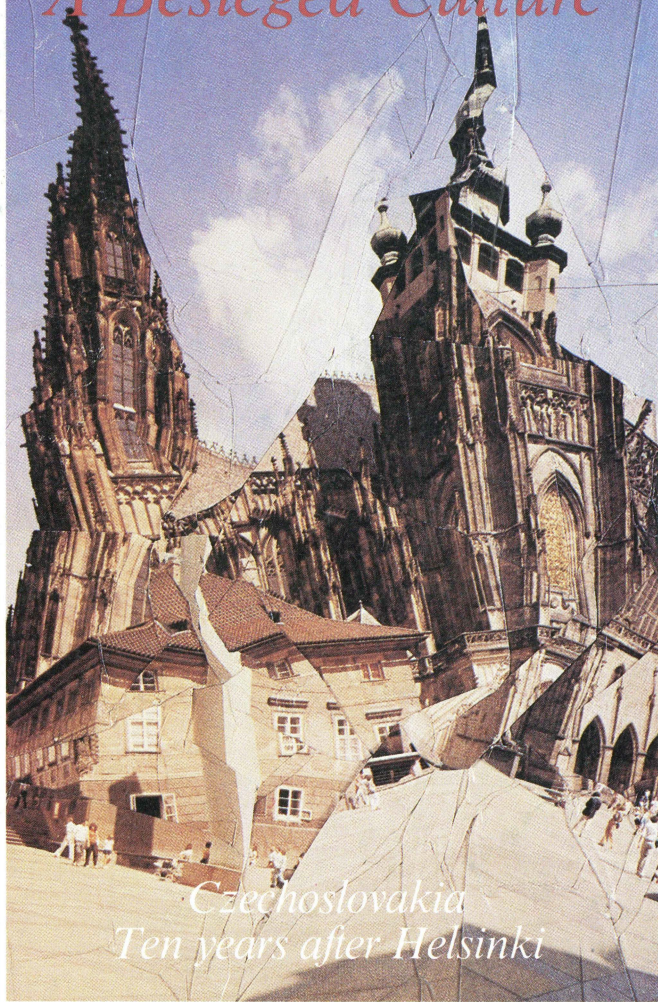


A Besieged Culture



*Czechoslovakia
Ten years after Helsinki*

A BESIEGED CULTURE

CZECHOSLOVAKIA
TEN YEARS AFTER HELSINKI

What shall I do? or: Why shall I do it? are questions that do not belong in this place.

Franz Kafka: Notebook in Octavo

Front page illustration: St. Vitus' Cathedral

A Besieged Culture

Czechoslovakia Ten Years after Helsinki

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CONTENT

Editorial Remarks	8
Jan Vladislav Introduction	9
I. THEY SAID ABOUT CZECHOSLOVAKIA	13
Louis Aragon The Biafra of Spirit	15
Heinrich Böll The Cultural Cemetery	15
Karel Kosik Letter to J-P. Sartre	16
Jean-Paul Sartre Letter to Karel Kosik	18
Jaroslav Seifert et al. Letter to Heinrich Böll	20
Heinrich Böll Letter to Jaroslav Seifert	23
Harry Järv "Normalization" in the Library System	25
Arthur Miller The Sin of Power	30
Jiri Kolar Kafka's Prague	31
Tom Stoppard Open Letter to President Husak	49
Philip Roth The Romance of Oppression	52
Ivan Klima Letter to Philip Roth	54
II. QUESTIONNAIRE	59
Editorial Note	60
Introductory Text and Questions	61
Vaclav Benda	62
Egon Bondy	70
Jiri Grusa	71
Vaclav Havel	72
Ladislav Hejdanek	75
Miloslava Holubova	78
Eva Kanturkova	80
Bozena Komarkova	87
Iva Kotrla	89
Marie Rut Krizkova	92
Miroslav Kusy	95
Frantisek Pavlicek	99

Lenka Prochazkova	100
Milan Simecka	102
Dominik Tatarka	106
Ludvik Vaculik	109
Josef Zverina	112
W.X	114
Y.Z.	119
III. REFLECTIONS	123
Jaroslav Seifert Being a Poet Means Taking a Stand	126
Milan Kundera I am Weighing my Words Carefully	128
Vaclav Havel Six Asides about Culture	129
Josef Skvorecky The Unfinished End of the Jazz Section of the Czech Musicians' Union	142
Jan Vladislav Poets and Power	149
Iva Kotrla Around the Abyss	157
Vlasta Chramostova A Censored Life	161
Pavel Kohout Life in a Graveyard	180
IV. CHRONICLE OF EVERYDAY REPRESSION	183
V. DOCUMENTS	263
Pavel Kohout Open Letter to the Minister of Culture	265
Ludvik Vaculik Impermissible Thoughts: A Letter to Kurt Waldheim	271
Vilem Precan A Few Words about Historians	275
Milan Simecka Letter to the General Prosecutor's Office	277
Miroslav Kusy Letter to the General Prosecutor's Office	279
Lists of Forbidden Writers	282
VI. BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES	285
PERSONAL INDEX	296

Editorial Note

This book is published on the occasion of the European Cultural Forum, which takes place in Budapest, October-November 1985. It attempts to present information, testimonies and reflections on the present cultural situation in Czechoslovakia, and to illuminate first of all those aspects of it, which will presumably be concealed by the official Czechoslovak delegation in Budapest.

With regard to the general frame of the Forum the book concentrates mainly on the events of the last ten years. This essentially determined the selection of those whose opinion was sought, and the choice of texts published. For obvious reasons, the presented picture is not complete. However, completeness cannot be achieved in one single publication, nor was it intended by the editors. In many cases they had to content themselves with partial illustrations.

Introduction

The book you're about to read is nothing like the countless propaganda brochures to be found at every conference, which attempt, in the name of "their" truth to conceal or dispel the real state of affairs. This book is not intended to persuade you of the validity of "its" truth; rather, it seeks – by means of a number of documents and personal testimonies, chronicling certain events – to draw your attention to a particular, indisputable *reality*. A reality to which we frequently remain blind and deaf, which we often refuse to take into account, comprehend, and act upon. Yet all this will not eliminate it, nor will it prevent from affecting the future of our world.

The reality this book wishes to draw attention to is the threat to one of the basic elements of our European identity. While it may be true that the problem of European identity may not be a top priority for those living in the western part of our continent, this is not to say that it does not exist or that it lacks urgency. That it does exist is, after all, demonstrated by the very agenda of this conference; as for its urgency, this has been the subject of studies by a large number of prominent historians, politicians, economists and, above all, philosophers, including the Czech Professor Jan Patočka, all of whom have written or are writing about the impending *end of Europe*.

One of the important acts in this historical play about the end of Europe has been taking place for several decades now in Czechoslovakia. Seen from outside, what has been happening in that country may not seem so terribly dramatic. To the uninitiated onlooker nothing out of the ordinary perhaps seems to be going on – after all, similar things are happening wherever a regime that governs without genuine national consensus strives to keep itself in power, come what may. This, however, is a false impression: what we have been witnessing for so many years now in Czechoslovakia is not merely a succession of ruthless, indeed frequently lawless, measures by means of which the illegitimate regime is defending its position or preventively safe-

guarding its existence. It is not just the systematic exclusion, silencing and sometimes literal destruction of inconvenient individuals or ideas. Nor simply just the usual story of the powerful and the powerless, as we know from other authoritative and totalitarian regimes (and as the Czechs and Slovaks learned to know to their cost in the 1950s). That which has been taking place in Czechoslovakia over the past few decades, and in the last 10 years in spite of the signing of the Helsinki Accords, is an undeclared and yet persistent and systematic total war against the very roots of Czech and Slovak spiritual life, against their true thoughts, feelings and aspirations, against everything that has, over the last thousand years, moulded the nation's identity and that finds its outward expression in its culture.

The regime which has been in power in Czechoslovakia for well-nigh forty years discovered in 1968 that a nation which manages to retain even part of its own identity – its own consciousness and conscience – cannot be brought under control totally or permanently. That the reason why, ever since that time, the regime has spared no effort to erase their true identity from the minds of the Czechs and Slovaks, and to replace it with another, artificial, foreign, *international identity*, of a kind that can be more easily manipulated and, if necessary, exchanged for another in the same way as street names are changed according to the immediate "historical" situation: in Prague, this has happened up to five times in the last half century. . .

That is what it is all about, why the Czechoslovak regime has devoted so much attention to culture for many years, so much effort to suppress its every nonconformist manifestation, even though it would have done better to concentrate its resources and energy on far more urgent problems in the economic, social and ecological fields. That also explains why, in their resistance, the Czechs and Slovaks put such seemingly exaggerated emphasis on culture, this being the only area in which they can express their views – whether directly or by allusion – on the

burning issues of the day, as they cannot in other spheres of life. Culture has thus become one of the last areas of at least a modicum of freedom, where the nation can defend its threatened identity. This does not by any means concern only a narrow section of the population represented by those members of the intelligentsia who are critical of the regime – it concerns *all* of society, as was shown recently by the spontaneous resistance put up by the nation when an attempt was made to impose a radical reform of Czech grammar.

Such spontaneous popular "referendums" are nothing new – one has but to take note of the lively, sometimes even feverish, interest in some books, films, theatre performances, exhibitions or concerts, and in particular the concerts of nonconformist pop music, which often turned into unscheduled demonstrations. The same applies to the remarkable revival of religious life in the country, as witnessed by the increasingly fuller churches, not to speak of the huge "open-air" meeting during the recent celebrations of the anniversary of the two Slav missionaries, Cyril and Method.

Further proof of this indisputable, though still little known reality can be found in the book you now have in your hands. The testimony it gives to every objective reader provides conclusive evidence of two things: on the one hand, how in Czechoslovakia (to quote the apt comment of Václav Havel) the regime in its death-like torpor" is trying to install "order devoid of life" and "the peace of the morgue or the cemetery"; and, on the other, how not only a large section of the intelligentsia but a significant part of society as a whole is persistently and effectively resisting these efforts, thus giving the lie to the image of a cultural cemetery.

This long-lasting struggle is naturally, first and foremost, a struggle for the nation's own culture, its own identity. But this culture and this identity are firmly rooted in the wider European context, which is why this struggle is at the same time a struggle for European culture and identity, whether the rest of Europe is aware of this or not.

One of those taking part in the questionnaire on the contemporary situation in Czechoslovak culture rightly pointed out that it is "flourishing in a constantly deteriorating environment" – a statement that can equally be applied to life and culture in all of Europe, in the whole world. "If the Earth is not preserved as a humanly habitable planet, then no world or European, and within these also no Czechoslovak culture can continue to exist." This warning can be turned the other way round: if any single culture, any single identity, is threatened, then in our present-day world this will sooner or later lead to the endangering of *all life everywhere*.

Jan Vladislav
August 1985

I. They Said about Czechoslovakia

Louis Aragon

The Biafra of Spirit

I refuse to believe that there is going to be a Biafra of the spirit there. And yet I can discern no daylight at the end of this path of violence.

Les Lettres françaises No 1252, 9 au 15 octobre 1968

Heinrich Böll

The Cultural Cemetery

Czechoslovakia today is a vertible cultural cemetery.

Heinrich Böll at a press conference in Stockholm on 8 December 1972 in connection with his Nobel Prize award for literature.

Dagens Nyheter, 9 December 1972

Karel Kosik

A Letter to Jean-Paul Sartre

I have been preoccupied with this question since 28 April when the police conducted a seven-hour search of my home and confiscated over 1,000 pages of my philosophical manuscript. The justification given for the search was the suspicion that my flat concealed written evidence of the crime of 'subversion'. Therefore I must assume that I face the threat of a one- to five-year prison sentence, as envisaged by Paragraph 98 of the Penal Code. I do not underestimate this threat by any means, but I am more concerned about the fate of my manuscript.

For the past six years I have been existing in a peculiar dichotomy: I am and at the same time I am not. I am dead and yet I live. I have been reduced to a mere nothing as far as basic civil and human rights are concerned, yet I am endowed with an exceptional existence in regard to the care and attention of the police. I am a mere nothing; therefore I cannot give lectures in philosophy at Charles University or be employed in any other job corresponding to my qualifications and field. I am dead; therefore I cannot attend the scientific assemblies to which I am invited, nor can I accept invitations to lecture at European universities. As one who mislead readers; therefore all my publications in Czechoslovakia are banned and withdrawn from public libraries, while my name has been erased from the authors' index. I am not; therefore official institutions are not obliged to answer my complaints and protests.

In other respects I am only too much alive, as the police raids which are becoming a regular feature of my life prove.

As a philosopher and author I have been buried alive in my own country; as a citizen I am deprived of my basic rights and live under the shadow of constant blame and suspicion. I am suspect, although I have committed no crime. Why am I treated with suspicion? Because I regard thinking as an inalienable human right and I exercise that right. Because I regard as

inalienable the right of every human being to hold his own opinion and to express and communicate it freely. Because I include among basic human rights the right to preserve one's integrity. (. . .)

The manuscript which was confiscated by the police is not intended for publication. It consists of rough notes and preliminary studies and outlines for two books I plan to write: 'On Praxis' and 'On Truth'. The manuscript contains ideas, either from other sources which are not of interest to the police, or my own, which are known to the police from books and essays I have published.

I should like to believe the state security officer who averred that the manuscript would be returned as soon as the police had finished examining it. But how long will it take the police to 'study' thousand pages of philosophy?

This brings me to another point. The police also confiscated manuscripts from my friends, writers Ivan Klíma and Ludvík Vaculík. This compels me to ask whether, on 28 April 1975, I did not witness a development which could have the most serious consequences for Czech culture.

Were the police testing the tenability and effectiveness of a new method, in comparison with which censorship, as imposed up to now, is a derisory trifle? Was April 1975 an attempt to foist on society a new custom and new normality – the regular confiscation of manuscripts? Could not this custom – in the land of Franz Kafka – become, in a short time, such a matter of course and indoctrinated need that authors themselves will phone the police to come and collect their completed works? I am no advocate of these innovations. (. . .)

Karel Kosík
Hradcanské náměstí 11
11800 Prague 1

Index on Censorship, Vol. 4, No 4, Winter 1975

Jean-Paul Sartre
A Letter to Karel Kosik

Paris, 22 June 1975

Dear friend,

The reason I have taken so long to reply is quite simple: Your open letter was not delivered to me. I only read a short excerpt in *Le Monde*, and it was not easy to obtain the letter. But now, at last, I have it.

Let me give you straight reply to your question: No, you're not guilty. Your letter alone should suffice as proof of your innocence, not only for me but for all friends of occupied and humiliated Czechoslovakia. If I am certain of anything, then it is that – as you say – to think for oneself is the inalienable right of every man. If I frequently, like everyone else, defended ideas shared by a collective of people, this was because they had penetrated to me, because I had compared them with my own opinions, weighed them and found them to be true. In brief, they became my own.

No government is qualified to judge the opinions of its citizens. It would no doubt judge them not from the standpoint of thought but from that of pseudo-thought. Genuine ideas I consider to be those which are born within man himself, or those which we have freely considered, found to be correct and as such taken over. Pseudo-ideas I consider the theses your government proclaims. They consist solely of words picked up from Soviet Russia and thrown over deeds only to conceal them, not to reveal their meaning. Such false ideas are not a force which can prevail without help from another, real, material and well-known force – the police.

So it is to this that the criminal political leaders wish to reduce Czechoslovak culture. Such infamy, or rather such imbecillity, cannot, however, be of long duration while there are people such as you, my dear friend, to unmask them. Police brutality can for a while violate free thought. It, however, re-

mains the only means by which people can understand their situation and ways of changing it. So that in the end they can either liquidate people or once and for all put away false ideas.

I can naturally only speak for myself. I have often enough, and long enough, discussed your dear, unfortunate country to be able to assure you that you have many friends who will exclaim with me: "If Karel Kosik is guilty, then so is everyone, and not just the intellectuals but every peasant and worker who thinks about what he does."

That simple idea will have to become the starting-point of anything we decide to do so that, in helping you, we should also help ourselves.

With feelings of sincere brotherhood,

Yours,

Jean-Paul Sartre

Listy (Rome), Vol. 5, No 5, July 1975.

Jaroslav Seifert et al.

A Letter to Heinrich Böll

On August 30th, a trial will begin in Prague that is curious and entirely unique in our country's modern history: fourteen young people will stand before the court, not for their political opinions, activity or ambitions, but for what could be called their relation to the world. These people, whose musical and verbal creativity makes them a sort of extraordinary Czech type of underground culture, have committed the "crime" of attempting with their compositions to sing out their revulsion for the established values of the world they live in, to its hypocritical morality, the uniformity of its life, to bureaucratic insensitivity and to the consumerist way of life. They have refused to take the different kinds of bait the current establishment has used to try to buy them off, and they have dared to be themselves in a world of widespread conformity and dissimulation, to express their life's feelings by their work. Naturally, all of this is not written in the indictment: that speaks only of alleged "mischief", which consisted of some of their texts containing so-called indecent words, which were supposed to have shocked someone. The absurdity of this formal indictment is in part indicated by the fact that we are referring to musical groups which did not perform in public – they had long since been denied the chance to do that – but rather at private (and legally permitted!) celebrations, to which only friends and fans were invited. For such ridiculous delicts, they are threatened with long and unconditional sentences of imprisonment. This threat is exacerbated by the fact that friends of the accused – three young labourers – were recently condemned in Plzen to strict unconditional sentences simply for assisting the Prague artists arrange a single performance. The very form and substance of the Plzen trial was a warning: for example, the public was barred from attending it, entirely without reason.

It is paradoxical that a year after the Helsinki Conference, and after several years of extensive consolidation of its power, the current Czechoslovak regime feels threatened by people singing songs in private, songs to which even the regime itself is unable to attribute any hostile political content. What can follow if this matter proceeds without interest and attention? Whom will they be able to prosecute then, and for what?

You have voiced your concern for the destiny of Czechoslovak culture many times, and many times your voice has been raised in support of all who are persecuted in Czechoslovakia for their opinions, attitudes and their work. That is why we are turning to you in this matter as well, and asking you in all urgency to give your attention also to this case; we ask that you use the weight of your artistic and human authority to appeal to the Czechoslovak authorities to cancel the planned trial, and that you possibly inspire an interest in this case on the part of other cultural figures, who care about the fate of freedom of the spirit on the European continent. We are also turning to you, of course, because our own voices have remained unheard: we have had no response, either to the private appeals made to the President of the Republic, or to declarations that some of us have sent first to the Czechoslovak media and later have even published abroad.

You know very well that freedom is indivisible, and no matter where it becomes the object of persecution, it is in danger everywhere. For that reason, there is a profound justification for solidarity extending beyond the borders not only of creative disciplines but also the borders of states and social systems.

Ivan Jirous, Svatopluk Karasek, Karel Soukup, Vratislav Brabenec, and the other young people who are due to be tried in Prague, are not publicly-known figures, and for that reason are far easier to persecute. It seems to us all the more important for the cultural public of Europe to stand up in their defense. We ourselves feel this with a particular intensity, because we cannot shake the feeling that these people are being persecuted so venomously, in a way, for us as well – that is, just because

they are less able than we to look for support to colleagues abroad. Even though we are active in other fields of culture, we refuse to accept the status of some sort of prominent "protected species", and to reconcile ourselves in silence with the fact that others, less "protected", can be tried as criminals without any notice from the world of culture.

We entreat you to stand up for these young people who are facing trial in essence for purposefully trying to retain their personal and creative integrity – and with them, in fact, for our entire younger generation, which is to be subjected to new pressure by means of the imminent trial.

With friendly greetings,
Jaroslav Seifert, poet, National Artist
Prof. Dr. Vaclav Cerny, DrHC, literary historian
Prof. Dr. Jan Patočka, DrSc, DrHC, philosopher
Prof. Dr. Karel Kosik, DrSc, philosopher
Vaclav Havel, writer
Ivan Klima, writer
Pavel Kohout, writer

Prague, 16 August, 1976

Listy (Rome), Vol. 6, No 6, December 1976.

Heinrich Böll

A Letter to Jaroslav Seifert

Dear Jaroslav Seifert,

when your letter reached me, I was just reading, for the second time, Reiner Kunze's book *Die wunderbaren Jahre*, and I was getting more and more goosebumps; and what I learned from you and your friends seemed to me to be an illustration to Kunze's book, which deals with "the wonderful years of the maturing, but not quite mature". Your letter tells of a hopeless condition, more absurd that could be invented, and yet it made me feel a bit of consolation: I have never heard of a group of poets, philosophers, professors in any other socialist country turning to the public outside their land (being unable to turn to their own public, as they have no access to the media), in the matter of a group of unknown youngsters, whose ponderous crime consists of singing songs and performing music.

I was most impressed by your unwillingness to accept, as you say, the status of a "protected species", that you reject the halo of prominence that clouds problems all over the world. It is an international problem, as are efforts to frighten young people, to bend them, to deprive them of a chance to speak out, to force them into participation in (generally) reactionary images of a conflict-free society, prescribed ways of thinking, prescribed music and reading, and prescribed behaviours.

I cannot tell whether the postponement of the trial was caused by the conclusion that "we could hardly make ourselves more ridiculous than by this trial". For those affected, there is nothing funny about it, even though the trial was postponed, because they still are at risk.

If I am thanking you and your friends who co-signed the letter with a special sincerity, it is because the letter includes, in addition to information about the trial, your definition of "protected species", which you and your friends refuse to be, and brings an entirely new dimension to the cultural scene. It goes

without saying that we here have every reason to dissect our protective halos with requisite mistrust, and it also goes without saying that we welcome the expression of solidarity that you stress so firmly.

Thank for your letter, which my friends here take as having been addressed to them as well, and when I send my sincere greetings to you and all your co-signers, I am also conveying the regards of all your many friends here.

Very sincerely, and with greetings to the young musicians as well, I am

Yours,
Heinrich Böll

Listy (Rome), Vol. 6, No 6, December 1976.

Harry Järv
"Normalization" in the Library
System

Poets try to give men a different vision, in order to change reality. For that reason they are politically dangerous elements, because they want to make a change. For the state, and all its devoted servants, want only one thing, to persist.

Franz Kafka

The interventions in the running of the libraries are typical of the way in which normalization is carried out. On May 31, 1972, the then Minister of Culture, Miloslav Bruzek, issued two decrees – "for official use only" – with directives aimed at "making the libraries more efficient and more important instruments for fulfilling the cultural policies of the government" and "ensuring that the libraries carry out their pedagogical functions in both the political and the cultural field". The substance of the directives is that subversive and ideologically harmful publications shall be collected separately in locked rooms. Various categories of books are given as examples, such as those that "attack Marxism-Leninism", that "cast aspersions on the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic or any other socialist country or any representative of such a country", Trotskyite, fascist and revanchist publications, works that "defend the Czechoslovak Republic that existed before the Munich Agreement (1938)", that advocate various bourgeois political and philosophical ideas, publications by people "with right-wing opinions who theoretically defend social democracy", publications

”by T.G. Masaryk, E. Benes (as well as all books about them) or other bourgeois politicians”. Publications by writers living in exile or writers who had ”right-wing sympathies” in 1968 and 1969 are to be considered ideologically harmful, ”even if the works themselves are irreproachable”.

The aim is obviously the same as that of the Catholic Church in its notorious list of forbidden books, *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, which was issued in many editions between 1559 and 1966 and which includes a great amount of good literature and an even greater amount that is uninteresting (and harmless). Aiming to protect the orthodox faith, which might not prove strong enough to stand up to free intellectual criticism, the *Index* was a phenomenon that must be condemned on principle – if anything should be forbidden with regard to literature it should be censorship. That the *Index* had also become a practical failure was eventually realized by the Catholic authorities and publication was quietly discontinued.

Censorship lists have been compiled several times in Czechoslovakia. The most extensive is from April 1973. It contains the names of more than 300 writers and a number of works of anonymous and collective authorship. 143 are writers whose whole production is banned, the rest have had specified books banned. Most of the names on the list are Czech, but there are also some foreign writers. It is something of a shock to find Lenin among the banned writers. The culprit is, of course, not Lenin, it is the Czech editor Zdenek Eis who is to blame. Jan Kozák, whose book *The Party in the Struggle for the Strengthening of People's Democracy* is included in the list, is president of the new Czech writers' association which was constituted in 1972 (the previous one had been dissolved because of the members' attitude during the Prague Spring) and in other respects a loyal supporter of the government. He is the man who diagnosed Kafkaism as ”a contagious disease infecting the blood of socialist countries”, as ”a knife severing the veins of progressive traditions”. A book by Václav Kopecký has been given special treatment because of some spiteful comments on

Husák. However, most of the black-listed names are those of writers, politicians, lawyers and scientists of various categories who actually hold divergent views. It is hardly surprising to find the names of Russian dissidents like Zamyatin, Solzhenitsyn and Kuznetsov. Vladimír Kaslík is there because of a book on Bakunin, Wagenbach because of his Kafka biography (the Czech Bohumil Nуска is also included for a book on Kafka). At the Kafka Conference in May 1963 Ernst Fischer and Roger Garaudy pleaded for Kafka and a humanitarian socialism; they were therefore subsequently excluded from the Communist Parties in their respective countries and finally banned in Czechoslovakia, the country they had done all they could to help. At the Liblice Conference Kafka became a portent of the Prague Spring; it has even been said that he was to blame for it. This is, of course, an exaggeration, but still it is not completely stupid to count Kafka among the dangerous writers. In fact, it is natural that he is included in the censorship lists, just as it is in the nature of things that writers played such a leading role before and during the Prague Spring and that they will do so also in the future. Kafka was himself aware of literature's explosive force in politics:

"Poets try to give men a different vision, in order to change reality. For that reason they are politically dangerous elements, because they want to make a change. For the state, and all its devoted servants, want only one thing, to persist".

The more stagnant and petrified a state has become, the more apt will this characterization be.

Alexander Kluge's offence was writing the novel *The End of the Sixth Army*, which is about the destruction of the sixth German army at Stalingrad. The Pole Kozakiewicz is represented by a book on juvenile psychology, John F. Kennedy by *Profiles in Courage*, Stefan Andres by a history of the Bible, Aragon by *The Killing*, etc. A previous list (from October 1971) included Ernest Hemingway, Jean-Paul Sartre and F. Scott Fitzgerald, but they are not on this one. The same applies to several Czech names.

Apart from the fact that the list as a whole is an absurd phenomenon, the inclusion of some of the titles there is incomprehensible even from the most narrow and dogmatic point of view, for instance Sainte-Beuve's essays and Raymond V. Schoder's *The Masterpieces of Greek Art*; the explanation is that their Czech editors (Václav Cerný and Jirí Frel respectively) are tainted. Zeal for orthodoxy has often crossed the borderline into the absurd.

From 1969 to 1973 cultural life in Czechoslovakia was completely paralyzed. After the collapse of the Prague Spring there was a feeling of total hopelessness. The mood of these years was expressed concisely in a farewell letter written 18/9 1970 by the writer Stanislav Neumann – grandson of the well-known writer Stanislav Kostka Neumann, one of the founders of the Communist Party in Czechoslovakia – before he committed suicide:

”I have decided to take my own life, because I see more and more clearly that the ideals which made me support the Party – and for which my closest friends were executed on May 2, 1945 – are not being realized but, on the contrary, are being trampled underfoot by the political methods of today. I could no doubt fight against these methods, but I have no longer the necessary strength and courage. I neither can nor wish to oppose the Party. That is why I have chosen this way out. It is true that Mayakovsky called it the way of the intellectualist, but in the end it was the only way for him too.”

According to one of the decrees of May 31, 1972 (Ministry of Culture No 9695/72, § 4, item 2), the dangerous books may be read by members of the Central Committee and Government without special permission; the books must however be fetched by the borrowers in person. Scientists, politically active people and experts may borrow them after receiving special permission from the Ministry of Culture. I suggest that the representatives of this latter category apply for such permission and read, for instance, some of the works of Tomáš G. Masaryk, protagonist in the creation of independent Czechoslovakia, while remembe-

ring the words of Stanislav Neumann quoted above and their profound significance.

From a longer article, "The co-ordinate system Czechoslovakia: three documents of the age", Radix No 2, 1978.

Harry Järv PhD is the Deputy National Librarian Stockholm

Arthur Miller
The Sin of Power

What the Russians have done in Czechoslovakia is, in effect, to prove in a Western cultural environment that what they have called Socialism simply cannot tolerate even the most nominal independent scrutiny, let alone an opposition. The critical intelligence itself is not to be borne and in the birthplace of Kafka and of the absurd in its subtlest expression absurdity emanates from the Russian occupation like some sort of gas which makes one both laugh and cry. (. . .)

The sin of Power is to not only distort reality but to convince people that the false is true, and that what is happening is only an invention of enemies. Obviously, the Soviets and their friends in Czechoslovakia are by no means the only ones guilty of this sin, but in other places, especially in the West, it is possible yet for witnesses to reality to come forth and testify to the truth. In Czechoslovakia the whole field is pre-empted by the Power itself. (. . .)

I know what it is to be denied the right to travel outside my country, having been denied my passport for some five years by our Department of State. And I know a little about the inviting temptation to simply get out at any cost, to quit my country in disgust and disillusion, as no small number of people did in the McCarthy fifties and as a long line of Czechs and Slovaks have in these recent years. I also know the empty feeling in the belly at the prospect of trying to learn another nation's secret language, its gestures and body communications without which a writer is only half-seeing and half-hearing. More important, I know the conflict between recognizing the indifference of the people and finally conceding that the salt has indeed lost its savour and that the only sensible attitude toward any people is cynicism.

So that those who have chosen to remain as writers on their

Continued on page 45

Jiri Kolar

Kafka's Prague

”How will this end?” we ask ourselves. ”How long can we bear
this burden, this nightmare?”
Franz Kafka: An Old Page

Loreto Church



I had not yet turned quite around when I already began to fall, I fell and in a moment I was torn and traspierced by the sharp rocks which had always gazed up at me so peacefully from the rushing water.

Franz Kafka: The Bridge

The Old Town Bridge Tower



Most important or most exciting was my desire to arrive at a conception of the meaning of life (and – this was essential – to be able to write it out so as to convince others), where life retained its natural heavy falling and rising, but at the same time it would no less clearly be perceived as a nothingness, as a dream, as a hovering.

Franz Kafka: He. Notes from the year 1920.

The Old Town Hall



One would rather expect the next generation, having more perfect knowledge, to condemn the achievements of the previous generation and to pull down what it had built in order to start anew.

Franz Kafka: City Arms.

St. Nicholas Church



This up and down and some fleeting, random and coincidental observations made on the way made up his life.

Franz Kafka: He. Notes from the year 1920.

St. George's Basilica



At such times it is as if I were not so much looking at my house as at myself sleeping, and had the joy of being in a profound slumber and simultaneously of keeping vigilant guard over myself.

Franz Kafka: The Burrow

The House at the Golden Well



native soil despite remorseless pressure to emigrate are, perhaps no less than their oppressors, rather strange and anachronistic figures in this time. After all, it is by no means a heroic epoch now; we in the West as well as in the East understand perfectly well, that the political and military spheres – where 'heroics' were called for in the past, are now merely expressions of the unmerciful industrial-technological base. As for the very notion of patriotism, it falters before the perfectly obvious interdependence of the nations, as well as the universal prospect of mass obliteration by the atom bomb, the instrument which has doomed us, so to speak, to this lengthy peace between the great powers. That a group of intellectuals should persist in creating a national literature on their own ground is out of tune with our adaptational proficiency which has flowed from these developments. It is hard anymore to remember whether one is living in Rome or New York, London or Strasbourg, so homogenised has Western life become. The persistence of these people may be an inspiration to some but a nuisance to others, and not only inside the oppressing apparatus but in the West as well. For these so-called dissidents are apparently upholding values at a time when the first order of business would seem to be the accretion of capital for technological investment.

* * *

'If American and Soviet astronauts can transfer from one spaceship to another applause comes hard when, as Ludvík Vaculík has recently written, he and other Czech writers cannot transfer a thought from the right to the left sides of their brains without fear of retribution. (. . .)

The Helsinki Accords bind both sides to respect elementary human rights. Why are we so powerless to speak to this issue? Is it that we fear the other side will start making noises about the race situation in Boston? The tortures in our cliënt-

state, Chile? The re-arrest under fake charges of the South Korean poet, Kim Chi-ha?

The answer is, not to sweep our own sins under the same rug as the Soviets' – but to rise to the challenge that détente implicitly raises; to open our own actions to the same measure and standard that we and Soviets have signed and agreed to (. . .)

This is not a question of coming out with high class speeches supporting academic or intellectual freedom. We are supporting repression. We can stop doing it. And in the process we can turn to our new trading partners and say: 'We meant what we signed to in the Helsinki Accords; we are actively working to eradicate injustice and unfreedom within our country and in those countries dependent on us – what are you doing to carry out the obligations in regard to human rights that you signed to? (. . .)

No appeal

The situation of the Czech writers and intellectuals is not unique in a world where repression, jailing, and the outright murder of writers by their governments is ordinary news. But there is one respect in which they are special; they have nowhere to appeal for relief. As citizens of a Socialist country, it is futile to look to other Socialist states for support, and their case is ambiguous in the eyes of the European Left whose anti-capitalist stance mutes its indignation against repression in the East.

The prospect, therefore, is that they will continue to be sacrificed on the altar of peace. (. . .)

International PEN exists to defend the freedom of writers. One of its oldest centres was in Prague, and it still has thriving centres in all the other Eastern European countries. The Prague centre no longer answers mail, it has been driven to silence.

I have walked in Prague with a certain playwright whose works are played all over Europe and in the United States; he once had his own theatre and acting company. He still writes plays and can send them out of the country for production and publication, but like his colleagues he cannot be played in his

own country or in his own language. Moreover, the Czech newspapers reported that he had emigrated, flown to the West, no longer exists in Czechoslovakia. He lives and works quite openly in Prague, but is a non-person to his compatriots. He is allowed to write for export and his royalties are taxed at ninety percent, a literary milk cow, condemned but exploited.

The wives of these writers are not permitted to hold jobs above the most menial. Their children are forbidden entrance in all but the lowest grades of school. Women holding doctorate degrees are washing store windows because their husbands are on the black list. Czechoslovakia lives under a permanent state of McCarthyism from which there is no appeal. (. . .)

I am not telling you that the Czech writers look to us for help. It is far worse than that. I believe they have long since assumed that we have decided to collaborate with the Soviet Union as a trading partner and that it is unrealistic for them to expect us to rock the boat. And this is why their situation is so meaningful; it has all the earmarks of the long future in which small nations especially must settle for a modicum of prosperity in exchange for which their souls will be excised, quietly, remorselessly, all for a good cause, the cause of peace between the giants.

Nothing to hide

I do not believe we have to cut out our tongues in order to reassure any other country of our peaceful intentions, or that we must adopt the impotence of moral eunuchs so that the volume of trade may grow. The Helsinki accords explicitly acknowledge that our relations with the Soviet Union encompass far more than trade, far more than cultural exchanges, and that fundamental protections of human freedom on both sides are of the essence. (. . .)

* * *

In the case of Czechoslovak literature in our day, there is a great richness and variety in the attempts of her writers to discover the order of disorder. It is remarkable, I think, that even in translation one detects what might be called a Czech flavour, a particular colour of life which is quite special. There is, perhaps above all, a particular kind of despair; it is not the despair one might feel at being hanged but of being hanged by a man who does not speak one's language. (. . .)

I salute these artists who under terrible circumstances have persisted in imagining themselves into the tradition; in a very real sense they have struggled for their humanity and ours.

Excerpts from Arthur Miller's articles:

- a) *The Sin of Power, Index on Censorship, May-June 1978*
- b) *After Helsinki, Index on Censorship, February 1976*
- c) *A kind of Dispair, Index on Censorship, March 1981*

Tom Stoppard

An Open Letter to President Husák

Dear President Husák,

I'm having a little trouble getting a visa to visit the CSSR and I wonder if you can help. It would be best of all if you helped me to get the visa, but it would be helpful if, failing that, you could tell me why I cannot have one. (. . .)

I presented myself at the Czechoslovak consulate in London and filled in the appropriate form and was impressed by (. . .) the politeness of the gentleman who came to the counter to say, "I am sorry, Mr Stoppard, but it is not desirable that you should receive a visa."

Disarmed by this politeness I didn't like to embarrass him by asking him for any reason. (. . .) It did not seem to be the moment to start a philosophical discussion about human rights. (. . .)

Instead, I retired from the field. Earlier this year I decided to have another go. My application for a visa was again refused without comment.

I should say that I think it is reasonable for any country to close its door against any person whom it would prefer to remain outside. I feel the same way about my house. (. . .)

I don't think that my behaviour in your house was particularly antisocial. Indeed, set against the virulence of the critics of government we shelter under our own roof, I would have thought that my conduct was genteel: a number of earnest discussions over cups of coffee, followed by an article of a few thousand words written in a tone which would have been far too mild to appeal to many of the newspapers and magazines which find themselves in weekly disagreement with the government over here. Be that as it may, I'm pretty sure I have no

'human right' to enter your country if you don't want me to. So this letter is not to register a complaint, merely a disappointment. You have made your point: a visitor whose only anti-social intentions are to give token and pathetic moral support by drinking coffee and conversing with a handful of Chartists is not welcome.

Ought I to have left matters there? I had a sense of frustration. The occupational prejudice of playwright is that things only move forward through dialogue. I also retain my faith, which may be an occupational naivety, in progress through reason and reasonable discussion. So on July 21, 1981, I committed the naive act of writing to Dr NĚmec, Minister of Justice for the Czechoslovak Republic, asking for an interview. (. . .)

I suggested to Dr. NĚmec that I would come to Prague, if necessary merely for one day, just to use up an hour of his time. I'll make no secret of the fact that at the back of my mind was the thought that in October my friend Václav Havel would be reaching the halfway point of his jail sentence and by Czech law, as I understand it, he would be eligible for parole. Frankly, Havel's prison sentence has been a great nuisance to me. Every week or so I have to ask myself what I can do to help him instead of being able to get on with my life and my work, so it would be a great relief if, after the failure of letters and telegrams, a personal word from the Minister himself settled the matter one way or another.

After five weeks without a response, I sent a telegram asking whether my letter had arrived. That was on 27 August. Seven weeks have passed. I rather think that I have now shot my bolt as regards achieving a return visit to Czechoslovakia.

And yet I am still troubled by a sense of incompleteness. Nothing that can be written or spoken is as ambiguous as silence, and I am troubled by this silence. I return to my work and to my life but at the back of my mind I ask myself whether this silence indicates a contemptuous indifference, a shiftiness, a tiny unease or a bureaucratic prudence. (. . .)

I would still like to return to Prague, and this desire has be-

come an end in itself, independent of any reason for going. Whether I go purely as a tourist for another look at the castle, whether I go to shake the hands of a few people who have fallen from grace and to reaffirm, uselessly, that they have not been entirely forgotten and ignored, or whether I go to have my bourgeois, moral scruples corrected by someone in authority, the idea of going back, and the sense of frustration, remain with me. I have had no luck with official channels. Perhaps I'll have more luck with a sideways attempt: herewith, therefore, my final application for a visa to visit the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic.

Tom Stoppard
October 1981

Index on Censorship, Vol. 10, No 6, November-December 1981.

Philip Roth

The Romance of Oppression

(. . .) When I was first in Czechoslovakia, it occurred to me that I work in a society where, for writers, everything goes and nothing matters, while for the Czech writers I met in Prague, nothing goes and everything matters. This isn't to say I wished to change places. I didn't envy them their persecution and the way in which it heightens their social importance. I didn't even envy them their seemingly more valuable and serious themes. The trivialization, in the West, of much that's deadly serious in the East is itself a subject, one requiring considerable imaginative ingenuity to transform into compelling fiction. To write a serious book that doesn't signal its seriousness with the rhetorical cues or thematic gravity that are traditionally associated with seriousness is a worthy undertaking too.

To do justice to a spiritual predicament that is not blantly shocking and monstrously horrible, that does not elicit universal compassion or occur on a large historical stage or on the grandest scale of twentieth-century suffering – well, that's the lot that has fallen to those who write where everything goes and nothing matters.

I recently heard the critic George Steiner, on English television, denouncing contemporary Western literature as utterly worthless and without quality, and claiming that the great documents of the human soul, the masterpieces, can arise only from souls being crushed by regimes like that in Czechoslovakia. I wonder then why all the writers I know in Czechoslovakia loathe the regime and passionately wish that it would disappear from the face of the earth. Don't they understand, as Steiner does, that this is their chance to be great? Sometimes one or two writers with colossal brute strength do manage, miraculously, to survive and, taking the system as their subject, to make art of a very high order out of their persecution. But most of those who remain sealed up inside totalitarian states are, as writers,

destroyed by the system. That system doesn't make masterpieces; it makes coronaries, ulcers, and asthma, it makes alcoholics, it makes depressives, it makes bitterness and desperation and insanity. The writers are intellectually disfigured, spiritually demoralized, physically sickened, and culturally bored. Frequently they are silenced completely. Nine tenths of the best of them will never do their best work just because of the system. The writers nourished by this system are the party hacks.

When such a system prevails for two or three generations, relentlessly grinding away at a community of writers for twenty, thirty, or forty years, the obsessions become fixed, the language grows stale, the readership slowly dies out from starvation, and the existence of a national literature of originality, variety, vibrancy (which is very different from the brute survival of a single powerful voice) is nearly impossible. A literature that has the misfortune of remaining isolated underground for too long will inevitably become provincial, backward, even naive, despite the fund of dark experience that may inspire it. By contrast, our work here hasn't been deprived of authenticity because as writers we haven't *been stomped on by a totalitarian government*. I don't know of any Western writer, aside from George Steiner, who is so grandiosely and sentimentally deluded about human suffering – and "masterpieces" – that he's come back from behind the Iron Curtain thinking himself devalued because he hasn't had to contend with such a wretched intellectual and literary environment. If the choice is between Louis L'Amour and our literary freedom and our extensive, lively national literature on the one hand, and Solzhenitsyn and that cultural desert and crushing suppression on the other, I'll take L'Amour.

From an interview with Philip Roth, conducted by Hermione Lee, in the Fall 1984 issue of the Paris Review.

Ivan Klima

A Letter to Philip Roth

Dear Philip,

Your interview is on a topic I frequently think about, it concerns me personally as well as my friends. After all, we live in a country where "nothing goes and everything matters", where our intellect is in danger of being disfigured, our spirit demoralized, and our bodies sickened . . .

You have been to Prague, where you and I on several occasions discussed the fate of Czech writers. You were interested in what was happening to them and wanted to help. Nevertheless, it does seem to me that some of your categorical statements on the dark prospects of literature in unfreedom are based on insufficient, or rather one-sided information.

The dilemma of freedom and its opposits, of the possibility and impossibility of creative work, as you outline it, is as obvious and indisputable as the dilemma between sound health and sickness, between a trip to Rhode Island and a sojourn in a death cell – no one can be in any doubt as to which he would choose. Yet, it can't be denied that the majority of writers and indeed artists of all kinds in Czechoslovakia or Poland, Hungary or Yugoslavia can choose whether they wish to go on living in their own country (in unfreedom) or abroad (in freedom). If they choose the first, despite the fact that they are often persecuted, banned or even imprisoned, does that not suggest that the dilemma is not quite so clearcut as you see it, that the problem actually lies elsewhere? I cannot in all conscience also accept your assertion that the literature which originates in these countries and does not enjoy official favour – which as often as not may not even be published – is (with the exception of a very few truly exceptional cases) doomed to remain provincial, backward and naive. I do not wish to set myself up as a judge in this

respect (I do know what dangers threaten literature in countries that do not have freedom – but who lives without some danger or other?), but I am convinced that Slavonic scholars acquainted with the work that has been done over the last 40 years in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and even in Soviet Russia would bear me out that among them you will find remarkable, average and bad writing, just as you would anywhere else in the world. The fact that even the best of them are sometimes little known or indeed quite unknown in the West is due to their being written in a minority language rather than to their provincial character.

I'm sure you will agree with me that one of the finest literatures of the nineteenth century came from the most unfree empire of its time – Russia . . . By this I don't mean to say that you need unfreedom to create a great literature. After all, it was in this same period that we saw the flowering of Anglo-American literature. And on the contrary: at the present time we are fascinated of the literature of Latin America, which can hardly be considered a continent of great freedom. Perhaps these few examples will suffice to allow me to come to the following conclusion: there is no direct linkage between political system and great literature. It seems to me simply impossible to find such a linkage between political conditions and the work of Joyce, Beckett, Vargas Llosa, Havel and Solzhenitsyn.

It is one of the failings of our time that it endeavours to minimise and simplify all the problems of our contemporary world to the common denominator of political conditions, transfer them to the sphere of ideological terminology, dividing the world up into good and evil, free and unfree, a world in which you can live with hope and a world in which (at least theoretically) it is not possible to live at all. And yet, in actual fact the vast majority of the world's population lives in this kind of world. If literature has any mission at all, surely it must lie in its constant confirmation of life as it really is, as opposed to a simplified version of life and the world we live in. And if there is anything that proves that life cannot be this simplified, then

it is the very fact the good literature and good art does get created in places where, according to a simplified outlook, you would expect to find nothing but "ulcers, asthma, depression and insanity".

I would hate to put myself in the position of one who is defending his own oppression. I know that in a country where a writer gets his head chopped off for writing an unsuitable text, you cannot have good literature. Fortunately, there are few such places in the world today. What we do have are countries in which freedom is, or seems to be, unlimited, and countries in which various limitations are placed on our freedom. The latter – and how depressing it is to realize this – are in a majority. That is to say, most people on this earth live in a world of considerably circumscribed freedoms. The question you dealt with in your interview thus goes like this as far as I am concerned: given this situation, where should writers live, and what possibilities are there for those who are willing (or forced) to share the fate of the "majority"?

According to the simplified view, writers living in countries where people enjoy limited freedom ought to be fascinated with their condition as persecuted, or at the very least circumscribed, beings and, as a result write in a "deadly serious" way about things which have by now become "trivial" in the West . . .

There are some voices claiming that this gives the writer a unique opportunity to produce great and vibrant literature, while others prophesy that this literature cannot but end up in insularity and provincialism. The misunderstanding has its roots in a false premise. Dostoyevski and Chekhov did not become great because they described the oppression and infamy of the Tsarist regime. Their greatness, their genius, is to be found in the way they wrote about the fundamental problems of human existence – that is, the same problems they would have written about had they lived in freedom in France or the USA. If the conditions they were living in influenced them at all, then perhaps they did so by not "pampering" them, by forcing them to stay close to the people they wrote

about and providing them with countless interesting subjects for their stories. (But even to say this is to simplify.) In the same way the work that is being done in our part of the world today that has any literary merit and offers new ideas cannot be expressed in terms of political terminology, just as your books cannot be interpreted in such a fashion.

Let me give you just one example. The greatest living Czech prose writer (although not too well known in the West because he is difficult to translate and impossible to interpret in political terms) is, in my view, Bohumil Hrabal. Timid and shy, he is perhaps the exact opposite of Solzhenitsyn. He was persecuted for many a long year. A lawyer by training (like Kafka), he spent many years working in a steel works and as a labourer in a scrapyards. He thus lived for a long time in a world unknown to most of us writers. This author, who according to the theory should have fallen ill, gone stale or at the very least become an isolated warrior has managed to create quite an exceptional *oeuvre*, not only in terms of Czech but also of modern world literature. It is the work of an extraordinary imagination, full of humour, poetry and paradox, absurdity, as well as a fascinating insight into individual human beings and life in general. I have no doubt that if Hrabal wrote in English, French or Spanish, his books would long ago have received the most prestigious literary prize. As it is, on the day a new book of his is due to be published (he is allowed to publish again after years on the black list), there is an absurd queue in front of all the bookshops, a queue that starts forming at midnight. Now, how would you classify *his* work? Among the provincial authors? Or the hacks nourished by the system? Or again among the "one or two (who) with colossal brute strength manage . . . to make art of a very high order out of their persecution"? And where would you put the *oeuvre* of Seifert, Havel, Cosic, where Konwicki, Déry, Rożewicz, Rasputin, and dozens of others?

There can be no argument but that the conditions of unfreedom have silenced, broken or destroyed a large number of ta-

lented writers, but to say that because of this no genuinely great work of art (but for one or two exceptions) can come out of this entire huge part of the world seems to me no more justified than to say that it cannot be created in conditions of freedom because writers who are free lack suffering and thus have no great topics to write about, that they are demoralised by their comfortable life and corrupted by their fame and earnings.

Surely every genuine work of art is the result of creative activity. Only a free human being can create genuine art, but perhaps you will agree that one can be free even while living in conditions of unfreedom. The creative act is only partly dependent on outside circumstances (which do have a decisive effect on the fate of the finished work, but that is not the subject of our discussion), even though we may often use them as an excuse and even though we would all wish them to be as ideal as possible.

The author is probably the best judge as to where and under what circumstances he can best do work that will seem meaningful to him. That which destroys one man can provide another with the incentive for further effort. And it does not seem right to me to condemn his endeavour as hopeless and his work as foredoomed just because the conditions he has to work under do not appear to be conducive to art.

With friendly greetings
Ivan Klima

From a manuscript circulating in Czechoslovakia, May 1985

II. Questionnaire

In spring 1985, the following text and questions were sent to a number of writers, artists, journalists, and scholars living in Czechoslovakia. The editors would like to express their thanks to all who answered them. They apologize that due to the limited volume of this book, it was impossible to publish all the received contributions, and that it was necessary to shorten some of them.

The questionnaire was also sent to three writers, who were recently deprived of Czechoslovak citizenship during their legal stay abroad. Only Jiri Grusa submitted his answer. Pavel Kohout and Milan Kundera are represented in this book by other texts.

Introductory text and Questions

For over one and a half decades a particularly oppressive, indeed a crisis situation has reigned over the cultural scene in Czechoslovakia; in its duration and unchanging character it has no parallel in the country's modern history. Hundreds of artists, writers, film, stage and television actors and directors, hundreds of journalists, historians, philosophers and scholars in other disciplines have been dismissed from the institutions that had been created by the world of culture, art and science to provide links between the creators of spiritual values and the public. Their books are not printed and are not available in public libraries, their works are not performed in theatres, on the radio or television, as actors and directors they have no engagements, they are not allowed to exhibit their works in public, they find no employment in their own fields.

Many of them can barely scrape a living, some have been imprisoned or otherwise persecuted, often their families as well, many have emigrated and the same ban has been placed on their works as on those of their colleagues who remained. Registration, injunctions and prohibitions, all kinds of manipulation by the state have made freedom of intellectual life impossible, preventing communication between the creative people and the rest of the population and blocking the development of creative powers among new generations.

First question: How does the situation briefly described here affect you personally, from the standpoint of someone (artist, etc.) whose work achieves fulfilment only at the moment when it comes into contact with the public?

Second question: How does this situation affect you as a member of the national cultural community? How do you come to terms with it?

Third question: What practical steps on the part of the state power and its official institutions could provide the beginning of a way out from the existing oppressive and critical situation? Is

it within your powers to influence the cultural policy of the state, or to contribute in other ways to overcoming the present situation?

Fourth question: A feature of the intellectual situation in Czechoslovakia is the endeavour by the state institutions to prevent the free flow of intellectual impulses, ideas and information from the rest of the world. What do you miss most of all in this artificially-created isolation? Do you expect any concrete steps by the European Cultural Forum towards overcoming this isolation?

Fifth question: What positive steps by foreign cultural institutions and personalities could, in your view, contribute to overcoming the stagnation in Czechoslovak culture?

Vaclav Benda

Let me first of all add two points to your introductory note. The "exceptionally difficult time of crisis" you mention has not afflicted Czechoslovak culture merely in the past 15 years but for no less than 46. The two brief periods when conditions were relatively good are unfortunately only exceptional episodes in a long story of unremitting cultural genocide. For an entire productive life-span scientific and artistic truth has now been stifled and distorted in Czechoslovakia, artists and scientists imprisoned, executed, exiled, or at the very least forced to do menial labour instead of working in their professions, while the heritage of the past has been filtered through the mesh of rapidly changing ideologies. The only lasting value, and at the same time the most effective argument, has been fear. Let me quote a case in point, much more controversial and less outrageous than many others, but for that very reason perhaps applicable elsewhere and not just in our part of Europe: while working on a certain anti-fascist study (I refrain from giving any details about it, since our political police considers the retyping of a

text of Lenin's by one of us to be no less incriminating than the retyping of something by Solzhenitsyn), we badly needed to read the actual writings of the Nazi ideologues, in particular Hitler, Streicher and Rosenberg. We discovered, however, that these sources were not accessible in the official libraries, while those specialists who had possessed them had long ago destroyed them out of fears whose intensity (and relevance!) has not diminished with the passage of years. We live in times when monuments are torn down, streets renamed, and convictions changed *en masse* – rarely is this in any way admirable, but it is deeply human. And, who knows, perhaps society does have the right (not very sensible and, as Herostrates' example shows, very difficult to implement) to set the seal of forgetfulness on certain facts. But if an artist or scientist is to praise or condemn something, as they are asked to do, they have first to know what it is they are lauding or denouncing, otherwise they are nothing but liars and lackeys, no matter how worthy the cause. Alas, one can rarely discern, in the "cultural policy" practised in our country for well-nigh half a century, any other intention than that of deliberately turning creative people into liars and lackeys.

My second point concerns the hundreds (no, thousands, as has been documented) of artists, journalists and scientists whom the powers-that-be have ostracised, both as individuals and as artists, journalists or scientists – and whenever anyone is persecuted, the persecution *invariably* extend to his family and friends. This is not just an arbitrary extra sanction but the usual practice of a well-run totalitarian system. All these people really were lucky in their misfortune: by the time they were expelled from our culture and banished to the fringes of our society they were already mature personalities and their work had given them a certain amount of experience and a certain reputation. Many have indeed been able to continue working, though this has proved difficult for all and impossible for some (such as actors, film directors and some of the scientists). Some have actually produced their very best work only in these unnatural

conditions. But we should not forget that the purges were not just a one-off act of retribution by our rulers – they are part of a systematic programme, so that this destructive pressure has not lost any of its intensity in the 16 years since 1968, and in fact the situation in all areas of our culture is deteriorating still further. During that time, under normal circumstances, two new generations consisting of thousands of artists, scientists and journalists would have made their debut yet some have been denied access to the necessary qualifications and to work in the profession, while others have received training which gets increasingly more threadbare and dubious. With the exception of a few doubtful and isolated cases, there is no cultural life in this country (I use the word "cultural" throughout in its widest sense, taking in art and science, politics, the media, human and civic ethics as well as religion), our cultural heritage has been badly distorted and access to it made difficult. And if some young people, despite all these obstacles, do manage to make their laborious way to the beginnings of a creative career, they soon discover that the first (and then all other) step depends on their willingness to lie, to allow themselves to be humiliated and corrupted, that honest toil will forever remain profitless, bringing them nothing but suspicion and strife. Those who happen to be well known can either proudly keep their good name or use it to obtain certain, often highly dubious, advantages; but what of all those unknown ones who have nothing to offer and on whom the powers-that-be do not have to waste too many carrots, for they are duty-bound to express gratitude even for the stick that is used on their backs. It is in these people, who have never been given the opportunity of working creatively, who may not even realise that this is their true vocation, that I see the chief and most tragic victims: sharing the unhappy fate of the whole nation, they have had the additional misfortune of being born at the wrong time.

No doubt, given certain propitious circumstances, there are individuals who, being particularly talented and single-minded occasionally succeed in making something of themselves in this

cultural graveyard. The fast-growing "parallel" culture has doubtless given a number of beginners – artists as well as scientists, politicians and journalists – a certain space in which to develop their creative personalities and even a kind of "public" exposure, though only very rarely could it offer them a proper education or any firm guidelines for their life and art. But unfortunately it is not just a few exceptional individuals who can provide a yardstick for the standards of a culture and guarantee its continuity; rather are these to be found in the frequently despised "average" which might appear grey and uninspiring but which gives the culture its strength, its continuity, and its ability to blossom. I shudder to think what will happen when those generations who still had this kind of background die out. To say that is not for a moment to forget the injustices perpetrated against individuals, but I want here to warn most emphatically against the physical and spiritual liquidation of the nation, for a nation deprived of its culture ceases to exist.

Now to the questions themselves. Not wishing to repeat well-known facts and proposals, I have linked them together and will concentrate on a particular, and seemingly secondary, problem: any significant improvement in this area (as, for that matter, in any other) would signify a radical change in our situation. Taken from a historical perspective, it is the rule rather than an exception that various artistic and scientific works should be banned and their authors persecuted – only in our case this rule has exceeded the customary measure. But I can find no historical parallel for one aspect of the situation: the police arbitrarily confiscates manuscripts that have scarcely been begun, personal diaries and correspondence, documents, archive materials and notes, etc. The confiscation of Karel Kosik's voluminous manuscript of his philosophical work is well known, thanks to the international outcry it caused. The Evangelical priest Jan Simsa was sentenced to eight months' imprisonment because he refused to surrender to the police a personal letter sent to him by his friend and teacher, the late Professor Jan Patocka. The historian Jozef Jablonicky has regularly had the manuscripts of his

studies, notes, card indexes, and scientific literature which he needs for his work taken away by the police. (With nine house searches each, he and I probably hold the Czechoslovak record in this respect.) Last autumn, the security people confiscated the intire *oeuvre* of the Moravian poet, Iva Kotrlá. And just the other day a court ordered the confiscation of Jiri Dienstbier's writings, which had been seized during the time he was imprisoned, including all his notes from the time when he was a foreign correspondent in Vietnam and the USA in the 1960s. These are just a few examples, and I could add many more like them.

As to 1) I personally consider this kind of preventive action against creative people to be far worse and more monstrous than the impossibility of communicating in a normal fashion with the public. Yes, even than the threat – and the reality – of reprisals by the authorities. I myself last year lost a manuscript of an essay on the commitment of Christians; and while I learned to admire those who are able to reconstruct works destroyed by the police, despite all my efforts I found myself unable to emulate them.

As to 2) Also from the point of view of the entire cultural community this eternal uncertainty is extremely damaging. It causes some people not even to attempt undertaking more extensive work or work that depends on a great deal of research; instead, they fritter away their talent or their expertise on the occasional undemanding effort. Others hide irreplaceable material which they use to research their project in the apartments of their less endangered friends, to whom they also immediately take each page as it gets written. This is psychologically extremely dispiriting, with moments of creative inspiration effectively marred by dint of technical difficulties. Their working tempo and in the end the quality of the finished work cannot but be unfavourably affected. Not to speak of the irreparable damage which the nation's culture suffers when these manuscripts or personal archives vanish inside offices of the secret police.

As to 3) Without wishing for a moment to suggest that otherwise everything (or indeed *anything*) is fine where our state policy is concerned, or that it is in order to send artists and scientists to jail because they are trying to go on working as artists and scientists, I'd like to put forward one or two modest proposals, the adoption of which would help solve this particular problem.

a) The police should simply obey the law which states that when a warrant is issued for the purposes of with Jiri Pelikán", "documents relating to conditions in Czechoslovak prisons", "a pamphlet on the occasion of 21 August" – but not "anti-State written and printed materials" as invariably happens in all political cases. The citizen is thus, among other things, debarred from recourse to the letter of the law, according to which a house search is only to be undertaken if the person concerned refuses voluntarily to give up the objects the police are seeking; neither he nor the police have the slightest idea what exactly it is that is being sought. For this reason the policemen take away everything they consider unsuitable or suspicious (frequently for no better reason than that it is in foreign language, whether it happens to be a detective story or a typed thesis in mathematics), and that despite the fact that these materials have nothing whatever to do with the investigation. All that is needed to improve this situation is for the Supreme Court to rule that no house search may be undertaken without the objects the police are interested in being described in the warrant.

b) The law should be changed to prevent the security agents confiscating any original written material or document – if necessary, they should have copies made and could then order them to be produced in court.

c) The law should be amended by setting a legally binding date by which the confiscated material must be returned, unless the court has in the meantime ordered its forfeiture. At the same time it should not be possible for the court to confiscate written material and other objects which have no bearing on the case before it.

d) The rules and regulations governing imprisonment and detention should likewise be amended. Insofar as a political prisoner is allowed to write anything at all (apart from censored letters to his family), such writings are taken from him and, in all probability, destroyed. In keeping with time-honoured European traditions, and out of mere respect for human beings, a prisoner ought to have his writings returned to him when he is released on expiry of his sentence.

e) Lists should be published, or some clearcut definition arrived at, of literature which, for example, it is prohibited to import from abroad, to own, or to lend to others. (Or let the Czechoslovak delegation officially deny the existence of such lists and the sanctions Czechoslovak authorities implement where literary works are concerned.) Even though this itself, *nolens volens*, is to accept a situation which is immoral and which goes against both the letter and the spirit of the Helsinki Accords and the later agreements reached in Madrid, I base my request on the fact that citizens can defend their freedom and dignity much better under laws, no matter how strict, rather than in a situation of complete arbitrariness.

As to 4 and 5) We find all expressions of solidarity extremely valuable. Every instance of pressure upon the Czechoslovak government urging it to behave in a more humane fashion and to show greater respect for culture is helpful to us. It would therefore be good if, at the European Cultural Forum, it was emphatically pointed out that in a number of cases (and perhaps most glaringly in the area of religious freedom and in connection with the cultural activities of the faithful, many Czechoslovak citizens have been imprisoned for importing, duplicating and distributing – or even just possessing – religious literature, for independent educational efforts, for cultural and educational work with young people, for producing works of art, etc.) Czechoslovakia has infringed the agreements concluded in Madrid. Those who show their solidarity should not allow themselves to be put off by the seeming indifference of the Czechoslovak government to their complaints: in fact, when-

ever there is a determined protest by the international public, the Czechoslovak authorities almost invariably ease up, and for every instance of exemplary repression there are at least ten others which are not resorted to for fear of the effect this would have on Czechoslovakia's image abroad. As regards positive steps taken by foreign cultural institutions or individuals, I do not believe in various boycotts or in preconditions being placed on mutual relations. On the contrary, there should be extensive official contacts, but it should be seen as a matter of course (and insistence should be made on reciprocity, because Czechoslovak delegations in the West do so automatically) that the official guests have a right to meet whomever they choose, as well as to point out to their hosts that such-and-such an individual ought perhaps to have been invited to an official banquet rather than languish in prison. It is equally beneficial for cultural agreements to be signed, but they should never be phrased in such a way that the western partners are then forced to accept persons or topics chosen by the other side, while the Czechoslovak state is in a position to select according to its own ideological (and police) criteria, to keep secret from its citizens names and events which come up at this international forum on the exchange of information and culture if it finds them not to its liking. It would be ideal if Czechoslovakia could be accorded some kind of cultural "most favoured nation status" removing various bureaucratic complications as regards authors' fees, taxes, students and scientific grants, employment of artists and others (paid and properly secured by written agreement) across state borders, etc. This would not mean any great sacrifice for the West, but it would serve to do away with an important factor which contributes to the discrimination practised against independent culture in our country.

Egon Bondy (Zbynek Fiser)

1. I consider this situation to be abnormal, but we know from experience that one can adapt to such a situation and continue working.

2. I see this as a very grave violation, which seriously threatens our national culture. Indeed, it poses a danger also to our national identity, and leaves me with feelings of shame and sorrow. I try to overcome this by working as hard as I can. It is for this reason that, some years ago, I started writing a history of philosophy, so that I might try, at least in one department, to fill the gap which has existed for several decades. The samizdat edition was very well received by my readers.

3. I really have no idea, no idea at all.

4. We all feel the lack of books, in particular where scientific literature, and more especially still literature on the humanities is concerned. Our public libraries don't have the necessary resources to purchase books from abroad, and the situation is fast becoming irreparable. Let anyone who can send us books as gifts addressed to our institutes of the humanities, especially to the State Library in Prague, the Klementinum. As long as the books are there, we'll manage somehow to get to them. Our colleagues abroad cannot even begin to imagine how catastrophic the situation is, all the way from the literary sciences to Oriental studies – I doubt if they could function under similar circumstances. So perhaps someone will take mercy on us.

At the same time, let me thank all those who keep sending scientific literature to individuals in this country. Let me assure them that we take good care of the books they send. It is as well to remind them that *non-political* scientific literature can be sent normally through the post, our censorship lets it through.

5. I don't know.

Jiri Grusa

1) This unusually difficult etc. situation is not something which has existed in Czechoslovakia only during the last 15 years; it has been our predicament for almost four decades. The only unique factor, perhaps, is that this predicament is shared also by our Czech socialist dreamers, who themselves established it in 1948. And because these dreamers traditionally flourished in Bohemia, our predicament is particularly grave in comparison with the neighbouring countries who suffer from the same kind of regime. Personally, it is no novelty to me, as it has more or less been the story of my life.

2) By being obstructive.

3) The practical sphere of the regime's power is not my concern. I cannot feel as they do, and even if I could I would not permit myself to do so. Besides, all the "measures" taken by the regime have been more like blows delivered. How to influence it? In such a way that it loses the initiative.

4) The system spawned by the offspring of the bourgeoisie as a clever idea of how once and for all to give everyone a fair share of the cake (provided of course that the knife remains always in their hands alone), could only end up in a system of perpetual rationing of everything, especially information. Limiting and licensing information is the system's particular speciality – one could even say its very nature. It is simply laughable to think that the regime would be favourably disposed towards any conference debate on this matter. After all, for them it is a matter of life and death.

5) To do everything in one's power to make limiting and licensing more difficult. This dinosaur of compulsory "total earthly happiness" (or what you call a "system") may perhaps meet its defeat in Silicon Valley.

Vaclav Havel

1. For a playwright it is, naturally, a particularly difficult situation. A play, after all, is something that comes into its own only on a stage, it is written out of a specific situation and for it, for a definite, specific public and often even for a specific troupe (or at least that is how I used to write), in short, it must have a home ground from which it might perhaps set out on a further journey. Even Shakespeare wrote for his theatre and for his audiences. In short, it is hard for me to write when I know that I shall send my play somewhere far away and will not even really know or feel who is putting it on, for whom and why. For seventeen years I have not been able to see any of the performances of my plays (with one unusual exception, a single amateur performance which led to great many troubles) and that really does not make my writing any easier. Somewhere at the deepest level there is also something else, something more serious, that makes my writing difficult. I am not sure just how to explain it. Perhaps this way: as long as there is in a society more than one subject of social and historical decision making, something goes on, a play of various forces unfolds with an element of the unforeseeable, of chance, of drama, of tension. There is, in short, an element of historicity. In our land all decision making and all influence have for many years been in the hands of a single subject, the central power, and that gives rise to a strange feeling of an a-historicity. It is as if time stood still. Nothing is going on. There is nothing. Everything remains the same. Everything is clear and given beforehand. A playwright, who is and must be a particularly sensitive seismograph of his time (if he is not to be simply a producer of theatrical consumer goods), finds himself, in such a non-time, in a peculiar situation. He feels forced to write about non-happening; though he works so much with time, he must write of a non-time; though he is to be the "mirror of his age", he must write of living in a non-age. People go on being born, growing up, falling in love, marrying, having children, dying. One can

write about that, and people have written about it since time immemorial. And yet it is not as simple as it seems: especially in a play, one can write even about that only against the background of some history, of some social process, no matter how concealed it remains. Occasionally, even in Czechoslovakia a good film, for instance, will be made (perhaps by Věra Chytilová who has a special talent to push through what no other could). Still, you always have the sense that the human story in it is suspended in mid-air, there is no historical background. Those stories could have taken place anytime, anywhere, and so need not have taken place at all. It is as if together with the loss of historical grounding, the dimension of historicity, human drama lost both meaning and relevance. It is a matter of the terrifying pressure of censorship and self-censorship, but it is also a matter of the overall climate: in the atmosphere created by a power so motionless, so petrified and yet dominating all life, every concrete human story seems to lose its force, its meaning, its face. It is a world in which everything becomes totally the same – and just try to write a play about the sameness of all and everything! It is peculiar, but that is how it is – or at least that is how I experience. To be sure, if I were to be completely honest, what makes my writing most difficult of all is something quite other, concrete to the point of banality: the fear that the police will come and take away an incomplete or recently completed manuscript. That perennial scattering of copies in various apartments, hiding pages somewhere behind the furniture whenever the bell rings, and so on and on, that is what I personally experience as dumbest of all. It is enough to make one a neurotic and cripple him as an author, so much more so because it has been going on for so long. But let others speak to it as well, so that we have an assurance that I am not using common conditions as an excuse for some personal lack of creativity.

2. I have become accustomed that most of what I read is in typescript. Occasionally I see an interesting performance or an

exhibit, but that is something that tends to happen only on the fringes of authorised culture, something half covert about which one never knows whether it will still be there the next day. More or less the same is true of good books: insofar as some appear occasionally, it is for the most only because some more courageous editor fought for it and won in the endless struggle with the supervisory bureaucracy. How should I take this common situation? It irritates me, naturally. And it grieves me deeply. It is simply a misfortune.

3. I myself can have no influence on the cultural policy of the state. At best, I can contribute to the growth of a culture that is independent (that is, either boycotted or persecuted by the state) by writing something good, by helping with the self-help distribution of good things. The stronger and richer this independent culture becomes, the greater the hope that it will exercise a certain pressure on the cultural policy of the authorities or that in some light, indirect way it will influence it, perhaps force it to make concessions. For myself at least, I see no other possibility.

4. What would be most important for myself personally would be to be able to travel, to breathe the cultural atmosphere of other lands, to look and to see how people live elsewhere, what interests them, what is happening where. To be sure, again for seventeen years, I have not been able to travel because, even if they let me out, they would not let me back. Here and there books or magazines from the outside world do penetrate here, foreign films are shown here (albeit only some, and always with a long delay), occasionally even a theatrical troupe comes visiting. I personally, as I have said, most miss the opportunity to take in foreign culture there where it arises, in its homeland. I expect that the European Cultural Forum will pass resolutions no less beautiful than those passed in Helsinki or Madrid. Unfortunately resolutions can neither feed a man nor set him free.

5. The more significant foreign cultural personalities come visit

here, the more contact with cultural institutions, the better. However, if they limit their contacts to their local official hosts and counterparts, they will only help stabilize the status quo and create artificial merit for the officials in charge of culture. It is important that ordinary people have a part in it. It is not we, banned writers or scholars, who are at stake. If the visitors make contact with us or call attention to our position, it will certainly be important, for us as well as in general, but it is not what is most important. After all, we as concrete persons, are not at stake, symptomatic though our fate may be for this age as a whole. The point is culture as such – that people at large should derive something from it.

Ladislav Hejdanek

1. Even though I am a socialist by conviction, as a result of my Christian orientation I could not work in the fields in which I had received my professional training (philosophy and sociology; the latter discipline was actually eliminated after 1948 as "bourgeois"). It was not until the nineteen-sixties that I was able to publish reviews and articles, almost exclusively of course in literary journals. In 1968 I was accepted along with one other non-marxist colleague by the Philosophic Institute of the Czechoslovak Academy of Science, as an expression of a new policy approach. Already in 1970, however, there was a wave of mass dismissals affecting the majority of the scientific and technical staff of the Institute. Thus, during my entire life I was able to work in my proper field for less than three years. Before 1968 I was employed in the documentation section of a medical research institute, and after 1968 I have been working as a night doorman, stoker, and most recently, stock-room clerk. During most of my life I was able to devote myself to philosophy only in my leisure hours away from my job.

2. Throughout the period in question, I witnessed two striking features with respect to the situation of philosophy. First of all, during the entire period (except for a brief interval in 1968) all non-marxist types of philosophy were excluded from schools and other institutions of learning, as well as from public cultural life (moreover, as to marxism, it was only a narrow interpretation of it, defined and controlled by non-philosophers). This had especially important consequences for Christians, who were – and are – more numerous than marxists : since 1968, there has not existed any function or employment for a Christian-oriented philosopher, not even in general pedagogic areas. (The same is of course true for all Christian-oriented persons in creative fields.) Christian cultural activity is being expelled from all aspects of social life and is limited to strictly controlled, closed, ghetto-like existence within the churches. (Theologic faculties were ejected from the university framework; more recently, the 1980 law regulating higher education stipulates that theologic faculties are no longer considered a part of the higher education system.)

The second noteworthy feature has been the enormous, catastrophic decline in philosophic thought as such. In the period immediately following 1948, this was due to the dearth of sufficiently educated, competent marxist scholars and teachers. After a few years this situation improved, particularly as a result of marked improvement in the Philosophic Institute in the nineteen-sixties. In 1970, however, the best marxist thinkers were expelled from schools and research institutes. As early as 1956, young marxists started to develop a capacity for independent thinking. Nowadays, almost three decades later, places where official philosophy is practiced are vegetating – either in reality, or at least in appearance. To the extent that if philosophy in our country is at all alive and working, it is happening outside of official centers, and in spite of them.

3. Under present conditions, one cannot expect any practical steps for the improvement of the situation to be taken by the state apparatus (or Party organs). The Czech situation – unlike the

Slovak – is characterized by the totally unrepresentative nature of Czech leadership, and the lack of any "feed-back" channel of communication whereby citizens could exert pressure on their political representatives. Any progress in our country is dependent upon progress in the entire bloc, and is a reflection of the over-all situation; the tail cannot wag the dog. Any tendencies to independent political development, if they exist at all, are immediately suppressed. Appropriate moves on the part of other nations in the cultural field or other areas of diplomacy can at times result in certain concessions; on the other hand, inadequately planned policies are likely to cause more harm than good.

4. The policy of hindering free flow of spiritual and cultural ideas from abroad is of course in sharp conflict with the need for the greatest possible flow of scientific and technical information. (*Viz* the problematics of Japan.) For this reason, in the long run the policy is doomed to failure. Sooner or later, this faulty approach must be abandoned if the Soviet bloc is to avoid stagnation and obsolescence in all areas, including science and technology. However, human life is not long enough to permit us to wait passively for this to happen. Moreover, for those of us living here, such stagnation is hardly a desirable solution. With the help of the rest of the world, especially the democratic forces of Europe, we need to break down all the various artificial barriers within which we are isolated. I don't believe that at present such help should primarily take an institutional form, even though some institutional – or rather organizational – aid is certainly needed. At the present time personal contacts and personal initiatives are the most feasible and most effective types of help, for such activities are least vulnerable for harassment and disruption. We thus welcome all kinds of personal and individual projects. In the area of philosophy, for example, this could take the form of visits by individual philosophers and lectures in private homes, possibly gifts of scholarly literature, and so on.

5. It is not possible to spell out concrete plans in advance, be-

cause that would be the best way of destroying them. The basic criteria are inventiveness, freshness, non-routine thinking. Once something gets underway, however, it is essential to exert every effort to keep it going. On the part of international cultural institutions and personalities this will require some sacrifice; we, too, cannot avoid making sacrifices. In my judgement, we have already succeeded in moving beyond dead center, and now it is up to the initiative and tenacity of both sides to keep the momentum going. Devotion to the basic goal is more important than specific practical guidelines. This goal is mutual understanding and cooperation of cultural leaders and scholars, particularly in Europe, without regard to any borders that separate them. The first principle ought to be the necessity for combating and surmounting isolation, no matter where it may exist and no matter who may be trying to impose it. We already have some experience in this struggle; those wishing to join or to try something new can now consult colleagues who can offer advice. Europe, fortunately, no longer has ambitions in the nature of power politics; however, Europe has by far not yet fulfilled its great historic mission.

Miloslava Holubova

1. I would rather leave personal feelings out of this, because the theme has been worn out and become annoying and boring. I also dislike the dramatization of our troubles by the Voice of America or Radio Free Europe.

2. As member of the national cultural community I feel the situation in question as a catastrophe.

I worked for almost 20 years as an educator with the High School of Art and Industry. I remember the deformation and deterioration of taste, judgement and creativity that was prevalent (with few exceptions) during the nineteen-fifties. In the six-

ties, the level in all areas of culture improved and standards rose. Students had a lively interest in everything. They studied with zest and eagerness, and filled the libraries. Today, school libraries are moribund, and the students are lazy, without interest. The goal is "to make it", rather than to finish one's studies. (There is an interesting new expression, *dostat se na vejsku*, meaning "to make it", literally "to get up on top". Formerly, young people went to school to study chemistry, history, or some other subject; nowadays they are in school "to get up on top", to get a prestigious, high-paying position, and perhaps to shorten their period of military service. The actual academic field is secondary.)

It is a catastrophe that since the nineteen-seventies the nation's culture – including film, theatre, information media – has been second-rate. An analysis of the causes of this phenomenon would require extensive study, but anyone familiar with culture and education understands the consequences. Inevitably, succeeding generations will be adversely affected. One generation gradually loses its taste, forgets, becomes used to the new reality, and the young won't know any better. I know of a doctoral candidate in literary history and criticism who had never heard of Václav Cerný. I could cite a number of similar "black pearls", but time is limited.

I repeat: it is a national catastrophe. I mentioned this several times in the course of police interrogation, perhaps because I needed some psychologic abreaction. My questioners kept silent and made no effort to refute me.

3, 4, and 5. I don't know what is to be done. The European Cultural Forum can certainly help, as always, and such help means a lot! However, it benefits mainly those people – and I don't know how many they are – who have kept their zest and healthy appetite for work, but not the nation as a whole. Our government and cultural organizations seem fixed on a kind of comradely vengeance. Unlike the situation in certain other countries, near and far, they are incapable of forgiving former

comrades anything whatever, and are mortally afraid of change. They probably believe – consciously or subconsciously – in the motto: after us the deluge.

It is bad, but not tragic. Strangely enough, there are exceptions: honest, talented, capable and industrious individuals who tenaciously carry on in spite of everything, and young people of this type are constantly cropping up in all fields. I believe that at the first opportunity they will pleasantly surprise everyone and sweep their colleagues along. I only hope that the present situation will not last so long that the ranks of outstanding individuals become depleted by constant travail and harassment.

Eva Kanturkova

1. I do not like to talk about the way i'm being persecuted. It is after all a choice one makes either to go along with something or not – and I'm also ashamed to have to admit that such uncultural conditions exist in the country I love and which is my home. True, it is not *my* shame, but on the other hand I don't see any merit in being persecuted.

You ask about the artist's contact with his or her public; in my case, I have never really known anything of the sort. I was just taking off as a writer when I was hit by the authorities' wrath. Within one year they pulped the entire printing of two of my books, those already published they withdrew from the libraries, a completed film they locked up in a safe and forbade its showing, and they stopped work on two screenplays. Since then I have only been able to publish either under someone else's name, or in foreign and émigré publishing houses, which our authorities consider to be illegal and, whenever they decide to take a tougher "line", a criminal offence. I was put in prison for one such book published abroad.

All this naturally means that my contact with the public has become very slight indeed. Most people can only learn about my books and other writings from foreign radio broadcasts. These broadcasts are of course jammed, yet every now and again someone will turn up and ask whether I knew that one of my essays or perhaps a novel in instalments had been read on the radio. As often as not, I don't know about it myself. If I am lucky, the listener will send me a tape of the broadcast. So it is sporadic, but on the other hand intensive contact. Anyone who takes the trouble to listen in to a jammed broadcast feels that he or she is something of a friend of mine when they hear my work.

But it is in the nature of art that it dislikes being "written for the drawer", and so it seeks and creates its own readership. You cannot work creatively without the inspiration that comes from contact with others. The unnatural conditions in our country give some people the idea that they are dependent on the tyrannical regime, that without its blessing and benevolence they cannot produce any art. That is an erroneous and misleading notion. Anyone who links his or her possibilities with the benevolence of the state and its institutions places him or herself in the most dangerous position imaginable: servitude leads to the inevitable loss of talent. The power to *publish* a book has proved by far less important than the ability to write freely. Their finished works then force the authors to seek other, "self-service", methods of publication. At the beginning of the 1970s, banned Czech authors formed their own public, circulating ten or 15 copies among themselves. Today, so many people have joined in this activity that the author no longer knows how many times his manuscripts has been copied. This non-public public has its own magazines and critical journals, views are exchanged on important questions of the day and this correspondence later appears in print. All this activity has its own inner momentum, and it says something about its importance that the authors are quite happy to write without expectation of any fees, for, who would pay them? Only the typists who are in

much shorter supply than works to be typed, get paid for their work.

This, then, is how Czech writers manage to keep their independence. Always running the risk of one day being arrested and imprisoned, which applies to the typist as well and needless to say is not a pleasant prospect to contemplate. At the same time it is not without value that we not only write our books but have to share their fate. I say this with some diffidence, but having been in prison has given me a great deal to write about. And so our books also share our destiny.

2. Sometimes when I read a friend's letter from abroad, something he or she says surprises me and I realise that we live in quite different worlds. You ask about our "national cultural community" – that, too, seems to be a question from another world. Do we have any such thing as a national cultural community?

To my mind, that is a living entity which is born of free cultural activity in the broadest sense of the words, i.e. creation, criticism, and consumption of artistic works. That can only take place in an open, structured society which we do not have in this country. A national cultural community is of course irrepressible, with its own dynamics, constantly renewing itself. It is not capable of mechanical enumeration, it cannot be artificially proclaimed, it is the very dynamic cultural ferment itself. True, our conditions here are not nearly as monolithic as the regime would like, reality is much more complex than that, not simply a black-and-white picture of what is permitted and what is not; but if we do have anything approaching a national cultural community, then it is only a very tenuous one, really just a precondition of it. In the 1960s there clearly was a newly constituted national cultural community, rich in literary and artistic works, films, music, creative critical writing; it had its own periodicals, and it was linked to a broad community of readers and others. Today, it has been split into individual groups, the situation is extremely complicated.

Since the last war our country has been through two big wa-

ves of repression, which have led to the destruction of our national cultural community. Both waves brought to the top people who adopted the ideological views of the day. One of the differences between today and the 1960s lies in the fact that in those days, many of those who had been at the top thanks to the earlier wave of repression then personally tried to help make amends for the "errors" of the past. That means they quite consciously and "from the inside" played their part in the rebuilding of our cultural community. The situation in the early 1970s was quite different: the repression brought to the top mostly those who in the sixties had not been able to "make it" because of their lack of talent or education. They had been pushed aside by a natural process, and now they were given the opportunity of exercising power. These people defend their positions, and the repression they practise is motivated partly by a desire for revenge and partly by their fear that they would not be able to compete under normal circumstances, and so they hold on to their jobs and their honours with all their might. That is why the situation in Czech culture today is so bad – it is not, first and foremost, a political struggle but personal interest and malice.

Those in power of course consider themselves to be the one and only cultural community in the country, although in truth they are far removed both from the nation and from culture. However, between them and us – those who have been cast out and proscribed, and whom the media describe as "counter-revolutionary and subversive elements" – there is a wide field of artists who are allowed to work and yet do not identify with the powers-that-be and their ideology. Thus the national cultural community is, on the one hand, shrouded by the artificially created image of official culture and, on the other, is being created with great difficulty and despite all the obstacles underneath these official layers. Those who have been expelled from public view don't hold up their banishment as some kind of golden seal of quality but respect everything good and interesting that comes from inside the official area; on the other hand, a

growing number of those who are allowed to work and publish are gradually ridding themselves of their fears for their livelihood and in various ways crossing the chasm which the authorities have dug between them and the banned artists. This mutual respect and merging of the two groups constitutes a lifeline which makes it possible to recreate out national cultural community once more. (I can't help adding that it is in particular the ladies in the "official" camp who are in the habit of collecting and in some cases having bound in leather what we, the banned writers, produce – as a new status symbol.)

3. I don't consider the present situation to be critical but think that we passed the critical stage some time ago. The so-called official culture has, over the years of our rulers' unlimited power, certainly got itself into a critical state – but that is their funeral. In what I would call the "live" culture, whether as practised by those who are tolerated by the regime or those who are not, one can detect a growing inner movement independent of the state ideology. That is not to say that the state and related institutions are not doing their best to stifle everything that is found wanting in terms of this ideology; but it takes two to do the stifling. And I can only repeat that it would be quite erroneous to think that free artistic creation is necessarily dependent on free conditions. To think in these terms is to adopt the mentality of those in power, who would like to persuade us that the citizen cannot do anything on his own, without official consent. No, whoever wants to create freely, does so. I am afraid that those who prefer to wait for freer political conditions before they devote themselves to their art will never produce anything worthwhile – in freedom or in unfreedom.

Of course it would be marvelous if we had, for example, a literary magazine at our disposal. But I find it equally encouraging and significant where Czech culture is concerned when I come across, in a samizdat literary review produced on the typewriter, the bibliography of the latest manuscripts put out by one of the samizdat editions. Admittedly, knowledge about this is at present confined to a small circle of people; ordinary rea-

ders may not even know that this samizdat series exists. It is in this way that the authorities are responsible for deadening our cultural activity – but it is not the authorities but rather the writers themselves who bear responsibility for our national culture. While it will certainly hamper a historian if he cannot gain access to the archives, and the state can in this way influence our culture for good or bad, it is also true that the state censor or the state poet, for all their power and official honours, will in the end contribute not an iota to the culture of this country. Let the state do its worst – I feel very encouraged when, for instance, Ivan Jirous, who has been jailed for producing a samizdat magazine, writes a new collection of poems while he languishes in the worst of Czechoslovak prisons. That is the one and only good way in which a writer or scientist can have some influence on the state's cultural policy: by his own, independent, output.

4. For my own part I don't feel a lack of creative impulses. Perhaps I am not in a position to judge this; certainly some of our friends living abroad keep warning us about the claustrophobic character of our spiritual world in this country. I nevertheless feel that we have enough – sometimes even too many – ideas, that what we lack is time to work on them. We have created quite strong unofficial links thanks to which we do receive spiritual and creative impulses vaplenty. For this we owe a great debt of gratitude to our friends abroad who publish magazines and books for our benefit.

But our position is quite exceptional, and maintaining these contacts and links is a risky business. It is the broad cultural public which suffers most from the lack of contact with the outside world, here much damage has been done to our national culture and erudition. Lately, however, people have showed a growing interest in, for example, foreign broadcasts. Not than I am unduly optimistic, yet I do not believe that it will be possible in the long run to turn our people into tame, unthinking subjects of an all-powerful state.

And what I do miss the most in our artificially induced insolation? I would say the possibility to travel abroad. It is quite

possible that the authorities would give me permission to go, but hardly likely that they would then allow me to return.

As for the European Cultural Forum, past experience has taught me not to hope for any really concrete results. The signing and ratification of agreements is all very well, but it does not necessarily mean that our authorities will adhere to them. Still, it is better to negotiate than to shout insults across the border. And that is why I think the forum is a good thing.

5. I shall never forget the moral strength I gained from the solidarity of my Swedish colleagues and of people from various walks of life in Germany, Australia, Canada, even Japan, when I and my friends were locked up in 1981. Solidarity is the strongest and most effective means which helps people to straighten up and forge links with one another. It is no coincidence that the Polish dockers called their organisation Solidarity.

Solidarity can take many forms, and perhaps I will be forgiven if I take a practical, feminine position. I want nothing for myself, being at an age when one's life has been well established and will produce whatever fruits it is meant to produce. But I cannot help thinking of all those younger writers and artists, people with talent and intelligence, who give up their social status in order to be able to paint, write or study – and not only in what is known as "dissident" circles. They deserve to get grants, invitations abroad, foreign literature and contacts. Not that a great deal is not done in this respect, but there is always room for more. Also, our émigré publishing houses, which are so tremendously important for the continuity of our national culture, are constantly having to struggle with a lack of resources; for them, the work of the Charter 77 Foundation in Stockholm is of particular importance. Czech is the language of a small nation and it is an expensive business translating our literature into other languages – here, grants and other kinds of support for East European non-commercial art would help a great deal. Foreign cultural institutions and individuals certainly ought not to turn only to our state organisations (such as the

DILIA literary agency in Prague). I succumb to feelings of horror – or have to laugh at the absurdity of it – when I see on prime time West German television a rubbishy Czech TV series, one of our regime's many Potemkin villages, which in this country earns nothing but ridicule. At such times I have to ask myself whether the commercialisation of art does not represent a similar sore as the ideological monopoly over here.

To sum up, I'd say that no one else can help us if we do not help ourselves. On the other hand, every assistance is much appreciated and of inestimable worth.

Bozena Komarkova

1.a – The situation is not quite as you describe it. The abnormal state of our culture has not lasted fifteen, but rather thirty seven years. The powers that be have exercised a uniform control over the spiritual life of the entire nation since 1948, and the obvious result is a crisis of cultural life. That it has been only fifteen years, that is the optical illusion of the generation which entered cultural life in 1948 and in virtue of conforming established itself in positions – at least for as long as it continued to conform. Anyone who in any way did not conform was forced out of cultural life or never could enter it. The persecution of culturally creative persons is more extensive still, since it includes also the work of earlier generations, that of T.G. Masaryk in particular.

1.b – I myself belong to the generation which completed its academic studies in the late 1920's. At the time, access to publication for beginners was slow, since there were few scholarly institutes and the depression in the thirties vastly increased the difficulties for persons relying on their own resources, without the support of recognized cultural personalities or even party political protection of persons who dominated publication. Soon after that came Munich, interrupting the work of

many, with the pressing demands of the resistance, and, for those who came back from jails, in our generation the end of cultural activity came before serious scholarly work that would habituate it for university positions could mature. Life in provisional terms, which began for us with Munich, became a permanent condition under the new situation. Dissent from the new situation, even though far removed from acts of diversion and restricted only on maintaining earlier views about the nature of democracy and of a free society, meant already then an exclusion from the professions.

Simultaneously with Z. Nejedlý's school reform, I was expelled from my job as a preparatory school teacher, before long, living on aid to the handicapped became my only outlook for the rest of my life. The range of my activity after 1949 was restricted to meetings with students in my apartment and conversations and lectures about topics of the times in the Czech Brethern Protestant church. My possibility of publication disappeared with the banning of Laichter's journal, *Nase doba*, and thereafter were limited to making carbon copies for my younger friends. Occasionally, I was able to publish something in Germany, rarely in "*Krestanska revue*", as long as the state censor did not interfere. To attempt to carry on scholarly work without access to literature and without access to a congenial context is a bootless activity. Only Charta 77 changed this situation, but by that time my age was almost the same as the number in its name. My friends took it upon themselves to have the modest harvest of my life published as *samizdat*.

2. In light of the above, I cannot consider myself one of the cultural community. My periodic attempts to become a part of it remain fruitless.

Your question does not appear to me well put. Creative work is any work into which a person puts something of himself, regardless of the area to which it relates. As for satisfaction from free creative work, that is something our social system de-

nies to everyone. Moral genocide, including cultural genocide, is only a first step to total genocide, as we experienced it in the 17th and 18th centuries.

3. No relief can be expected from the power of the state and of its institutions for the simple reason that they both design and carry out this condition. Theoretically, the change could be easy: just respect our own laws and the international agreements into which we have entered. In practice, under our present conditions, no one expects that that will come about.

4-5. We have no other option than to continue in non-conforming initiatives in the sense of our own cultural traditions and to expand our effort to make the widest possible strata aware of the authentic opinion of the nation, as it is expressed in non-conforming works. As the number of non-conformist activists in our country is small, unlike in Poland, we are that much more dependent on international aid. We can expect an international public to take interest in our affairs only if we win their respect with our own efforts and activities.

What concretely that should be, I cannot tell, since I do not know the international public and have no access to it.

The only concrete suggestion I have noted after the fruitless conferences in Belgrade and Madrid is that the validity of the first two "baskets" of the Helsinki agreement is null and void, by a long recognized principle of international law, as long as the third "basket" is not observed. The inviolability of the post-war frontiers should be made contingent on the observance of the third "basket".

Iva Kotrla

1) I have experienced injunctions and prohibitions by the state with regard to literary work for instance from 1984, when all manuscripts, including copies, were seized by the police during

a house search. Further, subsequent injunctions from the State Security of the CSSR taught me that writing for *samizdat* endangers in Czechoslovakia not only the author, but also husband or wife, dependent children and members of the family aged over 80; all of them have been, since the autumn of 1984 summoned for interrogation, or interrogated by the State Security. So through writings distributed in *samizdat* the author makes the acquaintance of just one kind of public, police officers. I have no other experience of any other public, I know none: other, more experienced writers have come to know in addition the public in the law courts.

2) The present situation affects me as follows: as a Christian incapable of being cast in the moulds of totalitarian state power I cannot be a member of the national cultural community, because who belongs to it is decided in Czechoslovakia by the appropriate party and state authorities in cooperation with members of the security service. And since religion is regarded by the ruling state ideology in the CSSR as the "opium of the people", I too am classed by the police not among the dregs of some cultural community, but directly among the criminal dregs of the national society – that is, among the drug addicts and holders of the "opium of the people" drug. How do I come to terms with this reality? By prayer . . .

3) I can give only my personal view: I would value as a practical step on the part of the state power if the police were to return the unfinished manuscripts they have seized – and not only to myself, but to the tens and hundreds of similarly affected workers in the field of culture. At the same time I would be happy in the present situation if the State Security would not continue in future with house searches: that is the only request – in the cultural field – I would put to the state authorities. Well paid police officers have no idea what a damaging effect their profession – carrying out house searches – has on the minds of small children. That I have experienced with my five children. As for how I myself could contribute to overcoming the present

situation, I can know only as much as the Security officers offer as advice: to confess everything I know about my friends or other persons capable of literary work and for my own part commit no more offences in the literary field, especially in the field of *samizdat*. In that case they will start to regard me again as a proper citizen of the CSSR who, as far as she was able, has contributed to overcoming the worrying state of *samizdat* literature.

4) What do I miss most in the artificially-created intellectual isolation in Czechoslovakia? To tell the truth – it is the presence of a humane and benevolent father – for adults. Concretely: that at least (what for decades has been impossible) there should be a bishop at the head of my home diocese and also that I might be allowed once in my life personally to see the Holy Father and, with many other believers, to receive his blessing – in my native land, which I love. Otherwise, because I was born into the situation of existing socialism, I do not expect, as a thinking being, any kind of concrete help from the European Cultural Forum. Only and perhaps – simply in the area of a stirring of the spirit . . .

5) I would regard as positive steps on the part of foreign cultural institutions if they took more interest in the fact that in an old European and cultural country (which the Czech area undoubtedly is) for instance not even a single literary journal for young artists and writers is allowed to appear. And if they also took notice of the situation in the regions, not just in Prague. For instance, in Moravia, a land where millions of people with their own distinctive characteristics are living, not one literary journal is allowed to appear, the Moravian Gallery still lacks exhibition premises for its collection, the second largest in the country, etc. And if foreign cultural institutions would publish for Europe information about how things were in the Czech lands in the past . . .

Marie Rut Krizkova

1) In 1968 I graduated from the Philosophical Faculty of Charles University in Prague. I was an atheist, not a party member. It looked as if I had before me a promising future as a literary historian: I had won 1st prize at a student academic conference for a study on Orten and commendation for an edition of Orten's prose.

However, I spoke out publicly against the entry of Soviet troops and in the further phases I refused to join the ranks of the 'mistaken'. So in 1970 opportunities to publish were closed to me. But I did continue to work more or less in my own field. I lost employment matching my qualifications after my conversion, when my employer was informed by members of State Security that I was a church-goer. Then I was unemployed for over six months, although I am on my own with my children (at that time they were aged 17, 14 and 3 years). Now for ten years I have been working, as most of us are, in the most menial and low-paid jobs; for some years I was employed as a forestry worker and after contracting spinal trouble as a forest warden; now I am a night sorter with the post office.

I declared my support for Charter 77 in January 1977, when I was already working in forestry, so that apart from numerous sessions of interrogation, citizens' "vigilance" and "shadowings", there was not much change in our lives.

How did I take this situation and how have I come to terms with it?

Rather as when one is hit by a natural disaster and one mobilises all one's forces to alleviate the consequences of the catastrophe. For me it meant to remain a source of certainty and safety for my children – even under threat. A child knows unerringly that as long as mummy is smiling, all is well. I could not have coped with it alone – I discovered a new world, a world of living faith and wonderful friendships.

And my relationship to readers is probably connected with that – when I write I feel as if I was standing before the face of

God, and I feel so linked with those for whom I am writing that there is no space left in me for a sense of non-fulfilment. And when finally – unwillingly – I finish something, I see that the warmth with which I have been writing has faded away and I hesitate to publish even within the limits open to me (*samizdat*).

2) It pains me. I can come to terms with being condemned myself to exist on the fringes of society, but I cannot accept the fact that my nation is condemned to exist in subjection. Indeed, if a free national culture were really to be wiped out, it would be the end of the nation. That cannot be accepted, that must be opposed.

How?

Above all by one's own creative work – in truth and love.

Then: everyone from their own place should try to get the opportunities for publishing extended, and the opportunities for contact with readers.

And finally: responsibility in personal life and a brave and firm stand as a citizen.

3) I was concerned with this question in 1983 as spokesperson for Charter 77. It happened really incidentally. At one of my interrogations the officer accused us of being enemies of our country because publishing abroad harms the interests of the land in which we live. I replied that the interests of the Republic are harmed by those who refuse to deal with problems of which they are aware or which are called to their attention. If the addressees would reply to our suggestions and comments, or at least try to solve the situation, there would be no reason to publish abroad.

4) I would say that the motive force of our ideological propaganda is falsehood (or rather, intentional half-truth) and hate, which relies on indifference and fear. Our task is still, therefore, to step outside the vicious circle, to confront the lies and hate or at least not to condone them.

In this foreign radio stations in particular could play an important part; I have in mind primarily the Voice of America

and London, which can be heard all over our country and do not carry the risk to which every reader of *samizdat* or foreign literature is exposed. The work of these radio stations is invaluable, thanks for it. Unfortunately, in their news and commentaries on the situation in Czechoslovakia and the other socialist countries they tend to dwell too much on the excesses of the regime and the persecution, so that many listeners are simply confirmed in the belief that they do well not to get involved in anything.

That in its way is cooperation with the regime, at least in the outcome. Perhaps a way could be found to give encouragement, to awaken the deadened conscience and lead to a joyful openness and life for one's fellows.

5) I recall the words of a wise priest. He spoke of the fact that many people think and act as if suffering was a test which the sufferer should pass. But that is not so. The suffering of another becomes a challenge for me myself. It is I, abiding in safety, who is tested and one day I shall have to answer for what I have done or not done for my suffering brother or sister.

So I hope – that when the fate of the persecuted becomes a matter of the "heart" for each of us we shall surely find a way – each on their own and for themselves and finally also together with others – to take up this challenge.

It might be worth considering adopting methods that have proved themselves in the work of Amnesty International, for instance personal or group letters to responsible institutions, and also to individual writers, artists, etc.

And another request: remind people that the possibility of publishing is inseparable from the right to express one's opinion. An artist, for instance, who is a religious believer has actually been for several decades without any chance and will remain without opportunity so long as the freedom of religious belief is not respected.

Miroslav Kusy

1. When today I look back at the forcible interruption of my scientific career following 1968, I can see that it has become irreversible: no matter what the future brings, I can never go back and resume where I left off all those years ago. Even if political conditions in our country were to change in such a way as to make it possible for me to start again, I couldn't possibly make up for the 15 lost years.

That means that I experience this situation as someone who has been effectively and irreversibly written off by the authorities, someone who has been deprived of work in this profession, in the vocation he chose for himself and in which he had successfully worked for a considerable period of time. This remains true even though I have managed to "get over it" and find an alternative which gives my life new meaning. It was a violent break, such as affected a great many other people.

2. This state of affairs was once upon a time accurately described by Louis Aragon as "Biafra of the spirit". A nation's entire moral stand, its way of thinking was dealt a mortal blow affecting the most progressive people in our national culture – a devaluation of the nation's basic moral and cultural values. What the powers-that-be call "consolidation and normalisation" of our national life in fact brought about its utter stultification. Nothing could be more characteristic of this than the way top people are chosen nowadays: total obedience to the leadership has become the prime qualification, as well as loyalty to the Party and its leaders (whoever they may be at any particular time) and its policies of the moment. (Exactly the same idea as the Nazi "Meine Ehre ist Treue" – "Loyalty, My Honour".) It is this criterion above all, according to which people are judged today and selected for important positions. Only those who are suitable (or at least pretend to be and proclaim the right slogans) can hope to get jobs and become part of the present social structure. Anyone who does not do so becomes an outsider, a person "without a future". This inevitably means that the vast

majority resort to hypocrisy, a "double face", dual morality, the schizophrenic upbringing of their children; it leads to apathy and cynicism, the disintegration of the nation's moral fibre. Those without morals and principles have a field day, being able to get rich, make profitable careers in the political, economic or cultural sphere, at the same time hindering all social, economic and cultural progress because stagnant waters are their ideal element. In this situation, it is far more difficult to make one's way in society on the basis of ability, character, skill or diligence than by employing a sycophantic attitude to the Party bosses, demagoguery, ruthlessness, conspiratorial methods and lack of scruple.

In the midst of a national moral crisis of these proportions (which is now beginning to worry even the top leadership, which has found it necessary to publish its document on the prevalence of theft, etc.) I came to the conclusion that I no longer had the right to keep silent, regardless of the possible consequences. For this reason I started to cultivate contacts with people who shared my views, for this reason I became an author of samizdat, signed Charter 77 and took part in various independent civic activities. I am doing all this in order to draw the attention of my fellow-countrymen and of our leaders to the crisis in which the nation finds itself, to appeal to their conscience, wake them from their lethargy and refute the comfortable excuse that "there's nothing we can do about it, anyway".

3. I believe that any reasonable voice that is raised today to criticise contemporary cultural policy and comment on the general crisis of our nation cannot but have some influence in the end. Not straightaway, perhaps, but the very fact that such a voice lends courage to others, encouraging them to express their own opinions, is of great importance. This of course is not lost on our authorities and their police apparatus: having no illusions about the true feelings of the vast majority of our nation, they rely solely on their being afraid to give voice to them. And even if we do not succeed in mounting a national day of protest such as they have had in Chile, we must at the very least give a

personal example to induce people to stand up for their basic convictions where fundamental questions of human decency, solidarity, and their human and civil rights are concerned. In this way the authorities will be given a tangible demonstration that it is not just the "extremism" of a few isolated dissidents, but rather that these individuals express the views of the nation, and that the nation not only sympathises with them but also stands behinds them.

We cannot, unfortunately, depend on the people who have brought us to this crisis to extricate us from it. The present leadership has carried its "consolidation and normalisation" to its logical conclusion, with all its catastrophic consequences. And they have enjoyed all the privileges and material advantages they could obtain from it. It is a similar leadership to that which ruled Poland before Jaruzelski. No Kadar-type reforms are possible with these people in charge – nor any other progressive reforms whatever. It is a leadership burdened with its destructive mission of "consolidation". The only way out of this impasse is a radical restructuring of the leadership. The people in all the top jobs today are those who saw their chance as part of this process of "consolidation" when many others were dismissed in the purges and they decided to "go to it" as they saw personal advantage and profit awaiting them. It is thus hypocritical today to cry over spilt milk and lament that corruption and bribery, incompetence and lack of professionalism, thieving and high living have become so prevalent in the country. If the Party and the government were serious about their warnings and their documents on "undesirable" phenomena and tendencies in our national life, they would have to start here – with themselves.

4, 5. The moribund character of our cultural and social life does not concern only internal conditions. It manifests itself externally too. Our authorities are trying to limit international relations to one type of relations only: contacts between officials and governments, that is contacts which are completely under their control and which the nation perceives merely in a strictly

censored version. Anything else is considered illegal. Western democracies on the whole accept this, because they do not want "difficulties", since our authorities loudly complain of "interference in our internal affairs" whenever any attempt is made to widen these contacts, they accuse the West of hostile acts and subversion. Nevertheless, non-governmental institutions and organisations in the West ought to keep insisting on freedom to contact our people, to meet representatives of our culture, they should insist in their right to have unofficial contacts in Czechoslovakia. They must bear in mind that officially sanctioned institutions and organisations here are *invariably* tied to the Party and government, *always* forced to adopt official views and standpoints, with no possibility to hold and proclaim independent views. That is why non-governmental bodies in the West should pay more attention to individuals and personalities over here, to people who are experts in any particular sphere.

Unfortunately, the fact is that while we were part of the establishment, our partners in western institutions and organisations used to send us their publications, invite us to conferences and study trips, ask us to write in their journals, etc. Once we were fired from our universities and scientific institutes, sociological and other societies, we ceased to exist as far as international congresses and symposiums were concerned, as well as foreign journals and periodicals, committees and councils, and so on. They discovered that attempts to keep up contacts with us brought unpleasantness on the part of Czechoslovak official institutions, and so they gradually gave up. They should realise that, even if we may not be able to accept their invitations, the very fact that we have been prevented from doing so would speak for itself. For this reason alone they should insist on normal legal contacts with us.

Naturally, we must in the first instance try and help ourselves – it is up to us to do our best to keep our cultural life alive and we cannot expect anyone to do this for us. But it is only by means of a joint effort that we shall be able to overcome the

barrier built on the concept of "two worlds" and "two cultures".

Frantisek Pavlicek

If I answer your questions briefly, that is due to my belief that brevity will best serve the purpose of this questionnaire. Moreover, it is a sign that I agree with what you have said in the introduction.

1. Similary as the fellow who, when young, helps to light a fire, gets burned by it in later years, and on the threshold of old age tries to cure himself at home. People who have been badly burned are said sometimes to die of suffocation, as the rest of their skin cannot provide sufficient oxygen.

2. If I were a foreigner, I would not believe it possible. For us, the natives of Czechoslovakia, it is shaming. At least for those of us who have not become accustomed to it. It is possible to report: "True, some artists are unable to publish in public for thousands of people, but some of them still have at least several dozens spectators and readers in the unofficial culture. So, while this is a considerable handicap, it does mean that these artists have not been entirely liquidated."

3. All it needs is to implement declared principles and programmes, fulfil obligations and keep promises.

4. As much truthful information as possible, not only about the world at large but also about our own country. I should feel greatly encouraged if I could hope that *any* steps taken will, in practice, bring about some improvement here, and not a worsening of the situation.

5. Culture is as much as an indivisible part of the life of a society as are politics and economics. It is therefore impossible to envisage any improvement in this area without corresponding changes in the other sphere. Foreign institution can perhaps

help by ridding themselves of illusions, by getting to understand the true nature of certain systems and realising in what way they can in the future have a bearing on their own life.

Lenka Prochazkova

1) I belong to the generation which lived through the fateful year of 1968 on the threshold of adulthood – I was seventeen. Today I am twice that age, so I have lived a full half of my life in an unfree country. Before the political thaw, which really started in the mid-nineteen sixties, I was still a child, not taking much notice of political events and the accompanying cultural situation in Czechoslovakia. I mention all this because it seems to me remarkable that just a single intensely experienced year can influence one's opinions and destiny for the rest of one's life. I was lucky enough to be able still to study, albeit with great difficulties (I was obliged in my fourth year to transfer from the Faculty of Journalism, where the administration changed, to the Philosophical Faculty of Charles University) and I graduated in 1975. But I could find no employment in my profession, so that since 1977 I have been employed as a cleaner in a theatre. It is a very low paid job, but for me it has at least the advantage that when I finish work I can leave at once and devote the hours saved to writing. Apart from a few stories which I published, before I signed Charter 77, under a pseudonym in the Saturday supplements of newspapers, I have never been published publicly. My books appear only in *samizdat* and in emigré publishing houses, while some pieces have also appeared in German. It follows from this that, apart from groups of friends and a handful of chance readers, no-one in my country knows me as an author. However, I foresaw this situation from the moment when I agreed to my first book being copied for the edition "Petlice". I was also warned by friends of the consequences that would follow for me from this decision. I

have had several unpleasant interrogations and a few weeks ago my passport was also confiscated. Now I cannot even travel to socialist countries. As for the response to my books: the official Czech critics are, of course, not interested in my work, because it is not openly published, but the small band of *samizdat* journalists and critics follow it, so I cannot say that I have not received any comments and appraisals. However, I miss very much the response of a wide readership and I must admit that I also miss the feeling of having seen a book of mine in the window of a Prague bookshop. But I think that the older writers who once experienced that and have for many years been unable to publish in their country take it much harder, some have even stopped writing. The lack of interest among foreign publishers in Czech and Slovak literature is also partly to blame. Few of the banned writers are able to live on their fees or grants from abroad. In order to support our families, most of us have to take second, unattractive jobs (cleaners, watchman, storekeepers, stokers etc.). These jobs rob us of time, energy and peace of mind, but on the other hand they give us daily communication with people who do not belong to the select circle, and that ensures a balance in our understanding of the situation in the country.

We have one enormous advantage over the officially recognised authors in that we write as we consider necessary and we feel no censorship over us. For this great freedom which we have taken for ourselves we have, however, to pay every day. Some have given up over the years and departed permanently abroad. Such departures always bear heavily on those of us who in the meantime remain here, but we understand them, because we cannot judge the decisions of others by our own criteria.

2) I believe that the fate of Czech literature at home is not as dismal as it appears to many friends abroad. I certainly do not feel as if I was on a leaking ship which, while it has not yet sunk, can be expected to sink any minute. Our ship is not leaking, only its sails are torn. We are rowing, and since there are few of us our progress is slow. But we have not lost our com-

pass, in the hold there are still a number of casks of drinking water and the crew's discipline is voluntary, democratic. In plain words, I think that in dark times a national literature can be saved by just a few outstanding books. And I also think that a few books of this calibre have already been written. Naturally, this year's Nobel prize for Jaroslav Seifert is a great encouragement and comfort.

5) The answer is very simple. What foreign cultural institutions can do for us is to notice our works, translate and publish them. It is not just a matter of the financial benefit to the authors but of maintaining their self-confidence, or of feeling that they are not speaking into a void; there is also the fact that the authorities here do, after all, deal differently with a writer whose books are printed in several world languages than they do with one whose work is copied out purely for *samizdat*.

Milan Simecka

Out of the question posed in the survey I have pieced together a question of my own. It asks about the extent of the catastrophe visited upon Czechoslovak culture in its daily life, in its week-day dress in newspapers, journals, television and radio, in movie theatres and "Houses of Culture", in its role of the arbiter of daily human communication. And, paradoxical though it may sound, I want to say at the outset that it was not the culture for which we fear most, literature, drama, philosophy, that suffered most in the last fifteen year. Such culture had been driven into a sharply watched privacy, into a ghetto, as we tend to say, but there it survived in ingenious, wondrous forms and we might even say that it blossomed. With the effective help of our cultural exile and of the Western cultural public it came even to be known. The real catastrophe affected most of all the culture of our every day, the culture with which we make daily contact,

starting with the morning paper and ending with the evening TV program.

It is this cultural every day that has been crippled by the cramp that seized our country in the first years after 1968. It is a cramp that will not let us even breathe and move freely, much less to think and create in anything like a normal way. From its first year of maturity, my generation never tasted what is called freedom of culture. Perhaps that is why we do not even devote much thought to such a concept – it seems simply utopian. We know only the shocking difference between a culture which continues to struggle for free expression and culture which has given up any free message.

I am almost ashamed to say it, but right now I have a feeling that we might have been better off if we did not attempt to guarantee the freedom of culture with some sort of reformed socialism. Who knows, perhaps the most worthy task of culture is to struggle for a free message under the conditions of unfreedom. Still, it was that seizure, that trauma of political power, to which the cramp still relates. Every sign of that happy time, not only its conceptions, its ideas and its slogans, but even individual words, sentences and even unspoken expressions, remain coded into the memory of our supervisors. The second period of our modern cultural history continues to be hobbled with reference to what happened at half-time.

This reference affects our entire culture, from the centre to its margins. It is proving most burdensome precisely in our cultural everyday, that is, in that culture which our people consume daily together with its bread, meat, electric power and gasoline. There the devastation of the fifteen year cramp of our culture is most visible. I do not want to blaspheme but I would dare say that the symbolic expression of our cultural malaise is not primarily the list of muzzled authors and the imprisonment of a famous playwright, but rather the list of youthful television commentators who lie shamelessly into every home and the permanent public presence of hypocrisy, the uninspired clichés and the shameless stupidities. I can think of no other period in

our history when all such phenomena would be met with nothing but indifference, apathy and hidden sneer.

After so many years we are no longer sure whether we had really used to read five or six weeklies which were informative, intelligent and interesting even though they were not free. Today for fifteen years we have not had a single lively cultural weekly or a newspaper that would print something in addition to the press office releases. We have only the literary supplements of party weekly, for the most part not fit to read. Perhaps I am not wrong in saying that something like that can be found nowhere in our cultural history since the beginning of our rebirth at the start of the last century.

Some notorious expressions of our cultural life seem almost anecdotes. Every public cultural production must be provided with some artificial ideological pendant so that the subservience of culture to the state would never be lost from mind. Even horse races, for instance, are always dedicated to some anniversary in the struggles of the working class. The fifteen years have given rise to habits that sound common sense can no longer control.

We do not speak in public; speeches are always read. We seem to be losing the ability to communicate. Only in private circles do we still speak normally. Public expressions are dominated by an artificial language not far removed from Orwell's newspeak. In TV and radio interviews, the interviewee obediently repeats the entire question and supplies the cliché demanded. Children in school speak the same way. The paralysis of living culture has brought about a blockage of independent thought from the first school years.

Except for minor exception, there is no cultural criticism or even routine cultural information. We go to theatres and movies on the basis of a recommendation from friends. The Czechoslovak citizen could learn nothing from domestic sources about the success of Forman's film, "Amadeus," even though it was made in part in Czechoslovakia and a number of our artists took part in it.

These intimately familiar absurdities of our cultural life cannot, alas, be dismissed as marginal anomalies while we console ourselves that the National Theatre plays to full houses and that the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra is as good as years ago. It is precisely the degenerate cultural everyday that has a negative effect on our national consciousness. A crippled culture, sharply watched and worn down, in addition, by self-censorship presents the public with an ideologically adjusted reality of our world and of the world beyond our experience. Such a deformed image of reality, remade to suit a purpose, is taking the place of actual lived experience and gives rise to schizophrenic states in our national consciousness as well as to a deep distrust for the moral sense of being which culture has sought to express since time immemorial. Hence the general moral apathy and massive turn to easily calculable material values – something about which even those who, fifteen years ago, subordinated culture to pragmatic political needs, complain about today. They weep over milk they themselves had spilled.

It is surely understandable that the most devastating effect of the cultural cramp is on the new generation which no longer remembers the culture that struggled for free expression. This generation, to be sure, looks up to the culture of the sixties with the same admiration as our generation did to the culture of the twenties and the thirties, but thinks of it as a more or less lost paradise. The demands of the mass media leave the younger generation with ever less time for reflection and lead it to read almost industrially. We can count our good books on the fingers of one hand, but we export television serials. Only in the fringes of the broad field of cultural everydayness are there signs of hope in the form of small stages, musical groups, covert recitals, common readings, philosophical sessions in private homes, private exhibits and other phenomena that do not depend on our culture yet live for its sake.

Should the European Cultural Forum contribute to a freer flow of cultural values, it can be only to the good for the Czechoslovak culture. How to do it concretely, that is surely

what those who consider the possibilities know best. We all know, though, that culture is not all what is at stake. The difficult situation of the Czechoslovak culture is in part a product of the difficult situation in which we all live as inhabitants of a divided continent. Not to forget us, that should not be just an act of good will. It would be better if interest in Czech culture flowed from the recognition that the story of Czechoslovak culture, like that proverbial drop of water, reflects many bad possibilities of our present-day world.

Dominik Tatarka

1. The organised, i.e. systematic terror against Slovak literature and the Slovak Communist intelligentsia began already in the fifties, just a few years after the "Victorious February of 1948". After they accused the poet Novomeský, later to be named a National Artist, and today's highest representative of the Party and government of bourgeois nationalism, the Party organised a conference of Slovak Writers at which they unanimously condemned another four "bourgeois nationalist" enemies – and it is no coincidence that these were two of our finest literary critics and two of our best prose writers. I was one of the four, being at the time the author of some very popular and highly regarded books. My fellow-writers unanimously condemned me and sent me to do manual labour.

What was I guilty of?

In 1953 I wrote a political satire, *The Demon of Consent*, which, according to one of our academicians and National Artists, has done honour to Slovak literature. The book appeared in 1957, having been approved by today's chief Party ideologue, Vasil Bilak.

My other crimes?

On 21 August 1968, that tragic day in Czechoslovak history, I made a public speech in a Bratislava square. I spoke about free-

dom, and to cheer up my fellow-countrymen I allowed myself a little prophesy, saying that on the spot where I was standing, which was now empty since they took down the Stalin monument, there would one day stand a statue of liberty. I watched as people demonstrated, the entire city was shouting as I was: We're defending our freedom.

But what has been my greatest sin? That I have refused to recant, I have not kissed anyone's hand, humbly to thank them for our defeat and humiliation. And I refused to demean myself by writing a recantatory introduction to the volume of my collected works which was being prepared for publication.

The community of Slovak writers has been broken, both morally and materially, at various meetings and conferences, and finally at political screenings after the invasion. Today, there is no such thing as a community of Slovak writers. Everything has been taken away from us: our publishing house, magazine, fund, and summer retreat.

They have liquidated the "Matica slovenská" institute with its modern publishing house and modern printing house and hundred-thousand-strong readers club. Today, the Matica is just an archive. The flame of our national consciousness, our literature and our writers have been systematically stifled.

As for me personally?

Ever since the invasion in 1968 I have been living in the prison of so-called administrative measures. To protect the state's interests, they took away my passport, gave me the smallest possible pension, denied me the opportunity of taking supplementary work in order to prevent me meeting people, my phone and my correspondence are monitored, my mail being delivered late or sometimes not at all. All my books have been removed from the libraries and bookshops. I am not allowed to publish anything, not even under a pen name. They did not even allow my name to be mentioned, not even derogatively. I ceased to exist. I was often called to the police station for tiresome, insulting interrogations about trifling matters, for instance had I been to Prague and whom had I met there.

2. The military and political occupation of our country is being strengthened by Sovietisation, both in national and cultural affairs. This is being felt most severely in the East Slovak region. The Greek Orthodox Church has been forcibly converted to Russian Orthodoxy, under the direct authority of the Metropolitan of Moscow. Those priests and bishops who refused to convert were imprisoned and liquidated. Ukrainian schools have become Russian schools, the Ukrainian University in Prešov is now a Russian university. It is possible that half of Slovakia will be declared a Ukrainian Soviet Republic, Sovietised Ukrainians form a privileged caste in both the police force and the army. In the offices of the Slovak Ministry of the Interior there are portraits of Commissar Dzerzinski instead of the official portraits of our head of state.

3. State power is demonstrably, outrageously hostile to the national and historical consciousness of a small, powerless nation. I don't expect any good to come of it. The authorities still consider me a class enemy, yet I have no influence whatever. The little that I can do, I do illegally and for my own benefit.

4. What do I miss the most? The opportunity to read, to see, to meet people I feel close to, with whom I have things to talk about. The Czech dissidents. I suffer because I cannot read all their works. It would be marvellous if this literature were published and could circulate freely. European cultural forums are a great help to us, but I don't believe they have the power to overcome our isolation. After 1968 our oppressors realised only too well that even the slightest relaxation would be dangerous, that it would lead to cultural and political upheavals on the part of our humiliated nations.

5. Czechoslovak culture is not stagnating, it is alive, ridding itself of provincialism, of sycophancy, it speaks to our people here at home and abroad, and it is even gaining a world reputation. Foreign institutions and individuals will do us a great service if they produce well-informed studies showing the peoples of Europe that we too are part of Europe, to quote Milan Kundera. What is needed is that our books should be translated in

greater numbers and more speedily, our art exhibited. It would be ideal if Europe took account of us in the same way as it has taken account of the Poles.

Ludvik Vaculik

1. The conditions described forced me to a modesty which is quite becoming but, at the same time, they have robbed me, which is quite irritating. I have kissed good-by (without grief, since it was a gradual process) all that makes a journalist's or a writers's life exceptional, exciting and, so to speak, fragrant:

a) having a name and being able to comment, b) having access to informations, to interesting places and exceptional people, c) striving for success and sensing achievement, d) travelling and studying, e) being able to devote oneself for a time to some assigned or self-assigned task and then perhaps to disappear again into peace, silence and anonymity.

I find it humiliating that here in my country I cannot earn a living by what I do best. It bothers me that I have to leave my affairs for the most part up to others, usually friends, but often strangers abroad, and think it has a corrupting effect on me.

Even though I write for local readers, I have increasingly to expect that the response and the honorarium will come from the reader abroad. That awareness encourages me to expand my writing beyond the limits of my village, but the inability to travel and to come to know the world around us presses me back down to the Czech village common. For that reason, I often cannot tell when I am being witty and original and when simply interestingly dumb.

It is painful to feel responsibility, as a responsible man, for what goes on around me, but to have no influence on it at all, as a worthless man. I should like to warn all who vote Communist parties in democratic countries that that is perhaps the greatest penalty which awaits them, should they win.

It is often very difficult for me to retain an interest in people and in things, to cultivate grand thoughts and to muster the willingness to help someone.

It takes a great strength, for which a man must be grateful to his partents, to those who raised him, to his family and friends, to keep a level head and a balanced judgement, sometimes just to keep the courage to face each new day, when for years it appears that there is no point in any good work, and so even in any good book. – At times, though, it is a relief: that a book, all the books one could write, do not matter as much as we once thought. Books are no big deal. (That is, they don't change the way the ball bounces.)

Yet at the same time one knows that it makes even less sense to do something other than to write: and so one must write but expect virtually nothing from it personally. Reading older Czech literature, reminiscences, correspondence and fortunately chosen pages from history helps a bit.

2. This question is virtually inseparable from the first. As a "member of the cultural community of the nation" I have to, in addition to point 1. above, struggle with fear for our national existence, to wonder whether there is any point to it all . . . and, for now, to resist the blind force or perhaps the villanous plan (just to be cautious, I take back the word "villanous") that seek to transform culture from a collective consciousness and conscience to a decorative curlicue on the facade of power.

Before the members of the "cultural communities" of other nations I tend to feel embarassed by the thought of who represents us, what kind of context we live in and what we look like, epecially since I know that those happier nations are no better than we are, only did not fall into someone else's stew.

Our national cultural community must live with the permanent insult of having to put up with arrogant overseers whom neither mother for father nor teacher inculcated with a respect for the work and thought of their fellow man and who cannot understand that culture is something autonomous.

I do not mean to imply that our state does not in any sense take a positive interest in the results of cultural creativity or that no good works have been created under its supervision. Only what I said twenty years ago still holds – they are created in spite of, not because!

3. This question is meaningful only as a gesture of courtesy. Our "state power" and "its official institutions" are not conscious of any depressing and critical state of our culture nor have any desire to do something about it. Just the opposite! The present state of our culture is their handiwork, this very year they are celebrating it!

4. Personally, it is travel I miss most. More generally our cultural life is also crippled by the fact that neither those who produce culture nor the cultural public are permitted to come to know new, experimental, problematic, original or elitist and generally exceptional works of foreign origin, west or east, that seek to defy convention, consumptions or commerce.

From the European Cultural Forum I expect nothing at all. Whatever may be said or done there, it can have no favorable effect on something as stubborn and at the same time as fearful, narrowminded and dependent as people who only know how to command, order and "approve", but do not themselves create anything and permit no freedom to anything, be it a song or a graffiti, a night in the woods or a housing cooperative, a brook or a tree.

5. Nor foreign cultural institutions or personalities can in any way contribute to overcoming the "inert point of Czechoslovak culture" as long as the counterparts with whom they deal seek political advantage in any concession. Our culture would help itself fast enough if they would only leave it alone!

* * *

The questions in this survey appear to me as legitimate. However, they also appear to me as vain as the answers. It is as if

you were to ask what a cow can do for the flowers in a meadow. There is a simple answer: it could stop eating them. But can a cow do that! No way! For that reason there is no point in inviting it to some conference, seminar or symposium about meadow flowers. The cow will gladly come, just for show, but anything it might say or sign there is worth a cow dropping.

(By the way of an explanation for the readers who know that usually I express myself in a mild and consiliatory tone, and are surprised. It was a cow who, on April 23rd, asked for this tone.)

Josef Zverina

Czechoslovakia's cultural conditions are truly disastrous. If we accept Václav Cerný's definition of culture as "a conglomerate of all the forms of love and art, of thought and action, which enable man to be ever freer and more creative, to be ever more human", then our culture has been impoverished of whole areas of philosophy and theology, of such cultural attitudes as freedom and love. The majority (seen from the standpoint of quality) of our artists and thinkers are living in exile, the best of the minority here have been silenced. Our culture is being steered by the politicians, administrators and policemen towards the shallows of ideological servitude. Those artists who collaborate with the powers-that-be are either second-rate people, or if they are of some standing, then they have to submit and serve the regime.

While the lot of the creative people is certainly not easy, we should not lament too much over it but remember that there are also the recipients of art and culture – readers, listeners and viewers. They, too, are part of our cultural life. And here I believe things are better. It is moving to see the queues outside the bookshops every Thursday, resembling those in front of the butchers' shops on Fridays. And these anonymous consumers of culture know how to be critical: as soon as anything of value

appears in the bookshops, the news spreads by mysterious means and the books are snapped up, just as the theatres and cinemas fill up with people who in these cases do not have to be coerced to go. True, the majority of our audiences favour the sub-culture industry, but that is the same the world over. In this country I would say their numbers have not grown, as opposed to earlier times, on the contrary it seems to me that we have more critical readers and viewers than before, that there is a growing appreciation of true worth in art.

To this part of our public we owe the very best. Those who create works of art have a greater than ever responsibility for their spiritual well-being. They are getting very little, but that which they do get they love and thrive on. For this reason, the best help we can receive from abroad is the best possible art.

Nor do I see our isolation in too tragic a light. Genuine culture unites us far more than whatever divides us, or with whatever they have divided us. This communality of the spirit cannot be bounded by geographical frontiers, it cannot be confined by prison walls. It was in the prison that we came to learn this truth. That was our greatest strength, so that we did not feel that we were finished, thrown out on the rubbish-heap of history, as the state representatives tried to tell us. Those of us with religious convictions feel this spiritual link with all decent people particularly strongly.

To discover the meaning of suffering and to stand up for what is worthwhile with all our might, all our mind, and all our heart is better than to lament and give way to pessimism and despair. I only wish this was far more widely applied in our culture, but I fear that some people have abandoned the sources of pure water and are wallowing the mire of sex, horror, and nihilism. This last was named by Heidegger as "the most unwelcome guest" – as for the rest, I'd recommend a reading of the accusation in Jude's letter (v. 12b–13).

Those who create genuine, nonconformist art deserve our respect, the more so as they have to pay a high price for doing so. It is of no importance if the artist is living abroad or eking

out an existence here. Our respect is their honorarium, in the real sense of the word, for their courage, their incorruptibility, their truthfulness and their love.

W.X.

The conditions in which blacklisted Czechoslovak writers have to live are not, as far as I know, in any way exceptional, nor particularly dramatic. A writer who confines himself to fiction could, hitherto, be confident that he would not be imprisoned, even if his work appeared abroad, whether in Czech or in a foreign language; all that would happen to him would be the occasional interrogation by members of the secret police, members of his family would be persecuted in their jobs or at school, his phone would be tapped and his mail monitored, he himself might be placed under police surveillance.

In extreme cases, prison is the price a writer must pay if he indulges in the more journalistic, cultural-political genres and expresses opinion or publishes facts not approved by the powers-that-be. These kinds of risk – which can of course change for the worse at any moment – we all have to take into account and learn to live with. I have certainly done so, and therefore feel reluctant to think or write about it. What I cannot come to terms with, however, is the impossibility of using the full facilities of various archives and libraries, the difficulty I experience in getting information and the authentic versions of cultural-political and philosophical articles and essays (not to mention books) from abroad. As time goes by, I feel increasingly a kind of perverted shame at my own lack of information.

Nevertheless, judging by the meagre information that does get to me, it would seem clear that the catastrophic conditions afflicting our Czechoslovak culture cannot be viewed in isolation from the threatened state of European culture as a whole; many

authors living in the West anxiously draw attention to this. And so I sit here in Moravia and, in my isolation, cannot but conclude that the causes of our contemporary problems are far older and more complex than all of us would like to admit. I base my view on the experience of a citizen of a small nation. Throughout history, the weak and the powerless have had a raw deal in Europe. As Christianity expanded, there arose organisers, politicians, plotters, philosophers, as well as benefactors of the arts which flourished with their encouragement – but morally, as Christians, they left much to be desired from the very outset. In every European state, in Britain as much as in Bohemia and Moravia, the dawn of history is marked by countless murders and merciless wars, which had the blessing of the Church hierarchy. Economic and cultural progress was partly based on robbery and led to a profligacy that was to find its critics and reformers: St Francis of Assisi, Wycliff, Hus. Catholic Europe could not forgive the Czechs for Jan Hus and the Hussites: it was the first, for a time at least successful, attempt to bring Christian moral values back into daily life. Though ultimately it was doomed to failure. Several decades later, the soldiers of Europe's Catholic rulers were slaughtering hundreds of thousands of people and annihilating entire cultures in newly-discovered America. Christianity, which was intended to give the world a new morality, did create the conditions for material and spiritual development, but lost its moral authority along the way. There there came the time of, to put it in contemporary terms, *real Christianity*, both Catholic and Protestant, which had learned to adapt in accordance with big power requirements, and which indeed itself came to play, if not the first then certainly the second violin in the murderous game of big power politics. This went on for so long, and in so blind a fashion, that God and religion were in the end discarded as unwanted and useless in a revolution. But reason and its socially more just construct of society lost their moral authority much faster than the previous era. Murderous progress "on a scientific basis" conquers the world, is successful and triumphant – and yet

it is all to end in the irrational catastrophe of the First World War, which once and for all destroyed the concept of reason and science as possible guarantees of a decent human existence. What has Europe to be proud of, except its constantly improving technology? Oh yes, its culture, its literature, which however unambiguously reveals the moral laxity, cruelty, cynicism, and – long before Orwell – the schizophrenic thought processes of modern man. And who is to blame, if there is neither God nor the Devil?

Marxism arrived just in time for one more attempt to be made to save the prestige of the Europeans. Evil was found not to originate in human nature but in circumstances. Everything was going to be fine, everyone would be moral, once the means of production were in the right hands, as soon as private ownership, social classes, exploitation and inequality were no more. It is, I believe, in this suggestively simple tactic that we have to look for the reason why Marxism, socialism, communism, and what is today known as a leftist orientation are still attractive, especially in the West, in the eyes of intellectuals. Why almost everyone has to try it out for him or herself. There is no one left to offer hope, except the Marxists. Those people who are capable of thinking about the problems of existence instinctively seek an answer which would offer them at least a modicum of optimism and relieve man of responsibility for the horrors he has perpetrated. Marxism is the last straw at which they clutch in their anxiety: man would not be such an incredible, schizophrenic monster if circumstances had not made him what he is. Let us simply change the circumstances, and we shall create a new man. We want to believe in him. That is why all those clever and otherwise sceptical gentlemen, all those writers and thinkers of world renown, allowed themselves – and in many cases still do – to be enchanted, then to "see the light" sooner or later, i.e. to let their true instinct as artists prevail and see things as they really are. And they see that this last, socially "most just" concept, this straw at which they had been clutching, this light of hope shining bright, has led to a situation in

which it is impossible reliably to order the everyday life of society, much less to safeguard human rights and liberties.

So has come a time when no more excuses are left. No God, no ideology, no moral code – all we have is the heir of European traditions and European civilisation, the being who, with hands covered in fresh blood, conquered the continents, created the foundations of scientific disciplines, built new machines and painted beautiful Madonnas, erected cathedrals and burned innocents at the stake. Such is he, and all this is deeply rooted in him, regardless of history and nationality – there are no guilty and innocent nations, there is no nation that would be incapable of wrongdoing and murder, all have had their execution blocks and torture chambers, their bloody battlefields, their Lidices and, potentially at least, even their concentration camps, which they may have tried out somewhere else than in Europe. Arguments about who caused what evil in Europe or in the world, who is responsible for it today (when the finger points at Communism and the Russians) seem to me simply nonsensical; the historical connexions are so evident (here, in Czechoslovakia, for instance, we know only too well who was ultimately responsible for allowing Hitler to play his part on the international stage) that all we can do today is to analyse and try to define them, but it would be foolish to cast doubt on them. Western Europe, Central Europe, Eastern Europe – everywhere we find the same human being, to this day, despite all ideological and administrative experiments, unable to change his deeply cleft nature, to build effective barriers against his cancerously spread selfishness, to respect the basic rules of human relationships, which have been established and acknowledged for centuries but never actually respected in practice.

Everywhere it is the same human being depicted in all his nakedness, accurately and exclusively, by great art. That is the reason every society has always tried to win over its great artists, why it has tried to corrupt them, sensing the moral superiority of their truth – hating and celebrating them at one and the same time; expelling them to the periphery, persecuting

them while they lived and paid homage to them once they were safely dead. I am surprised at the complaints made by Alexander Solzhenitsyn and Andrei Sinyavsky, who tell of the hatred that has followed them even in their exile – surely this is exactly in keeping with the good old European (and thus also Russian) tradition, just as was the case with their predecessors whenever they, in obedience to their talent and the unique mission of their art, wrote something that revealed the true face of man.

The hatred harboured by the governing circles in the countries of real socialism towards art and artists is obvious, their repression well known and capable of proof – while elsewhere in the world it may make do without repression and persecution, yet it may be even more effective in its consequences for art, and thus more dangerous. Modern means of communication and modern reproduction techniques are working overtime to build a wall of consumer rubbish between true, disturbing and critical art and the reader or viewer; rubbish which fails to show us man as he really is, his deep anxieties and contradictions, but instead presents us with a manipulated being and its predictable and solvable pseudo-problems. It is little short of incredible how similar are the TV series set in a "working environment" that I see on Viennese television and our home-grown products – not to speak of purely entertaining programmes. And so, exposed to this pressure by the manipulation and endless consumption of inferior quality goods, genuine European culture is on its way out, becoming strange and difficult to understand, its audience growing increasingly apathetic to it. Man no longer wishes to get to know himself – that is too painful an experience since wherever he looks he sees proof of his own guilt. And there are no excuses left.

Perhaps we can find some comfort in the thought that mankind cannot permanently exist without great work of art and culture, so that it will either perish or it will rediscover them and find new ways to return to them. This of course applies in equal measure to Czech culture and literature. As regards what we ourselves can do to help preserve it, we can only rely on the

magnanimity of people in responsible and leading positions, regardless of state frontiers and political groupings. We need reliable, undistorted information, the complete and original texts of important philosophical, cultural-historical and cultural-political books, essays, polemics; what we lack, on the other hand, is a representative, diverse and yet united platform, perhaps a periodical linked to a book series. I can imagine how difficult it would be to find the resources for such an undertaking when, in exile, no one is forced to strive for unity; but where there is too much diversity, the common purpose tends to go by the board and quality suffers. What we do **not** need are new illusions and myths, rehashed versions of the old ideologies. We are what we are. Perhaps the knowledge that space on Earth is limited will at last force us to admit this and to come to terms with ourselves and with the various European traditions.

The respondent expressed the wish to stay anonymous.

Y.Z.

1. I can only answer this question for my own person, for everyone will react differently to the given situation – some may see it as an out and out catastrophe, others instead as an impulse for even greater efforts in their creative work. Some as enslavement, others as a release from all normal obligations, that is, as a liberation. All these last 15 years I have been endeavouring to treat it as the second. A writer – as opposed, say, to a film director or an actor – can write (and indeed there are many such instances in history) even when faced with official disapproval and persecution, writers have been prohibited from publishing, banished or imprisoned. I follow with interest the unequal struggle between the samizdat editions and smuggled books from the émigré publishers on the one hand, and the output of our mass media, including the state publishing houses, on the other.

I may be wrong, since I can hardly claim to be an unbiased observer, but it seems to me that as long as we have something to say, we stand a good chance of winning this struggle. True, the regime has forced us into a certain isolation – there can be no doubt about this, and isolation is not exactly conducive to creation. Yet I do believe that it is in our (my) power to overcome this isolation. It is my view that under all circumstances we must always try and gain something positive. While life in the West is full of ideas and impulses, information and controversy, perhaps we in our situation have more of an opportunity to treat whatever impulses come our way more intensely and profoundly, we have in that sense a quieter environment in which to work. And after all, we don't live in Siberia, so that with a little effort we can at least passively participate in the world's doings.

3. Those in power are able, should they wish, to change the situation overnight. They can, for instance, abolish the list of banned writers. They can make the actual content of a book the criterion for its publication – it is no secret that many of the books which now appear abroad, published by the émigré houses, could just as easily come out here, if only they were signed by someone but the author, who happens to be on the blacklist. I have never wished to influence official cultural policy, or rather I can only influence it by means of what I write. The fact that certain works cannot be published while others, undoubtedly inferior in quality, keep being reissued can under certain circumstances at least cause some embarrassment to those who are responsible for our cultural policy.

A similar embarrassment, if not difficulties, is experienced by our powers-that-be thanks to the existence of independently created works in a society where everything is supposed to be officially sanctioned and directed from above. Let me repeat that I believe that it might be more dangerous for this independent art if our rulers attempted to achieve some kind of *modus vivendi* (according to their lights) than if we continue as we are today.

4. It is difficult to say what one misses most – we lack everything. And at different times and under different circumstances we find we miss something more than other things. We lack the opportunity to travel abroad without fearing that we shall not be allowed to return home. Freely to correspond. We don't have literary magazines, no means of carrying on discussions about various problems. We cannot obtain books and periodicals from abroad, not even to borrow them in the library. Foreign radio (such as Radio Free Europe and Deutsche Welle) is jammed, particularly when it deals with Czech affairs. It is impossible not only to buy émigré publications but even to bring them legally into the country, and the same applies to a number of foreign language books. Our cinemas, theatres, television fail to show anything of interest from the world's contemporary output – only commercial rubbish is usually imported from the West . . . but why continue? All this is well known by now. What can the Cultural Forum do? Nothing, or at least not more than to counter the demagogy of official representatives, who customarily operate with the number of titles published here, the print numbers, as if artistic creation could be defined by means of graphs like the growth of refrigerator or TV sets production. They should keep asking why such and such authors have vanished from the libraries. Why is Kundera, just as Vaculik, not published in Prague, why does Durrenmatt and Beckett not appear on the stage, why is Heinrich Böll and Graham Greene not published, why can *Amadeus* or the latest Fellini not be shown in the cinemas? Why not one of the 30 most prominent Czech writers has been abroad in the last 15 years? Or rather, why have the two who **did** not been allowed to return?

5. Come to Czechoslovakia, ask what has happened to the banned writers, some of whom are well known in the West. Go, if you like, to an official banquet and ask why so-and-so is not there, request that he or she be invited and, if this request is turned down, leave yourself. Keep asking questions and protesting. Refuse to accept official excuses. Write about the situation

when you get back home.

Consider Czech writers (I mean *all* genuine Czech writers, whether they are banned or not) as part of European culture, their work as part of the European cultural heritage. Translate their works. Ask us questions and expect answers which are not just of 'folkloric' interest. In recent years I have hundreds of times been asked political questions, when people wanted me to tell them what the repression in Czechoslovakia was like, but only very exceptionally did someone talk to me in a way that he might have used when talking to a colleague from the West. By this attitude – however well meant – they actually denigrate us, reducing Czechoslovakia to a colony also where cultural matters are concerned.

In other words, institutions as well as individuals can best render us assistance by making an effort to get to know our work and art, pass on the information in their own country and help to make it better known to their fellow-countrymen.

The respondent expressed the wish to stay anonymous.

III. Reflections

HAVEL, Vaclav

. . . The overall question, then, is this: What profound intellectual and moral impotence will the nation suffer tomorrow, following the castration of its culture today?

. . . I am speaking of that open warrant for the arrest of anything inwardly and, therefore, in the deepest sense "cultural". I am speaking of the warrant of the arrest of culture, issued by your government.

From the open letter to Dr. HUSAK, President of the Republic.

"Encounter", September 1976.

Jaroslav Seifert

Being a Poet Means Taking a stand

Question: You said that the poet should be the conscience of the nation. What does that imply?

Answer: That poets ought to listen to the voice within and not lie –which they have done. I said that in connection with the Writers' Conference in 1956. It is obvious that poets and writers of prose fiction are much more engaged with the truth than painters and musicians because they work with words and speech; obviously, too, we are talking about the truth that lies beneath the surface, that exists solidly behind the appearances of things.

Furthermore, the readership encounters the author's words with a great willingness to trust, to believe; the readers are bound to believe that they are going to gain in experience, they seek to identify with the author's words; they want to find expressions of their own experience in literature. *But* they want to see that experience enriched, structured, expressed by an artist, a poet, so that it will acquire a new value.

However, I would like to go further, to generalize this demand on the poet's being the conscience of the nation to include everything that is connected with the truth. Most simply, this means that every person should live and act as a responsible human being in relation to one's self, to one's children and to society as a whole. That everyone should view his or her life in an historical context and live as a human being responsible to history.

Importantly, too, this applies not only to poets and other writers but also to *all* intellectuals. We have to live in harmony with the reality we know, the reality perceived through our own wisdom and our own hearts: we *must not* live by lies.

Q: You have been accused of a great deal from official

quarters – among other things "subjectivity" and "pessimism".

A: Yes, well, such accusations have cropped up fairly regularly. I was assigned such attributes both in the 50s and in the 70s when optimism about the future was obligatory in our country.

My own background is proletarian, and for a long time I regarded myself as a poet of the proletariat. But as one grows older, one discovers other values and other worlds. In my case, this included the discovery of sensualism, and I can't see anything pessimistic about that.

Q: Do you feel free when you write?

A: I don't feel free when I write, but I write in order to feel free. All language activities can be seen as efforts that will result in achieving freedom, in experiencing its joy and sensualism. What one is seeking in language is the most elementary freedom – to be able to express one's innermost thoughts. That is the basis of all kinds of freedom, and in the social context it eventually takes the form of political freedom.

When I write, I try not to lie – that's all. If one cannot tell the truth, at least one must not lie – just keep silent.

From an interview by Zagorka Zivkovic in Dagens Nyheter, 5 December, 1984.

Milan Kundera

I am Weighing My Words Carefully

After the Russian invasion, some two hundred Czech writers were silenced, along with a pleiad of Czech film-makers admired all over the world at that time, dozens of painters, actors and theatrical directors. Thousands of scientists were fired from their jobs (including 145 historians), hundreds of university professors (from the Prague Philosophical Faculty alone, there were fifty professors and assistant professors), and along with them, hundreds of thousands of unknown people in schools, newspapers, offices, hospitals, laboratories. Some were imprisoned. Others were harassed to death. (Poet Stanislav Neumann took his life. My friend, novelist Jan Prochazka, succumbed to the furious campaign of the media. Philosopher Jan Patočka, spiritual son to Husserl, was seized by a fatal heart attack following police interrogation, etc.). Still others felt obliged to emigrate (famous theatrical directors Otomar Krejca and Alfred Radok, the greatest Czech conductor Karel Ancerl, film-makers Milos Forman, Ivan Passer, Vojtech Jasný, Jan Nemeč, etc.). The majority remained in the land, deprived of their livelihoods and expelled from public intellectual life. Since then, the situation has not changed.

After the defeat of the revolution in 1848, in the darkest time of the Austrian monarchy, two Czech university professors were expelled from the university. At the time, there was a huge scandal over it.

I am weighing my words carefully: in its duration, extent and consistency, the massacre of Czech culture following 1968 has had no analogue in the country's history since the Thirty Years' War.

Excerpts from an interview in Le Monde, 19 January 1979.

Václav Havel

Six Asides About Culture

I

While I consider it highly unlikely, I cannot exclude the theoretical possibility that tomorrow I shall have some fabulous idea and that, within the week, I shall have written my best play yet. It is equally possible that I shall never write anything again.

When even a single author – who is not exactly a beginner and so might be expected to have at least a rough idea of his abilities and limits – cannot foresee his literary future, how could anyone foresee what the overall development of culture will be?

If there is a sphere whose very nature precludes all prognostication, it is that of culture, and especially of the arts and human sciences. (In the natural sciences we can, perhaps, make at least general predictions).

There is a countless number of possibilities for culture in our country: perhaps the police pressure will intensify, perhaps many more artists and scholars will go into exile, many others will lose all desire to do anything at all and the last remnants of imagination with it and the entire so called "secondary culture" will gradually die out while the "primary" will become entirely sterile. Or again, perhaps that "secondary culture" will suddenly, unexpectedly blossom to an unexpected extent and form, the world will wonder and the government will be thunderstruck. Or again, perhaps the "primary culture" will massively awaken, perhaps wholly improbable "new waves" will arise within it and the "secondary culture" will quietly, inconspicuously and gladly merge into its shadow. Perhaps wholly original creative talents and spiritual initiatives will suddenly emerge on the horizon, expanding somewhere in a wholly new space between the two present cultures so that both will only stare in amazement. Or again, perhaps nothing new will come up at all, per-

haps everything will remain as it is: Diel will go on writing his serials and Vaculík his feuilletons. We could continue listing such possibilities as long as we please without the least reason to consider one of them distinctly more probable than any other.

The mystery of culture's future is a reflection of the very mystery of the human spirit.

That is the reason why, having been asked to reflect on the prospects of Czechoslovak culture, I shall not write about its prospects, limiting myself to a few, more or less polemical comments in the margins of its present. If anyone chooses to derive something from them for the future, that will be his business and on his head be it.

II

In its time, the state of culture in Czechoslovakia had been described rather suggestively as a "Biafra of the Spirit". Many authors, myself included, turned, when considering just what happened in Czechoslovak culture after 1968, to the metaphor of the grave-yard.

I must admit that recently, as I came across some such metaphor, something within me rebelled.

We should, at least, after all these years, specify the area to which the metaphor is supposed to apply.

It is certainly entirely valid with respect to the comportment of the powers that be in the area of culture with the so called "cultural policy". Something is constantly being banned, now as then, virtually nothing is permitted, the suppressed journals continue to be banned, manipulated institutions continue to be manipulated, and so on and on. The powers that be really act like a grave-digger while virtually all that is lively and yet had to be permitted lives almost by accident, almost by mistake, almost only on a word of honor, ever and surely in spite of endless complications and with no assurance about tomorrow.

What is true about the will of the power, however, need not be true of the real spiritual potential of our community. However suppressed beneath the public surface, however silenced and even however frustrated, in some way that potential is still here. Somewhere, somehow it lives on. And no one, surely, deserves to be called a corpse.

It simply does not seem to me that we have all laid down and died. By no means do I see only graves and tombstones around me.

For me, personally, something attests to this even more than the hundreds of *samizdat* volumes, tens of typewritten magazines, of private or semiofficial exhibits, seminars, concerts and what else – theatres crammed full of people grateful for every at least minimally meaningful word, phrenetically applauding every knowing smile from the stage – had we played to such houses in the early sixties, I can't imagine how we would have managed to complete any play in any theatre where I then worked!

There are lines waiting all night at some theatres when the month's tickets are about to go on sale, there are lines at book stores when one of Hrabal's books, emasculated though it may be, is about to appear. An expensive book on astronomy is printed in a hundred thousand copies – it would hardly find that many readers in the U.S. Young people travel half way across the republic to attend a concert about which no one can be sure that it will take place at all. All that and so much more – is that really a grave-yard? Is that really a "Biafra of the spirit"?

I don't know what will happen in the culture of the years to come. I do know, though, what will decide it, if not entirely, then to a great extent – on the future development of the confrontation between the grave-yard intentions of the powers that be and this irrepressible cultural hunger of the community's living organism, or perhaps of that sector which has not yet given up on everything. Nor would I dare predict what might awaken, given this or that change in our circumstances, and what would happen in that sector which today appears to have given up.

III

I have read somewhere that martyrdom is better adapted to a totalitarian system than thought.

I am a realist and as such far from the patriotic illusion that the world, due to its invincible ignorance, remains deprived of some fabulous intellectual achievements waiting here on every corner. And yet something in me rebels even against the claim that history has condemned us to the unenviable role of mere unthinking experts at suffering, the poorer relations of the people of the "free world" who do not have to suffer and so have time to think.

First of all it does not seem to me that too many people here are suffering from some kind of masochistic delight or for want of better ways to kill time. Besides, what tends to be designated as "martyrdom" – let's admit it, with a slightly contemptuous undertone – appears to me in our country neither a particularly common pastime nor for the most part just a blind rush into an abyss. We live in a land of notorious realism, far removed from, say, the Polish courage to sacrifice. I would therefore be very hesitant about denying the capacity for reflection to those who might be suspected of martyrdom among us. Quite the contrary, it seems to me that reflection has been a prominent accompaniment of the Czech type of "martyrdom". Think of Jan Patočka: is it not something symptomatic that the best known victim of what is called "the struggle for human rights" in our country was our most important philosopher? And, again, as I follow from a distance various individual deeds and social upheavals of "the free world", I am not at all sure that penetrating thought is what always, inevitably and most distinctly marks them. I fear that, quite the contrary, far too often idea comes limping behind enthusiasm. And might that just not be because for the most part no great price need be paid for that enthusiasm? Do thought and sacrifice really exclude each other so radically? Might not, under some circumstances, sacrifice be

simple the consequence of a thought, its proof or, conversely, its moving force?

In short, I simply would not dare claim that we think less in our country because we also suffer. I believe, on the contrary, that with a bit of good will a good bit of general relevance could be derived from our thought, and perhaps precisely because it was bought at a price and because it grew from something difficult. Admittedly, that thought is often tangled, stuttering and discontinuous. The easy virtuosity of globally digestible bestsellers is in truth not particularly typical of our texts. The English elegance or French charm, alas, are really far more traditionally English or French and are not native of our somewhat heavy-footed central Europe, though I would not derive any more from that than that that is the way it is.

I do not know to what extent the circumstance that we do occasionally think will affect our prospects for the better, but it surely will not harm them. Nor will it harm them if here and there somebody will not be intimidated by the danger that his hard-headedness will bring on him the appellation "martyr".

IV

Just what is a "parallel culture"? Nothing more and nothing less than a culture which for this or that reason will not, cannot or may not reach out to the public through the media which fall under the control of the power of the state, which in a totalitarian state includes all publishing houses, presses, exhibition halls, theatres and concert halls, scholarly institutes and so on and on. This culture therefore makes use only of what is left over – typewriters, private studios, apartments, barns, etc.

Evidently the "parallel" nature is defined wholly externally and implies nothing directly about quality, esthetics or some ideology.

I think it important to stress this rather trivial fact only because, in recent times, in particular in the exile press, there ha-

ve appeared various critiques of the "parallel culture" as a whole, possible only because their authors were not aware of precisely this trivial definition of what it means to be "parallel".

Oversimplifying just a bit, such authors followed a common reasoning. The official culture is subservient to some, naturally bad, official ideology. The "parallel culture" is or should be a better alternative to it. To what better ideology is it subservient? Does it have any ideology at all? Any program? Any conception? Or any orientation, any philosophy? They reached the disappointing conclusion that it does not.

They could have saved themselves disappointment if they had noted at the very start that, by its very nature, the "parallel culture" can have nothing of the sort. All those hundreds, perhaps thousands of people of all sorts and conditions, young, old, gifted, untalented, believers, unbelievers, gathered under the umbrella of "parallel culture", were led to it only and solely by the incredible narrowmindedness of a power which will tolerate practically nothing. They can never agree on a common program because the only real thing they have in common (and thanks to which they found themselves under the common umbrella) is their diversity and their insistence on it, on being each just what they are – and if in spite of everything they were to agree to a common program, it would be the saddest outcome of all: one uniform confronting another. If there is no great surplus of masterful works in "parallel" culture today there would be nothing at all in it, were that come to pass. If there is anything essentially foreign to culture, it is precisely the uniform. The "parallel culture" was born precisely because the official uniform was too constrictive for the spiritual potential of our community, because it would not fit inside it and so spilled over beyond the limits within which a uniform is obligatory. It would be a suicide if, having done that, that potential voluntarily sought to fit into another uniform, no matter how much prettier than the one from which it had escaped.

If we start with the presupposition that art constitutes a

certain distinctive way of seeking truth – truth in the broadest sense of the word, that is, most of all, the truth of the artist's inner experience – then there is only one art, whose sole criterion is the power, the authenticity, the revelatory power, the courage and suggestiveness with which it seeks its truth, or perhaps the urgency and profundity of this truth. Thus from the standpoint of the work and its worth it is irrelevant to what political ideas the artist as a citizen claims allegiance, what ideas he would like to serve with his work or whether he holds any such ideas at all. And just as the attractiveness or repulsiveness of political ideas guarantee nothing about a work of art and likewise do not disqualify it in advance, so, too, whether or not an artist is interested in politics neither certifies nor disqualifies him at the start. If so much of the art shown in official exhibits is indeed below average and better art can be found only on the periphery of public art (in marginal and semi-official exhibition halls) or entirely beyond public view (in studios) then it is so not because the creators of the first involve themselves in politics while those of the latter do not, but simply because a prospect of public recognition and advantageous contracts in our country, today more than at other times and in other places, is incompatible with that stubborn, uncompromising effort to reach out for some personal truth without which, it seems, there can be no real art. The more an artist compromises in that stubbornness to oblige power and gain advantages, the less good art can we expect from him; the more freely and independently, by contrast, he does his thing – whether with the expression of a "rebellious bohemian" or without it – the better his chances of doing something good – though it remains only a chance: the uncompromising need not automatically be good.

Thus it does not seem to me particularly meaningful to divide art between the official and anti-official on the one hand and the independent (that is, politically indifferent) on the other. Surely the measure of artistic power is something other than whether or not an artist is interested in politics. If then we do speak of "two cultures", one official and one "parallel", it does

not mean – at least as I understand it – that the one serves one set of political ideas and the second another set (which would force us to assume, in addition, a "third" culture, subservient to no politics) but solely the external framework of culture. The "first" culture is one living in the not very sharply defined area of what is permitted, subsidised or at least tolerated, an area that naturally tends to attract more of those who, for reasons of advantage, are willing to compromise their truth, while the "second" refers to culture living in the area constituted through self-help, which is the refuge, voluntary or enforced, of those who do not want to compromise (regardless of the extent of the overtly "political" or "non-political" nature of their work).

I mention that here because any a priori division of art into the "anti-official" (necessarily inferior) and the "a-political" (necessarily better) seems to me rather dangerous. Unwittingly, it applies to art the notorious extra-artistic standard, albeit this time turned inside out: the value of art is no longer judged in terms of the overtly political nature of a work of art, but, conversely, from its overtly non-political nature. Surely, if Magda Jetelová constructs somewhere her suggestive staircases and Ludvík Vaculík in his novel writes about cops and dissidents, the artistic power of the one or the other art object has nothing to do with the facts that a staircase (albeit only on a primitive thematic basis) be considered something non-political while the confrontation of cops and dissidents is eminently political. The "non-political" stairness of staircases and the "political" copness of the cops of themselves neither guarantee nor preclude anything. The only thing that matters is the urgency of artistic truth which both artists follow (and I believe that is indubitable in both cases). The degree of some kind of external, overtly thematic political or nonpolitical character has no connection with the power of artistic truth. If anything does have a connection with it, it is, quite logically, only the degree to which an artist is willing to compromise his truth for external reasons.

In any case, it seems that our present power can sniff out far

better than many an art theoretician what it should consider really dangerous to itself. Hundreds of examples testify that power prosecutes most vigorously not what threatens it overtly but has little artistic power, but whatever is artistically most penetrating, even though overtly it does not seem all that "political". The essence of the conflict, that is, is not a confrontation of two ideologies (for instance a socialist with a liberal one) but the conflict of an anonymous, soulless, immobile and paralyzing ("entropic") power with life, with humanity, with being and its mystery. The partner of power in this conflict is no alternative political idea but the autonomous, free humanity of man and with it necessarily also art – precisely as art! – as one of the most important expressions of this autonomous humanity.

I recall how, in my youth, I found it amusing that the lead paper at various writers' conferences and congresses would invariably be entitled "The Tasks of Literature in . . . Period" or -and that, in spite of all the tasks that were constantly being assigned to it, literature would keep on doing only what it wanted. And if by chance it did make an effort at meeting its assigned tasks, it was invariably the worse for it. Its only hope, no less so under the conditions of "parallelity" (and especially then – that is why it chose them!) is to ignore the tasks that anyone would assign to it, no matter how good his intentions, and will go on doing only what it itself wants to do.

There are no more gifted writers, painters or musicians in Czechoslovakia today than at any time in the past. The disappointment that the "parallel culture" is no better than it is – and we do occasionally hear that complaint – is, to be sure, quite understandable. The more one is repelled by the official culture, the more he expects from the other one and the more he orients to it. Still, such disappointment is not objectively relevant. By what odd fancy of history would there be more and better everything today, in our stifled conditions, than ever before?

A great many people can peck at a typewriter and, fortunately, no one can stop them. But for that reason, even in *samizdat*,

there will always be a countless number of bad books or poems for every important book. If anything, there will be more bad ones than in the days of printing because, even in the freest of times, printing is still a more complicated process than typing. But even if, objectively, there were some possibility of selection, who could claim the right to exercise it? Who among us would dare to say that he can unerringly, always recognize something valuable – even though it may still be in the state of birth, unfamiliar, potential – from its counterfeit? Who among us can know whether what today appears to us as a marginal expression of graphomania might not some day appear to our descendants as the most substantive of all that was written in our time? Who among us has the right of depriving them of that pleasure, no matter how incomprehensible it may seem to us? Was not the basic presupposition of editorial selection in freer times that a rejected author could turn to a competitor or publish his manuscript at his own cost? Would any of our great editors and publishers, Firt, Fucík, Skerik, Vilímek, Otta Laichter and all the others ever have dared decide about anything, had it not been for that possibility?

The *samizdat* Petlice Editions is by no means the only *samizdat* series, still, for those who measure parallel literature according to Petlice and the misery and hopes of the nation according to parallel literature, we need to note that *Petlice* is something of an authors' self-service in which everyone is responsible for himself alone. Should anyone not like something that appeared in Petlice, let him croon of his disappointment to the author and not blame anyone else. Fortunately, there is no Chief Editor of Petlice or Chief Director of Samizdat Concern who would be responsible for what had been allowed to be typed.

All this, I know, is obvious. Still it seems that even such obvious matters need to be brought to mind from time to time, especially for our exile whose perspective, often affected by the random selection of domestic texts that this or that exile happens to come across, might at times be distorted.

Jindrich Chalupecký, in an essay "Prague 1984" (written for *Art Forum*, Czech translation in *samizdat* journal *Kritický sborník*, 1984, no. 2), writes that the artist "either submits to the state power, produces works that propagate socialism and is respected and rewarded, or he protests in the name of freedom and leads the romantic life of a rebellious bohemian. If such official art arouses little interest, we can hardly expect much from the anti-official art. Both are equally conditioned by political perspectives and though certain political goals might be most noble and relevant, it turns out again and again that the world of modern art is not the world of modern politics. Neither politics nor art can profit from such efforts." It is not quite clear whether Chalupecký here speaks for himself or whether he is paraphrasing the perspective of Hans-Heinz Holze whose views he reported in the preceding paragraph. He is, however, clearly speaking for himself when he writes, a bit later, in a passage mentioning several recent exhibits of Czechoslovak plastic artists in the west: "It was not 'socialist realism.' Neither was it 'anti-official art'. The political context was missing, and there was no way of supplying it."

Such formulations as well as other passages in Chalupecký's essay might give the impression that there are, in Czechoslovakia, actually three cultures of three kinds for art – the official, adapted to the ruling ideology, then an "anti-official" one, evidently of the "dissident" variety, produced by people with a peculiar fondness for the "romantic life of a rebellious bohemian," a culture as feeble-minded as the official one and differing from it only in the political ideas it serves, and finally true, modern art which alone is good because it stands aside from politics and all ideology.

From Chalupecký's text, which is for the most part informative, it is not unambiguously clear whether the author really sees the panorama of contemporary Czech art in those three di-

visions, and so I do not wish to argue with Chalupecký, but solely with that strange 'trinitarian' vision his text evokes in me.

VI

At times we do encounter something we might call a sectarian view of parallel culture, that is, the view that whatever does not circulate only in typescript or whatever was not recorded only privately is necessarily bad and that not being printed, publically performed or exhibited is in itself an achievement or an honor while the reverse is always and automatically a mark of a moral and spiritual decay, if not of outright treason.

I could name quite a few very good and important achievements of most varied kind which I have encountered in the sphere of the "first" culture and which deny the legitimacy of such a view. I refrain from naming them solely because it might complicate the lives of the authors or call to them the attention of those thanks to whose inattention they were able to do what they did. I never take any pleasure in seeing someone from the "first" culture fall into the "second," rather, I am always happy whenever I encounter anything in the "first" culture that I would have tended to expect in the "second".

Even though the "second" or "parallel" culture represents an important fertile ground, a catalytic agent and often even the sole bearer of the spiritual continuity of our cultural life, like it or not, it is the "first" culture that remains the decisive sphere. Only once the suppressed spiritual potential of our community begins more distinctly to win back precisely this culture into its hands (and, to be sure, without its "interim" existence in the "parallel culture" it would really have no support for that) will things begin visibly to improve, in culture itself but, in dependence on it, in a broader social sense. It will be in the "first" culture that the decisions will be made about the future climate of our lives; through it will our citizens first really and on a broader scale begin to straighten up and liberate themselves. The "second culture" will stand in a relation to it analogous to

that of a match to a glowing stove: without it, the fire might not have started at all, yet by itself it cannot heat the room.

Perhaps this reflection might be suspected of a kind of instrumental relation to culture – as if I wished artists public opportunity because it increases hope of some overall improvement of our conditions. So let me make it a bit more precise: every meaningful cultural act – wherever it takes place – is unquestionably good in itself and without anything else, simply because it is and because it offers someone something. Yet can this value "in itself" really be separated from "the common good"? Is it not contained in it integrally from the start? Does not the bare fact that a work of art meant something to someone – even if only for a moment, perhaps to a single person – already somehow, however minutely, change also the overall condition for the better? Is it not itself an inseparable component of that condition, transforming it by its very nature? And does not in turn a change in conditions mediated by a cultural achievement open the door to further cultural achievements? Is not culture itself something that is a common good? Is not some "improving condition" – in the most general and deepest, I would say existential sense of the word – precisely what makes culture culture? Being happy if five thousand rather than five people can read a good text or see a good painting is, I think, a wholly legitimate expression of understanding the meaning of culture – and that even when we are happy that "things are beginning to move." Or is not precisely some "beginning to move" – again in that deeper, existential sense – the primordial intent of everything that really belongs to culture? After all, that is precisely the mark of every good work of culture: it sets our drowsy souls and our lazy hearts "moving!" And can separate the awakening human soul from what it always also already is, an awakening community?

Hrádeček, 11 August, 1984

Listy (Rome), vol. 14, No. 5, October, 1984.

Josef Skvorecký

The Unfinished End of the Jazz Section of the Czech Musicians' Union

The name of the organization was innocuous "The Jazz Section of the Czech Musicians' Union". Its membership was restricted to 3.000 – a mere club of aficionados of a type of music that ceased to excite the masses long ago, and was therefore taken off the Communist Party's list of dangerous social phenomena. When in 1984, after thirteen years of existence, the Jazz Section was finally, for all practical purposes, forced out of existence, the question naturally aroused: Why suddenly so much ado about a musical nuisance?

I suppose one has to go back to Lenin. This evil genius of a cause that once seemed so good to so many realized one thing: well-entrenched establishments are rarely overthrown by spontaneous, undirected mass movements. If a group of intelligent organizers channels the pent-up strength of popular feelings in the right direction, however, thrones will fall. It follows that once the well-directed power of the masses has achieved the aims of its leaders, the leaders must see to it that no more spontaneous movements emerge; or, if they do, that they be made nonspontaneous by guides appointed "from above".

Yet one cannot prevent spontaneous interest in various un-called-for things, such as pop-music, especially among the young. A group of youngsters become excited by Elvis Presley, gets hold of a few guitars, tries them out in an abandoned barn. Other youngsters will come to the barn to listen. Eventually a new amateur band plays for free in the local pub, crowded with rock'n'rolling teenagers. A spontaneous movement, in short, has emerged.

Remembering Lenin, the Party has established organizations such as the Socialist Union of Youth to channel such spontaneous movements into riverbeds controllable "from above" by means of "interest groups". It is hoped that, under the guidance

of overseers installed by the party, jazz-and-rock loving youth will listen to the trimmed sounds of records carefully preselected by an ideological committee, and play low-volume rock that will sound sweet even to the ears of the bureaucrats.

It is hoped but is never happens. All that the Youth Union accomplishes is that the amateur band moves from the barn into the state-provided club-room and the man from "above" buys them a synthesizer with the money from the Cultural Fund. There is a tremendous scarcity of dependable "men from above".

As long as it is only a local phenomenon, the deviations of an interest group can be handled. But if a central group in Prague appears "from below" and starts building up a network of Hicksville rock groups all over the country, we are in serious trouble.

The Jazz Section developed into such a central group.

It started in 1971, three years after the Soviet ambush. A group of jazz enthusiasts organized a jazz section within the government-okayed Musicians' Union, and elected Karel Srp for its chariman. At first it limited itself to the sort of activities permitted to such groups. It issued a not-for-sale members-only bulletin called *Jazz*. It sent lecturers to Cultural Clubs, held disc jockey shows. It sponsored the yearly festival entitled the Prague Jazz Days, which were distinguished at first by strict jazz orthodoxy. Slowly, then quickly, all this changed in the mid-70s, when jazzrock appeared on the scene and a half-forgotten positive phenomenon of the 50s was rediscovered and soon achieved unprecedented proportions. Officially sanctioned organizations have always been allowed to print newsletters, and sometimes little booklets, for their membership. Such materials could not be sold to the public, and the censors applied much lighter criteria of orthodoxy to them; sometimes they did not even require that they be submitted for inspection. In the 70s this loophole was suddenly stretched wide by the Jazz Section and its audacious chairman. To the bulletin *Jazz*, the Section added two more for-members-only publications: a paperback

series *jazzpetit*, and a line of art monographs *Situace /Situations/*. Both became the haven of authors, artists and theorists of art interested in genres and trends that were, for all practical purposes, outlawed.

The *Situace* series focused exclusively on what the old really existing socialist Dr. Goebbels would call *entartete Kunst*. The *jazzpetit* series was more diversified. It included, for instance, an anthology about New York's *Living Theater*, a book-length study of E.F. Burian, a pre-war Communist jazzman and stage director which, although Marxist, could not find an official publisher, or a fascinating study of how the Jews in the Terezin ghetto, facing death, managed to lead a more cultural life than the Wagner-adoring Nazis could ever boast of, entitled *Music of the Teresienstadt Ghetto*, deemed also too controversial, probably Zionist. There was *Czech Rock'n Roll* that even contained photographs of stars who left the country, and therefore became non-persons, and there was a two-volume dictionary of American rock musicians *Rock 2.000*, the second volume of which was eventually seized by the censors. Finally Karel Šrp edited a book on *Graphic Music and Phonic Poetry*, and the cup overflowed. The Ministry of Culture commissioned a number of "Marxist" analyses of the shocking book to serve as scholarly arguments for the eventual banning of the organization.

The publishing activities were only one factor in the deepening drama. The other factor was the emergence, in the mid-70s, of jazzrock, the consequent shifting of the Section's interest from orthodox jazz to hybrid forms, and finally, under the pressure of events, to rock. The attendance at the Prague Jazz Days multiplied; in the end some 15.000 people listened to jazzrock, New Wave, Rock-in-Opposition and Modern Jazz. After various molestations and much bureaucratic chicanery, the Jazz Days were finally banned.

Then the party focused on the Section itself. It launched a campaign of defamation, triggered by an article in the party's weekly *Tribuna*, entitled "New Wave with an Old Content". The article became a source of amusement for the Section's

three thousand members and an estimated 100.000 supporters and readers of its publications, for the two cops who wrote the article had not done their homework. Pete Seeger, for instance, was presented as a famous rock star of the early '50s, and punk rock was described as the invention of capitalist manipulators who intended to implant in young people's minds the conviction that one should identify with life under capitalism and not revolt. This display of Marxist thought gave the Section an opportunity to publish an answer, a pamphlet entitled *Rock on the Left Wing* which accused the party weekly of spreading right-wing concepts, and therefore "harming the interests of the Communist Party".

The *Tribuna* campaign demonstrated, among other things, that totalitarian thinking and the resulting diction is common to all who believe in the iron rule of any sort of party. To one of its authors, for instance, the punks appeared as "animals that bear only a superficial likeness to human beings". This very phrase, of course, was used by Julius Streicher in his notorious *Der Strümer*. Another contributor revealed that a group which, at the Festival of Political Songs – a musical non-event sponsored by the establishment – sang anti-war and anti-capitalist songs, outdid themselves at a gig after the festival playing ugly, high-decibel New Wave rock. Of course this is an old trick of all people living under repressive governments. Not all Christians were ready to let themselves be devoured by the lions. Some bowed to the statues of the pagan gods by day, and by night secretly worshipped God.

One group that was willing to expose itself to the lions' teeth was the legendary Plastic People of the Universe. They were all jailed before the witch hunt even started, in 1976, and the action led directly to the emergence of the Charter 77. In 1983, members of this movements came to the Section's help with an open letter entitled *About Popular Music* with an interesting main thesis. The "controversial" lyrics of contemporary Czech rock which the campaign used as one of its chief arguments, were probably the first example since the nineteenth century of ge-

nuine folklore, and had been provoked into being by the irrelevance of the officially approved songs. No wonder that young rockers resorted to self-help with the result that *lidová tvorivost* (people's creativity), which for many years had been only a propaganda myth, suddenly became a fact.

Another unexpected source offered help: the Critics' Section of the Musicians' Union. An open letter to *Tribune* opined: "It is a big question whether the present attack on the ideological diversion by rock music is as effective as it is loud. The main direction of this ideological diversion can be found not in the form of rock "excesses" but . . . is realized by the mass and frontal operations of the bourgeois model of music, by accepting bourgeois taste, by supporting the production of cheap and commercial pop songs which benumb people and divert their attention from the problems of life". The critics ended their exposé with what sounds like a warning: "The generations that follow one another identify quite strongly with the music of their youth, and it remains their music throughout life". In other words: if you make enemies of young people by suppressing the sounds they love, they will hate you until their dying days.

Irrespective of these efforts to help, somebody somewhere reached a decision and the Ministry finally took "administrative action". Dozens of rock groups were forced to disband – the most outrageous was the ban of the excellent experimental jazzrock orchestra of Michael Kocáb Prague Selection /Pražský výběr/. Dozens of musicians were asked to take "requalification exams" without which they cannot perform and which they naturally failed. Then the editorial board of *Melodie*, the only pop music monthly, was totally purged, and its experienced editors were replaced by a group of cops headed by a Miroslav Kratochvíl, whose occupation is that of a "professional director". /Just one taste of his expertise: in 1968 he was made director of the newly established *Radio Vltava* which purported to be a clandestine station of the "true Marxists" broadcasting from somewhere in Dubcek's revisionist Czechoslovakia, but was really filling the air with virulent anti-Dubcek and often

anti-Semitic propaganda from somewhere in the south of the German Democratic Republic.

A direct hit against the Section followed. Its dedicated chairman Karel Srp was fired from his editorial job with a printing company on the pretext that a general reorganization had eliminated the need for his post. But as soon as Srp quit, a new man was hired to fill his old position. Moreover, the Committee of People's Control, a sort of auditioning organization, seized the Section's accounting books. By a "coincidence", as soon as all the bookkeeping documents were confiscated, astronomical bills for unpaid taxes since 1980 started to arrive from the revenue office. These unexpected taxes, about 3 million crowns, were to be paid immediately from the Section's account, which was closed for all other purposes. The Section could have proven easily that the tax demands were incorrect, but for that they would have needed their books, to which they now had no access. This, naturally means that Karel Srp and other members of the Section's leadership may face charges of malversation.

In February 1984 the Prague Division of the Czech Musicians' Union, of which the Section is a part, was told to stop all activities; an indirect effort to stop the doings of the Jazz Section. But since the decree did not explicitly mention the Jazz Section, the Section carried on. The annoyed authorities sent an explicit command to the Prague Division to abolish the Section immediately. The Division duly responded that having been ordered to stop *all* activities, they could not carry on *any* and could not, therefore, oblige. Finally, the Interior Ministry itself was forced to come out, and on July 19, 1984, it curtailed all activities of the Musicians' Union for three months. The curtailment was to be lifted if the following conditions were met. The Union will stop publishing any books, pamphlets or periodicals. It will dissolve its Jazz Section. It will discontinue any work, theoretical or otherwise, in the field of jazz music. It will refrain from founding new orchestras, bands and musical groups.

The Union did not meet these demands. At the time of this writing, therefore, neither the Musicians' Union, nor the Jazz Section formally exist. Yet the Section continues publishing on what is now an illegal basis, and at the same time enjoys the support of – by now – hundreds of thousands of young people. So far, in spite of the official banning, the authorities have not taken any drastic steps. Some of the disbanded rock groups are back on scene, albeit under new names. In July 1985 a jazz concert organized by Fred Starr, the well known jazz historian and musician, was held in the garden of the U.S Embassy in Prague, attended by hundreds of jazz aficionados and Section supporters, unafraid to step into what is official held to be "enemy territory" to hear the beloved sounds that the government is trying to take away from them.

At the time of this writing, nobody dares to predict how all this will end. History, however, teaches one lesson: you can only suppress a spontaneous musical movement of the youth if you give the youngsters a music they will love even more than the one you outlaw. So far, no totalitarian regime has been able to perform such a feat. I don't believe any such government ever will. Miracles do not happen, and for a bureaucracy to create something of the nature of Elvis Presely's creation would be a veritable miracle.

A digest of a long essay entitled Hipness at Noon which appeared in The New Republic, 17 December, 1984.

Jan Vladislav

Poets and Power: Jaroslav Seifert

"Force does not tolerate another force", wrote Gustave Flaubert in connection with the planned but then hushed-up trial of his young friend, Maupassant, thinking when he wrote words of one of the two chief enemies of every good author. The first enemy are his readers, because a good book "force them to think, to work". More dangerous, however, is the second enemy Flaubert had in mind – those in power, the government.

There are many examples in Czech culture during the past fifty years of those who fell victim to the force Flaubert talks about, but Czech literature lacks books which record this struggle of ideas against power systematically and in detail. While there are several remarkable testimonies – such as the poetic diaries *Eyewitness* and *The Liver of Prometheus*, written in the late forties and early fifties by Jiri Kolár, the diary in the form of a novel *The Czech Dreambook*, written in the late seventies by Ludvik Vaculik, or the effective but highly pessimistic monologue *Too Noisy a Lonely Place* by Bohumil Hrabal, which ends with an apocalyptic vision of a world in which mass destruction awaits books and ideas condemned to death by the *Bibliographical Catalogues* of the Interior Ministry – we have not had a work that would sum up these and other testimonies, giving an overall picture of the true, and to this day hidden, face of Czech literature in the last few decades. One possible approach to such an undertaking was indicated by the Polish writer Czeslaw Milosz in his *The Captive Mind*. This consisted of a number of life stories used by the author to demonstrate different basic intellectual attitudes towards power, and in particular totalitarian power, in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

Similar instructive life stories also exist in the history of twentieth-century Czech culture, and the award of the 1984 Nobel Prize for literature drew attention to a particularly stri-

king one. But as so little is known abroad about the true nature of that culture, the decision to give the Nobel Prize to an "unknown" Czech poet puzzled many people, and the Czechoslovak authorities had not the slightest interest in trying to remedy the situation. On the contrary, despite their statements claiming that the recipient of the prize, poet Jaroslav Seifert, was greatly and universally respected, his works published in large quantities, Czechoslovakia's official representatives in fact shared the view of those foreign journalists who chose the most simplistic and banal explanation: that, once again, this was a politically motivated award and that the Swedish Academy was honouring Jaroslav Seifert the dissident rather than the poet. "In their eyes", was the verdict of Paris *L'Express* of 19–25 October, "the most important text to carry the name of Jaroslav Seifert was obviously Charter 77".

The doubts and in some cases indignation expressed by some of these "expert" commentators was partly an admission of their own ignorance. "That someone has not been translated into English or French", wrote Nicole Zand aptly in *Le Monde* of 14–15 October, "does not necessarily mean they do not exist".

Yet, it is not even altogether true to say that Seifert has not been translated. Both *Umbrella from Piccadilly* and *The Plague Column* appeared in English, translated by Ewald Osers, and his 1979 version of the latter, which was also performed on stage in dramatised readings, showed British and perhaps American readers that Seifert was an important poet five years before the Swedish Academy's award.

Those who really know Jaroslav Seifert and his work can have no doubt that he is, first and foremost, a poet. The authority he enjoys even outside the bounds of literature is based primarily on the quality and integrity of his literary *oeuvre*, and even his interventions in public life – on the rare occasions that he made them – invariably had to do above all with poetry, its mission in life, the poet's rights and responsibilities.

Czech readers have no doubts on this score. For them, Jaroslav Seifert is one of the most popular of all contemporary

poets, his poetry among those who are most widely read and, at least at first sight, the most easily accessible. And it is probably due to this very accessibility, the apparent simplicity of Seifert's work, that even Czech critics have not paid sufficient attention to it, so that we do not have any study that shows its real significance. When writing about Seifert, authors usually confine themselves to a description of his, on the whole, uncomplicated artistic development beginning his literary career with socially motivated verses based on his own personal experience and the spirit of the time, the young poet enthusiastically joined the postwar *avantgarde* in the early 1920s, celebrating *all the beauties of the world* as well as the revolution which was to bestow them on one and all; in the 1930s, older and wiser, he adopted a more classical, traditional style, and it was then that he won growing popularity with a wide readership; the climax of this phase of Seifert's development came in the late 1930s, with the approach of the Nazi occupation and world war, when he wrote a large number of poems giving effective voice the the fears and hopes of an imperilled nation, thus becoming a truly national poet.

This flattering but on the other hand limiting label, which is from time to time made use of by the representatives of communist cultural policy in Czechoslovakia, has stuck to this day, obscuring the true range and depth of the poet's *oeuvre*. It obscures, in particular, the turning-point which the then 64-year-old writer reached some time around 1965, when he turned away from the classical rhyming verse forms and adopted the freer, more colloquial verse which has allowed him to deal with greater immediacy and power with perhaps every important problem of modern man's existence.

It is that which lies in these hidden, incalculable depths that most disturbs and angers the Flarubertian force which does not tolerate other forces. That is why official Czechoslovak cultural representatives chose to ignore this aspect of Seifert's *oeuvre* since the Soviet invasion of 1968, refusing to publish any of his new books. And even when, after more than 10 years and under

pressure from the samizdat and foreign editions of Seifert, as well as translations into other languages, they at last capitulated in the early 1980s, publishing *Umbrella from Piccadilly*, *The Plague Column*, and Seifert's memoirs, *All the Beauties of the World*, they still failed to acknowledge their true poetic meaning.

This to be seen in the description of Seifert's work given in the literary columns of the Czechoslovak Communist Party daily, *Rude pravo*, on 13 October 1984, the day after the Nobel Prize award was announced:

"His development, both as poet and citizen, was complicated and not without contradictions, as he himself admits in his memoirs. Nevertheless, there is no doubting his importance for Czech poetry . . . In his early collections, full of social feeling and verse that is free from pathos, Seifert created an individual type of proletarian poetry. With J. Wolker, V. Nezval and K. Beibl he belonged to the leading representatives of the youngest generation of Czech poets. Though after a time he abandoned the ideals of revolutionary poetry, at the end of the 1930s he joined the front rank of those who wished to defend the Republic against facism. His poetry gave strength to the nation during the Nazi occupation. After the war, he celebrated the heroes of the Prague Uprising, the Red Army, his mother, his childhood, his home, and his country."

Thus ends this equivocal, distorted and incomplete pen portrait of National Artist Jaroslav Seifert in *Rudé právo*. There follows only an attempt to show how magnanimous the authorities have been to Seifert: "Seifert's name has lately been misused in the West for slanderous attacks against his country, attempts being made to use our leading poet as part of the psychological war against the countries of socialism. These are cynical, despicable attempts. Seifert's verses are a permanent part of the treasury of our poetry, he himself being one of our most published authors. For instance, in 1971-84 our publishing houses brought out 18 titles of Seifert's work in a total printing of 176.000. Most recently there have been his newest

collections: *Umbrella from Piccadilly* (1979), *The Plague Column* (1981), *To Be a Poet* (1981). In 1982 his *Recollections and Stories* (the subtitle of *All the Beauties of the World*) was published . . .”

As usually the case with self-praise, the above account is dictated by a guilty conscience. It is remarkable more for what it conceals than what it says. If Seifert had really been *persona grata* with the authorities, as the article suggest, why did his post-invasion books not come out as soon as they were written, why did *The Plague Column*, for instance, have to wait over 10 years for its official publication in Prague?

And so the poet had to rest content for many years with typescript samizdat editions of his work, *The Plague Column* and later *Umbrella from Piccadilly* being produced in several thousand copies.

While the unofficial samizdat editions were naturally not censored, censorship was applied to the later, official versions of Seifert's books, as can easily be verified by anyone who takes the trouble to compare the two. The censor's role was particularly significant in the case of Seifert's memoirs, *All the Beauties of the World* in which, according to a Prague samizdat article, nine chapters were left out, while in 12 others names, sentences and sometimes whole paragraphs were omitted. The index of names is thus shorter by 83 names, 51 of which are nevertheless mentioned in the book. The remaining 32 have disappeared altogether.

It is interesting to note the nature of the deletions. Not just people's names or items of a political or cultural-political character have been removed from Seifert's original text but also his reflections on death and a mention of the suicide of the mistress of the famous pre-war Czech art historian, Karel Teige, as well as various erotic scenes described in the book. It would appear from all this that death is just as obscene and unmentionable where Czechoslovak censorship is concerned as sex. Not a word about any of this is naturally to be found in the *Rude pravo* article.

Nor is the reader going to find out anything about some other facts which give an even clearer picture of the attitude of Czechoslovak authorities to poetry in general and Jaroslav Seifert in particular. Some of these facts can be gleaned from official documents, such as the protocols of interviews with non-conformist intellectuals carried out by the police, in which the interrogators voiced the opinion that Seifert's uncompromising attitude and his unwillingness to cooperate were due to his "senility".

Another document records the decision of the Prague Municipal Court of 23 February 1983 to confiscate the books and manuscripts taken away from Ludvik Vaculik's apartment during a house search on 21 January 1981. Giving a detailed justification for the decision, the court stated that "given certain political situation, even passages from works dealing with other historical periods than our own, or with other countries, can be misused for the creation of a hostile attitude towards our system, as was evident during the crisis period of 1968-69" ("the crisis period" being Czech officialese for what the rest of the world knows as the Prague Spring when the Dubcek government tried to reform the Stalinist system in Czechoslovakia).

Among the examples quoted as being works capable of misuse and therefore to be confiscated, we find a manuscript translation of *Reflections, Letters to Parents and Poems* by the German Protestant philosopher D. Bonhoeffer, who was executed in 1945 by the Nazis, clearly described as "letter from a German fascist prison": and, as the last of several examples, the manuscript of Seifert's *Umbrella from Piccadilly* and four other Seifert poems, which the judge, Dr Jan Rojt, evidently ordered confiscated because they were "in their original, unmodified form".

But it was not only Seifert's manuscripts which were deemed liable to confiscation; suggestions that he should be nominated for the Nobel Prize for Literature were considered equally "criminal" by the judiciary.

Jaroslav Seifert never idly indulged in theoretical or ideologi-

cal arguments, preferring to devote himself to his poetry; but he did not shirk speaking out when he deemed this to be necessary. When the "new-born humanity" so highly prized by the communist ideologues did not prevent over 40 writers from being given long prison sentences in the early 1950s, it was Jaroslav Seifert who first raised his voice on their behalf when he demanded to speak at the Second Congress of Czechoslovak Writers in April 1956. This was one of those moments when he realised he had to speak out, and he did. Yet even then it was no political speech – although he appealed for his imprisoned and suffering friends and colleagues, his main concern was more universal, the very *raison d'être* of literature and its basic duty, that of telling the truth.

"Again and again we hear it said at this Congress – and from distinguished lips – that it is necessary for writers to write the truth. That means that in recent years they did not write the truth. Did they or didn't they? And did they do so voluntarily or under coercion? Willingly or enthusiastically?"

"When I look back at the history of our literature I fail to find that any great Czech poet – and particularly not one of those who in their work spoke of the Czech nation as Neruda, Cech, Machar and Dyk – that any of them paused to ask themselves whether they had been telling the truth, and having paused announced to the nation and to their readers that indeed they had not. Or do you perhaps recall any one of them proclaiming: "Forgive me, my reader, I have seen your travail and the suffering of the Czech people and closed my eyes to it. I have not written the truth."

"If anyone else remains silent, this may well be a tactical manoeuvre. If a writer remains silent, he is lying."

For anyone who has not lived in a totalitarian state, in the atmosphere that prevailed in Czechoslovakia at the time when Jaroslav Seifert spoke these words it must be difficult, if not impossible, to realise just how much courage was needed for such a pronouncement, nor the incredible effect his words had on his listeners, to whom they came as a liberating catharsis. With

those few simple words Seifert bravely broke several strict taboos at once, above all by calling a spade a spade – to him a lie was a lie, truth was truth, and the imprisoned writers were prisoners whose fate at last merited attention.

”We all know full well – yes, I know we live in difficult times – that we must try to make their lot easier. But, dear friends, I ask you once more, are we really to be only the manufacturers of verses, rhymes and metaphors? Are we really just story-tellers and nothing more, that we should discuss only problems that affect our professional concerns as writers?

”That is how I see the mission of the writer in our time”.

This conviction Seifert has held steadfastly to this day. He had no need to demonstrate it by making public pronouncements – he has demonstrated it by the integrity of his poetry.

Index on Censorship, Vol. 14, No 2, April 1985

Iva Kotrla

Around the Abyss

In 1981–82, the Sinogls spent months in prison. It was because manuscripts were retyped in their residence, e.g. the poetry of National Artist Jaroslav Seifert, the prose of Meritorious Artist Dominik Tatarka, works of Ludvik Vaculik, Pavel Kohout. The District Court in Znojmo found Drahomira Sinoglova guilty and sentenced her, and the Regional Court in Brno confirmed the verdict and sentence when the prisoner appealed. For the use of her typewriter as described above, she was sentenced to one year unconditional imprisonment. It is simple: her guilt was proven before the court. She had been disseminating the works of Czech and Slovak literature by means of her typewriter! Although she was a pregnant mother of three small children, on March 1, 1982, she was forcibly removed from her permanent residence in Strachotice, Znojmo District, by the police, taken away from her six-month-old child whom she was about to feed. In the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, the letter of the law must be upheld!

Why was Drahomira Sinoglova sentenced to twelve months' unconditional imprisonment? In her free time, she allegedly copied on her typewriter the poetry of Jaroslav Seifert. The same poetry that at the very same time was being printed, in accordance with law and order, in a collection entitled *The Hour of the Rose* – as a New Year's publication for 1978. The booklet was published in an edition of 200 copies, the cover decorated with a vignette, a little tear, drawn by the artist Vojtech Preisig; and did this little tear, artistically placed and printed, not represent the actual tears of children? The children of Drahomira Sinoglova? Whose mother was dragged away by members of the Public Security police to prison, to uphold the letter of the law of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic?

Drahomira Sinoglova was convicted in Znojmo, on the Mo-

ravian border, in December of 1980; according to the indictment, she had retyped the literary texts of Jaroslav Seifert and other Czechoslovak authors, for the most part in 1979. But at exactly the same time, texts that she had been retyping were being published in Czechoslovakia legally, not only in books but in magazines as well. A quarterly publication, the magazine *Report of the Society of Czech Bibliophiles in Prague*, beginning with its fourth issue, published chapters from the books of memoirs entitled *All the Beauties of the World*, signed by Jaroslav Seifert himself. This contribution to the magazine for the Society of Czech Bibliophiles from a typewritten copy by the Moravian Printing Plants, National Enterprise, Operation 12 in Olomouc; the printers were paid for their work and they were working under regulations in effect at the time. But for Drahomira Sinoglova, instead of pay for her work, there was a trial in Znojmo and Brno, for retyping the verses of the selfsame author! Twice, and in keeping with the law. That's the way it is.

It is my misfortune to also know about how the beginning of the sentence for disseminating Czechoslovak literature was effected that morning of March 1, 1982 in Strachotice.

And how did it take place? Well, over the body of a little child. (Reports of Herod's actions in Bethlehem cannot be fiction if they are repeated.) Yes, the little body of a six-month-old boy, that was the brige, on March 1, 1982, from which Czechoslovak writers can stare into the abysmal depths of risk – if they aren't blind.

That first day of March in 1982, in Strachotice, children were being vaccinated against infectious diseases. When little six-month-old Pavel Sinogl found himself back in his own home, his mother got ready to feed him. His older siblings were obeying the law about compulsory school attendance, his father, a labourer, was of course at his job. Just then, four cars drove up to the locked gate, and ten men (including two uniformed members of the Public Security police) and two women emerged. Two police dogs were let out of the cars. One of the men climbed over the garden fence, entered the yard of the fa-

mily dwelling and let everyone in, including the dogs. The small boy's mother knew that the house was still locked, but nevertheless, she ran upstairs with the child in her arms, and one by one, locked herself behind four doors. The men lost no time and broke down the front door; as soon as they realized that the mother and child weren't on the ground floor, they proceeded upstairs. Without delay, they began breaking down doors. That was men's work. As soon as they saw the mother, the two women present, from the Child Welfare Department at Znojmo, began to tear the child from her arms. The entire action did not take place in silence, the dogs were growling, the mother refused to allow the weeping child to be torn from her grasp, the two uniformed men apparently first did not hear the order from one of the civilians to put the handcuffs on the mother, but finally, when the order was repeatedly yelled out, they did. The mother, whose hands were in the "cuffs" (the man had yelled, "Put the cuffs on her!") could no longer prevent the woman from tearing the child from her arms, and they did not answer her weeping plea that she be allowed to finish feeding the child, as everything was ready in the kitchen. But when she refused to move, the civilian in command informed her that the boy would get "government issue" food. Not to worry. The mother just had the chance to ask, "Why? He hasn't done anything! What are you going to do with him?" But already she was being dragged down the stairs to the car. Two women wasted no time on explanations and were already seated with the child in another car, and the whole convoy set into motion.

The shackled mother was not permitted to take anything with her, not so much as a toothbrush or a sweater, and she was speedily driven with her armed guard to the prison in Brno-Bohunice. So the other children (the boy, a second grader and the girl, a fourth grader at the Basic Nine Year School at Strachotice) arrived home to find their door broken down, their house empty. After March 15, 1982, their mother was transferred to work at the prison in Opava (winding electrical motors for MEZ Mohelnice). In the correctional institution of the Czech

Socialist Republic, she miscarried her fourth child. Then she was granted MERCY by the President of the Republic.

And thus, on the basis of mercy, she was able to return to her other children in Strachotice, where she lives to this day.

Note: The end is not in sight. Legal proceedings were started against the author, her husband Zdenek and Petr Kozanek, engineer, in September of 1984 for "attempted damaging of the interests of the republic abroad". Shortly after the birth of her child, Ivanka Kotrla was repeatedly interrogated at the prison in Brno-Bohunice. Her flat and that of her ill mother-in-law, Zdenka Kotrla, were subjected to the search of nine State Security policemen the day after her fifth child was born. Thus the keepers of law and order in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic successfully applied the same method against Iva Kotrla that she had described in the case of the Sinogls, two and a half years earlier.

Excerpts from an article written for The Moravian Reader, 1983, circulating in Czechoslovakia.

Vlasta Chramostova *A Censored Life*

*Not even the Flood lasted forever.
In the end the black waters receded.
True – few things have lasted longer!
(Bertold Brecht: On reading Horace)*

“No eggs! No eggs!” And there were no eggs, such were the times.

The *Landesbehörde* in Brünn issued permission to the Provincial Theatre in Brno to perform G.B. Shaw’s play *Saint Joan* according to a modified text, if on page 17 the phrase “No eggs” was replaced by the phrase “No chickens”, if on page 137, the words “It is only in history books and ballads that the enemy is always defeated” were removed, and if on page 155, “The world will perish in a welter of war” was struck. The document bears the stamp of the Provincial Office in Brno, an eight-crown revenue stamp and the date, August 8, 1941.

Events raged, the world was perishing in a welter of war, the censor couldn’t change anything about it. The performance of Shaw’s *Saint Joan* in the Provincial Theatre never took place, English drama was no longer performed on Czech stages. For that matter, the Czechs in the Protectorate of *Böhmen und Mähren*, Bohemia and Moravia, were supposed to be working for the Great German Reich and not going to the theatre. First the Germans arrested the principal actor and the manager, and then closed the Brno Theatre. And that was how it stayed until “the enemy” was victorious, Hitler married Eva Braun and he and his wound up the way tyrants wind up when in mankind’s rare starry instants, for a moment, justice prevails.

After the war, the Provincial Theatre in Brno was renamed the National, and for a few years, I became a member. One of a number of splendid dramatic opportunities I had was Shaw’s *Saint Joan*. There were eggs to be had, then, but I studied my part from a book that had the censor’s old permit.

Then came 1949. In eight years, history had had time to turn itself over twice.

The discriminated texts from the past were not struck, but Joan’s closing text, “Oh God, that madest this beautiful earth,

when will it be ready to receive Thy saints?" was changed to "if Thou madest this beautiful earth", because at that time, it was a known fact that there is no God, there never was, and hence he couldn't have made anything.

The question had to be made relative, even from the pen of Shaw. Those who had no intention of accepting the new "scientific teachings" and renouncing their faith would face long years of disparagement and discrimination.

The genuineness of the village maid, her indignation and her yearnings resembled the questions and the experiences that faced idealistic youth of that day.

"I thought that France would have friends at the court of the King of France; and I find only wolves fighting for pieces of her poor torn body. I thought that God would have friends everywhere because he is the friend of everyone . . ."

I saw little people achieving great and swift careers.

– collaborators insuring themselves by carrying the card of the most influential party,

– merits from the war grossly exaggerated according to political expediency,

– heroes who didn't live to see the gratitude of the nation,

– and names of the brave dead whose memory and deeds were erased from history.

And a new domestic censorship. The striking of facts, persons, their works and spiritual legacy.

– Once again a silenced surrounding World War One legionnaires,

– and surrounding men and women of the First Republic, a new silence concerning the non-Communist resistance movement at home,

– and concerning the heroism of the British pilots from Czechoslovakia during World War Two.

With incomprehending amazement and indignation, I watched the further rewriting of plays, textbooks, literature and history and a new round of injustice, suffering and martyrdom.

And so many new saints who, if they were to return to earth, would be burned at the stake again!

"Oh, God, that madest this beautiful earth, when will it be ready to receive Thy saints? How long, Oh, Lord, how long?"

* * *

Of course, that wasn't my first experience with the censorship of theatre and life.

When as an apprentice in the art of the theatre, I was transformed by the "*Totaleinsatz*" into a machinist in a German airplane factory, in the evenings I acted in the little hall of the former school theatre; I understood even then that what is important is not what is said on the stage, but what the spectators carry inside themselves, what they bring to the theatre, as well as the idea, the inner charge and message that the actor gives his text.

They closed the school, Czech theatres in Brno were occupied by the Germans. Grateful audiences on rickety uncomfortable chairs devoured every Czech word that reached them from the crowded, poorly equipped little stage. And it was enough in and old tale from the Enlightenment period, when a young teacher came out with a weather forecast, saying that "God willing, the sun will shine again", for the audience to be filled with an atmosphere of hope and understanding; it lacked little for them to rise and sing the national anthem.

There was a wartime blackout on the streets of my native city, along with the tenebrity of National Socialism's arrogant wantonness. With its rallies and party celebrations, its white stockings and leather pants, it displayed its mastery and declared the eternal world rule of Hitler's Thousand Year Reich. In spite of the curtailment of Czech theatres and repertoires, it was the theatre, along with the profound experience of national life in my family circle, that illuminated my seventeenth and eighteenth years with an indomitable faith and the conviction that no censorship can permanently regulate a nation's thinking,

change the order of things and the history of man, and that torture and executions cannot break the courage and opposition of a subjugated people yearning for freedom.

* * *

I was twenty-four when I was invited to work with the Vinohrad Theatre in Prague, at that time one of the best theatres in the land. It would have been an honour for any actor.

But just before my arrival, at the beginning of the vacation period, with a single blow of the political machete, the municipal theatres of Prague were administratively transferred to a new administration, and the company, which had been carefully collected over the years, was swept away, without the least professional consideration or feeling. It happened from one day to the next, thoughtlessly and with a lack of consideration that resulted, in part, in the suicide of the manager, Jiri Frejka, a great figure in Czech theatre. But that was not all that we were to witness.

After the Moscow model, the Czechoslovak Army Theatre was formed. A period began that had little if anything in common with the natural life of the theatre and with artistic priorities.

I am not saying that even in those dismal years, there was not a single valuable production, or that capable individuals did not appear on the stage. For art and creativity are strong herbs that struggle with adversity and ill times. Every generation has talented souls. Youth falls in love even during a war. Lion cubs are born, even in a cage . . .

Censorship? What kind, what for?

In the second, "peaceful" half of our century, totalitarian and post-totalitarian regimes, as they are called by Vaclav Havel, don't need censorship in the old sense of the word. They have perfected it by doing away with it. They don't censor or rewrite simple sentences, plays, authors, rehearsed plays after dress rehearsals or openings, but rather entire stages of culture, and the

history of "inimical" systems and nations, even classes of people at home, and religions. Life as a whole is bound by surveillance, jailed in the prison of the censorship of power and State Security. Any flight of art in a direction other than the perscribed one, anything that even moves beyond the mediocre – if it occurs – is doomed. Flight in an aviary. And anyone who knocks it over with the strength of his wings will know the flight of Icarus.

Military subject matter, logical in the post-war years on the stage, was permanently entrenched in the Czechoslovak Army Theatre as its mainstay. Productions that played and replayed the revolution of 1917 and over again the Second World War, exclusively, of course, from the viewpoint of the Soviets, imports on the same order from the other "people's democracies", and the unending struggle of the working classes, only with different costumes and situated at different geographical locations, all this became boring and unattractive after a few seasons. Schematism drove out the demanding audiences, and soldiers, driven to the theatre in busses, often directly from exhausting trainging sessions, would fall hopelessly asleep in the warmth and the velvet seats. They were distrubed only by the deafening and frequent roar of simulated machine-gun fire, or of airplanes and explosions, which took place at the latest around 11 o'clock. The intensity of the sound effects even woke the residents in surrounding houses. Thence came what was probably the only protest in the fifties against loud and overwhelming propaganda. It was beyond human powers to withstand day after day, weekdays and holidays, the experience of joy over the victory at Stalingrad, the Slovak or the Prague Uprising, the "hurrah" of the sailors of the Black Sea, the shots fired on the Aurora, or the 9th of May anywhere.

The more victorious the troops on the depicted battlefields, the more urgently the theatre cried out for help. It was impossible to maintain such a narrow repertoire. Exceptions began to force their way through. It was summer, audiences were diminishing, the chief timidly put on – as an "incidental" produc-

tion – Shakespeare’s *Much Ado About Nothing*. He hoped to attract back the civilian audiences, and at the same time, to grant the ensemble a classical text by means of which to gain some professional growth. And why not! What a joy to play Beatrice! What a joy at least to laugh for a while! Because all around, even in private life, there was much that was depressing. Concerns that were more than serious. My husband, politically compromised by his ties with the defendants in the purge trials, was thrown out of his job as director of the Brno Radio without notice, and sent to work in the mines as a punishment. The dangerous swarming of the State Security police, dangerous circumstances, dangerous times.

Better to hurry back to the theatre and to the young people, who could help laughing, joyfully and maliciously, whenever the occasion arose. Even when the occasion was more sad than funny.

In the public relations section of the theatre, as in many places in the military, there sat a private who in civilian life had been close to the theatre, finishing off his stint.

The telephone rings.

“Yes, sir, Comrade General, three tickets for Thursday.”

“I beg your pardon? – We’re playing Much Ado About Nothing.”

Pause.

“What’s that?”

“Shakespeare, Comrade General.”

The soldier doesn’t want to get in trouble, so he proceeds to spell it out, slowly and emphatically, to the high officer.

“S-h-a-k-e-s-p-e-a-r-e, an old English play.”

Another pause. Then the general snaps out his next question.

“And is he a progressive author?”

* * *

The maid called History once again believed in love. When else than in spring – 1968! She grew purer, and more beautiful.

Then came the crime of rape – with a dagger to the heart and a slit throat.

For the most part, the nation succumbed to the conviction that it was fighting for its rights, and hence was invincible. Warnings of danger, of Hannibal before the gates, were heard by only a few, the blissful dream of freedom masked out reality and judgment.

Yet "even after the end of the world, hope springs undisturbed."

A shocked society stood its ground, held hands and with a convulsive soldiarity overcame the fear of the future, which had rudely kicked open the door. People needed to reassure each other, to be in a group, no one could stay at home.

The Prague Theatre, once again called the Vinohrady, which had been playing to packed houses, was now full to the bursting.

The dramaturgy department reacted flexibly to the new situation. Maxwell Anderson's play *Barefoot in Athens*, from the period of McCarthyism in America, resounded incredibly in the post-August atmosphere of occupied Prague. Under the title *I Know That I Know Not*, we played what happened in Athens occupied by Spartan troops, what went on in Xantippe's household, at Socrates' trial and in prison after the philosopher's decision to drink the hemlock. An apocryphal play, a plebeian play and an intellectual one, full of nostalgia and folk humour, poetry and clever dialogue. But above all, the message of Greek wisdom, which we needed so badly at that moment.

It was not the theatrical poesy of my heart as a mature actress, but Xantippe was a marvelous role, and the production was exceptional, an unforgettable experience, not resembling theatre. Or else, resembling theatre very much? Who knows how spectators responded to *commedia del'arte*, how they entered into and took part in plays at medieval marketplaces? Athens at the end of the Fifth Century B.C., but in all the decades

of my work in the theatre, I have never experienced more contemporary theatre.

We opened the production "out into the people". On three steps leading from the proscenium across the orchestra to the auditorium, we stood there with the lights still up, and looked our fellow citizens in the eyes, and they in ours, we smiled, we were silent, and quickly established a comprehending contact. The auditorium fell silent, the ramp seemed to vanish, the lights in the auditorium gradually dimmed. That was the beginning of two hours of confidence, conviviality, an evening of friendly mutuality in a closed company. Then came the suggestive opening question of the narrator of the play, "Well, people, how goes it with you?" And there it was, as if we had opened the valve of the spectators' mischief, a spark of mirth and applause spread from one end of the auditorium to the other, from head to head. If laughter is the expression of freedom, as indeed it is, then in spite of the reality beyond the walls of the theatre, in spite of our dismal prospects, we were for a while rid of fear, we were happy and strong through our recognition of the truth—we were free. The performance preceded "sentence by sentence", at times the action couldn't move forward. From one performance to the next, the play was longer. Performances resembled some sort of stormy spectators' demonstrations for the idea of Greek-Athenian and our own lost democracy.

The top positions in the country had not yet been filled by the Party rulers named from abroad. The unions of writers, theatrical and film artists had not yet been dissolved. They had not yet fired the uncomfortable manager. Conditions had not yet begun to be normalized into the new Czech wave of repression, imprisonment and emigration. We were still playing Socrates.

Go right on asking him questions! He'll teach you that up is down. . . right is left and left is right . . ."

". . . He will not! . . . He'll show you that it depends on your point of view . . ."

Those few months or weeks, not before August 21 but directly afterward – that was the only time in my life when there truly was no censorship.

Those moments when we drew free breath were expensive.

But if we hadn't known them?

It would be as if life had passed and we hadn't known love . . .

* * *

Shortly afterward, the management of the theatre was informed by officialdom that during a performance of Dürrenmatt's *König Johann*, I had committed a provocation on the eve of the anniversary of the Great October Revolution, by the *accentuation* I had placed on certain lines.

By then, there was "surveillance" at every performance. We were still putting on the play about the peremptory and monstrous nature of struggles for power, thrones and crowns, but for the sake of safety, particularly our own, we shouldn't have been too obvious. It's risky subject matter. About treacherous noblemen who embrace with hypocritical smiles, toasting their friendship, and at the same time, carry on intrigues and make deals, destroy one another and are willing at any time to send their nation out to be slaughtered, without the slightest qualms, without feelings or scruples.

". . . from litters or from horseback, they observe/ From a safe place, with a weather eye,/ Rage, carnage, the death-rattles of men,/ Their vassals, who spill their blood/ For them, and damn their souls.

And why? Why? . . .

. . . But hatred hearkens not to reason,/ Hatred needs force and force needs murder."

True, the text written after Shakespeare's *King John*, wellfertilized with the experience of the modern world, had become almost tactlessly timely with respect to the most recent events at home, corresponding all too well to the state of mind of the times,

that "we are shut into a cage of wild animals",
that "kings are murderers",
and "you kept improving upon the world until it was all the
more damned".

It is also true that Constance is no lamb, but the author wills her to be a predatory creature of royal birth and blood, intractable in her determination, who controls her indignation over herself only with great difficulty.

KING PHILLIP: *"Friends, to table, the wedding board is full to overflowing, Constance, Arthur, come, join us. Rejoice, there is peace!"*

(All are seated, Constance and Arthur remain standing.)

With two weddings of former enemies, the family ties being established represent the loss of hope for an endlessly ambitious mother to see her son become the King of England. He had the right to the throne, but it is with rights sold and betrayed and easily sullied rights, that this play concerns itself.

PHILLIP (continues): *"Dear friends, this day of days/ Shall be honoured as a day of peace/ Each year. A day of spirit victorious Over sinful nature. A day of glory/ Which blesses Christian courage.*

CONSTANCE: *A day of shame, not glory! What for?/ By what right should this day be written/ In gold in every calendar? No, better/ To strike it from the week. A day/ Of disgrace and violence and betrayal./ If not, then let future mothers pray/ That they not give birth that day,/ And bring to life a monstrous thing.*

PHILLIP: *I swear, have you cause to damn/ This happy day in words so terrible?/ Come and feast. The soup is wonderful!/ Flush away your bitterness with sweet wine!*

CONSTANCE: *What derision, to hear you speak thus!/ First you would spill the blood of enemies,/ And now you intermix your own with theirs."*

I shouted my accumulated revulsion with everything and everyone. The injustice of the world, eulogists who yesterday damned today's allies, only to come to the joint feast of the vic-

tors with zealous devotion, overflowing with jovial rubbish about a joyous future, toasting it all.

Constance purchases relief with open hostility. Her prayer is a curse.

CONSTANCE: *Oh God, punish the treacherous princes,/ Hear me, a widow, be my spouse!/ Allow not this day to end in peace./ Ere nightfall, loose them at each other's throat,/ Crowned scoundrels that they are,/ Sitting here, feasting and drinking,/ As if all were well./ Hear me, oh, Heaven, hear me, oh, my God!*

I had plenty to address with my contempt, my defiance. Much to inspire me – and dates in the not so distant history of my land more than plenty.

Where is the truth of a role and where the truth of the actress? What separates them? Ideally, nothing. And at that time, that is how it was. A professionally experienced actress is capable of refounding – investing – utilizing – giving free rein to even the hidden, controlled and suppressed demons of her own soul. My voice carried clearly to the orchestra, the loges, to the highest balcony. My heart carried beyond the walls of the theatre, the city, the land.

The muderously bloody game for power is filled with executioners and corpses. And the pure lad Arthur, clever and fine, by birth and by soul the rightful successor to the throne of England, a child who has not had the chance to be sullied, a child whom they had fought over as if he were booty, lies dead, tiny, alone, deserted by all in the middle of the immense set, tall as the heavens. Constance stabs herself with a dagger and is dragged off like carrion from the stage of the theatre and history into the corner of the portal.

And there, although I wasn't playing the Bastard, the intellectual spokesman of the play, I experienced with him in the concluding monologue my own disappointment and feelings of helplessness.

"I found myself/ Among the pilots of this world, I tried/ To turn the wheel only a little way./ But the ship of fate was guided by human folly/ And chance. What I had hoped, failed./

*With all the haggling, murdering, betrayal,/ Pembroke took
the place of reason./ My land, you lie humiliated./ I will re-
turn to being just one of your people./ Perhaps just a stable-
boy for my brother./ The devil take honours, and nobility.*

But no one heard this private *accentuation* of mine.

* * *

Prince Hamlet welcomes a troupe of players to Elsinore Castle like old friends.

God knows how it was with Shakespeare the actor, but the truth is that never has greater tribute been paid to actors than by the author of this tragedy. Did he not find them worthy of coming – and helping Hamlet uncover a crime, convict the guilty?

They came and did it with the suggestiveness and truthfulness of their play, by acting out the truth more truthfully than Truth itself.

It is as if the genius of the theatre had left actors a legacy here and perhaps even the obligation not to flinch before the drama of their land, their times. His actors did not flinch.

When there was too much that was rotten in our "state of Denmark", and friends like Guildenstern started to circle around me, I realized that I would no longer permit myself to be played upon, that I would try and listen to the old challenge:

HAMLET: ". . . *why do you go about to recover the wind of me, as if you would drive me into a toil?*

GUILDENSTERN: *O' my lord, if my duty be too bold, my love is too unmannerly,*

HAMLET: *I do not well understand that. Will you play upon this pipe?*

GUILDENSTERN: *My lord, I cannot.*

HAMLET: *I pray you.*

GUILDENSTERN: *Believe me, I cannot.*

HAMLET: *I do beseech you.*

GUILDENSTERN: *I know no touch of it, my lord.*

HAMLET: *'Tis as easy as lying; govern these ventages with your finger and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music. Look you, these are the stops.*

GUILDENSTERN: *But these I cannot command to any utterance of harmony; I have not the skill.*

HAMLET: *Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me. You would play upon me; you would seem to know my stops; you would pluck out the heart of my mystery; you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass; and there is much music, excellent voice, in this little organ, yet cannot you make it speak. 'Sblood, do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me, you cannot play upon me.*

My television epitaph was the Monthly Review of Cultural News in May of 1969. The length of the program not only enabled well-known representatives of fashion and artistic disciplines to voice their personal tastes, but it also represented space for the expression of personal opinions.

During a dress rehearsal at the Semafor Theatre, we shot an excerpt from their latest production, where Jiri Suchy's famous song first saw the light of day, "Yeah, That Was the Life . . ." As it turned out later, it too became the target of sharp criticism, for the shots that were fired several times between verses.

*"Heaven suddenly knelt on the defeated land
Without a word, old Death was near at hand . . ."*

In a later version, no shots were fired. And after that, there were no versions.

*"Without a word, gone was the sunshine's glow
All hell broke loose, I hid my face in woe . . ."*

I arrived at Czechoslovakia's old and abundant tradition surrounding the great Elisabethan through another song that Suchy sang. This time it was on the text of the Shakespearian sonnet, "Thus can my love excuse the slow offence, of my dull bearer

when from thee I speed . . ." which reached all the way down to the youngest little schoolchild-singer. How varied and winding is the path of the Bard, by which he penetrates to the hearts of young generations! How could he have known that centuries later, in the Bohemian land he mentions in *The Tempest* as being "by the sea", he would become a song-writer lyricist, and that he would be the first among the foremost in a new artistic discipline that wouldn't even be invented until several centuries after his death? Which film writer in the world today can boast that his work would be done and redone so many times?

As for his sonnet number 66, from time to time it is censored in Czechoslovakia. For decades at a time, it has not been published or recited. So it can happen that when it sounds in millions of homes through the medium of television, it is as a captivating novelty. That evening it was probably so even for those who were so shocked by it.

*". . . right perfection wrongfully disgraced
And strength by limping sway disabled
And art made tongue-tied by authority
And folly (doctor-like) controlling skill
And simple truth miscalled simplicity
And captive good attending captain ill . . .*

The department that "allowed" this broadcast to go on the air was "reorganized", some people lost their jobs, and as for me, after long years on television, this was my final performance on the little screen.

Ten years later, in the light of revolving spotlights on the roofs of police cars parked in front of our building, an ominous yellow light blinks in the night-time street.

There are several cars there, as if Aldo Moro had just been killed.

But it was Macduff who killed Macbeth, in a four-hundred-year-old play. "Birnam Wood" arose to punish evil.

Fifteen policemen are searching the spectators in our flat, which, as so many times before, had been transformed into a theatre.

Minnesänger has finished. The end. Will the guitar never sound again? The closing performance?

MACDUFF: *"Stands Scotland where it did?"*

ROSS: *Alas! Poor country;/ Almost afraid to know itself. It cannot/ Be called our mother, but our grave; where nothing;/ But who knows nothing, is once seen to smile;/ Where sighs and groans and shrieks that rent/ Are made, not marked; where violent sorrow seems/ A modern ecstasy; the dead man's knell/ Is there scarce asked for who; and good men's lives/ Expire before the flower in their caps,/ Dying ere they sicken.*

MACDUFF: *O! relation Too nice, and yet too true!*

MALCOLM: *What's the newest grief?*

ROSS *That of an hour's age doth hiss the speaker;/ Each minute teems a new one.*

Another attempt.

Elsewhere.

At another time.

But spectators are no longer admitted.

The protagonist disappears from the stage like a medieval player driven to the gates of the city by dogs, but this is the end of Twentieth Century in Central Europe, a popular actor runs in and out among TV antennas, across the roofs of the neighbouring buildings, through courtyards, into the dubious asylum of the night. Not long thereafter, he leaves the country. So much for legendary strolls through the taverns of Prague and theatre clubs; relying on one's own popularity just didn't pay off. His "tone" was not proper for prison interrogations. And he no longer had the chance to grace the stage of a popular Prague theatre.

Movies with the well-known star of the silver screen in the Sixties had long since disappeared from movie houses.

And they are taking Lady Macbeth away.

She descends the staircase as if she were going down through a trap door.

The State Security policeman's first question: "Who's the author?" (*O! Scotland, Scotland!*)

* * *

"Gentlemen, I see that you're still young, you might be interested in knowing that during the Nazi occupation, when they found my uncle with some weapons, they cut off his head in Breslau. But we still performed, in taverns and tiny halls and in flats. They let us. Maybe there were fewer quislings then than now, I don't know, maybe we were too young and too insignificant. But the fact is that even in the flats of those Czech patriots who had been taken away or imprisoned, I recited the same national poet that I do in similar places today.

"Even in Nazi concentration camps, they put on plays, they had orchestras. Even prisoners, gentlemen, prisoners."

Dead faces, trained to immobility, do not respond.

Then follow several hours of the game of cats and a single mouse. They end the conversation with the threat, "You'll get over the theatre, that's for certain!" And then, "Let's go!" They relish my uncertainty, I don't know where they are taking me. They pepper my walk through barred corridors with comments and gestures.

They leave me outside the building; I find myself out on the deserted street at the hour between the dog and the wolf. Where, I wonder, is my colleague Macbeth? Will I ever see him again? No, the Prague of today is not created for night-time Bohemian pranks, they don't pay off, cruelly so.

They didn't return my citizen's identification booklet, I have to go back inside. Because otherwise, I could expect an even worse continuation of an evening that started so beautifully.

Finally my heels tap their way home.

Sleep is impossible. As I've done so many times in the past, I replay the events and conversations of the day, fill in what I should have said but didn't, in vain correct what was said.

The night is restless, interrupted by nightmares. But "even the darkest night turns into dawn".

I wrote myself a song.

PLAYING MACBETH

*Ah, Master Shakespeare, little choice have we
When our repertoire is picked by powers that be
Damned is so much that your skilled pen did write
Prince Hamlet's banned, along with Macbeth's night
Why, Hamlet used the stage to solve a crime
While crime was Macbeth's way to gain a crown
One act as dangerous as the other one
To those who happen to sit upon the throne*

And yet

We played Macbeth

A culture damned

Against the bars our head we rammed

*Even the darkest night will change to dawn
That certainty's the timely message you sent down
Three hundred darkened years our land has seen
We'd hate to tumble back to times so lean
That must be why in Prague we lived to see
The man who played Macbeth over the rooftops flee
His Lady driven through the nighttime streets
Because she's who she is, her punishment is meet:*

No more to act

She plays Macbeth

her yearning in the play is crammed

Against the bars her head she rammed

*For haven't jesters aggravated kings
As long as world and stage meant anything
And in the end, the jester wound up dead
The object of a simple royal dread???
The innocent has always been accused
Of guilt upon guilt, his good name used
But even in the death camp Terezin
Prisoners producing theatre were seen*

And yet

We played Macbeth

A culture damned

Against the bars our head we rammed

And so today I am banned for the public. They crossed me out, entirely, once and for good. And for such penalties, there is no amnesty.

But as we have seen with the censored eggs and with other things, problems and questions are not wiped out that way, they stubbornly continue to exist.

Including the question of the uncomfortable artist in society. Whether he is in fact silenced by such an externally imposed freeze; does he not continue to exist in the subconscious mind of his surroundings, at the very least on the level of the vital memory of the ever-existing problem?

For that matter, I took advantage of my situation. It became an inspiring climate for experimental excursions to the essence and roots of acting and the theatre. Without any external response, but also without external ballast – to the most immediate, purified acting media, to impecunious theatre, which in the long run is the only thankful kind. And perhaps it comes alive just by our allowing the classics, whose names we had begun to take in vain, to *take us at our word*.

Censorship functioned here in the sense of a bureau, and in the figurative sense of a castrated and manipulated existence.

When I stood up to it, should an uncensored life have followed? It didn't.

I stood at the crossroads and decided to listen to my voice, like Joan at the beginning. My voices didn't originate with Saint Catherine – they were the voices of my roles, my authors. They advised me not to listen to opportunists and cynics. The stage and life had been one and the same for me over three decades, mutually intertwined – and I know that even now "it is not the counsel of the devil but the counsel of God".

The theatre has always been for me the voice of every day; it supported the lame pilgrim.

- It was a crutch for the cripple, allowing him to move on,
- it was a lens for the blind man, and maybe also his white

cane, to tap along his way,

- it was speech for the mute, interceding for him,
- and it sang and it prayed for all . . .

I have never acted in a play that celebrated violence and prison, never in one that praised bondage, torture, lack of freedom.

They took from me what was the most important, the reason for my being on this earthly pilgrimage, and they left behind an eternal and unquenchable sorrow, because I can't and I mustn't.

But it was a choice.

And that was when an uncensored life came after all. Except that it was different, in a different sense, like the other side of the coin. In the genre of raw prose, without a passport, without a phone and other human niceties. Without the daily applause and the flowers.

But another life, which I wouldn't have known or lived otherwise, a life that is not superficial and gives in return unexpected spiritual adventure.

It has been fifteen years since I was forbidden to perform. I am the only one who knows how difficult it is. Fifteen years of not acting, but having the same recurring dream about returning to the theatre. The smell of the makeup, the voice of colleagues, the ringing bell, the stage, the glow of the spotlight, my cue – but I don't know the text, I don't know the play, I know that I don't know, I have forgotten everything. And the mornings, awakening in a cold sweat . . . And once, with tears on my pillow, awakening to hear myself whisper a text from my last role, surprised that I still recalled it.

"I am like an old dog who has lost all his poison teeth."

But the theatrical life of my dreams is far far harder than any life I ever lived.

Even the life I awaken into.

It is my own choice, an uncensored life.

Listy (Rome), Vol. 15, No 2.

Pavel Kohout

Life in the Graveyard

The Policeman or politician who gave order for the frontier guard to send me back to Austria when I tried to return home in October 1979 deprived me of my homeland but on the other hand enriched my knowledge of the ways of the world.

To the years I spent first on the side of the victorious revolutionaries and then on that of the vanquished reformists has now added experience of life in a Western society which – though only next door – might as well be on another planet.

Even though Czechoslovakia is one of the oldest and most highly developed of European countries, linked with the rest of Europe by history, civilization and culture, only a very short time was needed forcibly to sever these ties.

In Western Europe only people of my generation and older have any personal experience of life in a totalitarian society. Those who are younger have no idea how easy it is to reduce human life to a mere torso. It is to them that this book wishes to speak, and naturally to all people of influence and responsibility.

Man likes to ignore problems which do not concern him personally. He is even more inclined to believe statements which soothe his conscience. It is this that the oppressors who trample on human rights and culture are counting on when they try to persuade the world that to defend their victims is to endanger peace.

Seventeen years after the invasion of the Warsaw Pact armies, and ten since the signing of the Helsinki Accords those people in Czechoslovakia who dare to hold opinions different from their rulers (frequently only an esthetic opinion) are being buried alive. This book presents testimony on just a small part of the catastrophe.

It is not intended to be, nor is it, a Black Book against Socialism: many of its authors were or still are socialists. That gives them an additional reason to accuse politicians, who for the sa-

ke of their own power, are discrediting socialism as a regime which tramples on basic human values and the nation's culture.

The victims are not calling for a crusade, nor for any international boycott of their country of the kind, with which the world is justly punishing apartheid. All they ask is that the rest of the world – and above all their colleagues in the various professions – should loudly demand to know what is happening to them.

It is pleasant to visit Czechoslovakia, to attend various festivals and conferences. It is pleasant to take part in international congresses. But those to do so have a duty not to give catastrophe the semblance of normality and those responsible for it a clean bill of health.

Those who suppress human rights and culture make the absence of their former fellow-citizens and victims a condition for the holding of meetings, such as the Budapest Forum, a condition which those in the West accept for the sake of having the meeting. However, this removal of eyewitnesses from the scene places an even greater responsibility on their western colleagues.

By means of this book we are asking them to fulfil their moral obligation towards Czechoslovak culture in the same way that our predecessors in the 1930s offered persecuted European anti-fascists a home and lent them their voice before they themselves were stifled.

Politics is the art of compromise. Art stands for the uncompromising search for the truth and its defence. Anyone who fails to understand that the destruction of culture and persecution of people holding different opinions is not a bridge to peace but invariably a bridge leading to violence and war, has not understood the meaning either of history or of art.

Heinrich Böll once called Czechoslovakia a cultural cemetery. The astonishing cultural activity of the Czechs and Slovaks who, despite the circumstances described in this book, are busily creating literary and other art works seemingly gives that statement the lie: there is quite a bit of life in the cemetery.

But neither the splendid works produced by the parallel and emigrant literature nor the traditional glory of Czech musicians or the sporadic triumphs of the few artists recognized or tolerated by the regime must allow the world to forget the many who have been buried alive.

One of these, the eighty-four-year-old great poet of the nation, Jaroslav Seifert, whose signature adorns every single important petition as well as the Charter 77 manifesto, was officially lifted from his grave after fifteen years only by the 1984 Nobel prize for literature.

The hundreds of graves in which – together with anyone who has had the courage to take their side – are kept the leading personalities of Czech and Slovak culture, can only be opened by unremitting and vociferous solidarity.

Vienna, 20 July, 1985

IV. Chronicle of Everyday Repression

1977

1 January. *From the Declaration of Charter 77. (Excerpts.)*

(...) Tens of thousands of our citizens are prevented from working in their own fields for the sole reason that they hold views differing from official ones, and are discriminated against and harassed in all kinds of ways by the authorities and public organisations. Deprived as they are of any means to defend themselves, they become victims of a virtual apartheid.

Hundreds of thousands of other citizens are denied that "freedom from fear" mentioned in the preamble to the first covenant, being condemned to the constant risk of unemployment or other penalties if they voice their own opinions.

In violation of Article 13 of the second-mentioned covenant, guaranteeing everyone the right to education, countless young people are prevented from studying because of their own views or even their parents'. Innumerable citizens live in fear of their own or their children's right to education being withdrawn if they should ever speak up in accordance with their convictions.

Any exercise of the right to 'seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print' or 'in the form of art' specified in Article 19, Clause 2 of the first covenant is followed by extra-judicial and even judicial sanctions, often in the form of criminal charges as in the recent trial of young musicians.

Freedom of public expression is inhibited by the centralised control of all the communication media and of publishing and cultural institutions. No philosophical, political or scientific view of artistic activity that departs even slightly from the narrow bounds of official ideology or aesthetics is allowed to be published; no open criticism can be made of abnormal social phenomena; no public defence is possible against false and insulting charges made in official propaganda – the legal protection against 'attacks on honour and reputation' clearly guaranteed by Article 17 of the first covenant is in practice non-existent; false accusations cannot be rebutted and any attempt to secure compensation or correction through the courts is futile; no open debate is allowed in the domain of thought and art.

Many scholars, writers, artists and others are penalised for having legally published or expressed, years ago, opinions which are condemned by those who hold political power today.

Freedom of religious confession, emphatically guaranteed by Article 18 of the first covenant, is continually curtailed by arbitrary official actions; by interference with the activity of churchmen,

1977

who are constantly threatened by the refusal of the state to permit them the exercise of their functions, or by the withdrawal of such permission; by financial or other sanctions against those who express their religious faith in word or action; by constraints on religious training and so forth. (...)

Full text in the book by H. Gordon Skilling, Charter 77 and Human Rights in Czechoslovakia, London 1981, p 209.

Complaint by an internationally prominent Czech writer, a signatory of CHARTER 77, protesting against the illegal and repeated confiscations of his manuscripts by the police.

Headquarters of Public Security Police
City of Prague and Central Bohemian Region
Bartolomejská 7
Prague 1

Prague, 9 January 1977

Complaint against house search order

I hereby lodge a complaint against the order for a search of my flat which was delivered to me one day after the search was executed on 6th January of this year.

- 1) I was not born in Bruntál but in Broumov.
- 2) Bruntál is not situated in the district of Gottwaldov as is stated in the order.
- 3) The order does not mention any reference to criminal proceedings being instituted. If criminal proceedings have not been opened, then the search was illegal (Article 158, para. 6 of the Penal Code).
- 4) If the house search was illegal then it is to be considered an infringement of the freedom of residence (Art. 238 of the Penal Code) or, possibly, as extortion according to Art. 233 of the Penal Code, because it was carried out under armed threat.
- 5) Be that as it may, even the stipulation that a house search cannot be carried out without the procurator's approval was infringed. I was detained while taking a legal petition to the post-office. The ascertainable facts, the contents of the petition, and my deposition must have made it

1977

evident that this was all that I intended to do, no further activity was to follow and could follow. Consequently there was no danger of delay.

Further, I protest against the manner in which the search was conducted:

1) The protocol presents the confiscated papers collectively, without individual specification, e.g. item 31, "80 manuscripts in a cloth binding", etc.

2) It was immediately obvious that the things which were confiscated could have no possible connection with criminal activity; for example, a folder with a record of royalties and taxes, a folder designated "Dobrichovice" which contains documents dealing with the maintenance of a house and a garden in Dobrichovice; further, six savings books, some of them with children's 100 crowns deposits, etc. My experience from the year 1975 is that the confiscation of such things serves only to induce psychological pressure, to encourage intrigues and blackmail.

3) On the other hand, the protocol does not list some of the things which were confiscated. Since I was not allowed to look at it properly, nor was I allowed to give any explanation at the time of the search, I found out about some discrepancies only subsequently; for example, the manuscript of my book *A Journey to Praded* (black folder) was confiscated for the second time and it is not mentioned in the protocol.

4) Two things meant to be confiscated were left behind. One of them I refuse to surrender because it is a literary study; but the other, which the confiscator could consider a subversive printed document (objectively it is not), I am willing to exchange for the manuscript of *A Journey to Praded* (black folder).

5) A folder containing Collections of Laws (item 12) was also confiscated. My query about the reasons for this was answered thus: "We are interested in what you have underlined in it". This is an absolutely flagrant contempt and ridicule of the law, the conceit of an all-powerful man over whom there is no other authority.

I request that the mistakes be amended or that an apology is proffered and that the wilful behaviour towards me is redressed. If this is not done in the near future I will defend myself with all the means at my disposal.

In conclusion I should like to remark that next time somebody comes to take things from me by force, they should at least bring their own sack and not, on top of everything else, borrow my suitcases for that purpose.

Ludvik Vaculik

1977

February. *Marta Kubisová, one of the most popular singers in Czechoslovakia, banned for nearly eight years from the stage and subjected to defamation of character with no chance of defending herself against this practice, set out below is her proclamation to the singers of those countries which signed the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference and the international pacts on human rights.*

Prague, February 1977

At the present moment the Czechoslovak authorities take pains to assure the world public that in Czechoslovakia human rights are being fully observed. How untrue this is can be seen from my own example.

Although I have not lost either my voice or the public's affection, I had to leave the stage. I was twenty-seven years old when, without committing any offence, I was forbidden to sing.

I am turning to you as the idols of the young, convinced that you are aware of your responsibility. Every suppression of human rights will leave an indelible mark on the younger generation above all. It is necessary to stop this process. Any injustice, however small it may be, can develop into an irreparable wrongdoing.

Victor Jara did not manage to defend his right to live.

I signed the CHARTER 77 manifesto in the belief that all cases of disrespect for human rights in Czechoslovakia could be redressed, and I was denounced as a traitor of my own people.

I have been waiting for justice for seven years, and the result is only another case of injustice.

Act as long as there is time. If you allow justice to merge with lawlessness, then no-one will be able to hear us any more.

1 March. *The well-known Czech actress, Vlasta Chramostová, the recipient of many state awards and prizes, been banned for seven years from the stage, addressed and appeal to Western intellectuals asking for actions of solidarity. (Excerpts.)*

Prague, 1 March 1977

(. . .)

In spite of all the awards, the National Film Prize, the Prize of the

1977

Union of Stage Actors, the title of Merited Artist granted to me by the Czechoslovak government, one day, seven years ago, I was prevented from continuing my work in the radio, TV and cinema.

Without any explanation, without any chance to defend myself.

Not long after I had been awarded the Prize of the City of Prague for my twenty years of work on Prague's foremost stage, I joined the 'Theatre behind the Gate' after whose closure my theatre activities in Prague were banned. (. . .)

My protests, requests for interviews, attempts to explain my point of view were futile. For seven years I have been defending my professional and human rights by trying to exercise them "freely" in the most elementary situations of every-day life. After seven years I have not received any answer to my appeals apart from a still further descent on the ladder of civil rights.

(. . .)

I have signed CHARTER 77.

The reaction to its publication has only further confirmed its legitimacy. The need to bridge the gap which separates all agreements, covenants and international pacts from the practice of every-day life has become all the more pressing in my country.

I have come to realize that one can no longer consider the human rights to be safeguarded, wherever in the world it may be, if they are only conceded

- as a privilege for which one must give thanks on bended knees
- as a bribe for unconditional servitude
- as a reward for uncritical consent to everything. (. . .)

In my opinion we cannot talk of human rights being observed – anywhere in the world – if their exercise is conditional on the all-embracing requirement of the citizens' total obedience, an obedience which is complete and subordinated to the one and only permissible interpretation of all things. (. . .)

Vlasta Chramostová

2 March. *Slovak Woman writer Hana Ponická on banned Slovak authors. Speech prepared for the third congress of the Slovak Writers' Union. (Excerpts.)*

(...) For nine years we have been living in an atmosphere of exceptional tension throughout society. Even if such tension may last a long time,

outstanding works can come into being, good for readers and also for demanding literary critics. And come into being they do, but along with them, incomparable damage, too. In the years just past we have lost a number of important writers. They died, but their works continue to be published. But in addition we have also lost many remarkable writers who are living at home and abroad and are still fully capable of writing. Their works are not published and haven't been for a number of years. To this day, writers like Dominik Tararka, Peter Karvas and Ladislav Tazký are not fellow members of our writers' organisation, and are not permitted to publish. Nor is publication allowed for the highly valued translations of Zora Jesenská, from Russian, Soviet and English classical and contemporary literature, unlike the works of other recently deceased writers. Since her name was not mentioned with the others prior to the minute of silence which we were asked to observe to honour the work and the memory of all our recently deceased writers, I am at least making a brief pause now.

To this day, there is no hope of publication for the poems, prose works, and the translations, articles or literary reviews by other former members or candidate members of our writers' organisation, or by non-members and those who worked for our literary and cultural periodicals, writers such as: Ján Rozner, Pavol Hruz, Milan Hamada, Josef Bzoch, Fedor Cádra, Miroslav Kusý, Zlata Solivajsová, Miroslav Hýsko, Michal Gáfrik, Július Vanovic, Ctibor Stitnický, Frantisek Andrasčík, Stefan Moravčík, Roman Kalisý, Juraj Spitzer, Albert Marencin, Agensa Kalinová, Sona Cechová, Ladislav Dobos, Ivan Kadlecík, Ján Kalina, Tomáš Winkler and others.

Twenty-one years ago, the poet, Vitezslav Nezval, said, at a conference on Czech poetry in Prague: "As long as even a single poet is walking this land of ours with the feeling that he cannot publish, then, comrades, something is wrong." A year later, at the 2nd Congress of Czechoslovak Writers in 1956, in Prague, the poet, Frantisek Hrubin said: "Anyone of us who walks around, contentedly writing, contentedly collection his royalties, and calmly falling asleep as if he knew nothing, anyone who will not say out loud, "An injustice is being committed!" is a bourgeois egoist in disguise, and anyone who is capable of keeping his shame a secret is a coward!"

Honoured assembly! I am no longer able to keep "my shame" a secret. I am no longer able to hide my shame at being able to publish while others cannot. (. . .)

Since the time allotted to the discussion was limited Hana Ponická was unable to make her speech and asked that it be included in the minutes. According to later reports in the Western press the author was

1977

expelled from the Slovak Writers' Union in April 1977, her books are not published and films based on her scripts must not be shown.

Full text in the book by H. Gordon Skilling, op. cit. p. 306

13 March. *Death of Czech philosopher J. Patočka, spokesperson of Charter 77.*

Professor Jan Patočka, a 69-year-old philosopher and one of the three spokesmen for the Charter 77, was interrogated for 11 hours after his meeting with the Dutch Foreign Minister, Max van der Stoep, in a Prague hotel at the end of February. On 3 March he had a heart attack and was admitted to hospital, where he died on 13 March. Three days before his death the police again came to question him on his sick bed, after which he suffered a brain haemorrhage.

Index on Censorship, Vol 6, No 3, May-June 1977

28 April. *Protest by 149 European philosophers against the persecution of Czechoslovak scientists and scholars, artists, white collar and manual workers on ideological, racial or religious grounds; the protest caused the death of the Czech philosopher J. Patočka. (Excerpts.)*

(...) The undersigned professors and lecturers from Belgium, the Federal Republic of Germany, Great Britain, France, the Netherlands, Italy, Canada, Switzerland and the United States are deeply shaken by the demise of Jan Patočka and deem it their duty to point to the responsibility of the Czechoslovak authorities for the death of this man of great integrity. (...)

The undersigned protest against the discrimination and persecution of Charter 77 signatories whose sole offence consists in demanding the observance of civic rights guaranteed by the Constitution. (...)

The undersigned wish to ask the Czechoslovak authorities to treat all

1977

citizens persecuted on ideological, racial or religious grounds – scientists and scholars, artists, white collar and manual workers – who have lost their jobs since the "Prague Spring" as citizens with full rights. (...)

The letter of protest was drawn up at the initiative of the German philosopher Dr Walter Biemel, detained by the Czechoslovak authorities and expelled when he intended to pay homage to memory of his deceased friend, Jan Patočka. The signatories of the letter include B. Baczko (Geneva), J. Beaufret (Paris), W. Biemel (Düsseldorf), R. Cohen (New York), L. Coletti (Rome), J.P. Faye (Paris), R. Gutierrez-Giradot (Bonn), J. Habermas (Starnberg), L. Kolakowski (Oxford), K. Pomian (Paris), and others.

30 June. *Charter 77 Document No 12 On discrimination against a large number of writers and their works. (Excerpts.)*

In article 28 the constitution of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic guarantees "to all citizens freedom of expression in all areas of the life of society, and in particular freedom of speech and of the press". This freedom of expression in speech and in the press naturally also includes freedom of literary and scientific expression. The same freedoms are also included in international conventions on human rights, adopted by most members of the United Nations and also ratified by the government of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. But the administrative discrimination and repressive practice currently exercised against Czech literature is in gross conflict with all these guarantees of freedom of expression including their more precise definitions and conditions in the constitution. (...)

One would seek in vain in our modern history for any period of time when so many writers were kept, by forceful means, from publishing their work, as has been the case since 1969. The Union of Czech Writers, established at the congress in June 1968, had almost 400 members. After it was officially dissolved, a new union came into being with a mere 40–50 members at the start; according to official figures this number had increased by this year's congress to 164 members, all screened on the basis of today's political criteria. Moreover, of course, only membership in the Union allows writers the chance to work normally, to publish in periodicals and through publishing houses, to take study trips abroad, etc., not to mention the opportunity of receiving grants, prizes, fellowships and for that matter even the common social privile-

1977

ges belonging by right to every working person. Such favouritism towards official writers by no means results in the much touted blossoming of contemporary literature but rather in decay, as is admitted officially from time to time. This is the reverse side of the extensive discrimination against the other writers who represent the majority of the national writing community and its artistically far more significant portion at that. These writers are not only deprived of the opportunity to publish or to get other work in their fields, but they are also intentionally pushed into jobs that are entirely out of keeping with their qualifications, irrespective of the fact that this suppresses the nation's spiritually creative potential.

Of the writers who are victims of this general discrimination, two have been in prison since January, one has been in prison since last March, several others are recovering from imprisonment. About 90 writers of various generations, all writing and publishing in Czech, are disqualified from national literature simply because they live abroad. About 15 non-publishing authors, or authors with only token publishing privileges have declared, in connection with Charter 77, their loyalty to current political practices, some of them several times over, but the fact remains that over the last seven years they were unable to publish their work.

In addition to these authors, totalling something over a 100, another 130 (list attached in original) are affected in various ways. So we are speaking of some 230 writers. We have not listed by name a number of other writers of fiction, translators, songwriters, authors of reviews and critical essays, because we could, in all probability, make their civil and social situation even worse than it already is. In total, then, we are concerned with some 350 to 400 authors who are unable to publish their work in our country – and we are counting only authors who write in Czech, and for the most part those living in Prague, since circumstances do not permit us to acquaint ourselves more closely with groups of authors outside Prague. (...)

Full text of the document in the book by H. Gordon Skilling, op. cit. p. 249.

1977

13–14 August. *Police raid against young participants at Chod festivities in southern Bohemia.*

(...)The traditional Chod festivities were held at Domazlice and in its vicinity on 13 and 14 August, together with dances in the town and in the neighbourhood. A concert by the "Kaskada" beat band was to have taken place at the Sokol hall in the village of Kdyne. Since the Chod festivities had attracted a large audience, some 1.200 young people gathered outside the Sokol hall before the concert. At 8 pm the crowd broke through the locked door of the hall. The organizers collected a 15 crowns entrance fee from each participant, after which they announced that the concert would not take place since its orderly procedure could not be guaranteed. The crowd protested with catcalls. The police arrived on the scene asking the crowd to disperse. Those present who insisted that their entrance fee be refunded were led out of the hall by force and assembled outside the Sokol hall. The police used tear gas, truncheons and dogs. The crowd resisted the violence by violence. Ambulances were called in. The incident became a matter of prestige for the police: an eyewitness has declared that four policemen beat up a youth and then threw him down the staircase. The crowd outside the Sokol hall chanted "Gestapo, gestapo" and hurled stones at the police. The police took refuge inside the Sokol hall while young people outside blocked the entrance, broke windows and attacked approaching cars which, they suspected, were meant to force them to disperse. The crowd then moved to the railway station where it stopped a train that had not been intended to stop at Kdyne to avoid a clash with the gathered young people. The youths occupied the train but the police, pursuing them, beat up with truncheons those who had not managed to get into the train and later those who had been dragged out. The police eventually cleared the train but since the young people had meanwhile armed themselves with stones, set fire to one of the carriages standing in the station, and continued to clash with the police, the commander of the operation instructed his subordinates over the railway loudspeaker to stop using truncheons and force. At that point indeed, the balance of forces was such that the police and the army reinforcements called in could only have resorted to firearms in their defence. (...)

The result of these events is alarming: the violence used by the police has caused injuries to some one hundred young people, of whom 27 suffered serious wounds. The exact number of injured police is not known. But according to some reports seven policemen had to be admitted to hospital and two died as a result of their injuries. The damage caused to

1977

the railway station and its neighbourhood is estimated at three million crowns. The police used armoured cars during the operation, three of which were overturned, and several cars were set alight and damaged. (...)

Thirteen participants of these incidents, provoked by the organizers, the police and army reinforcements, were taken to court on 19 October 1977 and sentenced from 12 months' to two years' imprisonment as an act of intimidation against young people in Czechoslovakia.

N.B. In case the source is not mentioned then the text is taken from "samizdat" materials circulating in Czechoslovakia.

17–18 October. *Trial of Ota Ornest, Jiri Lederer, Frantisek Pavlicek and Václav Havel, four Czech journalists and writers. The concluding part of the final plea by Jiri Lederer before the court in Prague. (Excerpts.)*

(...) At a time when Brezhnev is granting an interview to France's *Le Monde*, and Gierek to America's *Washington Post*, when Tito is welcomed in Peking and Carter in Warsaw, when Strougal is holding talks with Kreisky and Sadat with Begin, at a time when the unheard-of becomes possible, when the world is changing before our eyes and relationships between states and between various political currents are being transformed, when people are shaking hands across frontiers of countries and the lines of doctrines, at this time, in the midst of post-Helsinki Europe, we are condemned like criminals for sending thoughtful verse, witty drama, analytical essays, entertaining novels and clever *feuilletons* to foreign lands. Such a verdict stands out in the centre of Europe like a depressing monument to the past, giving off the icy breeze of the cold war.

The verdict of the Municipal Court declares unequivocally that everything I did, I did out of hostility to socialism and the Republic. What the municipal judges said of me is not a verdict but an insult to my person.

I have not concealed my life, my feelings, my thoughts and my positions. As a journalist I went before the public with everything. I put my entire self into thousands of articles, reports, *feuilletons*, studies, essays,

1977

polemics, reviews and interviews –and signed my name to every one of them. Any they call me hostile to socialism!

I am as hostile to socialism as Georges Marchais, Enrico Berlinguer, or Santiago Carillo, these leaders of parties which, together with the Soviet and Yugoslav parties, are the most important communist parties of Europe. Their opinions are very near to mine and in some directions I identify myself with them entirely, for example, their opinions on Czechoslovakia in 1968, on the entry of Soviet troops into the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic in August of 1968, or on The Czechoslovak situation in the 1970s.

I am a proponent of socialism democratically administered; a socialism that ensures a workers' democracy, where trade unions are independent, democratically functioning workers' organisations. I am a proponent of a socialism in which citizens decide in free elections who is to represent them. A proponent of socialism which guarantees an independent judiciary. Socialism in which freedom of expression, particularly freedom of the press, is a matter of course. Socialism that respects the native popular traditions of democracy. Socialism in which the opposition is not persecuted, but is treated with respect, as one of the elements of public opinion. I am a proponent of such a socialism which, just ten years ago, we launched an attempt to establish, but our attempt was stifled by foreign tanks. (...)

At this point the President of the court once again interrupted Jiri Lederer and did not allow him to proceed. Lederer protested strongly but the President insisted on her ruling.

The court sentenced Ota Ornest to three-and-a-half years' imprisonment in the first corrective education group, Jiri Lederer to three years in the second corrective education group, Frantisek Pavlicek to 17 months' imprisonment suspended for three years.

Full text in the book by H. Gordon, op. cit. p. 295.

1 November. *Letter from the Charter 77 spokespersons to the Federal Assembly (Parliament) of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic on the violation of the Czechoslovak legal system during the trial of four Czech journalists and writers. (Excerpts.)*

(...) On 17 and 18 October of this year, a trial was held in the Municipal

1977

Court in Prague of Dr. Ota Ornest, Jiri Lederer, Dr. Frantisek Pavlicek and Václav Havel. O. Ornest and J. Lederer were charged with subversion of the Republic (article 98, paras. 1 and 2, of the criminal code); Dr. Pavlicek with attempting to subvert the Republic (article 7, para 1; article 98, para 1 of the criminal code); Václav Havel with attempting to damage the interests of the Republic abroad (article 8, para 1; article 112, para 1 of the criminal code).

The indictment declared, and the court confirmed, that the accused were guilty of these crimes on the basis of activity which in no way corresponds with the factual basis for such crimes: the writings sent abroad were works exclusively of a literary nature (literary history and literary criticism), and were non-political in character. Therefore, their publication anywhere in the world cannot be subversive activity on the basis of article 98 of the criminal code; still less can it be a threat to the social and state system of the Republic, its territorial integrity, its defence capability, its independence or its international interests. Moreover the subjective element, indispensable according to the law, is also lacking: in order that we might speak about criminal activity on the basis of article 98, it must be proven that such activity was based on "enmity towards the socialist system of the Republic", which was not proven in the case of any of the accused. In fact, those accused under article 98 were citizens who had devoted their entire lives to the cause of socialism, and not only in the cultural sphere, since they also had committed themselves in broader, sociopolitical contexts. That was officially recognised, in part, by the awarding of the Order of Labour to J. Lederer, the title of the Gottwald State Prize Laureate to F. Pavlicek and the Award For Merit in Building (Socialism) to O. Ornest.

As to the charge of preparing to commit the crime of damaging the Republic abroad (article 112 of the criminal code), the memoirs of a politician who was active almost thirty years ago cannot be considered an "untruthful report about conditions in the Republic or about its foreign policy". (. . .)

Nor was any attention paid in the indictment and the course of the trial to the fact that by ratifying the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic bound itself to adapt its legislation, and the practice of its administrative and judicial organs, to the obligations implied in this pact. In the given case, it is a question of article 19, para 2 (of the pact), guaranteeing freedom to "seek out, accept and disseminate information and ideas of all sorts, regardless of frontiers, be it verbally, in writing or in print, by means of art or any other means according to their own choice" (Collection of Laws, 120/1967). It is precisely such administrative and other measures

1977

which, in violation of these obligations, prevent the publication of many valuable works of literature at home, to the detriment of our cultural life (as we pointed out in document no 12 of Charter 77 on 30 June), and which have led the condemned citizens to an understandable effort at least to publish these works beyond the frontiers of our Republic.

The norms of trial procedure were also ignored. (. . .) For the proceedings, for no objective reason, a small room was chosen, with places for fourteen persons. In addition to the wives of the defendants and the son of J. Lederer, all seats were assigned beforehand to persons, as members of "the objective public", whom the defendants and their families recognised as employees of the State Security Police. Furthermore this *de facto* exclusion of the public was assured by an extensive campaign on the part of the security organs, which during the time of the trial issued summonses to dozens of friends of the defendants, under the pretext of investigating their participation in some "provocation being prepared", but were unable to give those interrogated and detained any concrete information about this. Also the presence and the behaviour of the security agents in the courthouse and around it during the trial was marked by a number of illegal acts, including the photographing and filming of citizens and foreign journalists who, by their presence, displayed an interest in the trial. All these steps could have no other effect than fortify doubts in the minds of the public at home and abroad concerning irregularities in the conduct of the trial. (. . .)

The judgement of the international public, for instance, the central organ of the Communist Party of France, *L'Humanité*, which cannot be accused of prejudice against our Republic, and whose reporter was not even permitted to enter Czechoslovakia, as well as the response to the trial at the talks in Belgrade, is evidence of the fact that the entire manner in which it was conducted, among other things, caused grave damage to the interests of the Republic abroad. (...)

Full text in the book by H. Gordon Skilling, op. cit. p. 268

20 November. *Charter 77 Document No. 13. On state regulation, restrictions and bans in the sphere of popular music. (Excerpts.)*

The criminal proceedings recently initiated against popular songwriter and singer Jaroslav Hutka, and the wave of protest evoked by the

well-known events at Kdyne, along with some other recent events and phenomena, impels one to consider the general situation in the sphere of contemporary Czech popular music, and the deeper social consequences of that situation.

It is well known that an artist active in this sphere can only perform under the auspices of the appropriate state agencies. This principle, and above all the way it is carried out in practice, is the fundamental cause of the everdeepening crisis in this socially significant sphere of culture. Thanks to that principle, performing publicity today means subjecting oneself to a complex, rigid and nonsensical bureaucratic system of controls and directives which not only debase the artist from a civic point of view, and make of the right to artistic activity a special privilege or gift, but which above all, are demonstrably stifling the entire sphere of popular music from an artistic point of view. (...)

One by one, many outstanding artists in the field of popular music and jazz have left the Republic; these are artists who refused to adapt to the given situation, because they felt that it hindered their artistic development. (. . .) After emigrating, a number of these artists have already achieved world success and their departure undoubtedly means a great loss for Czech culture.

The basic instrument used for restricting a performing artist is the everpresent threat of a partial or total ban on his public performances. This threat has a deleterious effect on every artist who performs publicly, and hence also on all popular music. Out of fear of such a ban, the artist subordinates the authentic expression of his personality to efforts to gratify the demands and taste of official functionaries. (...)

Recently total bans on public performance have often been combined with a variety of contrived criminal accusations. In the spring of 1976, nineteen musicians and singers of the groups, the Plastic People and Dg 307, and their circle were detained for investigation; most of them were accused of the criminal act of "public disturbance"; in the autumn of 1976, the leaders of both groups, Ivan Jirous and Pavel Zajicek, along with saxophone player Vratislav Brabenec and singer Svatopluk Karásek, were found guilty of that crime and sentenced; the others are still under indictment. In this case the indictment was clearly aimed at concealing the true cause of their prosecution, which was the opposition of official places to their work. This applied also to the group Sirotdci. The same is true right now for

1977

Jaroslav Hutka, who is accused of undertaking activity without permission. (...)

Groups and individuals whose repertoires include compositions with religious motifs are particularly hard-hit. These artists cannot even perform in Catholic churches any more, and the security organs display an intense interest in their activity. Religious motifs are suppressed even in folk songs, and they are not permitted on radio or television at all. The prohibitions go so far, as to ban the names of saints in songs, even at Christmastime. (...)

By means of this complex of infinitely varied restrictions, the younger generation is systematically being deprived of an entire important dimension of life, namely, free participation in the kind of culture that is truly close to their feelings and demands. The lack of such a culture, and the resulting suppression of a whole plane of collective experience – so important for young people – is the real reason for the ever-more frequent conflicts between youth and the security organs. It is not a coincidence that these clashes – whether they are bloody, as in České Budějovice, Kdyně or Domazlice, or not – are generally triggered by nothing more than an overcrowded hall as the natural consequence of a situation where the demand far surpasses the supply. If young people from an entire region gather for a single concert or entertainment, or if young people in a big city must be satisfied with a single discothèque, then it is obvious that this can and must evoke conflict situations.

In meantime it is unfortunately apparent that state organs, instead of considering the actual causes of these phenomena, react to them only by further intensifying police reprisals and police supervision even in places where there is no reason for it from the point of view of security. (...)

The right to free cultural expression is among the fundamental human rights which our state has pledged to observe. This right should be adhered to in the field of popular music, too, above all in the *genres* that are closest to the contemporary younger generation, and which are most suppressed by contemporary bureaucratic cultural policy. A consistent respect of this right will also be the only road to the lasting elimination of conflict situations between the youth and the state power, and the genuine strengthening of the authority of the state. Authority is only seemingly fortified by the use of a police club. (...)

1977

The singer Jaroslav Hutka was finally forced to emigrate. He arrived in the Netherlands in October 1978.

Full text in the book by H. Gordon Skilling, op. cit. p. 252.

December. *Open letter from thirteen Czech writers in connection with the European conference in Belgrade; the letter was addressed to Heinrich Böll, Michel Butor, Arthur Miller, Alberto Moravia, Philip Roth, Jan-Paul Sartre, Tom Stoppard, Peter Weiss, and others.*

We, together with millions of people from many nations, are following the negotiations of the Belgrade Conference. We are already too old to believe in miracles. Security, and collaboration in Europe and the world can only be achieved slowly, step by step. We also assume that patience is our most powerful ally. We have never sought confrontation with the authorities over the past eight years when we have been excluded from practising our professions, restricted in travelling and prevented from expressing a free opinion. We only defend ourselves against injustice.

It is of crucial importance for all artists, authors and other Intellectuals who in various European countries and for different reasons have been silenced, to state unequivocally whether their work belongs to the state, the regime, or to the wider public, ie those who take a real interest in it. Some states believe they are implementing the relevant paragraph of the Helsinki Declaration by reducing their cultural exchanges to bilateral agreements. We too, can understand that a state would like to invite officially, or allow to go abroad, only those authors and artists who agree with its political and cultural ideas. But we demand that other (non-governmental) cultural organisations and institutions should also have the right to invite authors and artists and to publish works of their own choice. Those who receive invitations from abroad should automatically be given permission to travel.

The unjust sentences pronounced in the Prague trial against four persons whose only offence was to have sent literary works abroad, have made it absolutely necessary for the paragraphs on free exchange of information. In the Helsinki Declaration to be defined more precisely.

1977

Moreover, it should not be forgotten that, at a time when dozens of exponents of a nation's literature are silenced, copied manuscripts tend to replace normal publications and serve to maintain the continuity of native literature and contact with culture abroad. Such publications must not be considered illegal solely because they have not been printed. In the last resort, authors should be given the chance to turn to a neutral authority, such as UNESCO, in order to demonstrate that the content of their work infringes neither their national law or international agreements.

We have decided to address this Open Letter to colleagues with whom we have been in contact personally or by correspondence. As we have not been able to obtain any answer from our government, we ask these colleagues, and with their support also those whom we do not know personally, to submit our proposals to their own governments with the request to discuss them in Belgrade.

The letter was signed by:

Jirí Grusa, Václav Havel, Jaroslav Hutka, Petr Kabes, Eva Kanturková, Ivan Klíma, Pavel Kohout, Karol Sidon, Jan Trefulka, Milan Uhde, Zdenek Urbánek, Ludvik Vaculik, Jan Vladislav.

Index on Censorship, vol 7, no 3, May-June 1978.

1978

22 May. *A letter addressed by Vaclav Havel to the World Congress of the PEN Club in Stockholm about the persecution of young people.*

Last month, in Brno, in Czechoslovakia, three young men were thrown into jail: Petr Cibulka, a worker; Libor Chloupek, a librarian; Petr Pospichal, a baker's apprentice. They were accused of inciting disorder, because they have copied from the works of Czech writers unpublished in their country, and because they have collected tapes with recordings of non-conformist singers and musicians. They were doing what I have been doing for years: publishing, in a few type-written copies, books which are blacklisted in Czechoslovakia, or collecting tapes with programmes by singers and groups which cannot perform publicly.

Now, how is it possible that the three young men are in jail for alleged offences which I myself and my friends have been committing for years without any measures being taken against us?

I cannot help the feeling that this is possible only because I and some of my colleagues, unlike the three arrested, are partially protected by the fact that my works are published abroad, that I am known to colleagues there, that I can rely on their solidarity. After all, international responses to police repression play a certain role here.

I would like to take the opportunity to express my thanks to those of you who have maintained this kind of solidarity. Your sustained interest in our situation is of great importance to us. And not only that. This solidarity strengthens the notion of a deep spiritual and moral context which proves to us that our colleagues abroad feel what we feel: namely, that freedom is indivisible and that we all together bear the responsibility for it.

It is exactly because of this notion of the indivisibility of freedom and of our responsibility to it – a notion which does not differentiate between those who are known and who are not – that I recall the fate of the three boys in Brno. Indeed, it deserves the same attention as if we, the older and better known, were the target. For, the aim here is to discourage young people from thinking independently or, at least, to frighten their friends.

Imagine that you, in your own country, were not permitted for ten years to publish a single line; yet, in spite of this, some young people still know you, copy from your works and land in jail for this. I feel certain that you would all do exactly the same as me: you would call on your colleagues everywhere to defend those persecuted.

If I am appealing to you for help on behalf of these people, it is not

1978

only because I have no other means at my disposal, but also because, as a member of PEN, I am convinced that our organisation would not fulfil its mission if it were to remain indifferent to the fact that in a developed country in the heart of Europe a twenty-year-old can be arrested for taking an interest, in literature other than that approved by the state, and for copying this literature for himself and his friends.

Such a ridiculous police action places more at stake than the liberty of three persons. It represents an attack on the very basis of culture, in the sense of limiting man's right to self-realisation and the truth.

Though invited to the Congress, the Czech playwright was not able to attend in person as he has been denied a passport by the authorities. Index on Censorship, Vol 7, no 5, September–October 1978.

2 June. *The writer Jiri Grusa, author of the novel "The Questionnaire", detained and charged with incitement.*

"Under Art 163, paragraph 1 of the Penal Code I am charging Jiri Grusa, born on 10 November 1938 at Pardubice, of Czechoslovak nationality, divorced, a technician at the Stavby firm in Prague, permanent address Prague 4, Bránik, Nad lesním divadlem 1 117, with the criminal offence of incitement under Art 100, paragraph 1a of the Penal Code, since verified facts provide sufficient ground for the conclusion that the above named, prompted by hostility towards the socialist state and social system of the Republic, wrote in 1974, the novel "The Questionnaire", containing gross slanders and attacks of the socialist social system of the Republic, and that he himself made at least 19 copies of this literary work which he then distributed among his friends, sending three copies to a foreign publisher in Switzerland for publication." (...)

Pavel Roubal, an engineer, was detained together with Jiri Grusa on suspicion of having made typed copies of the novel "The Questionnaire". Roubal was released on 28 July, Grusa on 31 July 1978, but charges against them have not been dropped.

9 August. *Woman accused of prostitution as punishment for copy-typing non-conformist literature.*

1978

(...) Zdena Erteltova, a university graduate, living alone with her grown-up son, was summoned for interrogation on 9 August 1978 and, refused to reveal the names of her friends whose works she had copied on her typewriter. (...) As a result she was scandalously accused of prostitution and parasitism; police officials conducted her to the venereal disease ward of the hospital "U Spolináře" where she was forced to undergo a humiliating examination and "admitted" to hospital. She was made to remain a fortnight in this virtual state of confinement. The results of her V.D. examination were obviously negative. Because of severe bleeding Zdena Erteltova had to be transferred to the gynaecological ward for minor surgery but one hour after the intervention she was returned to the isolation ward of the venereal disease department. Four days after her surgery, when she had been on hunger strike for two days despite her general condition of weakness to draw attention to her unjustifiable and desperate situation, she was transferred back to the local police station for further interrogation (!) and subsequently released. Throughout the fortnight in detention she was not once allowed to phone her son, she had no news about her sick mother, who depends on her care nor was she permitted to contact her lawyer. She was eventually released, not with an apology but with threats for the future. Like so many of us she was told by one of the police officials that "they can do anything". Like so many of us she was offered the chance of "emigrating within forty-eight hours" as the only "painless" solution. (...)

From a letter of protest to President Gustav Husak, signed by some fifty women.

18 August. *A doctor and a male nurse accused of incitement for collecting printed material dating back to 1968-69, and for lending and borrowing books.*

The district police at Příbram is prosecuting two employees of the national health institute of the uranium industry at Příbram-Zdabor. They are Dr. Emil Fuchs, aged 57, and 28-year-old Václav Kimák, a male nurse. They have both been charged with incitement, Kimák under Art 100, paragraph 1a, and Dr. Fuchs under para 2 of the same Article of the Penal Code. The former is said to have systematically collected printed material dating back to the crisis-ridden period in 1968-69, from an "unspecified date" (...) until 11 July 1977 (i.e. at least 15

1978

months age) under the pretext of studying history (...), and contemporary material linked ideologically to the crisis-ridden developments; (...) biased comparison could have created hostile feelings towards the social system of the Republic. Dr. Fuchs is said to have given Kimák "approximately during the same period and in the same place" (...) Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's book "The Gulag Archipelago", (...) the magazines "Listy" and "Svedectví".(...)

To illustrate the style of work of the Příbram police it should be pointed out that though proceedings were instigated on 11 July 1977, Lt Cejka, investigating the case, did not decide to issue the indictment for such old alleged acts till 18 August 1978 (three days before the anniversary of the 21 August 1968 invasion) while Kimák was again summonsed for interrogation a week later, this time in connection with an explosion on Gottwald Square at Příbram which had allegedly taken place in the night from 23 to 24 August.

30 August. *Protestant clergyman J Simsa sentenced*

Court proceedings were held at the Brno district court on 30 August 1978 against Jan Simsa, a protestant clergyman, now a worker, a signatory of Charter 77, and author of several studies. He was charged under Art 155 1/a of the Penal Code of attacking a public official. Some 50 of Simsa's friends had gathered outside the courtroom. Sixteen members of the public, most of them friends and relatives, were admitted. The President of the court severely reminded all intending to take notes that they needed the court's permission. When one of those present applied for it he was refused.

The indictment accused Simsa that during a house search on 31 May 1978 he had assaulted Lt Bata of the State Security service, thrown him onto a bed and hit him in the face. This was said to have occurred when the secret policeman was seizing from Simsa's wife a letter written by Prof Patocka. The defendant was under the impression that the policeman was using force against his wife. This impression was borne out by the fact that his wife had blood suffusions on her hands even one week later. Simsa had knocked the policeman down in an attempt to protect his wife.

The witnesses to give evidence included two policemen and a woman official of the local national committee who had been present during the search. The wife and son of the defendant, though eyewitness to the in-

1978

cident, were not called to give evidence. Their testimonies were reproduced briefly and inaccurately and differed substantially from the evidence given by the policemen.

In his final plea Simsa pointed out that as a Christian he had always favoured non-violent solutions of human conflicts and that under the conditions obtaining in his country this non-violent struggle was taking on concrete shape: one would have to learn to accept the beating of our wives and children with charity and patience. He then protested against a report by the prison doctor minimizing his serious illness, which could result in any prison sentence passed on him becoming life imprisonment.

The court nevertheless sentenced Simsa to eight months' imprisonment. As the verdict was being pronounced Simsa's wife was excluded from the courtroom when she wanted to collect her husband's notes placed on a chair.

27 September. *Police raids on "living-room theatre" in Prague*

Macbeth in your living-room The Czech parallel, or "second" culture, continues to flourish: literary works appear in samizdat editions; the lectures and seminars of Jan Patočka's university continue; concerts and exhibitions take place, and now, with the creation of *BYTOVE DIVADLO* (Living-room Theatre), a new art form has been added. The Theatre, which attracts a considerable number of patrons, opened its season with Pavel Kohout's adaptation of Shakespeare's "Macbeth", with well-known former actors, such as Pavel Landovsky and Vlasta Chramostova in leading roles. By the end of September 1978, Macbeth had been performed approximately twenty times.

Another attractive production in "Apelplac" – a recital by Vlasta Chramostova, which includes texts and poems by B Brecht, Jerzy Andrzejewski, Osip Mandelstam and Jaroslav Seifert.

The first police intervention was on September 27 on the night of the tenth performance of "Apelplac" in a flat in the Old City part of Prague. They took the names of all visitors and barred them from entering the flat. Others, such as Rudolf Slansky, son of the executed former General Secretary of the Communist Party, were taken to a policestation and told not to attempt to enter the flat. The performance did take place later in another part of Prague. On September 28, the police interrupted the performance of "*Macbeth*" in the flat of Mrs Vlasta Chramost-

1978

tova and took the names of all visitors. A second performance of "Macbeth" on October 2 was again interrupted by police, who this time allowed some of the audience to stay and asked another twenty to leave.

Palach Press, London, Bulletin Nr 10, October 1978.

1979

18 May. *Two Catholic priests sentenced for involvement in religious activities.*

The final part of court proceedings against Fathers Vojtech Srna and Miloslav Sváček took place before the Ústí nad Orlicí district court on 18 May 1979. Dr. Josef Lokvenc, the district prosecutor, had charged the two men respectively with the criminal offence of obstruction the supervision of churches, and religious societies (Art 178 of the Penal Code), and aiding and abetting the offence (Articles 10 and 178 of the Penal Code). Vojtech Srna was said to have committed the alleged criminal offence in August 1977 when as a Catholic priest he had assisted the Polish priest Zielonka during a mass read before reveille at the Esperanto camp at Herbortice. Miroslav Sváček was accused of assisting the crime by authorizing and facilitating this private mass.

The main proceedings, which started in February 1979, had to be adjourned twice because several witnesses had retracted or changed their statements on the grounds, that they had been made under duress. Moreover, a contradiction had arisen between the positions of the church authorities and of the Ministry of Culture on the nature of the assistance given by Vojtech Srna during mass. The court this time heard evidence by Capt Jaros, a State Security interrogator, and Lt Moravec, who stated that the interrogations had been conducted in order; the court therefore concluded that the evidence of the civilian witnesses was obviously inaccurate. The court also accepted the position of the Ministry of Culture which had ruled that the assistance of a priest during mass was at all times tantamount to the performance of religious rites and not to officiating as a ministrant. In his concluding speech the prosecutor pointed out that the action of the defendants had been highly dangerous since "religious ideology is in stark contradiction with the ruling Marxist ideology and can under no circumstances be granted unlimited freedom".

The court found the defendants guilty in accordance with the indictment and pronounced a verdict according to the prosecutor's demand: Vojtech Srna was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment and Miroslav Sváček to fifteen months, both sentenced being suspended for three years. Vojtech Srna was, in addition, banned from performing ecclesiastical activities (Art 49, para 1 of the Penal Code) for three years. (...)

The main court proceedings were attended by some thirty persons. In contravention of the provisions of the law on the participation of the public at criminal proceedings the prosecutor attacked the public before

1979

the opening, especially "the active ones, who pass on information about the proceedings to other citizens and to people abroad". In his summing-up speech he quoted passages from VONS statements, describing them as something "far worse and more vulgar than psychological pressure" and threatened possible VONS members present with criminal sanctions. (...)

VONS Statement No of 25 May 1979

27 September. *Criminal proceedings against Jiri Grusa, author of the novel "The Questionnaire", suspended.*

The Investigation Administration of the State Security has announced (...) that criminal proceedings on charges of incitement (Art 100 of the Penal Code) against Jiri Grusa have been suspended. He was alleged to have committed the offence when "in 1974-1975, prompted by hostility to the socialist social and state system, he compiled a book entitled "The Questionnaire", which contained gross slanders and attacks on the socialist social and state system of the Republic, and distributed it among his acquaintances ..." The statement of reasons of the suspension says i.a.: "... Even though the writing entitled "The Questionnaire" is objectionable in its own way the action of the defendant cannot be regarded as an offence since the findings of the investigation and the inane contents of the writing lead to the conclusion that the degree of danger posed by society by the action is negligible (Art 3, para 2 of the Penal Code). It has therefore been decided to suspend the criminal proceedings against the defendant since no reason has been found to take further action."

The criminal proceedings against Pavel Roubal for disseminating literature including Grusa's novel have also been suspended. Both have spent two months in custody in 1978.

VONS Statement No 149

8 October. *Decision of the Interior Ministry of the Czech Socialist Republic on stripping the writer Pavel Kohout of his citizenship.*

1979

The Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Socialist Republic, acting under Art 14a, para 1f of Law No 39/1969 (...), hereby deprives Pavel Kohout, born in Prague on 20 July 1928, last permanent residence Prague 4, Lhotka 560, now Burgtheater, Karl Lueger Ring 2, Vienna 1, Austria, of his citizenship of the Czech Socialist Republic and, under Art 1, para 2 of the above mentioned law, also of the citizenship of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. Statement of reasons: under Art 14a, para 1f of the law No 39/1969 on the acquisition and loss of citizenship of the Czech Socialist Republic (...) the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Socialist Republic is authorized to deprive a citizen living abroad, who by his acts damages major interests of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, of his citizenship of the Czech Socialist Republic and, accordingly under Art 1, para 2 of the aforesaid law of his citizenship of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic.

As a result of investigations and written material it has been ascertained that Pavel Kohout who had left the country on 28 October 1978 for one year, became actively involved in anti-Czechoslovak activities shortly after his arrival there. He established contacts with Zdenek Mlynár and Premysl Janýr, who had already been stripped of their Czechoslovak citizenship for their hostile activities against the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. He agreed with them to intensify and coordinate joint actions with the hostile activities being undertaken by Czechoslovak emigrés. Kohout confirmed this in an interview with Lattman a member of the Bonn Parliament, in December 1978 when he said that on his return to the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic he would take over the organization of links between the opposition abroad and the one inside Czechoslovakia, where he would become its main spokesman. It has further been ascertained that in an interview given on December 12 1978 and broadcast by the BBC, Radio Free Europe and the Voice of America, the above-named spoke of alleged discrimination of those Czech writers whom he described as struggling for the observance of human rights; in another interview, broadcast by Austrian television on 23 May 1979 and also recorded by Swiss television, he attacked i.a. the cultural policy of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. In addition to the above-mentioned activities he handed over his book entitled "The Hangwoman" for publication. This work, which is a vulgar anti-Czechoslovak, anti-socialist lampoon, was published abroad in 30.000 copies and sold in the Swiss, Austrian and West German book markets. The public was, moreover, informed of its content in fairly extensive reviews published in the West German magazines Stern and Frankfurter Rundschau. According to an interview granted to Austrian radio and television on 30 October 1978 Kohout intends to prepare the publication

1979

of this so-called novel also in the United States, Britain, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, France and Japan.

Pavel Kohout's action provides legal grounds for the deprivation of citizenship, and it has therefore been decided to proceed as stated above. (...)

16 October. *Charter 77 spokespersons protest against Pavel Kohout being stripped of his citizenship. (Excerpts.)*

On Tuesday, 9 October 1979, *Rudé právo* published a report of the Czech Ministry of the Interior, dated 8 October 1979 and stating that on 1 October 1979 the said Ministry had stripped the writer, Playwright and theatrical director Pavel Kohout of this citizenship of the Czech and Slovak Socialist Republic for allegedly damaging the interests of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic abroad. This decision was announced only a few days after, on 5 October 1979, when the letter border guards had used force to prevent Pavel Kohout and his wife Jelena Masínová from entering Czechoslovak territory. This act had no legal basis, as both Pavel Kohout and Jelena Masínová were in possession of valid Czechoslovak passports; they were returning to Czechoslovakia at the end of an authorized 12-month stay in Austria where Pavel Kohout had been working as a director at the Vienna Burgtheater. The action of the border guards which can only be described as an outrageous arbitrary act perpetrated by the Czechoslovak authorities against Czechoslovak citizens and as a gross violation to the international covenants on human rights and the Final Act of the Helsinki conference, was to be "justified" subsequently by the decision of the Czech Ministry of Interior or deprive Pavel Kohout of his citizenship as of 1 October 1979. The decision, which Pavel Kohout rightly refused to accept, aroused a wave of indignation in Austria and other countries and led to sharp protests by the highest representatives of the Republic of Austria. It had become clear once again that though Czechoslovakia had signed and ratified international covenants on human rights and the Final Act of the Helsinki conference it had failed to implement them in many instances. It had above all failed to amend the Czechoslovak legal provisions which run counter to these international agreements and which it had undertaken to amend.

To deprive a person of his citizenship against his will, i.e. to deny him the right to his country, is one of the worst injustices meted out against a human being; it affects the very foundations of human existen-

1979

ce and is a procedure which advanced societies should never use. If, however, such a measure is nevertheless used as punishment it should be decided by an impartial and neutral court which would thoroughly consider all the circumstances, facts and reasons in a public hearing before reaching such a serious decision. How is it possible that in 1979 Czechoslovakia has a valid law No 39/1969, under which a person may be stripped of his or hers citizenship not by a court but by the Ministry of the Interior (...)

22–23 October. *Six Czech intellectuals, signatories of Charter 77 and members of VONS, sentenced.*

On 22–23 October 1979 the main hearing took place at the Prague Municipal Court of the defendants Peter Uhl (born on 8 October 1941), philosopher Dr Vaclav Benda (born on 8 August 1946), journalist Jiri Dienstbier (born on 20 April 1937), writer Vaclav Havel (born on 5 October 1936), journalist Otta Bednářová (born on 18 June 1927), and psychologist Dana Nemcová (born on 14 January 1934). The court found them guilty on the grounds "that between the spring of 1978 and the end of May 1979, prompted by their hostility to the socialist social and state system of the Republic and with the intention of supporting hostile propaganda from abroad and inciting hostile feelings against the socialist state system in Czechoslovakia among the citizens of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, they had founded in Prague and elsewhere an illegal organization, "the Committee to Defend the Unjustly Prosecuted", and writer drafting the programme of the committee and distributing its tasks they had prepared in collusion with other persons and certain foreign nationals – over a period of time a large number of writings in which they had used fabricated or deliberately distorted data to level crude attacks on the security bodies, the prosecutor's office, the courts and the corrective education corps; they had distributed these written materials in Czechoslovakia and made them available abroad where they were used for attacks against the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic in the Western and emigré press and in broadcasts of various stations such as "Radio Free Europe"; thus, prompted by their hostility to the socialist social and state system of the Republic they had engaged in subversive activities against its social and state system and against its international interests; they had, moreover, carried out this act in collusion with a foreign national, on a major scale and conjointly; which rendered all the defendants guilty of the criminal offence of subversion

1979

of the Republic committed in collusion under Art 98, para 1 and 2a, b of the Penal Code under Art 9, para 2 of the Penal Code, and are sentenced

I Under Art 9 para 2 of the Penal Code to the following terms of imprisonment:

the defendant Petr Uhl – 5 years

the defendant Dr. Vaclav Benda – 4 years

the defendant Jiri Dienstbier – 3 years

the defendant Vaclav Havel – 4 1/2 years

the defendant Otta Bednářová – 3 years

II Under Art 98, para 2 of the Penal Code, with the application of Art 40, para 1 of the Penal Code the defendant *Dana Nemcová* to 2 years imprisonment. Under Art 58, para 1a, Art 59, para 1, of the Penal Code the sentence of the latter defendant shall be suspended for a trial period of five years.

Under Art 39a, para 2b of the Penal Code the defendant Petr Uhl shall serve his sentence in the second corrective education group.

Under Art 39a, para 2b of the Penal Code the defendants Dr. Vaclav Benda, Jiri Dienstbier, Vaclav Havel and Otta Bednářová shall serve their sentences in the first corrective education group”.

November. *Milan Kundera and other Czech intellectuals stripped of their Czechoslovak citizenship.*

Karel Trinkewitz, a novelist and artist and a signatory of Charter 77, was granted a visa to emigrate to West Germany towards the end of October after being deprived of his citizenship.

Premysl Janýr, who was allowed to travel to Austria to study journalism in 1977, and *Ivan Binar*, a former teacher who emigrated there at the same time, were stripped of their citizenship in November for “damaging the interest of the Czechoslovak Republic abroad”.

Also deprived of his citizenship was *Milan Kundera*, a leading Czech writer who has been living in France since 1975, teaching comparative literature at the University of Rennes. He was said to have damaged Czechoslovakia and its relations with foreign countries in his interviews and publications.

Index on Censorship, Vol 9, No 2, April 1980

1980

13 January. *Journalist Jiri Lederer released from prison after serving his full term of imprisonment.*

Jiri Lederer, a well-known Czech journalist, was released from prison on 13 January 1980 after serving the full time of three years imprisonment to which he had been sentenced for having sent abroad manuscripts of literary works by Czech writers who are banned from publishing in their own country.

24 March. *The detention of participants in philosophy courses.*

VONS describes in detail the detention of eight students on 19 March at a lecture by Dr Martin Palous on the phenomenology of meaning. The committee also mention similar harassment on 12 March. On 14 March, according to VONS, Ivan Dejmal, in whose flat most of the lectures took place, was summoned for interrogation by the Security Service and informed that "the philosophy course will not take place because we don't wish it", regardless of the fact that "the law allows it". According to the Security Service, "the world situation is not developing towards peace and we are not concerned about the relations with the United Kingdom". At the same time, they threatened to find Dejmal's fault too large (i.e. he could be evicted for exceeding the housing norm), suggested that he might lose his telephone, and threatened him with imprisonment if the lectures continued. (Dejmal has already spent four years in prison.)

VONS Statement No 179

29 March. *Police continues to intervene against participants at philosophy seminars.*

On Saturday 29 March, M Palous was due to give a lecture at the home of Jan Litomiský at Vyskytné near Pelhřimov. The lecture was to interpret Martin Heidegger's text on "What is philosophy" and to be followed by a discussion. A group of some fifteen participants in the course from Prague and Brno had intended to attend. But in the evening of 28 March Jan Litomiský's house was surrounded by police including

1980

up to twelve in uniform and five members of the State Security; a small bus was parked outside the house to take away detained visitors.

Five young participants from Brno, four workers and a librarian, were detained in the evening of 28 March and compelled to return to their homes. Jan Litomiský's guests from Prague who arrived in the morning of 29 March and found that the house was under police surveillance, reached the building through the rear entrance in the garden. But they and others were forced to identify themselves once inside the house though the police was thus violating the privacy of the home. The police then took away Jan Litomiský and one of his guests to Pelhrimov for interrogation threatening not to release them until the participants in the course had left the Pelhrimov district. The visitors had no choice but to surrender to police pressure. Some of them were searched and interrogated. Jan Litomiský was released in the afternoon and the police patrols withdrawn in the night of 29 March.

These incidents show that the State Security is stepping up its activities designed to prevent young non-conformists from various sections of society from getting together. There is also the attempt to isolate Jan Litomiský, an active member of VONS in a rural area.

Efforts are continuing to liquidate the Prague philosophy seminars of Dr. Julius Tomin. (...) On Wednesday 2 April at 17.45, when a regular Aristotelian seminar was due to be held, the flat of the Tomins was virtually blockaded by the police after their telephone had been disconnected. Three uniformed police were a guard on the landing of the house, though seminar participants nevertheless managed to reach the flat. The others, after being refused admission even to the building, stood around on the outside pavement. When Dr. Tomin went outside his house about one hour later to talk to the participants he was asked to identify himself and follow the policemen. Dr. Tomin refused to go with the police and tried to return to his flat. The policemen caught up with him outside the door of his flat on the fourth floor, whereupon Dr. Tomin put up passive resistance which he continued even after being dragged to a car and taken to the premises of the regional police administration at Bartolomejská Street No 7, Prague I.

Dr. Tomin refused to leave the police premises of his own will in protest against having been taken there by force. He was then brutally dragged out and left on the pavement at the nearby Konviktska' Street. The seminar nevertheless was held on that same day. (...)

VONS Statement No 175

1980

September. *Journalist Jiri Lederer forced into exile*

Jiri Lederer, a leading journalist of the Dubcek period who had refused to leave the country following his release from prison early last year sought political asylum in West Germany at the beginning of September after the authorities had ordered his Polish wife, *Elizabeta*, to leave the country by the end of August. Lederer said that they had refused to extend her visa after 14 years of residence in Czechoslovakia because of her contacts with Polish dissidents and added that he and their daughter *Monika* had also been stripped of their citizenship. At the same time *Jiri Polák*, a film scriptwriter, was also stripped of his citizenship and, together with his wife sought political asylum in West Germany.

Index on Censorship, Vol 10, No 1, February 1981.

1981

April. *Philosopher Julius Tomin stripped of his Czechoslovak citizenship.*

*Dr Julius Tomin, the philosopher, had his citizenship revoked in April – less than a year after he was given a five-year exit visa to enable him to accept an invitation to lecture at Oxford. The charges against him – and his wife Zdena who suffered a similar fate – were that they “participated abroad in activities against the Czechoslovakian Socialist Republic especially in their public stands on the BBC and in the British press which is testified by an article in *The Times* on 12 September 1980, and an ideologically inflammatory broadcast on 9 November 1980”.*

Index on Censorship, Vol 10, No 5, October 1981.

6 May. *Czechoslovak non-conformist intellectuals, writers and journalists arrested.*

In early morning raids in Prague, Brno and Bratislava on 6 May, 26 human rights workers and members of the Charter 77 movement were arrested, following the detention of two French citizens on the Austro-Czechoslovak border. The two, *Gilles Thonon*, a lawyer, and *Françoise Anis*, a student, were released three weeks later and expelled from the country. They had been accused of smuggling a large amount of anti-state matter into Czechoslovakia, this consisting of banned books and magazines as well as a portable duplicator. Of those arrested, 18 were released from custody, but nine of them are being charged with subversion “in cooperation with a foreign power” which carries a maximum sentence of 10 years imprisonment. The eight who remain in custody and face the same charges are: *Karel Kuncl*, a former well-known radio and TV commentator; *Jiri Ruml*, another well-known journalist of the Dubcek era; his son *Jan Ruml*, who since being expelled from university was a manual worker and a active member of VONS (Committee to Defend the Unjustly Prosecuted); *Eva Kanturková*, writer and journalist who has since 1968 only published in samizdat; *Jan Mlynárik*, a Slovak historian living in Prague; *Jaromir Horec*, poet and former editor of the Youth Union daily *Mladá Fronta*; *Jirina Siklová*, a Prague sociologist; and *Milan Simecka*, a former university teacher who has become well-known for his dissident writings, some of which have been published in

1981

Index on Censorship (the latest in 3/1981). Those who are awaiting trial while at liberty include Dubcek's Foreign Minister, *Dr Jiri Hájek*, the wife of the imprisoned playwright Václav Havel. *Olga Halová*, and his brother *Ivan*.

Index on Censorship, Vol 10, No 4, August 1981.

1 July. *Jiri Gruntorád persecuted for his activity in the sphere of independent culture and for cooperation with VONS.*

Jiri Gruntorád, age 28, in custody at the Ruzyně prison since 19 December 1980, is to stand trial before the Prague Municipal Court (...) on 6–9 July 1981. The municipal prosecutor Dr Frantisek Kubát has charged him with the criminal offence of subversion of the Republic under Art 98/1 of the Penal Code. But the true motive of Gruntorád's prosecution are clearly his publication activities among young people. He is said to have distributed literary texts "which went beyond the framework of officially produced literature", in other words, to have engaged in activities similar to the "Petlice" or "Expeditce" publications. But the indictment (...) insinuates that the defendant has engaged in several activities which are being classed as subversion of the Republic. For example, (...) it states that the defendant "has been particularly active in the publication" of the unofficial discussion journal FORUM, that "within the framework of his activities he has participated in the duplication and distribution of the so-called Brown Book" (a collection of documents on the trial of the Plastic People and DG 307 rock music groups). The indictment itself reveals the unsubstantiated nature of other charges, namely that "the defendant has regularly listened to broadcasts by the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe" and that "he has been in written contact with Radio Free Europe". From the indictment it transpires that the two allegations are not borne out by written or oral evidence, and that since the defendant has refused to make any statement in the preparatory proceedings this is evidently a pure fabrication, quite apart from the questionable criminal nature of the charges as such. The same applies to the accusation that "the defendant participated in compiling information on the investigation and prosecution of various persons and that he passed on this information to VONS", and that he has taken an active part in VONS work. In this connection we must point out that no member of VONS has been questioned about Jiri Gruntorád's case. Incidentally, the legitimate character of VONS cannot be doubted since it is a member of the International Federation of Human

1981

Rights, an organization with consultative status at the United Nations Organizations.

The court which heard Jiri Gruntorád's case on 6–9 July 1981, sentenced him to four years' imprisonment, to be served in the second corrective education group, and to be followed by three years of protective supervision, the maximum length. This is the first time protective supervision has been stipulated in the case of a person sentenced for an alleged political offence.

The court building was patrolled throughout the trial by large numbers of uniformed and secret police who did not allow the defendant's friends to enter. The defendant's common law wife was also barred from the courtroom so that none of the persons closest to him could be present at the trial.

VONS Statement No 255 and 256.

13 July. *Vlastimil Tresnák, a singer and writer, on his harassment and threats made by the police.*

On Monday, 13 July 1981 at 9.30 pm my friends Anna Dolezalová, Pavel Brunhoffer, Tomáš Tomásek, Josef Volfík and I were detained by uniformed police and by members of the State Security and taken to the regional police administration at Bartolomejská Street No 7. We were brought to the entrance of the building and subsequently summoned for interrogation. I was last. My questioning lasted until approximately 3.30 am. I do not intend to speak of the nature and methods used. I was then taken to the preliminary detention cell where I slept one or two hours. The questioning continued after lunch the same day, 14 July 1981, (...) and went on until I suffered a nervous breakdown. I had difficulty in breathing, felt a pain around my heart and was unable to move by myself. I was transferred to a bed and examined by a doctor. I was given some sedatives and taken back to the preliminary detention cell where I was permitted to lie on the bed during the day.

The following day, on 15 July, I was again interrogated, this time for about 30 minutes. Afterwards I was returned to the detention cell and released at 2.50 am on Thursday 16 July 1981. Finally I would like to add that I now feel that my life is at risk.

Vlastimil Tresnak was subsequently forced to emigrate. He arrived to Sweden in 1982.

1981

27–28 July 1981. *Trial of Rudolf Battek, a sociologist and writer, spokesman of Charter 77 and member of VONS.*

The Prague City Court at its hearing on 27 and 28 July 1981 pronounced a verdict of guilty against Rudolf Battek. He was found guilty of the criminal offence of subversion of the Republic under Art 98/1, 2 ab of the Penal Code and of the offence of causing bodily harm under Art 22/1 of the Penal Code.

Rudolf Batted was sentenced to seven and a half years' imprisonment to be served in the second corrective education group and to subsequent protective surveillance for three years as stipulated in Art 2 of Law No 44/73.

Battek was further sentenced to the confiscation of everything found on him during his detention and during a house search.

According to the statement of reasons the offence under Art 98/1, 1 is constituted i.a. by the fact that Rudolf Battek was a member of VONS, that a letter to the President of the Republic of which he was one of the signatories, "slandered the police at variance with the truth", that in a communication to the Presecutor General of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic he "had given an untrue account" of the brutal treatment by the police of J. Legerský who, though critically ill, was dragged from a hospital bed to a house search and later interrogated for several hours next to an open window although wearing only hospital clothing; moreover, that he had collaborated with "foreign subversive ideological centres" by writing letters to the Swedish politician Olof Palme, the President of the West German Social Democratic Party Willy Brandt and the Austrian Chancellor Bruno Kreisky, complaining of the unlawful treatment of himself and other Czechoslovak citizens by the police, and finally that he had participated in preparing Charter 77 documents and had written several papers and studies, in particular an essay entitled *Spiritual values, independent activity and politics* for an unofficial collection *On freedom and power*, etc.

The offence under Art 22/1 was said to have been constituted by the fact that on 14 June 1980 Rudolf Battek had allegedly hit the policeman Václav Vasek on his temple causing him an injury that needed three weeks treatment. The only eyewitness of the incident, J. Janda, said that while he had not seen the defendant actually hit the plaintiff, not having been on the scene during the outbreak of the conflict, he had seen Vasek's service cap lying on the pavement. The defence objected that the defendant had been resisting detention at the local police station as it was unjustified, and that even had he actually committed the act of which he was accused he would have acted in self-defence, but this was

rejected by the court with the argument that Battek had been summoned to the police station on that day and that he was under the obligation of awaiting the settlement of his problem. (Battek had been made to wait at the police station for several hours without anyone showing interest in dealing with him; when he eventually tried to leave the prepared provocation got under way.)

As regards the charge of a criminal offence under Art 98, Battek admitted to being the author of several of his own studies and letters but he categorically refuted the assessment made by them by the prosecution. On the second charge he firmly denied ever having attacked a policeman.

Rudolf Battek is the eight unjustly sentenced member of the Committee for the Defence of the Unjustly Prosecuted. Those still in custody pending court proceedings include another three members of VONS – Jiri and Jan Ruml and Jan Litomiský.

At the beginning of October 1981 the court reduced Batteck's original sentence to five and a half years' imprisonment but confirmed the duration of protective surveillance of three years.

VONS Statement No, 6 September 1981.

29 September. *The District Court of Olomouc sentences a group of six Catholics for having sponsored an independent religious publication.*

On 29 September the District Court in Olomoue, Moravia, sentenced six Roman Catholics to periods of imprisonment ranging from ten months to three years for producing and distributing unofficial religious literature. The six, who were convicted of "illicit trading", denied the charge that they had acted for gain and appealed against their sentences, *Jozef Krumpholz*, whose apartment served as a printing shop for the production of the material, was jailed for three years. *Rudolf Smahel*, a priest, was sentenced to two years, a fellow priest, *Frantisek Lizna* (a member of Charter 77) to 20 months. Of the other three *Josef Adámek* and *Josef Vlcek* each received terms of 20 months, while *Jan Odstřcil*, who was convicted of "embezzlement", was fined and sentenced to ten months' imprisonment.

VONS Statement No 273

Index on Censorship, Vol 11, No 1, February 1982.

1981

1 and 2 October. In connection with the trial of a group of Catholics the police in Olomouc carried out an extensive raid on young practising Catholics. During house searches they confiscated theological publications, prayer books, breviaries, portraits of Pope John Paul II, typewriters, tapes, etc.

VONS Statement No 274

15 October. *Secret police applies pressure on octogenarian poet Jaroslav Seifert.*

Two senior officers of the State Security visited the poet and National Artist Jaroslav Seifert in his Prague flat without any witnesses being present. Seifert is a signatory of Charter 77. They pressed him to publish a personal letter to the President and Prime Minister of Czechoslovakia thanking them for their good wishes on his 80th birthday and to withdraw his signature from a document of an international writers' organization. Shortly after the visit the octogenarian poet fell seriously ill and had to be admitted to hospital.

Information on Charter 77, No 12/1981

27 October. *Massive police repression against Roman Catholic nuns.*

On the orders of the District Procurator's Office in Plzen, dated 27/10 1981, 43 Security officers accompanied by five women and two dogs burst in the afternoon into the *Charita* home in Kadan, Chomutov district. The Dominican sisters were called together and told that a search would be made of the belongings of one sister because she had had contact with Father Dominik Duka, a Dominican monk detained for investigation in Plzen for alleged contravention of the law concerning State supervision of churches (Article 178, Penal Code). The said sister declared that she was a laundress and had merely washed the habit of the said priest several times a year and that she had no other contact with him, nor had she written to him or received any correspondence from him. She could not supply any unapproved material, because she had none.

On this pretext, then, a search of the whole institution was ordered. There are only two cellars in the convent, one containing vegetables, the other potatoes. However, the police were interested in particular in finding secret cellars connecting the convent with the town, so they tapped on the walls. Nor were they satisfied with the information that there is only an 18th-century crypt under the church, until they had opened it and found nothing but three coffins. On the first day the search lasted until 6.00 p.m., and on the following day from 8.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m.; a shocking experience for the nuns was that their cloistered seclusion was not respected. All their prayer books that were found were taken away. These were in particular the Czech translation of the Liturgy of Hours, a Breviary consisting of ten separate volumes, and the Czech translation of prayers for the Mass. The nuns had duplicated these liturgical books themselves, they had used the texts approved by the Secretariat of the Office for Church Affairs and the duplication had been reported by them to *Charita*. Since there were 90 sisters in the convent, of average age 70, and most of them had the books, a total of over 800 were removed. The sisters begged the searchers to take all their food, because they would rather go hungry than lose those precious books without which they could not pray with the whole Church, which is their sole comfort. But they were told that now at least they would be freed from hangovers from the past. Also all written matter was taken from them, whether typed or duplicated, even of earlier date. Thirty two typewriters were confiscated, just one was left. Security men kept watch over the sisters all night in the corridors . . .

At the same time a similar raid was made on a *Charita* home in Moravec. Here, too, large numbers of armed Security men (about 100) arrived in two coaches with dogs, an ambulance with a doctor, and with equipment for lighting up the buildings. Here also the pretext for the search was provided by the fact that the detainee Dominik Duka has an aunt among the nuns and that he corresponded several times a year with one of the sisters. Because even in this case the sisters were unable to produce any anti-state material, as was demanded of them, an extensive search was carried out in all three separate buildings of the institution. The officers scattered without control throughout the buildings, ignoring the legal regulation that a search has to be carried out in the presence of the person whose things are being examined . . .

In Moravec, too, liturgical books duplicated by cyclostyle were confiscated, all religious books, even those published before the war, texts published by the Faculty of Divinity in Litomerice, and even a book published by the officially-recognised Czechoslovak Writer Publishing House. Also confiscated were the sisters' handwritten notes for spiritual

1981

exercises, which were of a purely private nature concerning, for instance, matters of conscience. Finally, the Latin Liturgy of Hours was taken, a new breviary which reached Czechoslovakia in a normal way as a gift from the Pope. And other foreign-language books of an innocuous nature and which had arrived by post were removed. The confiscated things were thrown into sacks in the attic, so that it was no longer possible to distinguish whom they belonged to. The inhabitants of both Moravec and Kadan were given in justification of the whole operation the following untrue account: In these two homes for aged members of religious orders six Poles were hiding in each of the cellars, there were transmitters and "tubs" of gold. The gold was even valued at 12 million Czechoslovak crowns, although the objects were silver or gilt monstrances, chalices and ciboria of about 1 % of the alleged value. The sisters had the appropriate documents for these religious vessels . . .

The drastic effect of these police operations on the aged nuns is evidenced by, among other things, the fact that in Kadan during the three following weeks three of the sisters died.

VONS Statement no. 20.

For the full text see Human Rights in Czechoslovakia: a Documentation September 1981 – December 1982, compiled by Vilém Precan, Paris 1983, pp. 76–77

9 November. *E. Kalinowski, a Polish citizen, sentenced for alleged smuggling of subversive literature into Czechoslovakia.*

The Court of Bratislava sentenced to sixteen months in a category I prison, Edward Kalinowski, a Polish citizen born at Torun in 1956 and last employed as a chauffeur in Huta Katowice. Charged under article 10/1c as it applies to article 98/1 of the penal code (complicity in subversion of the government), he committed this crime April 30, 1981 in using his personal car to transport 176 copies of periodicals published by Czechoslovak expatriates. The publications included *Právo Lidu*, *Listy* and *Svedectví* as well as ten cassette tapes containing an editorial of *Svedectví* devoted to the events in Poland. L. R., a Czechoslovak emigrant gave the material to Kalinowski in Vienna. However, it could not be proven during the trial that Kalinowski had been instructed to deliver the publications to two Czechoslovak citizens living in Bratislava who were themselves originally charged under article 98 but then unconditionally released.

1981

Kalinowski was finally found guilty and sentenced; his car also was confiscated in addition to the periodicals and cassettes. However, the verdict seems flawed in that Kalinowski expressly renounced his appeal and prosecutor refrained from giving his opinion. Kalinowski is a member of Solidarity and, at the time of his arrest, a member of the Unified Workers Party of Poland. Since his incarceration, he has sent back his UWPP card in a letter addressed to the Polish Consulate in Bratislava.

VONS Statement No. 281

24 November. The Regional Court in Ostrava heard the appeal in the case of six persons sentenced on 29 September 1981 by the District Court in Olomouc for distributing religious samizdat. In four of the cases the appeal court confirmed the sentences, in one case reduced the sentence by six months, and referred one case to a lower court for re-examination.

VONS Statement No 282

14 December, Police action against Dr. Hejdánek's private philosophy seminar.

The Czechoslovak police again interrupted a philosophy seminar in the home of Dr. Ladislav Hejdánek, detaining all participants and subjecting them to interrogation. Dr Hejdánek was released after 21 hours, two participants in the seminar were held for 48 hours.

VONS Statement no. 248

30 December. Arrest of French professor J. Derrida at Prague airport.

Czechoslovak police arrested at Prague airport the French philosopher Jacques Derrida of Paris on the pretext that he was allegedly smuggling drugs. Professor Derrida had taken part on 28 December in the private seminar on philosophy held in Prague apartment of Dr. Hejdánek.

1981

Following representation by the French Government, Prof. J. Derrida was released from detention in the night of 31 December, 1981 and deported from Czechoslovakia.

31 December. *Letter by Miroslav Kusý to the President of the Republic on the charges brought against writer-philosopher Milan Simecka. (Excerpts.)*

(. . .) Milan Simecka's case does not provide the basis for a trial of any sort, not to speak of a major political one. I can assert this with full responsibility as I was involved in the closing of the files on the whole "case of Siklová and co." and was thus able to study Simecka's dossier in detail. (. . .) I would therefore like to acquaint you, Mr President, with the basic material in the case of Milan Simecka.

This consists of 11 documents which allegedly "convict" Milan Simecka of having written his works – works, let it be understood, which he has invariably signed and which he publicly acknowledged as his: of having corresponded and thus "maintained contacts" with old friends such as Jan Kalina, Vilém Precan and Ludvík Vaculík, and occasionally also with other acquaintances such as Professor Skilling, in other words that he did not strike up or terminate friendship in accordance with the political climate at any given time as is the custom with many people in our country; that he received and read articles and books which interested him – eg. by Kusý, Polish materials, "Padlock" publications, that he wrote or collaborated with others on various literary projects and that he continued to do this even after being cautioned by the prosecutor's office.

No more than this can be found in the entire dossier. Nothing except literary works, his own and those by other hands, written or read by him. Nothing but political analyses, political opinions, ethical evaluations and comments on world affairs in keeping with his moral and philosophical view of the world he lives in and whose betterment he is striving for. Nothing else can be found in any of his letters, analytical works or essays.

Charter 77 Information Bulletin, March 1982, p 6–8

Milan Simecka was held in pretrial custody from May 6, 1981 until May 27, 1982 when he was released without a trial; charges against him have

1981–1982

not been dropped. Miroslav Kusý, charged with subversion in the same case as his friend Simečka, was held from May 6 to May 21, 1981 and thus he well knows the investigation dossier. Though he was released, charges against him remain also.

2 January. *Commentary by the philosopher and Charter 77 signatory Ladislav Hejránek, on the repressive measures taken by the police against those who participate in a private philosophy seminar. (Excerpts.)*

Philosophy in our country suffered greatly during the Nazi Occupation; universities were closed and many important philosophers were tortured or killed in prisons and concentration camps. In February 1948, before any significant recuperation had begun, all non-Marxist professors were released and replaced by communists or opportunists without professional qualifications. These new professors were directed by and under the control of Soviet-imported specialists who often had a poor understanding of the Czech language. (. . .)

Today, the crisis in Czech philosophy is even more acute. Now, even the best Marxist philosophers are being dismissed. Instead, there is not only an absence of non-Marxist philosophy in Czech universities but also of pure Marxist philosophy as well; it having been replaced by a crude popularization which is little more than dogma. Nowhere in the country can our citizens learn philosophical thought of the world at large. Numerous other disciplines, especially the social sciences suffer the same plight. This state of affairs is in absolute contradiction to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which the CSSR has ratified, as well as the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. Not only do party organs and every level of government forbid the teaching of any non-Marxist philosophy in all secondary schools and universities but, moreover, any citizen whose convictions depart from the official party line (Christians for example) are prevented from teaching at any level aside from primary school. This intolerable situation was newly confirmed by the law on Universities of 1980.

After the military intervention of August 1968, our society once again found itself uprooted and shaken. Numerous specialists were dismissed and their function transferred to incompetents. Since that time those unqualified have sought to insure their positions against those who are younger and more competent. Two years ago, the vice-minister to the

1982

Ministry of Education acknowledged that the percentage of persons having completed a university education is lower in Czechoslovakia than in all other countries in the Soviet block, and in view of the fact that few business and organizations are interested in new graduates, there is little opportunity for those who are graduated. In my opinion, the situation is dangerously close to what one could term a conspiracy of incompetents. Things being what they are, we as a society, are compelled to build a system of self-defense, unless of course, we wish to completely abandon our future. This system must be outside and independent of the official framework but its position should not be one of simple opposition.

The aim of our philosophy seminars is not to stir controversy over official Marxism. We seek speakers with a broad outlook; we need them if we are to restore our philosophical work to a professional level. One of the greatest credits to Julius Tomin is that he founded, thanks to his imagination and practical initiative, a new tradition of contemporary philosophical exchange with not only Europe but America as well. As for myself, my students and my friends, we believe that it is necessary to continue Tomin's efforts and to keep in contact with those philosophers who are willing to come to Czechoslovakia despite the trouble and inconveniences that often accompany such a visit.

The seminar I direct has been held for a year and a half and during that time the police have interrupted our work four or five times though it was necessary to cancel the seminar itself only twice. One time our speaker was expelled from the country. The other time, the seminar was able to meet but our guest was prevented from delivering his lecture. Myself, I have been called for questioning only twice although my students have been interrogated frequently. In May of last year, there was even a question of legalizing our group's work. I broke off the debate after the arrest of several friends, but on the whole, despite some minor interruptions, one could say that our work had been more or less tolerated.

The situation abruptly changed after the imposition of martial law in Poland. On December 14, the police interrupted the seminar which was being held in my apartment and apprehended all of the participants. Two persons were kept in police custody for 48 hours. They released me after 21 hours and the rest were freed after a couple of hours of questioning. The following week, the seminar took place without incident. On the 28th of December we sponsored a lecture by professor Jacques Derrida of France. After the seminar had begun, the police entered the apartment building and submitted a latecomer to an identity check. The next day, when Prof. Derrida was absent from a follow-up discussion, we assumed that he had been arrested. Even now, we still don't know

1982

exactly what happened. He did not return to his hotel and did not pick up his suitcase until just before his departure Wednesday morning. At the airport, police arrested him for drug trafficking. Before the lecture, he gave me the impression of being worried about something but was not specific for fear of being heard. It's without a doubt for this reason that he left the seminar early and failed to return to his hotel. After vigorous intervention by the French Embassy and Government, Prof Derrida was allowed to take a train for Paris Friday morning and arrived there Saturday.

I do not know the full text of Prof Derrida's statement but I do know that he categorically denied the accusation. The details of the affair will almost certainly be brought to light with time. As for now, however, we are able to say with the confidence of certitude that the action taken by the authorities against the philosopher Jacques Derrida was, in reality, an indirect attack against our seminar and that its aim was to discourage potential future speakers from participating. The fact that there was no direct intervention during the seminar seems to me clearly significant inasmuch as it indicates the police did not have the evidence and, thus, confidence necessary to do as they would have wished. Instead of straightforwardly stopping our work and our collaboration with western philosophers, they must content themselves with harassment and attempts to provoke international discord. We preserve the sincere hope that our foreign friends and colleagues will not let themselves be intimidated.

The case of Professor Jacques Derrida, arrested at Prague Airport on the trumped-up charge of drug trafficking and released after intervention from the French Government was well covered by news services around the world.

For the full text, see Human Rights in Czechoslovakia p. 78-79

26 January. *Persecution of singer K. Soukup*

Karel Soukup, signatory of Charter 77, member of its group of spokespersons, father of three children, was after returning in May 1981 from serving a 10-month prison sentence systematically persecuted by the State Security service. The attacks reached their peak in September 1981, when Karel Soukup was brutally beaten and tortured for a number of

1982

hours. On this occasion he was accused of having in his apartment two magazines and two gramophone records that had been published abroad. The Procurator decided that these articles had not passed through customs, which apparently provides the material grounds of a misdemeanours under Article 5 of the law on misdemeanours no. 150 and of the criminal offence of incitement under Article 100 of the Criminal Law. Throughout the autumn Karel Soukup was persistently summoned for interrogation and constantly intimidated to the point where he applied to leave Czechoslovakia. His application was granted. In order to pay the charges required of himself and his wife he had to sell all the family belongings, except for some clothing. Having paid, he received by post a summons to appear in court in the charge that in years 1974–76 by agreement with the groups Plastic People and DG 307, whose programme was of an unsound character, he performed before considerable numbers of people his songs in which he displayed lack of respect for society and contempt for its moral principles by using vulgar expressions. By this he was alleged to have committed with others the offence of a breach of the peace under Article 9/2 to 202/1,2 of the Criminal law. Karel Soukup had been held in 1976 for nearly six months in investigatory detention on these charges and then released without trial. Of more than 15 initially accused, only four were taken to court and all the rest, apart from Karel Soukup, had the charges dropped in the course of time. Now the District Procurator for Prague-West, Dr Jan Kovarik, stated in the indictment, "although it would be possible to consider waiving prosecution for the above-mentioned acts, this legal provision cannot be applied precisely because during the waiver period the accused K. Soukup committed a penal offence of a similar character." Karel Soukup' case clearly exposes the aims and behavior of State Security, which is attempting by systematic harrassment (interrogations, beating, job loss, detention, house searches, repeated imprisonment) to break selected signatories of Charter 77 mentally, to destroy their self-confidence and manipulate their decisions in life.

Karel Soukup was forced in the end to emigrate with his family. From 10 March, 1982 he has been living in France.

VONS Statement No. 284

1982

1 March. *Brutal imprisonment of D. Sinoglová, sentenced to prison for one year for copying non-conformist literature.*

Thirty-one-year-old Drahomíra Sinoglová of Strachotice, Znojmo District, mother of three children, was sentenced by the District Court in Znojmo in December 1981 to one year unconditional deprivation of freedom for preparing the criminal offence of incitement (Article 7 to Article 100/1 of the Penal Code). The offence was allegedly committed by copying books by the banned authors Ludvík Vaculík, Pavel Kohout and others*. Although the court found no proof of copying books by these authors, nor of their unsound content, it nevertheless found D. Sinoglová guilty. The start of the sentence was postponed to six months after the birth of her child, i.e. to 1st March 1982. On that day, by decision of the District Court in Znojmo, Drahomíra Sinoglová was forcibly taken by Security officers from her six-month-old child, which she was feeding at the time, without regard for an application already made for postponement of sentence on the grounds of further pregnancy, and put in prison in Brno-Bohunice.

On 30 March, by clemency of the President of the Czechoslovak Republic, D. Sinoglová was released from prison.

VONS Statement No. 295 and Information on Charter 77, March 1982.

* also Jaroslav Seifert

2 March. *Open letter to the Congress of Czech Writers concerning the Czech writer Eva Kanturková, who had been detained in police custody for 10 months without any charges being presented in court.*

At the time of your Congress, the Czech writer Eva Kanturková is spending her tenth month in prison. As her closest relatives, we have therefore decided to draw your attention to the circumstances of her case. Eva Kanturková was arrested, together with other representatives of the intelligentsia, in May last year, being accused of subversion. The investigation was concluded in July, further inquiries by October, since which time the papers have been with the Municipal Prosecutor's Office in Prague, which is yet to lay charges in court. Eva Kanturková will shortly be 52, and she is not well. During the first weeks of her impri-

1982

sonment she twice lost consciousness in her cell and suffers from severe neurosis, while lack of exercise has aggravated her long-standing spinal condition. Our letters are given to her six or seven weeks late, some of them are lost and not delivered at all, on 1 March she still had not received a single Christmas card of the dozens sent to her by family and friends. Throughout her detention we were allowed four visits of 45 minutes duration; on the last occasion my wife asked me to send her an anti-lice shampoo. All this at a time when Eva Kanturková has been accused but not tried, because no court has yet heard the case. And yet all request for her release so that she can await the trial at liberty are turned down, allegedly because the accused might continue her criminal activity. What has Eva Kanturková actually done? She has edited and distributed various written material of a subversive character – that is, she was practising her profession as a writer and journalist. She is guilty of writing, and intending to write in future, only in accordance with her innermost conviction and conscience. Her books are being published in Sweden, France, Germany, and they will soon appear in other countries. The Swedish PEN Club last December elected her an honorary member of this international writers' organisation. Members of the European Parliament, French President Mitterrand, Senator Kennedy, and other prominent individuals and organisations have intervened on her behalf with Czechoslovak authorities.

The letter was sent by Eva Kanturková's husband and two adult sons. Eva Kanturková was released on 22 March 1982.

3 March. *From a letter sent by Charter 77 spokespersons to the official union of Czech Writers and the Union of Slovak Writers concerning the situation of Czech and Slovak literature. (Excerpts.)*

. . . We address ourselves to the participants in the Congress of the Union of Czech Writers with an appeal to the moral responsibility which is borne by everyone through membership of the cultural community. It involves the duty to allow anyone in the field of culture to have a voice, however unrelated it may seem at first sight. It is possible to remain for any length of time indifferent to such obvious malpractices and distortions in one's closest professional circle without anyone taking part in this game of deafness, blindness and dumbness being permanently scarred. We append a list of over 200 Czech authors whose

works are subject to an anonymous ban on publication. They are writers of all generations and a variety of outlooks, from poets and prose writers to scriptwriters, cultural and literary historians, critics and philosophers of art and history. They include authors living at home and abroad, young people and those who have died in recent years but whose works lie unpublished and veiled in silence.

Appended to the letter was a list of 230 writers of the most varying outlooks, ages and branches of literary work who are entirely or to a great extent excluded from official Czechoslovak literature. (Säap, 282-3)

10 March. *Charta Document No 11/1982 protesting against violations of the law concerning religious practices: religious literature. (Excerpts.)*

Publishing possibilities for religious literature are being limited more and more every day. The "Czech Catholic Charita", the only institution permitted to publish religious literature for the Catholic Church in the Czech Socialist Republic, published only one religious book and one book of religious songs in 1981. The only professional magazine, "The Spiritual Sheperd", does not meet the require standard and does not inform its readers about theological research abroad. The weekly newspaper, "The Catholic News", is an instrument used for the propagation of government politics which presents distorted information about religious life and home and abroad. (. . .)

November 24, 1981, the Appeals Court of Ostrava upheld the verdict rendered by the Magistrates' Court of Olomouc in the legal action taken against Catholic priests and worshipers, Jaroslav Krumpholc, Frantisek Lizna, Josef Vlcek, Josef Adámek and Rudolf Smahel. They were actually convicted for no other reason than for having published and distributed religious literature which, in this case, was not in the loosest sense of the word antigovernmental. Both courts ruled the defendants guilty under article 118 of the penal code (on lillcic commercial enterprises) in the obvious hope of giving the case an air of "economic criminal activity" and hiding the true reasons behind the conviction. (The accused testified before the court that their activities were far from lucrative and, in fact, often required that they defray costs with money from their own pockets).

For further information, see Human Rights in Czechoslovakia, p 36-40.

VONS Statement No 297

1982

20 March. *Police operation against a concert by nonconformist rock groups.*

Czechoslovak police on 20 March 1982 carried out an extensive operation in the village of Plackov, in the Pelhrimov district, to prevent the holding of a concert by groups of nonconformist rock musicians.

22 March. *Four Czech intellectuals released from detention.*

Four of the seven Charter 77 members awaiting trial in Prague since their arrest on 6 May last year (*Index 4/1981*) – Jirina Siklová, Eva Kanturková, Karel Kyncl and Jan Ruml – were released from custody on 22 March. They join nine dissidents (including the former Foreign Minister, Dr Jiri Hájek, and the wife and brother of the imprisoned playwright Václav Havel) who were released earlier but are still liable to go on trial as the charges against them have not been dropped. The three who remain in custody are Ján Mlynárik, a historian, Jiri Ruml, a prominent pre-1968 journalist, and Milan Simecka, a writer.

Index on Censorship, Vol 11, No 3, June 1982

24 March. *Police operation against Dr. Hejdánek's private philosophical seminar.*

Czechoslovak police again interrupted a private philosophical seminar in the Prague apartment of philosopher Dr. Ladislav Hejdánek. The nine participants were detained for 24 hours before being released.

I. Medek Press Service, Vienna, 25 May 1982.

29 March. *Police operation against Dr Hejdánek's private philosophical seminar.*

Czechoslovak police again interrupted the private philosophical seminar held in the Prague apartment of philosopher Ladislav Hejdánek and detained all nine participants for 20 hours. During their interrogation, the police threatened to detain them again if the seminars take place in the future.

I. Medek Press Service, Vienna, 30 March 1982.

1982

30 March. *Roman Catholic priest sentenced for duplicating and distributing religious literature.*

March 30, 1982 before the District Court of Litomerice, Radim Hložánka answered to charges of obstructing state control over churches and religious organizations. Born January 4, 1923, Hložánka is parish administrator of Hostka in the Litomerice diocese. He committed his crime by obtaining funds which he then invested in the publication of religious literature. Hložánka admitted that he had, indeed, photocopied written religious material – hymnals and collections of prayers – and that it would have been impossible without generous donations from benefactors.

The Czechoslovak Penal Code does not term the reproduction of texts a crime provided that the material does not present a threat to national security. The prosecutor had to prove that in reproducing religious texts, Hložánka was guilty of "abusing religious office" and of "breaking a loyalty oath to the state". The prosecution depicted Hložánka as a man "dangerous to society", for while he was supposed to attend to his pastoral duties, he was actually reproducing liturgical texts which, in the eyes of the court, seems contrary to a priest's mission. And when it was found that he went from store to store buying paper supposedly for approved uses and then overloaded the printing capacity at the bindery, all in the effort to produce clandestine religious literature, he was made to seem even more culpable.

Based on these arguments, Radim Hložánka, already twice sentenced for "breach" of his pastoral integrity (most notably to eleven years in prison during the 1950s), was sentenced again, this time to twenty months in prison and five years suspension from exercising his religious office.

VONS Statement No 306

6–7 April. *Persecution of the religious orders. Franciscans J. Bárta and L. Trojan sentenced.*

On April 6 and 7, 1982 before the Magistrates' Court of Liberec, Josef Bárta and Ladislav Trojan answered to charges of obstructing state control over Churches and religious organizations (article 178 of the Penal Code). Bárta, born March 18, 1921, is a priest and Trojan, born June 27, 1912, is a physician and priest.

1982

Their crimes consisted of holding mass and organizing prayer meetings without official authorization. Bárta was also accused of having directed sessions at a religious retreat and of having courses in theology to students in preparation for the monastic life. He developed programs of study and photocopied workbooks while supervising student work and administering examinations on the premises of the Franciscan Monastery of Liberec.

The two defendants had already served prison sentences in the past: Bárta, in 1952, was convicted of "high treason" and sentenced to twenty years in prison of which fifteen years were actually served; Trojan was imprisoned without a trial during the 1950s under the "centralization of monks" program. Secretly ordained in 1956, he was sentenced in 1961 to four years in prison for "plotting against the Republic" and "divulging secrets of the State". In all these instances as well as the present case, the defendants were, in reality, guilty of only one "crime" –that of being monks who belong to the Order of St. Francis in the province of St. Venceslas in Bohemia. Their "crimes" are nothing more than their harmless efforts to live according to their convictions.

In the case of the two priests, the court found them both guilty. Joseph Bárta, 61 years old, was sentenced to 18 months in prison. Ladislav Trojan, the 70 year-old physician, was given a ten month suspended sentence and three years parole. Both appealed their verdicts.

VONS Statement No 301

For full text see Human Rights in Czechoslovakia, pp 41–42

10 April. *Provocation by the police against pop-music concerts.*

On the occasion of the 11th Prague Days of Jazz the State Security in Prague was preparing to mount an extensive provocative operation on 10 April 1982 with the aim of frightening away young pop fans. The operation failed thanks to the disciplined behavior of the audience at the concerts, which were cancelled shortly before they were due to begin.

I. Medek Press Service, Vienna, April 1982

1982

27 May. *Three Czech intellectuals released from detention.*

On 27 May 1982 the journalist Jiri Ruml and writer Milan Simecka, who were in custody in the Prague-Ruzyně prison, and historian Ján Mlynárik, who was in the prison hospital in Trenčín, were released. All three had been held without trial since May 1981. The case against them has not been dropped. Ján Mlynárik was later forced to emigrate.

VONS Statement No 303

7 June. *Police occupation of house in which philosopher L. Hejdánek lives.*

On 7 June 1982 Czechoslovak police occupied the house in which philosopher Dr Ladislav Hejdánek lives because they thought that the usual philosophical seminar was to take place there.

I. Medek Press Service, Vienna, 9 June 1982

2 July. *Four publishers of unofficial satirical magazine VOKNO sentenced.*

Four people were sentenced on 9 July 1982 to prison terms ranging from 15 months to three and a half years. The four men, brought before the district court in Chomoutov in Northern Bohemia on charges of "breach of the peace", were: Ivan Jirous, a 38-year old art historian and a Charter 77 signatory who worked as a mason at the time of his arrest; Frantisek Starek, a 30-year old technician and a Charter 77 signatory; Michal Hybek, a 25-year old university student and Milan Fryc, a 25-year old employee of the state fisheries.

The court found them guilty of publishing and distributing an unlicensed satirical journal, *Vokno* (The Window). An expert called by the prosecution stated that the defendants "propagated the culture of the 1960s which paved the way to counter-revolution". Ivan Jirous and Michal Hybek were also charged with "being in illegal possession of drugs" allegedly found during a search of their homes. Ivan Jirous was sentenced to three and a half years' imprisonment followed by two years police surveillance; Frantisek Starek, two and a half years' imprison-

1982

ment and two years' police surveillance; Michal Hybek, 18 months, and Milan Fryc, 15 months' imprisonment.

Ivan Jirous has three previous convictions for "breach of the peace". He was sentenced in 1973, 1976 and 1978 and spent a total of three years and 10 months in prison. Frantisek Starek was sentenced in 1976 to eight months' imprisonment for the same offence; his sentence was halved on appeal and he was released.

Amnesty International Newsletter, September 1982, Vol XII, No 9
Human Rights in Czechoslovakia, pp 48

26 July. *Prominent Czech artist J. Kolar sentenced to one year's imprisonment in absentia.*

A Prague court on 26 July 1982 sentenced the poet and artist Jiri Kolar to one year's imprisonment *in absentia*. The reason given was that since September 1981 he "had been living abroad, i.e. in France, without the permission of Czechoslovak authorities, and has thus committed the criminal act of leaving the Republic". Jiri Kolar, one of the first people to sign Charter 77, went to France in December 1978 for a two-year study trip. When in 1980, for reasons of his work and health, he requested a prolongation, this was refused without any reason being offered. This refusal and now the sentence passed on Jiri Kolar serves not only as one more example of the infringement of the human rights of Czechoslovak citizens but also testifies to the treatment that Czechoslovakia metes out to nonconformist artists who do not find favour with it – even such a prominent artist as Jiri Kolar.

The court also ordered the confiscation of Jiri Kolar's property, which deprives him of his archive which he has spent a lifetime accumulating, as well as of a large part of his *oeuvre* that had remained in Czechoslovakia.

It is worth mentioning that Jiri Kolar was tried and sentenced for his civic courage and nonconformist art in the 1950s, when he spent almost a year in prison for writing and distributing allegedly subversive literature.

13 August 1982. The police in Bratislava arrested Helena Gondova. A week earlier they searched her home under the pretext that she was suspected of acting as a fence for precious metals and pornographic literature; all they found, however, and confiscated were religious books and magazines.

Informace o cirkvi, No. 10/1982

1982

30 August 1982. The police in Slovakia arrested the Catholic activist Frantisek Novajevsky, a 26-year-old building worker. Novajevsky had repeatedly tried to enrol in a religious seminary but refused to cooperate with the secret police. During a house search at his home the police confiscated some 300 books.

Informace o cirkvi, No. 10/1982

24 September. *Arrest of nonconformist writer Dr J. Savrda.*

On 24 September 1982 Czechoslovak police carried out a house search at the home of Dr Jaromir Savrda in Ostrava-Zabreh. They confiscated two typewriters, Charter 77 material, some books and personal notes and detained Dr Savrda on suspicion of the so-called criminal act of invitement (paragraph 100 of the Criminal Code). A signatory of Charter 77, Dr Savrda (born 25 May 1933) was imprisoned for two and a half years in 1978–80 for copying the literary work of banned writers. His health suffered as a result of his imprisonment so that he has been granted an invalid's pension.

VONS Statement from 10 October 1982

1983

14 May. *Charter 77 document No 14/83 on the confiscation of literary and scientific works in Czechoslovakia. The document was addressed to the PEN Club (Maison Internationale) in Paris, the PEN American Center in New York, and the PEN Zentrum in Darmstadt. (Excerpts)*

(. . .) From time to time the world public is informed about the persecution of some of our citizens for their critical views, their convictions, and for disseminating unofficial culture. We would like to draw your attention to a very important and yet little known aspect of this repression, i.e. the continuing destruction of artistic and scientific works.

In the course of house searches carried out in connexion with accusations of "incitement" or "subversion", the police confiscate all kinds of literary works: fiction, poetry, translations, philosophical essays, not only printed books published in Czechoslovakia or abroad but also author's manuscripts or their typewritten copies (so-called samizdat).

In Czechoslovakia there are hundreds of authors whose writings are not allowed to be normally published. Many of them have been condemned to silence (with only a brief interlude at the end of the 1960s) since the coup of February 1948; many others since 1969, others cannot publish because their work is not in keeping with the official ideology or it simply does not meet with the approval of the police authorities concerned. But even those who are more or less tolerated cannot, of course, publish everything, so that some of their work remains in manuscript. The nonconformist and banned authors have only one way of staying in touch with their readers, and that is to copy their work on the typewriter. This unofficial "publishing" activity is thus in competition with the official publishing houses: many hundreds of books of every genre have appeared in typewritten form in the various samizdat editions (such as *Petlice*, *Kvart*, *Expedice*, and many others). It is difficult to explain how much self-sacrifice and courage is required for this kind of "publishing", which can – and often does – lead to legal action being taken against those responsible, based on the arbitrary application of certain paragraphs of the Czechoslovak Criminal Code (such as incitement, subversion, illegal commerce, etc). During house searches the police of course also confiscate books and periodicals which came out normally in Czechoslovakia at the end of the 1960s, as well as all publications from emigre publishing houses (Publishers 68 in Toronto, Index in Cologne, the Christian Academy in Rome, Konfrontace in Switzerland, and so on). And even books in other languages.

1983

By way of illustration we append a list of the books confiscated in just a small number of house searches. There have been countless such police operations in recent years, so that it would now be quite impossible to compile a complete list. (. . .)

With the document came a list of 326 literary works – novels, short stories, poems, plays, essays – not only in manuscript or in samizdat editions but also printed books. These included books published abroad and those which came out officially in Czechoslovakia prior to 1968. The authors include not only the most prominent Czech and Slovak writers such as Nobel Prize winner Jaroslav Seifert, Václav Cerný, Bohumil Hrabal, Václav Havel, Pavel Kohout, Jiri Kolár, Milan Kundera, Jan Patočka, and Ludvík Vaculík, but likewise many foreign authors, as for instance Anna Akhmatova, Rudolf Bahro, Vladimír Bukovský, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, G. Corso, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Alan Ginsberg, R. Guarini, M. Heidegger, Tadeusz Konwicki, Edward Lipiński, Nadezhda Mandelstam, Henri Michaux, E. Montale, P de Ronsard, Mark Twain, A.M. Besnard, K. Rahner, William Congreve, Osip Mandelstam, George Orwell, Boris Pasternak, H.G. Skilling, Alexander Solzhenitsyn; Charles Baudelaire, Albert Camus, Arthur Miller, Albert Schweitzer, N. Tvardovsky.

17 May. *Letter from Charter 77 (Document No 16/83) to the President of the Czechoslovak Republic about the persecution of the writer Dr. J. Svrda and Professor V. Liberda.*

Mr President,

The Ostrava writer, Dr. Jaromír Svrda, was recently sentenced in Ostrava to 25 months' imprisonment for having allegedly committed the criminal act of incitement. This is his second term of imprisonment, for the same reason. Because they found some typescripts in his house, mostly of his own works but also a few by other people, and several books published abroad or here in the sixties. This time the trial was an obvious travesty of justice, morality and logic. One of the main "proofs" presented by the prosecution was Svrda's copy of a poem by Tvardovsky, "Torkin in the Other World", that is, a poem by one of the greatest Soviet poets of recent times which is legally published in the USSR and praised in the official *Encyclopedia of Soviet Writers*. The court however refused to consider any evidence on this point, as well as all other evidence in Dr. Svrda's defence.

1983

(. . .) We are of the opinion that this is a particularly shocking case of arbitrary action by the regional security authorities who have completely ignored the law, elementary human rights and liberties, as well as all humanitarian principles.

Together with Dr. Savrda, the court sentenced equally absurdly Professor Vladimír Liberda, a man who during the war was active in the resistance and found himself facing a Nazi firing squad, and who has since then dedicated his life to the struggle against the repetition of the horrors he knew in his youth.

In the name of Charter 77, of which Dr. Savrda is a signatory (and that is his greatest "crime", even though this was nowhere mentioned) we urge you to act in the case of Dr. Savrda and Professor Liberda; the only possible action at this stage, and one that is fully within your competence, is to award both of them a pardon. We are convinced that it is not only in the general interest but also in the interest of the present state leadership that Czechoslovakia should not time and again draw the attention of the world to itself by such shameful cases, even if they are the work of provincial authorities, because they cast a very sad light on Czechoslovak justice and state power. In particular now, before the Prague peace congress, such a step would be most timely and would help overcome the doubts about the integrity of the host country of the congress and its organisers, which many western peace movements seriously and apprehensively entertain.

On 3 March 1983 Dr. Savrda was sentenced to 25 months' imprisonment; he is seriously ill, has lost 18 kg while in custody awaiting trial, and if he is not operated on in time is in danger of having both his legs amputated.

At the same time Professor V. Liberda was sentenced to 20 months' imprisonment.

30 August. *Charter 77 Document No 31/83 on popular music in Czechoslovakia. (Excerpts.)*

To the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, Czechoslovak Federal Parliament, Czechoslovak Ministry of Culture and the Czechoslovak Musicians' Union.

(...) Prohibitions in the area of popular music (. . .) are not restricted to rock and its New Wave alone. (. . .) There are pressures behind the scenes on more daring managers to keep this or that folk singer from performing, (. . .)

Some examples: 1/ Our perhaps best contemporary singer and guitarist, Vladimír Merta, has for years had mysterious, inexplicable difficulties. (. . .) Today, it is impossible to buy a single one of his records and to see him perform in public. (. . .)

2) Vladimír Misík and his group, ETC, recently lost his manager and therewith also the possibility of appearing in public.

3) Jirí Suchý has been unable to appear on television or radio for years. He is an author and a singer who has become a classic in Czech musical life. (. . .)

4) Numerous chansonniers (Lutka, Vonková, Nos and others) have greater or lesser difficulties which are always equally mysterious.

5) One of the most distinctive singers of recent times, chansonnier and accordion player Frantisek Horacek, nick-named Devil Jim, probably could not appear in public at all. The reason is not that his songs might contain some crushing critique of the regime but because he is too unfamiliar and too distinctively appealing for any bureaucrat to dare let him loose on a stage.

(. . .)

6) In this context it would be hard not to mention one phenomenon whose absurdity characterizes the present situation more precisely than anything else: A poet and a singer whose production has literally become Folk music has for years been Karel Kryl, emigrated fourteen years ago, and the young have been listening to his songs on Radio Free Europe (. . .) Jirí Gruntorád, a worker condemned to a four-year-prison term, was charged (page 5 of the court ruling of August 10, 1981) that "the accused regularly followed the broadcasts of the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe, recording the songs of Karel Kryl which have been found on almost all the seized tapes".

The systematic effort at depriving Czechoslovak popular music of everything that is distinctive, progressive, original, genuinely lively and truthful does not consist only in the prohibition of individual groups or singers. It permeates everything, the entire cultural policy of the state and the practice of all its institutions. (. . .)

The only institution which for years has systematically, professionally and on the highest level cared for contemporary progressive music, presented it to the public and educated young people in this respect is the Jazz Section of the Czechoslovak Musicians' Union. This section publishes the *Jazz Bulletin*, one of the best Czechoslovak cultural publication and in its genre probably one of the best in Europe. It has published innumerable important publications, (. . .) highly valued by UNESCO, among others. It has sponsored important exhibitions and projects, and organized the well-known "Prague Jazz Days" which is –

1983

or was until recently – the most important event of the year not only in the area of rock music but of jazz and original jazz rock production as well. (. . .) All the work of this institution has for years been carried on by a handful of young people in their free time, in spite of continuous, incomprehensible difficulties.

The Ministry of Culture, the Musicians' Union, and other institutions – also the inevitably omnipresent Ministry of the Interior – interfere in their work in countless ways, and on many occasions have striven for the abolition of the Jazz Section as such. They have by now three times prohibited the holding of the Jazz Days, usually at the last moment, in spite of the fact that foreign performers had been invited.

The State Police calls the representatives of the Jazz Section for regular interrogations, searches their archives under the guise of house searches and in general treats them like criminal delinquents.

The position of the Young Music Section of the Musicians' Union is in an only slightly better position.

The only more or less official journal devoted to popular music in our country, *Melodie* – whose printing of 100 000 copies sells out each month in three hours – likewise copes with incomprehensible difficulties. Though an unquestionably high quality journal, carrying contributions by our best experts in this area, though having won a truly deserved popularity by its high professional level, its erudition and objectivity, not only in Czechoslovakia but in other socialist countries as well (a part of each printing is exported to the USSR), the journal recently became suspect to the officials. (. . .) The entire editorial staff was fired, all regular free lance contributors were cut off, and the journal was entrusted to people who are commonly known for their ignorance and lack of interest in the field.

1984

17 January. *Award of the Jan Palach Prize. House search at the home of Anna Sabatová.*

On 17 January 1984 members of the State Security carried out a house search at the home of Charter 77 signatory and VONS member Anna Sabatová, in Prague 2, Anglická 8. The warrant gave as a reason for the search that it "was undertaken in connection with the investigation of a case of a threat to the general good according to paragraph 179, section 1 of the Criminal Code" and that "written or material proof testifying to or connected with the said criminal act might be found in the flat". The search, carried out by seven policemen, lasted 10 hours until shortly after midnight, regardless of the presence of Anna Sabatová's two small children. Her husband, Petr Uhl, is still in prison as a result of his civic courage. At the beginning of the search Anna Sabatová was asked to "place in a prescribed place any weapons, explosives, money, foreign currencies and other valuables, should these be present in the flat". Anna Sabatová replied that she had never possessed any weapons or explosives, and that she saw no reason why she should display the other objects. She also lodged a protest against the house search, during which a large quantity of handwritten notes, typescripts, magazines and books in Czech and in foreign languages, especially in French, were confiscated, as well as a notepad, gramophone records, tapes, and a typewriter. Also, from the nursery, several bits of wire and the remnants of a bell.

None of the confiscated objects has any connection with the suspicion that the flat might contain proof of the crime of a threat to the general good, i.e. an act which "puts people in jeopardy of death or serious injury, or poses a threat of considerable material damage by fire, flood, or the harmful effects of gases, electricity or some such dangerous matter". Neither the house search nor the confiscation of typescripts, books and the other material can be explained in terms of the law, but only as a means to persecute the family of Anna Sabatová and as an attempt to discredit Charter 77, which is based on the idea of non-violence. It is not without significance that the house search took place on the day when the Jan Palach Prize was awarded in Paris to the editors of the bulletin *Informace o Chartě 77*, which gives Anna Sabatová's address as the address of the editorial office.

The prize is named after the young Czech student who burned himself to death in 1969 in protest against the Soviet occupation of the country.

VONS Statement No 355

1984

19 March. *Police operation against a lecture by the Dutch philosopher T. de Boer.*

On Monday 19 March 1984, at half past seven in the evening, the police interrupted a lecture by Professor T de Boer from Amsterdam shortly after it began. The lecture was part of the regular philosophical seminar which Dr Ladislav Hejránek runs in his flat at Slovenská 11, Prague 2, for his friends and others interested in the subject.

All 18 participants were asked for their identification and all, with the exception of members of Dr Hejránek's family, were taken to Bartolomejská 7, Prague 1, for interrogation. They included the Dutch guest and his son. Dr Ladislav Hejránek was not at home at the time, as he was in hospital.

The interrogation ended about midnight. Similar police intervention at these private philosophical seminars had regularly taken place in spring 1982.

VONS Statement No 361

28 March. *Intimidation of Catholics who wanted the Pope to visit Czechoslovakia.*

On 28 March the Communist weekly *Tribuna* published a sharp attack on Pope John Paul II, labelling him "one of the century's most reactionary popes". Czechoslovakia's Roman Catholic primate, Cardinal Frantisek Tomásek (85), responded with an angry letter to the paper, extolling the Pope as a great humanist and accusing *Tribuna's* editorial board of "unobjective demagogy". The primate further unnerved the authorities by formally inviting Pope John Paul II to visit Czechoslovakia next year.

The police launched a campaign of intimidation against Catholics who have been signing a petition which reads: "Holy Father, please come to the Czechoslovak Republic." The petition follows a formal invitation to the Pope issued by Cardinal Tomásek and, by the end of April, it had been signed by over 17,000 faithful throughout the country. In the Nové Zámky district of Slovakia three young men, Josef Jarecek, Ota Svec and Jozef Sadvský, who helped to organise the petition, were detained, interrogated, and beaten up. Large-scale interrogations were also reported from other parts of the country. In the Dolní Kubín dist-

1984

dict, a document containing over 1.000 signatures was confiscated from Martin Slieranka, who was beaten about the legs with rubber truncheons during his interrogation.

Index on Censorship, Vol 13, No 4, August 1984.

10 May. *Drahomíra Fajtlová, a woman on a disability pension, sentenced for lending books.*

On 10 May 1984 the Trutnov District Court, Dr Junek presiding, sentenced Drahomíra Fajtlová, born on 7 December 1927, of Trutnov, M Pujmanova Street 280, to one year's imprisonment suspended for three years. The indictment had been signed by Dr Dolezal, the Trutnov district prosecutor. Mrs Fajtlová was sentenced under Art 100, para 1a, c of the Penal Code (subversion). Her offence was claimed to be that she had lent a book which the court described as anti-socialist to three of her colleagues at work. The incriminated book was "Twelve Interviews" by Eva Kanturková. Mrs Fajtlová had spent four months in custody.

VONS Statement No 373

10 May. *Writer and geologist Miklos Duray, representative of the Hungarian ethnic minority in Slovakia, arrested.*

Miklos Duray, a 40-year-old geologist and writer, member of the Hungarian ethnic minority in Czechoslovakia and defender of its rights, was again detained on 10 May, this time for allegedly "damaging state interests abroad" and "spreading false alarm". Duray had spent some time in custody in 1982-1983 on charges of "subversive activity"; though he was released without trial the charges which carry a sentence of up to five years, have not been dropped and can now be added to the fresh charges. The US branch of the International Writers' Association asked President Gustáv Husak last June to put an end to the persecution of Miklos Duray. The signatories of the letter included Arthur Miller, Norma Mailer, and Kurt Vonnegut. Three well-known Hungarian writers living in their own country, Tibor Cseres, Istvan Csurka and Miklos Neszoly, have also publicly condemned Duray's detention as an attack on the entire Hungarian population in Czechoslovakia.

1984

Several Slovak public figures including Miroslav Kusý and Milan Siemecka have also approached. Dr Peter Colotka, Premier of the Slovak Socialist Republic (whose responsibility for the execution of state administration in Slovakia includes the security bodies as well as Josef Lenárt, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Slovak Communist Party.

19 August. *Document of Charter 77 on 21 August 1984.*

(...) Every nation has the right to its history, and to that history be presented to the public truthfully. This right, stemming from the right of the peoples of self-determination, includes the justification of a nation and its individual citizens in defending themselves against events of history being distorted or suppressed. The dignity of a nation entails as a minimum, the right to call violence and humiliation used against it by foreign powers by their proper names.

But the present situation in our Republic is very different and very far removed from the possibility of applying this right to self-determination and in particular to historical truth. On 16–18 August 1984 the Charter 77 spokespersons and a number of other citizens were unlawfully and without the consent of the prosecutor subject to house searches, 48-hour detention or prolonged interrogation by the State Security. The sole purpose was to prevent Charter 77 from recalling the anniversary of the military intervention against Czechoslovakia of August 1968.

What really happened in August 1968? A peaceful and autonomous process was under way in Czechoslovakia designed to create a truly democratic socialist society, and was hailed with great expectations by the overwhelming majority of Czechs and Slovaks. This development was brutally stopped on 21 August 1968 by the biggest military operation carried out in Europe since the second world war. An army of half a million men of the five Warsaw Treaty countries entered our territory, without the consent and against the will of all the constitutional bodies and the political leadership of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. The act violated the principles and norms of international law, commitments enshrined in the UN Charter and other conventions as well as in the Warsaw Treaty and bilateral agreements between Czechoslovakia and the participants of the intervention. This in fact marked the beginning of a further stage in the escalation of rearmament of the military forces in Europe.

If the Soviet union and its allies are today proposing to the member states of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to sign a treaty on the

1984

renunciation of force in international relations the credibility of such a proposal is greatly weakened by the August intervention and the continued presence of Soviet troops on the territory of the Czechoslovak State. We therefore deem it correct to recall once more the proposal of Charter 77 that the constitutional bodies proceed to review the agreement on the temporary presence of Soviet troops on our territory, imposed by the August intervention. The commencement of such negotiations would in itself substantially help to improve the climate in Europe and to restore confidence in overcoming the deadlock in the policy of detente. An agreement on the cessation of the presence of Soviet troops in Czechoslovakia would significantly contribute to improving the relationship of our nations with the Soviet Union. It would create the conditions for removing the historical trauma of society and would lay firm foundations for its future autonomous political development. This would also benefit the international prestige of the Soviet Union and help to clear the prospects of peaceful coexistence in Europe and throughout the world. (...)

1984

1 September. *Harassment of Slovak historian Dr Jozef Jablonický and confiscation of his manuscripts.*

On 21 August 1984 Dr Jozef Jablonický, (...) of Bratislava, (...) received a summons to appear at the customs administration on 22 August at 9 am. When he arrived at the stipulated time a woman official informed him in the presence of a policeman that by using "methods available to them" the administration had discovered "objectionable printed material" in a parcel addressed to him by a certain Mrs Gutman in Paris. The official then opened the package and took out from a box of washing powder one copy of each of the magazines "Svedectvi", "Listy" and "150.000 slov". When asked what he had to say Dr Jablonický replied that he knew nothing about the whole matter and that he had nothing to do with it. Members of the State Security arrived in the scene with a written warrant to search Dr Jablonický's flat, garage and place of work. The warrant had been signed by the Deputy Prosecutor General of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic on the grounds that criminal proceedings had been instigated on the charge of incitement under Art 100 of the Penal Code. The search was conducted by Capt Vercík and Capt Stach, both of the State Security. They confiscated Dr Jablonický's latest papers on history as well as reference documents. One of the State Security members said that these were materials they had been anxious to obtain. Dr Jablonický was then interrogated until 6 pm. He was again summonsed on 28 August 1984 as a witness against persons unknown in the same case.

The harassment of Dr Jablonický started in 1976 when he was prevented from publishing. Notwithstanding adverse conditions he continued his research and published several works on the resistance in Slovakia in 1939-1945. The action by the State Security makes a mockery of the current celebration of the 40th anniversary of the Slovak National Uprising, on which Dr Jablonický, an unbiased historian, is an outstanding expert.

VONS Statement No 388.

11 October. *Charter 77 Document No. 17/84. On the award of the Nobel Prize for literature to the Czech poet Jaroslav Seifert. (Excerpts.)*

The Nobel Prize for literature for 1984 was awarded to National Artist Jaroslav Seifert today. The work of Jaroslav Seifert, who celebrated his 83rd birthday last month, is one the pinnacles of modern Czech poe-

try and has loyally accompanied several generations of readers: he is a truly national poet and artist, not only in the sense of his officially awarded title.

Jaroslav Seifert is also a courageous citizen, opposed to all injustice; he has remained faithful to his perception of truth even at the cost of the disfavour of those in power. Let us recall that in 1969–70 he was the last chairman of the Czech Writers' Union prior to its arbitrary dissolution. He reaffirmed his civic courage by signing Charter 77.

The significance of his literary work is borne out by the fact that despite the ostracism of the regime it has not been possible to wipe him out from the national consciousness and he has therefore lived to see, albeit with many years' delay, the official publication of his latest works, which had long been in circulation among his readers in countless typed copies.

We consider the award of the Nobel Prize for literature to Jaroslav Seifert to be not only a just appreciation of a great Czech poet but also an encouragement for the entire unofficial Czechoslovak culture. (...)

17 October. *Criminal proceedings against Petr Kozánek and a house search in the home of Czech woman writer Iva Kotrlá.*

The state Security investigator in Brno is conducting criminal proceedings against Petr Kozánek, living at Palackého Street 178, Kyjov, Hodonín district, for the attempted criminal offence of damaging the interests of the Republic abroad, under Articles 8/1 and 112 of the Penal Code. He is said to have committed the offence on 24 September 1984 when, while travelling to Australia, he was found in possession of poems by Ivanka Kotrlá. After a house search in his flat on the same day he was taken into custody. On 25 September 1984 the home of Zdenek and Ivanka Kotrlá at Eliska Machová Street 35, Brno 2, was also searched in connection with the arrest of Petr Kozánek. (. . .)

Contrary to the law, the children of Mr and Mrs Kotrlá, all minors, were questioned during the search. Their twelve-year-old son broke into tears during the questioning and later went down with fever. The members of the State Security made remarks and invectives on the family in the presence of the children, with an extremely depressing effect on them. Ivanka Kotrlá was not present since she had given birth to their fifth child the day before. Zdenek Kotrlá is seriously ill (toxic affliction of the liver). He suffered an attack during the search and a doctor called to the house recommended his transfer to hospital, which the police on the scene did not permit. The confiscated matter included Ivanka Kotr-

1984

lá's manuscripts dating back to 1966, essays by Ludvik Vaculik, personal letters and information on the church, and religious literature. Since her return from the nursing home Ivanka Kotrlá has been repeatedly summoned for questioning.

On the basis of a subsequent decision of the State Security investigator criminal proceedings have been instigated against Zdenek Kotrlá, a disabled person and father of five children, on charges of attempting to damage the interests of the Republic abroad. He is accused to having "handed Petr Kozánek literary publications of the unofficial 'Petlice' edition to be taken abroad". Most of the texts are poems.

VONS Statement No. 392

2 November. *Charter 77 Document No 18/1984. Demand of the release of Rudolf Battek.*

Rudolf Battek, an eminent Czech socialist and active member of the movement for human rights, spokesman of Charter 77 and member of VONS, has now been in prison for more than four years, his sole crime being his civic attitude and consistent struggle for the respect of valid Czechoslovak laws. Despite the indignation of the home and foreign public at his case, he has not only not been set free but transferred, at the beginning of 1984, to a prison with harsher conditions of political isolation. In spite of his age - today is his 60th birthday - and his serious illness he is to spend another 13 months in prison and on his release to be placed under so-called protective surveillance for a further three years. Past experience with the application of this surveillance to political prisoners (which is an absurdity anyway) unfortunately compels us to express the fear that this will be tantamount to house arrest, more oppressive in many ways than actual prison conditions. The convicted person is, indeed, exposed to the almost unrestricted and totally uncontrolled arbitrary action by the police who determine all details of his living conditions, including his return to prison if they hold that he has violated the conditions of protective surveillance. Where political prisoners are concerned their justified family, social and cultural requirements are not respected (as stipulated by the law on protective surveillance, questionable in itself) and, what is more, the arbitrary action by the police automatically extends to the family members and the entire environment of the convicted. After all, the purpose is not to reintegrate the alleged culprit in society as declared by the law but, on the contrary, to exclude him from society and break all his social ties.

1984

We therefore urgently appeal to the President of the Republic to use his powers and waive the rest of Rudolf Battek's sentence. Such a decision would be both a most humane act and at least a partial remedy to the evident injustice which has occurred in Battek's case – and an improvement of conditions in our society is quite unthinkable without a remedy of injustices. We also appeal to the world public and are turning for support in particular to the politicians whose views are close to those of Rudolf Battek and whose voice could exert significant influence on a relevant decision. (. . .)

The document was addressed to Gustáv Husák, President of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, and to the Bureau of the Socialist International.

19 November. *House searches and confiscation of literature on the pretext of investigating fictitious criminal activities.*

Gabriel Gössl, 41 years old, of Prague 1, was detained by the police on 9 November 1984 and accused of the criminal offence of stealing property in socialist ownership, allegedly committed by stealing a caravan in 1982, thus causing damage to the value of 12, 000 Kcs. Though he never received a written "document on his charges his house was searched to discover items connected with the criminal activity" and "important for the requirements of the criminal proceedings". The search lasted more than four hours and 148 items were confiscated, mostly foreign publications such as the magazines 'Svedectvi' and 'Listy', typed editions of books of the Expedice series and similar editions, but also books put out by Czechoslovak publishing houses in the 1960's (for example, books by Josef Skvorecky, Václav Havel, Karel Sidon, and Ludvík Vaculík), English paperbacks, three typewriters (including one electric) and private correspondence from various persons abroad (mostly dating back to the 1970's).

Gabriel Gössl was then detained at Ruzyně prison until the afternoon of 22 November. After his release from Ruzyně he continued to be questioned at the Bartolomejská Street police headquarters. During the interrogation he was not asked a single question relevant to the criminal offence with which he had been charged: the interest of the State Security focused on the technical aspects of the Expedice publications, the distribution of typed editions, and the like. A house search was also carried out in the home of Gössl's sister Eliska Kolesová, living in Prague 10, and seven months pregnant. Gössl's girl friend, Jarmila Konířová, and

1984

his brother-in-law Zdenek Kolesa, an auxiliary employee of the Czech Philharmonic, were also detained for 24 hours, the latter being questioned in handcuffs. On returning to her place of work (Office of the Presidium of the Federal Government - Exhibitions Commission) Jarmila Konířová found that her office had been sealed. She was advised to take her remaining leave and then hand in her notice on the basis of mutual agreement; if she refused she would be dismissed summarily for loss of confidence.

VONS Statement No. 407

1985

18 January. *Police intervenses against independent historians and their unofficial magazine *Historický sborník* (Historical almanach).*

On 18 January 1985 five members of the State Security police accompanied by the director of the State Saving Bank entered the office of Dr. Bohumil Cerný in the archive of the bank inspected the premises of the archive with the explanation that they were searching for leaflets which had allegedly been issued in connection with the Palach Prize award to Dr. Ladislav Hejránek. No leaflets were obviously found but the members of the State Security police confiscated ten copies of two volumes of the Historical Almanach, which contains works of Czechoslovak historians who are not permitted to publish officially.

When the search was over the members of the State Security police took with them Dr. Bohumil Cerný and Dr. Milan Otáhal, who had been visiting his friend at the archive. Dr. Cerný was interrogated for four hours, Dr. Otáhal for five hours. The questions put to Dr. Cerný concerned solely the Historical Almanach whereas Dr. Otáhal was questioned about the leaflets.

This police action, like the recent intervention against a seminar held by Ladislav Hejránek, is designed to intimidate independent scholars and compel them to abandon their free creative work.

VONS Statement No 420

29 January. *Further police action against an unofficial philosophy seminar held by Ladislav Hejránek.*

On 29 January at 8 pm the State Security police stopped a lecture by Ladislav Hejránek which was being held in his flat in Slovenská Street 11, Prague 2, as part of a lecture series on cosmology.

The police violated the privacy and freedom of the person by unlawfully entering the flat, taking the lecture and fourteen members of his audience to a waiting police van and driving them to a police station in Mirové Square. All were interrogated and released the same night.

We believe that this intervention of the State Security police against independent lectures reflects their resentment at the award by the Paris Committee of Support for Charter 77 of the Jan Palach Prize to Ladislav Hejránek on 17 January. The award is a recognition of the work

1985

done by Ladislav Hejdaček over a number of years in conducting the philosophy seminars.

VONS Statement No 417

12 March. *Charter 77 Document No 6/1985. Letter to President Husák on an illegal police action against the participants of a private showing of old film.*

Mr President,

on 11 March 1985 at around 7 pm a number of friends and acquaintances gathered at the flat of Mr and Mrs Sevcik in Prague 6 to watch some Czech films made in the 1960's and currently not shown. About one hour later someone rang the bell, asked Mrs Sevcikova to come to the gate on the pretext of bringing her a telegram, while dozens of police in uniform and plain clothes broke into the house from the garden. The security bodies thus unlawfully violated the freedom of the home.

All those present, a total of 48 persons (!), were taken to waiting cars and driven to police headquarters in Bartolomejská Street. There members of the State Security police questioned them while some of those detained were made to stand in the entrance hall until 2.30 am, i.e. some five hours without food or drink, and denied the possibility of sitting down. Members of the State Security police questioned them about the circumstances of their visit to the Sevcik home and claimed that "this had been too large a gathering". Eleven of the detained (Kveta and Jiri Dienstbier, Marie and Oldrich Hromadka, Petr Kabes, Eva and Jiri Kanurek, Petr Pithart, Mr and Mrs Sevcik and their niece) were placed in the preliminary detention cells in Konviktská Street. In addition, the State Security police carried out a search at the flat of the Sevcik family and confiscated a film projector, films, several typewriters and some posters (Mr Vasclav Sevcik is a graphic artist).

Mr President, the Charter 77 spokespersons as well as many citizens have for years been drawing attention to these and similar practices by the State Security police. Members of the State Security police place people in preliminary detention cells to punish them for having participated in something which the police believe they should not have done, or even for refusing to give evidence during an interrogation although this is a legal right. As a pretext member of the State Security police allege that the citizen in question is under suspicion of having committed the crime of distributing public order, incitement or other offences even

1985

if they harbour no such suspicion and are not engaged in any investigation or enquires in this respect. They thus arrogate to themselves the right to punish a citizen by depriving him of his freedom, a right which in our state belongs solely to the court. Moreover, the seizure and confiscation of property must also be decided by a court whereas items confiscated during many a house or personal search remain in the possession of the security bodies without any valid legal basis. Since there is often no question of a crime no legal proceedings are instigated; but items confiscated during the searches are not returned even after representations.

We consider it our duty to draw your attention to these practices and ask you, as the Head of State, to ensure that they are put right.

13 March. *Lenka Mareckova, aged 21, sentenced for reciting her poetry at a literature soirée of the Young Authors Club.*

On 13 March 1985 the Senate of the District Court in Písek, Dr. Milan Frysman presiding, sentenced 21-year-old Lenka Marecková, an employee at the Metro transport enterprise, to seven months' imprisonment. She was charged under Art 100/1a, c of the Penal Code with incitement and is to serve her sentence in the first corrective education group. Lenka Mareckova had spent two months in custody.

Her criminal offence allegedly consisted in having recited her own poetry the district library in Písek. The reading had taken place on 21 December 1982 as part of a series of literary Tuesday soirées organized by the Young Authors' Club. The court arrived at the conclusion that her poems "grossly debased the socialist character of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and attacked its legal system as well as the application of socialist law and order and that, in connection with the demise of Leonid I Brezhnev, they contained vulgar abuse of the late leader of the USSR and of the USSR as such". Some forty young people had been present at the poetry reading.

The absurdity of the case where a young girl is in the dock for reading her own poems at an official literary soirées was underscored by the fact that the author of the poem *The Death of a Dictator*, prosecuted because the poem was felt to slander Leonid Brezhnev, was convicted on the very day of the funeral of Konstatin Chernenko. (...)

There is no doubt that here a young woman has been punished for expressing her political views in her poems. The verdict of the Písek court and the entire proceedings against Lenka Marecková must therefore be repudiated as a violation of the fundamental civic liberties and human rights.

1985

19–21 March. *Prison sentences for attempting to import religious literature from Poland.*

On 19–21 March the trial took place at the District Court in Bratislava 1 of A. Gabaj, B. Borovský and T. Konc, three young Catholics, charged with violating regulations on trade with foreign countries under Art 124/1, 2 of the Penal Code. The indictment claims that the defendants intended to meet citizens at the border with Poland and to receive religious literature in the Slovak language not available in Slovak bookshops. The prosecution stated that the value of the literature which the defendants intended to accept amount to more than 29.000 Kcs in fact, however, the Polish police had not handed over the confiscated books to the Czechoslovak authorities and their price was therefore a pure estimate. Moreover, the defendants had no intention of crossing the Czechoslovak border, the import of religious literature to Czechoslovakia is not forbidden, and books are duty-free according to the customs regulations. The Bratislava 1 District Court nevertheless found the defendants guilty and sentenced A. Gabaj and B. Borovský to 18 months' imprisonment and T. Konc to 16 months', to be served in first correction education group.

VONS Statement No 432

11 April. *Further repression of Catholic press.*

Shortly after Sir Geoffrey Howe, the British Foreign Secretary, had pointed out during his visit to Czechoslovakia that the violations of human rights and international agreements by the authorities were arousing misgivings in the West, the State Security police organized a vast repressive drive against the Catholic church. This time it was directed against the religious press. They carried out house searches in the homes of people suspected of distributing religious literature, both samizdat and imported, and took them into custody. According to reports received so far the following have been detained: Dr. Vladimír Fucík (51), a biologist, in charge of a research group at the Institute of molecular genetics of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences in Prague; Adolf Rázek (55), leading economist at the institute of mathematics of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences in Prague; Kvetoslava Kuzelová (62), a retired nurse; Michal Holeček (29), employed at the Textil – Středoceský kraj enterprise in Prague; and Václav Dvůrák (34), an economist employed at the Semptra enterprise in Prague.

1985

According to the first reports the searches were conducted in a correct manner. Items sought and confiscated included religious books and magazines, typewriters and duplicating machines, paper, money etc. The detained persons were charged under Art 178 of the Penal Code on obstructing state supervision of the churches.

In Moravia a search was carried out in the home of Father Radim Hložánka, a retired priest, born on 4 January 1923, resident at Petřvald near Ostrov; he had been sentenced to 11 years' imprisonment in the 1960's and to 20 months' imprisonment on 30 March 1982 for duplicating religious literature.

In Slovakia brief detention periods were imposed at the same time on Dr Ján Carnogurský, a lawyer barred from exercising his profession, and his father, Pavel Carnogurský, a pensioner.

12 June. *Literature in the dock again*

The District Prosecutor in Hodonín, Dr Jaroslav Obdržálek, charged ing. Petr Kozánek and Zdenek Kotrlý with attempting to "damage the interests of the Republic abroad" (paragraph 8, section 1 of paragraph 112 of the Criminal Code). As we have already reported (see Sdelení No 329 and No 345), Petr Kozánek (36) spent several months in custody, while Zdenek Kotrlý (40) was under investigation in liberty. They are in danger of being sentenced to up to three years in prison. The District Court in Hodonín has set the date of the trial for 19 July 1985.

Their offence is said to be that Zdenek Kotrlý handed Petr Kozánek several manuscripts and asked him, while on his legal trip to Austria, to post them to Alexander Tomský who, according to the indictment, "is editing in England a new philosophical and literary journal of a Christian-democratic character". Petr Kozánek tried to do as his friend requested, but was arrested at the Czechoslovak-Austrian frontier. The manuscripts were four collections of verse by Iva Kotrlá, Zdenek Kotrlý's wife, and one collection by Zdenek Rotrekl, a Catholic poet from Brno.

The indictment rested largely on "expert testimony" provided by the "Institute for Research into Social Consciousness and Scientific Atheism" in Brno, which is part of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences. According to this testimony, "the documents which were to be exported distort historical relationships, the world in which we live is depicted as full of uncertainty, a dreary totalitarian system, and they are therefore capable, by their content, of damaging the Republic's interests abroad".

1985

We consider it inadmissible that police and judicial authorities should pass judgment on literature, rather than literary critics and the readers who buy books. Moreover, we have to ask what guarantee of objectivity can the accused expect, being as the indictment states "strong religious believers" when the institute giving testimony has "atheism" in its very name.

Czechoslovak representatives repeatedly assure us that no one in this country is punished for his or her opinions, provided these are not accompanied by criminal acts. If the court accepts the prosecution's case, this will be yet another proof that not only political views but even the mere poetic expression of feelings about life can in this country bring someone several years in prison.

VONS Statement No 454

VONS (Committee to Defend the Unjustly Prosecuted, Czechoslovak League for Human Rights, member of the International Federation for Human Rights.)

V. Documents

Pavel Kohout
*An Open Letter
to the Minister of Culture*

Prague, June 1973

Dr Milan Klusak
Minister of Culture of the
Czech Socialist Republic

Minister,

. . . / The claim by foremost European writers such as Böll, including many communists such as Aragon, that there is an unjustifiable destruction of spiritual values in progress in our country and that the authors of these values are being persecuted corresponds to the facts. Statements to the contrary made by our British colleague James Aldridge are untrue. How would he react to a statement by a Czech writer of the successful normalization of British culture if, say, Peter Brook were banned from directing plays, Peter O'Toole were not allowed to appear on the screen, of Graham Greene could not be published (any more than, naturally, James Aldridge)? But the Czech cultural landscape presents an even sadder picture, as in addition to Jaroslav Seifert or Otomar Krejca a total or partial prohibition of public artistic activity has been imposed on hundreds of writers, actors, film directors, painters and other artists. . . . /

The record of official Czech culture over the past four years has, therefore, no parallel. Poetry has dwindled to two, three names. No work of fiction of any significance has appeared. Not a single play that would stand comparison even with an average production of the years preceding 1969 has been put on. After the banning of several outstanding performances (including Brecht's *Mother Courage*) and the disbandment of the Prague Theatre Behind the Gate not a single production marking an advance has appeared. Not even experienced filmmakers who represent the present trend at the Barrandov film studios and as such try to justify the sacking of many of their outstanding colleagues with the assertion that the latter were not making films "for the people", have been able (or simply have not dared) to make a film about the problems or conflicts

of their contemporaries which could withstand comparison with films by the late Jan Procházka (to avoid doing harm those still alive). The mammoth exhibition arranged this year at the Riding School of Prague Castle would make one weep if one did not have the good fortune of knowing dozens of excellent paintings, prints or sculptures awaiting better times in studios or sheds. (...)

Czech culture is today being officially represented to the world by a handful of soloists and orchestras with a curtailed repertoire, to be followed straight away by pop singers, provided these have swiftly replaced their protest songs of the summer of 1968 by songs in keeping with the changed requirements. (...)

The old artistic unions, with a leadership elected by direct and secret ballot, were arbitrarily dissolved and replaced by appointed leaderships of new mini-unions which declared that they intended to free Czech art from the hands of cliques and power groups. But the number of artists active in all the spheres of art has dropped significantly during the period of their existence. The creation of works of art and what happens to them are the virtual monopoly of the members and, more particularly, of the officials of these unions who draw advantage from the silencing of the majority of artists. (...)

Similarly, leading posts in publishing houses, theatres, orchestras, artistic agencies and further cultural key institutions are allocated primarily to members of the unions, in most cases people who have failed over the years to win artistic or human authority; they are the ones entrusted with educating the young generation at art schools. The members of the leadership of the unions generally share out union or other prizes amongst themselves.

Another contemptible fact is that the works of hundreds of Czech authors have been removed indiscriminately from book-shops, second-hand shops, book-stores, school and public libraries, so that the new generation of the reading public is given an entirely distorted picture of its national literature, a picture which in many instances will never again be corrected. (In my last letter to your predecessor I said that I was in possession of a so-called Catalogue of exceptionable literature No. 1, drawn up by his ministry for the State Library of the Czech Socialist Republic, which contains i.a. 152 names of Czech writers, historians, economists, etc. whose works are to be totally removed. This letter, too, has remained unanswered, although such barbarism alone justifies Louis Aragon in complaining of the "Biafra of the spirit", and Heinrich Böll in speaking of a "cultural graveyard". But what these two did not know was that the publishing house of the Academy of Sciences has put out an encyclopaedic dictionary which has, naturally, not omitted bour-

geois politicians, such as Petr Zenkl or nazi collaborators such as Emanuel Moravec, but where quite unnaturally, dozens of foremost artists, scientists, sportsmen including the holder of several Olympic gold medals in ladies' gymnastics – are missing.) (...)

In your first television discussion with representatives of the new artistic unions, Minister, you repeated that you were not prepared to talk to those who were on "the other shore".

Where is that other shore if it is so far removed from any discussion? And who are all those hirelings? And who has allocated them to that shore, on what evidence and for how long, who is to determine which of them no longer deserves to be on that shore and which of those who are still "on our shore" will eventually be taken to the other one? Who was it that uncovered that terrifying conspiracy of so many Czech artists against socialism and their country only a few years after the verdict that Laco Novomeský's "conspiracy against socialism and his country" had been fabricated? Who is that anonymous Grand Ferryman who has issued the said "Catalogue of exceptionable literature No. 1", which evidently anticipates a catalogue No. 2, No. 3 and more? Who are all those small ferrymen who are denying audiences the works of Brecht because of the person who has translated them, and who are throwing works by classics on the scrap heap because of the author of the epilogue; who decide that a distinguished artist is permitted to make a mere fifty prints from a matrix and an even more distinguished artist only thirty so that they do not earn more than indistinguished artists; who decide that a famous actor shall portray only negative characters on television because he has been an official of the former union, and another outstanding actor none at all (even though he has turned down of his own free will the chance of remaining a star of the West German theatre and, what is more, is one of these who participated in forming the pre-war anti-hitler front of Czech and German theatrical artists in Prague)? Who is it that orders actors, visual artists or musicians to break off contacts with their life-long friends who happen to be blacklisted at the moment, unless they wish to share their fate? Who is it that violates international agreements and, above all, the Czechoslovak Constitution by issuing secret regulations or unlawful administrative decrees to deprive a handful of writers of their last chance of a fee? Who is it that allows well-known literary scholars who were imprisoned in concentration camps during the war to be labelled enemies of the people by an unsuccessful colleague – who was one of the few Czechs to apply for admission to a university of the Third Reich? Who ferries whom? (...)

I have a close friend who has graduated from four universities and who has been working as a taxi driver for the past three years even after

a coronary. I know an eminent scholar who is wasting his time in early retirement and has no access to laboratories. I know a distinguished philosopher who coaches incompetent students. I know two outstanding translators in the prime of their life who are wearing themselves out as night watchmen. I know three historians who are working in a cellar operating central heating installations. I know a poet who had to struggle hard to be accepted as an instructor at a swimming pool. I know an excellent novelist who delivers milk. I know another one who was compelled to work as a hotel porter ; when he left to resume writing he discovered that he had lost his entitlement to social security for artists.
(. . .)

The number of my acquaintances, former students and their professors, journalists and political workers with immense talents who are today working as bricklayers, shovelmen, drivers or shop assistants, runs into dozens. And I used to know an exceptionally capable scientist, an old friend, the chairman of one of the Party branches at the Nuclear Physics Institute, whom they turned into a wreck so that he had to spend over two years in a psychiatric clinic and finally hung himself last March. He is the one I am thinking of most when writing this letter.

This is the situation in which your predecessor had the nerve to declare textually in a television address on 28 January of this year (1973) that "the situation in the sphere of culture is normal".

But this utterly abnormal situation has been going on for almost five years and there is no sign of a way out. Nor did your speech on taking office reveal one. How is this possible? What is the purpose of all this? Why should thousands of brains which in their sum total would be an immense asset for the intellectual advancement of our country precisely at a time when all the risks of a consumer society are making their appearance, remain condemned to inactivity or to an activity which hardly corresponds to their capacity? Why should talented people at the zenith of their strength who have not given up their creative work even in circumstances such as these, be forced to work under constant stress, at the cost of ruining their health and wasting their energy; why are they and their families on holiday confined within the borders of their country as though it were a detention home? Is it not evident that what is happening in culture is no longer a political confrontation but an unprecedented conspiracy of the incapable, or people capable of anything, maintaining a state of war to prolong their boom, conceal their creative impotence and sometimes even blemishes on their past which go as far as collaboration with the nazis? Is there no enlightened politician around who understands that people with their own views, however different from the official ones, people who are competent, are always better partners than people without views of their own, who betray at the first shock?

We recently saw how parties which had for many years been killing

each other in Vietnam came to an agreement. We have just witnessed a handshake of cooperation between statesmen of two superpowers which are separated by an ocean, language, ideology and way of life. Is agreement impossible in central Europe, between people separated merely by their vision of what socialism should be like?

Our society is seeking to reintegrate even criminals lawfully sentenced for crimes. Is it possible, on the other hand, to exclude from that society a large section of the national intelligentsia "guilty" of no more than holding views the correctness or incorrectness of which only the future will decide? After almost five years, which represent a hell of a long span of human life and correspond to the sentence meted out for heavy and proven crimes, are we not entitled to ask how long this anathema is to last? For life, as certain officials or journalists are raving? But not even our penal code provides for life imprisonment, only for the death sentence. . .

It would be unrealistic to expect that you will admit us straight away as discussion partners on the television screen or in the newspaper columns. But why could the uncivilized plunder of libraries not cease here and now? Why should it not be possible to publish once again works which have long had their place in the school readers? Why should it not be possible to publish new, mature books by authors who have sounded the depths of time and human destinies? Why should genuine literary critics or scholars not be able to start work? Why should not all those who have proved by their silence how much they have to say be once more allowed to shoot films, sing, act or exhibit? (. . .) Why should it not be possible to put an end to the state of emergency in Czech art and science, as anachronistic as the cold war?

National culture has its specific foundations which are no less valid than the laws of economics. In a society of the silenced even those who are permitted to do so find it hard to write, paint, compose or act. Their felling of bad conscience is the stronger the more clearly they see that there is no great difference between their own views and the views of the disinherited. Moreover, they are depressed to notice that the yardstick which has a similar function in art as in sport, has suddenly become invisible, that there exists another culture which despise persecution, and sometimes even because of it, reaches more and more readers and audiences, both the youngest and the most discerning, who naturally feel growing repulsion against official culture.

And only a visionary or a cynic can hope that injections of grants, prizes or trips abroad will raise a totally new generation of artists which will simply replace the one written off. One can hardly expect politically motivated works from people who can see for themselves how their politically motivated predecessors have fared. In any case, those who are bright are being silenced in advance just to be on the safe side – as

demonstrated by the case of the most talented one among the young playwrights. (. . .)

I often go to the Vysehrad cemetery. My parents are buried there. On the inscriptions of the tombstones I meet many names without which Czech culture would have remained at the level of folk songs or folk-craft. On every All Souls' Day a pilgrimage takes place: a popular referendum with candles to determine who is and who is not a truly national artist. I look around the graves with the brightest lights. Each life a tragedy. Loved by their readers, they died hated by the regime. For a long time I believed that Karel Capek would remain the last to be hunted to death. That tomorrow's school readers will no longer be collections of banned writings of yesterday. That the society which each of those enlightened men and women have helped to prepare will not permit its own artists to die under injustice. I was wrong. I was wrong! The blind alley in which Czech art has been writhing for five years now has become the graveyard of both the victims and the agents of that injustice. And I do not know whom I pity more, whether the friend who has died under an avalanche of insults and with no flag of mourning on the house of the writers' union, or former friends who have died adorned with medals and titles as a reward for having helped to silence their no less talented colleagues and comrades of long standing.

It is a sad drama, Minister, and it will be all the sadder the longer it lasts, all the sadder since it has long ceased to be the result of the historic confrontation of classes that it was a quarter of a century ago, but the fruit of envy harboured regardless of classes and of hatred conceived by individuals who try to make up for their lacking talent and intellect by sharing in the exercise of power in an attempt to shape society to fit their own image. (. . .)

I am writing this letter as the Conference on Cooperation and Security in Europe, the outcome of long years of endeavours by progressive people all over the world, is drawing near. When I think back to the open dialogue I had with my West German colleague Günter Grass in the columns of the Hamburg magazine "Die Zeit" in 1967-1968 I believe I can claim it to be the outcome of my own endeavours, too, as part of the endeavours of many Czech writers, journalists, scholars or politicians whom you are constantly driving on to the "other shore". I am thinking of them as well as of all the people similarly silenced throughout the world when I conclude by saying that the approach of statesmen to that conference, and of the conference towards statesmen, should be guided by this axiom:

Cooperation and security in Europe can only be offered and

ensured by those who offer and ensure security and cooperation first and foremost to their fellow citizens.

Pavel Kohout, writer
Praha 1, Hradcanské náměstí 1

Listy (Rome), Vol. 4, No. 1, February 1974.

Note: Dr. Milan Klusak is to this day Minister of Culture of the Czech Socialist Republic.

Ludvik Vaculik

Impermissible Thoughts: A Letter to Kurt Waldheim

Prague, 29 July 1975

Dear Secretary General,

(. . .) A quarter of a year has now passed since an event which deeply offended me. I thought of writing to you then, but I dismissed the idea as being somewhat eccentric. A sober inner voice told me: 'Don't be an ass. After all, what're you complaining about? All right, they crawled into your flat, rummaged about in your life, carried away some of your effects, but you are innocent, so why not wait a bit.' (. . .) But the months are going by and I have come to realise what I have to live with, day in day out: with the expectation that they'll turn up again, or subpoena me to go and see them, and with a wretched feeling of gratitude for every uneventful day.

I finally decided to write to you for the following reasons: My anger and feelings of outrage remain unabated, indeed are growing. The time I had set myself in which to wait for them either to explain what it is I am supposed to have done or to apologise is up. And in the meantime something else has happened which sounds a warning – the joint space flight of Apollo and Soyuz.

(. . .) Our two neighbouring countries are of the developed ones which, when viewed in relation to the world's poverty, can well be said to be spoiled. One cannot help but ponder on one's own responsibility according to Jasper's scale: from criminal responsibility to the metaphysical. And of course he who shares the responsibility ought to have the decency to keep quiet and not add his voice to the indictment.

That is why I tell myself more and more frequently that I – or we – have what we wanted, that I and we cannot blame anyone else for the conditions in which we have to live. As a Czech, for instance, surely I share the blame for the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire a long time before I was born. In my youth I started the Second World War and later participated in the creation and fossilisation of the two zones of Europe. Now I find hovering over me co-responsibility for the Helsinki conference and its, as yet unknown and unexpected, consequences. That is, so to speak, my *metaphysical* responsibility. As a former member of the Communist Party I share the *moral* responsibility for what grew out of the collective revolutionary ideal of social justice in some kind of a higher, 'people's', form of democracy. I fail to find any direct *political* responsibility in my case (. . .) As for *criminal* responsibility, I neither feel it nor look for it. Yet it is this that they are constantly trying to pin on me. Naturally I have to defend myself against this, I fume and call down imprecations on their heads. But deep inside, when looking at the whole business somewhat more metaphysically, I am not really all that annoyed: that, I say to myself, is how it goes in this world, and who knows, maybe it is as it should be. However, on the first level of reality we all – they as well as we – act more in accordance with our daily roles than our better inclinations. And that is why I find it difficult to live in a state of enmity with anyone (. . .)

Now mine is a hard nut for a lawyer to crack, Doctor. In the autumn of 1969, proceedings were started against me on charges of subversion because I had been co-author of a petition addressed to the highest authorities in the country. The petition expressed disagreement with the way things had gone since August 1968. In the autumn of 1970 an indictment was issued against the eight authors of the petition and a date set for the trial. One day before this date, the trial was postponed indefinitely and the public told that in fact there was to have been no trial and that the whole thing was a malicious rumour. In the autumn of 1973 new criminal proceedings were opened against me for an interview I had given a British TV company. Again nothing happened, no indictment was ever drafted, but the proceeding have not been called off to this day, no one has told me anything, so that I do not know where I stand, which is what ought to have been done and would be done under a more normal legal system. I have been deprived of my passport, degraded from a First Lieutenant in reserve to a private (not that I mind), and am subjected to surveillance (my mail, telephone calls, friends, contacts with abroad, sexual life, etc.). (. . .)

Apart from anything else, once legal proceedings are started, the person concerned can be sent to prison, for example because of a 'resumption of criminal activity', which could be applied to me if I again appeared on foreign television or wrote to the United Nations. What is one to

call such a state of affairs? Is there a legal term to cover it, at least in times of peace?

I rather suspect that the postponed trial back in 1970 did take place, after all: in the absence of the public and of the accused. Not in the building of the Municipal Court but in the dusty attic of some anonymous house, as Franz Kafka described it with such foresight. There, I was sentenced to an unknown term for an unknown crime – I and my sons. (. . .)

At the end of April this year I was visited by a group of members of the State Security. They came, with the approval of the Public Prosecutor, to carry out a house search because, they said, I was suspected of concealing written materials which provided proof of subversion of the Republic. (. . .)

Thus it is possible to search *any* flat, and then something will be found or it will not. Is this possible in any other country in peacetime? I mean a country with a European tradition.

When the search was over, various objects (. . .) were taken away, but nothing had been found which would qualify as 'illegal printed matter'. Since that day no one has approached me, but at least fifteen other people have been interrogated in connection with me. None of the confiscated things has been returned to me. (. . .)

Among the things which I may thus have lost is the manuscript of a book on which I have been working for several years. (. . .) I myself do not as yet know how the book will end, what I'll add and what delete, but our State Security already knows that it's going to be a harmful book. Thus, if I lend it to friends or, worse still, have it published abroad, I'll commit the offence of spreading disaffection. This criminal offence is committed if one acquaints at least two people with the incriminating statement or text. It is therefore sufficient for me to: 1. give the manuscript to a typist for copying; 2. lend it to my friend Karel Kosík (he, too, had a manuscript confiscated but this was a philosophical treatise and they must find it heavy going!). Moreover, I don't know what they teach at Vienna University, but at Charles University they tell law students that 'Preparation to commit a criminal offence is punishable by the same term as the offence itself' (para 7, clause 2 of the Penal Code). If I am writing a 'harmful' book, I naturally intend someone to read it, therefore I am preparing to commit a criminal offence. That is not a literary exaggeration but a factual deduction. May I now be allowed a literary exaggeration: If by some mischance you had in recent years been awarded not an honorary doctorate at Charles University but a regular doctorate of law, and if you then had become a judge in this country, you would today, the six hundred years of Charles University notwithstanding, have to sentence many a Czech writer according to para 100 to three years' imprisonment for a manuscript captured on his desk, and if he actually handed the manuscript over for publication,

then to between one and five years. And in my case – a man with two pending cases – you would no doubt throw the book at me, if you will pardon the expression, and charge full tariff on me.

Forgive me, Secretary General, for conjuring up such an ugly image, but at least you can see what kind of a person I am and what it is that irritates them about me. (. . .) To show that I do not for a moment believe you could have become such a lawyer and judge, let me confide in you that my confiscated manuscript really did contain things which were tantamount to disaffection in our pre-Helsinki conditions. Perhaps you can understand what I mean when I say that I wrote them because I had succumbed to the impression that I was at home in my flat, where no one can see or hear me. It was late at night, say, and I felt sad or angry. And so I put my thoughts on paper, freely and without restraint, like before the war. Or during the time of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Or as if it was peacetime.

Since that warlike incident last April I cannot collect my thoughts regarding that absent book-in-progress. Whenever I put a sheet of paper in my typewriter I seem incapable of writing anything but some kind of protest. The world rejoices at the sight of Americans and Russians, up there in space, screwing a joint vessel together, and here I am, down on earth, with my pettifogging worries about my papers. And I am spinning a layman's essay on the law which I have decided to publish, this being the purpose behind my letter (. . .)

Every State which wishes to appear in civilised company at splendid international conferences considers it necessary to guarantee freedom of the individual in its constitution. This freedom happens to be inseparable from the concept of Europe. It is the greatest European discovery throughout the whole of our history. It is not only *my* opinion that it requires greater care in its implementation. For instance: Where does a man's personality end? Hitherto it seemed to be permissible for a man to juggle thoughts from one half of his skull to the other. Is he, though, also to be allowed to cast them in front of him onto his desk in order to get a better look at them and put them in order? In my country this has now become doubtful, Doctor, and I am telling you about it because, unless it is nipped in the bud, we shall have created an ugly European precedent. And it cannot be put right merely by someone duly returning our manuscripts to me and my friend Kosik (and we are by no means the only ones!). Something more is required. Otherwise I see no guarantee to prevent the police, intent on protecting law and order with even greater alacrity, from entering my flat as soon as I sit down at my desk and asking me: 'What is it you are going to think about now? Come along with us.' (. . .)

Dear Secretary General, that is almost all I had in mind. The rest I could perhaps only tell you as a metaphysical accomplice. And even that only, dear Doctor, if we both could be sure of at least a square met-

re of privacy in this dear old basin of ours . . . (between the Alps, the Carpathians and the Sudetenland).

I look forward eagerly to your reply. In the meantime I wish you confidence in the meaningfulness of your work, and also success. And, lest I forget, above all health, patience in your daily trials, and the harmless protection of saintly patrons.

Yours sincerely
Ludvik Vaculik
Prague 7, Veletrzni 21

Excerpts from a letter to the UN General Secretary. Index on Censorship, Vol. 4, No. 4, Winter 1975.

Vilem Precan

A Few Words about Historians

Esteemed colleagues, the situation has become unbearable. Like many of my, and hence your, colleagues, I suffer from a complete lack of legal, material and personal security. Any time a group of policemen equipped with the General Prosecutor's permission to search my home and even to arrest me, can again break into my flat. Any time they can tear the unfinished draft of this letter from my typewriter. I do not even know if I shall succeed in completing these lines for your Congress. But I do know which of the embarrassingly anachorinistic articles of the Penal Code the police, the Prosecutor and the Court can apply to my writing and sending this letter, and what sentence I may expect. (I assure you that the section of the Czechoslovak Penal Code dealing with the so-called "Criminal offences against the Republic" is a mockery of the Human Rights Charter, which was also signed by the representatives of Czechoslovakia. In this context what is called here socialist legality is the suppression of fundamental human and civil rights.) (. . .)

Six years have elapsed from the moment the regime initiated the so-called "consolidation". But the situation is worse now than it was at that time. It is an offence to possess journals other than those allowed by the government. Confiscation of books, manuscripts, notes and personal correspondence still continues. In Czechoslovakia intellectuals and others are treated worse than notorious thieves and violent criminals in other countries. Communication between people is regarded as illegal assembly, exchange of books, periodicals and manuscripts is con-

sidered as an anti-state act. People are summoned to the police and submitted to humiliating interrogations about what they do, who they see and what they think. During these searches police officers look for subversive literature under pillows in bedrooms and among children's toys.

A few words about historians. Those who were dismissed from scientific institutions, secondary schools and universities, museums and other cultural institutions, did not leave because they were not good historians or because there are too many historians in Bohemia. (. . .) They refused contemptible servitude to contemptible politicians and the identification of historical science with politics and ideology that is characteristic of a totalitarian regime. They wanted to end the long-standing struggle for the restoration of historical science, giving it back its true social function, and furthermore, as researchers, publicists and teachers they worked continually towards this goal. They demanded and strove for conditions in which all Marxist and non-Marxist schools could freely compete and they demanded the same rights for all historians to engage in scientific work and to publish the results of their research. Even after the tragedy of August 1968 they stated in the Declaration of the Historical Institute of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences of 25 September 1968:

"We insist on the freedom of scientific research and on unrestricted contacts with world science. We shall write without ambiguity. No subject will be taboo, and we shall investigate all matters fully and report on them openly."

And so the pen was brutally knocked from their hands. Their works continued to be trampled underfoot while they were powerless to defend themselves. (. . .)

They were and still are being accused of subversion of the Republic. To date no-one has withdrawn his accusations against two authors to the *Black Book*, which were based exclusively on their participation in the compilation and publication of this historical document. This might seem ludicrous, but it also contains an element of the perverted rationale of a totalitarian regime, which considers even the smallest enclave of freedom of thought and expression as a moral threat. This totalitarian regime attempts on all occasions to realise the terrible vision of George Orwell: "Who controls the parts controls the future, who controls the present controls the past." (. . .)

It is a great thing that mankind does not exterminate itself with hydrogen bombs. It is excellent that the era of the Cold War has come to an end. One can only rejoice that the Conference on European Security in Helsinki has reached its final stage. Every sensible person will recognise that if antagonistic forces are to coexist the politicians cannot but compromise. But this does not mean that blackmail ceases to be blackmail, nor will aggression, absence of freedom and justice cease to be what they are. Appeasement is a terrible thing in politics, but in culture it means

death – the very negation of culture’s existence.

What is the best way of seeking, finding and expressing freedom? Through culture in its broadest sense, art, literature, science and all activities that humanise the life of individuals, nations and mankind as a whole. If culture is not to destroy itself such compromises, which would threaten its existence, its development and its mission to seek and advance learning, must be refused. Living culture means also, and above all, men of culture who cannot exist without civil rights and the freedom to create. Their *right and duty* is to defend freedom wherever it is threatened and incessantly to redefine and widen its limits. (. . .)

Prague, July 1975

Excerpts from an open letter to participants in the XIVth International Congress of Historical Sciences in San Fransisco, August 1975. Index on Censorship, Vol. 4, No. 4, Winter 1975.

Milan Simecka

A Letter to the General Prosecutor’s Office of the Slovak Socialist Republic

Complaint

On Saturday 8 June 1985 a car carrying the writer Dominik Tatarka, myself, and my son was stopped by a police patrol about 5 km outside Ziar nad Hronom. The police car overtook and braked so suddenly in front of our vehicle that it was only with difficulty that we avoided an accident and possible injuries. The policemen took away our identity cards and, under the pretext that we had been guilty of a motoring offence, escorted us to the police station at Ziar nad Hronom. Here, they quickly forgot about the “motoring offence” and told us instead that we had been detained because we were on our way to a meeting of “anti-socialist and right-wing opportunistic forces”. That is how they classified a trip by several friends to the mountains. Without any further beating about the bush they told us we had a choice between an immediate return to Bratislava under police escort or 48 hours in protective custody, possibly longer. I am willing to believe that in the case of Meritorious Artist Dominik Tatarka, a 73-year-old and sick writer, who walks

with great difficulty with the aid of a cane, this threat was meant purely academically.

They wrote down some meaningless statements and, according to some paragraph or other (I don't pay any attention to their numbers because I know from experience that a paragraph of some sort can always be found), they subjected all three of us to body searches and also searched the car. All they found was a few papers, which they naturally confiscated. Nothing new as far as we were concerned. After three hours of peaceful interrogation we set out on the return journey, followed by a Volga carrying four plainclothes men. They did allow us to stop for lunch – I expect they too were hungry. We reached Bratislava at half past six in the evening, having spent 12 hours on a pointless journey. Surveillance over us was taken over by other units.

It might be said that nothing particularly terrible took place. We were not physically assaulted, we were allowed to sit and not forced to stand up against a wall, we did not suffer from thirst, they didn't yell at us, nor did they demand some absurd "confession", they did not insult us or humiliate us in any way. Nevertheless, I would like the General Prosecutor's Office to tell me whether this sort of treatment of Czechoslovak citizens is customary and whether it is lawful. I have read that there exist laws protecting human dignity, freedom of movement, right to recreation, and other similar rights. I should be grateful if you would explain that in our case none of these rights had been infringed. Moreover, our journey to the police station at Ziar nad Hronom, where we had not intended to travel, cost us money, as did the return journey to Bratislava. Will anyone recompense us for these expenses?

I leave open the question, who will refund the State's expenses. As a prelude, I had already been followed by several cars, with male and female occupants, while still in Bratislava. Later I learned that several of my writer friends in Prague had been placed under similar surveillance. I tried to calculate, in my amateurish way, how much this must have cost in petrol, the wages of the police agents, and other expenses. I came up with a sum in six figures. Yet I keep reading in the newspapers that it is a crime to waste resources. I should also add that a secret police officer visited two writers in Brno and asked them not to leave the city that weekend, or . . . True, this is no less illegal and undignified, but it is cheaper and less inconvenient for those affected by it. The above-mentioned secret police officer should have been given a bonus for the financial saving. But if this whole operation had not been undertaken, the Republic would not only have saved some money but also its reputation. The security of the state, which the police authorities in question are supposed to be safeguarding, would not have suffered in the least. This I can easily prove, should anyone be interested.

I look forward to hearing from you as to my complaint and learning

where I am to apply for the refund regarding my unnecessary expense. At the same time may I draw your attention to the fact that I have had no response to my earlier complaints.

Bratislava, 12 June 1985
Dr. Milan Simecka
Pražká 35
811 04 Bratislava

Miroslav Kusy

*A Letter to the General Prosecutor's
Office of the Slovak Socialist Republic*

Complaint

On Saturday 8 June 1985, at 8 a m, I was stopped by a police patrol near Ziar nad Hronom under the pretext that they wished to check the technical condition of my car. Having allegedly found some things wrong they ordered me to follow them to the local police station at Ziar nad Hronom. With me in the car were my wife and two young daughters. One of the policemen took me inside the station, where he handed me over to members of the State Security. They now gave a different reason for my apprehension: no longer the technical condition of my car but instead paragraph 120 on state security, according to which they carried out a personal search of myself, my wife and our two children as well as the vehicle – on suspicion that i was in possession of a weapon, ammunition, explosives, or drugs. Naturally, they found nothing of the sort, but used the occasion to take away four manuscripts of my own, signed articles, which they on the spot described as "harmful material". They were unable to tell me according to which paragraph they were doing so.

During an interrogation lasting over three hours (the children waited outside in the police station yard) one of the secret policemen told me that they had ascertained that I was to take part in some anti-State, anti-socialist, opportunistic and I don't know what else, super-dangerous meeting in their area, although they were unable to give any details. Nor was I, and I refused to talk about this absurd subject. When they had completed the typing of the statement, the same policeman told me

that I now had to return to Bratislava, accompanied by a police escort. Should I refuse, or drive in any other direction, should I try to visit anyone en route, he had orders to detain me for 48 in protective custody.

I had been intending to spend a weekend in the country with my daughters and so I tried to negotiate: can we at least pay a visit to auntie Hana Ponická, whom the children were looking forward to seeing and whom they were bringing a basket of strawberries on her birthday; and could we also visit some sick relatives in Sliac, who were expecting us; or at the very least to the grandparents near Topolciany, whom we had promised to visit on our way home.

The secret policeman went away to consult by phone the Regional Security people in Banská Bystrica, and he returned with the unambiguous order: we had to go straight back to Bratislava and spend the weekend at home on pain of the above-mentioned sanction.

Under the circumstances, seeing that I had with me two frightened and tired children, I submitted to the brute force of this order, but I am taking this opportunity of lodging a vehement protest.

I complain of:

1. The confiscation of my manuscripts, which turned out not to be the cause of any investigation and which were absurdly described as "harmful material". (The titles of the articles were: "To be a Marxist in Czechoslovakia", "*Horror Vacui*", "I Still Well Remember"). As far as I know, I am allowed by Czechoslovak law to possess any "written material" (particularly those authored by me!) and the police are not entitled to take them from me only because they happen to find them in my possession.

2. Serious infringement of my personal liberty, that of my wife and my children throughout the said weekend, "motivated" by the absurd allegation that we were on our way to some anti-State meeting. Had this accusation been meant seriously, the police would have been duty bound to "catch us red-handed" and prosecute us. Those responsible for the action taken against me, however, were well aware that they would have ended up with egg on their faces and so fabricated their "prevention of an anti-State meeting", so that they did not have to prove anything. Who was meeting whom? And for what purpose? If anyone had really been preparing to commit a crime, the behaviour of the police was ridiculous: they detained one of the perpetrators before they could perpetrate anything and . . . sent them home. However, if no criminal act were in preparation, the police acted illegally.

3. Preventing us from spending our weekend any other way. Had they merely been concerned to prevent some meeting, all they had to do was to stop me and issue a warning. Why did they order me to return home and spend the weekend in Bratislava? Why was I not allowed to make any of the alternative visits I proposed? Or do the police consider all of those as possible venues for an "anti-State meeting"? Even a visit to old

grandparents in the country? Surely not – they merely make their very well paid work so much easier in this way. Why should they carry out their duties in more difficult fashion, when they can simply put me under house arrest, little caring that they are thereby seriously infringing the Constitution and our laws? Since when have our policemen been granted powers to order a citizen where and how he is to spend his weekend?

4. The malicious conduct of the police, who – apart from ruining my weekend – also caused me material damage in the form of wasted travel expenses. If they wanted to stop me from attending a meeting, as they claimed, why did they not do so in Bratislava rather than wait until I had arrived in Ziar nad Hronom? I can see no "sensible" reason for this, only ill-will. I know that in Bohemia this is what State Security does do, warning people while they are still at home not to take part in some gathering or other; I too was thus warned on one or two occasions by the Bratislava State Security (for instance, not to attend the funeral of General Svoboda). Even though this, too, is hardly according to the law, it is at least a more decent way to do it than to let me and my family travel halfway across the Republic before turning us back. At the very least I demand that I be recompensed for the money I wasted. When the State Security in Bratislava prevented me from travelling to Prague to attend a Charter 77 meeting, they did at least refund the money I had already spent on my rail ticket.

I request that the General Prosecutor's Office take up my complaint and rectify the situation.

At the same time I would like to point out that you have still not taken a decision on my previous complaints concerning the confiscated objects during a house search in 1977 (tapes containing the first words spoken by my daughter, a record of my wedding, taped music, as well as books I had brought in our bookshops, by Dubcek, Patocka, etc). These things have been in police hands for eight years!

Bratislava, 11 June 1985
Professor Dr. Miroslav Kusý
Slowackého 21
821 04 Bratislava

Lists of Forbidden Writers

List of writers (journalists) who cannot publish in Czechoslovakia. This list was attached to the letter Charter 77 addressed to the Congress of the Union of Czechoslovak Writers, dated March 3, 1982. (230 names)

Ludvik Askenazi, Milan Balaban, Zdenek Barborka, Rudolf Battek, Hana Belohradská, Vaclav Belohradský, Jan Benes, Marie Benetková, Vaclav Benda, Zbynek Benisek, Ivan Binar, Ivan Blatny, Vladimir Blazek, Jitka Bodlakova, Egon Bondy, Jiri Brabec, Vratislav Brabenec, Eugen Brikcius, Antonin Brousek, Ales Brezina, Stanislav Budin, Vladimira Cerepkova, Vaclav Cerny, Miroslav Cervenka, Lumir Civrny, Jiri Danicek, Jiri Dienstbier, Ivan Divis, Lubos Dobrovsky, Bohumil Dolezal, Jaroslav Dresler, Miroslav Drozda, Irena Dubska, Ivan Dubsky, Ladislav Dvorsky, Vratislav Effenberger, Karel Bichler, Roman Erben, Ladislav Fikar, Ota Filip, Daniela Fischerova, Viktor Fischl, Petr Formanek, Bedrich Fucik, Jirina Fuchsova, Jiri Gold, Eduard Goldstucker, Bohumila Grogerova, Ladislav Grossman, Jiri Grusa, Igor Hajek, Jiri Hajek, Ales Haman, Miroslav Hanus, Jiri Hanzelka, Jirina Haukova, Vaclav Havel, Zbynek Havlicek, Zbynek Hejda, Ladislav Hejdánek, Vilem Hejl, Jitka Henrykova, Josef Heyduk, Josef Hirsal, Jiri Hochman, Karel Hora, Dana Horakova, Bohumil Hrabal, Josef Hruby, Jaroslav Hutka, Ivana Hyblerova, Jindrich Chalupecky, Petr Chudozilov, Milan Jankovic, Pavel Jansky, Pavel Javor, Josef Jedlicka, Ivan Jelinek, Ivan Jirous, Vera Jirousova, Emil Julius, Petr Kabes, Zdenek Kalista, Eva Kanturkova, Svatopluk Karasek, Vladimir Karfik, Dusan Karpatsky, Frantisek Kautman, Mojmir Klansky, Ivan Klima, Alexandr Kliment, Helena Klimova, Milan Knizek, Josef Koenigsmark, Erazim Kohak, Pavel Kohout, J.M. Kolar, Jiri Kolar, Bozena Komarkova, Petr Kopta, Miroslav Korycan, Karel Kosik, Karel Kostroun, Iva Kotrla, Libor Koval, Jiri Kovtun, Zdenek Kozmin, Petr Kral, Antonin Kratochvil, Karel Kraus, Eda Kriseova, Karel Kryl, Oldrich Krystofek, Marie R. Krizkova, Jiri Kubena, Ivan Kubicek, Milan Kucera, Erich Kulka, Ludvik Kundera, Milan Kundera, Karel Kyncl, Pavel Landovsky, Gabriel Laub, Jiri Lederer, Josef Lederer, A.J. Liehm, Vera Linhartova, Frantisek Listopad, Bedrich Loewenstein, Josef Lopatka, Zdenek Lorenc, Arnost Lustig, Sergej Machonin, Milan Machovec, Inka Machulkova, Emanuel Mandler, Jan Mares, Frantisek Merth, Karel Michal, Oldrich Mikulasek, Stanislav Moc, Antonin Mokrejs, Milan Napravník, Vladimir Naroznik, Zdenek Neubauer, Jiri Nemeč, Ladislav Novak, Bohumil Nuska, Anastaz Opasek, Jaroslav Opavsky, Radim Palous, Frantisek Panek, Jan Patočka, Frantisek Pavlicek, Karel Pecka, Jiri Pechar, Tomas Pekny, Zdenek Pinc, Vladimir

Piatorius, Petr Pithart, Jiri Placek, Dalibor Plichta, Zdenek Pochop, Rio Preisner, Iva Prochazkova, Miroslav Ptacek, Lenka Prochazkova, Karel Ptacnik, Jaroslav Putik, Milos Rejchrt, Jaroslava Reslerova, Jiri Ruml, Sylvia Richterova, Zdenek Rotrekl, Pavel Reznicek, Zdenek Reznicek, Vilem Sacher, Zdenka Salivarova, Jaroslav Seifert, Jaroslav Selucky, Karol Sidon, Jan Skacel, Karel Soukup, Andrej Stankovic, Vera Stiborova, Jiri Stransky, Daniel Stroz, Milan Suchomel, Oleg Sus, Nina Svobodova, Karel Sebek, Karel Siktanc, Milan Simecka, Jan Simsa, Vladimir Skutina, Josef Skvorecky, Pavel Srut, Pavel Svanda, Nikolaj Terlecky, Zdena Tominova, Miroslav Topinka, Josef Topol, Jan Trefulka, Karel Trinkewitz, Vlastimil Tresnak, Milan Uhde, Ota Ulc, Zdenek Urbanek, Milos Vacik, Ludvik Vaculik, Marie Valachova, Edvard Valenta, Zdenek Vasicek, Jaroslav Vejvoda, Jan Vladislav, Stanislav Vodicka, Jan Vodnansky, Josef Vohryzek, Vladimir Vokolek, Vladimir Vondra, Jaroslava Vondrackova, Jiri Weil, Josef Vondruska, Frantisek Vrba, Ivan Wernisch, Pavel Zajicek, Miroslav Zikmund, Karel Zlin, Josef Zumr, Josef Zverina.

In the above list, proscribed Slovak writers and journalists do not figure. We add that compiled by a Slovak woman-writer, *Hana Ponická*, who was expelled from the Slovak Writers Union. It appeared in *Le Monde*, 14 May 1977, and so cannot correspond to up-to-date facts to which we do not have access.

Frantisek Andrascik, Jarmila Blazkova, Jozef Bzoch, Fedor Cadra, Sona Cechova, Ladislav Dobos, Michal Gafri, Milan Hamada, Pavol Hruz, Miroslav Hysko, Jozef Jablonicky, Zora Jesenska, Agnesa Kalinova, Roman Kalisky, Jan Kalina, Ivan Kadlecik, Peter Karvas, Miroslav Kusy, Albert Marencin, Jan Mlynarik, Stefan Moravcik, Hana Ponicka, Jan Rozner, Zlata Solivajsova, Ctibor Stitnický, Juraj Spitzer, Dominik Tatarka, Ladislav Tazky, Julius Vanovic, Tomas Winkler.

VI. Biographical Notes

BATTEK, Rudolf (b. 1924)

A sociologist, essayist. During the "Prague Spring" deputy of Czech National Council. Debarred from all his professional activities since 1969. Sentenced to a total of more than ten years of prison. Now still held in prison. Charter 77 signatory. His work is banned.

BEDNÁROVA, Ota (b. 1927)

A journalist. Has had no possibility to work in her profession since 1969. Worked as a charwoman; now retired. Charter 77 signatory and one of the founding members of VONS. Spent 16 months in jail. Persecuted and harassed by the State Security police. Her work is banned.

BENDA, Václav (b. 1946)

A philosopher, writer, literary critic; mathematician. In 1977, signing Charter 77 cost him his employment. In 1979 became one of the Charter 77 spokesmen, was arrested and condemned to four years in prison. His work is banned.

CERNY, Václav (b. 1905)

A literary critic and theoretician, historian, publicist; translator; university professor. In 1970 deprived of his university post and forced to retire. Persecuted and harassed by Czech authorities, and the State Security police. Doctor honoris causa of French universities. An important signatory of Charter 77. His work is banned.

CHRAMOSTOVÁ, Vlasta (b. 1926)

An outstanding Czech actress. Forbidden to perform in theatres, television and radio broadcast since 1969. Signatory of Charter 77. Harassed and persecuted by the State Security police.

DIENSTBIER, Jirí (b. 1937)

A journalist, publicist, dramatist; translator. Since 1970 not al-

lowed to work in his profession. Charter 77 signatory; spokesman in 1979. Was then arrested and condemned to three years in prison. His work is banned.

FISER, Zbynek, pen-name BONDY, Egon (b. 1930)

A philosopher, writer, poet. Removed from his university post and prevented from pursuing his work. Charter 77 signatory. His work is banned.

GRUSA, Jirí (b. 1938)

A poet, prose-writer, literary critic. In 1978 detained for his novel "Questionnaire" (Dotaznik). Charter 77 signatory. His citizenship withdrawn in 1981. Now lives in exile. His work is banned

HAVEL, Václav (b. 1936)

A world famous writer and playwright. Since 1969 forbidden all professional activities. Holder of international awards for literature; doctor honoris causa at York University in Toronto, Canada, and at Toulouse University, France. Charter 77 signatory, in 1977 one of the first spokesmen for it. Spent almost five years in prison. His work is banned.

HEJDÁNEK, Ladislav (b. 1927)

A philosopher, essayist, publicist. Prevented since 1971 from working in his professional field. Signatory of, and one of the leading spokesmen for Charter 77. Persecuted and harassed by the State Security police. Employed as a stoker. His work is banned.

HOLUBOVÁ, Miloslava (b. 1913)

An art historian, writer. Arrested and imprisoned as early as the 1950s. Forbidden to write and publish. Charter 77 signatory. Her work is banned.

HRABAL, Bohumil (b. 1914)

A writer, poet, script-writer. Living in Czechoslovakia, he is one of the few well known and well read writers whose works have been spared prohibition. Nevertheless, his important work is published mostly in *SAMIZDAT*.

HUTKA, Jaroslav (b. 1947)

A singer, song-writer; founder of a music group "Safron-crocus" (Safran). Charter 77 signatory. Persecuted and forced into exile. His work is banned.

JABLONICKÝ, Jozef (b. 1933)

A historian. Has lost any possibility of professional work since 1974. Incessantly harassed and persecuted by the State Security police. His work is banned.

JANOUCH, Frantisek (b. 1931)

Professor of theoretical physics. In 1970 forbidden to work in his profession and to publish. In 1974, he was allowed to take up guestprofessorship offered to him by the Swedish Royal Academy of Sciences. In 1975 deprived of Czechoslovak citizenship. Chairman of the Board of the Charter 77 Foundation in Stockholm. His work is banned.

JIROUS, Ivan (b. 1944)

An art historian and critic; poet. Since 1970 denied any possibility of working in his profession. Charter 77 signatory. Spent several years in prison for "slandering the nation", for "scandalous vulgar texts". . . His work is banned.

KABES, Petr (b. 1941)

A poet and publicist. Charter 77 signatory. Working as a night watchman. His work is banned.

KANTURKOVÁ, Eva (b. 1930)

A prose and script-writer, publicist. Signatory of and spokeswoman for Charter 77. In 1981 arrested; spent one year in prison. Now awaiting a lawsuit. Her work is banned.

KLÍMA, Ivan (b. 1931)

A well-known prose-writer, dramatist, essayist. Lost his last post in 1970, persecuted since then; without permanent job. His work is banned.

KOHOUT, Pavel (b. 1928)

A well-known writer, dramatist, poet, film producer. Produced his own plays on numerous world stages. Charter 77 signatory. In 1978 permitted a one-year-stay in Austria. A year later driven away from Czechoslovak frontier by force. Then stripped of his Czechoslovak citizenship. Now living in exile. His work is banned.

KOLÁR, Jirí (b. 1914)

A poet; world famous experimentalist in verbal and pictorial poetry, in collages. Persecuted and harassed; he stood trial twice: in the 1950s and in 1980. Charter 77 signatory. Now lives in exile. His work is banned.

KOMÁRKOVÁ, Božena (b. 1903)

A philosopher, theologian; writes on human right issues. Detained in Nazi prisons during World War II. In 1951 forced to retire for political reasons. Charter 77 signatory. Her name is on the list of proscribed writers.

KOTRLÁ, Iva (b. 1947)

A writer, poet. In 1970, expelled from university, one year before her finals. Persecuted and harassed since then. Her work is banned.

KRIZKOVÁ, Marie Rút (b. 1936)

A literary historian and critic. Unemployed for a long period in the 1970s; when she found a job was sacked because of her signature of Charter 77. Persecuted and harassed by the State Security police. Now employed as an assistant forestry worker. Her work is banned.

KUBISOVÁ, Marta (b. 1942)

The Great Lady of Czech pop-song. Strict interdiction of any public appearance and performance since January 1977 when she signed Charter 77 and became its spokeswoman.

KUNDERA, Milan (b. 1929)

A world famous writer; poet and dramatist. His Czechoslovak citizenship was withdrawn in 1979. Now lives in exile. His work is banned.

KUSÝ, Miroslav (b. 1931)

A philosopher, political scientist, writer, university professor. Has had no possibility of professional work since 1970. Charter 77 signatory. His work is banned.

KYNCL, Karel (b. 1927)

A journalist, writer, publicist, playwright; translator. Since 1969 prevented from working in his profession. Charter 77 signatory. Harassed and persecuted; spent almost two years in prison. Now lives in exile. His work is banned.

LEDERER, Jirí (1922–1983)

A journalist, literary and TV critic. Charter 77 signatory. Spent a total of 50 months in prison. Harassed and persecuted and finally forced into exile. His work is banned.

MLYNÁRIK, Jan (b. 1933)

An art historian; assistant professor at the Academy of Fine Arts until 1970. Then worked as an assistant labourer in a theatre. Charter 77 signatory.

Spent more than a year in prison. Persecuted and harassed for his Theses on the eviction of Germans from Sudets. His Czechoslovak citizenship withdrawn in 1982. Now lives in exile. His work is banned.

NEMCOVA, Dana (b. 1934)

A juvenile psychologist. In 1976 she lost any opportunity of working in her profession because of having organized solidarity actions on behalf of imprisoned members of the music group "The Plastic People".

Charter 77 signatory; One of the founding members of VONS. Spent five months in prison.

ORNEST, Ota

A theatre director. Has had no possibility of professional work since 1970. Spent two and a half year in prison. Constantly harassed and persecuted by the State Security police. His work is banned.

PATOCKA, Jan (1907–1977)

A philosopher, historian of philosophy and culture; university professor. Lecturer at European universities. Signatory of, and a prominent spokesman for Charter 77. Twice forced to give up lecturing in Czechoslovakia: in 1948 and in 1972. Persecution and harassment in the 1970s exacerbated his poor health which finally broke under interrogation by the State police. He died shortly afterwards. His work is banned.

PAVLÍČEK, Frantisek (b. 1923)

A playwright and script-writer. Director of the leading Prague theatre, Na Vinohradech, until 1970, when he was forced to resign for political reasons. Charter 77 signatory. Harassed and persecuted by the State Security police. His work is banned.

PRECAN, Vilém (b. 1933)

Historian, essayist, publicist. Has had no possibility of professional work since 1970. Harassed and persecuted by the State Security police. Now lives in exile. His work is banned.

PROCHÁZKOVÁ, Lenka (b. 1951)

A writer. Daughter of proscribed author Jan PROCHAZKA (1929–1971). In 1975 finished her studies at Charles University. Since 1977 has been working as a charwoman. She, and the rest of the family have been persecuted and harassed since the death of her father. Her work is banned.

RUML, Jirí (b. 1925)

A journalist; publicist, dramatist. Since 1970 prevented from working in his profession. Signatory of and spokesman for Charter 77. Persecuted and harassed; arrested in 1980. His work is banned.

SEIFERT, Jaroslav (b. 1901)

A poet, writer, essayist. In 1967 awarded the status in Czech National Artist. In 1969/1970 President of the Union of Czech Writers. Since then unscrupulously harassed by Czech authorities and the State Security police. Condemned to silence. His works were rarely published until October 1984 when he was awarded Noble Prize for literature. Charter 77 signatory.

SIDON, Karol (b. 1942)

A writer, playwright, script-writer. Since 1969 his professional activities have been prohibited. Charter 77 signatory. Forced into exile. His work is banned.

SIMECKA, Milan (b. 1930)

A philosopher, writer, publicist; university professor. All professional activities prohibited since 1970. Charter 77 signatory. Harassed and persecuted by the State Security police. His work is banned.

SIMSA, Jan (b. 1929)

A theologian, evangelical priest, poet, author of cultural-historic essays. At the beginning of the 1970s forbidden to perform his clergyman's duties; has since worked as a labourer. Charter 77 signatory. Spent eight months in prison. His work is banned.

SOUKUP, Karel (b. 1951)

A singer and song-writer. In 1975 spent six months in prison (without trial) in connection with the rounding-up of Czechoslovak "Underground" musical groups. Charter 77 signatory. Forced into exile. His work is banned.

TATARKA, Dominik (b. 1913)

An outstanding Slovak writer and dramatist. Lives in Slovakia, totally surrounded by State Security police, denied all movement and possibility to work. Charter 77 signatory. His work is banned.

TOMIN, Julius (b. 1938)

A philosopher and publicist. Since 1970 denied all possibility of professional work. Charter 77 signatory. In 1979–1980 organized private lectures on classical philosophy. Harassed and persecuted by the State Security police. His citizenship revoked in 1981. Now lives in exile. His work is banned.

TREFULKA, Jan (b. 1929)

A writer, literary critic, script-writer. Effectively prevented from working in his chosen field since 1970. Charter 77 signatory. His work is banned.

TRESNÁK, Vlastimil (b. 1950)

A singer, song-writer, author; photographer. In 1974 forbidden to continue in his professional activities. His recordings withdrawn from circulation, and his work banned. Charter 77 signatory. Forced into exile.

UHDE, Milan (b. 1936)

A poet, writer, literary critic, playwright. Since 1970 prevented from working in his profession. Charter 77 signatory. Persecuted and harassed by the State Security police. His work is banned.

URBÁNEK, Zdenek (b. 1917)

A writer, essayist, theatre critic; translator. Harassed and persecuted by the State Security police. Charter 77 signatory. His work is banned.

VACULÍK, Ludvík (b. 1926)

A writer, essayist, journalist. All his professional activities curtailed since 1969. Often interrogated by the State Security police. Charter 77 signatory. His work is banned.

VLADISLAV, Jan (b. 1923)

A poet, writer, essayist; Director of unofficial publications after 1969. Charter 77 signatory. Persecuted and harassed by the State Security police. Forced into exile. His work is banned.

ZVERINA, Josef (b. 1913)

An historian and art theoretician; theologian, publicist; translator. Spent World War II in Nazi concentration camps. During 1950s and 1960s served 13 years in prison . . . Since 1970 persistently divested of all opportunities of working in his professional spheres; forbidden to execute his ecclesiastical duties. An outstanding signatory of Charter 77. His work is banned.

*Personal index**

- Adamek J. 222, 234
Akhmatova A. 242
Aldridge J. 265
Ancerl K. 128
Anderson M. 167
Andrascik F. 190
Andres S. 27
Andrzejewski J. 207
Anis F. 218
Aragon L. 15, 27, 95, 266
Baczko B. 192
Bahro R. 242
Bakunin A. 27
Barta J. 236
Battek R. 221–2, 253–4, 287
Baudelaire C. 242
Beaufret J. 193
Beckett S. 55
Bednarova O. 213–4, 287
Begin I. 195
Benda V. 62, 213–4, 287
Benes E. 26
Berlinguer E. 195
Besnard A.M. 242
Biebl K. 152
Biemel W. 192
Boehr de T. 247
Bondy E. (Fischer Z.) 70, 288
Bonhoeffer D. 154, 242
Böll H. 15, 20, 23, 24, 27, 181, 201,
265–6
Borovsky B. 259
Brabenec V. 21, 199
Brandt W. 221
Brecht B. 161, 207, 265
Breznev L. 195
Brook P. 265
Bruzek M. 25
Bukovsky V. 242
Burian E.F. 144
Butor M. 201
Bzoch J. 190
Cadra F. 190
Camus A. 242
Capek K. 270
Carillo S. 195
Carnogursky J. 260
Carnogursky P. 260
Carter J. 195
Cech S. 155
Cechova S. 190
Cerny B. 256
Cerny V. 22, 28, 79, 112, 242, 287
Chalupecky J. 139, 140
Checkhov A. 56
Chramostova V. 161, 188–189,
207, 287
Cohen R. 192
Coletti L. 192
Colotka P. 249
Congreve W. 242
Corso G. 242
Cosic 57
Cseres T. 248

*) Personal index does not contain names which appear only in the list of forbidden authors (pp. 282–283).

- Csurka I. 248
Dienstbier J. 66, 213–4, 257, 287
Dietl 130
Derrida J. 226–7
Dery 57
Dobos L. 190
Dostoevsky F. 56
Dubcek A. 281
Duka D. 223
Duray M. 248
Dürrenmatt F. 169
Dvorak V. 259
Dyk V. 155
Dziedzinski F. 108
Eis Z. 26
Erteltova Z. 205
Faitlova D. 248
Faye J.P. 192
Ferlinghetti L. 242
Fischer E. 27
Firt J. 138
Fitzgerald F.S. 27
Forman M. 104, 128
Frel J. 28
Fryc M. 238
Fucik B. 138
Fucik V. 259
Fuchs E. 205–6
Gabaj A. 259
Gafrik M. 190
Garaudy R. 27
Gierek E. 195
Ginsberg A. 242
Gondova H. 239
Grass G. 270
Green G. 265
Gruntorad J. 219–20
Grusa J. 60, 71, 202, 204, 210, 288
Gössl G. 254
Guarini R. 242
Gutierrez-Giradot R. 192
Habermas J. 192
Hamada M. 190
Hajek J. 219, 235
Havel V. 11, 22, 50, 55, 57, 72,
125, 129, 195–7, 202–3, 213–4,
242, 254, 288
Havel I. 219
Havlova O. 219
Heidegger M. 215, 242
Hejdanek, L. 75, 226–30, 235,
238, 247, 256, 288
Hemingway E. 27
Heneka A. 3
Hitler A. 63
Hlozanka R. 236, 260
Holecek M. 259
Holubova M. 78, 288
Holze H.-H. 139
Horec J. 218
Howe G. 259
Hrabal B. 57, 149, 242, 289
Hromadka O. 257
Hrubin F. 190
Hruz P. 190
Hus J. 115
Husak G. 49, 205, 248, 254
Husserl E. 128
Hutka J. 198–201, 202, 289
Hybek M. 238
Hysko M. 190
Jablonsky J. 65, 251, 289
Janouch F. 3, 289
Janyr P. 211, 214

- Jarecek J. 247
Järv H. 25, 29
Jasny V. 128
Jesenska Z. 190
Jetelova M. 136
Jirous I. 21, 85, 199, 238, 289
John Paul II 223, 247
Joyce J. 55
Kabes P. 202, 257, 289
Kadlecik I. 190
Kalinowski E. 225–6
Kafka F. 2, 16, 25, 27, 31, 32, 34,
36, 38, 40, 42, 57, 273
Kalina J. 190, 227
Kalinova A. 190
Kalisky R. 190
Kanturkova E. 80, 202, 218, 232,
235, 290
Karasek S. 21, 199
Karvas P. 190
Kaslik V. 27
Kennedy J.F. 27
Kimak V. 205–6
Klima I. 16, 22, 54, 58, 202, 290
Kluge A. 27
Klusak M. 265, 271
Kocab M. 146
Kohout P. 22, 60, 157, 180, 202,
207, 210, 211, 212, 213, 242,
265, 271
Kolakowski L. 192
Kolar J. 31, 149, 239, 242, 290
Komarkova B. 87, 290
Konc T. 259
Konwicki T. 57, 242
Kopecky V. 26
Kosik K. 16–19, 22, 65, 274
Kotrla I. 66, 89, 157, 160, 252–3,
291
Kotrly Z. 260
Kozak J. 26
Kozakiewicz 27
Kozanek P. 252–3, 260
Kratochvil M. 146
Kreisky B. 195, 221
Krejca O. 128
Krizkova M.R. 92, 291
Krumpholz J. 222, 234
Kryl K. 244
Kubisova M. 188, 291
Kundera M. 60, 128, 214, 242, 291
Kunze R. 23
Kusy M. 95, 190, 227–8, 249, 279,
281, 291
Kuzelova K. 259
Kuznecov A. 27
Kyncl K. 218, 235, 291
Laichter O. 138
L'Amour L. 53
Landovsky P. 207
Lederer J. 195–7, 214, 217, 291
Lee H. 53
Lenart J. 249
Lenin V. 26, 63, 142
Liberda V. 242–43
Lipinski E. 242
Litomisky J. 215–6, 222
Lizna F. 222, 234
Llosa V. 55
Machar J. 155
Mailer N. 248
Mandelstam N. 242
Mandelstam O. 207, 242
Marchais G. 195

Mareckova L. 258
 Marencin A. 190
 Masaryk T.G. 26, 28, 87
 Masinova J. 212
 Mayakovsky V. 28
 Merta V. 244
 Michaux H. 242
 Miller A. 30, 45, 48, 201, 242, 248
 Milosz C. 149
 Misik V. 244
 Montale E. 242
 Moravcik S. 190
 Moravec E. 267
 Moravia A. 201
 Mlynar Z. 211
 Mlynarik J. 218, 235, 238, 292
 Nejedly Z. 88
 Nemeč J. 128
 Nemeč Dr. 50
 Nemcova D. 213–4, 292
 Neruda J. 155
 Neszoly M. 248
 Neuman S.K. 28
 Neuman S. 28, 29, 128
 Nezval V. 152, 190
 Novajevsky F. 240
 Novomesky L. 267
 Nuska B. 27
 Odstrcil J. 222
 Ornest O. 195–7
 Orwell G. 104, 116, 242
 Osers E. 150
 O'Toole P. 265
 Otahal M. 256
 Palach J. 246, 256
 Palme O. 221
 Palous R. 215–6
 Passer I. 128
 Pasternak B. 242
 Patočka J. 9, 22, 65, 128, 132, 190,
 242, 281, 292
 Pavlicek F. 99, 195–7, 292
 Pelikan J. 67
 Pithart P. 257
 Polak J. 217
 Pomian K. 192
 Ponicka H. 189–190
 Precan V. 3, 227, 275, 293
 Presley E. 142, 148
 Prochazka J. 128, 266
 Prochazkova L. 100, 293
 Radok A. 128
 Rahner K. 242
 Rasputin V. 57
 Razek A. 259
 Rojt J. 154
 Ronsard de P. 242
 Roth P. 52, 53, 54, 201
 Rotrekl Z. 260
 Rosenberg A. 63
 Rozewicz 57
 Rozner J. 190
 Ruml Jan 218, 222
 Ruml Jiri 218, 222, 238, 293
 Sabatova A. 246
 Sadat A. 195
 Sadovsky J. 247
 Saint-Beuve C.A. 28
 Saint Francis of Assisi 115
 Sartre J.-P. 16, 18, 19, 27, 201
 Savrda J. 240–43
 Schoder R.V. 28
 Schweitzer A. 242
 Sevcik V. 257

- Shakespeare W. 166, 207
Shaw G.B. 161
Seifert J. 20, 22, 23, 57, 102, 126,
149–158, 182, 207, 223, 242,
251, 293
Sidon K. 202, 254, 293
Siklova J. 218, 235
Simecka M. 102, 218, 227–8, 235,
238, 248, 277, 279, 293
Simsa J. 65, 206–7, 294
Sinoglova D. 157–160, 232
Sinyavsky A. 118
Skerik 138
Skilling H.G. 242
Skvorecky J. 129, 254
Slansky R. (jr) 207
Slieranka M. 248
Smahel R. 222, 234
Solivajsova Z. 190
Solzhenitsyn A. 27, 55, 57, 63,
118, 206, 242
Soukup K. 21, 230–31, 294
Spitzer J. 190
Srna V. 209
Srp K. 143, 144, 147
Starek F. 238
Steiner G. 52, 53
Stitnický C. 190
Stoel van der M. 191
Stoppard T. 49, 50, 51, 201
Streicher J. 63, 145
Suchy J. 173, 244
Svacek M. 207
Svec O. 247
Tatarka D. 106, 157, 190, 277, 294
Tazky L. 190
Teige K. 153
Thonon G. 218
Tito I. 195
Tomasek F. 247
Tomin J. 216, 218
Tomin Z. 218, 294
Tomsky A. 260
Trefulka J. 202, 294
Tresnak V. 220, 294
Trinkewitz K. 214
Trojan L. 236
Tvardovský N. 242
Twain M. 242
Udhe M. 202, 295
Uhl P. 213–4, 246
Urbanek Z. 202, 295
Vaculik L. 16, 109, 130, 136, 149,
154, 157, 187, 202, 227, 242,
254, 271, 275, 295
Vanovic J. 190
Vilimek 138
Vladislav J. 3, 12, 149, 202, 295
Vlcek J. 222, 234
Vonnegut K. 248
Wagenbach 27
Waldheim K. 271
Weiss P. 201
Winkler T. 190
Wickliffe J. 115
Wolker J. 152
W.X. 114
Y.Z. 119
Zajicek P. 199
Zand N. 150
Zamyatin J. 27
Zenkl P. 267
Zivkovic Z. 126
Zverina J. 112, 295

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böll * vlasta chramostova * vaclav cerny * jiri
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