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## MUSIC AND THE TOTALITARIAN REGIME IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

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### *Abstract — Résumé*

Many studies on the subject of the communist totalitarian regime take into account their standard Soviet model and pay little attention to specific and somewhat different situation in individual countries of the former »Soviet bloc«. This study deals with the situation and events in the cultural world and music of former Czechoslovakia. Historical documents such as the *May Declaration of the Representatives of Culture to the Czech People* (from 1946), the *Prague Manifesto* (1948), and others are analysed, as well as ideas, artistic and personal destinies of a series of artists and musicians.

The need for a critical historical analysis of the musical life in Czechoslovakia during the

years 1948—1989 still remains a painful task of Czech musicology. However, it can already be stated that the first stage, from 1948 till 1968, was a period of confrontation of ideas and of changes, both within and outside the Communist Party. Towards its end this period became a time of searching for democratic alternatives within the socialist regime. In the second stage, from 1968 till 1989, all cultural life became paralysed. Any hope of the reform of socialism was gone, being replaced by the hope of destroying this lifeless system. The events of 1989 opened up a way to normal life, but rehabilitations are still proving to be a painful exercise.

### I

Many studies on the subject of the communist totalitarian regime and dictatorship take into account the standard Soviet model and pay little attention to the specific situation in individual countries of the so called 'Soviet bloc'. Authors of such studies usually end up with generalised claims that do not help to make clear the diversity and the modifications, which each of these countries have undergone. Several recent studies dealing specifically with the situation in Czechoslovakia tend to be historically incorrect: typically, everything was fine before the communists came to power; once they took over, they started systematically to violate the whole nation. Good was replaced by evil.

Important questions are left out in this kind of simplified statements, such as: 'Why were the communists supported during the power struggle and the take-over by a large proportion of the population, who saw an exceptional historical opportunity in the arrival of communism? Why did they have the support of not only a large number of working class people, but also of prominent intellectuals?'

This study shall concentrate on the situation and events in the cultural world and above all in music. However, a general overview of the political scene is necessary.

## II

I do not want to claim that our country adopted none of the bestial forms of violence and oppression typical of the Soviet system. But they did not occur overnight and to such an extent in all areas of the public life.

First of all, we must realise that from May 1945 until February 1948 there was a parliamentary democratic system under which the post-war political parties pursued their policies. The public at large did not know about the willfulness of the Soviet party apparatus. Under the influence of the victorious advance of Soviet Red Army against Nazi Germany, the memory of Soviet political processes faded. Slovakia and a major part of the Czech lands were liberated by the Red Army. Any criticism of the Soviet establishment after the Second World War was regarded by the general public as blasphemy. The Communist Party benefitted from this situation in political wrangles.

Another factor boosted the influence of the communists: after the forced repatriation of the Germans from the Czech border regions houses, factories, and fields left were abandoned, and communists were in charge of the resettlement and allocation of farm land. Landless people moved into these border regions where they easily acquired land. But there were also selfless enthusiasts whose prime concern was to reclaim the land that historically belonged to the Czech Kingdom. Needless to say, most settlers were young people. And so it happened that in the general elections in 1946, mainly in these border regions, the communists won a large number of votes (a total of 40% in the Czech lands).

How was it possible that the Communist Party gained support of many staunch democrats, some of whom went on to become party members? No doubt they sympathised with the ideas of social justice, humanism, democracy and freedom — all virtues the Communist Party claimed to stand for.

Significant from this point of view is the *May Declaration of the Representatives of Culture to the Czech People*, published by the communist periodical *Tvorba* a week before the election in 1946. It was signed by 380 prominent Czech artists and scholars.

At a time when our people are about to appraise their achievements in the general elections, we are proud to declare our support to the ideas of the Party, which showed its people the way forward when the sheer existence of the nation was at

stake; we manifest our loyalty and admiration for the Party, which united our nation in a fight in which the blood of its best members had been shed... That is why we want to demonstrate today our will to accomplish, along with this Party and all democratic sections of our life, the idea of a new true democracy; we want to strive in our work, each one of us in our own sector, to build a new republic soon. — We are here today to declare our loyalty and respect for this Party, knowing that the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, the guardian and creator of unity and better future of our nation, does not need to and will not misuse the power for its own purposes, but that its greatness and power will guarantee the greatness and strength of our people and state.<sup>1</sup>

Among its signatories were not only members of the Communist Party, but also its sympathisers, often from the pre-war left avantgarde. We find among them, for example, Herberta Masaryk, the granddaughter of T. G. Masaryk; the excellent esoteric poet Vladimír Holan, who was later oppressed by the regime and ended up living in poverty and isolation; the poet and artist Jiří Kolář and the journalist Antonín Liehm, who both later emigrated to France.

Altogether there were about 30 signatories, who after February 1948 at some stage clashed with the regime and were in the course of the 'ideological struggle' labelled as 'the enemies of the people'. A number of others gradually became disillusioned and disgusted and left the political scene at all, particularly after 1968. Some of the signatories, on the other hand, became leading representatives or at least servants of the dictatorship, often up until 1989.

Around 30 signatories of the 'Declaration' came from the sphere of music. Apart from some later well-known communist composers, such as Václav Dobiáš, Jan Seidel and Emil Hlobil, we also find signatures of excellent composers such as Alois Hába and Klement Slavický, both barely tolerated in the '50s, and of teachers from the Prague Conservatoire. Some, like Karel Ančerl, suffered in Nazi concentration camps and their experience has also shaped their attitudes.

Even for a period of time after the communist take-over in February 1948, certain strata of the population and democratically minded party members seemed to accept that oppression of the opposition was a necessary evil on the way to historical political changes, when ultimately a more just society would be created, a society that after a period of Jacobean dictatorship would live up to the French Revolution motto: Freedom, Equality, Fraternity. This illusion was further supported by the fact that local organisations of the Communist Party had not yet fully degenerated into obedient tools of the central party apparatus. Clashes of opinions occurred within the party and sometimes even affected the party apparatus, whose members still included those who preferred the idea of political persuasion to the idea of class coercion. Democratic thinking in Czechoslovakia — unlike in the Soviet Union — had strong historical roots. Political life had not yet completely disintegrated.

<sup>1</sup> *Tvorba* XV, 1946, Vol. 20, p. 327.

Those, who realised in time that they were in serious danger or that there was no hope for the future, emigrated or became bitter, others became scared or chose to follow the path of passive resistance. But many were still naive enough to believe that everything was leading to a *better tomorrow* (the cliché of the day). We must realise that the revolution brought certain social improvements, or at least hope, to a number of people, and that in the early days, these improvements did not result in any advantages for party members. But naive democrats had virtually no influence on political life. The decisions were made by Jacobean fanatics, behind whose back were hiding pushy careerists.

After World War II, many young and inexperienced people became party followers, and for those who looked up to the Soviet Union it became a kind of lighthouse, a source of enlightenment and salvation. They were uncritical. Together with a certain section of the population they admired a system which had won convincingly their fight against a seemingly unbeatable Germany. Under the influence of such emotions, the role played by other Allies in the liberation of Czechoslovakia was rather neglected.

Experienced Stalin-orientated party ideologists took advantage of this favouritism, and from 1945 onwards systematically fostered it. (This process also included the 'hardening' of new 'cadres' in political training.) The resulting formula was clear: the Soviet communist system is anti-Fascist. This means it is humanitarian, kept together by a unity of nations and its main interest is caring for people's prosperity; consequently, it is therefore a democratic system. With these proclamations the communists took power in democratic Czechoslovakia on the 25th of February 1948.

In the sphere of culture some positive changes occurred after 1948 but their effects became much debased by subsequent ideological interventions. The State gave support and provided grants to new theatres, orchestras or picture galleries. It also gave support to publishing of books and to music publications; it contributed to the development of folk art, to the publishing of methodological materials, and so on. According to the slogans of the period, people were to be given back what they were deprived of by the bourgeoisie and by insufficient access to the culture and education because of their economic circumstances.

It should truthfully be said that in this respect the communist regime actually behaved most democratically. It created and financially supported an extensive network of people's art schools throughout the Czechoslovak Republic. For very reasonable fees, these schools were accessible to children from all levels of society. Teachers' training centres were also established and teachers were able to attend working conferences on full pay. Quite a number of internationally recognized Czechoslovak musicians owe their artistic development to the conditions created by the State.

Artistic creativity was also generously supported. In 1953 a Czech Music Foundation was founded (as was its Slovak counterpart) to which, by law, the musicians contributed a certain percentage of their earnings. The Foundation gave grants to composers and music theoreticians, commissioned new works and provided interest-free loans as well as social contributions to its members.

Musicians were indebted for many of their other advantages to the Music Information Centre that was established in 1955 in place of the former archives of the Czech Music Foundation. The task of this centre was to promote contemporary music composition and to contribute to the introduction of new works outside the country as well as copying parts for the premieres of music works, lending music publications and enabling socially disadvantaged musicians to borrow instruments or purchase them at a discount price.

These basically positive *organizational changes* to the cultural life of the nation were, however, to a large extent *devalued by ideological requirements and interventions*. The regime gave straightforward support to the works bound up with the *current ideology* as if this would, in effect, guarantee their inherent artistic value. Considering, then, that after February 1948 the publishing houses were controlled by the State, it became possible to publish only the books, *music materials or records that the regime considered desirable*. The management of theatres and concert activities were likewise under State control. Writers or composers who did not conform with the current requirements found it hard, if not impossible, to become established. *Those artists that became undesirable were silenced*. New artistic works bore marks of ideological dogmatism obviously adopted after the Soviet model. The book market became flooded with translations of Soviet dogmatist literature. While it was relatively easy to become acquainted with the works from the 19th century, new works of artistic quality appeared only sporadically. Especially in music, the policy enabled listeners to become familiar with Russian and Czech classical music: the problem was that according to Zhdanov's imported attitudes (I will come to those later) to contemporary composers, this music was presented as a model so far unsurpassed yet worthy of following. As a result of ideological pressure the positive interventions in the structure of cultural life were therefore losing their positive meaning. *Communist ideologists needed to subordinate the mind of artists and of the wide population to their ambitions of power*. In order to promote the vision of a happy communist future, *the past was blackened, distorted and concealed*. The self-awareness and self-realisation of the working classes that replaced, in the ideological process, Hegel's self-realisation of an idea, was not to stem from the perception of truth, but from the mind of an *enlightened party man*. *A number of brainwashing events were organised by the party*: a political process with a counter-state centre (1952), a fight against cosmopolitanism as an ideology of American Imperialism (1952), a fight against T.G.Masaryk and socialdemocratic politics (1953), various conferences held with the aim of increasing ideological effects on the masses, and others. This ritual was quite specific in Czechoslovakia: the tradition of democracy was much stronger in this country than in other countries of the Soviet bloc. That was the reason for the fight against Masaryk and socialdemocracy.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Political changes led to Bohuslav Martinů's decision to remain in exile. First, the composer's return was prevented by the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia. After the war he applied for the position of professor of composition at Prague's Conservatory of Music but, due to various intrigues, the authorities kept postponing their decision. After February 1948 Martinů was not able to visit his country even as a tourist. He died in Switzerland in 1959.

Despite all attempts by the regime, it was not possible to destroy the historical conscience, not even that great numbers of party members. The self-righteousness of the party leadership was shattered for the first time by S. Khrushchev's speech at the XX Conference of the Soviet Communist Party in 1956. Khrushchev's criticism of Stalin and the personality cult, gave a boost the rebels even within the party itself. From then on, the party leadership tried several times to counter-attack, but it was forced to retreat every time. They had to admit the bestiality of political processes, and to free political prisoners gradually, albeit without political or legal rehabilitation. The conference on Franz Kafka could not be stopped (1963), and was later attacked as being the beginning of a counterrevolution. In the 1960s critical articles began to appear, various lobbies were formed within the artists' unions (this was unthinkable in the 1950s); in film the 'New Wave' of Czech cinematography appeared; in music some contemporary composers from the West and emigrants were no longer taboo, the music of followers of the so-called 'New Music' began to come to the fore; avantgarde, concrete and electronic music came to life and experimental art was discussed. One of the last desperate counter-attacks by the leadership of the Communist Party was the banning of the periodical *Literární noviny* in the autumn of 1967. Everythings was nonetheless moving irreversibly towards the 'Prague Spring' of 1968.

This phenomenon would not have taken the form it did, had it not been for the quiet support of a certain section of the party apparatus. To put it metaphorically: from 1956 till the end of 1968 a party existed within the party, which in the end, in 1968, brought about the party revolt called 'Socialism with a Human Face'. Looking at it from yet another angle: the events in Czechoslovakia created an illusion that the communist movement outside the Soviet Union could be reformed, but the Soviet occupation prevented it from being effected.<sup>3</sup>

### III

After February 1948, Czechoslovakia played a special role in the stabilising process of the musical life within the Soviet bloc. On the 20th February 1946 a united Syndicate of Czech Composers was founded. (A similar one was founded in Slovakia.) In 1946, the Syndicate established contacts with the world by organis-

<sup>3</sup> I wish to make a personal observation here. Along with Vladimír Karbusický and others, I was one of those who belonged to the critical wing in the Musicological Section of the Composers' Union. After Karbusický, in exile, published his book *Ideologie im Lied, Lied in der Ideologie*. I could not agree with him in making no distinction between Marxism and German Nazism. It was not my intention to defend either the Soviet or our pro-Soviet regime. It was just that it seemed rather rash on Karbusický's part to reject even the 'authentic' Marxism of the 19th century in which we tried to find the roots of humanism during the reform process in 1960s. This is why I entered the debate. Years later I do see that our Marxists are unable to free themselves of the Soviet model and that it is not just that the teaching of Marx is being deformed. The reasons for the Marxists' insensitivity to democratic methods lie somewhat deeper.

ing an international festival, the Prague Spring, which has been held every year since then, from the 12th May till the 2nd June. It was organised to honour the 50th anniversary of Czech Philharmonic — the first Czech symphony orchestra, which was officially and fully subsidised by the state from October 1945. In 1947 (16th–26th May), the Syndicate of Composers organised — to coincide with the Prague Spring Festival — the First International Conference of Composers and Music Critics. With this step Czechoslovakia took the initiative in post-war Europe and had a great chance to become an important organisational centre of international co-operation in the field of music and musicology in a truly modern spirit.

But the outcome of the debate of the Second International Conference (held in Prague between 20th and 29th May 1948), dashed all these hopes. The question: 'Where is music heading?' was answered by the notorious Proclamation of the Second International Conference of Composers and Critics in Prague (later known as the *Prague Manifesto*), and accepted by the participants of the Conference. The content of the Manifesto was severely criticised by Theodor W. Adorno in his study *Die gegängelte Musik*.<sup>4</sup> He exposed not only the dubious premises and vague formulations, but also the political and artistic consequences contained in the Proclamation. Time proved Adorno right. The *Prague Manifesto* must, however, be assessed from yet another point of view.

In January 1948 a Conference of Composers took place in the Soviet Union where Zhdanov delivered his simplified doctrines with their numbing effect on the development of music in both the Soviet Union and its satellite countries. And the *Prague Manifesto* had the same effect there and was officially considered to be, along with Zhdanov's theories, a theoretical and aesthetic basis of socialist music. Even though many ideas from the Manifesto are similar or even identical to those of Zhdanov, the prevailing notion — that the Prague Proclamation resulted from a dictate of Soviet delegates at the Conference — is misleading. The role of T. Khrennikov and B. Jarustovsky in pushing through Zhdanov's doctrines in the Soviet Union is generally well known, but the situation in May 1948 was not yet politically ripe enough to allow them to dictate to the entire presidium of the Second International Conference.

Let us look at the names of the signatories of the Proclamation for the presidium of the Second Conference: A. Estrella (Brazil), Roland de Cande (France), M. Flothuis, M. Rebling (Holland), Hanns Eisler (Germany), Marcel Bernard (Switzerland), Alan Bush (Great Britain). The future »socialist« countries were represented by: V. Stoyanov (Bulgaria), Š. Lucký, F.A. Kypta, A. Sychra, J. Tomášek (Czechoslovakia), O. Danon, N. Devčić (Yugoslavia), D. Bartha (Hungary), Z. Lissa (Poland), A. Mendelsohn (Romania), T. Khrennikov, B. Jarustovsky, J. Shaporin from the Soviet Union. But it is difficult to find out today whether anybody else

<sup>4</sup>Adorno wrote his essay in the summer of 1948 immediately after he finished his *Philosophie der neuen Musik*. He published it in 1953 in the magazine *Monet*. Later it was included in his book *Prismen. Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft*, published in Frankfurt in 1955. As for the wording in the 'Prague Manifesto', I cannot give extensive quotes here. Adorno gives a number of these quotes and also discusses them.



had been invited for the Conference. Perhaps some of those invited declined the invitation, as they already suspected the direction the conference agenda would take.

The music critic M. K. Černý, in his otherwise very controversial study *On Criticisms of the Prague Manifesto* recalls a contemporary testimony, the Soviet delegation during the drawing up of the Proclamation behaved in a very reserved manner and an important role was played by the British composer and conductor Alan Bush.<sup>5</sup> We have no reason not to believe this statement. However, everything indicates (though examination would be required to prove it) that the entire board was leftist. The Second International Conference of Composers and Music Critics is, in my view, excellent proof that ideological models are not necessarily pre-fabricated by the political leadership and enforced from above, but that they originate from the same seed-bed and only later fully take root. I am convinced that the text of the Proclamation would have been more or less the same — even without Zhdanov's doctrines. Both the Proclamation and Zhdanov speak for the people. But all of post-war Europe spoke about people. How popular this subject was is apparent from the *Program of the first national government of Czech and Slovaks*.

#### IV

In the Program announced publicly on the 5th April 1945 in the liberated east Slovakian town of Košice (the majority of the Czech territory was then still under control of Hitler's Germany), are formulations such as: *The domestic politics of our government will be based on the fundamental article of the Czechoslovak Constitution, which says that the people are the only source of state power. The government will therefore build all public life on a wide democratic basis, it will guarantee its people all political rights, and it will fight relentlessly against all remaining fascist elements. A process of complex democratisation will go ahead, and it will not only enable all strata access to schools and other sources of education and culture but also — in an ideological sphere — the system of education and the nature of culture will be popularised, in order to serve not only a narrow section of the population, but all the people and the nation... It will all be carried out in a progressive, popular and national manner, and our great classics will be our models, as they themselves too created a culture of highest standard, which was both profoundly popular and national.* (Emphasis added.)<sup>6</sup>

Do not the underlined sentences have the same tone as Zhdanov's doctrines? People as the ultimate authority, serving people, classics as an ideal model... These

<sup>5</sup> M. K. ČERNÝ, Ke kritikám 'Pražského manifestu' (On criticisms of the 'Prague Manifesto'), *Hudební věda* X, 1973, Vol. 3, p. 237.

<sup>6</sup> Program první domácí vlády republiky, vlády národní fronty Čechů a Slováků (Program of the First Post-exile Government of the Republic, the Government of the National Front of Czechs and Slovaks). Publication of the Ministry of Information 2-45, pp. 15, 28.

formulae did not sound then like empty rhetoric, but like an attempt to settle with the past, to introduce a better democratic system than that of the pre-war period. Post-war Europe was politically inclined to the left. It seems that our new interim government (with communists in it, but not in a majority) as far back as 1945 reacted to the atmosphere of the day.

Two years before the Prague Manifesto, in June 1946, the First Conference of Czechoslovak Writers was held a month after the first post-war Czechoslovak free elections. It anticipated in many respects the atmosphere of the Second International Conference of Composer and Music Critics. The report about the conference states: *'The most important outcome of the conference must be the fact that all the papers given here, despite the range of opinions they represent — from Christian spiritualism to dialectic materialism — had one common denominator: the prospect of building a new republic, clearly aimed at achieving socialism.'*<sup>7</sup> It was not just a journalistic phrase, as we can see from parts of the *Manifesto of the Conference of Czechoslovak Writers*, accepted by the Conference: *'We are meeting here at a historical moment when the Constituent National Assembly is to safeguard the results of the national revolution and prepare the ground for the building of a socialist state. A people's democratic republic will release all the creative forces of our nation and will guarantee them total freedom: it will foster a positive attitude in people towards work, based on the moral demands of socialism, not on its power. With the changes in the position of people comes a fundamental change in the writer's position. Without giving up his visionary role, he is no longer playing an opposing role, but rather a constructive one. In the new social order, which we shall create together, there will be no conflict between an individual and society, as the development of an individual and the society are inter-connected. Bearing in mind the responsibility and gravity of our deeds, we must do our best to reach a profound understanding of the man from the street and the people, to get to know him; in order to become not only interpreters of revolutionary social changes, but also guides to new horizons and creators of new relationships between men. We strongly reject the indifferent, abstract liberal humanism and offer instead new socialist humanism, which fights for freedom of mankind... In this spirit we are part of the progressive struggle of the entire world, in which the Soviet Union is a glowing example in the striving for new humanity.'*<sup>8</sup>

It is clear that by 1946 writers were anticipating the birth and development of a socialist system that would be — according to their convictions — more just than the pre-war system. The pleonastic term *people's democratic republic* was coined, in order to make it clear to everybody that our pre-war democratic republic had been a bourgeois democracy, not a people's democracy. For our purpose, phrases like: *'there will be no conflict between an individual and society, as the development of an individual and the society are inter-connected'*, *'we must do our best to reach a profound understanding of the man from the street and the people, to get*

<sup>7</sup> *Tvorba XV*, 1946, Vol. 26, p. 401.

<sup>8</sup> *Manifest sjezdu českých spisovatelů (Manifesto of the Congress of the Czech Writers)*, cf. Note No. 7.

to know him' are of particular interest and significance. Everything seems to suggest that to understand the post-war situation and the negative or at least backward developments in music of the whole Soviet bloc, we need to understand how the notions of 'the people, general public, masses, progress, revolution, socialism', were intertwined. But that would, of course, be a subject of another sociological study, beyond the scope of this essay. I shall therefore describe the situation in music only.

Undoubtedly WW II brought large sections of population into political turmoil and provoked revolutionary moods within them. An increased interest by some politicians, sociologists, art-scholars, ideologists and others, 'in the people', was under these circumstances understandable. The problem lies in different interpretations of the term 'the people', in the various roles ascribed to them, the many ideas about looking after their well-being and also the reasons for being manipulated.

Surely, a large section of a nation is 'the people', but is it a homogeneous entity, i.e. a mass? And when we say, we want to 'get to know the man from the street and the people', does that not mean a 'nation'? But is a nation the same as the people? Are there not social strata within a nation? Undoubtedly, there are. And when we talk about music, does not the term *popular music* or *folk music* cover just a wide spectrum ranging from traditional folk songs, country and western, municipal blues to kitsch and trash. Indeed, musicology as well as literary theory demonstrate that 'popular' in arts is not an unambiguous term.

On the one hand, we find grouped together concepts such as: 'revolution', 'progress', 'socialism', 'advanced democracy', and 'the people as vehicle of progress, whose wisdom and aspirations have to be adhered to'. On the other hand, it is assumed that through their work artists will mould the masses. The listener or reader is considered to be previously 'formed' and his 'progressive tastes' should be catered for (see the *Prague Manifesto*), whereas at the same time the composer is asked to mould people's needs through his work (meaning that they do not exist as yet). A 'progressive' composer should adapt to the 'progressive feelings' of people, i.e. he should adapt to popular, mediocre taste instead of developing it. As a speaker for a collective, composer does not speak to anybody else, but turns back to the collective, which understands him only if he speaks the language to which it is accustomed to. The circle is closed, the way forward is blocked.

Ideologists did not understand that progressive ideas in politics and progressive ideas in the arts and aesthetics are two totally different matters. (By the way, their understanding of progress itself was dubious.) Political and revolutionary demands — and the possible uprising — stem from an opposition to an unbearable situation (be it nationalistic, economic, socially or ideologically oppressive). These demands are therefore linked to *needs*, which are for various reasons *unfulfilled*, and which would be satisfied through revolutionary changes. In fact, these changes did occur, to a certain extent, in Czechoslovakia already as early as 1945. But was the situation in politics the same as in culture and arts? Were there new demands and new needs, which only a revolution could satisfy? Not at all. Suc-

cessful revolutionaries coming from the people in its broadest sense, not only a few individual are not seeking revolution in the arts, but rather a *cultural repose*, something they were used to. They are not hungry for novelty in the arts, they do not have *new* needs. If there is any *opposition* here, then it is opposition against innovative art, i.e. opposition to the unusual in art. To serve the people in culture and music therefore means to serve those *old* needs.

And that is exactly what happened. No revolution in music, no *New music* as musicologists are commonly used to call it. I mean music that does not conform to the standard, in terms of listeners' models, but attempts to develop them. It is therefore laughable today to call a piece of work new when new music is meant to conform to consumer's and political demands.<sup>9</sup>

New music *could not have developed* in these circumstances. *Progress* could not have been achieved in this way. This was major obstacle in establishing an International Association of Progressive Composers and Musicologists, as proposed at the Second Prague Conference, where a preparatory committee for such an Association had been formed. Adorno's remark at the end of his criticism of *Prague Manifesto* was accurate: '*The people are the opium of the people.*'

The *Prague Manifesto* reacted to the fact that there was disharmony between the top creative production and the general consumers. Adorno himself was aware of this discrepancy but, rightly, dismissed criticism of the composers based on accusation of individualism and subjectivity. Even if it were true in the case of a few individuals, it was not true in general. In art, *only new, unworn, un clichéd work can stimulate new demands*. But such a work has to be offered to, not demanded by the masses as a *deep inner necessity*. Even today (and the situation will be the same in the future), there are people in our country who are deaf not only to Janáček or Martinů, but even to Bedřich Smetana. And whose fault is it? Are the composers to blame?

Even the work of prominent composers who lived after WW II (such as Stravinsky, Hindemith, Schönberg, Prokofiev, Martinů) did not and still does not have any impact on the public at large. This discrepancy (*Prague Manifesto* call it 'a crisis'), this *pair of open scissors*, has to be closed. But which end should be closed? The *Prague Manifesto* talks about overcoming musical illiteracy, it mentions the need to educate the public but, in reality, it asks composers to listen to the people and give up the extremely subjective positions. '*Only then will music be-*

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Antonín SYCHRA, *Stranická hudební kritika-spolutvůrce nové hudby (The Party Line for Musical Criticism — Co-Creator of New Music)*, Prague 1951. After publishing his early structuralist musicological works showing much talent, A. Sychra (1918-1969) became since 1948 an ideologist of the Union of the Czechoslovak Composers and took part, together with Jaroslav Jiránek and others, in the 'ideological struggle for progressive Czechoslovak music' and, as University professor, 'for progressive musicology'. After reviewing his attitudes in the 1960s he concentrated on experimental aesthetics.

After World War II it was the historian and musicology professor Zdeněk Nejedlý (1878-1962) who also had a negative influence on the general concept of Czech culture and musical life; first, as the Minister of Education and, from 1962 until his death, as the President of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences.

come a vehicle of new and progressive ideas and emotions of the general public and of all that signifies advance in our time.<sup>10</sup> And the pair of scissors should not open any longer.

The contemporary dislike of individualism and subjectivity in art seemed relatively democratic: only he who lives with the people, i.e. a collective, who understands its demands, who is reformed and becomes part of the people, is a true democrat, a progressively minded person, a socialist. But what about the division of work, and what about specialisation? In such an atmosphere it is difficult to realise the idea that *an artist has to be independent and free* if he wants to be useful to the society. Only exceptional politicians are to be singled out from the collective; those who 'discovered the way to free people'. In the arts though, the public at large does not want to be free. New horizons of political life can be outlined by skilled speakers, even in practice, new political life can bring certain satisfaction, but music by an 'individualistic' composer is disturbing, it breaks with the accepted norms, the usual ways of perceiving and experiencing music.

Composers set themselves, therefore, the goal of writing music for the people. The result of their endeavour were given a brand name: *music for the masses*. Songs for the masses were a type of music particularly popular and its composition was systematically promoted. The term 'the people', because of its slightly romantic connotations, was replaced by the term 'mass', suggesting something shapeless that has yet to be moulded. In Smetana's opera *The Brandenburgers in Bohemia* the choir sings: 'We are not a rabble, we are the people.' In the new language it would be put thus: 'We are not the people, we are the masses.'

## V

Many of Zhdanov's ideas, presented at the conference of Soviet composers in January 1948, were anticipated on several occasions. It would be, therefore, a misinterpretation to classify his appearance there as a high-handed political dictate. He was merely summing up the existing situation: he spoke for simple people with backward tastes.

But, in addition, he was also an advocate of artistic mediocrity. He spoke on that platform and his ideas were enthusiastically accepted. It was not by chance that he criticised the best Soviet composers. He criticised, for example, Shostakovich and gave prominence to a less important composer Dzerzinsky, who had been used as a model already in 1936 when Shostakovich was criticised for the first time. When Zhdanov branded the prominent composers 'formalists' (Shostakovich, Prokofiev, Miaskovsky, Khachaturian, Popov, Kabalevsky, and Shebalin) and asked who else should be included, a voice from the audience readily added: Shaporin.

<sup>10</sup> Provolání II. mezinárodního sjezdu skladatelů a hudebních vědců v Praze v roce 1948. (Com-muniqué of the 2nd International Congress of Composers and Musicologists in Prague, 1948). Published in *Hudební rozhledy* VI, 1969, Vol. 1, p. 69.

These so called 'formalists' were by far superior as composers to those present at the conference, for whom the 'ideological struggle' against the 'bourgeoisie' and 'formalist art' was a welcome opportunity to further their own interests. Moreover, they could, with their limited abilities as composers, easily comply with Zhdanov's demands, unlike those great composers who set themselves more demanding tasks which were beyond lesser artists.

Those who are mediocre in any specific field of activity need to have control over the situation to prevent being threatened by it. That is the reason why they seek political support for their endeavours. And that is what happened in Czechoslovakia after the revolution, even in the sphere of music. In the chaotic bustle into which a number of able composers were drawn, simplified ideas and compositions represented only one part of the musical output. Often there was not bad-will involved, only naiveté. In December 1948 the Czech and Slovak Syndicates of Composers and Musicologists announced a five-year plan. It included formulations such as these: *'The songs of the people will be returned to the people and we shall teach them these songs and we shall also learn to play light portable musical instruments, such as the accordion and guitar in order to accompany them. In their creations of new songs for the masses composers will take into account the new type of work and the new working collective... In compositions for youth organizations and for the army, soloists will act as choir leaders, when songs with choir refrains are sung. In developing this form of song further, we shall achieve a form of small cantata and later grand vocal forms.'*<sup>11</sup>

In May 1949 the Syndicates were re-organised and the Union of Czechoslovak Composers was founded. In April 1950 the Union organised a Festival of Latest Music, accompanied by discussions, under the title *Composers are with the People*, and in February 1951 festival under the banner *Our Music in the Fight for Peace*. The Korean War was then fully under way, and a number of people were convinced by intense propaganda on the part of the regime that the war had been brought about by South Korea and the United States. At the 1951 festival a number of songs appeared on the theme of peace. The new musical language was intensely debated, as language which should be understood by the public. Among guests invited for this festival were not only foreign delegates, but also workers from large factories, who were asked to express their opinions about the compositions.

It is obvious that in this sort of atmosphere, more serious lyrics could not succeed, and only rallying songs, and lyrics about building or political campaigning and poems celebrating Stalin and Gottwald were put to music.<sup>12</sup> As far as musical forms were concerned, all vocal forms were very popular (the small song form, enthusiastic rallying songs and small cantatas), grand political themes appeared in cantatas and operas. With regards to musical language simplicity, emphasis was constantly placed on comprehensibility, and clarity, i.e. on an uncom-

<sup>11</sup> Rámcový pětiletý plán skladatelů a hudebních vědců (The Five-Year Plan of Composers and Musicologists). *Hudební rozhledy I*, 1948, Vol. 5, p. 83.

<sup>12</sup> Klement Gottwald, the leader of the Czech communists, who became the President of the Czechoslovak Republic in May 1948, quite soon after the coup in February of the same year.

plicated melody close to folk songs or the music of our classics, with particular reference to Smetana. Musicians were constantly challenged by critics to reflect the new times in their music, and to employ new intonations, but all these attempts ended inevitably either in reworked marches, in national dances, or in well-worn sentimental lyricism.

These conditions hampered the development of composers' talents, even though ideologists from both the political apparatus and from the Union of Composers claimed to be completely supportive of arts and artists. In reality, mediocre production was promoted, and from that production, which fully complied with official musical and aesthetic norms, nothing that would be of interest remains today. Only when these contemporary demands were accepted by talented composers, such as Václav Dobiáš, did their compositions result in what even today could be considered an interesting, specific form of art.

There was still a lot of enthusiasm among the population, especially young people in the early 1950s. In schools and at factories youth choirs spontaneously appeared and performed new songs with great vigour. (The state liked to support and boast of them.) Until 1951 people danced in the streets in the centre of Prague every year to celebrate the liberation of the city. But the oppressive atmosphere began to stifle even some members of the Communist Party. Moreover, after the currency reform in 1953, the regime was afraid of spontaneity in the streets, since they felt it could turn against the government. The youth choirs began to stagnate. In 1955 the Union of Composers organised a conference about 'Song', but it did not succeed in fully restoring the popularity of vocal forms.

When, in 1948, during the process of establishing the Union of Czech Composers, a unified (and in the sphere of classical music also the only) periodical *Hudební rozhledy* (Musical Review) was founded, it seemed possible that professional discussions and criticism would survive. But already the editorial of the Musical Review hinted otherwise: *There is no longer time to publish individual monthly periodicals, even though we do appreciate the role played by, for example, Tempo or Rytmus in their day, and we do not wish to undervalue their achievements in promoting our music. But now we stand united and aim for one goal. This does not mean that we are not open to independent and open discussion and criticism, on the contrary!* (Emphasis added.) *We are all tarnished with the old and will have to do our best to get rid of it. But, first of all, there has to be good will amongst all of us.*<sup>13</sup>

The two phrases after the underlined sentence are more interesting than the underlined sentence itself. Criticism from outside and self-criticism, the two driving forces of dialectic revolutionary events, were reduced to the poet's S.K. Neumann motto: *Fight the bourgeois within yourself*. Auto-criticism had turned into self-flagellation and criticism became a merciless tool of class struggle. Mainly naive, young people exercised self-criticism. In 1950 at the first Meeting of the Union of

<sup>13</sup> *Hudební rozhledy* I, 1948, Vol. 1, p.1.

Czechoslovak Composers, held under the slogan *Composers are with the People*, Vladimír Sommer, a promising 29 year old composer, claimed (despite his mining family background): *'In practice, I was aware of the necessity of fighting for the working class cause, but in my compositions I neglected that. Only in autumn 1948, during one of my visits to a factory, where I met workers, did I feel the urge to write a cantata about Gottwald. This was a direct result of my meeting the workers.'*<sup>14</sup>

However, the same composer soon went his own way. And he became more and more often a target of criticism, which came to a head with his *Vocal Symphony*, written between 1957 and 1959. Several members of the Union of Composers had to intervene, in order to get the excellent *Vocal Symphony* premiered at last in 1963. And the reason for the ban? Pessimistic lyrics. (Franz Kafka, F.M.Dostojevsky, Cesare Pavese — who committed suicide and whose text 'Death will arrive and will have your eyes' closed the Symphony.)

There were, nevertheless, strong individuals among the older as well as the younger generation of composers whose artistic qualities extended, or started to extend, beyond uninteresting mediocrity. Although they were targets for those 'veterans of ideological struggle' and denied sufficient space for development, within the Composers' Union it was still rather difficult to establish fully a dictatorship of mediocrity. During the 1960s in the Composers' Union the initiative was often taken to a certain degree by composers and performing artists who were not members of the Communist Party.

## VI

It seems now worthwhile to take a closer look at cultural and musical life in Czechoslovakia during the past forty years. Although the political and cultural atmosphere of each decade, affecting directly the life and creativity of artists, was transformed and quite distinct, the whole period appears unified and holistic in many aspects.

Most importantly, it was not possible to act as an entrepreneur either privately or as a group. Everything became officially subjected to institutions created for the purpose, such as the Pragokonzert in Prague. This did not mean, however, that in the culture all commerce was completely stifled. The State-run theatres, concert agencies, publishing houses, record companies and similar organizations did strive to make a profit although they were not able to dispose of their profits freely. Then again, they could apply for subsidies, but artists' fees were, however, retained. Still, the main pressure exerted was not commercial but ideological. Many accepted this, either because of their political convictions or for materialistic reasons. The artistic results were, in general, rather modest. It would be worthwhile

<sup>14</sup> *Hudební rozhledy II*, 1950, Vol. 8-9, p. 223.



to find out in detail what books were given preference, what directions the new theatrical or musical companies were forced to accept, what pictures were exhibited and bought by the galleries, what movies were allowed to be made or what compositions recorded and broadcast by the State Radio. In spite of all this, some outstanding works did appear. Much depended also on the common sense and courage of the members of the 'approval' committees as well as on the courage of artists themselves. The latter, however, were asking themselves the question of what, in the given situation, it still was or was not possible to express in artistic terms. This sort of 'auto-censorship' was the most bizarre and terrifying consequence of the atmosphere of the times, saving much trouble to the official censorship. Many artists often set themselves lower standards than necessary which, in turn, badly affected the artistic works. Music also yielded to such pressures, although in ways that differed from those of prose, poetry or drama. Music boundaries were, for quite a time, set by Zhdanov's normative demands. This is why in the early 1950s the quarter-tone music classes of Prof. Alois Hába in the Academy of Music Arts<sup>15</sup> were abolished. Religious, atonal or non-thematic music was officially rejected until the 1960s.

Every so often the introductory speeches at the annual meetings of the Union of the Czechoslovak Composers might contain critical objections against particular composers, music historians or musicologists who would then experience many difficulties. These reports were then consulted with the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, and this also applied to all the other artists' unions. Communist union officials were then required 'to rectify the deficiencies that were found'; so it was left to the moral and professional qualities of union officials how strongly these directives would be applied within a particular union.

From all this it becomes sufficiently clear that under such circumstances some union officials, sometimes Party members but sometimes not, would take advantage of their positions (usually with mutual support) to further their own careers and to push their own policies. This would bring them many benefits and allow them to remove or suppress their adversaries or, for that matter, artists, music theoreticians, historians or critics of more ability. In this way they gained themselves access to radio, television, the recording industry, editorial committees, publishing houses, etc. A particularly important position was membership of the board or committees of the Czech Music Foundation or the Authors' Rights Protection Union. This is where it was possible to influence decisions as to who would be awarded a union grant or receive a financial contribution or, more specifically, whose composition would receive a higher financial rating from the Authors' Rights Protection Union for being 'politically involved'.

In so far as there were also honest people on the committees they attempted to intervene in a given circumstance but their votes carried weight only rarely and

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<sup>15</sup>'Music Arts' in the Academy's title refers to the arts in general, including music, as inspired by any of the nine muses (goddesses) in the Greek and Roman mythology. The best translation of this institution seems to be 'University of Performing Arts'.

with great difficulties. Within the Authors' Rights Protection Union this practice of financially over-rating 'politically involved' compositions reached proportions that were nothing short of corruption, especially during the 1970s and 1980s.

Starting in 1957, each year the Union of the Czechoslovak Composers organized a festival called 'The Week of New Music'. During the reform period in 1960s this festival introduced many excellent new compositions. Within days of the festival, with a subsidy from the Czech Music Foundation, the compositions were issued on records and put on sale. This practice continued in the 1970s and 1980s but, due to renewed political pressure, the quality of music dropped again. Such were the bitter fruits of the forced disruption of the Prague Spring of 1968 by the Soviet armies and especially when Gustav Husák, on becoming the General Secretary of the Communist Party, introduced the period of *normalization* of society. Anyone who disagreed with the entry of the fraternal Soviet armies was persecuted, forced to accept menial jobs, forbidden to publish or otherwise victimized. This is, for example, what befell the winner of the Stalin Prize, composer Jan Kapr, after he returned this prize to the Soviet Embassy and left the Communist Party.

In the early days of the purged Composers' Union many of our best composers were not admitted on the grounds of politically and ideologically motivated criteria (composers like Miroslav Kabeláč, Klement Slavický, Vladimír Sommer, Svatopluk Havelka, Jan Klusák and others) while the Union became overridden by the mediocre and downright inept composers. In truth it should, however, be added that there were exceptions even among the composers that were acceptable to the new communist leadership; one in particular was Václav Kučera, himself an excellent composer, whose efforts on the organizational level maintained continuity with the music developments throughout the world and continued to enlarge the Composers' and Concert Artists' Union membership.

In Slovakia the situation was somewhat less difficult, at least in the respect that the bans on public appearances of artists, unless they continued to rebel openly, were not of such duration as in the Czech lands.

In general, however, this 'struggle against counter-revolution' resulted in harsh sanctions. For example, the musicologist Ivan Vojtěch had to leave the Charles University's Faculty of Philosophy and, later on it was Tomislav Volek who had to leave the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences. The composer Marek Kopelent was forced to leave Supraphon, the recording company, as were the others in this company who refused to denounce the Charter of 1977 in which Václav Havel, Jan Patočka and others called upon the Communist Party to respect human rights. Anyone who signed or publicly approved of this Charter was declared an enemy of the people and dealt with accordingly. Under great pressure, almost all musicians and music theoreticians signed the so-called Anti-Charter.<sup>16</sup>

In the stuffy political atmosphere after 1968 the non-conformist among the composers searched for alternative forms of self-expression. Initial research into

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<sup>16</sup> I do not wish to conceal that I, too, signed this Anti-Charter. In my position at the Philosophical Faculty I resisted heavy pressure until, feeling isolated, I decided to sign, not wanting to give up the chance of still being able to influence my students. Personally I felt terrible.

these aspects was published in 1991 by Jaroslav Smolka.<sup>17</sup> He does also talk about the situation before 1968. During the 1950s, under the pressure of Zhdanov's ideological controls the response of composers was to take a refuge in a return to the folk music (as, for example, Klement Slavický or Jan Hanuš did). When in 1958 the Soviet political leadership reviewed its 1948 decision concerning music, there was a certain relaxation of attitudes towards music in Czechoslovakia too. This was reflected by the performances of religious music by composers like Jan Hanuš or Petr Eben or the 1957 composition *Mystery of Time* by Miroslav Kabeláč who also later, in 1967–68, wrote his outstanding *Symphony No. 7* using texts from the New Testament, especially from the Revelation of St. John. The earlier mentioned *Vocal Symphony* of Vladimír Sommer was also given its first performance, as were many other compositions: for example, *Foams* (1965) by Svatopluk Havelka, setting to music the poems of H.M. Enzensberger. The works of the protagonists of the new Czech and Slovak music were also finally recognized (including composers like Jan Klusák, Zbyněk Vostrák, Luboš Fišer, Jan Novák, Peter Kolman, Ivan Parík, Ilja Zelenka, etc.), while a number of Czechoslovak sound studios started to experiment with *musique concrète* and electronic music.

The shock caused by the Soviet occupation in 1968, and by the self-immolation of the student Jan Palach in January 1969 in protest to it, became a stimulus for many other compositions. In the following years of normalization nonconformist composers tried to circumvent the tighter censorship by giving enigmatic or ambiguous titles to their works: e.g. *Inclined Plane* (1979) by Ivan Kurz, *Peace With Snakes* (1977) by Karel Odstrčil, *Socratic Meditations* (1982) by Zdeněk Šesták, *The Darkened Land* (1975), a string quartet by Miloslav Ištvan, and so on. Works by forbidden poets (like those of the excellent Brno poet Jan Skácel) continued to be used, as were historical, moral or biblical themes; in particular Miroslav Kabeláč in his *Symphony No. 8* for Solo Soprano, Mixed Choir, Organ and Percussions (1970) made most expressive and prominent use of the biblical quotation 'mene, mene tekel, ufarsin'. Many other such compositions then proliferated. At no place or time have the watchdogs of ideology had a chance of succeeding in silencing the critical consciousness of a nation or its culture and art.

The need for a critical historical analysis of the musical life in Czechoslovakia during the years 1948–1989 nevertheless remains a painful, yet also pleasurable task of Czech musicology. This task will now also be compounded by the need to evaluate the situation during the post-1989 period in which not all developments may be only positive. Even in a free society, art has to find a space for creating spiritual values so as to uphold humanist ideals in the face of utilitarian consumerist society.

In comparing the periods of 1948–1968 and 1968–1989 it may be found that there are remarkable differences between the two stages of the communist regime. While the first stage is a period of confrontation of ideas and of changes, not just within the Communist Party itself, it is also a period of a relatively specific inter-

<sup>17</sup>Jaroslav SMOLKA, *Stínová česká hudba 1968–1989* (Ghost-Written Czech Music in 1968–1989), *Hudební věda* XXVIII, 1991, Vol. 2, pp. 153–185.

vention by a wider professional section of society in the cultural spheres. Towards its end, in 1968, this period became a time of searching for democratic alternatives within the socialist regime. In the second stage all political as well as cultural life became paralysed. After Gustav Husák's appointment in 1970 as General Secretary there was a great purge within the Communist Party, with about one-third of the Party membership, i.e. over 430 000 members, either expelled or having their membership terminated. After that, as far as I am aware, there were no other purges or expulsions. With Party organizations completely adjusting themselves to become merely tools for carrying out the directives of the Party's top executive leadership, there was no need to purge such a well-adjusted membership. This, however, meant that any hope of the reform of socialism was gone, being replaced by the hope of destroying this lifeless system.

## VII

In 1968 a Rehabilitation Committee was set up within the Union of Czechoslovak Composers, whose task was to reveal the injustice done in the past and to rectify it. The Czech committee just managed to make public its finding in 1969. The committee analysed the situation in the musical life from 1948, it assessed the role and responsibility of individual actors and named those who had been wronged. But only twelve people were mentioned specifically; however, the fate of some was drastic, especially that of the University Professor Josef Hutter, who was imprisoned by both Fascists and Communists. Some of those who should have applied for rehabilitation never came forward, and the overall number of people affected indirectly should have been much higher.<sup>18</sup>

The events of 1989 were like an avalanche, which opened up a way to normal life. Yet it is not possible to put everything right, as would be desirable. Political rehabilitations are proving to be a painful exercise. At the beginning of 1990 the musicians set up a Purging and Rehabilitation Committee. Its task was primarily to examine the second period of communist power, i.e. 1968-1989, and to help rectify the wrong doings of the past. It took three years to announce publicly the outcome of the committee findings, the main problem being that the committee had no executive powers and the Ministry of Culture was not very helpful. All the committee findings and proposals were left 'hanging in the air'. The report reads: *'The results of our work look modest, very modest. They include: the moral satisfaction of rightful claimants to rehabilitation and the forwarding of their processed claims together with some proposals to the Ministry of Culture; several individual initiatives (such as awards and jobs); four cases of increased pensions for*

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<sup>18</sup> Zpráva o činnosti rehabilitační a rekapitulační komise sekce hudebních vědců skladatelů Svazu čs. skladatelů (Report of the Rehabilitation and Recapitulation Committee of the Musicologists and Critics Section of the Czechoslovak Composers' Union), *Hudební věda VI*, 1969, Vol. 3, pp. 326-339.

*composers and three for composer's widows. Well, we have to admit that one executive officer would have done the job more quickly, easily and efficiently. We worked without power, and in such a way, that we have nothing of which to be ashamed nor proud.*<sup>19</sup>

## VIII

Let me add a few remarks on the actual communist concept of culture, including music.

Every communist politician wants to be in control of things, including arts and music. But how do you control something that requires special training if you do not have it? In other forms of art the situation seemed easier for the communist politicians, as they felt that they had no problems understanding the subjects and images. This was also the reason behind their insisting on social realism, which had to be intelligible and instructive. However, there are - with exceptions - no subject matters in music, it is not a descriptive form of art. As a layman, the politician who wanted to control music had two possibilities: Firstly, where comprehensibility is considered, to rely on his taste, i.e. what he liked; and secondly, where didactic qualities are sought, to choose a kind of music, where he could follow 'the subject-matter', i.e. the programme music. As far as the taste is concerned, this *men of people* usually preferred popular songs of the cheapest kind, in other words trash. For them, this was the real 'people's music'.

And what about music like jazz? At the beginning, the communists resisted: as music from the West, it was decadent, as everything from there. But they could not wipe it out altogether. In the end they found an ideological detour: jazz is music of oppressed black people and therefore acceptable in our country.

To follow these ideological manoeuvres in relation to non-realistic art, to various art trends and modern art in general would be perhaps amusing, but I fear rather tiring as well.

## IX

*Everything shall be forgotten and nothing shall be undone.* (Milan Kundera)

<sup>19</sup> Jan ŠMOLÍK, *Zpráva o rehabilitační komisi* (Report on the Rehabilitation Committee), *Hudební rozhledy XLVI*, 1993, Vol. 1, p. 48.

*Sažetak*

## GLAZBA I TOTALITARNI REŽIM U ČEHOSLOVAČKOJ

Mnoge studije kojima su tema komunistički totalitarni režimi i diktature bave se uglavnom standardnim sovjetskim modelom, a malo pozornosti obraćaju na specifične i ponešto drukčije situacije u zemljama bivšeg »sovjetskog bloka«. U ovom se radu raspravlja o situaciji i događajima u svijetu kulture i glazbe u bivšoj Čehoslovačkoj (s naglaskom na stanje u Češkoj Republici). Analizira se niz povijesnih dokumenata poput *Svibanjske deklaracije predstavnika kulture češkoga naroda iz 1946.*, tzv. *Praškog manifesta iz 1948.*, i drugih, te ideje, umjetničke i osobne sudbine brojnih istaknutih umjetnika i glazbenika.

Potreba za kritičkom povijesnom analizom glazbenog života u Čehoslovačkoj za vrijeme razdoblja od 1948. do 1989. ostaje i dalje mukotrpnim zadatkom češke muzikologije. Međutim, već se sada može ustvrditi da je prvi dio tog razdoblja (1948.—1968.) bilo doba protustavljanja ideja i promjena i u Komunističkoj partiji i izvan nje. Na kraju se to razdoblje pretvorilo u doba traženja demokratskih alternativa unutar socijalističkog režima. U drugoj fazi (1968.—1989.) došlo je do paralize cijelog kulturnog života. Nestala je svaka nada u reformu socijalizma, a zamijenila ju je nada u uništenje tog beživotnog sustava. Događaji iz 1989. otvorili su put u normalan život, ali rehabilitacije onih koji su stradali još se pokazuju kao bolni procesi.