiment /-bn-/
/43/ i v absurdním světě má naději své místo /k/žádný/
/47/ kritik josef vohryzek /františek kautman/
/53/ kassandra anebo démóstheneas /ir/
/58/ s + s / co a jak /petr fidelius/
000
000

OPERNÍ HLÍDKA

- /69/ údiv vídeňských kritiků /caruso/
000
000

GLOSÝ

- /73/ jak jsem se dostal k plotěštině /milan hrbí/
/79/ censura budiž pochválena /ir/
000
000

DISKUSE

- /83/ filosofie/nebo filozofie? /vii/
000
000

KNIŽNÍ ZPRAVODAJ

CLÁNKY/STUDIE

- /01/ diskuse na téma jedné klímovy věty /iven dubský/
000
000

O KNĚŽÁCH

- /35/ filosofická psychologie/
nebo filosofie psýchy? /rudolf starý/
/43/ diskuse o postmoderně /-hd-/
/47/ paměť hrůzy /simone de beauvoir/
/51/ skrytá tvář české literatury /-ran-/
/55/ díra - bohužel nejen v hlavě /k/žádný/
000
000

DOZUMENT

- /61/ poděkování universitě v amsterodamu /l/hejždánek/
000
000

OPERNÍ HLÍDKA

- /64/ těla v opeře /caruso/
000
000

HIS MASTER'S ROCK

- /67/ dr. max/veše tělo... uletělo /elvis/
000
000

TELEVIZE

- /71/ máni, proč tu mají všichni tak/
000 krátký nožičky? /alfred altschul/
000

GLOSÝ

- /80/ češství a světovost /karel severa/
/83/ úspěchy amlerizace /z/kautman/
/85/ pařížský deník /jan vladislav/
000
000

DISKUSE

- /91/ obec otřesených/anebo postižených? /petr rezek/
/104/ kriticky o svitákoví /ja/
000
000

KNIŽNÍ ZPRAVODAJ

Facsimile of the title pages of two issues of the samizdat quarterly *Kritický sborník* (Critical digest) which is currently in its seventh year of publication, having appeared regularly since 1981



V. S. Maslov

IN MEMORIAM
1937 - 1987

On this inside back cover – a place reserved in this year's issues of ACTA for special purposes – we originally intended to reproduce an illustration to mark the anniversary of Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk. However, we decided in the end to print it on a separate sheet which readers may cut out and frame, if they wish, without spoiling the journal. The illustration has an interesting history: it is done from a block made in Czechoslovakia by anonymous graphic artists in 1987 who copied it from a 1902 wood engraving by Max Švabinský and made it available to the CSDC.

Forthcoming issues of ACTA will include:

Papers presented at the panel *Czech writing in the context of contemporary literature*, at the National Convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies (Boston, 5th November 1987):

M. Goetz-Stankiewicz: *Five Czech novelists take on the world*

J. Gruša: *A travelling ghetto their fate*

J. Vladislav: *Václav Havel: responsibility as destiny*

Edice Petlice (Padlock Books) 1972–1986

A complete list of currently appearing Czech and Slovak samizdat journals

Historický sborník (History compendium) 1–21: Abstracts of articles and studies published in the samizdat history periodical 1978–87

Milan Jungmann: notes on contemporary Czech literature

Meta-language justifies the artificial reality of those who neither have nor are permitted to have any interest in true reality: their jargon describes nothing, but merely skims round the edges of a thick, hot porridge. (...) Meta-language just tries in vain to conceal dire ignorance and a loathing of Mother Reality and Grandam Matter.

Ivan Kadlečík (Martin)

Czech literature and Czech social awareness in general is stupidly missing out on a whole area of knowledge and even some real gems when it does not pay at least the same sort of attention to Slovak literature that the Slovaks do to our own.

Ludvík Vaculík (Praha)

We can only hope that things will improve substantially with the appearance of ACTA and we look forward to its providing more information of this kind, including regular news about the world of independent/samizdat publishing back home as well as publicity for different periodicals and books. And it is not even necessary to wait until the Documentation Centre receives them, ACTA can take the information from elsewhere.

Václav Havel (Praha)

