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**THE HEGELIAN END OF HISTORY - THE BREAKUP OF
CZECHOSLOVAKIA**

by

VLADIMIR SUCHAN

A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of
the requirements of a degree of
Master of Arts

Department of Political Science

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Ottawa, Ontario
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**TWO WAYS: NIHILISM AND THE ART OF PIETY AND BEING
(THE MAKING OF THE UNIVERSAL AND HOMOGENEOUS STATE AND
DEMISE OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA)**

submitted by

Vladimir Suchan, Dipl., Judr.

in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the degree of Master of Arts

Chair, Department of Political Science

Thesis Supervisor

Carleton University
September 20, 1996

ABSTRACT

This thesis originally aimed at establishing a meaning of the "paradoxical" disintegration of Czechoslovakia by its own political representation in 1992. Its author, however, realized that this presupposes a search for a broader context wherein the meaning of the systematically "faulty" behaviour of the local political elite can be incorporated and better understood. This meaningful context was identified with nihilism in general and with the making of the Universal and Homogeneous State as an embodiment of the end of history in particular. Consequently, the inquiry set itself a goal to analyze and unveil the negative continuity and essence of such nihilism as defined by and manifested in this concrete case. Obtained evidence and findings, in turn, allowed to illuminate and critically examine the theoretical, spiritual and structural essence of nihilism as such, especially Hegel's "sorcery" and its Marxist operationalization. Finally, the author presented and outlined a phenomenology of humanness as it has disclosed itself through the Bohemian ethos as an affirmative way of being and art of piety.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work is grounded in and owes its existence first and foremost to characters of concrete persons whom I had honour to meet, and who spiritually effected and enriched me in different stages of my development. In the first place, I would like to express here my gratitude to my wife Simona for her firm support, trust and endurance whose importance cannot be overstated.

I also sincerely appreciate all the assistance, support and advice that I have received from my advisor Dr. Piotr Dutkiewicz and Dr. Tom Darby from whom I was taking courses in political thought.

My acknowledgement goes to Danko and Violeta Jovanovic for their generous assistance, understanding and precious advice that greatly helped me throughout my work.

I am also very grateful to Mrs. Jana Fialova, my mother-in-law, as well as to Dr. Marie Neudorfova, Masaryk's Institute in Toronto (Mrs. Novotna), the forthcoming staff at the department of interlibrary loans of Carleton University, and my parents who all helped me to obtain necessary materials and literature. Without this assistance, it would be impossible to face such a challenging and complicated task.

My own position towards the problems dealt with in this work was also influenced to a great extent by my experience from the war-torn former Yugoslavia where I worked for UNHCR. In Montenegro and Eastern Bosnia and Hercegovina, I met with people for whom heroism and integrity was an everyday imperative and elementary condition of being and survival. Against all the impossible odds, they were still preserving a fundamental trust in the affirmative strength of human character. Such experience is probably hardly transmittable to those who feed themselves predominantly on news and their stereotypes. People there showed me a great deal of way towards the recollection of a meaning in life.

One particular moment may be noted in this regard. One day in June 1993, after I had delivered upon the immediate approval of the Serb command a Muslim soldier with an inflamed appendix to Sarajevo from the enclave of Zepa, I was held on my way back to the enclave together with accompanying UN military observers for about twelve hours at a Serb check point at a crossroad near Sarajevo as public evidence of foreign double treatment or hypocrisy (shortly before UNPROFOR refused a medical evacuation of a wounded Serb soldier who then died). There I happened to be confronted by a Serb who also asked me about my religion; thereby, he actually put me under somewhat uneasy circumstances in front of a challenging question 'who was I.' At that time, I answered that I was an atheist. His reaction was that of contempt, to say the least. A local Serb soldier later told me that the brother of that man had been killed in Zepa where I was then deployed as a humanitarian worker.

In hindsight, I think that the curse of the unknown Serb was one the final steps in my own self-awareness. It helped me to return to my self, my own stance, that is, to piety. Personally, I am indebted to that unknown man from a war crossroad as well.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
INTRODUCTION	1
A) Systematic "Failures" of the Elites and the State	1
B) Enframing the Problem of the Czech State and Nation	2
C) Czech (Böhmisch) Experience of Nihilism: Weakness and Death	6
D) Facing Kafka's Böhmisch Castle-Temple of Nihilism	10
E) Does Other Possibility Exist?	18
F) Building the Inquiry as a Quest	19
CHAPTER 1	21
BÖHMISCH NIHILISM SERVING HEGELIAN GODS	21
1.1. Marx's and Engels's Formulation of Böhmisch Nihilism and Recurrences of the Same	21
1.2. Birth of Contemporary Böhmisch Nihilism and Its Continuous Negative Progression (1918-1989)	30
CHAPTER 2	51
BÖHMISCH NIHILISM PREPARING (FOR) THE ARRIVAL OF A NEW HEGELIAN IDOLATRY (The Böhmisch Birth of Nietzschean Farce)	51
2.1. The New Shift of the Czech Elite and Czech Nationhood	51
2.2. Havel's Projection of the Future and Its Confirmation: Author and Actor	67
CHAPTER 3	82
THEATRE AS POLITICS OF BÖHMISCH NIHILISM (BARTERING THE STATE AND NATION)	82
3.1. Velvet Revolution or Veiled Refoolation? (Actors qua Politicians and Politicians qua actors)	82
3.2. The Split of Czechoslovakia and Its Context (Final Destination or Transit?96	119
3.3. The New "Ideal Association"	123
3.4. Böhmisch as an Extension of Germanic Being	123

CHAPTER 4	134
THE WILL-POWER QUA BETRAYAL-POWER OF SKVORECKY'S COWARDS (HEGELIAN SLAVES): DEAD FORM WITHOUT CONTENT	134
4.1. Skvorecky's Cowards in Power as Apology for Being and Falsity (Installing and Extolling the Regime of Betrayal)	134
4.2. Böhmisch Nihilism: the Politics of the Squealer-Coward as War	138
4.3. Böhmish Nihilism as Concretized Hatred and Death	143
4.4. Schism between the Being (Bohemian Ethos) and Böhmisch Nihilism of Death	147
CHAPTER 5	163
MARXISM: GENEALOGICAL UNDERGROUND OF BÖHMISCH NIHILISM AND DEATH	153
5.1. Marxism: Böhmisch Nihilism Going Under	163
5.2. Hegelian Mobilization of Falsity: Absolute Power?	164
5.3. Marx's Operationalization of Hegel's Spirit and Falsity	177
CHAPTER 6	200
THE SPIRIT AND BEING OF NIHILISM	200
6.1. The Nihilist: Slave of Death	200
6.2. Nihilism: The Murder of God	205
6.3. Tyrannical Father, Internal Slave, Nihilistic God	219
6.4. The Technology of Nihilism as Screening off Being and a Screen-Picture	227
6.5. The Structure of Nihilism and the Universal and Homogeneous State	240
6.6. Nihilistic Hatred: Departure from Being	265
CHAPTER 7	274
THE ARCHIMEDEAN POINT AND EXTERNALITY OF BÖHMISCH NIHILISM	274
CHAPTER 8	290
CZECH CHARACTER: CULTIVATING PIETY OF BEING	290
8.1. Sources of Being and Character	290
8.2. Hold of Being as Art of Piety	295
8.3. Czech Bohème: In the Beginning Was the Word	298

8.4. Man's Essence: Freedom to Know Good and Evil and Love Good	300
8.5. The Word: The Art of Conscience, the Art of 'We'	303
8.6. Bohemian Emergence, Merging, and Symmetry of Being, Action, and Appearance	309
8.7. TYMYJA: Thyme (<i>Materidouska</i>) of Being	320
8.8. Abiding in the Harmony of the Diverse (<i>Malebná velebnost</i>)	334
8.9. The divine principle and I (<i>Reka and Jez</i>)	336
8.10. The Way of Human Personality: <i>Quaternito</i> of Cross	340
8.11. Bohemia and the Castle of Death	344
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY	355

La Bohème

Heaven has moved
 above the Czech lands

At an old switch
 a workman shifted in his teeth a match
and listened to the whistle of doomed trains
 for nobody nor angel
can stir that lumber
 guaranteed

So with a sigh
which might also have been
 very rude
he bowed to his bag
 with screws and wrenches
and at the bottom there
 in a wisp of rancidly oiled
 yesterday's newspapers
were unused
 old amortized
wings

La Bohème

Nebe přestehovali
nad českou zem
U staré výhybky
delník prehazoval sirku mezi zuby
a naslouchal hvízdáním odsouzených vlaků
protože s tímhle krámem
by zaručene nedokázal pohnout ani anděl
A tak se s povzdechem
jenž dobře mohl být
i velmi sprostý
shýb pro brašnu
se šrouby a klíči
a úplně vespod
v olejove prozluklém chumlanci
z vcerejších novin
lezela zřidkakdy použitá
stará amortizovaná
křídla

Pragut. 1985

INTRODUCTION

A) Systematic "Failures" of the Elite and the State

In November 1989, the Communist regime in Czechoslovakia crumbled down relatively easily and in a remarkable synchronism with other Eastern European countries, members of the Soviet bloc. Three years later, Czechoslovakia born in 1918 out of the ashes of World War I was separated into the Czech and Slovak Republics. This division into two separate republics was done in principle unconstitutionally.¹ If the breakup of Czechoslovakia was evaluated by one of its prominent actors (Petr Pithart) as the "bankruptcy of the post-totalitarian elites in Czechoslovakia,"² then the performance of the previous Communist elite had been even more clearly another kind of disastrous failure. In this light, the nature of those systemic failures on the part of the political elite(s) and their interrelations arises as a fundamental political question. In other words - it is a prime question of our time - what or who is served by the elite of a national state. In a broader sense, it is also the question of the elite's identity-identification. In this regard, it may seem since 1945 the Czechoslovak elites have been treating their state and nation, to use Hegelian terminology, as the alienated object and themselves as its alienating and alienated medium.

We can assume that the nature of that phenomenon could be revealed

¹ See Rudiger Kipke and Karel Vodicka, eds., *Rozloučení s Československem: příčiny a důsledky česko-slovenského rozchodu*, (Praha: Český spisovatel, 1993), pp. 55, 81, 107-110, 115, 162. Petr Pithart, a former Czech Prime Minister, who participated in most negotiations that led to the demise of Czechoslovakia, stated that the unconstitutional character of the breakup "could not be said unambiguously," nevertheless, he was willing to confirm that it was not done democratically. At the same time, for Pithart, establishing responsibility for the undemocratic breakup would allegedly "endanger the democratic future of the new states." [Ibid., p. 225]

² Ibid., p. 230.

under a condition that we can determine its *underlying or overarching context*.³ It is also notable that, commenting on the paradoxical search after "the culprits of the victorious takeover" in 1989, Alojz Lorenc, the last chief of the Communist political police, also underscored the decisive character of such a broader context: "The search for the background has its background . . . [it is because] the future is at stake."⁴ Consequently, the meaning of the particular (the demise of Czechoslovakia and behaviour of the local elite) is dependent on establishing its place within a certain political, as well as philosophical frame or system of meanings.

B) Enframing the Problem of the Czech State and Nation

In 1982, Professor Tom Darby published a study on politics and time under the eucharistic title *The Feast*, reinstating Alexandre Kojève's revelation of the end of history and the making of an Hegelian New World in the form of Universal and Homogenous State.⁵ Amid fragmentary political theories, paradigms and concepts, Hegel's philosophy, phenomenology and logic have reemerged claiming its truths not only to be universal, but Absolute. Absolute hereby means not only a supreme, ultimate truth, but also final, entailing *death* of spirit, history, politics, God and man - as we have known them.⁶ Since 1989, with the proclamation of a New

³ The state is here understood not only in an institutional, structural or purely functional sense, but especially as a political organization that grounds and affirms man as a *political being*, where man's essential political quality is conditioned by a common political togetherness (in a sense of *polity*) and its public openness that provide a space for political action and justice.

⁴ Alojz Lorenc, *Ministerstvo strachu: Neskartované vzpomínky generála Lorence*, (Bratislava: Tatrapress, 1992), p. 175.

⁵ Tom Darby, *The Feast*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), op. cit.

⁶ On death see *ibid.*, pp. 93, 107, 164, 203-204, 207, 209, 211, 215, 221, 223, on the notion of the Absolute, see, for example, *ibid.*, pp. 95-96, 107, 149, 153-154, 159-160, 164, 205-206.

World Order by the only remaining superpower: the idea of the Universal and Homogenous State⁷ has gained a remarkably strong momentum and has emerged more clearly into the light of day.

In this contemporary Hegelian world of ours, every transcendence is "checked within the confine of the subject"⁸ the truth is, therefore, to be grounded in the subject's nothingness.⁹ It is an extreme form of "Zerrissenheit" — a time of *death*, where I — ⁹ that is the ego closes on evrything, it sees oneself as everything — meets only oneself.¹⁰ A man living in such a New World is by definition an Hegelian belonging to one and the same self-consciousness¹¹ whose advent is accompanied by propaganda and violence.¹² Essentially, this a world regime under sway of nihilism where "God is dead" (in fact, murdered), and so is man.¹³ As Darby put it, "today if a person is not a nihilist he can be one of only three things: naive, foolish, or cowardly."¹⁴

In this regard, we also witness a growing tendency to replace or at least dilute the nation-bound identities with global cosmopolitanism or tribalism — both tendencies complement each other in a sense that each of them is negating, depoliticizing and destroying the hitherto existent institutions, especially the nation-

⁷ On the concept of the "Hegelian community of believers," see, Tom Darby, *The Feast*, op. cit., pp. 204, 208-209, 225.

⁸ Ibid., p. 149.

⁹ Ibid., p. 150.

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 209, 211.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 216.

¹² See, *ibid.* p. 226.

¹³ See, for example, Nietzsche's attempt to bring the news of God's death to people and exalt it as a new beginning in F. Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. [F. Nietzsche, *The Portable Nietzsche*, (New York, Viking Press, 1976), pp. 103-439]

¹⁴ Tom Darby, "Reflection on Technology: An Excursus as Introduction," in Tom Darby, ed., *Sojourns in the New World: Reflections on Technology*, (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1986), p. 4.

state: the former as if 'from above,' while the latter 'from below.'¹⁵ As Jacobson stated, "the New World Order must also transcend the traditional bounds and prerogatives of the nation states," shattering existing ethno-centric histories of nations and, in the last instance, overcoming nations as such.¹⁶ Consequently, it seems very plausible that there should be an inherent connection between the process of that globalization ruled by the Hegelian spirit and the dismantling of 'moribund' nation-states such as Czechoslovakia.

The advent of a Czechoslovak state was accounted for by her founder Thomas G. Masaryk in his work *The Making of a State: Memories and Observations, 1914-1918*.¹⁷ The making of a Universal Homogenous State, elaborated on by Kojève, Darby, Fukuyama and others, coincided with the "unmaking" of Czechoslovakia as a state. However, if our "non-time" is, as Tom Darby put it, the relatively short period between the Friday's crucifixion of Hegel-man and his Sunday's resurrection as God,¹⁸ the *via dolorosa* of Bohemia is probably yet not at its end. The explication of evident congruity between the global and local is the supreme challenge of this work.

As Heidegger put it, the phenomenon *begins to be what it will be* from its bounds or frontiers.¹⁹ Defining means establishing frontiers-limits from which the

¹⁵ Recently, tribalism has been revitalized as a political concept. In principle, it connotes what used to be nation that, in the conditions of the demise of the nation-state, "progresses" back to the stage of mere ethnicity or tribal identity. In other words, a nation without the state = postmodern tribalism.

¹⁶ Carl G. Jacobson, Morris Miller, Metta Spencer and Eric L. Tollefson, eds., *World Security: The New Challenge*, Canadian Pugwash Group, (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1994), pp. 40-41.

¹⁷ An English translation of the work by Henry Wickham Steed was published under the said title in London, Macmillan, 1927.

¹⁸ Tom Darby, *The Feast*, op. cit., p. 209.

¹⁹ Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1977), p. 8.

phenomenon can often be seen more clearly than from its centre. As Havel affirmed, "here, in the very neuralgic knot of our continent . . . a new vision of Europe is being tested."²⁰ Examining the "frontier" case of Bohemia should, therefore, offer a unique opportunity of gaining a meaningful insight not only into Bohemian destiny, but also into that of the essence of nihilism. To this effect, it would be necessary to combine and synthesize the general (philosophical and more global) approach with the particular, that is, concrete historical, political and other evidence, as well as a particular Czech perspective on nihilism that, seen from this side, tends to coincide with the Germanic ethos or/and a domestic (hence "Böhmisch") genus of self-negation. "Böhmisch nihilism" as a chief subject of the present research is to be understood as a concrete and specific phenomenon of the end of history and making of the Universal and Homogeneous State *as manifested, experienced and realized in the Czech case*. Hereby I also tried to give an account of my own previous professional (seven years of work at the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs, mostly dealing with Eastern European affairs) and personal experience with the post-historical "negativity." To a certain extent coincidentally, I quit my diplomatic job in a moment of the split of my country. In this regard, my own perspective and experience have admittedly provided a concrete ground for particular insights and understanding, that would be otherwise inaccessible. At the same time, it has also influenced the character and perspective of this work: starting from a distinct character of experience, this work is also a "contemplation" about the meaningfulness and possibility of a character at

²⁰ This quotation from Havel's speech delivered in June 1992 on the eve of Czechoslovak parliamentary elections is given in Rudiger Kipke and Karel Vodicka, eds., *Rozloučení s Československem: Příčiny a důsledky česko-slovenského rozchodu*, op. cit., p. 119.

the end of history. Therefore, I do not pretend to provide (or be able to provide) a *total* view of the Hegelian world, Hegel's science, nihilism or Marxism, but still hopefully a valuable, although specific view that may reveal some essential elements in the "picture." Having myself a "multi-cultural" background, I consciously opted in favour of a Bohemian (Czech) ethos of humanness. In this regard, I think that it is necessary to draw a line and realize an essential difference between "perspective" (viewing = being) and "character" (= being = thinking + acting). The former belongs to postmodern subjectivism-egotism, the latter to the affirmativeness of one's bondedness (boundedness) by *interhuman* relatedness through time and *care* for being. Admittedly, the difference between a mere "perspective" and "character" is a matter of life (being), not a topic to be settled once and for ever in a book.

C) Czech (Böhmisch) Experience of Nihilism: Weakness and Death

Interestingly enough, in Canetti's *Crowds and Power*, one may find a following account of an "old Wendish [Western-Slav] legend" that illuminates the nature of the danger represented by nihilism as grasped by the Slavic mind:

Once upon a time, there was a peasant girl of Dehsa, who lay down on the grass at midday and slept. Her betrothed sat by her. He was thinking how he could get rid of his bride. Then the noon-woman [*polednice* in Czech, my comment] came and questioned him. Each time he answered her she put fresh questions to him. As the clock struck one his heart stopped beating. The noon-woman had questioned him to death.²¹

²¹ Elias Canetti, *Crowds and Power*, (New York: The Noonday Press, 1993), pp. 289-290. An excellent image of *polednice* and its tragic connotations are presented in J.E. Erben's poem *Polednice* written on the basis of a Czech legend and included in his collection *Kyřice*. The legend also foreshadows a probable outcome of the Böhmisch nihilism, the will to death.

In a peculiar way, moments of this legend about an egoistic will to death reappear as signs of contemporary self-identifications. Josef Skvorecky, a Czech writer, wrote, in the aftermath of the World War II, his first novel *Cowards*, which had very strong autobiographic features and described a strikingly similar phenomenon.²² The main hero Danny (a literal counterpart of the author) dreams there about plotting the death of his friend. He is a self-conscious coward. This realization, however, only reinforces his cynicism (nihilism) and inner hatred:

Yes, I realized, he could get killed ... this way, I could get rid of Zdenek very *effectively* [my italics]. If he was killed, I'd be glad to go to visit his grave with Irena. Irena would feel that was very noble of me and I'd be very gentle ... With Zdenek out of the picture, I'd be extremely unselfish.²³

This death wish diverted towards others stems from a possessive, self-expanding urge of the ego. Death, being a goal, also becomes a means. As Danny is ready to admit, in a case of the death of the other, "I'd have sweet Irena all to myself."²⁴ At the same, the emptiness of his "love" is freely acknowledged:

I knew she was dumb but I needed her and her silly chatter. Right now I needed her somehow. It was as if something was wrong with me ... I needed Irena so I could think about her and wouldn't have to think about those other things ...²⁵

Danny also confesses that making somebody unfaithful, that is, to re-make

²² It is worth noting that Vaclav Klaus, the Czech Primer Minster (from 1991 on) identified Skvorecky's *Cowards* as "indisputably" the top novel of his choice in the contemporary Czech literature. See Karel Hvizdala, *První zpráva (Rozhovor s Vaclavem Klausem)*, (Praha: Cartoona, 1992), p. 12. Josef Skvorecky is a Czech well-known writer, a former dissident well rooted in the tradition of Böhmisch nihilism. He emigrated to Canada.

²³ Josef Skvorecky, *Cowards*, (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1970), pp. 26-27.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 381.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 401.

somebody in his own image, "makes him love even more" such a person.²⁶ Love is here synonymous with hatred.²⁷ Finally, Danny, Skvorecky's little hero, is self-defined as a dead man, or as "living dead," that is, in a sense of spiritual humanness:

I was nothing but a living corpse ... They'd made a living corpse out of me and I didn't know for the life of me whether there was some magic potion that would bring me back to life.²⁸

In his study *Zahradni slavnost pro 15 milionu* (*The Garden Party for 15 million* - an allusion to Havel's play *The Garden Party*), Slavomir Ravik, a Czech

²⁶ Josef Skvorecky, *Cowards*, p. 380.

²⁷ This hatred is self-perpetuating and self-annihilating. As F. Dostoyevsky put it, a nihilist dreams of "making [the rest] like him," and when the others seem to become like him he cannot but hate them even more, because they begin to share with him his own ego. Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *Notes from Underground & The Grand Inquisitor*, (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1960), pp. 60-61. The futile circularity of the nihilistic love-hatred complex is also well expressed in another place of Dostoyevsky's report "from underground": "I had never in my life ever been able to imagine any other sort of love ... [than] he by tyrannized over. ... I always began it with hatred and ended it with moral subjugation, and afterward I could never imagine what to do with the subjugated object." [Ibid., p. 111, cf. also pp. 80-94 and 107-108] In Dostoyevsky's *Possessed*, a self-conscious nihilist admits: "I hated it as I did everything else that was part of me." [Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Possessed*, (New York: The Modern Library, 1963), p. 714] Or as Kafka explained it, "anyone who loves the world must hate all men, for he embraces [takes] their world too." [Franz Kafka, *Dearest Father: stories and other writings*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1954), p. 40; see also Sigmund Freud, *Civilisation, War and Death*, ed. by John Rickman, (London: the Hogarth Press, 1953), pp. 20, 43]

²⁸ Josef Skvorecky, *Cowards*, op. cit., p. 401. Note also a clear projection of his own failure into "them" that stands in this context for his friends, co-citizens, nation. Skvorecky later confessed what is evident: that the novel was a statement about himself. [See Antonin J. Liehm, eds., *The Politics of Culture*, (New York: Grove Press, 1968), p. 159] In this connection, Skvorecky also identified himself with Faulkner's statement "Those who can, do - those who can't, write." [Ibid., p. 159] On the innate relation of an inferiority complex and the phenomenon of Skvorecky's coward see ibid., p. 168. Ferdinand Peroutka, a Czech political analyst and literary critic, while stressing the artistic quality of Skvorecky's novel *The Cowards*, also noted that it is an "egoistic book" that represents "emotionally, as well as rationally the end of the way." As the main hero-coward says, "Everything was for me, except for myself, enormously distant." In this regard, Peroutka concluded: "Skvorecky apparently feels: Anything that is not me is worthy of hatred or boring." According to Peroutka, the novel, therefore, expresses "the spirit of the twentieth century that is blowing across all the countries," and that is "close to cynicism or nihilism." Peroutka thus clearly realized that the book is essentially a manifesto that reflects the problematic of the maturing of a nihilist. [Ferdinand Peroutka, *Budeme pokračovat*, (Toronto: Sixty-Eight Publishers, 1984), pp. 98, 101, 103-104, 106-107]

political scientist, brings to our attention some probably unexpected parallels between Havel's plays, especially *Garden Party* (1963) and *Largo Desolato* (1984), and the recent developments, especially the breakup of the Czechoslovak state.²⁹ Indeed, the declamations of Havel's heroes seem to aptly characterize actors and phenomena of these dramatic events. A leading theme of the modern Czechoslovak politics, as well as Havel's plays can be defined as a problem of identity, (self)alienation, negation and non-being. Hugo, the principal character in *Garden Party*, stresses in a pure Hegelian language:³⁰

Me! You mean who I am? ... In man there's nothing permanent, eternal, absolute; man is a continuous change [ironically] - a change with a proud ring to it, of course! .. we all know very well that A may be often B as well as A; that B may just as well be A; that B may be B, but also A, B, and D; an in certain circumstances even F may become Q, Y, and perhaps also H ... I want to be all the time and that's why *all the time I must a little bit not be* [italics added].³¹

In another of Havel's earlier plays, *Memorandum* (1965), betrayal is presented as the inclusive and last form of death-bound humanity. Gross, the main character of this play, says: "I only keep playing myself, instead of really being myself."³² These words could also denote the metamorphoses of the Czechoslovak or Czech elites during the past fifty years that carried out several overhauls of their roles and identifications (Stalinism, de-Stalinization, a new ideological hardening

²⁹ Slavomir Ravik, *Zahradni slavnost pro 15 milionu*, (Praha: Periskop, 1993).

³⁰ In a sense, the Hegelian existential dialectics can be expressed as not to be = to be. This "identity of identity and non-identity" (or a "meaningful meaningless" or nothingness) is further enforced by the essentially *negating* and *abstracting* working of Hegelian spirit as a universal and homogenizing agent. See Tom Darby, *The Feast*, op. cit., pp. 82, 91-99, 179, 218, 221|

³¹ Václav Havel, *The Garden party and Other Plays*, (New York: Grove Press, 1993), pp. 50-51.

³² See Ravik, *Zahradni slavnost pro 15 milionu*, op. cit., p. 13.

of the line in the 1970s," perestroika of the late 1980s, post-Communist transformation, disengagement from the Czechoslovak state).

D) Facing Kafka's Böhmisches Castle-Temple of Nihilism

"All questioning," as Elias Canetti stated, "is a forcible intrusion."³³ So is to be the present questioning of nihilism, including its manifestation in the case of Bohemia. Questioning is a struggle for boundaries and knowledge (also a boundary). It is a primary condition of human life.³⁴ In order to bring an essence to light, one has to force entrance into it - by letting it be encircled and caught in a serpent's bite of questioning. Questioning, that is, a radical examining in a Socratic sense, is thus a means that could provide a way for cutting through the gordic knot of nihilism in a form of meaningful account *qua* radical openness of our being to a new beginning that would break through political death in the Universal and Homogeneous Nothingness. In this way, questioning can be compared to a bite by a snake. It brings both death and life. Its symbolism is relevant to our nihilistic age.

In Michael Ende's *The Neverending Story*, Sebastian, a modern mythical, "sci-fi" hero fighting nothingness (nihilism), encounters at the end of his journey two snakes of good and evil, each holding the other's tail in their jaws. The snakes hold together and guard the Water of Life: "If they let each other go, the world

³³ Elias Canetti, *Crowds and Power*, op. cit., pp. 284-5.

³⁴ This deliberately points towards Socrates' ethos. In the oldest mythologies, snakes are also guardians of the springs of life, as well as immortality. It also symbolizes resurrection. The serpent (questioning) may also "become the source of the healing of the wound caused by the serpent." [See J.E. Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols*, (London: Routledge & Kenan Paul, 1962), pp. 272-277]

would end. That [is] certain."³⁵ One snake biting its own tail denotes for Rio Preisner, a contemporary Czech philosopher, the circularity of Hegel's nihilistic logic.³⁶ The same image of a snake biting its own tail was also used to describe the self-referring circularity of the discourse on thinking and being of the domestic (Böhmisch) nihilists whose self-reflections can be found, for example, in Havel's theatrical characters.³⁷ According to Nietzsche, it was his Zarathustra who killed the other snake by "biting off its head" while it was "crawling from his throat," that is, at least in his dream.³⁸ Another snake, the sole snake survivor from the previous pair, became an honorary member of Zarathustra's cave and a possible memento of a (non)being caught in the eternal recurrence of the same as an ever-occurring dead end,³⁹ without a new possible political or philosophical questioning:

nothing matters to us anymore. It's all the same to us. When you know as much as we do, nothing matters. Things just repeat. The world is empty and aimless. Everything circles around. ... It all cancels out, good and bad, beautiful and ugly. Everything's empty. Nothing is real. Nothing matters.

³⁵ Michael Ende, *The Neverending Story*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1984), p. 365. This notion of questioning can be contrasted with that of Ivan Havel (the brother of Vaclav Havel alias Sakateka) and Zdenek Neubauer (Sidonius): for them, the question mark "?" goes (or is to go) "around nothing - a semidemarked and aggressive emptiness ... whose symbol could be a question mark without the point: a pointless question. [Laughter]" Thus the path of questioning becomes a "crooked path whence who enters never returns." Thereby, the "point" is (to be) negated by the commanding space of nothingness, which forces the question to miss the target. Thus, the avoidance of the point is essential for them. The main imperative is the preservation of "darkness." See Sidonius & Sakateka, "Dialogue on Questions" (1985), in Marketa Goetz-Stankiewicz, eds., *Good-Bye, Sumizdat*, (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1992), p. 151. Havel and Neubauer de facto only paraphrase Heidegger's dictum that the man cannot "directly counter" or resist the expansion of nihilism and its power. [See, Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, op. cit., pp. 34-35]

³⁶ Rio Preisner, *Ceska existence*, (London: Edice Rozmluvy, 1984), p. 24.

³⁷ Marketa Goetz-Stankiewicz, *The Silenced Theater: Czech Playwrights without a Stage*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), p. 58.

³⁸ F. Nietzsche, *Portable Nietzsche*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1976), p. 330. According to Jung, snake-dreams tend to indicate that "the conscious mind is deviating from its instinctual basis." [Jung, *Psyche and Soul*, (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1958), p. 130]

³⁹ William Irwin Thompson, *At the Edge of History*, (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1971), p. 103.

Why shouldn't we die . . . the whole of us."⁴⁰

Yet, according to Franz Kafka, "in giving its advice the serpent did only half its work. now it must also try to falsify what it has brought about, that is to say, in the fullest sense of the words it must bite its own tail."⁴¹ In other words, "the [fixed and completed] universality of sickness and death"⁴² should also spell death to all true questioning of man and to man himself. However, Kafka knows that not only the beginning of the project of nihilism but also its currently implemented second half is a *falsification as well*. Moreover, if I understand Kafka right, he even dares to suggest that the Hegelian death may be actually a death of the "snake" itself, that is, of nihilism which may include nothing less than a spiritual death of Hegel, the god.⁴³

Importantly, Martin Heidegger, probably the "greatest priest" of nihilism known to our century, stated that "questioning is the piety of thought."⁴⁴ Heidegger, however, understands "piety" as a surrender, "yielding to the holding-sway" and concealment of the truth of nihilism that is to be "concealed to the last."⁴⁵ Thus, that Heideggerian "piety" makes the truth and identity shrink into a

⁴⁰ Michael Ende, *The Neverending Story*, op. cit., p. 54.

⁴¹ Franz Kafka, *Dearest Father: stories and other writings*, op. cit., p. 86

⁴² Alexandre Kojève, "The Idea of Death in the Philosophy of Hegel," (Complete text of the last two lectures of the academic year 1933-34), translated by Joseph J. Carpino, *Interpretation*, Winterm 1973: 138.

⁴³ On the notion of Hegel being a god from the point of view of his own system see Tom Darby, *The Feast*, op. cit., pp. 209, 216-222. Cf. Martin Heidegger's interview for *Der Spiegel* "Only a God Can Save Us," *Philosophy Today*, 20:4, 1976: 116.

⁴⁴ Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, op. cit., p. 35.

⁴⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 34, 22. Or as Martin Hybner, a former Czech dissident, put it in an almanac edited by Vaclav Havel, "it is necessary to investigate and watch . . . and keep enclosing [the words] in a frame." [Vaclav Havel, ed., *Hostina: filozoficky sbornik*, (Toronto: Sixty-Eight Publishers Corp., 1989), p. 73] The truth is kept as "the very last possible" alternative which "comes only when we have been deprived of all the others." [*ibid.*, p. 66]

See also Franz Kafka, *The Complete Stories*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1971), p. 240; Paul Goodman, *Kafka's Prayer*, (New York: Hillstone, 1976), p. 236. For the sake of fairness, it should be stressed that Kafka himself was undergoing a great personal torment which is apparent in

"concealment" and "reporting," apparently in order to protect (also) the life of Hegel, the god.⁴⁶ In the fall of 1933, Heidegger identified the holder of the truth with one particular person: "Do not let doctrines and ideas be the rules of your Being. The Führer himself and he alone *is* the present and future German reality and its rule."⁴⁷ Later, Heidegger added to it an important qualification:

National Socialism, to be sure, moved in [the right] direction. But those people were *far too limited* in their thinking to acquire an explicit [immediate] relationship to what is really happening today and has been underway for three centuries [my italics].⁴⁸

Admittedly, this "one-sidedness" of the nihilistic "piety" is a reversal of the traditional piety, truth, the whole human history, order and man.⁴⁹ Further, it is

his decision to have all his writings destroyed; and yet, he provided us with an invaluable account of the phenomenon of Böhmisch nihilism. This moral ambivalence is also well reflected in his attitude towards the bond of silence. In this way, he wrote about an urge to "confide one's secret to the generality," thus, "hoping to have reconquered one's good and - in the most important element of all - free childhood." But this becomes for him only "a brief folly," entailing subsequent "bitterness." (Franz Kafka, *Dearest Father: stories and other writings*, op. cit., p. 205) Elsewhere, he expressed the fatality of his position in the following way: "Just contrive to make yourself intelligible to the woodlouse. Once you have taught it to ask what is the purpose of its world, you will have exterminated the nation of the wood lice." (Ibid., p. 209) His personal letter to his friend Max Brod of October 25, 1923 is meaningful piece of evidence: "the evil powers, whether on good or bad assignments, were only lightly fingering the entrances through which they were going to penetrate someday, and event to which they were already forward with unbearable rejoicing. So if I do not write, that is due chiefly to 'strategic' reasons [my italics] such as have become dominant for me in recent years." However, Kafka tries to reassure (himself) that "I want to share my heart with people." [Franz Kafka, *Letters to Friends, Family, and Editors*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1977, p. 387)] This end of his book *The Process* is also fitting here: K. let the (his) murder happen and eve assists himself in carrying it out, yet, at the last moment of his life, his ultimate cry belongs to the humanity whose voice becomes inseparably one with his own.

⁴⁶ Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, op. cit., p. 23. At this point, it can be merely noted that the "piety" of nihilism may also be quite concrete because, as Heidegger said, "only a very few people can have [possible and necessary] insights." These few selected have the capacity to think "in the utterly primordial sense," that is, as a possessing, keeping or holding. Ibid., p. 109. [Cf. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 1959), pp. 322, 325]

⁴⁷ Martin Heidegger's interview for Der Spiegel "Only a God Can Save Us," op. cit., p. 96.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 111.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 113. Similarly, Marx envisioned a "complete, radical return of mankind" [overthrow] and stressed a "regression" of man into a "cave". (Karel Marx, *Early Writings*, (London: C.A. Watts & Co. Ltd., 1963), pp., 155, p. 177. On the reanimalization of man in the

evident that nihilism is formed in such a way as to question radically all that is, while being itself defended against questions - also by its universal one-sidedness or, respectively, by the unconcealment merely of its *face* side. Socrates' method of compelling people to make conscious choices by questioning and sharing wisdom, which was "at the service of anyone who wanted it," is thereby countered by an exclusive freedom from questions and one-sided discipline of (public) shame and silence serving the lies and power of "the very few."⁵⁰ A defence of the public realm of politics as a harmonic polyphony of voices stands here against a new sojourn amid shadows of a cave (cage) with a monotony of dead silence. As Arendt indicated, holding to human *arete* makes oblivion (of the past and truth 'out there') and forgetting human *questions* and human quality impossible.⁵¹

Eric Voegelin reminded us that philosophy is the love of being.⁵² Therefore, neutrality in this regard could be only a sign of ignorance, impotence or hypocrisy.⁵³ The choice taken here is to question nihilism - with a view to the piety of being and concretely with a view to its concrete ground - of Bohemia.

Admittedly, as shown above, the odds are enormous. However, as Michael Ende showed, the situation is almost hopeless, but there is one way out - to confer to beings and things their right (new) names, thus, skinning them from "wrong"

Universal and Homogeneous State see, for example, an excellent analysis by Tom Darby in his book *The Feast*, op. cit., pp. 99-102, 172, 181, 210. Nietzsche's concept of a "blond beast" and barbarism also falls into this category. [See also the concept of "the new paganism" in William Irwin Thompson, *At the Edge of History*, (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1971), p. 103]

⁵⁰ Canetti, *Crowds and Power*, op. cit., p. 288. On the concept of defence against questions and its relation to secrecy and power see *ibid.*, pp. 284-296.

⁵¹ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, op. cit., p. 208.

⁵² Cited in Dante Germino, *Beyond ideology, The Revival of Political Theory*, (New York & London: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 182.

⁵³ As Jan Hus stressed, it is courage that binds justice with life. See Jan Hus, *The Letters of John Hus*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1972), p. 3.

ones, that is, from lies.⁵⁴ Naming (*defining*), in particular, and human speech, in general, are the piety of thought and being, that is, salvation.⁵⁵

To start in a meaningful way, we have to reveal first of all a right name of the essence of the Hegelian spirit and, thus, also of nihilism. It is *death*. For the unveiling of both the foundation stone of Hegel's Absolute wisdom, we are indebted to a vigorous and rather straightforward Marxist interpretation of Hegel by Alexandre Kojève who established "the primordial role that the idea of death plays in the philosophy of Hegel."⁵⁶ Death was not only Hegel's leading inspiration or his starting point but also Hegel's final aim and destination. As Kojève pointed out, death is "the ultimate source of *all of Hegel's thought* [*italics added*], which does no more than draw out all the consequences, even the most ultimate, of the existence of this fact."⁵⁷ Consequently, the philosophy of Hegel "is in the final analysis *a philosophy of death*."⁵⁸ Hegel ultimately equated death with his notion of absolute and accords it the supreme power standing above any being. In particular, death as "power of *separation*" is defined by Hegel as "the source of [all] the sciences, arts, and crafts, is an 'absolute' power, against which Nature can oppose no effective resistance."⁵⁹ In other words, every one has to die, and, in this sense, death is accepted as *the* end that has itself no other end above itself. It is evidently assumed that the discovery of that "omnipotence" of death as an ontological

⁵⁴ Michael Ende, *The Neverending Story*, op. cit., p. 149. As a matter of fact, before M. Ende, the imperative to "use only precise words" had already been formulated with regard to modern politics by Ferdinand Peroutka, a Czech first-class intellectual. [See Ferdinand Peroutka, *Budem pokračovat*, (Toronto: Sixty-Eight Publishers, 1984), p. 240]

⁵⁵ On the problem of the imprisonment in the Circle of Eternal Return with regard to one's identity, see, for example, Michael Ende, *The Neverending Story*, op. cit., pp. 163, 165-166.

⁵⁶ Alexandre Kojève, "The Idea of Death," cit. op., p. 114.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 124.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 124.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 127.

revolution and radicalism can serve as the ground for absolute and universal power on the earth provided that it can somehow be organized and translated into a closed system that would imitate death, that is, be 'in its image and likeness.'

In this light, an attentive reading of modern German philosophy would reveal that a central place is accorded, with a varying degree of explicitness, to the idea of death as a modern deity under the veil of various names that emerges as a source of knowledge, power, dread, awe and temptation. Clearly, repercussions of that tendency, both in terms of our consciousness and politics, cannot be but profound, to say the least. Knowing the name of the essence does not suffice because the idea of death itself is anything but simple. What kind of death is it? This is a compelling question.

At this point, we can summarize our main preceding hypotheses: the "failures" of the Czech elites are systemic, and their deeper understanding requires establishing it as part of broader nihilistic trends and policy. The Böhmisches case is part of the making of the Universal and Homogenous State. This nihilism is ruled by the notion of (political) death of man (nation and state). Moreover, the essence of nihilism is not necessarily affected by the demise and progressive succession of its particular moments; in this way, nihilism ought to pervade and cut across various political labels and movements. Thus, the modern history of Czechoslovakia, particularly, the Communist past, post-Communist transformation, including the demise of the Czechoslovak state, should be examined in terms of this context, that is, *continuity* and progression of (Böhmisches) nihilism. Consequently, an emphasis is placed on *continuity* that is to be sought behind apparently radical discontinuities. In other words, it is a quest after Lorenc's

"background of the background " In this way, the elites' "failures" may actually appear not necessarily as mistakes or errors but as a deliberate choice of a political line and method.

In this connection, it is also necessary to carry out a reevaluation of the doctrine of Marxism and its realization from the point of view of the said hypotheses, at least because Marxism shaped in a profound way a great part of the modern Bohemian history. In this sense, that examination of Marxism is unavoidable. Admittedly, at the very onset of this research, I had intended to pay to Marxism not more than a modest amount of attention before comparative analyses of nihilism began revealing an initially rather unexpected nature of Marxism, its *continuity* and organic link with nihilism. It appeared that only on the common basis of nihilism, one could make mutually compatible and "reconcile" contradictory Marxist notions of universal humanism and "emancipation" and simultaneous calls for the total annihilation of the allegedly 'inferior' Slavic nations, especially the Czechs. In this sense, it can be also suggested that the essence of Marxism and Communism may not be Marxism, as generally understood, but nihilism. In this way, it can be further assumed that Marxism ought to be seen probably as the hitherto most significant *operationalization* of Hegel's spirit.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ In this connection, one may recall Nietzsche's own words relating to St. Paul, which may be seen as an attempt at self-criticism and may also pertain to the "massification" of Hegel's spirit by Marx, the modern "Paul" of Hegel: "Paul wanted the end, *consequently* he also wanted the means. What he himself did not believe, the idiots among whom he threw his doctrine believed. His need was for power ... he could use only concepts, doctrines, symbols with which one tyrannizes masses and forms herds." [Friedrich Nietzsche, "The Antichrist", in *The Portable Nietzsche*, op. cit., p. 618] In a similar way, Nietzsche provided a hindsight with regard to Hegel and his end of history and man: "it would *not* be necessary! But is highly probable that it will *end* that way, that you end that way - namely, 'comforted,' as it is written ... 'comforted metaphysically' ..." [Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), p. 26]

E) Does Other Possibility Exist?

On the basis of the said, we can conclude that the Czech question and its future depends on overcoming nihilism *qua the project of death or politics of death*. Particularly, it can be assumed that Czech 'being' depends on the possibility of refuting and overcoming the "absolute truth" of the Hegelian *philosophy-politics of death*. We can therefore presume the only possible way out of nihilism is to re-discover experience that extends well beyond the Hegelian or at least nihilistic age and beyond (our) nihilistic ego.

Does the other possibility exist? Heidegger offers some affirmative indications. In particular, he stresses that "the other possibility" is there, but blocked by technological enframing, respectively, that "*a former way of revealing*" is thereby concealed.⁶¹ The prominently modern phenomenon of secretiveness and caution in the form of Heideggerian 'piety of questions' would also testify to the "other possibility" apparently perceived as a real danger. Understandably, self-conscious nihilism should know its enemy. Where is the salvation to be looked for? A meaningful alternative that would not be a mere negation of negation and thus amounting to the same, i.e. to another nihilism, has to come from its own foundation. Besides mummified or dead antiquities whose fact of death had substantially either distorted or diminished their power to testify, the hitherto living evidence is - language that could be a source of a radical re-collection of our most profound memory and identity, which potentially surpasses the "forgetfulness" of contemporary nihilism.⁶² As Heidegger pointed out:

⁶¹ M. Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, op. cit., pp. 26, 27.

⁶² Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, translated by Ralph Manheim. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987), p. 51.

... language too is an essent, which like other essents can be made accessible and delimited in a definite way. Obviously the validity of such an undertaking and the way in which it was carried out depended on the fundamental view of being that guided it. The determination of the essence of language, the very inquiry into it, are regulated at all times by the prevailing preconception about the essence of being and about essence itself. But essence and being express themselves in language ...⁶³

Apparently, the meaningfulness of being and return to it must lie where essentials still exist. It is also to be noted that Heidegger's approach, while being highly inspirative, was pursued with a definite purpose or very concrete *context* according to which "the destiny of language is grounded in a [German] nation's *relation to being*."⁶⁴ In this regard, Heidegger provided us not so much with an alternative to Germanic (Böhmisch) nihilism, but rather with its further, yet greatly valuable elaboration.

Consequently, the present research is to be ended by an outline of a possible alternative to nihilism, the Bohemian relation to being. Because of the given scope of this work, the discussion would, however, have to be restrained to suggestions of selected notions related to the concept of being understood as an open art of holy wholeness, togetherness, radical, yet balanced openness and its piety.

F) Building the Inquiry as a Quest

The structure of the work follows that of our hypotheses. Therefore, the first four chapters will be a review of concrete predominantly political manifestations of nihilism which negate the Czech statehood and nationhood, and

⁶³ Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, op. cit., p. 53.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

document the thesis of the continuity of nihilism pervading through a series of discontinuities. The task would be to provide a concrete historical context for the following discussions. The fifth chapter, relying on the practical insights gained in the previous chapters, will deal with the problem of Marxism as nihilism and the operationalization of Hegel's spirit. In the sixth chapter, I will attempt to establish a broader spiritual and structural context-meaning of nihilism by analyzing some of its key elements. The seventh chapter will be a conclusion of the former chapters with a view to the relevant hypotheses. The final eighth chapter will present a ground of Bohemian ethos as a revived continuity of man with being.

CHAPTER 1

BÖHMISCH NIHILISM SERVING HEGELIAN GODS

1.1. Marx's and Engels's Formulation of Böhmisch Nihilism and Recurrences of the Same

If we understand Böhmisch nihilism as a policy of negation and assimilation of Czech being, ideas of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels provide admittedly one of the most systematic and radical program that has been made public to this effect. Considering the Communist experience and its results on the whole, it also appears that to a significant extent the concrete anti-Czech and anti-Slavic aspects of this ideology have been really, although tacitly, followed: there is too much evidence of methodically organized forcible suppressions of national independence and self-determination, including unrare instances of extermination and prolonged physical, political and spiritual decimation of potential elites of the Slavic nations under Marxian-Communist rule. It appears somewhat paradoxical that a relatively lesser known nationalistically oriented part of the doctrine of the dyad of Marx-Engels,¹

¹ Hatred of the Russians, to which "a hatred of the Czechs and the Croats" had to be "added," is prescribed by Engels as "the *first revolutionary passion* of the Germans." Emphases are made by Engels himself. [Karl Marx, *The Revolutions of 1848*, Political writings, Vol. 1, ed. by David Fernbach, (new York: Penguin Books, 1973), pop. cit., 244]

Most of the related hatred-loaded program declarations are ascribed to Engels who was in this regard, admittedly, generally less tactful and more open than Marx. However, because both worked on their doctrine together, wrote a number of works together, closely consulted their views and agreed them with each other, and because there is *nothing* that would suggest that ideas of each of them were not shared by the other or dismissed by the other as part of their creed, we can see Marx and Engels as one of the rare, almost perfect ideological dyad that history has known so far. In this way, the concrete authorship, in some cases even impossible to distinguish with certainty, is for the purpose of our discussion in principle a matter of indifference. In addition, most of these writings were published in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* whose editorial constitution, as Engels informed us, was "simply the dictatorship of Marx" which "was a matter of course, undisputed and willingly recognized by everybody." [Karl Marx, *Selected Works*, op.

often considered as an accidental fallacy or as a spurious, ephemeral or specifically conditioned phenomenon,² turned to be politically more essential and more faithfully realized than a widely noted idea of the proletarian rule which clearly had not materialized during the several-decades's long experiment.

Marx's and Engels's program of national 'finalizing' aggression was basically drawn as early as 1848 - during the political birth of Pan-Germanism marked by the convocation of the German National Assembly in Frankfurt in 1848.³ The terms of Marx's and Engels's demands are straightforward and unequivocal in their crude

cit., p. 32] Moreover, "it was due in the first place to [Marx's] clear view and his firm attitude that the paper became the most famous German newspaper of the year of the revolution." [Ibid., p. 32]

It is to be stressed that I will be dealing here only with one particular issue - with Marx's and Engels's position with regard to the Czech question, and not with the Marxist teaching as a whole. Most of Marx's and Engels's writings pertaining to the Czech question are related to the revolutions of 1848, at a time when the Czech nation was struggling for its spiritual awakening within the Austrian monarchy, and when German nationalism started its drive for building its own statehood that would embrace much of Central Europe.

² A typical example of such an apologetic "explanation" of the anti-Slavic chauvinism of Marx and Engels by "the peculiarities of the epoch" may be, for example, found in this case in its "Bolshevik" (Marx-Leninist or perhaps Stalinist) form in Karl Marx, *Selected Works* (in two volumes), Vol. II, prepared by the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute, Moscow, edited by V. Adoratsky, (New York: International Publishers, 1933), pp. 86-87 fn. Significantly, it also stated there that "the treatment of the national question ... seen in the case of Marx and Engels, is characteristic also of the Bolshevik [Stalin's] Party." [Ibid., p. 87 fn.]

As David Fernbach noted with regard to this Marxist program of racial war, "yet it showed a substantial gap in Engels's historical knowledge, to say the least, to assert that the Czechs had 'never had a history'." [Karl Marx, *The Revolutions of 1848*, op. cit., p. 51] Cf. Engels's justification of the modern anti-Czech crusade was by the means of "historical arguments" that have nothing in common with 'historical knowledge' but were derived from *a priori* goals, for example, *ibid.*, p. 237. In this connection, Engels claims that "[the Slavs] being oppressed at home, they were *oppressors of all revolutionary nations* abroad ..." [Ibid., p. 237] To rectify all those "fallacies" and similar aberrations would be too tedious a task; moreover, for our discussion, it is more important to elucidate what Marx and Engels *willed rather* than if it was done in accordance with the truth. Admittedly, this also applies to nihilism in general.

Importantly, the Czech edition of the works of Marx and Engels deliberately omitted all the parts where they elaborated and promulgated the consequential program of anti-Czech "national nihilism," as defined by Antonin Ostry, a Czech Marxian author who found himself after 1968 in the ranks of the regime-enforced opposition. [Antonin Ostry, *Ceskoslovensky problem*, (Koln: Index, 1972), p. 306]

³ Thus, we may found that, in the view of Marx and Engels, "[the interests of the German 'proletariat'] made imperative the definitive unification of Germany into a *nation*, which alone can provide the battlefield, cleared of all traditional petty obstacles" [Karl Marx, *Selected Works*, op. cit., p. 33] The emphasis in the text is original.

simplicity: it is "a war of annihilation of the Germans against the Czechs," being since then (June 18, 1848) allegedly "the only possible solution."⁴

The annihilation of the Czechs should be carried out as a *total war* "by all possible means,"⁵ which means *only* by "the most decisive acts of ruthless terrorism" until death: Engels claimed to be in conformity with, and cleared by, "the interests of the [Marxist] revolution."⁶ Any application of justice or humanity in this extermination, were by Engels explicitly ruled out beforehand: "these more or less moral categories ... *prove absolutely nothing* in historical and political matters ... an empty dream."⁷ Instead, he called for application of utmost brutality against those "barbarians" or "pitiless ruthlessness."⁸ The goal of this war was a "necessary" death of the Czech nation. To this effect, Engels demanded that the Czechs fulfil "their chief mission to perish in the universal revolutionary storm."⁹ The Czechs had to die or let themselves be killed. Because of their expected unwillingness to do so, Engels asserted that the Czechs, "are therefore now counter-revolutionary,"¹⁰ while "entirely clearing the Slavs out" for all time was "revolutionary."¹¹

That Marxist war of annihilation was as a "complete extermination:" the

⁴ Karl Marx, *The Revolutions of 1848*, op. cit., pp. 126. This was written as an immediate reaction to the bloody suppression of a Czech revolution in Prague by the imperial army, that cowardly and base betrayal of the revolution.

⁵ Ibid., p. 163.

⁶ Ibid., pp. 244-245.

⁷ Ibid., p. 229.

⁸ Ibid., p. 236. In other place, Marx states: "Force versus force. A physical victory had to decide the issue." [Ibid., p. 248]

⁹ Ibid., pp. 215, 217. Marx and Engels declared that "the natural and inevitable fate of these dying nations was to allow progress of dissolution and absorption by their stronger neighbours to complete itself." [Karl Marx, *Selected Works*, op. cit., p. 120]

¹⁰ Karl Marx, *The Revolutions of 1848*, op. cit., p. 217.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 218.

Czechs and other Slavs were for Marx only a "national refuse," waste material.¹²

Engels, reviving the barbaric rhetoric of old tribal conquests felt compelled to "take a blood revenge on the Slav barbarians" that "would annihilate all these small pigheaded nations even to their very names," while promising as already given a "general" world war.¹³ The mission of this war was to remove "also entire reactionary peoples [including the Czech nation]," that was portrayed as a would-be "[historical] advance."¹⁴ This program of total annihilation was supported by a *de facto* imperialistic concept of "the leading civilized countries" that would leave no place for national, cultural, religious differences.¹⁵ In the light of the above said, *The Communist Manifesto* stipulation that "the hostility of one nation to another will come to an end"¹⁶ was apparently understood by Marx and Engels, in this case of the Slavs, as their total extermination and assimilation.¹⁷ The Slavic nations, including the

¹² Karl Marx, *The Revolutions of 1848*, op. cit., p. 222.

¹³ Ibid., p. 225. On the foregone "next world war" forwarded as a certainty by Engels in this regard see also ibid., pp. 225-226. This world conflagration was to be an apocalyptic war against Russia, for whose sake Engels was demanding extreme general terror, while promising to "erect democracy" at the end. [Ibid., pp. 127, 154-155]

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 225-226, see also p. 227. The criminal self-assuredness of Engels and his utter lack of critical self-reflection in this regard is quite striking. In the same spirit, he applauds the annihilation of the Slavs as "some of the best and most commendable of the deeds we and the Magyar people can pride ourselves on in the course of our history," and immediately makes a rebuke: "By the way, we should add that the Magyars have been too forbearing and too weak towards the arrogant Croats ..." [Ibid., p. 236]

¹⁵ See *The Communist Manifesto*, ibid., p. 85. Coincidentally, Engels's "great historic nations" to include Germany, Poland, Hungary, and Italy, while contradicting as a spiritual concept the tenets of Marx's and Engels's historical materialism, consisted exactly of the presumed allies of Germany in the expected war. For Engels, "the lesser nationalities [were] doomed to subordination," and their emancipation was *a priori* rejected as "idealist." [See ibid., pp. 50-51]

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 85.

¹⁷ Thus, according to Engels, "the European brotherhood of peoples" would be "only a result of thorough revolutions and bloody struggles" and not a matter of fraternization between nations. [Ibid., p. 226] The Czechs were in this regard defined as "the obstacles in the way of such a general liberation and [Marxist brotherhood]." [Ibid., pp. 227-228] Otherwise, this extermination and subjugation of "lazy Mexicans" was to be carried in the name of civilization, that is, for the sake of "railway" and (bourgeois) "world trade." And Engels asks: "what moral principles matter against such world-historical events?" Not

Czech one, was collectively labelled as "long-decayed and impotent nationalities," "small, crippled, powerless nationalities," "decayed nations," too many "Slav barbarians," "the most barbarian peoples."¹⁸

Engels proclaimed that the Slavs were by nature incapable of life and development on their own - these "elements" had allegedly to be "*forcibly* [Engels's emphasis] imported by other, non-Slavic peoples." To this effect, Engels conferred on himself a power to see collectively into their "minds" and establishes that there appeared to him a lack of "a national historical tradition" - on part of all of "these peoples, Czechs and Serbs not excepted."¹⁹ As a matter of curiosity, the Slavs were also held by Engels collectively responsible among many other things for the failure of the German 'negotiated' revolution of 1848.²⁰ Because Engels saw his Communist future without the Slavic nations (and the Czechs), he alleviated his conscience by

to leave any doubts about Marx's own complicity, Engels immediately stresses: "[I and Marx] were fighting long before the revolution against this theory of the universal brotherhood of peoples, which is aimed at nothing but a random fraternization without regard for the historical position or the social level of development of the individual peoples ..." [Karl Marx, *The Revolutions of 1848*, op. cit., p. 230]

¹⁸ See Karl Marx, *The Revolutions of 1848*, op. cit., pp. 213-214, 219, 221, 223, 235, 268. It is notable that the then German ruling classes, including the bourgeoisie, had the same chauvinistic views and were using the same language with regard to the Slavic and Czech questions. [See *ibid.*, p. 52]

¹⁹ Karl Marx, *The Revolutions of 1848*, op. cit., p. 221, see also p. 235. In *Germany: Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, it is, for example, asserted that the Czechs seen as peasants on a flour diet are incapable of "mental culture" whose "almost every element had to be imported from Germany." [Karl Marx, *Selected Works*, op. cit., pp. 88-89] The Czechs were also presented by Marx and Engels as "primitive Slavonian serfs" that should never be allowed to govern themselves. [*Ibid.*, p. 92] In the same spirit, they claimed that [the Czech] "nationality and political vitality had long been extinguished, and [the Czechs] in consequence had been obliged, for almost a thousand years to follow in the wake of a mightier nation, their conqueror, the same as the Welsh in England, the Basques in Spain ..." [*Ibid.*, pp. 119-120] The coarse falsity of Marx's and Engels's arguments in this regard is noteworthy: thus, for example, they also maintained that the Czechs "from times almost immemorial have had for all purposes of civilization no other language but the German ..." [*Ibid.*, p. 120]

²⁰ In this connection, Engels who himself, during the revolution, supported with Marx the bourgeois and petit-bourgeois agenda, blamed the Czechs for a "cowardly and base betrayal of the revolution." [*Ibid.*, p. 240, see also p. 223]

denying them also the past, if not any existence altogether. Thus, with conditioned exceptions of the Russians and Poles (the latter needed for the German war against the former), Engels claimed, "no Slav people has a future, for the simple reason that all the other Slavs lack the primary historical, geographical, political and industrial conditions for a viable independence."²¹

In this way, Marx's and Engels's sincerity of their pro-democratic and liberationist rhetoric was checked and negated by their own doctrine. In his speech on Poland of November 29, 1847, Engels refuted part of his own writings on the Slav and Czech questions, declaring that "a nation cannot be free and at the same time continue to oppress other nations."²² At the same time, as we have seen, Marxist "brotherhood" and "freedom" might be universal, but it was not meant for everybody: in fact, it presupposed massive exterminations, and Engels definitely preferred Czech oppression to German "freedom" provided, of course, that he took the above said idiom on the interrelatedness between freedom and oppression seriously. Elsewhere, Engels bluntly dismissed any notion that the Germans "should let these half-Germanized Slavs 'go free'."²³ Consequently, neither Marxist "democracy" and "equality" appears as reliable notions: "no references to an indefinite democratic future of these [Slavs'] lands prevent us from treating our enemies as enemies."²⁴

²¹ Karl Marx, *The Revolutions of 1848*, op. cit., p. 52, see also p. 228. Importantly, Engels also promulgates a principal claim-dogma of all the subsequent strands of Böhmsch nihilism that prescribes that these Slavic peoples, including the Czechs, "have never had a history of their own." And from this conscious lie, Engels derives his pronouncement that, consequently, these peoples have no capacity nor right for survival. [Ibid., pp. 231-232, 236] Similarly, previous domination is considered as a sufficient ground for annihilating the Slavs. [See ibid., p. 235]

²² Ibid., p. 100.

²³ Ibid., p. 236.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 245; see also p. 222.

Engels himself thereby made it quite clear that Marxism and Marxian socialism are not *the* way in which the Slavic peoples could attain for themselves justice, equality and democracy. As he put it, "those leaders of the South Slav movement who are still spinning yarns about national equality and a democratic Austria are either blockheaded dreamers ... or scoundrels ..." ²⁵

Finally, all the "revolutionary" jargon aside, Engels set to explain-justify his Marxist hatred in terms of traditional-supremacy rhetoric of the aggressor. ²⁶ Accordingly, he located the Czech lands as being "right in the heart of Germany" ²⁷ or as "an inserted wedge." ²⁸ Because, for Engels, the Czech lands were the "German heart" pierced by its Czech inhabitants, the Czechs should be never allowed to recreate their own state, ²⁹ and "Bohemia could only exist, henceforth, as a portion of Germany." ³⁰ In this regard, the Czech question and the Yugoslav (Serb) one are closely connected: they are the first immediate blocks on the path of expansion:

Germany and Hungary *cannot* allow themselves to be cut off from the Adriatic, owing to 'geographical and commercial necessities' ... [which] are just as much matters of life and death for Germany and Hungary ... And where the existence of great nations and the free development of their

²⁵ Karl Marx, *The Revolutions of 1848*, op. cit., p. 222.

²⁶ For Engels, such a "conquest" is demanded by the "geographical and strategic necessities." And, in Engels's view, this imperialist conquest serves the interests of "civilization." [Ibid., p. 234]

²⁷ Ibid., p. 244.

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 232-234.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 232. Marx and Engels also designated Bohemia (the Czech lands) as an alleged Vendée located in the very German heart. [Karl Marx, *Selected Works*, op. cit., p. 121] The Austrian Pan-German program of 1913 similarly characterized Central Europe with Bohemia as "the centre of German life all over the earth." [Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1951), p. 228]

³⁰ Karl Marx, *Selected Works*, op. cit., p. 91.

resources is at stake, nothing will be decided by ... sentimental factors ...³¹

Because Engels defined the Slavs and the Czechs in particular as "the particular enemies of democracy," "democracy" coincided for him with freedom of aggression and its expansion.³² In this context, it is also revealing what the red colour, used as a Communist symbol, epitomized to Marx. For him, it was a sign of a completed conquest: "the colour of the defeated, the *colour of blood* ... the *red republic*."³³

After World War II, Hannah Arendt,³⁴ conceptualizing the phenomenon of totalitarianism, asserted that the role of proletariat "was played in the East by 'peoples without a history'."³⁵ In the same vein, Arendt also dismissed that these nations ever had a homeland of their own and even sense of it:

Here were masses who had not the slightest idea of the meaning of *patria* and patriotism, not the vaguest notion of responsibility for a common, limited community. This was the trouble with the 'belt of mixed populations' (Macartney) that stretched from the Baltic to the Adriatic ...³⁶

³¹ Karl Marx, *The Revolutions of 1848*, op. cit., p. 233.

³² Ibid., p. 231. Similarly, Engels understood "civilization" as a form of colonialism. [Karl Marx, *Selected Works*, op. cit., p. 88]

³³ Karl Marx, *The Revolutions of 1848*, op. cit., p. 129. The emphases were made by Marx.

³⁴ It is also notable that Arendt defined Marxism as "the greatest antinational doctrine." It is not clear what meaning Arendt attached to her notion of "antinational" in this connection. [Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, op. cit., p. 236]

³⁵ Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, op. cit., p. 270. Arendt repeatedly denied in her book on totalitarianism the existence of history and culture for the Central and Southern European nations. Arendt states that these "peasant classes" (that is, not seen as nations) "had not [yet] struck deep roots in the country" - despite their recorded political histories of more than one thousand years. [Ibid., p. 231; cf. ibid., p. 229] According to Arendt, the Slavic nations represent the "unhistorical strata of Europe's population." [Ibid., p. 270]

³⁶ Ibid., p. 232. Arendt hereby relies on her collective reading of the "vaguest notions" of other nations's minds. It is ironic (and Arendt might not know that) that it is the Slavic languages, including the Czech and Serb, that have a verb *patriti* (and all its further derivations) containing numerous related meanings: "to belong", "to care about", "to watch", "to keep", "to see", "to search", "to obtain", "to provide" etc. while other European languages are limited to nouns with the given root denoting only a

Arendt posited the being of these nations as mere "tribal nationalism" (nationalism without a sense of *patria* and the state) that she further designated as a status of "rootlessness" *qua* a form of non-being.³⁷ With regard to nihilism, Arendt's notion of "educating [Slavic] masses in the spirit of high treason" is also worth noting.³⁸ At the same time, Arendt defined the Germanic concept of Europe as follows:

a revolutionary reorganization of Central Europe in which the Germans of Austria, together and strengthened by the Germans of Germany, would become the ruling people, in which all other peoples of the area would be kept in the same kind of semiservitude as the Slavonic nationalities in Austria.³⁹

As we have seen, Böhmisch-Germanic nihilism classified from the very onset its primary objects for "eradication" the phenomenon of identity-character-ethos with its roots in history and culture to include also the very idea of the nation and state as such.⁴⁰ The drive of that nihilism is focused first of all on the spirit as a vital source

rather narrow scope of meanings. This would point towards the Slavic languages as the more probable origin of the root *pa-tr/pa-r*. [Cf. Josef Holub and Stanislav Lyer, *Stručný etymologický slovník jazyka českého se zvláštním zretelem k slovům kulturním a cizím*, (Praha: Státní pedagogické nakladatelství, 1978), p. 336]

³⁷ On Arendt's concept of tribal nationalism applied exclusively to the nations of Central and Eastern Europe and her related notion of these peoples' alleged rootlessness see Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, op. cit., pp. 227, 232, 236. According to Arendt, such "tribal nationalism" or "tribalism" had "started from non-existent pseudomystical elements ... [and] dare to measure a people its past and present, by the yardstick of exalted inner qualities." [Ibid., p. 227]

³⁸ See *ibid.*, p. 236. It is also notable that in Arendt's view, Mussolini's claim that the Czechoslovak state was absurd, "was right." [Ibid., p. 269 fn]

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 45. In accordance with that project, as Arendt notes, the Nazis started in 1940 their depopulation policies in the Eastern territories. [Ibid., p. 394]

⁴⁰ In particular, *where* are we co-determines *who we are* [where < = > who are (we)]. The question of "who are we" implies an open plurality of being with whom we have to establish relationships. This moment is more significant for our identity than reflecting on an isolated and mortifying egotism in the equation "I = I" with any of its possible predicatives. In having a place, we are also in a position to assume a standpoint and, thus, also being-identity, that is, not merely a point of reference, but spaciality

of thinking, knowing and courage. This follows a classic war axiom: "culture takes precedence; the military comes after;" and "culture takes precedence over the material."⁴¹

It also appears that the distinction and opposition between two ways of living represented by Böhmisches nihilism and Bohemian ethos consist in the radical difference between, as Freud, the "Böhmisches" father of psychoanalysis, put it, "*to have it*" or "*to be (like)*," that is, between owning-devouring-non-being and being-belonging-participating, between negating and creating and between hatred and love.⁴² This struggle is consequently about what *matters* to us, as well as about how much we *matter* ourselves.

1.2. Birth of Contemporary Böhmisches Nihilism and Its Continuous Negative Progression (1918-1989)

The renewal of Czech statehood in the form of Czechoslovakia on October 28, 1918, which also provided a basis for the assertion of Slovak self-being (*svěbytnost*),⁴³ provided a chance for a new positive revitalization of the region of Central Europe. Today, it can be said that twenty years of the democratic republic of Czechoslovakia are with regard to their positive significance well above any other subsequent period in

of ontological and spiritual *relevance* where we awaken and reveal ourselves.

⁴¹ Zhuge Liang and Liu Ji, *Mastering the Art of War* (commentaries on the classic by Sun Tzu), (Boston & London: Shambhala, 1989), pp. 58, 23.

⁴² Sigmund Freud, *A General Selection from the Works of Sigmund Freud*, edited by John Rickman, (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1957), p. 185.

⁴³ It is almost impossible to render an English translation of the word *svěbytnost* in English, usually given as sovereignty or independence. Its meaning is, however, tied to a notion of (own) being or as one's right of being/dwelling in the Being.

modern Czech history. Notably, except for fascistoid Henlein's party of Sudeten Germans, which was from 1935 onwards on the payroll of Hitler's Reich,⁴⁴ it was the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia that was for most of its pre-World-War-II history the only political force with an openly nihilistic standpoint towards Czechoslovak statehood and any change in this course occurred only as a result of an order from the Comintern, respectively from Moscow.⁴⁵ So, for example, Vaclav Kopecky, one of the then Communist leader, declared on March 27, 1931 in the parliament: "The Czech nation cannot be free as long as Czechoslovakia exists."⁴⁶ This line was imposed on the Czechoslovak Communist party together with its so-called bolshevization starting from 1923 that coincided with Stalin becoming the leader of the Communist party in the Soviet Union and removal of former Communist "idealists."⁴⁷ From July 1928, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia was already firmly under a dictate of Moscow, thus, becoming effectively a forward outpost of foreign interests.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Leopold Chmela, *Czechoslovak Sources and Documents, No. 30, The Economic Aspect of the German Occupation of Czechoslovakia*, (Prague: Orbis, 1948), p. 24.

⁴⁵ It was A. Ostry, a Czech dissident political analyst, who, as far as I know, first denoted that policy of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia against the Czechoslovak statehood as nihilism. From its conception, it was directed *against* the Versailles settlement (later to be revived, for example, by Pithart and Havel - see below). Only after the VII. congress of the Communist International in 1935 (the unified antifascist front), the Czechoslovak Communists readjusted their nihilism according to new tactics. [A. Ostry, *Ceskoslovensky problem*, (Koln: Index, 1972), pp. 315-317]

⁴⁶ Vilem Hejl, *Rozyvat: Mnichov a nas osud*, (Toronto: Sixty-Eight Publishers, 1989), pp. 79-80.

⁴⁷ Vojtech Mencl, Milos Hajek, Milan Otahal and Erika Kadlecova, *Krizovatky 20. stoleti: Svetlo na bila mista v nejnovějších dejinách*, (Praha: Nase vojsko, 1990), pp. 113-117; Vaclav Cerny, *Pameti*, (Toronto: Sixty-Eight Publishers, 1982), pp. 149, 153-155, 247-8; Bohumil Cerny, Jan Kren, Vaclav Kural a Milan Otahal, eds., *Cesi, Nemci, odsun: diskuse nezavislych historiku*, (Praha: Academia, 1990), pp. 234-238.

⁴⁸ Vaclav Cerny, *Pameti*, op. cit., pp. 154-155. Cf. H. Gordon Skilling, *Communism National and International, Eastern Europe after Stalin*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964), p. 87. In addition to Moscow, and later Berlin, the Vatican was the third centre of power that was in principle hostile to the Czechoslovak Republic. Until January 1928, the Vatican obstinately refused to be reconciled with the existence of the Czechoslovak state at least *de iure*. [See Hans Brisch and Ivan Volgyes, eds., *Czechoslovakia: The Heritage of Ages Past*, East European Monographs No. LI, Boulder, (New York:

After the "bolshevization" of the party had been completed in 1929, the party highest organ, the politburo, began working exclusively in German.⁴⁹ All this, however, meant that the party underwent a radical change of its identity: since October 1927 until the first half of 1930, the membership of the party fell from 130,000 roughly to 30,000.⁵⁰ Still, in 1935, when the immediate threat of Fascism was already more than obvious, the Communist party was distributing leaflets with a slogan 'Not a penny for the army'.⁵¹ Only when this nihilism receded into the background, could the Communist party expand again.

The existence of Czechoslovakia as an independent and democratic state was then interrupted by the notorious Munich deal of 1938 which was an *overture* to world conflagration. Several moments are here noteworthy, especially with regard to contemporary developments. In this way, they pertain to our notion of the continuity of anti-Czech nihilism. As John W. Wheeler-Benne put it, for Mr. Chamberlain, one of the men of the Munich deal perceived the Czechs as a remaining "stumbling-block" which had nearly prevented his agreement with Hitler and, thus, an arrangement of a new order in Europe.⁵² In this way, the disintegration and demise of Czechoslovakia, similarly some fifty-four years later, was portrayed by its protagonists as something "almost inevitable."⁵³ The Munich deal also provided an outlet for a more aggressive

Columbia University Press, 1979), p. 40]

⁴⁹ Bohumil Cerny, Jan Kren, Vaclav Kural a Milan Otahal, eds., *Cesi, Nemci, odsun: diskuse nezavislych historiku*, op. cit., p. 74.

⁵⁰ Vojtech Mencl, Milos hajek, Milan Otahal and Erika Kadlecova, *Krizovaky 20. stoleti: Svetlo na bila mista v nejnovejsich dejinach*, op. cit., p. 117.

⁵¹ Emil Hajek, "Ministerstvo obrany, nebo setmosti?" in *Listy*, No. 3/1996: 48.

⁵² John W. Wheeler-Bennet, *Munich: Prologue to Tragedy*, (London: Macmillan, 1948), pp. 356-357.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 354.

articulation and support of inner nihilism and self-denial whose arguments almost literally were taken over about forty years later during the breakup of Czechoslovakia. The essence of this re-emerging nihilism was well summarized by Vaclav Cerny in his memoirs: it was a spirit of defeatism; the Munich tragedy was presented as if a "deserved punishment for [Czech] megalomania":

All that the First Republic embodied, her self-conscious pride, her world ambitions, were all of sudden a mistake. All the national pettiness, lack of confidence, scrub humbleness before force were almost congratulating themselves for the national calamity: our words were fulfilled, we have always said so, luckily we know the culprits! *A petty Böhmisches triumphed in Bohemia, he had been without an outlet and starved after his long fasting. He had been starving after power ... but he knew that he cannot get it self-assertively ...* [my italics]⁵⁴

This Munich ethos was to stigmatize the subsequent period until the present as its moral plague propagates and repeats essentially one message: 'The Czechs should be modest, weak and small, the last among the last.'⁵⁵ After the conclusion of the Germano-Russian pact of August 1939, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia returned to its nihilistic attitude towards Czechoslovak statehood. Communist resistance against Nazism, as well as the idea of anti-fascist national front were abandoned. This significantly weakened and split Czech resistance as such.⁵⁶ Moscow

⁵⁴ Vaclav Cerny, *Pameti*, op. cit., p. 443.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 444.

⁵⁶ Vaclav Vrabec, "Pakt a KSC", *Tvorba*, No. 2/1990: 4. At the same time, Moscow was sending out orders to the Communists in Europe to welcome Hitler's soldiers in the occupied countries as "class brothers" because "distinguishing between fascist and democratic countries has lost its previous meaning." Instead, the Communists were urged to fight against national leaders and political forces of their countries, including social-democrats, and against national resistance labelled as "imperialist." In a message of March 10, 1940, Gottwald, the Czechoslovak Communist leader, explicitly stated that "we reject decisively a creation of the Czechoslovak army abroad." [*Ibid.*, p. 4]

and the Communist leadership of the Communist party in Moscow supported the separation of Slovakia on March 14, 1939.⁵⁷ Similarly, at the beginning of the war, the Czechoslovak Communists were rejecting the idea of the renewal of Czechoslovak integrity and frontiers and, instead of carrying out resistance, were concerned mostly with fighting against alleged "anti-German nationalism" and "chauvinism" and avoiding an encounter with the allegedly "revolutionary German proletariat clothed in military uniforms."⁵⁸

With regard to nihilism and its ethos, of particular importance is the figure of the Czech "president" in the German Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, Emil Hacha.⁵⁹ Upon the demise of Czechoslovakia and fascist occupation of Bohemia on March 15, 1939, Hacha appealed to a "trust" conferred upon him by Hitler, the leader of the German nation, that "obliged" him to use, if needed, all the extreme measures "if the interests of the [Czech] nation were endangered."⁶⁰ During the years of the

⁵⁷ Vojtech Menci, Milos Hajek, Milan Otahal and Erika Kadlecova, *Krizovatky 20. století: Svetlo na bila mista v nejnovějších dejinách*, op. cit., p. 177; Simultaneously, there appeared a Communist-inspired drive for "a Soviet Slovakia," that is, for incorporating Slovakia into the Soviet Union. On the other hand, German Communists also advocated a permanent absorption of Czech lands in an expanded Germany cautiously supported from Moscow. Already at that time, a Czech Communist leader, Vaclav Kopecky, forwarded the idea of a symbiosis and eventual merge between Fascism and Communism. The renewal of Czechoslovakia was posited by Moscow as a part of "imperialist and anti-Soviet plans," while the Czechoslovak separation was advocated as a primary Communist demand and was voiced with a full seriousness by G. Husak as late as the summer 1944. [Vaclav Vrabec, "Pakt a KSC", op. cit., pp. 4-5]

⁵⁸ See Bohumil Cerny, Jan Kren, Vaclav Kural a Milan Otahal, eds., *Cesi, Nemci, odsun: diskuse nezavislych historiku*, op. cit., pp. 299-300; Edvard Benes, *Pameti*, II. dil. (Wormannsquick: Archa, ?), pp. 29-34. The then Communist propaganda depicted the "friendly" Sovieto-German relations as the "basic stone of the international situation" and labelled the USA as "the most dangerous factor in the development of the war." [Ibid., p. 30]

⁵⁹ In the ciphers of the Czechoslovak government, Hacha was referred as Havel. [Dusan Tomasek, Robert Kvacek, *Causa Emil Hacha*, (Praha: Themis, 1995), p. 99]

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 41. The Nazis did not allow themselves any ambiguity as to "endangering Czech interests." The Nazis' program was a biological extermination of the Czech nation. For example, on October 1, 1941, the German Protector in Bohemia, Heydrich, confirmed in his inaugural address to the leading Nazi functionaries that the territory of Bohemia ought to be settled by Germans, whereas the Czechs were to be

German occupation and terror. propaganda and Hacha himself tried to be depicted and received as a *moral* authority, that is, a would-be moral justification of collaboration, weakness and cowardice. In this way, base human qualities were covered up and shielded by appeals to their opposite - their alleged "*morality*" and "*responsibility*" that Hacha was to embody in the service of German supremacy. To this effect, Hacha focud in his speeches on his personal dissatisfaction with the Czech "*moral*" environment.⁶¹ As Hacha himself stated: "Moral qualities are today as important as professional ones. We have to evade servility, we have to evade denouncing because, gentlemen, thereby we don't gain a favour of the German leaders."⁶²

Hacha as a would-be (moral) authority was a creation of propaganda and the press professionally managed by the Germans. In this way, Hacha, himself a bureaucratic 'nobody' without his own personality⁶³ was turned into a useful "image," cover up, for the purpose of control inside the country, as well as for abroad. To a great extent, this was achieved already during peace-time.⁶⁴ Hacha also obediently tried to redefine the Czech identity - in his own image and likeness. To this effect, he

either Germanized or dispersed in Russia or expelled somewhere in the East. The most dangerous class of Czechs were defined as those with a "good racial background," but with a "bad conviction" - they were to be put against the wall and exterminated. [Dusan Tomasek, Robert Kvacek, *Causa Emil Hacha*, op. cit., p. 126]

⁶¹ See, for example, Dusan Tomasek, Robert Kvacek, *Causa Emil Hacha*, op. cit., p. 70.

⁶² Ibid., p. 44, see also p. 43. Clearly, the words ceased to have their traditional meanings and were used to cover up their opposite.

⁶³ Hacha was a typical case of pedant who having no content, the more he was forced to cling to a form or any form, for that matter. The form was also covering up his cowardice and collaboration. Thus, when dozens of thousands of Czechs were executed so that the Czech nation be beheaded of their best, he complained to the Nazis authorities that the Germans were not showing their "Heil" during the Czech anthem. [Ibid., p. 144] *Uniformity* of form was for him more important than the coherence of the essence (the word "conscience" does not seem to fit well in this connection).

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 72.

had to put their words on their head to do so. In his manifesto of June 19, 1942, he asserted:

Who stands against the Great German Empire, who brings into our lands a disintegration, treason and crime, is not a Czech. We shall have no mercy for such people ... We have excluded those traitors from the nation for good ... you should work and to do everything so that the Fuhrer can again trust the Czech nation ...⁶⁵

Evidently, Hacha based his own existence upon the "trust" (or "recognition" in the Hegelian language) of his master, Hitler, in his servility and found his meaning in making the others to do the same. Hacha's own identity became totally derived from an external source of the master's recognition, consequently, becoming himself nobody. This led to an advent of active slave (super-slave) like Hacha who was instrumental for enforcing passive servility of others.⁶⁶ Hacha's inability to act politically was essential for the realization of the Nazis goal of imposing on the Czech nation "apolitical politics," that is, to de-politicize them so that their life can be completely cut-off from any extraneous information and completely then subdued and organized by Nazi propaganda and will.⁶⁷ The Nazis tried to hold to their program of de-politicizing the Czechs until the very last moment.

Depoliticizing means nothing less than a loss of one's own being. What is left as the main duty of citizens depoliticized into slaves is labour.⁶⁸ On the gates of death

⁶⁵ Dusan Tomasek, Robert Kvacek, *Causa Emil Hacha*, op. cit., p. 157.

⁶⁶ Cf., for example, *ibid.* p. 170.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 180.

⁶⁸ See *ibid.*, p. 198.

camps, like that one in the Czech town of Terezin, was the Hegelian slogan: 'Labour makes freedom' (Arbeit macht frei). In the same spirit, K.H. Frank relegated the Czech people in his New Year address of 1945 to the "working people."⁶⁹ Thus, with a view to that mechanism of slave producing other slaves (as a kind of super-slave) and Hacha's role in it, Hitler titled Hacha as "the greatest patriot of his nation"⁷⁰ and praised him for spreading an awareness of the European dimension and the "European obligation" of the Czechs.⁷¹

The Nazis also knew too well about the inner emptiness of those cowards and their inevitable existential dependency on being determined, confirmed, held and safeguarded by their masters' "recognition." In this sense, K.H. Frank warned one of the member of the Czech protectorate "puppet" government: "An escape from responsibility [to us] is out of question. Who went with us once, cannot go back any more ..."⁷²

Similarly, according to Hacha's "testament," the Czech nation can preserve itself only by following his imperative of "being useful" to the German Reich. He expressly protested against being guilty of any lost Czech lives - for Hacha "the guilt falls on the heads of those [victims] who did not obey his voice." Hacha finally defined his task as "managing the retreat" (sic) of the Czech nation from a "dizzy sovereignty." He finished with a somewhat ambiguous wish that the Czech nation

⁶⁹ Dusan Tomasek, Robert Kvacek, *Causa Emil Hacha*, p. 186. The reduction of a nation and its people to "labourers" was also the main motto of the following Communist rhetoric and policies.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 166.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 169.

"live to see the victory of the Reich and Europe."⁷³

Symbolically, Hacha became, since late 1943, mentally sick - he developed a loss of memory.⁷⁴ One of the last medical reports on Hacha's health made after the liberation in a prison hospital of Pankrac read:

In the sphere of mental abilities, he shows a strongly reduced level of understanding and total mental feebleness. He does not recognize his environs. *He is not oriented in time and space [my italics].*⁷⁵

Unfortunately, the German occupation had also other *serious long-term* repercussions that were followed upon and further developed after the war by the Communist regime serving first of all the strategic needs of the Soviet Union. Thus, despite a number of otherwise discontinuous elements, Communism in Czechoslovakia represented an underlying continuity of nihilism of a deliberate disrupting the self-being (*svébytnost*) of the Czechoslovak statehood and Czech nation. The German spatial policy laid down a basis for a systemic and planned spoliation of the Czech nation.⁷⁶ In a place of system of individual responsibility, Nazi methods "installed a system of distrust, of suspicion and of keeping an eye on each individual."⁷⁷ It was suppressing initiative. The ethos of industry was replaced by slavery. Comprehensive central control was "a fundamental requisite and primary condition for the erection of

⁷³ Dusan Tomasek, Robert Kvacek, *Causa Emil Hacha*, op. cit., p. 178.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 182.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 212. Hacha's illness and then death prevented his being tried for treason.

⁷⁶ Leopold Chmela, *The Economic Aspect of the German Occupation of Czechoslovakia*, Czechoslovak Sources and Documents, No. 30., (Prague, Orbis, 1948), p. 131.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 38.

a system of robbery."⁷⁸ The application of a system alien to Czech mentality, meant demoralization.⁷⁹ In this way, it was fascism, not Communism that first introduced and imposed in Czechoslovakia the institution of a command economy resulting in a drastic decrease in the volume of real national productivity and bureaucratization of the economy and country: a pre-war ratio was 7-8 productive workers to 1 administrative, during the occupation there were 3-4 workers to 1 bureaucrat.⁸⁰ Bureaucratization also involved an introduction of administrative uniformity of spirit.⁸¹

Vilem Hejl, a Czech political analyst, also shed light on the less known background of Edvard Benes, the Czechoslovak President who surrendered the state to the Munich dictate in 1938 and then to the Communist demands in 1948. In 1941-1942, Benes finished his book, *Democracy Today and Tomorrow*, being, as Hejl put it, Benes's program for the future and his political confession. In this regard, Hejl noted that rarely indeed was any political project realized so thoroughly.⁸² In the said book, Benes stressed that "the collectivizing national-socialist [Nazi] measures according to the German example" would be of importance for the future, thus, in this way, Benes saw the fascist states as "preparing themselves for a development towards new forms of ownership."⁸³ Thereby, as Hejl pointed out, Benes de facto praised the totalitarian regimes of his time as a transit to a system of the future, in Benes's own

⁷⁸ Leopold Chmela, *The Economic Aspect of the German Occupation of Czechoslovakia*, op. cit., p. 38.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 38.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 39.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 40.

⁸² Vilem Hejl, *Rozvrat: Mnichov a nas osud*, op. cit., pp. 97-98. As a matter of fact, already during the World War II (as early as 1943), Benes was informed by Stalin about calculations and preparations with regard to a third world war. [Ibid., pp. 147-148, 159-160].

⁸³ Ibid., pp. 98-99.

words: "as much the future democracy will have to limit and regulate economic and ownership freedoms, the more it will have to regulate some modes and expressions of the former free democratic political life."⁸⁴ This regulation was to be of a corporative type that would enable the state to "intervene more into individual freedoms more than in a classic pre-war democracy."⁸⁵ Hejl concluded that in this way, "an abandonment of the state continuity and factual removal of Czechoslovak democracy was prepared" by its nominal leader and representative.

The following period was characterized as subduing Czechoslovakia by the Soviet Union as one of its East European satellites.⁸⁶ H.Gordon Skilling, an expert on Czechoslovakia, characterized the country under socialism as a "dependent state, subject to a high degree of Soviet control and influence" with a comparatively little degree of autonomy. "The submissive character" of the leadership was given as the decisive factor for this mode of dependence.⁸⁷ Communism in Czechoslovakia,

⁸⁴ Vilem Hejl, *Rozvrat: Mnichov a nas osud*, op. cit., p. 99.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 99.

⁸⁶ See, for example, A.H. Hermann, *A History of the Czechs*, (London: Allen Lane, 1975), pp. 273-77; Vojtech Mencl, Milos hajek, Milan Otahal and Erika Kadlecova, *Krizovatky 20. stoleti: Svetlo na bila mista v nejnovějších dejinach*, op. cit., pp. 211-212.

⁸⁷ H. Gordon Skilling, *Communism National and International, Eastern Europe after Stalin*, op. cit., pp. 23-25. An exclusive account was provided to the public by Josef Frolík, a former high-ranking secret police officer and later defector. It is rather chilling. At least two out of five Communist presidents had records of being informers or collaborators of the Fascist regime. Their services then were used effectively by the Soviets - once more against the nation. Thus, Antonín Novotný, a leader of the Communist party and Czechoslovak president, was first an agent of the Gestapo, later to be hired by Soviet intelligence; so were, for example, such highest party and state officials as Vladimír Koucky and Evžen Erban (who was to play later a remarkable role in hosting Vaclav Havel and his wife at an exotic party on the eve of the Velvet Revolution). [Josef Frolík, *Spion vypovídal*, (Praha: Orbis, 1990), pp. 53-54, 110, 141] Among the agents of Gestapo and other fascist police organizations, were rather prominent personalities, such as Viliam Siroky, like E. Erban, a member of the highest leadership; Karel Mestek, a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party; a minister of national security Ladislav Kopriva; Vaclav Nosek, the first Communist minister of defence; a Deputy Minister of the Interior Jindrich Kotál; a chief of the investigation department of secret police from the period of greatest political reprisals of the 1950s, Milan Moucka; Milos Vejvoda, a prominent Czechoslovak diplomat and deputy foreign minister; officials in of

including its worse period of the 1950s, was introduced under the leadership of the people of the 1929 generation (Klement Gottwald, Antonín Zapotocký, Karol Bacilek, Jaromír Dolanský, Václav Kopecký, Viliam Siroký, and Zdeněk Fierlinger) whose political basis was, as noted above, nihilism towards Czechoslovak statehood.⁸⁸

The remaining leadership potential of the nation was deliberately stifled by the terror of political processes of the late 1940s and the 1950s while the power of the secret political police was simultaneously increasing under the direction of Soviet advisors. These systematic persecutions in Czechoslovakia were the largest and also the most conspicuous in all the Eastern European satellites of the Soviet Union. The social stratification of the victims also reveal the rationale and nature of the operation. Among the condemned for "political crimes" by the Communist regime, two groups clearly prevailed: 41 per cent of them were workers, followed immediately by the intellectuals comprising 35-40 per cent. According to Zdeněk Hejzlar, a Czech historian, "despite all the apparent coincidences of the selection of victims ... everything, that could have been eventually a ground for building a national tradition

the secretariat of the party Central Committee, and others. The former Nazi agents, especially those of the Gestapo and SS, were deliberately hired by the Communist police. [Josef Frolík, *Spion vypovida*, op. cit., pp. 53-54, 72, 90, 91, 107, 110, 141, 156, 221] On the links between Gestapo and KGB see *ibid.*, pp. 140-141, or Allan Bullock, *Hitler and Stalin: parallel lives*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992), pp. 662-663, including an account of a Soviet transfer of some hundreds of German Communists to Gestapo for execution, others were executed in the USSR after their flight there from fascism.

Gustav Husák, the General Secretary of the Communist party from April 1969 till 17 December 1987 and the last Czechoslovak President, actively collaborated with the pro-Nazi government in Slovakia. He was then invited by Nazi Propaganda Minister Goebbels to visit the "liberated Ukraine" in the fall of 1941. In 1942, he signed an emotional appeal on behalf of "Winterhilfe" for the Nazi Army in Russia. In 1943, he visited with a Slovak delegation the mass graves of Polish officers discovered in the Katyn forest near Smolensk and "crossed the lines" back to the communist side only in 1943. And in winter 1944, he advocated the annexation of postwar Czechoslovakia by the Soviet Union. [Jiri V. Kotas, *Czechoslovakia's Crossroads in the Twentieth Century (a personal essay)*, (Ottawa: Českosloveska cesta, 1988), p. 18]

⁸⁸ H. Gordon Skilling, *Communism National and International, Eastern Europe after Stalin*, op. cit., p. 89.

of revolution, was attacked."⁸⁹ The political power was transposed through directed processes of internalization, mostly by the means of induced ubiquitous fear into spiritual, cultural and behavioral patterns - internal enslavements. A key role was in this regard assigned to orchestrated, "theatrical" political processes with real executions whose purpose was a liquidation and deterrence of independent-minded and leader-type personalities and political talents. It was a planned (re)production of mediocrity, especially in the Czechoslovak elite.⁹⁰

This spelled a radical reversal of the elite character and role. It involved an inner mortification of the personal self-being (*svébytnost*), followed by replacing the enforced inner emptiness by an extraneous will and forcing the object to learn by heart its role. At the end, this person emerged as a being without his own will, character and *looking forward to death and embracing the ethos of death*, thus, being himself *de facto* dead, as Skvorecky confessed in his novel *Cowards*. The political processes displayed the mechanism of man's murder in a concise and extreme form.⁹¹ The ultimate aim was the destruction of the nation by depriving them of the potential for action.⁹²

This spreading and self-reproducing inner death of the elite was then underscored by a physical death of its "god" - Stalin, in 1953, whose shadows, to use

⁸⁹ Zdenek Hejzlar, "K politice a vnitřnímu vývoji KSC po roce 1948" in *Sborník: systematické změny*, (Koln: Index, 1972), pp. 75, 81.

⁹⁰ Erazim Kohák, *Narod v nás: Česká otázka a ideál humanitní v době normalizace*, (Toronto: Sixty-Eight Publishers, 1978), p. 265.

⁹¹ See Vojtech Mencl, Milos Hajek, Milan Otahal and Erika Kadlecova, *Krizovatky 20. století: Sverlo na bílé místo v nejnovějších dějinách*, op. cit., pp. 247, 249. See also Vladimír V. Kusín, *The Intellectual Origins of the Prague Spring*, (Cambridge, the Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 11.

⁹² H. Kovalyova and E.V. Kohák, *Na vlastní kůži*, (Toronto: 68 Publishers, 1973), p. 263.

Nietzsche's imagery, have still been hanging on the walls of the Soviet cave a long time after the dictator had passed away. In this regard, as Kotas rightly hinted upon, Stalin's death amounted to the death of the whole system - its acknowledgement came with a delay only in the late 1980s. The regime, finding itself 'tired to death,' began "being slowly supplanted by the more formalized and automated rituals" - rituals of Stalin's dead survivors.⁹³

Importantly, the experiment and transitional rehearsal represented by the "Prague Spring of 1968" was theoretically prepared some ten years ahead - in the middle of the 1950s or, respectively, in Czechoslovakia in 1957-1958 according to Ota Sik, one of its authors.⁹⁴ The chief symbol of Prague Spring and its leading character, Alexander Dubcek, was selected by Moscow. In 1967, Novotny allegedly refused the demands of Moscow for deploying its units on the territory of Czechoslovakia.⁹⁵ The truth, however, is that in accordance with the plans sanctioned by Marshall Grecko in 1965, forward arsenals of nuclear weapons were stationed

⁹³ Jiri V. Kotas, *Czechoslovakia's Crossroads in the Twentieth Century (a personal essay)*, op. cit., pp. 20, 23.

⁹⁴ Ota Sik, *Czechoslovakia: The Bureaucratic Economy*, op. cit., p. 7. Vladimir V. Kusin traced the origins of the project "Prague Spring" to the 1956 works carried out in some academic institutions, especially the Prague School of Economics and the Mining College in Ostrava, as a search for "new facts" called "democratization" that was to dispense finally with the nominal legitimacy of "majority decisions." [Vladimir V. Kusin, *The Intellectual Origins of the Prague Spring*, (Cambridge: The Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 20-23; see also Zdenek Hejzlar, "K politice a vnitřnímu vývoji KSC po roce 1948", op. cit., p. 82] The phenomenon of a ten-years period, during which subsequent political agendas are formulated and publicly appear, also seems to be applicable with regard to the Velvet Revolution of 1989. Charter '77 was established in 1977, and the current programs of Böhmsch nihilism were presented first in 1977-1978 while some of their basic concepts emerged again some ten years before in 1968-1971 (see further below).

⁹⁵ Vojtech Mencl, Milos Hajek, Milan Otahal and Erika Kadlecova, *Krizovatky 20. století: Světlo na bíla msta v nejnovějších dějinách*, op. cit., p. 286.

secretly in Czechoslovakia.²⁵

In December 1967, Brezhnev visited Prague. He spoke with every member of the Presidium separately. That was an unprecedented move on the part of the Soviet leadership. The longest talk was with Dubcek. The contents of all these secret discussions remain unknown. On January 3, 1968, during a meeting of the Central Committee, Antonin Novotny himself proposed Dubcek as his successor to the post in the Party, and the Prague Spring of 1968 was started, as Pithart put it, as a "theatrical show."²⁶ The preparation for the August invasion in Czechoslovakia began at the level of the armies of the Warsaw Pact states in February 1968, consequently, at the level of the Soviet general staff, the planning and its elaboration had to start much earlier.²⁷

The lesson of that opening, however, indicated that, if the potential of the 'other possibility' is not checked, controlled or occupied *beforehand*, it can lead to a creation of an undesired political space of legitimacy in its own right, that is, to a reviving of Czech political self-being (*svěbylost*) which, in 1968, proved to be still

²⁵ *Lisny*, No. 3/1995: 52. Notably, the bargaining process and negotiations in 1983-1987 on the removal of these forward nuclear weapons, that resulted in a Soviet-American treaty on the abolishment of the intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) of December 1987 together with following reductions in strategic weapons, preceded all the political changes of 1989 in Eastern Europe, thus, being a fundamental prerequisite of that transformation. On the intermediate-range forces problematic and the conclusion of the treaty see, for example, Carl G. Jacobson, *Strategic Power USA/USSR*, eds. (London: Macmillan, 1990), pp. 115, 146, 148-149, 164, 229, 303, 377, 379, 421-433, 441, 479. In this way, a strategic and military adjustment preceded the political changes in Eastern Europe. In a corresponding way, the Soviet military doctrine was overhauled roughly in the period of 1985-1988. [See, for example, *ibid.*, pp. 489-491]

²⁶ See Eugen Steiner, *The Slovak Dilemma*, op. cit., p. 159; Petr Pithart, *Dejiny a politika*, op. cit., p. 287.

²⁷ *Lisny*, 3/1995: 51.

surviving and capable of reemerging after its enforced prolonged retreat.⁹⁹ This is also apparently what Pithart defined as an underestimation of the supposedly "unpolitical" part of the public on the part of the regime.¹⁰⁰

After the military invasion of August 1968 that established a Soviet military presence in Czechoslovakia, Dubcek himself and other men of 1968 became "liquidated by their own 1968 efforts" in a strictly disciplined way to be demoted and put aside after fulfilling the task of "legalizing" the results of the invasion.¹⁰¹ Dubcek, as the leader of the party, was replaced in April 1969 by Husak, the former prisoner of the Communist regime that "served to spread some necessary momentous illusions."¹⁰² As far as the political Communist elite was concerned, Pithart summarized the Prague Spring essentially correctly as an attempt of the elite to justify themselves even for the price of the loss of "the last remnants of the independence of Czechoslovakia as the state."¹⁰³ As a result, the derived character of the party and its subordination of foreign interests were reconfirmed, and this, in turn, enhanced nihilistic cynicism and relativism of the dependent elite.¹⁰⁴

Importantly, the idea of encouraging the separatist tendencies that appeared on

⁹⁹ Cf. Jiri Valenta, "The USSR and Czechoslovakia's Experiment with Eurocommunism: Reassessment after a Decade" in Hans Brisch and Ivan Volgyes, eds., *Czechoslovakia: The Heritage of Ages Past*, East European Monographs No. LI, New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), pp. 202-212; Vojtech Menci, Milos Hajek, Milan Otahal and Erika Kadlecova, *Krizovatky 20. stoleti: Svetlo na bila mista v nejnovejsich dejinach*, op. cit., p. 300.

¹⁰⁰ Petr Pithart, *Dejiny a politika*, (Praha: Prostor, 1990, p. 276.

¹⁰¹ Jiri V. Kotas, *Czechoslovakia's Crossroads in the Twentieth Century (a personal essay)*, op. cit., pp. 32-33.

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 33. Kotas noted: "This gimmick was not without precedent. In 1956 for the same reason, Moscow approved the elevation of two other former prisoners, Poland's Gomułka and Hungary's Kadar." [Ibid., p. 33]

¹⁰³ Petr Pithart, *Dejiny a politika*, op. cit., p. 289.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., pp. 277, 302.

the part of the Communists during World War II was reconsidered in 1968 (and later again in 1989-1992). According to Eugen Steiner, the Russians made a conscious conclusion that it was "the time to encourage the Slovaks into a more nationalistic attitude." In this way, Vasil Bilak, a man of the Kremlin with a strong Stalinist past, after 1968, officially the second most powerful figure of the Communist regime in Czechoslovakia and otherwise ultra-orthodox conservative, was in 1968 privately expressing "a possibility or even preference of Slovak independence."¹⁰⁵ Following that line, Bilak, who could not speak properly either Czech or Slovak, became suddenly a proponent of an even more nationalistic programme than Dubcek or Husak and actively helped to open the Slovak question also within the party.¹⁰⁶ The legislation on the Czechoslovak federation was adopted in October 1968 *shortly after* the Soviet invasion. According to C.S. Leff, remaking the Czechoslovak state into a rather complex and quite untransparent federation was "the sole major institutional legacy of the Prague Spring."¹⁰⁷

According to Petr Uhl, a dissident-Trotskyist and prominent figure of the Velvet Revolution, the technocratic generation that was to play a crucial role in the changes of the 1980s began forming in the 1960s, especially *within* the Communist apparatus. Concepts of the new power designs were formulated by the end of 1967 to be

¹⁰⁵ Eugen Steiner, *The Slovak Dilemma*, op. cit., pp. 177, 181.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 202; H. Gordon Skilling, *Czechoslovakia's Interrupted Revolution*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 453; Robert W. Dean, *Nationalism and Political Change in eastern Europe: The Slovak Question and the Czechoslovak Reform Movement*, (Denver: University of Denver, 1973), pp. 29-30, 58.

¹⁰⁷ Carol Skalnik Leff, *National Conflict in Czechoslovakia: The Making and Remaking of a State, 1918-1987*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 243.

rehearsed in 1968.¹⁰⁸

Alojz Lorenc, the last Communist chief of the secret police belonged to this generation of technocrats. As he himself stressed, at that time, there appeared a new generation in the secret police, purely technocratic, unbound by the previous revolutionary tradition and somewhat "isolated" from their older colleagues.¹⁰⁹ They were free from the shadows of Stalin that still hung over the heads of their mentors and that already vanished for the former. It was also Alojz Lorenz who defined the the *first* principle of the destiny of Czechoslovakia as its determination by *external* factors.¹¹⁰

After a short-lived reawakening in the 1960s, the morbid ethos of the 1950's that moulded the elite then reemerged in a weaker version in the 1970s under an euphemism of "normalization." Importantly, however, the Czechoslovak elite together with their Soviet masters embarked at that time upon a path of further degradation, becoming intertwined and entangled with the underclass of the society and turning themselves into a mafia in funnelling large amounts of assets away from the public sphere and the state.¹¹¹ The top of society became bound by the bottom and established a mutual interdependence and understanding, thus, controlling the society from both ends together. The mortified elite thus found the only possible way of its revitalization

¹⁰⁸ Petr Uhl and collective, *Program spolecenské samospravy*, (Koln: Index, 1982), pp. 45, 65.

¹⁰⁹ Alojz Lorenc, *Ministerstvo strachu: Neskartované vzpomínky generála Lorence*, (Bratislava: Tatrapress, 1992), p. 40. Lorenc himself defines in the title of his book the Communist Ministry of the Interior pertinently as that responsible for fear, a Hobbesian fear perhaps.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

¹¹¹ See, for example, Josef Skvorecky, *Hlas z Ameriky*, (Toronto: Sixty-Eight Publishers, 1990), pp. 215-217; Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, (New York: the Free Press, 1992), p. 32.

in assuming the features of an underclass who was, however, invested with power over the state 'rented' from Moscow 'lenders'. This factor later proved as essential during the post-Communist transformation and privatization that legalized and validated what had been previously formally illegal and publicly embarrassing. This required from the elite public self-denial, that is, being what there were not, and great efforts had to be exerted for up-keeping their socialist images fencing off the (in)sight of the public. However, already in 1959, Ferdinand Peroutka, a political observer, noted that "the bourgeoisie of that society was a political bourgeoisie" or "bureaucratic bourgeoisie." At the same time, he also discerned an emerging tendency to make the ruling class hereditary. This was combined with clearly anti-proletarian policies inside the state.¹¹²

Together with political, military and economic preparations for a transition of 1989, negotiations and bargaining were apparently under way regarding the future position and destiny of Czechoslovakia. In his book published in Koln in 1982, Petr Uhl, a former dissident and later one of the leader of the Velvet Revolution, wrote: "The Czechoslovak question is also for the rulers in Moscow a constant burden, that they try to cover up or apologize for because it hinders them in their current (sic) policy of reconciliation and cooperation with the West."¹¹³ In a similar spirit, Carol Skalník Leff stressed in his book published in 1988:

¹¹² Ferdinand Peroutka, *Demokraticky manifest*, (New York: Universum Press. Co., 1959), pp. 58-59, 48-49.

¹¹³ Petr Uhl, *Program spolecenské samosprávy*, op. cit., pp. 73-74.

[Czechoslovakia's] genesis as a state by an act of international will is only symptomatic of the insoluble long-term dilemma of the small nation. For most of their histories, Slovakia and the Czech lands have been vassals to the dominant power in Central Europe, this was no less true after 1918 than it had been before. In fact, in the aftermath of the Soviet invasion of 1968, despairing Czech intellectuals voiced regrets that the state was ever born, and they pondered the alternative of an East European confederation powerful enough to withstand Germany and the Soviet Union.¹¹⁴

If the Czech Marxist-oriented intellectuals have been consistent in anything, as M. Neudorfl, a historian of Czech origin, noted, it was their lack of responsibility towards their own nation and state. In this regard, "with some honourary exceptions, since 1989 the Czech intelligentsia as a whole has not significantly changed this fundamental attitude that remain mainly opportunistic and has ignored their need to mature both politically and morally."¹¹⁵

At this point, it can be summoned up that since 1938, the state and elite had shown a tendency of their separation and alienation from their legal and legitimate basis of power consisting in the political body of citizens. Instead, the political elite had been turned into serving as an agent and mediator of an external will (to power), carrying out a depolitization of citizens into a mass society of labourers. External

¹¹⁴ Carol Skalnik Leff, *National Conflict in Czechoslovakia: The Making and Remaking of a State, 1918-1987*, op. cit., pp. 274-275. In this connection, Leff reminded us that "international forces have recurrently offered an entree to dissatisfied Slovaks." [Ibid., p. 275]

¹¹⁵ M.L. Neudorfl, "Verejnost a její uloha v demokracii," *Polygon*, No. 7/1993: 15-16. The convergence of former Communist intellectuals into the ardent advocates of the demise of Czechoslovakia was also noted during the breakup of the state by Jaroslav Jiru, a Czech political observer who demonstrated this "easiness of negative being" on a example of Otta Urban, a former Marxist historian who became after 1989 a head of the department of Czech and Slovak history at Charles University in Prague. In this regard, J. Jiru remarked with astonishment: "now the Bolshevik experiment comes to an end, so, according to Urban's reasoning, the Czechoslovak republic should end together with it too ... Well, how easy it is to shift from Marx and Lenin to St. Wenceslav and Emul Hacha!" [*Lidove noviny*, August 11, 1992, p. 8] St. Wenceslav was abused as a symbol by the Nazis. Emil Hacha was a puppet-president during the German occupation.

factors also appeared as the decisive ones on the eve of the post-Communist transformation. The continuity, that connected different regimes in Czechoslovakia since 1938, was a continuity of the negative with regard to Czech nationhood and statehood.

CHAPTER 2

BÖHMISCH NIHILISM PREPARING (FOR) THE ARRIVAL OF A NEW HEGELIAN IDOLATRY

(The Böhmisch Birth of Nietzschean Farce)

2.1. The New Shift of the Czech Elite and Czech Nationhood

It is evident that to a certain extent the meaning of the dramatic developments of the late 1980s and early 1990s is to be sought in its preceding conceptual genesis. Some ideas and inquires questioning the rationality of Czech nationhood and statehood appeared for a moment in 1968 as if only to test the water. These were short-lived and were not developed into a comprehensive program of immediate actions.¹ In this

¹ In the 1960s, in the ranks of exile Catholic historians linked with Vatican, an idea was formulated in a 'perfect' language of nihilism that the nation is an artificial entity whose existence is not "natural." The future is to be a return to a medieval existence of man where nations have no role so that the history of any nation, particularly of the Czech nation, ought to become only an antiquarian interest of small groups keeping for the time being a distinct language and nationality (Bohdan Chudoba, Mnichov, 1975). [Jaroslav Krejčí, *O cestství a evropanství*, 1. díl, p. cit., p. 33. In 1968, Milan Kundera, a Czech writer with a former Communist background, asserted in 1968 that the father of modern Czech national nihilism, G.H. Schauer, is worthy of appreciation: it may not be good or efficient to spend so much energy in the rebirth of the Czech consciousness and culture": "Wouldn't it be better, more advantageous for mankind to devote all this energy toward the perfection of German culture ...?" Kundera concluded: "... the definite answer has yet to be given. The question lives on, and the Czech people still haven't completely justified their new national existence." [Antonín J. Liehm, eds., *The Politics of Culture*, (New York: Grove Press, 1968), pp. 149-150; on the idea of national and personal self-denial, also advanced by Kundera, see *ibid.*, pp. 136-137. On a review and analysis of the 1968 polemic on the Czech question, including a discussion between Havel and Kundera, see A. Ostry, *Ceskoslovensky problem*, op. cit., pp. 294-341, especially 321-341.

Simultaneously with a careful opening of the question of "advantages" of Czech "non-being," an "alluring" Germanic concept of *Mitteleuropa* and nostalgia for the pre-1918 *Donauraum* were called to rise from the dead. Concretely, it was argued for a "liberation" in this way both from Americanism and Russia, understandably under a German 'protection'. [See Vladimír V. Kusín, *The Intellectual Origins of the Prague Spring*, op. cit., p. 148]

Importantly, this was also followed by a briefly appearing discussion on the "revision" of the German question and the post-war settlement. [See Bohumil Cerný, Jan Kren, Václav Kural a Milan Otahal, eds., *Cesi, Němci, odsun: diskuse nezávislých historiků*, (Praha: Academia, 1990), pp. 33-43.

regard, the years 1977-1978 seem to represent a certain threshold as far as the public formulation of relevant concepts and ideas is concerned.

Ivan Svitak, a Czech Marxist thinker, asserted in a book that appeared in 1979 that "Czechoslovakia can exist only as a part of supranational formations, and whether it will be formally independent and autonomous during the next few decades is of little importance for the formation of supranational entities." In this regard, Svitak stated that "for the time being, however, it seems ... [that] the decision on that 'sale' of Czechoslovakia] will be made in the Kremlin." At the same time, Svitak drew a prospect of a forthcoming disintegration of the Soviet Union. He, moreover, also foresaw a resurrection of Dubcek (what later happened as well), as an actor in transforming the Communist system in cooperation with the Communist rulers "as part of the clearance sale of the principles of socialism." Finally, he also correctly chartered the political course after the takeover that he deemed already inevitable:

The nation, sceptical of any new fir of enthusiasm, would accept very little as a substantial improvement ... The reform communists, who suffered some discrimination [as dissidents], would again find themselves in the spotlight of history and the decree permitting the payment of royalties in hard currency would be a sufficient ideological argument for writers to join a literary club.²

Svitak was also right in establishing the imperative of the elite to isolate the

² Ivan Svitak, "The Prague Spring Revisited," in Hans Brisch and Ivan Volgyes, eds., *Czechoslovakia: The Heritage of Ages Past*, East European Monographs No. LI, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), pp. 166-167, 168-169.

Communist party because it would tend to turn against their rule.³ At the same stroke, in this delineation of the project of the forthcoming future, Svitak denied the notion of Czechoslovak independence.⁴ In the same edition, another Czech dissident thinker, Jan F. Triska, assured that "as has been the case in the past [in 1918, 1938, 1968] ... any change, to be effective, has to originate outside the country than at home."⁵ It seems that the cards of the late 1980s games were already distributed by the end of the 1970s.

The legitimacy of the "mere" Czech allegiance has been questioned or denied in a number of writings produced by political, philosophical and cultural representatives of Böhmsch nihilism - the post-1989 political elite.⁶ Together with this negative questioning and rejecting the Czech national identity and ethos, starting from

³ Ivan Svitak, "The Prague Spring Revisited," op. cit., pp. 168-169. Similarly, A.H. Hermann concluded by 1975 that "the party control, however, provided the Soviet Union with massive supplies *a fond perdu*." [A.H. Hermann, *A History of the Czechs*, op. cit., p. 283]

⁴ Ivan Svitak, "The Prague Spring Revisited," op. cit., p. 170. In his book from 1978, Erazim Kohak, a Czech philosopher who lived in emigration and today teaches in Prague, stated that, "Czechoslovakia is for Moscow [only] of significance as its forward military frontier zone" to serve as an isolation stuff between the Russian empire and Europe; how this material is concretely arranged is allegedly a matter of indifference. [Erazim Kohak, *Narod v nás: Česká otázka a ideál humanitní v udobí normalizace*, (Toronto: Sixty-Eight Publishers, 1978), p. 187]

⁵ Jan F. Triska, "Czechoslovakia: The Politics of Dependency" in Hans Brisch and Ivan Volgyes, eds., *Czechoslovakia: The Heritage of Ages Past*, op. cit., p. 191.

⁶ A representative and inspirative source in this regard is a "black book" by Bohumil Cerny, Jan Kren, Vaclav Kural a Milan Otahal, eds., *Cesi, Nemci, odsun: diskuse nezavislych historiku*, op. cit., especially contributions of Danubius (Jan Mlynarik) - particularly pp. 45, 71, 79-80, 89, 345; Jan Pribram (Petr Prihoda) - p. 50; Bohemus (Toman Brod, Jiri Dolezal, Milan Otahal, Petr Pithart, Milos Pojar, Petr Prihoda) - pp. 184, 186-190 (also on the Czech language), 193 (Czech language), 198; Jan Kren - pp. 206, 210; Erazim Kohak - pp. 321, 325, 328; Rudolf Hill - pp. 334, 340-341; Ivan Plaff - p. 350; Bedrich Loewenstein - pp. 355-360. Their critiques by Radomir Luza - pp. 162, 164; Vaclav Kural - pp. 239-240, 315; Jaroslav Opat - pp. 264-265, 267, 279-281 and 285. The pseudonym of Bohemus and Danubius are here also meaningful - the first is a clear reference to the Böhmsch ethos, and the other reminds one of an image of the Danubian empire. See also, in particular, Petr Pithart, *Dejiny a politika*, op. cit., pp. 11, 20-30, 42-46, 48, 53-54, 60, 68-69, 88, 107, 137-138, 158-159, 169-170, 175, 178, 195, 225, 231-235, 255, 261-262, 326, 328, 331-333, 336-338, 361, 366-369.

1977, a revision of the German question with regard to Czechoslovakia and post-war settlements was initiated and enforced by anonyms symbolically named Danubius (Jan Mlynarik) and Bohemus (Petr Pithart, Petr Prihoda, Jiri Dolezal, Milan Otahal, Milos Pojar, Toman Brod) linked to Charter 77,⁷ while Havel was avoiding until November 1989 any move that would linked him with condemning the result of war and following Czechoslovak security measures (transfer of the Sudeten Germans) to the astonishment of some dissidents.⁸

⁷ Bohumil Cerny, Jan Kren, Vaclav Kural a Milan Otahal, eds., *Cesi, Nemci, odsun: diskuse nezavislych historiku*, op. cit., p. 4.

⁸ Thus, Lubos Kohout was startled that the then official spokesmen of Charter 77, Vaclav Havel and Ladislav Hejdanek, did not deny the link between the activity of Charter 77 and Danubius's text. [Ibid., pp. 135-6, 141-3] Hejdanek, a close friend of Havel, refused to comment on the issue, but attacked the conclusions of Hubl's refutations of Danubius's revisionist attempt, thus rendering support to Danubius as an official representative of Charter 77. In this connection, Danubius (Mlynarik) also threatened his opponent Milan Hubl that the Charter "was not a dove-cote where everything is tolerated." [ibid., p. 128] Notably, Zdenek Mlynar, a former Communist leader from 1968, was also engaged in the polemic, supporting the revisionist line [ibid., pp. 167-178] In this connection, it is worth remembering that the generation of the Sudeten Germans, who had overwhelmingly supported Hitler's program of conquest "Volk ohne Raum" (Hitler's Nazism itself was born in the Sudeten frontier area) and Henlein's fascizoid aggressiveness, were defined by Bohemus (Pithart & spol.) as "traditional supporters of conservative and reformist parties" and "democratic and civil forces" (sic). [Ibid., p. 199] At the same time, Bohemus (Pithart & collective) condemned the Czech nation almost for everything from their alleged insufficient democratic spirit, "unempathetic" treating of the Germans (after 400,000 Czechs were killed, and the whole nation was earmarked for annihilation) to national vitality and own language (!). Importantly, Pithart and others already tied this attack to a transparent attempt at stirring animosity between the Czechs and Slovaks by claiming that the Czechs "triumphed over national aspirations of the Slovaks" (sic). [Ibid., pp. 265-266] According to Pithart & spol., the linguistic conception of the Czech nation and its resurrection was also guilty of "greatly predetermining .. the perversions, including (sic) the [Nazi!] theory and practice Heim ins Reich .. Endlosung," as well as later Communist purges and crimes. [Ibid., p. 315] Erazim Kohak, for example, found that for the sake of "factuality and humanitarian ideal" the word "Czech" ought to be spelled even differently. [Ibid., p. 328] The very Czech culture together with the Czech language were portrayed as deadly enemies - allegedly for the Czechs themselves. [See, for example, ibid., p. 356] The Czech language was charged as being "impractical" or even "fatal" from a political point of view, thus, being marked as an "obstacle." This is one of the main thesis propagated by Pithart and Bohemus. [Ibid., p. 357] According to Pithart (Bohemus) it was the Czech language as a part of the Czech being that "impeded the settlement of the Czech-German question" as understood by Böhmisch nihilism. [H. Gordon Skilling, *Sumizdat and an Independent Society in Central and Eastern Europe*, (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1989), pp. 118] To this effect, the Czech national revival was labelled as a "pathology." [Bohumil Cerny, Jan Kren, Vaclav Kural a Milan Otahal, eds., *Cesi, Nemci, odsun: diskuse nezavislych historiku*, op. cit., p. 358] Czech being was allegedly "a not fully responsible movement, policy." Böhmisch nihilism should supplant this and provide it with its "own feet." [Ibid., p. 359] In this way,

Immediately with that revisionist drive in the form of the "German" (Böhmisch) question, a call for a revision of the concept of (Czech) statehood itself was launched as well.⁹ A concept of breaking the Czech state into pieces-regions and their assimilation at least partially into the German body was already proposed as a possible more moderate variant.¹⁰ It was demanded that the Sudeten Germans be treated as one collective, if not a nation, and should *collectively* be reinstated.¹¹ The proponents of the revision also threatened that the reversing of the results of the World War is "a *condition* for real peace;" otherwise the Czech nation was to be denied a way back to its own history.¹²

According to Jan Mlynarik, the Czechs should better bow down because the Germans "have often focused on vengeance," and that Prague itself should be expected then to become a German city because "the idiotic Czech policy" had created all the problems.¹³ The Czechs should redefine themselves, because there are still

Böhmisch nihilism also redefined itself as "defiling all that was surpassing [Böhmisch] pettiness and that was restraining primitive drives." [Ibid., p. 360]

⁹ Bohumil Cerny, Jan Kren, Vaclav Kural a Milan Otahal, eds., *Cest. Nemci, odsun: diskuse nezavislych historiku*, op. cit., p. 328. Kohak supported the appeal for revising Czech statehood by his claim that the brutality of the Germans was equal to that of the Czechs that puts the whole world conflagration on its head.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 342-343. In this regard, it was suggested rather bluntly that Germany would even "gladly" pay for that regional dismembering of the Czech state. [Ibid., p. 342]

¹¹ See, for example, ibid., pp. 340-341.

¹² Ibid., p. 341.

¹³ Ibid., p. 345. In this regard, Mlynarik himself also provided ample evidence of the correctness of Arendt's observation that "[Pan-Germanism] spoke from the beginning a strikingly vulgar language." [Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, op. cit., p. 238] Thus, Mlynarik saw the language of his opponent as "anal feces;" those then who carried out the transfer of the Sudeten Germans, in Mlynarik's view, "discharged bull's feces" into his life, into the Böhmisch history. Czech emigrants not agreeing with his opinions were accused of "freely desecrating" him from the New World. He assumed a collective *Ich* and spoke in the names of the generations and later the whole nation which "feel and see it in this way." Mlynarik also charged the nation with a task of "removing these bull's feces of the transfer which [the emigrants] had left [for him], thus, endangering the [Böhmisch] future - for ever!" This threat was then emphasized by Mlynarik's asserting that "the successors would pay at one time for the colossal stupidity

some Germans "who want to pave the towns of Bohemia with Czech skulls."¹⁴ To this effect, Mlynarik announced, "we want to reach an agreement with [Germany]" on a common basis "to find a common solution" by "distancing ourselves from the inconsiderate acts of our fathers" - "for the sake of our survival and in the interests of quiet existence of our children."¹⁵

The self-alienation of the proponents of this Böhmisch nihilism was elevated as a universal ideal and goal: "*Split loyalties* [that is a betrayal in other words - my comment] is a precondition of 'open society' ... split loyalties enables a *plurality of truths* [and thus also a plurality of lies - my comment], and thus, a separation ... of the nation from the state."¹⁶ Thereby, schizophrenia (split personality) was *de facto* elevated as a political program. Importantly, the protagonists of Böhmisch nihilism consciously *referred to and argued by* Marx's rhetoric, calling for the annihilation of the "counter-revolutionary national ruins," pointing towards the Czech nation.¹⁷ Such voices were coming mostly (but not only) from the ranks of the ex-Communist dissidents.

This way of Böhmisch nihilism and gradual revising of the results of World War II was portrayed as the only one to the Western world offered to the Czechs.

[the transfer]." Mlynarik charged the Czech war generation with a collective guilt and rejected the result of the war that ended up the massive executions of the Czechs in the protectorate and concentration camps. Mlynarik (a Slovak historian) presented himself on this occasion as 'a Czech man from the border region,' using an anonym "Hranicar" - a man from the frontier. [Bohumil Cerny, Jan Kren, Vaclav Kural a Milan Otahal, eds., *Cesi, Nemci, odsun: diskuse nezavislych historiku*, op. cit., pp. 345-346]

¹⁴ Bohumil Cerny, Jan Kren, Vaclav Kural a Milan Otahal, eds., *Cesi, Nemci, odsun: diskuse nezavislych historiku*, op. cit., p. 346.

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 346-347.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 356.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 357.

Vilem Hejl, one of those who defended the idea of Czechoslovak statehood and nationhood, pointed out that the campaign vented through the dissent against the idea of a Czechoslovak state "had its boom during the Fascist occupation," including the attack against "clenching to the exotic [Czech] language" and demand that the Czechs give up "higher cultural ambitions of their own" in exchange for "pettiness."¹⁸

In 1977-1978, the concept of 'denationalizing' the Czech statehood was articulated and elaborated as a "*political program for the future*" by Pithart.¹⁹ It is also an apparent (or meaningful?) paradox that one of the most concise and also radical programs of Böhmsch nihilism was theoretically forwarded by Petr Pithart. He formulated these views well before he became the first post-Communist Czech Prime Minister (1990-1992). He then played a substantial political role in the process labelled as "rebuilding the Czechoslovak federation from above" that immediately preceded and cleared the way for the demise of the state. Ten years before the dismantlement of Czechoslovakia in 1990-1992, Pithart began deploring the linguistic and political separation of the Czech-speaking "nation" from "Böhmsch society." In

¹⁸ Vilem Hejl, *Rozyvat: Mnichov a nas osud*, op. cit., 219-220. Hejl cites as an example a book *Ces v nove Evrope* (*The Czechs in the New Europe*) by a collaborationist Emanuel Vajtauer (1943), thus pointing out "plagiarism" of the Böhmsch nihilists. Moreover, Hejl also noticed that Böhmsch nihilism tries to transpose its ideas into practice by the means of breaking the state into regions, districts and isolated localities to which it tries to restrain any potential "patriotism." This would amount, a Hejl noted, putting the nation into a regime of reserves or museums. [ibid., p. 228]

¹⁹ Petr Pithart, *Dejiny a politika*, op. cit., pp. 30, 89, 338. Until the autumn of 1968, Pithart, a son of a Czechoslovak high-ranking diplomat, was a member of the Communist party. His desertion from the party did not prevent him from being allowed to depart for a post-graduate course at Oxford University in the autumn of 1969, at a time when the Prague Spring had already been crushed, and the so-called normalization was already launched. In 1977, in one of his texts, Pithart also managed to reproduce internal information of the interior minister on Charter 77. [ibid., p. 318] During the breakup of Czechoslovakia, while Pithart's acting was of little help in maintaining the state, his public speeches from that time do not reflect as a whole to which extent he might have been faithful to his line from the period prior to 1989.

his view, the "Czech" nation should have been essentially a nation of the Czechs and the Germans, thus forming a "Böhmisch political nation"²⁰ that would reject and abandon the Czech language as a constituent part of its identity. In Pithart's own words, there should be "a realistic resignation on the external non-essentiality of language."²¹ Apparently, the Czech nation would not be there any longer.²²

In 1986, Pithart announced: "The essence of the nation is grasped by ... H.G. Schauer²³ and E. Radl²⁴ with a characteristic controversial *onesidedness*." Pithart then

²⁰ On Pithart's concept of a "Böhmisch political nation," implying that the Czechs should be part of Germano-Czech entity ideally speaking German, see, for example, Pithart, *Dejiny a politika*, op. cit., pp. 206, 331.

²¹ For Pithart's arguments on the "non-essentiality" and "irrationality" of preserving the Czech language, see *ibid.*, pp. 11, 44-45, 54, 158, 261-262, 326, 333.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 206, 328-338. A basic summary of Pithart's Böhmisch nihilism is contained in his essays *An Attempt at a Homeland* published in 1979, and *History, Campaigns and National Conscience* (1986). [*Ibid.*, pp. 19-30 and 327-343] In a similar vein, and also following Emanuel Radl, Jan Kren has revitalized a thesis that the Czechs are "Slavonic Germans." [Bohumil Cerny, *Cesti, Nemci, od. un: diskuse nezavislych historiku*, op. cit., p. 206] On Radl's assertion that the Czechs could be viewed more properly as "Prussianized Slavs who have nothing [essential] of their own," see Emanuel Radl, *Valka Cechu s Nemci*, (Praha: Melantrich, 1993), pp. 164, 219, 241, 245. Also, see Erazim Kohak's comments in Bohumil Cerny, *Cesti, Nemci, odsun: diskuse nezavislych historiku*, op. cit., p. 325.

²³ In 1886, Gordon Schauer published a provocative article *Our two questions* where he asked whether "our national existence is worth the effort, and whether its cultural value is so great." On an essentially positive view on Schauer's nihilism vis-à-vis the worthiness of the Czech renaissance and further existence of the Czech nation, see also, for example, Vaclav Belohradsky, *Myslet zelen sveta*, (Praha: Mlada fronta, 1991), pp. 88-92.

²⁴ Emanuel Radl's work *Valka Cechu s Nemci* (*The War of the Czechs against the Germans*) is a primary discourse in Böhmisch nihilism (first published in 1928). Schauer and Radl can be rightly viewed as predecessors and forerunners of today's Böhmisch nihilists who also consciously acknowledge their authority. A knowledgeable critique of Radl can be found in the book *The War of the Czechs against the Germans*, Radl attacks the alleged "anti-German policy" of the first Czechoslovak Republic [Emanuel Radl, *Valka Cechu s Nemci*, op. cit., p. 9]. His ideal is an assimilation of the Czechs with the Germans where the Czechs are perceived as basically debased and inferior to the Germans whose privileges would deserve to be legitimate and constitutional. [*Ibid.*, pp. 74-75, 82, 94, 104, 108-110, 117, 136-137, 197, 218-219, 236, 240, 245] A strong government should be a guarantor of that assimilation. [*Ibid.*, p. 82] A national language (Czech) is a "local prejudice and custom." [p. 110] Radl formulates the ideal of "Böhmisch" identity and loyalty as opposed to its "Czechish distortion." [pp. 222-223] Finally, Radl suggests that "Germany would swallow the Czechs anyway." [*Ibid.*, pp. 217-218] What Roman Jakobson, a notable Bohemist, wrote about Radl during World War II is unfortunately valid still today with regard to the current Böhmisch political elite: "One feels a chill going through the spine just if one thinks that those [Radl's] statements, to be sure, welcomed and adequately utilized by German propaganda, could be made some fifteen years before [the occupation], and that they have among some Czechs enthusiastic admirers

hastened to assert that H.G. Schauer and E. Radl are "right" in their 'onesidedness' toward the Czech nation. Thereby, he justified their position as a basis for his "political program for the future,"²⁵ which is to be "a return to what had been."²⁶ This program was to be carried out by dissolving the being from within, in Pithart's words by "working in the own ranks and not to abandon them."²⁷ Pithart postulated the separation of the nation from the state: "the Czech state was not [to be] a creation along which its creator, the nation, would grow as well."²⁸ Elaborating this nihilistic *a priori* prescription, Pithart, the coming-to-be Czech Prime Minister asserted, "the state was and remained for us - an alien stuff [state]."²⁹ Consequently: "the formulation of our national identity ... may be well a matter of indifference. And hence none at all."³⁰

In 1989, shortly before the Velvet Revolution, he argued that the Czech nation had only two alternatives left that amount to the same: 1) to build an "unpleasant" relationship toward its past and, above all, to embrace an "unpleasant" future, or; 2) to "declare bankruptcy and to place our destiny in hands of somebody else who will

even today [that is, during the Nazi occupation] elevating Radl's views above Palacky [founder of modern Czech historiography] and above Masaryk." [Roman Jakobson, *Moudrost starých Čechů: odvěké základy národního odboje*, (New York: Československý národní kroužek, 1943), p. 224] In his postscript to Radl's work, Ladislav Hejdanek, a prominent ex-dissident, stresses Jan Patočka's praise of Radl as "the greatest thinker of the first republic and perhaps the strongest Czech philosopher." [Emanuel Radl, *Válka Čechů a Němců*, op. cit., p. 275] Attention is drawn to Radl's appeal for having the name "Czechoslovak" substituted by a "linguistically more neutral one." [p. 285] Hejdanek urges that this Radl's work become a reader of every [Czech] citizen." [Ibid., p. 276]

²⁵ Pithart, *Dejiny a politika*, op. cit., pp. 30, 338. Italics added.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 88.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 30.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 158.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 169.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 225.

keep a tight rein on us."³¹ The potentially close interdependence of theoretical views and practical matters is perceptible in Pithart's questioning the Czechoslovak frontiers as being "maximalist" and "mythologized pictures beyond more realistic parameters."³² Having this in mind, Pithart presented the idea of the Czechoslovak state as "an undeserved gift"³³ or as a suspicious and cunning "dream that would not hold out" and, to this effect, called for a "critical re-examination" of the First Republic combined with "un-demonizing" or extolling the Habsburgs.³⁴

Czech aspirations, including the cultivation of the Czech language, were for Pithart an "irresponsible negation" and opposite to "spiritual depths."³⁵ In this spirit, Pithart labelled the nation and homeland as "dead terms" and "an old smell."³⁶ Pithart reserved the future for one exclusive type of the "dead" homeland that would be a "much sober link than the nation" based on a "realistic surrender of the external spuriousness of the [Czech] language, common history and distinct character."³⁷ In other words, Pithart's program for the future was formulated as the death of the nation, language, history and the state.

This was to be achieved by: 1) depoliticisation of the nation;³⁸ 2) down-sizing and dissolving the state in regional pettiness that would substitute the state and nation by an ideal of idiotic, tawdry, that is, petty-bourgeois, local triviality - this for the

³¹ Pithart, *Dejiny a politika*, op. cit., p. 361.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 195.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 26, 107.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 43, 69.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 326.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 332.

³⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 46.

sake of "renowned" peasants' fairs," "magic love pictures," "worshipped statues" and country churches. This is for Pithart the right "patriotism." At the same time, he accused the Czech spirit of its alleged "unrootedness in the concrete home."

Language, culture and history are, however, for Pithart not part of this Pithartean "concrete home," they were dismissed as "irrational" and "accidental," while "love pictures" and "fairs" did pass Pithart's test of "rationality" and "naturalness." The Czech revival that called all this concrete being to live were accused by Pithart of emotional sterility towards concrete being, while Pithart tried to persuade the reader that is exactly what his nihilistic program of banality is not.³⁹ Instead, Pithart called for establishing self-negating identities and responsibilities - as he put it, a plurality of "mutually self-negating loyalties (allegiances)."⁴⁰ In the same spirit, Pithart declared that "Masaryk's decision to be Czech ... has some features of unnaturalness."⁴¹

Pithart advocated a policy of "adjusting to the powerful neighbour" further defined rightly as "a little goal of little men."⁴² Pithart's determinism amounted to

³⁹ See Pithart, *Dejiny a politika*, op. cit., pp. 44-45.

⁴⁰ See *ibid.*, p. 88. This is also supported by Pithart's embracing a claim of Vaclav Belohradsky, a Czech philosopher and Patocka's disciple, that "sources of personal firmness are exhausted" as well as "sources of democracy". [*Ibid.*, p. 208]

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 231, see also pp. 196, 198.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 301. In this relation, Pithart himself refers to E. Hacha. Interestingly, Alojz Lorenc, the StB chief, also shares with Pithart the same contemptuous attitude for other co-citizens, viewing them as "dwarfs." To change men into "dwarfs" was apparently also what Lorenc was asked to do. Significantly, Lorenc also relates the phenomenon of "petit men" to the problem of the state. [Alojz Lorenc, *Ministerstvo strachu: Neskartované vzpomínky generála Lorence*, op. cit., p. 84] The concept of "small men" seen as an "anxiety of small souls about themselves and the world" is also embraced by Havel. Importantly, Havel holds both as a "proto-origin of some global conflicts" born in Central Europe (Germany), as well as a power "awakening new capacities" and "the best engine of his desire for success [power]." This "new capacity" for destruction and power born out of that "pettiness" or "emptiness of character" is further rightly acknowledged as "an escape from the fear of his own conscience." [Vaclav Havel, *Vážená občane, Projedí červenec 1990 - červenec 1992*, (Praha: Lidové noviny, 1992), p. 13]

On Nietzsche's account of "little people" *qua* "poisonous flies of the market place" ("parasitising" on a similar Socratic imagery) see a respective part of "Thus Spoke Zarathustra" in F. Nietzsche, *The*

nothing but a disguised excuse for a beforehand calculated failure or "bankruptcy," as Pithart defines it, with giving up one's destiny to a "tyrant."⁴³

Another leading and also politically prominent representative of Böhmsch nihilism, who has been after 1989 in charge of the state news agency, thus, disposing of a great deal of political clout, is Petr Uhl, a self-defined "revolutionary Marxist" or Trockist.⁴⁴ Uhl led a collective of authors who elaborated by 1979 another comprehensive political program which is, however, with regard to the Czech question compatible with that of Pithart. The program formulates a supreme principle of Böhmsch nihilism: "We conclude that the Czechs and Slovaks have not 'the right to have their own state,' or state or national sovereignty" because their goal and focus is not a concrete nation but abstract "man": "In our considerations [plans] we are

Portable Nietzsche, (New York: Penguin Books, 1976), pp. 163-166. Particularly, as Nietzsche stresses here, that these "little people" are "showmen" serving the great men and are need because "little do the people comprehend the great - that is, the creating. But they have a mind for all showmen and actors of great things." [Ibid., p. 163] For these "little men-showmen", to prove means "to overthrow." Importantly, Nietzsche also defines these "little-men-actors" as "clever cowards." [Ibid., p. 165] And these "showmen" also belong to "the most contemptible and despicable" - to Nietzsche's "last men" who, being small themselves, also "make everything small." [Ibid., p. 129]

⁴³ Petr Pithart, *Dejiny a politika*, op. cit., p.36.

⁴⁴ Karel Hvizdala, *Vyslech revolucionaru z listopadu 1989*, (Praha: Art-Servis, 1990), p. 30. Vaclav Bartuska, a member of the parliamentary committee for the investigation of the magic of the Velvet Revolution, recorded during his investigation the following conversation with Karel Vykypel, a former Communist chief of police counter-intelligence: "[The bluff with the dead student] was certainly not invented by Petr Uhl. Peta [a domestically used diminutive version of Petr] - we call him so, because we know him intimately - is a serious, very intelligent and responsible person ... He has worked extremely hard and has been very efficient, he has done a lot of work in the opposition. He has a gift for conspiratorial work, he was an excellent intelligence officer. I have always been saying to our boys: 'Just wait when we make Uhl the boss, he will be tough on you.' He has had a record with us for years, but we have always gone along with each other in a solid way. It has been a good cooperation with him." [Vaclav Bartuska, *Polojasno: Patraní po vinicích 17. listopadu 1989*, (Praha: Exlibris, 1990), p. 147] After Uhl had served a mystification about a dead student to the world, he, already as the director of the Czechoslovak News Agency (CTK), became directly involved in issuing a public disinformation about a resignation of the then defence minister M. Vacek in 1990 that contributed to the following removal of the minister. [See Miroslav Vacek, *Proc bych měl mlcet*, (Praha: NADAS, 1991), pp. 89-90]

concerned with man, not with nation."⁴⁵ To this effect, Uhl also called for the abolition of the "raison d'être of the state existence" of Czechoslovakia⁴⁶ and "gradual removal of the state and its institutions."⁴⁷

At the same time, Uhl indicated that a revision of the German question, including the transfer of Sudeten Germans, had been under way.⁴⁸ Uhl further demanded an immediate abolition of the crimes against the foundations of the state, crimes against the security of the state, crimes against defence preparedness, military offenses and crimes against the defence of the country. According to Uhl, espionage for a foreign state is to be judged only on the basis of its personal material profitability.⁴⁹ Uhl also required that the crime of failing to announce a criminal act, as well as a preparation for a criminal act become unpunishable.⁵⁰ In addition, Uhl demanded that a regular army as an instrument against external threats be abolished, and the officer army staff be "deprofessionalized," while simultaneously advocating "a universal military-like organization."⁵¹ The ultimate goal was for Uhl first a World Council to be later reformed into a "central administrative body of long-distance control," that is, into a form of universal housekeeping⁵² - in the image of the Universal and Homogeneous State.

Together with producing the decomposition of the state, nation and army, Uhl

⁴⁵ Petr Uhl, *Program společenské samosprávy*, op. cit., p. 150.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 149.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 10.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 59.

⁴⁹ Ibid., pp. 155-156.

⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 156-157.

⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 145-147.

⁵² Ibid., p. 123.

also wanted to expand this process of nihilism into the family by fully emancipating sexual relations instead.⁵³ In Uhl's view, "promiscuity oriented individuals will certainly create their own societies (and organizations)."⁵⁴ The nihilistic regime would take away the freedom to be a human, but would offer a substitution in the form of a "sexually permissive policy."⁵⁵

Ferdinand Peroutka, a political analyst-journalist, living in exile, summarized the essence of such nihilistic projects as follows:

There is such a plan: We will cease to be Czechs and will assimilate with the mankind ... It, however, appears to me that if somebody gives up too compliantly his nationality, he does not demonstrate any strength of character.⁵⁶

The aforementioned notions and ideas negating the actuality-rationality of Czech nationhood and statehood as they started appearing in the late 1970s can be summarized as follows:

- 1/ the Czech/Czechoslovak statehood is a regressive impasse and is inferior to "empire-building" (Belohradsky), Czechoslovakia as a state is already a mirage;
- 2/ the Czech nation does not [is not to] exist any longer;
- 3/ Czech culture, history and language are of no real value or use in a new "planetary civilization" and Central European regionalism;
- 4/ the transfer of Sudeten Germans should be rectified or retributed;

⁵³ Petr Uhl, *Program spolecenske samospravy*, op. cit., p. 140.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 152.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 63.

⁵⁶ Ferdinand Peroutka, *Budeme pokračovat*, (Toronto: Sixty-Eight Publishers, 1984), pp. 232-233.

5/ the Czech question is in fact a German question;

6/ the change in the existing balance of power in Europe is imminent.³⁷

Given its sensitive and apparently controversial nature, the project, presented as an 'academic critical inquiry', was unleashed in dissident outlets and publications, especially in the Paris-based journal *Svedectví*. Because of the regime-imposed "quarantine" on those writings, the platform had remained mostly unknown to the public at large.

An interesting piece of information was offered in this regard by Alojz Lorenc. Speaking about his presentation in the consultative meeting of the Warsaw bloc's intelligence services in the autumn of 1986, he was to conclude:

³⁷ A representative and inspirative source in this regard is a "black book" by Bohumil Cerný, Jan Kren, Václav Kural and Milan Otahal, eds., *Cesi, Nemci, odsun: diskuse nezávislých historiků*, op. cit., providing an account of the debate on the Sudeten Germans in *Svedectví* and *Právo lidu* in 1977-1980. For another review of this debate and nihilistic generalizations see Jaroslav Krejčí, *O české a evropské*, 2. díl (O českém národním charakteru), pp. 81-89. Krejčí rightly noted that this platform indicates an "elementary [but, perhaps, deliberate] ignorance of oneself." [Ibid., p. 87] Petr Přihoda (under an anonym of Jan Příbram), a close associate of Pithart claimed that the national awareness of the new generations "should not be awakened" because he sees it as "explicitly destructive" (for whom? why?). The notion of homeland should be thus according to Přihoda obliterated and left dead. [Ibid., p. 88] On a review of the nihilistic platform with regard the Czech history within this debate see H. Gordon Skilling, *Samizdat and an Independent Society in Central and Eastern Europe*, (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1989), pp. 114-119. In this regard, for Přihoda, the in the years 1938-1945 "the Czech nation was deprived of identity ... [thus] it ceases to be a nation in the modern sense ... it loses its patriotic feeling" because, in Přihoda's opinion, the occupation was "a time of testing - and the nation failed in it." [Ibid., p. 114] Přihoda thereby tries to distribute the guilt of Fascism among those who were on the opposite side of the war. In this regard, Chapter 77 document on 'The Right to History' (no. 11, 1984) with its affinity to the Catholic Böhmsch platform is to be particularly noted. [See ibid., p. 119] Later, Pithart, Otahal and Přihoda published under an anonym "Podiven" a book entitled *The Czechs in the History of the New Epoch (Čest v dějinách nové doby)* which was immediately translated into German and is remarkable only in terms of its gross simplifications and accusations according to which, as Ravík summarized it, "The Czech nation always made a mistake whenever they stood against the penetration of an allegedly higher German culture into the Czech life." The book actually was a mere elaboration of ideas of Jan Patočka, a Czech disciple of Heidegger. Patočka became a spiritual father of the former dissidents and current political elite in the Czech Republic, hence a close link between the mainstream of German nihilism and its contemporary Böhmsch variant. See further below. [Slavomír Ravík, *Byli nebylo: Společnost trvale neudržitelné hlposti*, (Praha: Periskop, 1995), p. 45]

efforts to remove the so-called heritage of Yalta are the common denominator of current international tendencies ... The states of Central and Eastern Europe will be affected by these efforts to enforce an implementation of such gradual changes which would be hardly identifiable in their isolation and, at the time when their character becomes apparent, it would already be impossible to resist them.⁵⁸

Similar statements forwarded by present Czech politicians about the need to revise the results actually of *both* World Wars can be listed here:

⁵⁸ Alojz Lorenc, *Ministerstvo strachu*, op. cit., p. 130. Lorenc also provided an interesting account of his conversation with a prominent Czech dissident who apparently suffered from 'existential anxiety' and identity problem, and may have been "won" sometime in the late 1960s (1968?). The agent "had a greatly critical attitude towards the policy of the state." The talk is recorded by Lorenc as follows:

Lorenc: We appreciate your cooperation. I would only like to clarify for myself why you are collaborating with us at all when you express disagreement with principal questions of the policy of the state.

Dissident: Well, a lot will change, for sure, but I think that the State Police [StB] will be close to it ... I feel in your people more of a professional approach than, to say, of ideological hatred ... I have already been collaborating for twenty years.

Lorenc: This sounds logical, but is this the real reason why you collaborate?

Dissident: There is still another reason. Without that collaboration my situation would be even worse; and now I have guarantees. [Ibid., pp. 114-115]

It may be interesting to compare this with "emphases" (this is literally what he did) by Jicinsky made in the text of Bartuska who tried to investigate the background of the Velvet Revolution: "*Moreover many [younger members of the secret Communist police] know a lot about many powerful men [after 1989].*" "Still, I cannot get used to that who holds in his hands several high-ranking men (and, perhaps, even the minister of interior himself, who knows!) *is praised more than a man with clear conscience.*" Italics were added by Jicinsky himself. [Zdenek Jicinsky, *Cs. parlament v polistopadovem obdobi*, (Nadas - Afgh. s.r.o.: Praha., 1993), p. 134 fn] Z. Jicinsky was a former Communist expert on law and constitution-making who became a dissident after 1968 and a member of the new political elite after 1989. He had some problems with the 'unprofessional' politicking of Havel as comes clearly out of Jicinsky's book whose footnotes are at large more interesting than the main body of text.

On the importance of the Velvet Revolution for the summit Gorbachev-Bush see, for example Zdenek Jicinsky, *Cs. parlament v polistopadovem obdobi*, (Nadas - Afgh. s.r.o.: Praha, 1993), pp. 15 - 16; and Lorenc, op. cit., p. 8.

From a retrospective, Miroslav Vacek, the last Communist defence minister, later stated: "Thereby, I do not want to argue that what Mr Dolejsi wrote about - that it was all about a managed transfer of political power to the dissidents agreed upon by KGB and CIA. I myself, however, cannot dispense with an impression that first there was to have been negotiations between Gorbachev and Reagan in the past and between Gorbachev and Bush preceding these crucial changes, where the spheres of influence of these superpowers were revised ... [if not for this the changes] would not have occurred in such a short span of time in all the socialist countries, and, perhaps, they would not have been so gentle or velvet." [Miroslav Vacek, *Proc bych mel mlcet*, op. cit., p. 25] The title of Vacek's book is also pertinent: "Why should I keep silent?"

Pithart: [T]he crisis created by the settlement of Europe under the peace agreements from Versailles and Saint Germain needs to be resolved.⁵⁹

Havel: The existent European peace arrangements are tumbling down.⁶⁰

Havel: Something that was not really precisely called the Yalta settlement of Europe has collapsed. But not only this: in a sense, the Versailles settlement has become antiquated too. And, thus, for the third time in this century, Europe finds itself facing its task to arrange itself ...⁶¹

Havel: [Post-communist countries, i.e. the Czech Republic] try to rectify various mistakes of the Versailles order or *go even deeper into history* and make use of freedom, the greatest they have ever had, for a *complete reparation* [of history].⁶²

The underlying reasoning by the Czech elite in this regard may have been condensed in the pronouncement of the Czechoslovak ex-foreign minister Jiri Dienstbier: "the preservation of the clan is decisive [for the elite], and the kind of flags that fly above them is unessential ..."⁶³

2.2. Havel's Projection of the Future and Its Confirmation: Author and Actor

In this regard, it is remarkable how many high-profile revolutionaries of 1989 either rejected or seriously questioned the word "revolution" as adequate for describing what had happened (Urban, Panek, Klima, Neff, Steigerwald, Oslzly,

⁵⁹ *Lidove noviny*, April 26, 1994, p. 6.

⁶⁰ Vaclav Havel, *Vazeni obcane*, op. cit., p. 195.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

⁶² Vaclav Havel, *1992 & 1993 (projevy)*, op. cit., p. 92. Italics added. On the imperative of "going against History", see also Klaus, op. cit., p. 52; Vaclav Belohradsky, op. cit., p. 89. At the summit of the OSCE in 1992, Vaclav Havel announced: "history has been awakened ... nothing is forgotten, nothing is pardoned. [Vaclav Havel, *Vazeni obcane, Projevy cervence 1990 - cervence 1992*, (*Lidove noviny: Praha*, 1992), p. 194]

⁶³ Jiri Dienstbier and Jana Klusakova, *Rozmlouvaji nadoraz: nejen o tom, jak si stojime ve svete*, (Praha: Primus, 1993), pp. 89-91.

Battek, Bystrovova).⁶⁴ Yet, they found it either problematic to come up with a different name of their own or finally preferred 'takeover' to 'revolution.' Karel Steigerwald offered his own version - "*The Theatrical Putsch*," to denote the leading role played by play-writers and actors in the revolution.⁶⁵ Such a name of the takeover has a particular relevance, especially in the light of the confession of Steigerwald, one of its managers, himself a theatrical artist, who pointed out that because the dissidents were either unknown to the overwhelming majority of the citizens, or their public image was not yet particularly high, they stepped aside to let the popular actors and artists pave the way for them.⁶⁶ In this regard, Martin Palous further added: "Everything was in fact taking place in a theatre [in *Laterna magika* - the headquarters of the Civic Forum] and, moreover, under direction of a playwright, and so everything was some kind of theatre."⁶⁷ Vaclav Maly, a Catholic priest and chief manager of the manifestations was with regard to such a theatrical technology of politics very explicit:

In directing the public presentations, we focused on that people should see famous *faces, actors, sportsmen, singers*. This was to prevent an impression that it is created again by the dissidents, that it is a matter of only a tiny group

⁶⁴ Karel Hvizdala, *Vyslech revolucionaru z listopadu 1989*, (Praha: Art-Servis, 1990), pp. 7, 16, 34, 41, 45, 48, 53, 55.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 40-43.

⁶⁷ M. Otahal and Z. Sladek, *Deset prazskych dnu (17. - 27. listopad 1989)*, (Praha: Academia, 1990), p. 633. There was a great deal of irony in a statement of Ladislav Adamec, the premier of the last Communist government, addressed to Jiri Bartoska, a Czech actor, during the first meeting with a delegation of the Civic Forum on November 21, 1989: "Why aren't you playing [in] a theatre? People want to go to a theatre." [Michal Horacek, *Jak pukaly ledy*, (Praha: Ex libris, 1990), p. 78]

of power-thirsty people with inferiority complexes [my italics] ⁶⁸

In this way and from the very start, the organizers of the take-over consciously wanted to "educate people below to support effectively support the powerful." ⁶⁹ The takeover appeared to another of its actors as a "happening" and "big fun" (Vladimir Kovarik). ⁷⁰ Similarly, the last spokesman of the Communist government, Miroslav Pavel, who played an important role in the takeover to become then for a while the director of the Czechoslovak Television, stated that it was not so much a revolution as an orderly passing-on of the power. ⁷¹ Miroslav Vacek, the last Communist Minister of Defence and still a supporter of the Communist party, said: "Many former dissidents do not call November 1989 a revolution, but they speak about a take over. This appears as more truthful to me as well." ⁷² Alojz Lorenc, who is suspected as being one of the directors of the power transfer, also referred to it as a "state take-over," conspicuously avoiding the word "revolution." ⁷³ Ludvík Vaculík, a former Czech communist writer and later dissident, further elaborated on this theme, arguing that

⁶⁸ Karel Hvizdala, *Vyslech revolucionaru z listopadu 1989*, op. cit., p. 32. Vaclav Havel later said that his role at the head of state seems to him as that of "swindler" from which also stems his great personal uncertainty: "I feel that anytime anybody could come, take the position from me and send me back to prison." [Michaels Simmons, *Nesmely prezident* (The Reluctant President), (Praha: Volvox Globator, 1993), p. 15]

⁶⁹ Karel Hvizdala, *Vyslech revolucionaru z listopadu 1989*, op. cit., p. 33. That this support (or better, who should support whom) was understood essentially as a radical "onesidedness" was evidenced by subsequent statements on the part of the new political elite. Thus, for example, Pavel Tigrid, a former leading dissident and Czech minister of culture after the breakup, complained in 1994: "There is still such a belief that the state ... has a certain obligation with regard to the [national] culture. This should end." [Frantisek Dvorak, Slavomir Ravik, Jiri Teryngel, *Zaloba aneb Bila kniha k patemu vyroci 17. listopadu 1989*, (Praha: Periskop, 1994), p. 61]

⁷⁰ Karel Hvizdala, *Vyslech revolucionaru z listopadu 1989*, op. cit., p. 58.

⁷¹ Oskar Krejci, *Proc to prasklo aneb hovory o demokracii a 'sametove revoluci'*, (Praha, Trio, 1991), p. 111.

⁷² Miroslav Vacek, *Na rovinu: Bez studu a prikryti*, (Praha: Periskop, 1994), p. 169.

⁷³ Alojz Lorenc, *Ministerstvo strachu*, op. cit., p. 170.

"how the StB agents participated in this *play* was not essential; what was important was how the play ended."⁷⁴ What is the available evidence that would (or not) substantiate such a thesis? Is the result really everything, and is anything else dismissable?

In this regard, the strange coincidence and parallels between Czech theatre and Communist power and police are manifest here again. Curiously enough, an essentially correct and subsequently validated scenario of what was to become the Velvet Revolution and following transformations, including the breakup of the state, can be also found in Havel's play *The Conspirators* (1970 - 1971), and also in another piece of his *The Beggars' Opera* (1972). As Marketa Goetz-Stankiewicz, a Canadian Bohemist, noted, *The Conspirators* is about craving for political power where ideals are used as coverups of this struggle for power, and, as other plays of Havel, is also circular [like the perfect system of Hegel], circular are also all the transformations and interchangeability of identities of Havelian characters.⁷⁵ The "main theme" of Havel's plays inevitably turns to that of betrayal and treason.⁷⁶ In this way, *The Beggar's*

⁷⁴ Alojz Lorenc, *Ministerstvo strachu*, op. cit., op. cit., p. 10.

⁷⁵ Marketa Goetz-Stankiewicz, *The Silenced Theatre: Czech Playwrights without a Stage*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), p. 60.

⁷⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 65. In addition to the archetype of a Hegelian slave-coward who becomes a kind of super-slave trying to make slave-cowards from others as embodied by Emil Hacha, the Czech "president" during the fascist occupation, there is also another side of this archetype represented by Karel Sabina, a XIXth-century Czech writer and political leader who turned to be a paid informer of the Austro-Hungarian secrete police. A first-class analysis of the existential and spiritual background of Sabina can be found in Slavomir Ravik, *Česke Charaktery: Karel Sabina (portret konfidenta)*, (Praha: Prazska imaginace, 1992). Ravik stresses that Sabina cannot be seen as an individual case, coincidence or merely as a mistake. A personal failure is turned into a social force for "extending one's pettiness" as an ostensible redemption and revenge. [*Ibid.*, p. 10] Such an agent is a coward and weakling aspiring to play if not a leader's role in the universe than at least in the nation which he hates. [*Ibid.*, p. 19] All Sabina's literal work is a painful search for his own self-justification and apology for betrayal, and this also became a basis of his "philosophy," hence a "philosophy" and writings as nothing but an incessant diagnosing of his own ego

Opera, as well as other Havel's plays, are about joining such a game and accepting its rules:

Macheath [one of the mafia bosses in *The Beggars' Opera*], caught in the mesh of pretence, no longer able to distinguish a lie from the truth ... draws his conclusion: 'If everyone around betrays me, as has become obvious, it does not mean that they expect anything else from me, but the exact opposite: by acting in this way they offer me some sort of principle of our mutual relationship.' Accordingly he decides to play along on the principle, when in Rome, do as the Romans do; or 'if you can't beat them, join them.'⁷⁷

and its 'feelings' presented as a doctrine of the universe. The solution was found in nihilism, that is, 'beyond good and evil' that meant an assimilation of good by evil - because he was himself conscious that he had failed in standing for good. [Ibid., pp. 5, 20, 26] Sabina's existential mode was distinguished as a 'crisis of (his) identity', radical uncertainty, self-alienation and impossibility to be what he is. [Ibid., p. 44] Sabina was also a forerunner of the concept of the 'solidarity of the shaken' and existential 'shock' (in the face of death) forwarded by a Czech Heideggerian philosopher Jan Patočka (1907-1977) who became a spiritual father of contemporary Böhmsch nihilism and political elite - as Sabina put it in one his librettos: "Only a vigorous action which will shake the country ... will bring us salvation! (Jen zivy cin, jenz zemi zatrese nam spasu prinese!)." [See *ibid.*, p. 45] He longed for the future to negate the present and the past and knows that he has no future. [Ibid., p. 68] Cf. Havel's play *Temptation* where a German titanic Faust is transformed into a petit Faust - Foustek - while his *alter ego* Fistula is a police squealer-provocateur-devil with smelling feet; as Havel said, such a Faust "had been haunting him for a long time," "understanding that he had somehow become involved with the devil" and, thus, "rediscovering himself" - it was a "recapitulation," "personal revival," "resume of what has already been." Importantly, both Foustek and Fistula appear as "double agents" - the former is unsuccessful in it and the former is presented as highly effective. [Vaclav Havel, *Disturbing the Peace*, op. cit., pp. 67-68]

Sabina sincerely despised the public while projecting his own deficiencies into it. Then, he indulged in reprimanding the public for his projection and personal problems. It seemed to him that actually only the nation and its aspiration prevent him from reaching his identity and being. [Ibid., pp. 68, 126] Sabina was also an author of the libretto of a well-known Czech opera, *The Bartered Bride*, by Bedrich Smetana whose title may be also rendered as "the sold-out bride." This piece is *inter alia* notable because one its chief characters is a stupid Vasek (Vaclav) a local cheater-comedian who is exposed and ridiculed at the end. One of the mottoes of the play is: "Almost all men are more or less comedians, but not everybody plays his comedy as well as we - as we do!" [Ibid. 17]

⁷⁷ Marketa Goetz-Stankiewicz, *The Silenced Theatre: Czech Playwrights without a Stage*, op. cit., p. 84. For Havel, treason is evidently tied to a fear of maturing as a man; thus, "maturing" means for him betraying: "the 'mature' I ... betrays its source in Being and denies intrinsic orientation toward it." [Vaclav Havel, *Letters to Olga, June 1979 - September 1982*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988), p. 335. In Ende's real fiction about nihilism, a snitch says in strikingly Havelian language: The power to manipulate beliefs is the only thing that counts. That's why I sided with the powerful and served them - because I wanted to share their power ... When your turn comes to jump into the Nothing, you too will be a nameless servant of power, with no will of your own. Who knows what use they will make of you? Maybe you'll help them persuade people to buy things they don't need, or hate things they know nothing about, or hold beliefs that make them easy to handle, or doubt the truths that might save them. Yes, you little

Jenny, one character of Havel's *Beggars' Opera*, we learn, "had to betray" in order to "preserve herself," in this regard, she discovers even her concealed hatred of others as "self-preserving." In addition, she suffers from a schizophrenia or split personality, implying this as an acquittal of her guilt because she does not see herself as being identical with herself or her actions.⁷⁸ On other occasions, Havelian protagonists at least try to appease themselves by imaging that their real identity can be the very role: "Life simply forced you into a certain role, and you came to believe that what you are playing is your own self."⁷⁹ Since, understandably, this can hardly be a viable solution, the play, as well as the Havelian figures are condemned to the circularity of meanglessness (instability and uprootedness from a firm stand-point) going around oneself in circles and whirling around the truth, not close enough to get burned by it, not far enough not to be afraid of it, hence also their schizophrenia.

In his play *The Conspirators*, written in 1970-1971, Havel depicted the conspirators as triggering, managing from behind, and using in their interests - a student revolt (what also happened in November 1989): Moher, being both the police chief and chief conspirator, stresses:

You do know my concept: the demands of the students should be boycotted, but nothing should be done against [the students] so that we don't scare them. Only in this way, it can grow into larger unrests that will only then show in a

Fantastician, big things will be done in the human world with your help, wars started, empires founded ..." [Michael Ende, *The Neverending Story*, op. cit., pp. 126-127]

⁷⁸ See the relevant comments and analysis in Marketa Goetz-Stankiewicz, *The Silenced Theatre: Czech Playwrights without a Stage*, op. cit., p. 67.

⁷⁹ Vaclav Havel, *Hry 1970-1976*, (Toronto: Sixty-Eight Publishers, 1977), p. 72. The referred statement is addressed to a conspirator-chief of the police by his mistress, also a conspirator.

full light the incapability of the government [whose he is a member] to solve that situation.⁸⁰

The conspirators are actual power-holders of the regime which they are set to bring down. They are chiefs of the regime police, army and justice. Formally, they prepared slogans disguising their take-over as a "national revolution," while, in reality, they meant its negation.⁸¹ Their task is a cover-up war against their own population and reducing its being to folklore - to "traditional forms of folk's art."⁸² Ofir, the chief of the army staff, declares: "I am not an ambitious man and have never longed for functions ... As far as the future is concerned, I do have some certain ideas ... a fight organized by the state ... against the population ..."⁸³ The conspirators also understand that it would be necessary to overcome a critical span of several days needed for making the mechanism of fear effective: "the others will become scared and will start joining [the stage]."⁸⁴

Understandably, the regime which the conspirators have in mind is not democracy, the words of Moher who recapitulates as if the post-1918 history of Czechoslovakia from the point of view of Böhmisches nihilism, seem to apply to a kind of post-post-Communist phase:

This is a crisis of our whole political system which since the declaration of independence was not able to solve any of the difficult social problems which

⁸⁰ Vaclav Havel, *Hry 1970-1976*, op. cit., p. 33.

⁸¹ Ibid., pp. 24-25.

⁸² See ibid., p. 26.

⁸³ Ibid., p. 26, also p. 100.

⁸⁴ Ibid., pp. 97-99.

had been left over to us by colonialism ... Why did we fight so long for our national freedom when we become somebody's milk cow? The crisis of our system is part of the global crisis of parliamentary democracy. Where has such democracy led us? To the edge of total destruction when the arbitrary will of the gang of demoralized members of the [elite's] golden youth is about to rule the country. Our allies have a right to be alarmed. What should they, for example, think of when, during the last week, five new Communist parties have arisen? ... What follows from this, my friends? It follows that it is high time that we took things firmly into our hands. In other words: our moment is coming [to make an *ordnung*].⁸⁵

In this regard, the conspirators' program envisages actions against universities going as far as closing them (like during the Fascist occupation) and struggle against the cultural and educational level of the population.⁸⁶ On the other hand, the head of the new regime would focus in his speeches after the putsch on "the question of inter-human relationships" because "new possibilities will open in this area too."⁸⁷ The (military) security of the state would be handed over or surrendered into the hands of foreign power.⁸⁸ In fact, the conspirators are controlled and directed from abroad.⁸⁹ Helga, the officer for liaison with these foreign powers, assures: "[F]inally, they promised to me that their countries are willing to offer us large economic aid, for

⁸⁵ Vaclav Havel, *Hry 1970-1976*, op. cit., p. 86. The Prime Minister to be disposed by the conspirators complains in this regard to the leader of the putsch, a member of his government: "And do you think that this nation with so profoundly democratic thoughts and feelings nation would shortly after [1989?] they finally achieved democracy - although certainly imperfect - let it be stolen by somebody over night?" [Ibid., p. 67]

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 99. On the analysis and statistics related to the decline in the field of education and culture after 1989 (number of students, attendance of cultural events, number of books read, number of concerts etc.) see, for example, Slavomir Ravik, *Bylo nebylo: Uher Alles*, (Praha: Periskop, 1995), pp. 38-64; Slavomir Ravik, *Totalni deziluze*, (Praha: Prazska imaginace, 1992), pp. 67-72; Slavomir Ravik, *Bylo nebylo: Latrina magika v Cechach, na Morave a ve Slazsku*, (Praha: Periskop, 1995).

⁸⁷ Vaclav Havel, *Hry 1970-1976*, op. cit., p. 78.

⁸⁸ Ibid., pp. 98-99.

⁸⁹ Ibid., pp. 51, 57, 58, 70, 84, 98, 99; cf. pp. 43, 85-86.

example, in the form of exploitation of our mineral wealth."⁹⁰ Unless the foreign powers did not reach an agreement (on their spheres of influence), "the state would be simply cut in half." As one of the heroes-conspirators of this play tells us, any disagreement, with such a dictate to break up the country "won't matter a sh..."⁹¹

The Havelian heroes also evoke the confession of Skvorecky's coward: they are dead living or living corpses (to use Arendt's term), thus, fulfilling the Hegelian Kojévian ethos of death and its imperative at the end of history:

It appears to me as if I were buried alive. Like a body without the soul. An artery without blood. A tree without sap.⁹²

I am squashed by death! Whatever I have done, lived or thought up since then, is marked by it - as if all that were dead in some strange way - I know that and I am helpless against it. It is a horrible, vain struggle.⁹³

Havel's *Beggars' Opera* (1972) deals with the structural and 'moral' problems of the transformation, concretely with the coalescing of the police and mafia (an outstanding feature of the [post-]Communist transformation): "Morals [of the mafia-elite] are always the same, but what had been hushed up before, is done now publicly!"⁹⁴ This ostentatious amorality is to internalize the masses with it and forge

⁹⁰ Vaclav Havel, *Hry 1970-1976*, op. cit., p. 99.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 90. The arrogance and vulgarity of the relevant statement cannot be easily translated into English, in Czech it reads: "To by vám bylo hovno platný..."

⁹² Ibid., p. 59.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 49. Helga, a lover of the future head of the state, dreams: "Do you know what we will do if all this ends up well? ... We will have a nice residence where we will regularly invite actors, writers, scientists, simply intellectual elite of the nation: I will be a hostess, and you will philosophy with them, discuss your reforms as a really enlightened head of the state! Are you for it? - A fantastic idea, puppee!" [Ibid., p. 27]

⁹⁴ Vaclav Havel, *Zbracka opera*, (Praha: Dilia, 1990), p. 13.

thereby a new bond between the rulers and the folk. The play shows the impossibility of escape from the circles of conspiracies, lies and betrayals presented as acts of prudence.⁹⁵ Moreover, betrayal becomes their only possible way of existing and communicating with the world - all they can is to expand, reproduce and "gradually improve" it. Such is the rule of the game.⁹⁶ This (political) prostitution thrives best and most freely when covered by a legal facade.⁹⁷

The structure of this 'spider web' is ubiquitous, but most importantly is the top equals the bottom. It is the world of Kafka's *Trial* separating "justice" from the law and the "law" from justice: "But yet, it is strange: No one knows about our organization, and everyone serves it! - Who does not know that he is serving, always serves best!"⁹⁸ The police and mafia are a ruling dyad.⁹⁹ In this regard, particularly important are those agents who are a linkage-transmission in the "dangerous zone" on the edge between the underground-police and the public, spreading step by step the dominance of the political underworld.¹⁰⁰ Importantly, the play is also one of Havel's crucial elaborations on political strategy related to the destruction of existing institutions and their restructuring defined here as (new) "fusion" (assimilation) by the means of "delimitation," or breaking up of the existent entity.¹⁰¹

What is given to the public the revealed truth, but its concealment. Emotions

⁹⁵ Vaclav Havel, *Zbracka opera*, op. cit., p. 77.

⁹⁶ See *ibid.*, pp. 82-85.

⁹⁷ See *ibid.*, p. 19.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

⁹⁹ See, for example, *ibid.*, pp. 82-85.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

¹⁰¹ See particularly *ibid.*, p. 72.

and feelings are good only for manipulations.¹⁰² Schizophrenia and *angst* of the plotters compensated by their hatred of the world, where they officially belong to, are paramount (this is encountered by turning the fear into a source of masochistic lust of a [sex] slave):

Do you understand at all what it is - to have two faces for so long? To live two lives? To think in two ways? From the morning to the evening, to watch yourselves, to pretend, to hide something or feign? To keep accustoming oneself constantly to the world where you live, and that you reject, and denounce the world to which you really belong?¹⁰³

Because of this impossibility to belong somewhere and also their unwillingness to do so, these (Hegelian) nihilists-agents become true 'universal nothings' or non-beings (German *N-ichts*): they are "not identical with themselves."¹⁰⁴ Their "destructive [nihilistic] way of thinking" drives them "into a strange vacuum" of non-being where all is compared to nothing, and, thus, "there is no identity!"¹⁰⁵ This lack of their own positive content is also a reason why they feel no responsibility for concrete being 'here and now' (the state and nation). And this emptiness is also a reason for their collaboration - they bow to an external force or will that gives to their emptiness a form. Only this assigned form or image appears as all that which represents their essential content - form represents content.¹⁰⁶ For such nihilists-agents, a would-be escape from existential paranoia - if they "want to belong to themselves

¹⁰² Vaclav Havel, *Zehracka opera*, op. cit., p. 63.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 68.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 76.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 77.

¹⁰⁶ See ibid., pp. 82-85.

again" is to destroy what is and has its own identity (like the state and nation). Only a "drastic self-confirmation by action" or "murder," that is, death of the other, makes it possible for them to "live."¹⁰⁷ Understandably, a deep existential hatred stemming from one's realized radical deficiency is here a key, or, as Havel put it in his play, a "mysterious need to do evil."¹⁰⁸

In 1987, Havel finished another 'prognostic' play *Redevelopment or Slum Clearance* (*Asanace*). There he speaks of a "project" of "taking from the people their home(s)" disguised as renovation.¹⁰⁹ A great deal of the project is a play, a theatre involving its own makers: "It's as if they're not people but characters in a play someone's putting on -"¹¹⁰ The play is about putting (political) *death* of the people into effect: "We're not improving life, we're manipulating it to death!"¹¹¹ A first part of the play apparently is a short-lived party-like frenzy wherein the secret police grant the people freedom, that is, they seem to be "liberated" from the police - by the police that, in addition to freedom, also order:¹¹² "But everyone must dance!"¹¹³ This is followed by a wild party-celebration¹¹⁴ reminiscent of not only the final episode of Orwell's *Animal Farm*. After letting people rejoice at the gift of democracy for a

¹⁰⁷ Vaclav Havel, *Zebracka opera*, op. cit., p. 77. On Havel's notion of the interrelatedness between death and voidness of content and his own personal experience ("dead outlines, forms without content") see Vaclav Havel, *Letters to Olga, June 1979 - September 1982*, op. cit., p. 242.

¹⁰⁸ Vaclav Havel, *Zebracka opera*, op. cit., p. 77. In another play, Havel says: "the devil of it is that she destroys not out of malice or simple-mindedness but out of her very nature ..." [Vaclav Havel, *Redevelopment or Slum Clearance*, (London & Boston: Faber and Faber, 1990), p.36]

¹⁰⁹ Vaclav Havel, *Redevelopment or Slum Clearance*, op. cit., p. 12.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 19.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 15.

¹¹² Ibid., pp. 26-27.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 31.

¹¹⁴ See ibid., pp. 31-32.

while, the police announces:

Preparations for the project will therefore continue as before but with a new dynamism! Certain people will try to convince you that this is a return to old rightfully rejected methods. On the contrary! This is a radical renewal of the original intention, and a radical cleansing of former deformities calling for critical reform, as well as of all later excesses resulting from this criticism.¹¹⁵

The play (project) winds up as a ritual of lie and farce. Again, the nihilistic characters and executors of the project are spiritually dead - this was accomplished or completed by their "arrest," that is, initiation into collaboration with the political police. As a result, they cease to be beings sharing in human togetherness and love and turn into a mechanism or empty machine of an extraneous 'absolute' will.¹¹⁶ To this effect, Plekhanov named apparently after a well-known Russian Marxist, here an experienced planner, advises: kill love inside or you must kill oneself.¹¹⁷

By being "dead" with regard to their *own character and truth*, they are prone to believe (out of desperation) that they have gained thereby one great advantage: the others can still lose the truth because they have it - and so the agent of nihilism cannot but try to destroy the truth wherever it is still suspected and take away from others the ability to justify themselves *in memoriam*. They cannot do otherwise: they are and have to be totally false. Truth is killed for them as much as they kill it. In this way, they are 'absolutely' free from the truth. Thus, with a touch of bitterness, they

¹¹⁵ Vaclav Havel, *Redevelopment or Slum Clearance*, op. cit., p. 44, see also p. 47

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

congratulate themselves: "Only a corpse is never fooled."¹¹⁸ This reduces to politics to "apolitical politics" to a theatre where the nihilist believes only in the power of his lie:

Some plays, Luisa, you'll never understand until they're taken out of the repertory. As this one; you'll see. ... Only this time the audience won't walk out of the play; the play will walk out of the audience.¹¹⁹

Accordingly, Havel defines politics as "[theatrical] acting."¹²⁰ For Havel, "ultimately, all theatre is built around the conflict between who a character seems to be and who he really is."¹²¹ Because the play is only about an exchange of one lie or form (mask) for another - its actors as well as its audience (like the nation) are caught in a Hegelian circularity of nothingness. Because there is no truth, individual differences between lies are only a matter of form: as Havel himself said, only what matters is the form under which there is really nothing.¹²²

In his speech at New York University on October 27, 1991, Havel, already as the head of the post-Communist state, concluded:

I can responsibly say that I was not forced to disclaim nothing from what I wrote before or to change my opinion about anything I wrote about. It is

¹¹⁸ Vaclav Havel, *Redevelopment or Slum Clearance*, op. cit., p. 45.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 41.

¹²⁰ Quoted in Slavomir Ravik, *Bylo nebylo: Latrina magika v Cechach, na Morave a ve Slezsku*, op. cit., p. 250.

¹²¹ Vaclav Havel, *Disturbing the Peace: A Conversation with Karel Hvizdala*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990), p. 195. Havel also calls it a "problem of the true face," "the phenomenon of masks," "the theme of identity in crisis" and "identity that is decaying, collapsing, dissipating, vanishing." [Ibid., pp. 195-196] On the assignment of Havel's role compare *ibid.*, p. 205.

¹²² Vaclav Havel, *Letni premutani*, (Praha: Odeon, 1992), p. 102.

perhaps incredible, but it is really so: I did not have to change my opinion, but I have even reassured myself of it!²³

In the summer of 1992, at a time when the top elite decided to break up the country, Havel was thinking in his *Summer Meditations* literally the same.

[I] can responsibly say that I was not forced to disclaim anything from what I wrote before or to change my opinion about anything I wrote about. It is perhaps incredible, but it is really so: I did not have to change my opinion, but I have even reassured myself of it!²⁴

As we have seen, the forthcoming political changes in Czechoslovakia were foreshadowed by their conceptual formulations on the part of the dissident movement, the designated counter-elite that came to power after 1989. Their underlying and unifying principle was an essentially negative position with regard to Czech nationhood and statehood. At the same time, they indicated a potential ground for a certain understanding with the Communist power-holders, also on the basis of their congruent attitude towards the fundamental issues of the state and nation

²³ Vaclav Havel, *Vážený občane, Projevy červenec 1990 - červenec 1992*, op. cit., p. 113.

²⁴ Vaclav Havel, *Letní premítání*, op. cit., pp. 101-102.

CHAPTER 3

THEATRE AS POLITICS OF BÖHMISCH NIHILISM (BARTERING THE STATE AND NATION)

3.1. Velvet Revolution or Veiled Refoolation? (Actors qua Politicians and Politicians qua Actors)

It can be assumed that the communist elites had contingencies for a forthcoming change of the regime (well, unless one is ready to conciliate oneself with a belief in a death-wish or complete ignorance on the part of the Communist regime). Milan Uhde's explanation of the inquisition trial of the Czech priest Jan Hus seems to address rather the Velvet Revolution of 1989 in Czechoslovakia:

Let us understand it well: among the highest representatives ... of power there were also supporters of remedy and purification. Being realistic politicians, they, however, knew well that the remedy should be organized, and to organize it is up to the leadership, otherwise a chaos would arise.¹

After the XVIIth congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in 1986, when the party leadership also realized its own rapidly growing unpopularity within the party itself, the Ministry of the Interior was charged with a task of preparing a plan of its activities within a given time horizon, being that of 1990. As Lorenc later stated, the main line of "new" activities stemmed from the "*already clear*" further course dictated by foreign factors and, thus, also from "*the foreseen changes in*

¹ Milan Uhde, *Česka republika, dobrý den*, (Praha: Atlantis, 1995), p. 160.

internal politics of the state" [my italics], in this regard, an "opening up of the country" as if from inside was defined as the crucial direction.² According to Lorenc, at the same time, the Minister of the Interior Vajnar already announced in a consultation meeting on the new strategy a "*political character of the expected changes*."³ The first post-Communist Interior Minister, Richard Sacher, commented these preparatory measures by the Communist police as follows:

On one side there was a conservative leadership of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, on the other the state police (StB) with an ability to analyze the current development and estimate its tendencies. In the last period of the totalitarian regime it was apparent (sic) that some sectors of the police tried to distance themselves (sic) from some imprudent steps made by the political leadership.⁴

The new wave of Czech public leaders was generally recruited from among the signatories of the Charter '77. However, as generally acknowledged, without powerful extraneous inputs and additional fostering, Charter '77, self-defined as apolitical and non-oppositional, had very limited capabilities for any large-scale action; and of the 217 first signatories of Charter '77, 156 were ex-Communist Party members.⁵ In 1986, when apparently selected groups in the Czechoslovak secret police started working on the "new political changes" to come by 1990, the Charter 77 did not progress in any tangible way. There was a stagnant pool of signatories of around

² See Alojz Lorenc, *Ministerstvo strachu*, op. cit., p. 119.

³ Ibid., p. 120. Italics added.

⁴ Ibid., p. 13.

⁵ See *ibid.*, pp. 8, 97.

1800. Its broader influence was without any "visible success."⁶ Lorenc thus concluded that by 1986, when he personally started to deal with this area of police interest, the Charter "was more calling for opposition than being it itself;" it was "politically and socially isolated;" its real active members counted only several dozens, concentrated almost exclusively in Prague. Lorenc also confirmed that the secret police was present from the very beginning within the Charter, and police agents were among the first signatories, while the police network of dissidents was "incessantly supplied." As a result, the secret police "had an ability to influence the Charter to a certain extent." In 1986, Charter 77 started its political activization.⁷

By 1989, developments began accelerating in the whole of Eastern Europe, as well as in Czechoslovakia. Vaclav Zajicek, a former chief of the department dealing with police matters of the Party Central Committee, confirmed that, upon an order of his superior R. Hegenbart, a political and security overhaul of the country was drafted in early February 1989. In May 1989, the security apparatus made a final conclusion that the then communist state and party leadership had virtually no use value for

⁶ Lorenc, *Ministerstvo strachu*, op. cit., p. 97.

⁷ Ibid., p. 98. Lorenc's evaluation was confirmed by H. Gordon Skilling, a Canadian expert on Czechoslovakia with close connections with the dissidents, see H. Gordon Skilling, *Samizdat and an Independent Society in Central and Eastern Europe*, (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1989), p. 39: thus, on the eve of the Velvet Revolution he himself saw the dissident culture living in a "kind of ghetto, almost unknown to the general public." The limited scope of clout on the part of the Charter was also acknowledged by the dissidents themselves. [See Vojtech Mencl, Milos Hajek, Milan Otahal and Erika Kadlecova, *Krizovatky 20. stoleti: Svetlo na bila msta v nejnovějších dejinách*, op. cit., p. 335] On the perception of Charter 77 as an "isolated ghetto" by other dissidents-organizers of Charter 77 see also Karel and Ivan Kyncl, *Po jaru prisla zima: aneb Zamysleni nad vlastni knizkou o Charte 77*, (Praha: Art Servis, 1990), pp. 80, 81, 111.

delivering the change required.⁸ In the summer, Pavel Tigrid, a leading anticommunist emigrant, wrote in his journal *Svedectví* in the summer of 1989 that Havel was to be president, not Dubcek.⁹ At this time, the existing Communist leadership was transferred on the list of its expandable assets by Moscow that needed a peace in this part of Europe": the Secretary General of the party, Milos Jakes, was not allegedly denied a reception by Gorbachev who was said not to accept even Jakes's telephone greetings during a vacation in the USSR in the summer 1989. Shortly after, a videotape and cassette with a compromising speech of Jakes delivered at a closed Communist meeting in Cerveny Hradek was released to the public with a mediation of the Charter 77 (Sasa Vondra). It seems quite probable that on this very occasion, Jakes himself was either drunk or drugged.¹⁰ This was followed by a visit of Lorenc to Moscow in September 1989 where Lorenc met with the highest men of the KGB, including its chairman Krjuckov, both first deputies of Krjuckov and the chief of counter-intelligence Grusko. Hegenhart, the highest party executive dealing with police matters, later said that at that time Lorenc proposed to him a "pact" against the nominal Communist leadership. This was also followed by an appearance of the so-

⁸ Vaclav Bartuska, *Polojasno: Patrami po vintcich 17. listopadu 1989*, op. cit., p. 95. From the early 1989, Lorenc also recorded his conversation with the then Secretary general of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, Milos Jakes, that apparently preceded a short Havel's detainment from February to May 1989:

Jakes: Would not it possible to prosecute only people around Havel? And to leave Havel out ...?
Lorenc: ... it can hardly go.

Jakes: It has to be done with a political effectiveness.

[Alojz Lorenc, *Ministerstvo strachu*, op. cit., p. 66]

⁹ See Zdenek Jicinsky, *Cs. parlament v polistopadovem obdobi*, (Nadas - Algh, s.r.o.: Praha, 1993), p. 1989.

¹⁰ Cf. for example, Marek Benda, Martin Benda, Martin Klima, Pavel Dobrovsky, Monika Pajerova, Simon Panek, Roman Kriz, *Studenti psali revoluci*, (Praha: Univerzum, 1990), p. 178

called initiative MOST (written all in capital letters like another initiative STUHA). This initiative MOST (meaning "bridge") represented by a rock musician Michael Kocáb and Michal Horáček, a journalist, is essentially a story of how a part of the Communist establishment found a "bridge" to personal contacts with the "official" dissent. This succession of events was wound up by the Soviet-American summit in Malta (actually on a US navy ship) in December 1989 wrapped up in a slogan "from Yalta to Malta."¹¹ The development progressed to such an extent that, in early November 1989, dissident Jiří Krizán could report to Sasa Vondra, the current first deputy foreign minister of the Czech Republic, that "signs of dialogue had appeared: Evžen Erban [a member of the highest political circle of the regime] had invited Havel to an obscure party (with his wife in the role of an oriental dancer!)."¹² In October 1989, Pavel Bratinka, a dissident to become a deputy foreign minister, announced on a forum in Italy that the regime would soon collapse, and that then Communist leader M. Jakes would be succeeded by K. Urbanek as also happened.¹³ The leadership of the Communist party actually knew at least two weeks ahead about the foreseen massive manifestations in Prague that materialized after November 17, 1989.¹⁴ In addition, they also correctly estimated beforehand the number of participants in the

¹¹ Bartuska, *Polojasno: Patraní po vinicích 17. listopadu 1989*, op. cit., p. 220.

¹² S. Vondra's own wording is here reproduced as cited in Karel Hvizdala, *Výstřední revolucionari z listopadu 1989*, op. cit., p. 2. After 1989, Jiří Krizán became one of the most important advisors to Havel, and his task was to "supervise" the Ministry of the Interior. As indicated above, Evžen Erban was a former agent working for the occupation regime of the Nazis during the war, later hired by the Soviets. In 1948, he worked as a leading Communist agent in the leadership of the social-democratic party. [See Jiří V. Kotas, *Czechoslovakia's Crossroads in the Twentieth Century (a personal essay)*, op. cit., pp. 11, 13] Clearly, the invitation, as well as the character of the "party" seem to suggest a certain advanced form of mutual acquaintance and intimacy.

¹³ M. Otáhal and Z. Sládek, *Deset pražských dnů (17.-27. listopad 1989)*, op. cit., p. 570.

¹⁴ Slavomír Ravík, *Bylo nebýlo: Tento způsob leta*, (Praha: Periskop, srpen 1995), p. 35.

manifestation at 50,000¹⁵

The official demonstration of 17 November 1989 was organized, legitimized and logistically secured by the Prague organization of the Union of Socialist Youth, whose leader Vasil Mohorita was then a member of the highest ruling Communist circle and, later, one of the leaders of the post-November Communist party. As Karel Steigerwald, one of the protagonist of the velvet take-over, put it, not only was the procession of students led "according to the police plans," but also the leadership of the Communist youth organization carried out "a remarkable role of the Trojan horse."¹⁶ As the then leader of the Union of the Social Youth, Martin Uleak said

together with the university council of Prague and independent students [mostly dissidents' children], we had prepared the action for quite a good time ahead ... Three days before it [was to take place] we were even told that this manifestation could be culmination point in the development of this state. This became even a slogan, almost all the [high] functionaries kept saying 'Beware of it ... it could also be a complete tragedy.'¹⁷

The co-organizer cryptically named "STUHA" (presumably derived from two Czech words denoting "student movement") did not represent more than a handful of students who were the children of famous Czech dissidents (Marek Benda, Martin Benda, Martin Klíma, Pavel Dobrovský, Monika Pajerová, Simon Panek). STUHA was "founded" in two meetings on September 28, 1989 and October 9, 1989. The first "conspiratory" session took place in a restaurant — it was a public secret that all Prague

¹⁵ M. Otahal and Z. Sládek, *Deset pražských dnů (17–27. listopad 1989)*, op. cit., p. 560.

¹⁶ Karel Hvizdala, *Vslech revolucionaru z listopadu 1989*, op. cit., pp. 40–41.

¹⁷ Václav Bartuška, *Polojasno: Patraní po vinicích 17. listopadu 1989*, op. cit., p. 91.

established by the first parliamentary committee – Danisz – who later appeared on the lists of StB agents – was quoted as advising his colleagues in the Parliamentary Committee: “Vasek Havel once told me: ‘You should keep your hands off this Hegenbart, he has done for you [plural in Czech] so much that one day, when we tell it all, you will be astonished. For the time being, we have to keep silent.’”³⁰ Similarly, another lawyer member of the committee, Motejl, stated that Vaclav Havel told him already in December 1989: “Hegenbart is not so bad as those others.”³¹ During further discussions in the Parliamentary Committee investigating the 17th of November 1989, Danisz was obliged to reinforce his argument:

Somebody needed that [things] change here ... That we avoided a bloodshed like that in Romania, is a credit to the one who organized the coup ... But are you guys crazy? To be sure, we *received freedom completely free of charge*, in comparison with others. Why should we sue someone, who gave us such a push, for a few broken bones? ... You cannot find the truth anyway. It is too early for it. It could damage many myths ... Myths are sometimes very constructive and useful [my italics].³²

And again later:

Guys, you should understand that if it turned out that this revolution was made by Lorenc and Hegenbart, it would impair a good thing. There is no sense in breaking myths prematurely. People believe that it is the work of students and the Civic Forum, so why should we take these beliefs away from them? ... Vasek Havel will not be happy if Hegenbart too is to be compromised.³³

²⁹ Slavomir Ravik, *Totalni deziluze*, (Praha: Prazska imaginace, 1992), p. 15.

³⁰ Bartuska, *Polojasno: Patraní po vinicích 17. listopadu 1989*, op. cit., p. 174.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 233.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 86-87.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 202-3. Evidently, Danisz was responsible for informing Havel about the work of the parliamentary investigation committee.

Heideggerian "unauthenticity" of the federation (or what would be its alleged "irrationality" and, thus, "unreality" in a Hegelian sense), Havel basked in a rhetoric that was defaming the nature of the state which he represented.⁵⁸ This was quite unusual a political practice when a highest state official openly questions the legitimacy and sensibility of the state. In this regard, Havel's attached to his Czech co-citizens labels of colonizers, to say the least:

We behave towards members of other nations or ethnic groups that live with us in way that to do the same with regard a black co-citizen would be inconceivable to any white in New York ... Many Slovaks consider the Czechs as their colonizers, and many Czechs consider the Slovaks as an appendix which complicates their life.⁵⁹

Havel further emphasized his point by claiming that in their history the Slovaks "have been always under somebody's else rulership," thus dismissing the Czechoslovak federation and his own presidency as being also shared by the Slovaks.⁶⁰ Havel, effectively fomenting a Slovak alienation, went to assert that "for many Slovaks it is less important if they are under a good or bad rule, with their participation or without it, with or without a consideration of their interests (sic), than a bare fact that is from somewhere else."⁶¹ In a similar way, Havel spoke about

⁵⁸ See, for example, Vaclav Havel, *Vazeni obcane*, op. cit., p. 30: "Everything federal is marked by previous sour experience ... the high degree of nonconfidence of the Slovaks towards the federal institutions, moreover so geographically distant from them [200-400 kilometres - author's comment], is more than understandable," said the federal president on 17 September 1990. Havel, recalling Masaryk's dictum that "states are sustained only by those ideals out of which they were born," went to assert that "the situation of our state ... does not reflect much from those past ideals." [Ibid., p. 56]

⁵⁹ From Havel's speech delivered in Prague on February 25, 1990 on the anniversary of the birth of T.G. Masaryk. [Vaclav Havel, *Projevy (leden - červen 1990)*, op. cit., p. 65]

⁶⁰ Vaclav Havel, *Letni premitani*, op. cit., p. 15.

⁶¹ Vaclav Havel, *Letni premitani*, op. cit., p. 15. In addition to denigrating the federation, Havel also slandered the Slovaks. This was a common feature of his public speeches from that time. After declaring his "full" or "deep understanding" for the alleged Slovak hatred and contempt of their "unauthentic"

summoned there by their youth activists and leaders.¹⁹ Coincidentally, the demonstration was then led towards Wenceslas Square along a curious detour of several miles, winding up on National Boulevard, where the head of the march was cut off and several hundred people were severely beaten by the police. By that time, the great majority of the marchers (including most communist youth activists) had already gone home. The police had been ready, waiting for their victims at the 'rendez vous' several hours before the demonstrators had even started to gather in distant Vischrad, coincidentally, the doors of the neighbouring houses had been also locked well in advance. A StB lieutenant, Ruzicka/Zifcak, was one of those who headed the demonstration towards National Boulevard, where he pretended to succumb to the violence of his colleagues and posed himself as dead.²⁰ A short-lived but crucial

¹⁹ On the importance of the role played by the leaders of the Communist "youth" see, for example, Marek Benda, Martin Benda, Martin Klima, Pavel Dobrovsky, Monika Pajerova, Simon Panek, Roman Kriz, *Studenti psali revoluci*, op. cit. Besides a tiny Socialist Party of Czechoslovakia, which was represented by its chairman during the foundation of the Civic Forum - in a police-guarded theatre on November 19, 1989, the official Communist youth broke the "official" line by denouncing the police action against the student manifestation in its newspaper on November 20, 1989. [Cf. M. Otahal and Z. Sladek, *Deset prazskych dnu*, op. cit., pp. 597, 615] On the same day, the then chairman of this Czechoslovak youth organization and member of the secretariat of the central committee of the party, Vasil Mohorita, made an encouraging speech on the Wenceslav square where he also denounced the police action. He also helped in installing audio equipment on the square. This greatly helped to get the cautious public into motion and into streets. [Marek Benda, Martin Benda, Martin Klima, Pavel Dobrovsky, Monika Pajerova, Simon Panek, Roman Kriz, *Studenti psali revoluci*, op. cit., p. 95] Immediately after the foundation of the Civic Forum, it was Mohorita together with the then Prime Minister Ladislav Adamec, who established the Forum as a counter-partner representing the Czechoslovak people for the government. [Ibid., p. 99] The youth organization declared its support of the ensuing student strike. It also produced and distributed across Czechoslovakia appeals for a strike and information bulletins. Apparently, without the technical, logistic and organizational help of the Communist "junior" activists, the strike could not take place. [See ibid., p. 101] Jakub Mejdricky, a Communist youth leader (member of the central committee) and then leader of the student strike, was known as a frequent traveller to the USSR since his age of 16, where he admired "deep Siberian forests, wild rivers ..." [Ibid., pp. 117, 129] Miroslav Vacek also stressed that Mohorita, for a while the leader of the post-1989 Communist party, was "crucial in the appeasement of the Communist parliamentary members with electing Havel as president in December 1989." [Miroslav Vacek, *Na rovinu: Bez studu a prikras*, (Praha: Periskop, 1994), p. 175]

²⁰ Bartuska, *Polojasno: Patrami po vinicich 17. listopadu 1989*, op. cit., p. 190.

myth of a murdered student and, thus, the take over was born on the basis of the emotional (false) appeal and the public relations of actors. On November 17, 1989, probably for the first time in the history of the regime, the Czechoslovak Ministry of the Interior was evacuated by its highest management, and for the first time, its analytical department did not have to make any analysis – the situation was apparently sufficiently clear beforehand to the top, and nothing else was required in this regard.²¹ Except for a small number of "official" dissidents (one of them, Vaclav Benda, later claimed that he was during the manifestation as "usually" tapping in to the StB from his presumably StB-tapped apartment),²² all of them left Prague for about one day

²¹ Bartuska noted: "History was not moved by the Friday beating [November 17, 1989], but only by this short piece of information [of an allegedly killed student]." (Vaclav Bartuska, *Polojasno: Patraní po vinících 17. listopadu 1989*, op. cit., pp. 98-99) "If not for the brutal suppression of the demonstration, the information about the dead student would arouse strong doubts. On the contrary, it could hardly be an improvisation ... it was too great a coincidence that [a person who was to invent the story] met so quickly somebody from the circle of the Charter [77]." [Ibid., p. 155] Moreover, the mother of Martin Smid, the student who was supposed to be killed, announced as early as the evening of November 18, 1989, in the Realistic Theatre [again another theatre], that her son was alive – Havel was present there, his spokesman Zantovsky, later the Czech Ambassador to the USA, refused the evidence of Smid's mother: "No, I have it confirmed, if it were a hoax, I would be out of the job tomorrow." Smid's mother also personally spoke with Havel, but in vain: "They held a commemoration ceremony for my son [instead]." The other units of the police also established by the evening of November 18, 1989 that Martin Smid lived. The information was, however, ignored [by other police?]. [Ibid., p. 60] Zifcak-StB-agent-imposter of Smid was one of the leaders of the Independent Student Association [STUHA?] that was signed as a co-organizer of the manifestation and he himself brought this declaration to the Charter spokeswoman Dana Nemcova for its emitting by the Radio Free Europe. But he did not "remember" this before the parliamentary investigation committee. He was also one of those who were leading the manifestation towards the police clubs. [Ibid., pp. 190, 199] When Zifcak was exposed by students themselves, the then Minister of the Interior flew to see Zifcak personally before his hearing and had several-hours' consultation with Havel about the same: as a result, it was ordered to the parliamentary committee that nothing can be published. [Ibid., 202] Lorenc also confirmed that the crucial "coincidence" was this bluff with a dead student. As Lorenc lauded it, it was "quite a good combination." Allegedly, the StB was not behind it [alone?]. Lorenc then quotes one of the post-Communist leaders who was to say: "So what, we do need some corpse." [Alojz Lorenc, *Ministerstvo strachu*, op. cit., pp. 174-175]

²² Ibid., p. Vaclav Bartuska, *Polojasno: Patraní po vinících 17. listopadu 1989*, op. cit., p. 113.

²³ Karel Hvizdala, *Výslech revolucionaru z listopadu 1989*, op. cit., p. 16. Moreover, Vaclav Benda, who later became the leader of the Catholic-Democratic party, also revealed that one day before the manifestation, on November 16, 1989, he had in his apartment a "dramatic negotiation" with a member of the central committee of the Communist youth organization (perhaps, Mohorita or Uleak). Present was also a prominent dissident Rudolf Battek, later a leader of the social-democrats. They discussed last organizational arrangements of the manifestation, especially, with regard to its "management and control" on the spot. Allegedly, and also understandably, the man from the official power structure had for this

Immediately theatres were turned into an emergency stage for closing down the Communist regime, and "student guards" appeared at entrances to university facilities. Evidently, the strategy was well poised to effectively mobilize and respond to the cultural and behavioral patterns of the Czechs.

Interestingly, Soviet lieutenant-general Teslenko was present in the police headquarters of the operation, while Alojz Lorenc was permanently on the telephone in the presence of a Soviet delegation headed by general V. Grusko, the chief of the second directory of the KGB and deputy chairman of the KGB. The Soviet delegation departed from Prague on November 18, 1989²⁴ and Czechoslovakia was about to leave the Soviet Empire as its asset was to be entrusted into Havel's hands as its caretaker. As Michaels Simmons, a personal acquaintance of Havel and his biographer, put it:

In a moment, when Gorbachev placed an unbounded full power (sic) into Havel's hands, he might retreat and let Havel cope with this situation. At one time, future historians will have to examine carefully what and by whose hand was written on the other side of this authorization, but the confidence and determination of Havel and others at the time when the revolutionary flow was moving towards one apparently unproblematic goal, indicate that Mikhail Gorbachev was merely one of those who quietly supported all this from Moscow.²⁵

meeting a mandate from "high" places, including a "certain mandate from the secret police (security)." It was confirmed that no "preventive arrests and restraining of the movement of the activists would take place," as well as "the police would not in any form visible" - perhaps inside the procession. On November 18, 1989, one day after the manifestation and its brutal dispersal by the police, this mysterious man as if taken directly out of Havel's play *The Conspirators*, expressed to the dissidents a gratitude for keeping their agreement, while the police were to provide Benda with a close personal guard. On the eavesdropping on the Czechoslovak secret police, Benda commented: "As was my habit during such occasions, I was listening to the radio connections of the secret police which followed the manifestation. Charming, there mobile stations have a code name Katan (Executor)." [Ibid., p. 16]

²⁴ Bartuska, *Polojasno: Patrami po vinicich 17. listopadu 1989*, op. cit., p. 138. Lorenc, *Ministerstvo sprachu*, op. cit., p. 160.

²⁵ Michaels Simmons, *Nesmely prezident*, op. cit., p. 13.

Simmons further asserted that the Soviet leadership, including the KGB and the Warsaw Pact command, prevented an "uncontrollable" development in Prague and "curbed" the Communist regime of Czechoslovakia. Understandably, the most precarious thing was to exclude the possibility of having the velvet take over suppressed by the action of the army generally suspected as the force most loyal to the state.²⁶ Thus, it seems that, during the takeover, the Soviets and police security were most concerned with keeping close watch over the army - their nominal former ally.

Coincidentally, Rudolf Hegenbart, the then chief of the 13th department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (responsible for internal affairs), later told the Parliamentary committee that he too was at the time of the regime forthcoming collapse busy entertaining a delegation from the USSR allegedly, somewhere outside Prague.²⁷ Hegenbart, assuming the stature of an *eminence gris*, frequently figures prominently in the annals of the revolution.²⁸ It may be noted in this regard that a second parliamentary committee for the investigation of the mystery of the "velvet" takeover conspicuously denied and avoided some of the most striking facts pointing towards the involvement or presence of the KGB, as

²⁶ Michaels Simmons, *Nesmely prezident*, op. cit., p. 13. The contacts between the Civic Forum and the Soviets during the take-over were numerous. On the Soviet side, it seemed that the chief concern was to prevent anything or anybody (like the Workers' Militia, army or naive Communists) that would complicate a smooth passing-over of power. [See, for example, Marek Benda, Martin Benda, Martin Klima, Pavel Dobrovsky, Monika Pajerova, Simon Panek, Roman Kriz, *Studenti psali revoluci*, op. cit., p. 99; Oskar Krejci, *Proc to prasklo*, (Praha: Trio, 1991), pp. 27, 103]

²⁷ Bartuska, *Polojasno: Patrani po vinicich 17. listopadu 1989*, op. cit., p. 54.

²⁸ *Inter alia*, Hegenbart's "people" were said to be "detaining" delegates to a crucial session of the central committee of the Communist party on November 23-24, 1989, at a time when a certain possibility existed that the then Minister of Defence might intervene. The detained delegates were then "instructed" (apparently by the means of appropriate persuasion methods) "how to behave." As a result, the whole presidium of the central committee resigned as required. [Karel Hvizdala, *Vyslech revolucionaru z listopadu 1989*, op. cit., p. 47]

established by the first parliamentary committee.²⁹ Danisz, who later appeared on the lists of StB agents, was quoted as advising his colleagues in the Parliamentary Committee: "Vasek Havel once told me: You should keep your hands off this Hegenbart, he has done for you [plural in Czech] so much that one day, when we tell it all, you will be astonished. For the time being, we have to keep silent."³⁰ Similarly, another lawyer-member of the committee, Motejl, stated that Vaclav Havel told him already in December 1989: "Hegenbart is not so bad as those others."³¹ During further discussions in the Parliamentary Committee investigating the 17th of November 1989, Danisz was obliged to reinforce his argument:

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And again later:

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²⁹ Slavomir Ravik, *Totalni deziluze*, (Praha: Prazska imaginace, 1992), p. 15.

³⁰ Bartuska, *Polojasno: Patraní po vinicích 17. listopadu 1989*, op. cit., p. 174.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 233.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 86-87.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 202-3. Evidently, Danisz was responsible for informing Havel about the work of the parliamentary investigation committee.

Moreover, according to Karel Steigerwald, an actor of the velvet pass over "in the most critical moment, it was Ladislav Adamec (Czechoslovak Communist Prime Minister) who played a very important role".³⁴ This Adamec's role consisted in inviting a delegation of the Civic Forum created in the evening on November 19, 1989 to a meeting on November 21, 1989, when understandably only a limited number of people knew at all about this new political formation.³⁵ In a crucial time, an intervention of the new Communist leader, Karel Urbanek in the favour of the dissidents' demands effectively undermined the line of the last defence of the government.³⁶

On 29 December 1989, the Communist Czechoslovak Parliament elected *unanimously* - at "gun point" of the TV cameras - Vaclav Havel for president after the calls for a people's vote had been rejected with arguments that it would be "too complicated," "untimely" or "costly."³⁶ Similar arguments were later used for preventing a referendum on the breakup of the country.

Communism in Czechoslovakia, as well in other Eastern European countries

³⁴ Cf. Michal Horacek, *Jak pukaly ledy*, op. cit., pp. 59-81; M. Otahal and Z. Sladek, *Deset prazskych dnu*, op. cit., pp. 585, 587; Karel Hvizdala, *Vslechy revolucionaru z listopadu 1989*, op. cit., pp. 42. On 21 November, 1989, Adamec was still afraid to receive Havel himself, as a result, Havel had to wait in a vestibule of the building of the Presidium of the Government. Thus, Jiri Bartoska, an actor, took part in this first meeting instead of Havel as "a less politically engaged personality". However, Adamec thereby initiated the official talks with Civic Forum, announced its existence officially to the public and elevated it as a counter-partner of the government and future power holder. [Ibid., p. 35] During a hearing before the parliamentary investigation committee, Adamec claimed that he did not even know that a massive student manifestation was to take place in Prague on November 17, 1989. [Vaclav Bartoska, *Polojasno: Patranu po vinicich 17. listopadu 1989*, op. cit., p. 81]

³⁵ Oskar Krejci, *Proc to prasklo*, op. cit., p. 104.

³⁶ Marek Benda, Martin Benda, Martin Klima, Pavel Dobrovsky, Monika Pajerova, Simon Panek, Roman Kriz, *Studenti psali revoluci*, op. cit., p. 168. Dubcek was manoeuvred out of his possible candidacy for president by giving him a position of the chairman of the federal parliament as a Christmas present by the same Communist parliament that ruled during Dubcek's forced internal exile. Consequently, Havel was elected president by the Communist deputies at a time when more than 80 per cent of the citizens wanted to have direct presidential elections. [Oskar Krejci, *Proc to prasklo*, op. cit., p. 42]

ceased to exist in the fast pace of developments. However, neither the Czechs nor the Slovaks appeared to be lucky in the same measure when, on 1 January 1993, they found themselves without their common state, being fenced off in two different entities, with their manifest, yet not prevailing wills in support of the common state not considered. While the authorities asserted that the Slovaks had never really identified themselves with Czechoslovakia (Havel, Pithart, Klaus), nevertheless, several years after the breakup, around sixty percent of Slovaks kept preferring a common federation with the Czechs.³⁷ And during the last Czechoslovak elections of 1992, even the Slovak nationalist party (SNS) did not advocate a split of the country. In fact, no party had a breakup in its program, nor had the two victorious republican parties of Klaus and Meciar who, immediately after the elections, confronted the people with the *fait accompli* of their new agenda. Nick Thorpe, a Canadian correspondent, noted that a wide-spread "nostalgia for Czechoslovakia was evident at the very start of the Czech Republic ... Tomas Garrigue Masaryk, the father of the Czechoslovak state in 1918 must be turning in his grave at recent developments."³⁸

In this light, Danisz's thesis about freedom given to the people of Czechoslovakia "for nothing and free" may be reconsidered. In particular, Havel himself later invalidated Danisz's maxim in his New Year's address to the nation on January 1, 1994 by stating that the division of Czechoslovakia was "a levy for us to pay for our post-November freedom."³⁹

³⁷ See, for example, *Country Report: The Czech and Slovak Republics*, (the Economic Intelligence Unit, London, No. 2, 1993), p. 10. In July 1994, only 35% of Slovaks were for the preservation of the independent Slovak state while more than 50% of them regretted the division of the Czechoslovak state. [*Lidove noviny*, 21 June 1994, p. 1.]

³⁸ *The Toronto Star*, January 5, 1993, p. A13.

³⁹ Vaclav Havel, *1992 & 1993 (projevy)*, op. cit., p. 176.

3.2. The Split of Czechoslovakia and Its Context (Final Destination or Transit?)

Hardly ever has modern history recorded a demise of a state brought about so 'gratis' or with such ease. On the surface, it appeared merely as a result of an irreconcilable personality clash between two stubborn national prime ministers Vaclav Klaus and Vladimir Meciar, to whose political ideologies Czechoslovakia had to be sacrificed. Their collaboration and mutual understanding in dismantling the country was at that time portrayed as a 'natural' outcome of the particular meanness of Meciar complemented by the nonchalant generosity of Klaus. Out of curiosity, one may wish to pose a question of how many minutes or hours it took for a couple of republican leaders to settle the termination of a state. Recently, an advisor to Meciar claimed that it was a matter of merely a several-minute phone call, during which Klaus congratulated Meciar on his election victory.⁴⁰ Another version argues that 40 minutes of discussion between Klaus and Meciar was necessary to reach such a conclusion.⁴¹

Interestingly enough, it was Vaclav Klaus, the Czech Prime Minister, who drew attention to the ostensible connection or continuity of the breakup and previous crucial events in recent Czech history. In rejecting the popular demand for holding a referendum, he compared the breaking up of the state with the years 1918, 1938, 1948, 1968 and 1989, when no referenda had been called either.⁴² Earlier, Havel

⁴⁰ Cited in a CBC report on the split emitted on the French channel of the CBC at 23.-24.00 on 20.9.1995.

⁴¹ See, the account of the leaders' meeting in Brno on 7 July 1992 in Robert Young, *The Breakup of Czechoslovakia*, Research paper No. 32, (Institute of Intergovernmental Relations, Queen's University: Kingston, 1994), p. 35. Also Rudiger Kipke and Karel Vodicka, eds., *Rozloučení s Československem*, op. cit., p. 110.

⁴² Slavomir Ravik, *Totální deziluze*, op. cit., p. 83.

only admitted the apparent when he stated that "the attempts to divide the state constitute a high powered play of politicians and do not reflect the interests of ordinary people."⁴³ On September 15, 1992, Milan Uhde, the then president of the Czech parliament and one of key figures in carrying out the split of the country, explained the sidetracking of the federal parliament of Czechoslovakia and rejection of referendum in the following way:

[Referendum] is an obsession with another democracy than with the parliamentary one ... It is an obsession that tries to arouse in people ... an impression that it is the citizen that can consider best all the questions of the state ...⁴⁴

By January 1992, over 2,500,000 citizens' signatures had been collected for a petition calling for a referendum. It was simply ignored by the political elite whose very leaders used this form of appeal during their dissident past (for example, the

⁴³ Robert Young, *The Breakup of Czechoslovakia*, op. cit., p. 70.

⁴⁴ Rostislav Hovorka, *Kronika dělení (Ceskoslovensko 1990 - 1992)*, (Hodonin: Pedagogické středisko, červen 1995), p. 59. Jicinsky's comment in this regard is significant: "In the creation of the independent Czech republic ... the ruling coalition has put into the foundation of the new Czech state something very dangerous, that is, contempt for the will of the citizens." Again, this statement well summarizes the misery of the continuity of Böhmsch nihilism. [Z. Jicinsky, *Cs. parlament v polistopudovém období*, op. cit., p. 34] In this regard, one may also compare this refusal to consult the voice of the people with Havel's words addressed to the people gathered in demonstration in Prague on November 25, 1989 where Havel criticized the Communist leaders because "[these] representatives of the state claim that the problems of this country cannot be discussed in the street [that is, directly with citizens]." [M. Otahal and Z. Sladek, *Deset prazských dnů*, op. cit., p. 464] In his New Year's address of 1993, when the breakup of the state had already taken place, Milan Uhde took the courage to reassert that "a free citizen is the guarantee of [democratic] conditions." [*Lidové noviny*, January 4, 1993, p. 3] When the politicians started openly working on the dismantlement of the state, the Czechoslovak citizens were demanding not only a referendum (82 per cent in Slovakia and 66 per cent in the Czech Republic), but also new parliamentary elections (60 percent of the Czechoslovak citizens); this idea was supported even by 51 per cent of those who voted for the ruling Civic Democratic Party (ODS) of Vaclav Klaus. [Slavomir Ravik, *Zahradní slavnost pro 15 milionů*, (Praha: Prazská imaginace, 1993), pp. 6, 87] In July 1994, one and half a year after the split, only 35% of the Slovaks supported the preservation of the independent Slovak state, while more than 50% of them regret the division of the Czechoslovak state. [*Lidové noviny*, June 21, 1994, p. 1]

petition of Charter 77 "Few Sentences" from early 1989 received a wide international attention and was supported by some 30,000 signatures).⁴⁵

Dusan Slobodnik, a Slovak political observer and witness of the breakup, argued that the "play" in which the state was at stake had its "scenario" that "can be substantiated factually" as it chronologically unfolded. At the beginning, he said, it was to anger the Czechs and insult the Slovaks, where a key role was played by the media, especially the ex-dissident *Lidove noviny* and ex-Communist youth *Mlade fronty Dnes*, and the leaders of the Civic Forum (J. Ruml, Forejt, Fiska, J. Hanak, I. Vaculik). The purpose was to stir or imitate artificially the tension and conflict, a reaction in Slovakia aroused by this manipulation was then presented to the Czechs by the "play directors" an alleged effort of the Slovaks to have a divorce. The real position of Slovakia was also played down, distorted or silenced by the federal television network controlled by the people from Charter 77. Despite all this, the vast majority of the Slovaks kept identifying themselves with the idea of Czechoslovakia, while the group of Czech politicians linked to and supported by Havel adopted arbitrary measures that were damaging Slovak workers (an arbitrary conversion of the military industry in Slovakia, distancing themselves from the problem of a hydro power station Gabčíkovo as allegedly an internal matter between Slovakia and Hungary).⁴⁶ The examination of the process of the breakup seems to confirm a great

⁴⁵ On February 25, 1990, Vaclav Havel declared: "[We] only want that the people and anybody else have the leading role in reality, not only on paper." [Vaclav Havel, *Projev předem 1990*], op. cit., p. 67]

⁴⁶ Dusan Slobodnik, "Hra o republiku" in Tazky, Mnacko, Kalisky, Vnuk, Comar, Kalny, Smolec, Simecka, Veres, Slobodnik, Varos, Hric, Minac, *Horuce temy: Slovensko v ringu*, (Bratislava: Tatrapress, 1991), pp. 99-106. With regard to the official policy of the Czech politicians, which was detrimental to Slovakia and their backstage manoeuvring, a revealing piece of evidence was provided by a former economist of the federal government, Frantisek Dvorak. It also sheds some light on the possible broader strategic context of the whole operation, especially in relation to large quantities of armament and aviation

deal of Slobodnik's conclusions.⁴⁷

The beginning of the whole process of dissolving and "delegitimizing" the common state could be traced to as early as November 1989, when the thesis of the "non-authenticity" of the existing federation had been launched and then intensively promoted - by the Czech side (Havel, Pithart, Klaus).⁴⁸ Paradoxically, the authorship of unauthenticity of the state was claimed by its "authentic" head, Vaclav Havel. This was certainly an unprecedented phenomenon when such a high official supposed to draw his powers from one political entity asserts that the entity itself which he is to represent is "unauthentic" or "unnatural."⁴⁹

transferred to Slovakia before the breakup. Thus, while the convergence program of military industry enhanced unemployment in Slovakia and, thus, caused manifest displacements and damage, the amount of money transfers to Slovakia in 1991-1992 increased in comparison with generous long-term subsidies for Slovakia under the Communist regime 2-3 times - by 50-70 billion crowns per year. This can be truly appreciated only in the light of the previous intensive Communist industrialization of Slovakia, that was largely oriented on the creation of defence industry. [Frantisek Dvorak, Slavomir Ravik, Jiri Teryngel, *Zaloba uneb Bila kniha k patemu vyroci 17. listopadu 1989*, (Praha: Periskop, 1994), p. 128] This information of unusually high amounts of financial transfers that drastically increased in 1990-1992 was confirmed by a former Czech minister of education, Petr Vopenka, who claimed that the amount surpassed in 1992 all the Slovak expenditures on all the forms of education starting from kinder-gartens to universities. [*Lidove noviny*, November 20, 1992, p. 8]

⁴⁷ In this regard, it is notable that Vaclav Benda, a Czech political leader after 1989, already mentioned above, was heard to declare merely for hours after swearing his allegiance to the Czechoslovak state that "the mission of the federal parliament is to liquidate the federation." [Slavomir Ravik, *Bylo nebylo: Tento způsob leta*, (Praha: Periskop, srpen 1995), p. 31]

⁴⁸ See, for example, Vaclav Havel, *Vazeni obcane, Projevy červenec 1990 - červenec 1992*, op. cit., p. 27. In his speech to the Federal Parliament on 17 September 1990, Havel advocated the need for the Slovaks to "realize their national sovereignty politically or in any other way and make their existence visible on the international scene in any possible way." Ibid., p. 193: "I do not intend to leave my citizens alone ... [but] no state has for me a supreme value." See also Vaclav Klaus, *Rok: malo ci mnoho v dejinach zeme*, (Praha: Repru-media, 1993), p. 66; Dienstbier's similar arguments in Jiri Dienstbier, *Rozmlouvaji nadoraz*, op. cit., p. 25. Havel made his first announcement on the "non-authenticity" of the state in his address in Bratislava on 22 November 1989. See Martin Butora and Zora Butorova, "Neznesitelna lahkost rozhodnu," in R. Kipke, *Rozloučení s Československem*, op. cit., p. 137. Actually, *The Manifesto of the Movement for Civic Freedom* published on October 15, 1988 prepared by Charter 77 already advanced the idea of (ir)relevance of the federation and the idea of "a true sovereignty" (sic) of the single republics instead that of the federation as the expression of the alleged "authentic" aspirations of the Czechs and Slovaks. [H. Gordon Skilling and Paul Wilson, eds., *Civic Freedom in Central Europe: Voices from Czechoslovakia*, (London: Macmillan, 1991), p. 142]

⁴⁹ Vaclav Havel, *Letni premtani*, op. cit., p. 28. Consequently, the dissolution of the state first started by redefining its predicate, using Heideggerian language of authenticity to this effect, then by depriving it of its traditional name to negate its very being at the end.

On 25 January 1990, in the Polish Parliament, Havel reminded the audience that he is an "author of absurd plays with inconspicuously bad ends."⁵⁰ On January 23, 1990, Havel "ambushed," as Jicinsky characterized it, the state and the parliament with his unified package of provocative proposals on the change of the state name and symbols. According to Jicinsky, Havel did not reveal his intentions or the content of his proposals to any representative of parliament before his speech. He only insisted that his proposals be immediately accepted. This speech by Havel made the Czechoslovak conflict and served as a matter of public politics and initiated the notorious 'hyphenated' war over the new name of the state and state symbols that was, therefore, but an artificial product of politicking presented as a seeming failure or error.⁵¹ To this effect, Havel claimed that "perceiving Czechoslovak statehood and identifying themselves with it" were to be viewed as "a deformed perception."⁵² Justifying this initiative, Havel acknowledged that the creation of new state symbols and related quarrels represented a "drastic intervention into the national and state consciousness," that Havel, however, posted as necessary: "because of different reasons," Havel said, "I consider this period to be the beginning of a new historic era

⁵⁰ Vaclav Havel, *Projevy, leden-cerven 1990*, (Praha: Vysehrad, 1990), p. 39.

⁵¹ Z. Jicinsky, *Cs. parlament v polistopadovem obdobi*, op. cit., pp. 106-107, see also *ibid.*, pp. 108-109. Cf. Rostislav Hovorka, *Kronika deleni*, op. cit., p. 5.

⁵² Vaclav Havel, *Vazeni obcane*, op. cit., p. 30. The same idea was also later shared and reinforced by Klaus. See, Klaus, op. cit., p. 68: Klaus dismissed Czechoslovakia as being an expression or form of Czech statehood. On the "deformed perception" of the alleged deformed perception of citizens and the refutation of Havel's denunciation of the federation as an "administratively complicated way of totalitarian ruling" see Zdenek Jicinsky, *Cs. parlament v polistopadovem obdobi*, op. cit., pp. 26-27. Havel himself was, of course, as federal president the highest representative of that federation.

In the aftermath of Havel's proposals, Pithart became the Czech Prime Minister and, on February 6, 1990, declared as part of his program that the Czech government become "a strong counterpart" to the federative state because the Czech lands had not been allegedly reconciled yet (accustomed) with the fact that they are an independent republic. Pithart's government thus was set up to "renew Czech statehood." This was one rare moments when Pithart expressed a keen interest in 'Czech statehood.' [See Rostislav Hovorka, *Kronika deleni*, op. cit., pp. 5-6]

that deserves such a radical expression [of new symbols]."⁵³ Besides dealing with the allegedly "deformed" perception of the people, this battle over 'a hyphen' actually became a beginning of dismantling the state.⁵⁴ The prevailing mood among the Czechoslovak populace at the time was a feeling of bewilderment and bafflement over the scolasticism and ostensible lack of reason on the part of the parliament and leadership. Shortly after, in Toronto on February 19, 1990, Havel announced a "very important task to separate the consciousness [of the people] in the Czech lands from the consciousness of Czechoslovak statehood" because, "in the consciousness of the Czechs, Czech statehood had been dangerously integrated with Czechoslovak statehood;" and "it would be wonderful for both nations to have their own national organizations and structures," including "political ones at least."⁵⁵ On the same occasion, during a meeting with Czech emigrants, Havel stated as a matter of fact that Slovakia would break away.⁵⁶ At that time, perhaps only a very small number of the ordinary citizens would suspect or imagine anything similar to happen in the near time to come. On February 25, 1990, Havel explained the puzzling decision of the elite to have another election again in two years (1992) in the following way: "In two years ... new and more natural territorial breakup of the country will be created ... I, however, recommend that [democracy] be checked up in two years ..."⁵⁷

In addition to heading the drive of the new political elite in claiming the

⁵³ Vaclav Havel, *Projevy, leden-cerven 1990*, op. cit., pp. 34-35.

⁵⁴ Slavomir Ravik, *Zahradni slavnost pro 15 milionu*, op. cit., pp. 9, 21. See also Zdenek Jicinsky, "Ke ztroskotani ceskoslovenskeho federalismu" in Rudiger Kipke, *Rozloucení s Československem*, op. cit., p. 69.

⁵⁵ Vaclav Havel, *Projevy, leden-cerven 1990*, op. cit., p. 49.

⁵⁶ *Polygon*, No. 3-4/1994, June 20, 1994: 33.

⁵⁷ Vaclav Havel, *Projevy (leden - červen 1990)*, op. cit., p. 69.

Heideggerian "unauthenticity" of the federation (or what would be its alleged "irrationality" and, thus, "unreality" in a Hegelian sense), Havel basked in a rhetoric that was defaming the nature of the state which he represented.⁵⁸ This was quite unusual a political practice when a highest state official openly questions the legitimacy and sensibility of the state. In this regard, Havel's attached to his Czech co-citizens labels of colonizers, to say the least:

We behave towards members of other nations or ethnic groups that live with us in way that to do the same with regard a black co-citizen would be inconceivable to any white in New York ... Many Slovaks consider the Czechs as their colonizers, and many Czechs consider the Slovaks as an appendix which complicates their life.⁵⁹

Havel further emphasized his point by claiming that in their history the Slovaks "have been always under somebody's else rulership," thus dismissing the Czechoslovak federation and his own presidency as being also shared by the Slovaks.⁶⁰ Havel, effectively fomenting a Slovak alienation, went to assert that "for many Slovaks it is less important if they are under a good or bad rule, with their participation or without it, with or without a consideration of their interests (sic), than a bare fact that is from somewhere else."⁶¹ In a similar way, Havel spoke about

⁵⁸ See, for example, Vaclav Havel, *Vazeni obcane*, op. cit., p. 30: "Everything federal is marked by previous sour experience ... the high degree of nonconfidence of the Slovaks towards the federal institutions, moreover so geographically distant from them [200-400 kilometres - author's comment], is more than understandable," said the federal president on 17 September 1990. Havel, recalling Masaryk's dictum that "states are sustained only by those ideals out of which they were born," went to assert that "the situation of our state ... does not reflect much from those past ideals." [Ibid., p. 56]

⁵⁹ From Havel's speech delivered in Prague on February 25, 1990 on the anniversary of the birth of T.G. Masaryk. [Vaclav Havel, *Projevy (leden - červen 1990)*, op. cit., p. 65]

⁶⁰ Vaclav Havel, *Letni premitani*, op. cit., p. 15.

⁶¹ Vaclav Havel, *Letni premitani*, op. cit., p. 15. In addition to denigrating the federation, Havel also slandered the Slovaks. This was a common feature of his public speeches from that time. After declaring his "full" or "deep understanding" for the alleged Slovak hatred and contempt of their "unauthentic"

perceiving the federation as a Czech trick and invention (despite all the *recent* historical data) that intended to restrict Slovak sovereignty. Similarly, the Slovaks were presented by Havel as "always neglected, overlooked" and "condemned to live in the shadow of their bigger and stronger brother."⁶² Havel himself explained his depreciating of the common state, asserting that "it is not from the sociological or political point of view important to what extent and when these feelings were correct, but it is important that they simply existed and exist."⁶³ As M. Neudorfl stated, Havel was thereby "actually encouraging in his speeches the Slovak nationalist sentiment and ignored the positive achievements of the two nations in Czechoslovakia."⁶⁴ This attitude-tactics was also observed by Theodor Draper who noted that Havel was positing as a fact his idea that it was a Czech "egoism" and "contempt" that "forced the Slovaks to cease considering Czechoslovakia as their country."⁶⁵ In making such questionable statements, Havel made a reference to alleged Slovak opinions or gossips and was putting in the mouth of the Slovaks. As a matter of fact, separatist demands and its rhetoric were shared only about some fifteen per cent of the Slovaks until the very moment of the split, so that this was creating an impression as if Havel was acting as their unacknowledged spokesperson.⁶⁶

Havel also initiated and legitimized the ignoring of the federal parliament, later a subject of his open attacks, and of the federal constitution in the process of the

coexistence with the Czechs, he defined this "fully legitimate will" at the same time as "a primitive, xenophobic and in its consequences suicidal nationalism." [See *ibid.*, p. 17]

⁶² Vaclav Havel, *Letni premitani*, op. cit., p. 16.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁶⁴ Marie L. Neudorfl, "Vaclav Havel and the Ideal of Democracy," a paper delivered at the Vth Congress for Central and East European Studies, Warsaw, August 6-11, 1995, p. 15.

⁶⁵ Theodor Draper, "The End of Czechoslovakia", *The New York Review of Books*, No. XL, 3/1993: 15.

⁶⁶ Cf., for example, Oskar Krejci, *Proc to prasklo*, op. cit., pp. 124-125.

breakup by summoning both republican governments without the federal one to a "common working session" to his residence in Lany on April 11, 1990. There, it was established that the "primacy, sovereignty and integrity of the national republics" (versus the federation), being *de facto* an unconstitutional act, be the decisive principle for all the subsequent negotiations. This was justified by claiming that the hitherto state arrangement and, thus, also the valid constitution "did not respect fully" some undefined "authentic principles of the federation."⁶⁷ In September 1990, Havel had to admit publicly that the presidentially sponsored negotiations on the division of powers in the federation, held in the summer of 1990, "led to suspicions and sometimes even to doubts about the future of our federal state."⁶⁸

By enforcing the issue of the split, the political elite *de facto* ambushed with this agenda the two nations: only 12 per cent of the Slovaks and 11 per cent of Czechs thought in September 1990 that Slovakia and Bohemia should separate.⁶⁹ The rationale of the 'hastily made' decision to hold elections as early as two years after those in 1990 is also pertinent in the light of the subsequent termination of the state. The validity of available indications that the Czech part had been heading for separation as early as 1990, was later also asserted by Meciar.⁷⁰

The population was unable to understand their own leaders. Two years later, when most citizens demanded a referendum, it was the leaders who could not come to

⁶⁷ See Rostislav Hovorka, *Kronika deleni*, op. cit., p. 10. On Havel's attack against the federal parliament, the highest body of the federation, see, for example, *ibid.*, pp. 48-49.

⁶⁸ Havel, *Vazeni obcane*, op. cit., p. 27. The possibility or prospect of a breakup was again announced by Havel in a speech to the Federal Assembly on 10 December 1990. [See, Robert Young, *The Breakup of Czechoslovakia*, op. cit. p. 31]

⁶⁹ Oskar Krejci, *Proc to prasklo*, op. cit., pp. 124-125.

⁷⁰ See in J. Diensther, *Rozmlouvaji nadoraz*, op. cit., p. 26.

terms with the rationality of such national will. They argued that holding a referendum would be 'too expensive,' 'untimely', 'too complicated' or that "a man from the street cannot decide such an important question."⁷¹ and that it would be impossible to compose the right question and even to rightly decipher the people's [right] answer. When the fate of Czechoslovakia was decided from above, only 16 percent of people in both republics favoured the same.⁷² Finally, it was simply proclaimed that a referendum on the future of Czechoslovakia "no longer made any sense" (Havel).⁷³ Havel claimed against all the facts to the contrary that he "cannot impose the federation on a nation [the Slovaks] which does not want to live in it,"⁷⁴ while preventing the same nation from expressing its true position.

Havel himself was aware that the meaning and possible repercussions of a breakup: "The divorce would be a denial of the will of all the previous generations, denial of the common work of our Czech and Slovak predecessors and rejection of the

⁷¹ This statement also accusing a popular vote of being demagoguery was made by Milan Uhde. [Slavomir Ravik, *Zahradni slavnost pro 15 milionu*, op. cit., p. 84]

⁷² The data is based on a poll made by an official Czechoslovak research institution. Robert Young, *The Breakup of Czechoslovakia*, op. cit., p. 37. Significantly, one year after the breakup, which was portrayed by Czech political leaders inside the country, as well as abroad as the fulfilment of the wishes of the Slovak nation, a pool established that sixty per cent of the Slovaks would still vote against the split of Czechoslovakia while only 24 per cent consented with it; in March 1993 (three months after the breakup) only 14 per cent of the Slovaks supported the move. [Slavomir Ravik, *Bylo nebylo v listopadu 1993*, (Praha: Alternativy, 1993), p. 49] In this light, Ravik himself tended to consider the separation as a "high treason with all its consequences." The "low identification of the Slovaks" with their new state (23 per cent for the separation and 60 per cent against) was also established by a sociological research conducted by the International Politological Institute in Brno (Czech Republic) in October 15-25 1993. [*Budovani statu: Aktualni problemy Slovenska po rozpadu CSFR*, (Brno: Mezinarodi politologicky ustav Masarykovy univerzity, 1994), pp. 1-2] Moreover, those Slovaks who were in favour of democracy overwhelmingly supported the idea of Czechoslovakia. In addition, according to 58 per cent of the Slovaks, the new Slovak state should not draw its continuity from the Slovak Independent State from World War II, while 20 per cent were of the opposite opinion. [Ibid., p. 2] With regard to the warnings against "undemocratic" and "xenophobic" trends in Slovakia made by the Czech politicians who worked on the breakup, it is also interesting to note that "the principle of a 'strong hand' has less supporters in Slovakia than in the Czech Republic" as embodied by Klaus's government. [Ibid., p. 6]

⁷³ See Robert Young, *The Breakup of Czechoslovakia*, op. cit., p. 37.

⁷⁴ Vaclav Havel, *Letni premiant*, op. cit., p. 22.

ideals that stood at the foundation of our common state."⁷⁵ This slighting of reason by the political representation probably made Dienstbier denote the split as 'inevitable irrationality'.⁷⁶ And curiously, as Young noted, "there seemed to have been little pressure from abroad to settle the issue through a referendum."⁷⁷

A very important impetus for widening and legitimizing the mood for separation was brought about by Havel's 'address to the Slovaks' in Bratislava, the Slovak capital, which was delivered on March 14, 1991, on the anniversary of the 14th of March 1939, when the "Slovak Independent State" was declared under the patronage of Hitler.⁷⁸ In a relatively short speech (covering slightly over two pages), Havel stated that the Slovaks had "a unique chance to make freely for the first time in their history *their own decision* [my italics]" about their own state and national sovereignty; and, according to Havel, such a chance "should not be wasted away".

It is not up to anybody else but only to you, citizens of the Slovak Republic, how you decide that you fulfil your longing for national sovereignty ... There is much [evidence] that a majority of the Slovaks wish just such a development - a majority that is perhaps less loud, but is considerate and thinks in a long term perspective.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Vaclav Havel, *Letni premitani*, op. cit., p. 22. In this light, the breakup was also a radical revision of the "ideals" of the Velvet Revolution itself which was a source of legitimacy of the new political elite. In this connection, Dr. Josef Sarka, an organizer of the original student demonstration against the Nazi regime in 1939, who was also participated in the manifestation of November 17, 1989, came to consider the Velvet Revolution as a "betrayed revolution": "what kind of democracy is it when people could not speak their mind about the termination of the Czechoslovak state, and the separation was approved by the deputies who swore their allegiance to the federation?" [Slavomir Ravik, *Bylo nehylo v listopadu 1993*, op. cit., p. 40]

⁷⁶ J. Dienstbier, *Rozmlouvaji nadoraz*, op. cit., p. 28.

⁷⁷ R. Young, *The Breakup of Czechoslovakia*, op. cit., p. 51.

⁷⁸ On that day, there were actually two meetings organized in Bratislava - one openly separatist and another supporting the federation. Havel "coincidentally", as R. Hovorka put it, participated in both of them. [Rostislav Hovorka, *Kronika deleni*, op. cit., p. 32]

⁷⁹ Vaclav Havel, *Vazeni nhcane*, op. cit., p. 65.

The whole speech of Havel boiled down to a steady reiteration of this appeal. Havel's urging that the Slovaks "should make such a decision" was stressed fifteen times. The same message was additionally reinforced by another fifteen similarly worded imperatives; at the same time, the word "Czechoslovak" was completely avoided and was not uttered at all. Havel further described the federation as "pseudofederation," "necessary evil," "a brake on the development of its members," "a burden" and "a source of complications." Havel then offered to extend a prior full consent to a Slovak decision to separate from the Czechs. He wound up his speech with a prophetic: "God is watching you, and I hope that we will not ask him to forgive us in years to come."⁸⁰

Interestingly, the then Czech Minister of Finance (then Federal Deputy Finance Minister under Klaus), I. Kocarnik, ordered stamps for the separation of a single Czechoslovak currency as early as 1991.⁸¹ In May 1991, upon its own initiative, the Czech National Council discussed the scenarios for separation. The Slovak part followed suit. By mid-1991 both republican governments had separation plans ready, detailed down to the division of federal assets.⁸² In this regard, a Canadian analyst, Robert Young, argued that normally the state authorities "cannot readily acknowledge the possibility of fragmentation before it occurs, even to the point of commissioning reports and contemplating scenarios."⁸³ On July 17, 1991, M. Macek, the then vice-chairman of the later ruling Civic Democratic Party and Czechoslovak vice-premier, indicated that the ruling Civic Democratic Party identified itself with the separation of

⁸⁰ Vaclav Havel, *Vazeni ohcane*, pp. 65-67.

⁸¹ Slavomir Ravik, *Bylo nebylo: Je to ve hvězdach*, leden 1994, (Alternativy: Praha, 1994), p. 48.

⁸² R. Young, *The Breakup of Czechoslovakia*, op. cit., pp. 31, 33.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

the state.⁸⁴ On November 17, 1991, Havel launched a direct appeal to the citizens to support his own position against the powers of the parliament and government, tying this together with his apparent concern about the federation.⁸⁵ Shortly beforehand, Havel implied that the citizens should be "given an opportunity" to speak their mind *at least* as far as the broadening of his own powers is concerned.⁸⁶ This untimely and isolated action on Havel's part aroused and also effectively pre-empted people's sincere enthusiasm and involvement. The parliament, government and Havel himself ignored the result of this initiative, as said above, manifested in over 2,500,000 signatures. Understandably, the effect was a dissuasion and discouragement of the misled people.

When people's resistance and energy was needed most - in the summer of 1992 - it was coincidentally a time of vacations, and their previous lesson was a sheer uselessness of their action. Admittedly, at that time, most people shared a high trust in Havel and relied on his guidance. This prevented them from an effective independent resistance (compare the section on war strategy below). Furthermore, on the part of the elite, there was nobody of any serious clout or interest who was in a position to organize and direct people's counter-action.

On May 12, 1992, speaking to Slovak citizens in Bratislava during the fatal election campaign of 1992, Havel again stated that it was better to separate than to indulge in a "never-ending confusion caused by the cowardly inability of politicians to

⁸⁴ Slavomir Ravik, *Zahradni slavnost pro 15 milionu*, op. cit., p. 24. M. Macek retreated from his functions after a revelation of his swindle with a privatized state property. On January 4, 1993, a few days after the breakup, M. Macek boasted: "I feel well because it is known about me that I had been pressing for the breakup of Czechoslovakia." [Ibid., p. 25]

⁸⁵ See Vaclav Havel, *Vazeni ohcane*, op. cit., pp. 118-119.

⁸⁶ Quoted in Slavomir Ravik, *Zahradni slavnost pro 15 milionu*, op. cit., p. 17.

say what they are up to."⁸⁷ On June 25, 1992, when the split was already being openly negotiated by Klaus and Meciar, Havel resorted to an unspecified looming threat when, speaking in the Czechoslovak Parliament, he warned against "all forms of resistance" because otherwise:

we will all and everybody have to pay for it very dearly and very soon, when the interest charged will be so high that you will be shocked ... A serious and profound historical process is involved here; it has a thousand aspects that you could understand only after a certain time ... It is about matters that are too serious ...⁸⁸

In the meantime, Havel used the Slovak formal manifestation of sovereignty, adopted on July 17, 1992, as the opportunity to resign prematurely, thus clearing the scene - within an hour after the Slovak Assembly's vote.⁸⁹ His resignation, Havel expressly justified by his inability to stand up to his oath to the state and the constitution because it would not be "any longer in accordance with his [private] nature, conviction and conscience."⁹⁰ On this occasion, Havel also lauded his own character: he resigned because "simply, the society has not been able to stand up to [his own] moral mirror."⁹¹ Shortly afterwards, Havel, however, also stated in an interview for *Time* (August 3, 1992) that "he does not have any emotional bounds towards the Czechoslovak state."⁹² As Young stressed, Czech Prime Minister Vaclav

⁸⁷ Vaclav Havel, *Vazeni ohcane*, op. cit., p. 181.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 192.

⁸⁹ Slavomir Ravik, *Zahradni slavnost pro 15 milionu*, op. cit., p. 14; R. Young, *The Breakup of Czechoslovakia*, op. cit., p. 27. As Ravik emphasised, Havel could stay as President in his office till 5 October 1992 and use all his presidential powers for mobilizing support for a common state.

⁹⁰ Rostislav Hovorka, *Kronika deleni*, op. cit., p. 55.

⁹¹ Slavomir Ravik, *Totalni deziluze*, op. cit., p. 85.

⁹² Quoted in Slavomir Ravik, *Bylo nebylo: Spolecnost trvale neudrzitelne blbosti*, op. cit., pp. 50-51. In 1990, Havel explained his new candidacy for president by listening to a "voice of higher responsibility" that "whispered to him that the job has not been finished yet." In 1992, he abdicated and paved the way

Klaus "encouraged and welcomed the resignation of Havel as the last prominent Czech leader at the federation level."⁹³

With regard to this final phase of the dismantling of the state, it is peculiar to note that the principal constitutional figures and institutions used unconstitutional methods either as blackmail in relation to other state institutions or as direct means for enforcing their program. On September 3, 1992, the liquidation federal executive ordered that the three-fifth threshold of the votes in each of the three chambers of the federal legislature required for any constitutional change be reduced to a simple majority of deputies at the republican level, forcing the federal legislative body out of decision-making.⁹⁴ Klaus threatened to declare Czech independence "if the Slovaks would drag on," making it clear that he would not hesitate, in contravention to the constitutional order, to bypass the Federal Assembly using his command of a narrow majority in the Czech chamber. He portrayed resisting deputies as "disloyal" and "obstructionists" and precluded "any substantive debate on the Czech-Slovak union as an alternative."⁹⁵ As Young stressed, "at this point, it was Klaus who was willing to threaten [with] a non-constitutional separation."⁹⁶ Havel publicly supported the course of Vaclav Klaus, as well as the idea to ignore the federal legislature because, as he claimed, "in such a situation a legal puritanism has no importance."⁹⁷ Havel himself attacked the last-minute resistance of federal deputies as "divisive and disruptive."⁹⁸

for separation. [Slavomir Ravik, *Totalni dezintegrace*, op. cit., p. 84]

⁹³ R. Young, *The Breakup of Czechoslovakia*, op. cit., p. 35.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 54.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 42.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 54.

⁹⁷ Slavomir Ravik, *Zahradni slavnosti pro 15 milionu*, op. cit., pp. 83, 22.

⁹⁸ R. Young, *The Breakup of Czechoslovakia*, op. cit., p. 54.

Later, on November 17, 1992, Havel announced that he would run for the Czech presidency at a moment when no post of this kind yet existed, nor the end of the federation was yet official, and no constitution of the Czech Republic existed.⁹⁹ The easiness with which Havel terminated his obligations to the Czechoslovak state corresponded to that he demonstrated by announcing his candidacy for another post of president. Coincidentally, Havel made this declaration of his intent one day before a crucial vote in the Czechoslovak parliament on allowing the breakup, thus, placing the deputies under an additional pressure not to run against his manifest will.¹⁰⁰

On November 10, 1992, the Czech republican legislature passed a resolution assuming "full responsibility" for the Czech Republic, ignoring the powers of federal authorities and the federal constitution. In addition, the two political parties ruling in both republics with thirty percent of votes issued their public threats to dissolve the federation unconstitutionally.¹⁰¹ On November 25, 1992, the Federal Assembly passed the dissolution law with a majority of one and two votes, respectively, beyond the designated thresholds.¹⁰² Symbolically, Vaclav Klaus attended the parliamentary session hobbling on crutches. To formally clear this "constitutionally doubtful breakup,"¹⁰³ the deputies were encouraged by a government-made promise that they would be seated in non-existing republican Senates for the rest of their lives. During the whole process, the media also played a crucial role in disciplining and even "brainwashing" the populace and precluding the articulation and promotion of a pro-

⁹⁹ Rostislav Hovorka, *Kronika deleni*, op. cit., p. 55.

¹⁰⁰ See R. Young, *The Breakup of Czechoslovakia*, op. cit., p. 39.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 55.

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 56. Rudiger Kipke, *Rozloučení s Československem*, op. cit., p. 155.

¹⁰³ Rudiger Kipke, "Nejnovejší politický vývoj v Československu v zrcadle veřejného mínění" in Rudiger Kipke, *Rozloučení s Československem*, op. cit., p. 55.

Czechoslovak platform ¹⁰⁴

Subsequent analyses undertaken by different authors independently came to the conclusion that the breakup of Czechoslovakia was executed undemocratically, illegitimately and without an evident mandate.¹⁰⁵ In this regard, the political elites in both republics were said to carry the responsibility for it.¹⁰⁶ At the moment when most

¹⁰⁴ See, for example, Zdenek Jicinsky, "Ke ztroskotani ceskoslovenskeho federalismu" in Rudiger Kipke, *Rozloučení s Československem*, op. cit., p. 71. And Martin Butora and Zora Butorova, "Neznesitelná ľahkost rozhodnutí," *ibid.*, pp. 135, 139-140. Actually, before this vote in the federal parliament took place, the employees of the federal government had been deprived of radios, type-writers and other logistic support because the material "delimitation" of the federation had already gone ahead. [Slavomir Ravik, *Zahradni slavnost pro 15 milionu*, op. cit., p. 5]

¹⁰⁵ See contributions by Rudiger Kipke, Zdenek Jicinsky, Karel Vodicka and Petr Pithart in R. Kipke, *Rozloučení s Československem*, op. cit., p. 53, 79-81, 98-100, 108-109, 225. Cf. an analysis of a former Czechoslovak Vice-Premier, Pavel Rychetsky, in *Lidove noviny*, September 1, 1992, p. 8. On October 1, 1992, the federal parliament did not accept a proposal on the termination of the federation whereby it would de facto, contrary to the constitutional order, delegated the power to dissolve the Czechoslovak state to national governments or parliaments. It adopted a proposal of Milos Zeman (social-democrat) on the preparation of the constitutional law on the transformation of the federation into a Czecho-Slovak union. The presidium of the federal parliament with no lawmaking powers on its own simply ignored this legally binding document, so did both republican governments. However, the proposal itself appeared to essentially a disguised exercise in misleading the public because "its last article was proposing to abolish what the first recommended to establish;" in particular, it read: "The Czecho-Slovak Union ceases to exist in a moment of the entry of the Czech and Slovak republics into the European Union." [Pavel Tigríd, *Jak to bylo*, (Praha: Lidove noviny, 1993), p. 30] On November 5, 1992, the federal government submitted to the federal parliament an addition to its program declaration containing a task to terminate the federation by December 31, 1992, that was again as such unconstitutional (de facto an attempt to dissolve the state by the means of a merely procedural arrangement). This was rejected. In normal conditions, this would have to entail the resignation of the government and new elections. Instead, the Czech government declared its full responsibility for the state of affairs in the territory belonging to the Czech Republic, and, on November 20, 1992, the Czech parliament established a Czech Ministry of Defence and the Office of Czech President while no Czech constitution existed, and matters of defence belonged exclusively to the federation. At the same, both national governments hastily proceeded in concluding a series of inter-state agreements that had the nonexistence of the federation as its basic premise and, thus, stipulated such a situation. Consequently, these agreements and actions had no legal ground. Their basis was only the gentlemen's understanding and will of the two republican prime ministers, Klaus and Meciar. Even, when a tiny majority of the deputies of the federal parliament sanctioned the separation under pressure and threats of Klaus, Meciar and Havel, they did so disregarding their own oaths to the constitutional order of the Czechoslovak state. [See Rostislav Hovorka, *Kronika delení*, op. cit., pp. 61, 63, 65-66] For example, J. Kalvoda, the leader of a minor governmental party, the Civic Democratic Alliance (ODA) representing only some 384,000 voters (around 5 per cent) was one of the most ardent spokesman for the unconstitutional approach: "ODA," he declared in a moment of a short-lived resistance of the highest legislature, "is not a supporter of such a mode of separation in which the federal parliament would participate with its decisions," "in the process of the separation of the federation, the way by the means of the federal parliament's decision is not needed ..." [Slavomir Ravik, *Totalni deziluze*, op. cit., p. 77]

¹⁰⁶ See contributions by Fedor Gal and Petr Pithart in R. Kipke, *Rozloučení s Československem*, op. cit., pp. 156, 162, 230-1.

people in both republics were clearly saddened by the forthcoming breakup, on the eve of the anniversary of Czechoslovak independence. V. Havel spoke to his co-patriots about "the necessity to turn the fruit of this harvest into a new sowing" because "[we] have sown well and have watered well," and "life is a joyful participation in the miracle of being."¹⁰⁷ On December 10, 1990, when he tried to use the Czecho-Slovak question to have his presidential powers expanded (a constant drive of Havel's), Havel spoke a different tune:

if we made possible that all this [the breakup] happens . . . we would enter into the records of history of our nations as the first generation in their history which, without being exposed to any inadvertent [public] pressure from outside, prepared with their own blindness a unbounded and long-term suffering (sic). I dare to say that the next generations would curse us, and that the world community would declare us mad.¹⁰⁸

It is the international aspect and possible repercussions of this "joyful sowing" that concern our present analysis. There is a consensus on the part of the Czech leadership that the breakup should be viewed as part of a broader framework. In his speech to the Polish Parliament in January 1990, Vaclav Havel had expressed his appreciation of *a new Mitteleuropa* as a meaningful filling of "the great political vacuum that appeared in Central Europe after the break-up of the Hapsburg empire," describing it as a "political" project that has today a "real historic chance."¹⁰⁹ Havel had further indicated that the split of Czechoslovakia would in principle entail a

¹⁰⁷ Vaclav Havel, *1992 & 1993 (projevy)*, op. cit., p. 21.

¹⁰⁸ Vaclav Havel, *Vazeni obcane*, op. cit., p. 56.

¹⁰⁹ Paul G. Lewis, 'History, Europe and the Politics of the East', in Stephen White, Judy Batt and Paul G. Lewis, eds., *Developments in East European Politics*, (MacMillan: London, 1993), p. 269. On the continuity of the project *Mitteleuropa* and its contemporary context see a more detailed discussion below.

"breakdown of all guarantees of the inviolability of her borders."¹¹⁰ At a time when he was already contemplating his resignation,¹¹¹ he stated,

The breakup of the state would also mean an actual loss of defence ability of both republics (a circumstance especially serious *in the situation of questioned state borders* [by whom?]). From the standpoint of security, it would be consequently a really hazardous act.¹¹²

Havel further strengthened this projection by stressing that "certainly, it would be a very painful step with long-term tragic consequences for both republics." In this regard, as Havel put it, the Czechs and Slovaks alike should "get rid of their illusions."¹¹³ After the breakup, Klaus compared the advent of a separate Czech entity to a state of "post-operational narcosis" and spoke about it as "a geopolitical tragedy."¹¹⁴ However, in the view of Deputy Foreign Minister Pavel Bratinka, "the breakup of Czechoslovakia was the only viable way to preserve stability in Central Europe," whereby the Czech elite allegedly rendered "a great service to Europe."¹¹⁵

In this light, the views and concepts of Czech leaders concerning the (future) Czech statehood (its value and nature) are worthy of attention. Adopting the German term *Verkleinerung* (diminishing, cutting down, belittling) for denoting the Czechoslovak breakup,¹¹⁶ Klaus implied that the new Czech state could be seen as "a

¹¹⁰ Slavomir Ravik, *Zahradní slavnost pro 15 milionů*, op. cit., p. 22.

¹¹¹ See, for example, Vaclav Havel, *Letní premiéra*, op. cit., pp. 118-119.

¹¹² Ibid., p. 24.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 25.

¹¹⁴ Slavomir Ravik, *Bylo nebylo: Zlatý píst*, kveten 1994, (Alternativy: Praha, 1994), p. 20.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 37. As Zdenek Jicinsky stated, P. Bratinka together with D. Kroupa and other deputies of the Civic Democratic Alliance and the Civic Democratic Party "belonged to these members of parliament who did not publicly recognize the federative arrangement of the state ... In one or another way, they promoted unitarianism [clearly unacceptable as such to the Slovaks], and when the Slovak side did not want to accept it [as expected], they for the split." [Ibid., p. 37]

¹¹⁶ Vaclav Klaus, *Rok: málo či mnoho v dějinách země*, (Praha: Repro-media, 1993), p. 57.

somehow compensatory and temporary arrangement, a state residue."¹¹⁷ In this regard, the future of this Czech state may also be "a provisional, temporary and compensatory solution."¹¹⁸ Some time earlier, Havel had also declared that the Czech people "little appreciated their own republic as a sensible expression of their existence."¹¹⁹

The Czech ex-Prime Minister Pithart set the tone, arguing in his analysis of the split that the Czech state was "commonly seen as an unwanted child." Moreover, in Pithart's view, *the nation* as a concept is the property of the poor: for one's identification and existence, wealth is sufficient. Consequently, *the nation* is (to be) rejected as an identification (for the Czechs). In Pithart's view, *region* replaced *nation*. "Regions" (should) attempt to free themselves from the state (in Pithart's words: "decentralization of the Czech Republic") in the process of "their disintegrating by rich regions," thereby "securing for themselves a special status."¹²⁰ As a result of this political regrouping, the internal setup of the Czech Republic should be "less advantageous" than connections inside "new regions." In fact, this had already been achieved to a great extent in the frontier areas of the Czech Republic from where many thousands of people daily commuted to labour in Germany, after the local Czech industries declined under the "laissez-faire" policies of the government. According to Pithart, moreover, current state frontiers should be reduced to "merely hypothetical lines." The power of the existent Czech state will weaken in the same measure. Furthermore, the existing national education should "virtually melt" in the framework of the new "regional" setup. What Pithart calls "Czech nationalism" has to

¹¹⁷ Vaclav Klaus, *Rok: malo ci mnoho v dejinach zeme*, op. cit., p. 68.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

¹¹⁹ Vaclav Havel, *Projevy, leden-cerven 1990*, op. cit., p. 35.

¹²⁰ R. Kipke, *Rozloucení s Československem*, op. cit., pp. 221, 223, 225.

be radically "cut off from its roots."¹²¹

According to Pithart, the Munich deal of 1938 should also be seen because of the split of Czechoslovakia now on "from a new perspective." In Pithart's view, Czechoslovakia was an "artificial state," "unviable creation," "fastidious task" and "mistake" "fortuitously" born in 1918 out of the will of the great powers and T.G. Masaryk, "hard-to-please imagination of a cosmopolitan." The Munich deal of 1938 so "desatanized" is then nothing more than a fault of the Czechs - "the Germans have always told us that." In Pithart's view, the breakup of Czechoslovakia confirms *de facto* that the Czechoslovak state was an "error" sacrificed by the Czechs for the sake of "having more meat than the Slovaks have and more meat than we had with the Slovaks." He concluded that the situation of the Slovaks and the treatment of the Sudeten Germans in the 1930s (and the Munich deal) were results of the same "faulty [Czech] national policy." The only solution left for the Czechs was indicated as being a multiregional *Mitteleuropa* based "not only on economics."¹²²

On the state anniversary of 28 October in 1990, V. Havel declared that there is "a legitimate question of whether the decision of our predecessors [to found an independent Czechoslovakia] was also free and whether it was also right."¹²³ At the OSCE summit in Helsinki on July 9, 1992, Havel, still in the capacity of

¹²¹ *Lidove noviny*, May 6, 1994, p. 6.

¹²² See Pithart's article "28 October: Munich from a new perspective" was published in *Lidove noviny*, October 27, 1994, p. 8.

¹²³ Václav Havel, *Vázení občane*, op. cit., p. 40. Vilem Hejl commented similar views - however, voiced in the aftermath of the Munich deal of 1938 (and later reproduced by some dissidents before 1989) in the following way: "From many critiques that appeared after Munich, we can ignore those which asserted that it had been possible to prevent Munich beforehand if Czechoslovakia had in time taken care of its dangerous powerful neighbour. But they do not say anything else than that it would have been possible to prevent the capitulation by a volunteer and willing serfdom - such is shortly the essence of the whole philosophy of subsequent collaborators." [Vilem Hejl, *Rozvrát: Mnichov a nas usud*, op. cit., p. 36]

Czechoslovak President, indicated that Czechoslovakia was "already overcome by the dynamics of history."¹²⁴ Lately, those ideas have been intensively expanded and elaborated by the media and other members of the Czech elite.

Jiri Valenta, a Director of the Czech foreign ministry's Institution of International Relations, also holds in his analysis of the Czechoslovak breakup that on the part of the Czech Republic, there is "a less evident taste for statehood," and that neither the Czech Republic nor Slovakia are capable of "reliably defending themselves."¹²⁵ In this regard, as early as 1 January 1990, Havel declared: "As Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, I want to be a guarantor that the security of our state will never again be a pretext for anybody to thwart courageous peace initiatives ..."¹²⁶ With regard to such a "peace drive" sacrificing the state and its security, Miroslav Vacek, the former Czechoslovak Defence Minister, said that those who stood in the Czech Republic behind the separation were well aware that it would undermine the stability of the Czech Republic itself - also by losing the defence industry of Slovakia.¹²⁷ This conscious weakening of the security of the state was continued after the breakup as well.¹²⁸ It is noteworthy that, since the breakup unto the

¹²⁴ Vaclav Havel, *Vazeni obcane*, op. cit., p. 195.

¹²⁵ R. Kipke, *Rozlouceni s Ceskoslovenskem*, op. cit., pp. 201, 203.

¹²⁶ Vaclav Havel, *Projevy, leden-cerven 1990*, op. cit., p. 17.

¹²⁷ Slavomir Ravik, *Bylo nebylo: Zlary pist*, kveten 1994, op. cit., p. 37.

¹²⁸ This process of weakening the army actually began under the previous Communist regime. In August 1989, the then Secretary General of the Communist party, Milos Jakes, officially announced, without prior consultation with the army command (!) a reduction of the army service. [Miroslav Vacek, *Proc bych mel micer*, op. cit., p. 48] According to Vacek, Havel as the head of state actively supported the questioning of the role of the army during political meetings. [Ibid., pp. 27-28] Neither, Havel concealed his intention that the question of the protection of borders of the state vis-à-vis Germany "should be changed in the near future." [Ibid., p. 49] In Vacek's view, from the very beginning [thus, from December 1989], the committee of the Civic Forum for the defence matters tried vehemently and at any cost to undermine the defence capability of the army. [Miroslav Vacek, *Na rovinu: Bez studu a prikras*, op. cit., p. 179] It is also of symbolic importance that the post-1989 political elite abolished the Day of the Czechoslovak Army. [Ibid., p. 210] The essence of the Havel-initiated "convergence" program was succinctly summarized by Slavomir Ravik: "In the post-November euphoria, Havel boasted that we would

time of writing this work, the Czech government elaborated no defence doctrine of the state. In 1993, Vaclav Klaus, the Prime Minister, justifying the lack of security strategy of the state, claimed in this regard that "the defence doctrine is not a document that is to be approved by the government."¹²⁹ By the end of April 1996, Klaus still maintained that "we [the government of the nation?] have not yet misfired in anything," while the current Czech constitution completely ignores defence and security issues of the state.¹³⁰

In this regard, it is peculiar that, in negotiating the breakup, it was the Czech side that systematically kept rejecting (sometimes even as a "joke") all Slovak proposals for any kind of mutual military and economic union.¹³¹ Klaus declared in this regard:

the current *abandoning* of the federation is in the interest of both parties. Projects of confederation, union or some alliance amount to forcing one part of the present federation into the political, economic, national and possible

abolish the defence industry.. In this moment, the foreign military producers cheered up ... Then Havel explained that he had not meant classic ammunition and hand-guns, but tanks and all the military hardware. Thereby, he did not cheer up the Slovaks, who were threatened with an economic collapse which began undermining our relationship with Slovakia." [Slavomir Ravik, *Bylo nebylo: Prusvih po cesku, červen 1994*, (Praha: Alternativy, 1994), p. 13. On the governmental policy of "quiet demobilization of the army" after the breakup of Czechoslovakia, which Slavomir Ravik suspects of being part of "deliberate designs" and supporting data see, for example, Slavomir Ravik, *Bylo nebylo: Je to ve hvězdach, leden 1994*, (Praha: Alternativy, 1994), p. 43; Slavomir Ravik, *Bylo nebylo: Chaos nebo bordel? únor 1994*, (Praha: Alternativy, 1994), p. 57; Slavomir Ravik, *Bylo nebylo: Už jsme tady, březen 1994*, (Praha: Alternativy, 1994), p. 59; Slavomir Ravik, *Bylo nebylo: Nevím a jedu, duben 1994*, (Praha: Alternativy, 1994), pp. 32-34; Slavomir Ravik, *Bylo nebylo: Zlatý píst, kveten 1994*, (Praha: Alternativy, 1994), p. 39; Slavomir Ravik, *Bylo nebylo: Prusvih po cesku, červen 1994*, (Praha: Alternativy, 1994), pp. 51-52; Slavomir Ravik, *Bylo nebylo: Latrina mařika v Cechach, na Morave a ve Slezsku*, (Praha: Periskop, 1995), pp. 98-101, 312-315.

¹²⁹ Miroslav Vacek, *Na rovinu: Bez studu a prikras*, op. cit., p. 153.

¹³⁰ Emil Hajek, "Ministerstvo obrany, nebo setmosti?", *Lisry*, No. 3, 1995: 46. Emil Hajek is a retired Czech general.

¹³¹ R. Young, *The Breakup of Czechoslovakia*, op. cit., pp. 25, 28, 48; R. Kipke, *Rozloučení s Československem*, op. cit., p. 93.

'neighbouring' problems of the other part, and *this can be very dangerous*.¹³²

Sometimes, one has to appreciate the openness of Czech politicians inasmuch as the public does not listen to speeches nor read articles of their leaders. For example, Pithart admitted once more:

At present, the problem of a previous lack of legitimacy [of the breakup - that is, *post factum*] is being resolved. In order to lessen the number of those who still regret the dissolution of the federation, the relationship between the two states is often *artificially worsened* ... As a result, today, the prospect of some new rapprochement is clearly an illusion.¹³³

3.3. The New "Ideal Association"

The following developments shed another light on the nature of the whole process, illuminating both the previous events, as well as the forthcoming ones. Three days before his abdication, Havel stamped the idea of "Czech interest" as "defeatism."¹³⁴ In this regard, as Havel put it, even the name "Czech Republic" and especially the second word still connotes for him the Communist past.¹³⁵ On

¹³² V. Klaus, *Řek malo ci mnoho v dejinach zeme*, op. cit., p. 42. Italics added.

¹³³ Petr Pithart, "Czechoslovakia: The Loss of the Old Partnership," paper delivered at the Conference "Federation or Confederation: Searching for a New Partnership", Toronto, 22 June 1994, p. 8.

¹³⁴ *Lidove noviny*, October 20, 1992, p. 8. It is worth comparing this statement of Havel with the declaration of Charter 77 on the "significance of October 28, 1918 in the history of Czechoslovakia" issued on October 27, 1987: "If the ideals of national sovereignty and independence [*svěbytnost*] had been applied at the birth of the Czechoslovak state and have been proven in a series of difficult challenges, it is our duty to develop and fulfil their heritage. It is, therefore, self-evident that the leading politicians should strictly defend the interests of the state. Our participation in the economic or military integrations should be a surrender of national sovereignty or our interests ... We think that the official lack of respect towards October 28, 1918 and insufficient willingness to defend our state interests are closely interconnected ... The importance of our statehood, therefore, needs to be stressed as the most fundamental reality." [Vilem Precan, eds., *Charta 77 (1977-1989): Of moralni k demokraticke revoluci*, (Bratislava: Archa, 1990), pp. 329-330] In September 1992, that is, during the process of separation of Czechoslovakia, the Czech foreign minister Josef Zieleniec was reported to have negotiated in "integration of the Czechoslovak republic into the territorial frame of Germany." [Slavomir Ravik, *Über Alles*, (Praha: Periskop, 1995), p. 28]

¹³⁵ Slavomir Ravik, *Bylo nebylo v listopadu 1993*, op. cit., p. 25.

November 16, 1993, Havel further held that "it is necessary to overcome the idea of the nation-state" in its hitherto existing form of Czech statehood that amounts, as Havel put it, to the rejection of the nation-state as "a culmination of national existence."¹³⁶ Havel's line was also echoed by the Czech prime minister Vaclav Klaus who said: "the word 'national allegiance' is an unknown term, therefore it is not possible to elaborate it further."¹³⁷

What is the alternative? In Havel's view, the new association should arise from "natural historic, spiritual, social and economic connections," as opposed to the alleged artificiality, hence non-authenticity, of the post-1918 form of Czech statehood and "artificiality of a number of borders" in Central and Eastern Europe.¹³⁸ If certain states in Central Europe are "artificial," then "regions" are deemed as "natural."¹³⁹ Importantly, as Young noted, the current Czech Constitution contains significant abeyances on the issue of the territorial division of the country and striking (temporary?) ambiguity with regard to the powers and the boundaries of expected future "regions" or "lands," which are to be endowed with their own elected

¹³⁶ Ibid., p. 50.

¹³⁷ Slavomir Ravik, *Bylo nebylo: Zlatý píst, kveten 1994*, op. cit., p. 25. In this regard, it is to be noted that Havel, Klaus, Pithart and others expressly appealed to the alleged need to build a distinct Czech nation-state distinguished from "the unauthentic federation" and reproached the Czechs for not identifying themselves predominantly with the Czech Republic but with Czechoslovakia instead - while they worked on separating the Czech nation from the Slovaks.

¹³⁸ Vaclav Havel, *Vazeni obcane*, op. cit., pp. 24, 165. In addition to the "artificial borders" thesis, Havel also implies that the importance of such borders should be reduced. [Vaclav Havel, *Projevy, leden-cerven 1990*, op. cit., p. 45]

¹³⁹ Havel, 1992 & 1993, op. cit., p. 184. Even, the new Czechoslovak and Czech symbols introduced in early 1990, especially the "fragmented" coats of arms, seem to have already prepared the ground for this "regionalization" of the state. See Vaclav Havel, *Projevy, leden-cerven 1990*, op. cit., pp. 34-35. On the intimate link between the demands on the re-Germanization of the Czech lands and the concept of "(Euro)regionalizing" the Czech state, see an account of Berndt Posselt, a leader of a Sudeten German association, member of the European Parliament and vice-president of the Pan-European Union (with a specialization in issues of "internal security"), who defines Sudeten Germans as necessary "care-takers" of the Czech Republic. [*Cesky denik*, June 6-8, 1995, p. 5]

legislatures.¹⁴⁰ Such a 'suspended' Czech Constitution with a deliberately built-in "hole" for some future contingency provides an opportune "legal" platform for a possible region-based disintegration of the Czech state. In this regard, two basic concepts were revived and elaborated:

1) one of *Mittleuropa* appealing to the "thousand-year tradition" of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation with a de-Czechized Bohemia as its 'honourary member';¹⁴¹ and

2) that of a "Danubian federation" or "empire."¹⁴²

The *Mittleuropa* platform is Germany-centred; the other is oriented on Austria

¹⁴⁰ R. Young, *The Breakup of Czechoslovakia*, op. cit., p. 58.

¹⁴¹ *Mittleuropa* has been embraced and popularized by V. Havel, V. Klaus, J. Dienstbier, M. Uhde and others. See, for example, Havel, 1992 & 1993, p. 125; V. Klaus, *Rok malo ci mnoho v dejinach zeme*, op. cit., pp. 67-68; J. Dienstbier, *Rozmlouvaji nadoraz*, op. cit., p. 46; Slavomir Ravik, *Bylo nebylo v listopadu 1993*, op. cit., p. 25; Timothy Garton Ash, "Mittleuropa?," *Daedalus*, Winter 1990, Vol. 119, Number 1: 1-2.

As F. Gregory Campbell stated, since the nineteenth century German foreign policy tended to regard *Mittleuropa* as a special sphere of German influence. It was popularized as a concept by Friedrich Naumann in his work on *Mittleuropa* (1915). [F. Gregory Campbell, *Confrontation in Central Europe: Weimar Germany and Czechoslovakia*, (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 1975), pp. xiii, 45] This strategy always presupposed a fragmentation of Southeastern Europe defined as an important source of great weakness and isolation for Prague. It also requires a weakening and division of Central Europe itself using Austria as its more or less traditionally willing accomplice in the realization of that project. [Ibid., pp. 242, 268] On the eve of World War II, the German Ambassador to Belgrade von Hassel declared: "from the German point of view, it is necessary that the new ascendance of Germany is possible only in the framework of Central Europe and on its basis ..." [Slavomir Ravik, *Bylo nebylo: Larrina magika v Cechach, na Morave a ve Slezsku*, op. cit., p. 295]

Vilem Hejl registered the attempts to revive in dissidents' circles (like pseudonyms Severa and Andreas and especially authors from the group of ex-Communists Obnova) and the idea of Germanic *Mittleuropa* already before 1989. He pointed out the artificiality of that project and its incompatibility with history and traditionally existing political entities. He concluded that it is a "perverse and absolutely absurd idea" that was created as a part of the plans of the German Reich's imperialism as a forward station on the axis Berlin-Baghdad. Inevitably, it opens the explosive problem of Poland. This, in Hejl's view, also reveals the essence of the whole concept: it is a surrender of one's own responsibility for the state and escape from it by giving it into hands of somebody else. It is a covered longing for a protectorate and colonialization. Thus, it is nothing but a rejection of the Czechoslovak and Czech statehood. [Vilem Hejl, *Rozvrat: Mnichov a nas osud*, op. cit., pp. 208-30, 233-238, especially pp. 208-211, 226]

¹⁴² See, for example, Havel, 1992 & 1993, op. cit., pp. 78, 84; V. Belohradsky, *Myslet zelen sveta*, op. cit., pp. 89-91; E. Kohak, *Narod v nas*, op. cit., pp. 135, 148; Jan Pavlik, "Philosophy, 'Parallel Polis' and Revolution: The Case of Czechoslovakia", in Smith, Barry, ed., *Philosophy and Political Change in Eastern Europe*, (Illinois: the Hegler Institute, 1993), pp. 69, 86, 99.

and the old empire's heritage as a would-be more palatable option. These two concepts are, however, not really exclusive, rather they represent two intertwined contingencies of a single logic. However, it needs to be noted that *Mitteleuropa* defined by Havel as a "political phenomenon"¹⁴³ tends to be increasingly Poland-exclusive, while the "Danubian project" discounted Poland by its very nature. As Havel stated,

our brothers, the Poles, know that they *do not belong to the historic Danubian space* ... they might again be *put aside* from rapidly emerging integrations and become again a traditionally *unfortunate zone between* a great Germany, on one hand, and an even larger and also changing [Russia], on the other hand ... then, *we should all together reconsider the political-geographic situation of Poland* [italics added].¹⁴⁴

In this regard, Lech Walensa publicly voiced his disillusionment: "The approach of Prague frightens me. The public will not forgive the involved politicians for this. In my view, they are making a mistake that will cost all of us dearly."¹⁴⁵ Indeed, it was the Czech party that has deliberately isolated itself from the Visegrad

¹⁴³ Vaclav Havel, *Projevy (leden - červen 1990)*, op. cit., p. 43.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 92. Thus, while propagating a 'return to Europe' *qua return to (Germanic) Mitteleuropa*, the Böhmisch political elite is at the same time forced to reject all other (non-Germanic) options like the idea of Visegrad (a certain form of union with Poland, Slovakia and Hungary - the "most Central European" countries and immediate neighbours; it would represent a formation of four countries with more than 60 million people). Moreover, by separating the Czech Republic, as Ravik pointed out, Bohemia lost a contact with the Danube and its region so extolled as a "lost ideal" by the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian empire. [Slavimur Ravik, *Bylo nebylo v listopadu 1993*, op. cit., p. 25] On the other hand, the "premature" loss of Czechoslovakia was hailed by the Czech foreign minister Zieleniec, who leads together with Klaus the ruling party, the Civic Democratic Party. In this regard, Zieleniec expressed his "satisfaction that we have separated ourselves from the zone of instability - exactly thanks to the breakup of Czechoslovakia." At the same, he spoke about focusing the Czech foreign policy on cooperation in the Danubian basin direct access to which the Czech Republic lost by the separation ... [Slavimur Ravik, *Bylo nebylo: Je to ve hvězdách, leden 1994*, op. cit., p. 43]

¹⁴⁵ Slavomir Ravik, *Bylo nebylo: Je to ve hvězdách, leden 1994*, op. cit., p. 17.

initiative and has prevented its further expansion.¹⁴⁶ As Slavomir Ravik pointed out, it is also somehow paradoxical that, by breaking up the Czechoslovak state, the Czech elite *de facto* cut the Czech Republic off from direct access to the very Danube, which should be the axis of their "Danubian" program.¹⁴⁷ Given the existence of the "Danubian project," which is to include Austria, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Hungary, Slovenia (and Slovakia?), it becomes evident that the presence of a strong and rebellious Serb element (Krajina and Western Bosnia) is inherently incompatible with the nature of this project and the southern enclosure of that basin. As seen above, the Czechoslovak breakup as well as present Czech policy also tend to weaken the sustainability of Polish sovereignty and Poland's frontiers.

Interestingly, the drawing of a division line or future 'front line' by Samuel P. Huntington ("clash of civilizations") coincides with such a delimitation policy.¹⁴⁸ In general, the next period is likely to be years of transition and volatility with possible crises on the horizon, sliding in a worse case towards a grave conflict that would establish the seriousness of one's (state and national) existence.

3.4. Böhmisches as an Extension of Germanic Being

By apologizing to Germany for the transfer of the Sudeten Germans as early as November 1989 and calling it "a profoundly amoral act," Vaclav Havel initiated an intense campaign for an unspecified rectification of "Czech guilt" for imposing

¹⁴⁶ The Czech politicians even implied that Visegrad was a French plot (Vladimír Dlouhý, *Lidové noviny*, March 16, 1994, p. 3.) or obsessional intrigue played by the West at the Czechs' expense (Václav Klaus), see Slavomir Ravik, *Bylo nebylo v říjnu 1993*, op. cit., p. 43.

¹⁴⁷ Slavomir Ravik, *Bylo nebylo v listopadu 1993*, op. cit., p. 25.

¹⁴⁸ See Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilization", *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1993, Vol. 72, No. 3: 22-49; especially p. 30 - the map with the line of divide.

"collective guilt" on the Germans.¹⁴⁹ In this regard, Havel also resorted to a threat, declaring that "who is afraid to look into the face of one's own history, should also be afraid of what comes."¹⁵⁰ Because symbolism is held as a particularly efficient means, Havel used the first anniversary of the entry of Nazi soldiers into Prague on March, 15, 1939, not for stressing the idea of integrity, but for denouncing again the transfer of Sudeten Germans as "amoral."¹⁵¹ Moreover, Havel already spoke about "sacrifices, that a *rectification* will demand, will be *inter alia* a payment for the mistakes and sins of our fathers."¹⁵² Practically on a daily basis, the media in the Czech Republic have been publishing articles and materials related to the Sudeten Germans' demands, the "Czech guilt" and the necessity to rectify the result of the World War "not only morally." As a matter of fact, the media in the Czech Republic are already controlled by German, especially Bavarian publishers.¹⁵³

In 1990, when the reunification of Germany was negotiated, the Czechoslovak or Czech politicians chose, unlike Poland, to stand conspicuously and self-consciously aside in order to "facilitate" the process and not to complicate it by demanding that Germany clearly state its position vis-à-vis the results of the war as far as Czech or

¹⁴⁹ Slavomir Ravik, *Bylo nebylo: latrina Magika v Cechach, na Morave a ve Slezsku*, op. cit., p. 301.

¹⁵⁰ Vaclav Havel, *Vazeni obcane*, op. cit., p. 12. In this regard, Havel also questioned the relevance of the Czech (wartime) resistance, asserting that "a majority of the Czech society did not identify themselves too much with the Resistance and, moreover, they viewed it as something that threatened their security." [Havel, 1992 & 1993, op. cit., p. 99]

¹⁵¹ Slavomir Ravik, *Bylo nebylo v rjnu 1993*, op. cit., p. 45.

¹⁵² Vaclav Havel, *Projevy (leden - červen 1990)*, op. cit., p. 82.

¹⁵³ In addition to a greater part of the Czech national periodicals (around 80 per cent), all the regional and local media (over 30 journals and newspapers) have already been acquired by German publishers, mainly by Neue Passauer Presse which is closely related to the Bavarian Christian-Social Union (CSU). This control is also strengthened by control in decisive sectors of the economy: the Skoda concern, 99 per cent of the cement production, kaolin, banks, oil import. [*Denni Telegraf*, No. 147/111, June 23, 1994, pp. 1-2; and *Lidove noviny*, July 27, 1994, p. 5; Slavomir Ravik, *Bylo nebylo: Latrina magika v Cechach, na Morave a ve Slezsku*, op. cit., p. 302]

Czechoslovak statehood and borders are concerned. The Czech leadership lauded at that time themselves for their "restraint" and "prudence" only to supervise an initiation of the process of attacking the foundations of Czechoslovak and Czech statehood.¹⁵⁴

Antje Vollmer, a member of the German government, who plays a role of the "good" half from the old game of a good-bad dyad (or "hot and cold"), was nevertheless very probably right in admitting that the Czech ex-dissident politicians (Havel, Dienstbier) "wasted a chance" to solve the politico-strategic issues with regard to Germany by refraining from taking part in the talks 4 + 2.¹⁵⁵ The alleged settlement of the Czecho-German issues turned out to be an imposition of the German demands in the form of the collective rehabilitation of the Sudeten Germans. In this way, the post-1989 political elite contributed to the advent of political ambiguity and uncertainty of the security in Central Europe, also undermining international guarantees and position of the state.

This was followed by a negotiation and conclusion of a new and controversial Czechoslovak-German agreement of February 1992. It effectively subverted the previous agreement from 1973. On signing the agreement, Helmut Kohl was consequently in a position to declare: "The [German] government considers the Munich agreement invalid, *but* if it were from the very beginning, the consequences for the Sudeten Germans would be too big. Who wants a development of mutual relationship, *should accept that what the German side can accept* [my italics]."¹⁵⁶ The

¹⁵⁴ Slavomír Ravík, *To by Metternich koukal!*, (Praha: Periskop, 1996), pp. 12-13. From the very beginning, as also understood by the then Czechoslovak foreign minister, Jiří Dienstbier, the basic presumption, explicit on the part of Germany and tacitly followed by the Böhmsch elite, was a notion of a principal validity of the Munich deal. [Ibid., p. 13]

¹⁵⁵ Václav Zak, "Nelehké sousedství", *Nova prítomnost*, No. 2/1996: 20.

¹⁵⁶ Slavomír Ravík, *Bylo nebylo: Latrina magika v Čechách, na Moravě a ve Slezsku*, op. cit., p. 300.

same reading of the new agreement was confirmed by the resolution of the Bundestag as part of its ratification while the Czech public was placated by a "leak" of the explanatory material prepared as internal information for the government, which has not any binding or legal power.¹⁵⁷ Notably, the real status of such a paper was not explained.¹⁵⁸ Moreover, the German text of the agreement changes the respecting of the existing *staaten borders* merely into "existing borders," thus denying to recognize the state boundaries of the Czech Republic.¹⁵⁹ When the breakup of Czechoslovakia was intensively pursued, the then Czechoslovak Foreign Minister, Jiri Dienstbier said on September 12, 1992 "[Such a demand with regard to the nullity of the Munich deal] would be legally disadvantageous for us as for Germany." In Dienstbier's view, it is allegedly indifferent if the Munich agreement (that opened the World War) was to be valid or not from the beginning.¹⁶⁰ For Havel, the only contentious issue in the agreement was "some kind of settling [the demands] of the Sudeten Germans."¹⁶¹ Roughly at the time when Havel made this declaration (June 18, 1992), he wrote in his *Summer Meditations*: "I do not hide that we can propose a certain step forward to the [demands of] Sudeten Germans ... [the transfer] was a thoroughly questionable answer to the crimes of Nazism and the Henleins."¹⁶² Somewhat later, Dienstbier again praised this work of his: This October (1992), I met with Genscher in Rome and we said to ourselves that *only now* it is being *confirmed* how good an agreement we

¹⁵⁷ The resolution of the Bundestag also demanded an "accelerated settlement of Sudeten Germans" in Bohemia. [Slavomir Ravik, *Über Alles*, op. cit., p. 33]

¹⁵⁸ See Slavomir Ravik, *Bylo nebylo: Latrina magika v Cechach, na Morave a ve Slezsku*, op. cit., p. 297.

¹⁵⁹ Slavomir ravik, *Über Alles*, op. cit., p. 28.

¹⁶⁰ Slavomir Ravik, *Bylo nebylo: Spolecnost trvale neudržitelne hlbasu*, op. cit., p. 53.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

¹⁶² Vaclav Havel, *Letni premítání*, op. cit., p. 72.

concluded [*italics added*] " On this occasion, Dienstbier himself interpreted the agreement in the following way: "Both states oblige themselves that they will never allow that the *consequences* of war, violence and expulsion be rectified by another injustice," that is, "injustice" apparently perceived and defined in this context by the side that caused the war and faced its "consequences."¹⁶³ The basic assumption, as well as final goal of this political and moral negation and assimilation of the distinction between Nazism and fighting against it was finally unveiled by Libor Novak, a vice-chairman of the ruling party, the Civic Democratic Party, who said on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the V-day: "The opinion that the Czech Republic was on the side of the victors in World War II is a false perception."¹⁶⁴ Marun Benda, a son of a leader of a Catholic party, denigrated the Czech inhabitants of the frontier areas as "riffraff," while speaking of a "splendid" collective *return* of the Sudeten Germans *qua* "rich patriots" whose settlement as a "class" of the rich is to be wished by the state.¹⁶⁵

In May 1994, the German Minister of the Interior confirmed that the German government will pursue the "solution" of the question of the Sudeten Germans. This line was also publicly supported by the Austrian government.¹⁶⁶ On May, 30, 1994, the Bavarian Premier Edmund Stoiber indicated in a Sudeten German assembly that the Czech Republic can be integrated into the European Union only with the good will of Germany that has, however, to be paid for. The next day, Klaus agreed with the

¹⁶³ Jiří Dienstbier, *Rozmlouvají nadoraz*, op. cit., p. 48. In addition, Dienstbier explicitly stated that the agreement *opens* the issue of property claims - as understood by the Sudeten Germans.

¹⁶⁴ Slavomír Ravík, *Bylo nebylo: Společnost trvale neudržitelne hlboší*, op. cit., p. 56.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

¹⁶⁶ *Lidové noviny*, May 23, 1994, pp., 1, 6; *Lidové noviny*, May 21, 1994, p. 7.

leaders of the parties in the governmental coalition to start direct negotiations between the Czech government and the Sudeten German nongovernmental organization in the form of a joint committee. One month later, because of the public astonishment, Klaus's government had to adjourn silently its prepared move.¹⁶⁷

Shortly before, in an editorial in the government-linked newspaper *Lidové noviny*, it was asserted that representatives of the Czech elite began assuring that the "German dominance is a hundred times more attractive than that of Russia in the past."¹⁶⁸ The German-controlled Bohemian media also compared the relations between Germany and Central Europe as those of France and Maghreb and attacked the alleged envy of Germany's Western allies.¹⁶⁹

In early 1995, in the anticipation of the 50th commemoration of the V-Day, a number of Czech prominent figures, including Petr Pithart, launched the *Appeasement '95* petition calling *de facto* for rejecting and revising the relevant post-war decrees and decisions of the then Czechoslovak government based on the given results of the war.¹⁷⁰ Except for one cursory remark, the *Appeasement '95* petition "consists of an enumeration of [alleged] preponderance of Czech violence over the German one [at the time of World War II]," while the occupation and systematic "de-Bohemization" is passed over by one mere reference to "separation."¹⁷¹ Significantly, the initiative was presented on the same day when, 57 years before, a dialogue between the then Czechoslovak government and Sudeten Germans had been launched leading to the

¹⁶⁷ Slavomír Ravík, *Bylo nebylo v rýnu 1993*, op. cit., p. 45.

¹⁶⁸ *Lidové noviny*, April 15, 1994, p. 1.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

¹⁷⁰ See, for example, *Babylon*, 4 April 1995, pp. 1-2, 6.

¹⁷¹ Václav Slavík, "I v Sudetech byli antifašisté", *Lidstvo*, No. 3 1995: 14.

destruction of Czechoslovakia.¹⁷² In this regard, Petr Pithart demanded that the Czech nation "repent" and plead for "being pardoned."¹⁷³ In this light, it was not difficult to conclude, as pointed out Dusan Trestik, a Czech political activist, that the initiative *Appeasement '95* did not originate in the Czech Republic.¹⁷⁴ Vaclav Klaus, who had previously kept a somewhat lower profile with regard to the German question, also pleaded guilty on the behalf of the Czechs.¹⁷⁵ Importantly, the timing of *Appeasement '95* and Klaus's declaration was chosen as to redefine the message and symbolism of the 50th anniversary of V-Day. This was followed by a public formulation of German demands by the Bavarian premier, Edmund Stoiber that include a "return" (appropriation) of parts of Czech lands as a piece of the German "homeland." It was presented as the unceasing "right for fatherland" and abolishing of respective decrees of the then Czechoslovak president E. Benes, especially that of general amnesty.¹⁷⁶ The last German demand would allow it to classify and prosecute as punishable crimes not only acts of 'collateral damage' (to use the currently coined term) that occurred during the transfer, but also would designate the whole Czech resistance during the war, which the given decree covered in the first place, as criminals. On June 10, 1995, during a commemoration of the 53th anniversary of the wipe-out of a Czech village of Lidice by the Nazis, Vaclav Klaus questioned the validity and legitimacy of the decisions of the victorious powers, including those of the Czechoslovak

¹⁷² Slavomir Ravik, *Bylo nebylo: Spolecnost trvale neudrzitelne hlposti*, op. cit., p. 29.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 50. In the regard of "repentance", Ravik stressed that was Pithart who "took part in the dismantling (and also geopolitical weakening) of the Czechoslovak state." [*Ibid.*, p. 27] Due to these already explicit activities, R. Valencik, a Czech political observer, characterized Pithart as "apologetic of the Munich ethos." [*Ibid.*, p. 30]

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

¹⁷⁵ See *Lidove noviny*, June 5, 1995, p. 1.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

government, made at the end of World War II.¹⁷⁷ In January 1996, during closed Czecho-German negotiations, Klaus Kinkel, the German foreign minister, redefined the Postupim agreement as an unbinding political memorandum. That declaration caused an uproar and was immediately trivialized by the Czech government.¹⁷⁸ Moreover, what first started as an exchange of politeness in the aftermath of 1989, increasingly turned into explicit threats that also were used as a card concerning the issue of the admission of the Czech Republic into the European Union. Thus, after the 50th anniversary of V-Day, the German politicians made a point that the Czech side had "the last chance" to accept the German demands "voluntarily," otherwise it would be "forced" to succumb to them.¹⁷⁹

The strategy of the Böhmisches political elite and elite-controlled government in realizing its program of nihilism can be described as "two steps ahead, one step back" - in Havel's words: to "arrange it in such a way that serious political themes be always put in a seemingly balance with soothing lessening themes ... [and to know] when a given degree of openness and restraint is to be maintained."¹⁸⁰ Concretely, it means that the Böhmisches elite themselves serves as a vent, mediator and agitator for articulating publicly and "legitimizing" the German agenda and demands as if being their own. This is done in a form of rebukes to the nation and "trials" of what is possible at a given moment, followed either by a further expansion and disclosure of

¹⁷⁷ Slavomír Ravík, *To by Metternich koukal!*, op. cit., p. 4.

¹⁷⁸ Slavomír Ravík, *Smrt krásných srnců*, (Praha: Periskop, 1996), pp. 3-4.

¹⁷⁹ *Cesky deník*, June, 6-8, 1995, p. 5. At the same time, this dictate was denoted as not being "an ultimatum."

¹⁸⁰ Václav Havel, *Letni přemýšlení*, op. cit., p. 102.

the agenda or by temporary backtracking and retreat.¹⁸¹ In this spirit, the new "European thinking," as German foreign minister Kinkel put it, should mean for the Czech nation respecting "the wounded legal thinking of many Sudeten Germans" which amounts to a radical revision of the traditional views about the "legality" of aggression.¹⁸² According to Ravik, the goal is also to manoeuvre the separated and isolated Czech Republic out of its international position of a member of the anti-Hitlerian and anti-Nazi coalition of the allies.¹⁸³

A Sudeten German concept of possible new Czech-German relations was well presented in Eugene von Teuber's account, ominously titled *Step Ahead of Disaster*, which, besides the thesis of the artificiality of Czechoslovakia,¹⁸⁴ provides a good insight into some ideological tenets that may lay down the political and cultural ground of a new association in the making. Some of them are worth noting:

- "the Czechs came up from nothing. All they have is what we've made of them;"¹⁸⁵
- Czechs were [and essentially are] a "nation of excellent servants;"¹⁸⁶
- "we get along perfectly well with the Czechs. They have always served us wonderfully."¹⁸⁷

¹⁸¹ See Slavomir Ravik, *Bylo nebylo v rijnu 1993*, op. cit., pp. 57-59; Slavomir Ravik, *Bylo nebylo: Latrina magika v Cechach, na Morave a ve Slezsku*, op. cit., p. 293-295; Slavomir Ravik, *Uber Alles*, op. cit.; Slavomir Ravik, *Vyssi princip*, (Praha: Periskop, 1996), pp. 17-25; Slavomir Ravik, *Prilis mnoho viniku*, (Praha: Periskop, 1996), pp. 2-5, 10; Slavomir Ravik, *Smrti krasnych srncu*, op. cit.; Slavomir Ravik, *To by Metternich koukal!*, op. cit.; Vaclav Zak, "Nelehke sousedství", *Nova pritomnost*, No. 2/1996: 22. In this regard, Havel the German legal system with international law. (Slavomir Ravik, *Bylo nebylo v listopadu 1993*, op. cit., p. 11)

¹⁸² Slavomir Ravik, *Bylo nebylo: Latrina magika v Cechach, na Morave a ve Slezsku*, op. cit., pp. 298-299.

¹⁸³ Slavomir Ravik, *To by Metternich koukal!*, op. cit., p. 6.

¹⁸⁴ Eugene von Teuber, *Step ahead of Disaster*, foreword by Michael Novak. (Oregon: Grosvenor, 1993), p. 1.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

¹⁸⁶ Eugene von Teuber, *Step ahead of Disaster*, op. cit., p. 68.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

- "you couldn't make everyone equal. We were not all to be equal."¹⁸⁸

- "privilege [is] everything that makes life worth living."¹⁸⁹

Under the "Stability Pact" initiated by the EU, Central Europe, including the Czech Republic, and the Baltic states were designated as a source of envisaged conflicts resulting from problems of minorities and borders. An official map of the Stability Pact placed the Sudeten Germans in the territory of the present Czech Republic.¹⁹⁰ The purpose of that arrangement is the "achievement of a new quality in the relations between nations" - a wording that dodges the question of currently existing states.¹⁹¹

In Havel's view, Central Europe will be "the front line of the struggle for democracy and stability in Europe."¹⁹² Or as Dienstbier put it, security and geopolitical problems and instability are to become "an everyday life" in Central Europe in the time to come.¹⁹³ Similarly, in Timothy Garton Ash's view, Central Europe is most likely to appear as an in-between zone of poverty, tension and Germanic *Schlamassel*.¹⁹⁴ In this regard, attention of political analysts was also drawn to the declaration of the strongest German party CDU-CSU from September 1994 that already bluntly states that "if the European integration does not achieve progress, Germany may feel obliged by her own security needs and can be impelled to attempt to stabilize Eastern Europe by her own and traditional means."¹⁹⁵

¹⁸⁸ Eugene von Teuber, *Step ahead of Disaster*, op. cit., p. 33.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 68.

¹⁹⁰ *Lidove noviny*, May 28, 1994, p. 5.

¹⁹¹ *Lidove noviny*, May 28, 1994, p. 1.

¹⁹² V. Havel, *1992 & 1993*, op. cit., p. 148.

¹⁹³ J. Dienstbier, *Rozmlouvaji nadoraz*, op. cit., p. 32.

¹⁹⁴ Timothy Garton Ash, *Rok zazraku '89*, (Praha: Lidove noviny, 1991), p. 125.

¹⁹⁵ Richard Seemann, "Je cesta do NATO realna?," *Lisry*, No. 3/1996: 43.

On the basis of the previous analyses, Böhmisch nihilism appears as a phenomenon of a systemic negative *enframing* or disrupting of Czech 'being,' that has cut through seemingly different and discontinuous moments such as Communism, post-Communist transition and the breakup of the state. In this light, both the Velvet Revolution and the demise of Czechoslovakia reveal themselves as parts of rather complex processes and operations whose nature and effects are evidently of a broader relevance for the making of a new order at the end of history. Several moments can be in this regard emphasized:

- a close connection between nihilism and "theatrical politics;"
- a rather unessential nature and expendability of ideological labels used by the elite;
- the elite's acting on several levels of concealing-unveiling their political goals and identity;
- the elite's relatively high degree of "dissonant" relation with regard to official (legal) political institutions;
- the local elite's tendency to identify themselves against their own nation-state - according to external sources of power and political will.

CHAPTER 4

THE WILL-POWER QUA BETRAYAL-POWER OF SKVORECKY'S COWARDS (HEGELIAN SLAVES): DEAD FORM WITHOUT CONTENT

4.1. Skvorecky's Cowards in Power as Apology for Being and Falsity (Installing and Extolling the Regime of Betrayal)

The previously unveiled notions and phenomena of Böhmsch nihilism can be gathered together in several interrelated paradigms: Böhmsch nihilism as a system of self-denial and betrayal of being; Böhmsch nihilism as a form of hidden war; Böhmsch nihilism as a totalizing hatred and the (nihilistic) imitation of death; and the Czech question as the defiant ethos of resisting and overcoming (Böhmsch) nihilism. Our preceding discussion has revealed continuous manifestations of Böhmsch nihilism as a form of both self-denial and denial of Czech statehood and nationhood, that disclosed itself in a willing sacrificing of the state against the aparent determination of both nations to the contrary.

In particular, we can assume that the Böhmsch elite's urge to accept and internalize the imposed external will organically presupposes a revision and redefinition of resistance. Obligation to defend oneself is posited as 'amoral' and 'evil', and the evil demands to be protected and repaid by the "banality (or stupidity) of good."¹ To this effect, Havel also contends that justice, honour, betrayal, distrust

¹ See, for example, Vaclav Belohradsky, *Myslet zelen sverem*, op. cit., p. 38. The compatibility of Belohradsky's views on the universality and homogeneity of guilt with those of Havel is very strong. In this regard, Emanuel Radl's philosophy has become a spiritual reference for the post-1989 Böhmsch political elite. Roman Jakobson saw Radl as a "simple-minded partisan for the collaboration with the

or courage have no weight in our real, ordinary life, they are relocated into an ideal egotism concealed behind all the visible and real "horizons," that is, outside the given world.²

To this effect, Böhmsch nihilism apparently had not only to practise a consequential betrayal of the given being *qua* the state and nation, but also to elaborate a whole comprehensive "philosophy" of its justification³ that, in turn, is to be "confirmed" by its practice, trying to negate and preclude anybody's firm ground or even faith in it. Concretely and ultimately, it means precluding the nation to have its state and the state to have its state-making nation. As Havel sees it: "[N]othing is really a truth any more because the human identity is melting away as the only source and the only measure of the truth."⁴ Understandably, this falsehood presented as the truth depends on the survival of the role within politics as theatre. Consequently, for Havel, "[a Havelian man] is identified with his role; he stands and falls with his

Germans" and "one of the most confused philosophers" in Czechoslovakia. [Roman Jakobson, *Moudrost starých Čechů: odveke zaklady narodního odboje*, (New York: Československý národní kroužek, 1943), pp. 49-50] Jakobson also pointed out that already in the XIVth century, the beings of *the night* or "hats" denoted the archetype of the fifth column and collaborators. [Ibid., p. 118] Coincidentally, "night" as a symbol, cipher and ethos is also very popular among the contemporary Böhmsch nihilists. [See, in particular, Jan Patocka, *Kacířské eseje o filosofii dějin*, (Praha: Československá akademie věd, 1990); also Tomas Halík, "Ego dormio" in Vaclav Havel, ed., *Hostina: filozofický sborník*, (Toronto: Sixty-Eight Publishers Corp., 1989), pp. 161-163. Halík, a Czech former dissident thinker, asserts there: "Night cannot be any longer suppressed." [Ibid., p. 163] It is remarkable that Pithart himself praises Roman Jakobson for being "unbiased" and "informed" - thus, *de facto* refuting his own claims about Emanuel Radl and own arguments that are based on Radl's thinking. [Petr Pithart, *Dejiny a politika*, op. cit., p. 22]

² See Vaclav Havel, *Do různých stran (1983 - 89)*, (Scheinfeld - Schwarzenberg: Cs. středisko nezávislé literatury, 1989), pp. 34-35.

³ See Vaclav Havel, *Letters to Olga*, op. cit., p. 360; Marketa Goetz-Stankiewicz, *The Silenced Theatre: Czech Playwrights without a Stage*, op. cit., p. 65.

⁴ Vaclav Havel, *Do různých stran*, op. cit., p. 228. As a solution-substitute, Havel proposes to cultivate one's subjective nothingness or emptiness of egoism, that is, nothing but himself. [Ibid., p. 228]

role."⁵

In this regard, Petr Pithart advanced a concept of the "pettiness" or "fanaticism of triviality" (*malichernost*) of the meaning of Czech resistance, whereby, as Pithart claims, the Czech nation, "inasmuch as it really felt itself as a nation, showed only a mediocre capability of resistance against Biedermeier of triviality."⁶ As Havel alleged, "a greater part of our society did not identify themselves too much with the resistance [during the war], moreover, they saw it as something that endangers their security." In 1993, Havel extrapolated his argument to an overwhelming size, alleging that "during the war, there were many active members of the resistance, but thousands times more of collaborators."⁷

At the same time, Havel leads a campaign against "collective guilt and collective responsibility" allegedly ascribed by the Czechs to the Sudeten Germans, while demanding *de facto* that the Czechs succumb to the same "collective guilt and responsibility," in calling for a collective Czech apology to the Sudeten Germans *qua*

⁵ Quoted in Robert B. Pynsent, *Questions of Identity: Czech and Slovak Ideas of Nationality and Personality*, (New York: Central European University Press, 1994), p. 25.

⁶ Petr Pithart, *Dejiny a politika*, op. cit., pp. 235, 69, 366.

⁷ Slavomir Ravik, *Bylo nebylo: Latrina magika v Cechach, na Morave a ve Slezsku*, op. cit., p. 305. Given the fact that around 400,000 Czechs were killed during the war and a great part of them were those who stood against Fascism, it appears that there should have been according to Havel at least around 200-400 million Czech collaborators. The mechanism of projection can apparently reach a virtually unbounded scale of invention. It is worth to compare this Havel's denunciation with his conviction according to which "whenever someone starts carrying on about how corrupt everything around him is, it is usually a clear signal that he is preparing to do something rather nasty himself." [Vaclav Havel, *Letters to Olga*, op. cit., p. 236] Milan Uhde's contribution to that banalizing of the same (evil) may be found in Milan Uhde, *Ceska republika, dobry den*, op. cit., pp. 213-217. Uhde there rejects a "collective guilt," however, together with a concrete guilt of concrete persons, displacing it on a universal eternal quality of impersonal "madness" or blaming the system as such that amounts merely to another veiled version of the supposedly denounced "collective guilt." In this regard, one suspects whether absolving concrete criminals by referring to the system is not but a veiled imposition of the notion of collective guilt - in the other way round.

collective, claiming a collective Czech ("everyone's") guilt and responsibility for socialism and slandering the whole nation collectively as would-be collaborators.⁸ In this regard, Josef Anderle, reviewing an English selection of Havel's *Open Letters: Selected Writings, 1965-1990* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991) remarked that Havel is "imputing to his people (unwittingly, perhaps) the sin of collective guilt, from which he had absolved other collectives, including the Germans in World War II."⁹

In this regard, Emil Hajek, a retired Czech general, observed that, after November 1989, [Skvorecky's] "cowards" came to power and tried to "fix" their identity and perhaps conscience by making their sickness a commanding policy, aspiring to dispose of any courage and bring about the eclipse of the state and nation.¹⁰ In this connection, it is also worth recalling how the coward's character and role were seen by what the author of *Cowards*, Josef Skvorecky, himself:

⁸ See Robert B. Pynsent, *Questions of Identity: Czech and Slovak Ideas of Nationality and Personality*, op. cit., pp. 6, 9-11. Thus, Havel is there quoted as declaring that "the Czechoslovaks must accept their guilt in helping to build socialism, the regime ... Everyone had accepted socialism ... we were all its creators." [Ibid., p. 11] It is well known from social psychology that the manipulation with feeling of false guilt produces inferiority-complex-driven fanatics and ultimately results in a manipulation of people. Another of Havel's confession is quite revealing in this regard: "Indeed, I would be so bold as to say that anything good I have ever done, I possibly did only to try to *conceal* my well-nigh metaphysical feeling of guilt [my italics]." [Ibid., p. 12]

⁹ *Czechoslovak and Central European Journal*, Vol. 10, Winter 1991, No. 2: 152.

¹⁰ See Emil Hajek, "Ministerstvo obrany, nebo setrmosti?," *Lisť*, No. 3/1996: 48. In this light, it is also noteworthy that, in the "Program principles of the Civic Forum" of November 26, 1989, the current elite declared that the power was held by a "narrow group" whose rulership had led to "the destruction of the foundations of the legal state." [Zdenek Jicinsky, *Cs. parlament v polistopadovém období*, op. cit., p. 112] The continuity of this nihilistic spirit and narrowing the politics to the service of that "narrow group" is also evident in the statement of Vaclav Klaus, also a self-defined liberal, that "to do something good for the people or [to claim] that the foundation of everything is to be tolerant" is "an incredible narrowing of the word 'liberal'. This cannot be so, really. It would be an absolute impotence and idiocy." [Karel Hvizdala, *První zpráva (Rozhovor s Vaclavem Klausem)*, (Praha: Cartoonia, 1992), pp. 55-56] On the notion of radical alienation of the elite from the nation and its hostility towards it see Slavomir Ravik, *Bylo nebylo: Tento způsob leta*, (Praha: Periskop, 1995), p. 3.

He wasn't a collaborator. It was just that he was always a trustworthy person in an important position. And that's exactly what he was. And always would be. They could count on him. ... He had to do that, too, so nobody would bring up those other things he'd had to do before. All right. He'd always been dependable, as my father used to say. And he'd go on being that way. You could count on him ... When I looked up at him standing there on the podium I figured this revolution wouldn't change things too much after all.¹¹

In this light, Havel also defines the ascendance of coward actor to power:

"Gradually, he adapts to the cliché (he 'learns'); he comes to identify with it; the more he identifies with it, the higher he rises; and when he is at the top, it turns out that he has entirely dissolved in clichés and thus has lost himself."¹² Indeed, it seems that death of man cannot be realized otherwise than a self-betrayal.¹³ Or as Rio Preisner noted:

Totalitarianism [nihilism as global totality] is based on loyalty towards permanent betrayal. Loyalty with regard to betrayal is a contradiction of terms, but, if thought to the end, it enables a certain knowledge of historical values ... However, at the end, it means that the traitor thereby betrays even himself. And to be able to do exactly this painlessly, the totalitarian system confers upon him a function.¹⁴

¹¹ Josef Skvorecký, *Cowards*, op. cit., pp. 399-400.

¹² Václav Havel, *Disturbing the Peace: A Conversation with Karel Hvizdala*, op. cit., p. 196.

¹³ As Otakar Krejčí, a Czech political analyst noted, "the velvet politicians take their own biography for the history of the nation - and sometimes they consider their biography as being something above the history of the Czech nation ... Their concept of society goes against the direction of humanism as it has evolved since the Renaissance. Their vision of social arrangement is in contradiction with the elementary requirements of justice." [Slavomír Ravík, *Bylo nebylo: Tenta způsob leta*, op. cit., p. 6]

¹⁴ Rio Preisner, *Ceska existence*, (London: Edice Rozmluvy, 1984), p. 123.

4.2. Böhmisches Nihilismus: the Politics of a Coward as War

The strategy of Böhmisches nihilismus follows a traditional outline of non-violent conquest wherein domestic nihilismus assumes a form of the 'fifth column' working against one's own nation.¹⁵ The doctrine of non-violent war was already elaborated by an ancient Chinese war strategist, Sun Tzu, and its concept also reemerges in the work of a Prussian general, Carl von Clausewitz. Because of the high relevance and crucial importance of the strategy of non-violent war for the course pursued by Böhmisches nihilismus it is necessary to review at least briefly its main principles and strategies (technology).¹⁶

It is a strategy aimed at gaining a war before the actual "hot" war would erupt.

¹⁵ The geostrategic position of the Czech Republic as a mountains-encircled plateau in the heart of Europe has a unique strategic importance for being a key to the Central European basin, controlling the "knot" of European communications and being indispensable for any thrust from the West of Europe into the (near) East of the continent. Additionally, this territory as a wedge deeply divides and thus strategically weakens (toward the East) the German-speaking "sea" and controls the direct link between Berlin and Vienna. The control of this area inhabited by the Czechs has always been a precious asset, especially from the point of view of Germany. As Bismarck put it: 'Who controls Prague controls Europe.' Could this be the essence of the imperative to "overcome history" so forcefully propagated by Pithart (together with the revision of the Versailles treaty)? [See an article of Dalibor Plichta, a political analyst, *Lidové noviny*, April 26, 1994, p. 6] In this regard, Engels, noted for his almost imperial contempt of "small Slavic nations" and the Czechs, in particular, perceived Bohemia as being "right in the heart of Germany," and asserted that a German renunciation of Bohemia would mean the end of German national existence. [Edward Mead Earle, eds., *Makers of Modern Strategy*, (London: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 164] Even the authority of Sun Tzu, an old Chinese war strategist, can be stressed because of its obvious applicability to the geopolitical position of Bohemia: "When a state is enclosed by three other states its territory is focal. He who first gets control of it will gain the support of All-under-Heaven." Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 130] Consequently, the probability that the territory of the Czech Republic is or will be an object of *positive* (aggressive) designs is to be in principle rather high.

¹⁶ V. Solovyov and E. Klepnikova reported: "The KGB also has a book, one that has become its catechism: it is a regular bible for its members, from ordinary agents to chiefs of the rank of general. It is not Karl Marx's *Das Kapital* or Hitler's *Mein Kampf* or Machiavelli's *The Prince*. It was written long before them, at the turn of the sixth and fifth centuries B.C. Its author was the world's first military theorist, Sun Tzu. Unlike Clausewitz, who regarded war as the continuation of politics by other means, the ancient Chinese theorist taught the ways in which one could defeat the enemy without waging war." [Vladimir Solovyov and Elena Klepnikova, *Behind the High Kremlin Walls*, (New York: Berkley Books, 1987), p. 90]

Therefore, it may be defined as (permanent) war that, however, avoids an actual battle - war without battle.¹⁷ It excellently serves and relies on cowards and traitors, and also produces them.¹⁸ Such a method was applied with regard to Czechoslovakia in 1938, 1948, 1968. A non-violent conquest has also its advantages over violence due to its lower political costs, easier appeasement of the international community and public opinion and thus more palatable legitimization, as well as due to its considerably demoralizing, destructive effect on the conquered nation which is deprived of mobilizing heroic myths for renewing in the future its lost spirit as a result of a 'defeat without a battle.'

The strategic goal of such a kind of war is to render the enemy (nation) "politically helpless or military impotent" or, in other words, to "overthrow the enemy's will."¹⁹ This implies the enemy's inability to resist and to escape the defeat as a result of his final cumulative and multifaceted disarmament.²⁰ It is realized in a form of piecemeal, insidious, careful and gradual movements aimed at ascending through interim 'small' feasible objects.²¹ During the process, the object of the aggression is systematically induced or forced into "a situation which is more

¹⁷ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, (London: Penguin Books, 1982), pp. 104, 126; see also an excerpt from a Czech translation of Sun Tzu by Oldrich Kral: "If possible, victories without battle if possible, victories that everybody sees, but nobody really knows how they have been achieved." [Oldrich Kral, "Vitezství Mistra Suna", *Nova pritomnost*, No. 5/1995, May 16, 1995: 22] Cf. a similar concept of "avoiding battle" where the rule is "Avoid the keen energy, strike the slumping and receding." [Zhuge Liang and Liu Ji, *Mastering the Art of War (commentaries on the classic by Sun Tzu)*, (Boston & London: Shambhalla, 1989), p. 127]

¹⁸ Oldrich Kral, "Vitezství Mistra Suna," op. cit., p. 23.

¹⁹ Peter Paret, *Makers of Modern Strategy*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), p. 196; see also Clausewitz, *On War*, op. cit., p. 104.

²⁰ Clausewitz, *On War*, op. cit., p. 104.

²¹ See, for example, *ibid.*, pp. 128, 136.

oppressive to him than the sacrifice which is demanded."²² In other words, it is self-denial or betrayal that is required as a would be less oppressive or more rational response, as has been so plastically presented and manifested on the part of Böhmsch nihilism.

Sun Tzu defines these tactics as "shaping the enemy;" according to this well-known Sun-Tzu's concept, a special situation is "created to which the enemy must conform."²³ Thus, every change in this position, especially *resistance*, is to be presented as entailing "a change for a worse," that is, bringing a harsher punishment.²⁴ Consequently, the enemy is systematically deprived of *initiative*, time and space for resistance. This is also realized by creating an impression of banality of the conqueror's *demands* and related triviality of the enemy's *sacrifices*, that is, the object of the aggression is lured to sell oneself out as cheap as possible; in this way, war turns into a form of prostitution which also amounts to betrayal: "The smaller the *sacrifice* we demand from our opponent, *the smaller*, it may be expected, will be the *means* of *resistance* which he will employ; but the *smaller* his *preparation*, the *smaller* will ours require to be [italics added]."²⁵ The strategy should actively seek to form and

²² See Clausewitz, *On War*, op. cit., p. 104.

²³ Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, op. cit., p. 93. On an indication of Germany's embracing of the concept and language of "shaping" with regard to European security, see W.R. Smyser, *Restive Partners: Washington and Bonn Diverge*, (London: Westview Press, 1990), p. 103. Smyser also notes that many Germans are ready to improve relations with Poland but are reluctant to make *concessions* that could *prejudice a final German and Central European territorial settlement*. [Ibid., p. 113] On the notion of "shaping" the nation by the post-1989 political elite in the likeness of their undeclared political goal, that is, to "dissolve" the nation and to create another one, see Oskar Krejci, *Proc to prasklo*, op. cit., pp. 129-132.

²⁴ Clausewitz, *On War*, op. cit., p. 104.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 109; see also, p. 400. Cf. Vaclav Havel, *Disturbing the Peace: A Conversation with Karel Hvizdala*, op. cit., p. 82.

distort an opinion of the enemy by creating false appearances, and mystifications. Power is used to reduce the strength and essential nature of the 'reasons to be' on the part of the object of aggression. The less powerful the motives are, the less part of the nation will resist and to break up its unity.²⁶

It is most important to attack particularly the head of the state and nation - the elite. Controlling the reason embodied in the enemy's ruling class/elite whose number is limited, a way is open for subduing and manipulating the spirit of the enemy's numerous masses. This presupposes a selection of the "centre of gravity" of the object's defense and his being in general, which the aggressor strives to recapture, paralyze and control. With regard to national campaigns, what is greatly important in the Bohemian context, is that such a centre is generally identified with a public leader and opinion.²⁷

The nation is finally to be conquered: it should be deprived of morale, and its courage 'killed'. This can be done, for example, by a combination of an economic

²⁶ Clausewitz, *On War*, op. cit., pp. 119, 401. Vaclav Havel says the same, although without a reference in his open letter to Gustav Husak (1975): "Order has been established. At the price of a paralysis of the spirit ... At the price of a *spiritual and moral crisis in society*. ... hastily we are all abandoning positions which only yesterday we refused to desert. What social conscience only yesterday regarded as improper is today casually excused; tomorrow it will eventually be thought natural, and the day after be held up as a model of behaviour. What yesterday we declared impossible - or at least averred we would never get accustomed to, today we accept, without astonishment, as a fact of life. And, conversely, things that a little while ago we took for granted we now treat as exceptional; and soon - who knows - we might think of them as unattainable chimeras. The changes in our assessment of the 'natural' and the 'normal', the shifts in moral attitudes in our society over the past few years have been greater than they might appear at first glance. As our insensitivity has increased so naturally our ability to discern our own insensitivity has declined. The malady has spread, as it were, from the fruit and the foliage to the trunk and roots. The most serious grounds for alarm, then, are the prospects which the present state of affairs opens up for the future." [Vaclav Havel, *Living in truth: Twenty-two essays published on the occasion of the reward of Erasmus Prize to Vaclav Havel*, ed. by Jan Vladislav, (London & Boston: Faber & Faber, 1986), p. 15-16]

²⁷ Clausewitz, *On War*, op. cit., pp. 389-390.

crises, scandals, disclosures, corruption, destruction of identity-bearing symbols indoctrination, terror etc.²⁸ The object's mind is thereby attacked, neutralized and emptied of content by enclosing it with false and deceptive images.²⁹ Consequently, Böhmisches nihilism inasmuch as it manifests itself as a force undermining the political quality of the state and nation appears to correspond to such a form of concealed "war without an (evident) battle."³⁰

4.3. Böhmisches Nihilism as Concretized Hatred and Death

The preceding analyses of the historical evolution of Böhmisches nihilism through its different forms and phases up to the present allows a certain recapitulation of the process. Its basis, as well as a constant imperative, is transforming the political people *qua* nation into a *mass indifferent to politics and its own destiny* and reducing thus depoliticized and homogenized mass. Inasmuch as they are *disarmed* and stripped off from their state, they become defenceless and ready to be put behind any suitable *fence* (being *fenced off* from themselves) as a herd of mortified humans, which can assume a form of some new Kafka's Chinese Wall. Thereby, the whole social structure tends to be brutally simplified into merely two last numbers-ranks of slaves and masters: a mass of human "zeroes" directed by a narrow and exclusive group maintaining a strict monopoly on producing 'supermen' as 'number-ones.' Such existential experience was also formulated by Vaclav Bartuska who, participating in

²⁸ Clausewitz, *On War*, op. cit., p. 343; Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, op. cit., p. 156.

²⁹ Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, op. cit., p. 41.

³⁰ An abundance of further factual evidence to this effect can be found in Slavomir Ravik, *Über Alles*, op. cit., especially pp. 30-64.

the student manifestation of November 17, 1989, concluded. "We were a mass herd which keeps going and does not know where."³¹

In particular, the relation between Böhmsch nihilism and the German ethos can hardly be doubted.³² This Germanic ethos may be briefly defined, in the own words of Max Scheler, a German contemporary scientist, as "*enamoured death*."³³ Further, this worship of death as a post-historical religion of extreme atheism is, according to Scheler, a German sickness that consists in a reduction of individuality and identity to *one-sidedness* of man.³⁴ On the part of Böhmsch nihilism, this corresponds to the said Pithart's "political program of one-sidedness," as well as to Vaclav Klaus's ethos of "simplification" and "flattening" (*zplošteni* or *placatosi*).³⁵ In this way, the Hegelian end of history as an absolute culmination of freedom means in this context a rule of a very concrete and specific freedom and will.

Not coincidentally, the political and existential seriousness of suicide for Bohemia, in particular, was first noted by T.G. Masaryk, the founder of the Czechoslovak state, who wrote his dissertation on the theme of suicide and its atheistic

³¹ Vaclav Bartuska, *Polojasno: Patraní po vinicích 17. listopadu 1989*, op. cit., p. 197.

³² See, for example, Martin Heidegger, "Only a God Can Save Us," op. cit., pp. 112-114.

³³ See Jaroslav Krejci, *O české a evropské*, 1. díl (O českém národním charakteru), (Ostrava: Amosium servis, 1993), p. 22; on Masaryk's views see, for example, Alan Woolfolk and Jonathan B. Imber, eds., *Constructive Sociological Theory: Thomas G. Masaryk*, (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 1994), pp. 244-245.

³⁴ Jaroslav Krejci, *O české a evropské*, 1. díl, op. cit., p. 20.

³⁵ On Klaus's political doctrine of "flattening" see, for example, Karel Hvizdala, *První zpráva (Rozhovor s Václavem Klausem)*, op. cit., p. 67; also Frantisek Dvorak, Slavomir Ravik, Jiri Teryngel, *Zaloba aneb Bila kniha k patému výročí 17. listopadu 1989*, op. cit., p. 32 - the respective chapter in this book is titled "Where the Spirit Is Rotting." Other favourite and abundantly used paradigm of this reductionist discourse is Klaus's imperative of "standard" quality and "standardization." The innate link of this rhetoric to the language of (political) technology is evident.

and nihilistic genesis.³⁶ Masaryk also pointed out that the ethos of death is interchangeable with the ethos of suicide - the wish to die can be transformed or projected into the wish to murder which again may (also) be directed against oneself. The common essence of this death-dyad is extreme egotism and subjectivism whose choice of being is death: "the one because it cannot love, the other because it hates."³⁷

In this regard, an interesting and revealing is Havel's speech-mirror "consecrated to all those who hate or hated" delivered in Oslo on August 28, 1990.³⁸ In this speech, Havel tells us in the spirit of a true Hegelian dialectic of the negative that "the hating one desires the hated," this being *the* way he "desires the Absolute" understood as "totally" assuming the identity or role of the God.³⁹ The "absolute horizon" is a rejection of a human measure and appropriation of the place of God for oneself.⁴⁰ Havel's unidentified "hating" person, therefore, thinks or wants to think that he is "a kind of overman or even God, and that this [assuming] entitles them to a complete recognition of the world, or even its complete obedience and loyalty, if not blind servility [that is, complete slavery]."⁴¹ To this effect, he wishes the end of history, politics and humanity because he wants to have his Divinity recognized in a perfectly Hegelian sense for ever so that it can "never be questioned by anybody

³⁶ Thomas Masaryk, *Suicide and the Meaning of Civilization*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970). See also Alan Woolfolk and Jonathan B. Imber, eds., *Constructive Sociological Theory: Thomas G. Masaryk*, op. cit., pp. 49- 94, 244.

³⁷ Alan Woolfolk and Jonathan B. Imber, eds., *Constructive Sociological Theory: Thomas G. Masaryk*, op. cit., p. 36.

³⁸ Vaclav Havel, *Vazent ohcane*, op. cit., p. 19.

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 19-20.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 21.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 20. Of course, all this is a pure Hegelian language or its remarkable imitation. Somewhat further, Havel demands "unbounded" slavery of the world that is to surrender to the man-god unconditionally in order to be expropriated in its absolute entirety. [Ibid., p. 21]

again."⁴² Havel's hateful man sincerely but usually secretly wishes total death to anybody who does not recognize him as a God or is "guilty" of his failure to be appreciated as such.⁴³ This "absolute recognition" in the form of that wished-for absolute catastrophe of the world and mankind is for him but a necessary solution of his own "primordial catastrophe" - his own birth: through death he wants to return back and shut the door of time firmly behind him for ever and for every one.⁴⁴ To this effect, he thinks (together with Hegel and Nietzsche) that he found his power of God a key in death. But at the same time, he is horrified by death, because until he lives he *defers* the ultimate test of his divinity. In particular, he might be simply wrong.⁴⁵

Positing himself as a God, he is, however, forced to face problems of the real world. As a result, it is a god with a keen inferior complex, a god who is frustrated, but because he is a god, the guilt is on the part of the ignorant world: "[he] wants to be the centre of the world ... is permanently frustrated and annoyed that the world does not accept him and does not recognize him, that the world does not take notice of him, or even that the world dares to laugh at him."⁴⁶ This man-god rightly suspects himself of being infantile, that is, a "spoilt and badly brought-up kid."⁴⁷ In this connection, an extremely developed Oedipus motherly complex, which became a

⁴² Vaclav Havel, *Vazeni obcane*, op. cit., p. 21.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 21. The man-god also feels that any harm done to him is necessarily "cosmological" in its scope. [Ibid., p. 23]

⁴⁴ See *ibid.*, p. 21.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 21. On Havel's belief in his own immortality and preoccupation with it see Vaclav Havel, *Disturbing the Peace: A Conversation with Karel Hvizdala*, op. cit., p. 190; Michaels Simmons, *Nesmely prezident*, op. cit., p. 148.

⁴⁶ Vaclav Havel, *Vazeni obcane*, op. cit., p. 20.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 20.

syndrome, as well as its politicized importance are paramount.⁴⁸ That others may even think of something else than his own Being (yes, written with a capital letter),⁴⁹ is considered as a hostile act, justifying his own undeclared war to the world.⁵⁰

Fundamentally, this man-deity hates the God because *he* "wants to be a God, or even thinks that he is Him and is constantly agonized by indications that he is not or cannot be Him."⁵¹ Consequently, Havel rightly concludes that this deity of a little man is rather a quality of evil who is "jealous of God."⁵² Because he is very intensively concerned about his own divine enthronement, the man-god realizes that seemingly only one thing bars him from the fulfilment of his will - the true God-Father who, in his view, does nothing but conspires against his Sacredness.⁵³ But because he has to live concretely, he needs to operationalize his Divinity and cosmic hatred. How? By looking for a "concrete" and "accidental victim" at hand who would also embody for him his own deficiency whereby hatred appears as projected self-hatred to be cured by the annihilation of the object-victim of his sickness.⁵⁴ The Achilles's heel of this absolute spirit *qua* man is also revealed: it is someone's laughter, but already a knowing smile is unbearable to his absolute divine power.⁵⁵

⁴⁸ Cf. Vaclav Havel, *Vazeni obcane*, op. cit., p. 20.

⁴⁹ See Vaclav Havel, *Disturbing the Peace: A Conversation with Karel Hvizdala*, op. cit., p. 150.

⁵⁰ Vaclav Havel, *Vazeni obcane*, op. cit., p. 20.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

4.4. Schism between the Being (Bohemian Ethos) and Böhmisches Nihilism of Death

Such Böhmisches operationalization of the death-suicide syndrome entails a nihilistic negation of the Czech identity (*svěbytnost*), history and language, as well as of independent politics and ultimately the state.⁵⁶ It is an institutionalized impotence and hatred of everything that is a ground of character and traditional faith in justice.

Jadwiga Staniszkis defined the same phenomenon as "the process of desubstitutionalization and the substitution of non-existent relations and mechanisms" produced the Hegelian slave [Böhmisches elite] *qua* posited being. Because that slave has no being of his own, but only a posited one *qua* image or show, he is bound to remain an *illusory being* or *immediate non-being*. This also applies to the politics reproduced by that slave. Moreover, due to its external givenness, he cannot even know himself otherwise than a posited or fabricated falsehood.⁵⁷ Consequently, by being false or externally fabricated, such a Hegelian slave tries to "redeem" or justify himself by making false that which has existed beyond him - the God, the state, nation - anything he is asked to, thereby only sliding deeper and deeper into the abyss of his

⁵⁶ The post-1989 elite that had been accusing the previous one of "the liquidation of historic memory," continues the same policy, although under other ideological labels. Evidently, historic forgetfulness, including the inability to remember other possibility of rulership, is a the elite's power maintenance imperative. Cf. Marketa Goetz-Stankiewicz, eds., *Good-Bye, Samizdat*, (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1992), p. 193-204. The British *Guardian* evaluated this as a "cultural genocide" of Central Europe or as "the third wave of plundering the cultural heritage," especially in Bohemia. [See Slavomir Ravik, *Bylo nebylo v prosinci 1993*, op. cit., p. 14. On the acknowledgement of the "full enforcement" of Orwell's dictum on controlling the time by controlling the future with regard to the present Czech Republic see Zdenek Jicinsky, *Cs. parlament v polustopadovém období*, op. cit., p. 20. The systematic decomposition of the state after 1989 is well documented, for example, in Slavomir Ravik, *Bylo nebylo: Latrina magika v Cechach, na Morave a ve Slezsku*, op. cit.

⁵⁷ See Jadwiga Staniszkis, *The Ontology of Socialism*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. 8-9.

death or dying as a being *for* himself. The Nietzschean "little man" finally hangs himself on the noose of his own jest. During this process of self-annihilation or dying out, he, however, also tries, if given power, to *desubstantiate* the fundamental essences like the state and nation. This is also apparently the purpose for which such a type of Hegelian slave is suitable and, consequently, used for. His aim and destination are the Hegelian nothingness. As the author of *Cowards*, Josef Skvorecky, put it in his another autobiographical novel *The Engineer of Human Souls*: "And what will you become? - Nothing. That's exactly what I want to be. Nothing."⁵⁸ This "nothing" exists only by being attached to something and constantly expanded into something. These Hegelian slaves are, therefore, always somebody's nothings. This provides for the perpetualness of their hatred.⁵⁹ It is the tautological world of nihilism that has chosen for the time-being its new spokesperson and showman "through whose mouth has spoken the world of spiritual manipulation [and] emotional sterility, the banality of life."⁶⁰ These nihilistic elites, however, compensate their self-alienation by their alienation from the nation. In Havel words, "suddenly, I came to despise the whole one world in which - as I have seen - I was still standing with one leg ..."⁶¹

⁵⁸ Josef Skvorecky, *The Engineer of Human Souls*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984), p. 228.

⁵⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 228.

⁶⁰ These are Havel's words spoken in October 1976; *Kniha Charty, Hlasy z domova 1976/1977*, (Koln: Index, 1977), p. 58.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 61. The Böhmsch elite has an ambition to rule or even to assume a role of new post-historical divinities, as we have seen, but they are unable to cope with one single, but crucial question, as Havel defined it, "how to cope with oneself?" [*ibid.*, p. 61] On historical parallels of this existential separation and alienation of the elite from its nation and its effect on the decay of the country see, for example, Frantisek Palacky, *Dejiny narodu ceskeho v Cechach a na Morave*, (Praha: B. Kocel, 1921), pp. 1053-1054, 1078. On the nihilistic concept of the inner split of Central European countries into two separate peoples, although formally of the same ethnic origin, see J.C. Nyiri, "Tradition and Bureaucratic Loere: Lessons from Hungary" in Barry Smith, eds. *Philosophy and Political Change in Eastern Europe*, op. cit., pp. 9-11.]

Ferdinand Peroutka, speaking about the Communist takeover in 1948, commented: "[The revolution] betrayed a broader revolution, but not its narrow one which it had intended to carry out from the very beginning."⁶² Given its goals, as well as the need to conceal itself simultaneously, the process of national desubstantiation is managed (and disguised) as a process of ostensible mistakes, failures and crises which, however, disclose a distinct tendency of their inherent coherence or even their deliberate nature. Therefore, our previous findings are also in conformity with Arendt's claim that the Communist "mismanagement" was actually fulfilling its real political mission. In this way, they were in Arendt's view "efficient."⁶³

However, the implementations of the revolutionary program of nihilism by the means of conscious failures went even further, and included a realization of Marx's imperative of the war of annihilation against the Slavs. This was *de facto* confirmed again by Hannah Arendt who wrote that the massacres of the Slavic population in World War (and we can also add those under Stalin's terror) "*was not be regretted*" from the point of view of "*thinking in terms of generations*"(!).⁶⁴ In this regard, Roy Medvedev pointed out that "our losses during the Stalin years thus exceeded the losses of all countries taken together in the course of both world wars."⁶⁵ Or as Arendt evaluated it:

Stalin's war against Ukraine in the early thirties was twice as effective as the

⁶² Ferdinand Peroutka, *Demokraticky manifest*, (New York: Universum Press, Co., 1959), p. 34

⁶³ Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, op. cit., p. 375.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 375. Italics added.

⁶⁵ Roy A. Medvedev, *On Stalin and Stalinism*, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 141.

terribly bloody German invasion and occupation. This is the reason why totalitarianism prefers quisling governments to direct rule despite the obvious dangers of such regimes.⁶⁶

This indicates that ideas, including their inherent genesis, are far from being universally neutral or unbiased. It is evident that systems of ideas do carry a certain, distinctive ethos and purpose concealed in their essence that, however, mercilessly urges and *frames* a given course of thinking, actions and politics. In this way, it would be perhaps better to think about ideas as moments and accounts of a distinct character and archetype of being that is not necessarily compatible and friendly with regard to other historically evolved ethos. Apparently, ideas and modes of being cannot be neutral, each of them represents a different choice of living and death. That awareness should not necessarily lead animosity or resentment, but requires from us caution and strength to take care of our own matters with knowledge and courage. In this way, nihilism *does* definitely express a specific ethos of being or death whose danger is the greater because of its claim for universality or its universal "one-sidedness." It is a radical one-sidedness of negation, that is, negation, including the physical one, of concrete ethos and archetypes of being. This onesidedness of Böhmisch nihilism is self-consciously Germanic or Germanizing.

As Havel, for example, sees it, the Germanic spirit should be the solution to technology, and to the dictatorship of consumerism and commercialism. In Havel's view, its the "systematically hierarchising" power of the German ethos, after having

⁶⁶ Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, op. cit., p. 396.

"definitively" German statehood completed and recognized as its task on which it has been working "for such a long time," could then "already without restraints" impose a regime of "global responsibility" as "the only possible salvation of the present world."⁶⁷ Evidently, the Bohemian (Czech) ethos, due to its position, is the frontier challenge to such nihilism. Consequently, to unveil this nihilism is to unconceal the radical danger.

To this effect, Pithart demanded to "cure" and "reunify" the body of humanity with "dead water" that should produce an organism of brand new "nation," Europe and mankind. Pithart wants to save with death the "phenomenal surface" defined as the "only living tissue."⁶⁸ For Pithart, this is "conservatism." Death *qua* "dead water," when related to us, human beings, is decoded as exploitable labour *qua* Marxian mortified human labour: "As a matter of fact, the interest of the elites had been and is ... the growth of expanding *mortified human labour*."⁶⁹

Skvorecky, self-identified as a member of "the dead folk," wrote:

[The dead folk] kissed the devil's bare bum, and if he commanded, they would even dance the Cossack, to the Russian beat. The thin and the fat, the highly placed and well-informed, they would all fornicate with a goat when he, the devil, commanded. And they will, when he commands. I see them everywhere around me.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ From Havel's speech delivered on the anniversary of the German occupation of Czechoslovakia on March 15, 1939. [Vaclav Havel, *Projevy (leden - červen 1990)*, op. cit., p. 85]

⁶⁸ Petr Pithart, *Dejiny a politika*, op. cit., pp. 368-369.

⁶⁹ Vojtech Menci, Milos hajek, Milan Otahal and Erika Kadlecova, *Krizovatky 20. stoleti: Svetlo na bila msta v nejnovějších dejinach*, op. cit., p. 10.

⁷⁰ Josef Skvorecky, *The Engineer of Human Souls*, op. cit., p. 551.

The same is also in other place expressed by a coward in the form *Ich*: "I'd give the Virgin Mary herself a boot up the ass if it would save my bloody neck."⁷¹ In Havel's words: "[Critics of Havel's *Largo Desolato*] were right: is not our very conscience often exactly what we would like most to kick into the ass?"⁷²

In 1978, Havel, on his part, forwarded a model of the future society defined as a "post-democratic system."⁷³ It should be a radical regime of "higher responsibility" which is "anchored in the universe," but incompatible with "any political order."⁷⁴ It would be a society of "certain *communities*" that would be "dynamic" and "small."⁷⁵ Apparently, Havel envisages some quantitative limitations of the population. It also presupposes an overthrow of the political traditions by a permanent fluidity of organizations created *ad hoc* which would also easily perish.⁷⁶ The key figure of this regime would be a sort of *Leader* provided with "large authorities" and "large trust."⁷⁷ This Havelian *Leader* or "grand master" is presented as a solution to "the classic powerlessness of traditional democratic organizations" that Havel sees as

⁷¹ Josef Skvorecky, *The Engineer of Human Souls*, op. cit., p. 158.

⁷² Vaclav Havel, *Do ruznych stran*, op. cit., p. 286.

⁷³ Vaclav Havel, *O lidskou identitu*, op. cit., p. 131.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 130; Vaclav Havel, *Do ruznych stran*, op. cit., p. 40. Cf. Marie L. Neudorfl, "Vaclav Havel and the Ideal of Democracy," a paper delivered at the Vth Congress for Central and East European Studies, Warsaw, August 6-11, 1995, p. 4. In this regard, one episode recorded by Petr Pithart is quite notable because it connects both the notion of "Leader" and theatrical mannerism. During the war over a hyphen in the name of state inaugurated by Havel in February 1990, Vaclav Havel invited some 30 Czech and Slovak representatives to his presidential chateau in Lany. Havel, quite in the image of Stalin notorious caprices, told the assembled politicians that they were to be held there by armed guards until they would come up with a new name of the state. The audience laughed first, thinking that it was a joke. Well, not really, the guards were two police girls armed with colts who were then escorting the captured men even to toilets. Pithart said that he still could not figure out what the meaning was of Havel's intimidation played by him with a full seriousness. [Slavomir Ravik, *Zahradni slavnost pro 15 milionun*, op. cit., p. 21]

"irresponsible."⁷⁸ Every member of that society would be "fully existentially answerable," we can assume that most probably to the *Leader*.⁷⁹ These Havelian societies are bound to be communities of foregone death, which should immediately be perishing together with their real needs.⁸⁰ Consequently, this Havelian Communism should be a system of "dynamic appearing and perishing."⁸¹ Havel defines all this as a "principle of *self-management*" or "self-organization" (Uhl's program of "revolutionary Marxism" was titled as a "program of societal *self-management*").⁸²

⁷⁸ Vaclav Havel, *O lidskou identitu*, op. cit., p. 130.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 130.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 130.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 130.

⁸² Ibid., p. 130. In Washington on February 21, 1990, Havel rejected interests of the nation and state in favour of the "global" and "general" ones and called a responsibility towards "something higher than my country" as "the *only real* spine of all his doing." [Vaclav Havel, *Projevy (leden - červen 1990)*, op. cit., pp. 59-60] In an address delivered at Harvard University on June 8, 1995, Havel essentially confirmed his allegiance to such a program, although in a somewhat more sophisticated and less straightforward way. It is a program of one universal culture and of a single global civilization. It is *de facto* a negation of what has existed - the state and nation that are to be replaced by hitherto non-existent, yet "natural" regions and communities "lying somewhere between nation states and a world community." It is quite transparently evident that Havel hereby defines only in other words the Germanic concept of *Mittleuropa* as a part of his "political architecture of the world." [Vaclav Havel, *Address by Vaclav Havel, Harvard University*, June 8, 1995, a press release by the Czech Foreign Ministry, pp. 9-10] Havel accepts only a special kind of responsibility - a "global" one, that is, for everything, and a derived responsibility towards these newly created "natural" communities. In other words, there is no responsibility towards the currently existent state, nations or citizens. [Ibid., p. 7] It is indicative that in this connection Havel also speaks about "pride" that "will lead the world to hell." The use of the verb "will" in a definite sense here is also of interest. [Ibid., p. 9]

The conformity of such a program of "communities" and a global order to the above referred project presented by Uhl is so high that both visions appear as stemming from the source of inspiration, as well as boiling down to the same. Thus, according to Uhl, both Havel's relative and friend, "gradually, a coordination council of several neighbouring countries will arise, later of the whole of Europe ... Later, all the mediate levels in the former states will be weakened, including the national ones ... European, American, African etc. and later a world council will change into a central administrative (long-distance) control for the preparation of a discussion about the common problems of the whole of mankind, and the preparation for decision making and evaluation of the results of the decision making." [Petr Uhl, *Program spolecenske samospravy*, op. cit., p. 123; on Havel's concept of the same see its account in Marie L. Neudorfl, "Vaclav Havel and the Ideal of Democracy," a paper delivered at the Vth Congress for Central and East European Studies, Warsaw, August 6-11, 1995, p. 4.] Uhl also foresaw that in a transitory period preceding that global order, it would be possible that the "workers encumbered by the illusions would try to (re)create representative institutions of power (legislative, executive and judiciary) on the territorial principle and on the principle of competition among political parties striving for power, in the spirit of

In this way, Arendt's words may be apparently also related to the phenomenon of Böhmisches nihilism:

[It is] a kind of laboratory in which to carry out the experiment with or rather against reality, the experiment in organizing a people for ultimate purposes which disregard individuality as well as nationality, under conditions which are admittedly not perfect but are sufficient for important partial results. Totalitarianism [nihilism] in power uses the state administration for its long-range goal of world conquest and for the direction of the branches of the movement; it establishes the secret police as the executors and guardians of its domestic experiment in constantly transforming reality into fiction; and it finally erects concentration camps as special laboratories to carry through its experiment in total domination.⁸³

In this light, J.L. Fisher, a Czech political scientist, was right when, in the

bourgeois-democratic traditions." Uhl openly rejects this as his goal. This "bourgeois-democratic prejudice" may be supported "only for a while" [Petr Uhl, *Program společenské samosprávy*, op. cit., p. 94] A renewal of the market is seen as a [temporarily enforced] "step backwards." [Ibid., p. 137] In that final Communist-like order, "it would be inconceivable," Uhl told us beforehand, "that all the people should decide all the problems - of economic, but also of more essential societal character." [Ibid., p. 125] In this regard, Uhl defines Havel's imperative of the "natural" as "natural relation free of ownership." [Ibid., p. 125] Moreover, that "naturalness" further boils down, in Uhl's view, to "an empire of natural need" being "a rational management of one's exchange of matters with nature." Uhl refers expressly to Marx in this connection. [Ibid., p. 129] In this "natural" world of global order, every person, in addition to his or her normal profession, would have to carry out also "unqualified works according to the need." Moreover, "a part of the working time will be filled by military exercises and disciplinary services." In addition, "another part will be allocated to making decisions about important problems of the working place ... [and] technology of production ..." [Ibid., p. 131] This should create "economic grids [links] that should regardless of [one's] moral stimuli ensure that one works for the society." [Ibid., p. 131] All this should result in a realization of Marx's imperative that "labour become the [main] need." [Ibid. p. 132] However, at the same time, labourers-slaves will be punished for working too much: "after passing a [certain] limit, the workers would not receive a higher reward; this will prevent an insensible intensification of work or extending of the working time by eager individuals." A special taxation system would also be prohibitive for increasing production by [remaining] private owners. Similarly, a surpassing of the plan would be punished, as well. [Ibid., pp. 132-133] Furthermore, in this "natural" order of Uhl, human cohesiveness and togetherness would be considered as a "negative" phenomenon. Accordingly, "moral" is defined as "uncultural." [Ibid., p. 139] For the sake of the "natural," family, being for Uhl as non-natural, should be dispersed by a boom in sexual freedoms, granted (also) to prisoners. [Ibid., p. 140] Finally, the new order would be an ultimate "expropriation of the workers," and, at the same time, Uhl predicted an advent of a new (global) class or, perhaps rather, caste ruling over the Havelian "architecture of the world." [Ibid., p. 142]

⁸³ Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, op. cit., p. 378.

1920s, he wrote that the essence of the Czech question, as well as of Czech history with its Hussite tradition, is in resisting and overcoming nihilism.⁸⁴ Our findings also clearly show that in Bohemia, two worlds and archetypes are in a mutual interaction and delineation. Communism appeared to be inherently conditioned and determined by nihilism, manifesting itself in our context concretely in its Böhmisches variant. This inner and systemic interconnectedness between these collective types of hatred was noted by Bohumil Dolezal, a contemporary Czech political observer, who pointed out that, by rejecting the democratic line of Czech political thinkers such as Frantisek Palacky, Karel Havlicek and Tomas Masaryk, these Böhmisches nihilists, often "reformed Communist" intellectuals have expressly reassumed the negativist line of a Böhmisches society as it evolved from Karel Sabina (intellectual-snatch) to Klement Gottwald and Antonin Zapotocky (Communist leaders) to be then "refined" by Jan Patocka (dissident philosopher) who formed a basis for present speculations of dissident intellectuals that the Czech nation "should have arisen somehow otherwise."⁸⁵ This continuous interrelatedness of formally opposite forms of Böhmisches nihilism (Communists, Fascists, dissidents) united by their hatred to and alienation from Czech statehood and nation had been underlined by a continuous "genocide of the Czech intelligentsia" and its disintegration due to the internal and external emigration that has been constantly taking place with short breaks since 1938.⁸⁶ Thus, it is not a coincidence, but a sort of existential necessity that the Czech nation, as Masaryk

⁸⁴ Jaroslav Krejci, *O cesství a evropanství*, 1. díl, op. cit., pp. 114-115.

⁸⁵ Bohumil Dolezal, "Ceske potize s narodem", *Prostor*, No. 23/1993: 37

⁸⁶ Oskar Krejci, *Proc to prasklo*, op. cit., p. 112.

noted, is a society that "constantly renews itself from below."⁸⁷

The direct confrontation with nihilism on the part of Bohemian being also apparently foreshadows possible outcomes of broader tendencies. In this regard, this century has been marked by an increasing schism between the nation and externally controlled nihilistic elite.⁸⁸ Oskar Krejci, a former advisor of the last Communist premier, as well as of the first post-1989 Czechoslovak premier, concluded that "the final result [of the post-1989 development] is a new undemocratic, aristocratic policy of the state representatives ... [yet without] an aristocracy of the spirit, but with an aristocratic arrogance of power."⁸⁹ He called it "Marxism with the wrong side out."⁹⁰ As H. Gordon Skilling put it, "all too often the ordinary Czech and Slovak seemed little more courageous and independent than their leaders ..."⁹¹ One of the first who noted this phenomenon was apparently a Czech sociologist Emanuel Chalupny who pointed out that the political elite had begun diverging from the vital force of the

⁸⁷ Karel Capek, *Hovory s T.G. Masarykem*, (Praha: Československý spisovatel, 1969), p. 49.

⁸⁸ An attempt to justify that political and ontological exclusiveness and separation of the ruling elite from the subjugated nation (amounting to an exaltation of the "traditional" system of castes) may be found in Ernest Gellner, *Narody a nacionalismus*, (Praha: Hribal, 1993), pp. 17-23, 25-27, 33-38, 42-47, 56-57, 60-63, 68-72, 75-77, 93, 102, 104, 110-111, 113-114, 124-125, 129, 132, 136, 138-140, 152. Ernest Gellner, a Czech by origin, was a professor of social anthropology at Cambridge, now he teaches at the Central European University in Prague. Gellner's apology is essentially complementary to the platform of Böhmsch nihilism and also explains the present dynamics and efforts on the part of the present Böhmsch elite. To some extent, Gellner is merely reinstating Arendt's principles of cynicism and arrogant thinking in terms of castes. He also sees nation as a kind of class/caste and also advances the notion of the need to protect the ruling caste by putting its amorality behind a screen of its ostentatious utilitarianism. He, however, avoids the word "totalitarianism." The affinity of Gellner's book to Böhmsch nihilism is stressed by the author himself who chose for his book Pithart's statement as a motto.

⁸⁹ Oskar Krejci, *Prosto prasklo*, op. cit., p. 132.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 122.

⁹¹ H. Gordon Skilling, eds., *Czechoslovakia 1918-1988, Seventy Years from Independence*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), p. 19.

nation.⁹²

The character of Bohemian being is formulated most clearly and systematically in the works of Czech reformist thinkers who prepared the Hussite movement of the XIVth century (Milic z Kromerize, Matej z Janova, Jan Hus), humanist J.A. Komensky (Comenius) and later by the founders and leading personalities of the Czech national revival (Josef Dobrovsky, P.J. Safarik, K.H. Macha, F. Palacky, K. Havlicek Borovsky, Karel Kramar) and especially by Tomas Masaryk, a philosopher and the first Czechoslovak President. I would also add to this still incomplete list a precious and revealing opus of the philosophical and religious poem by Jakub Deml, a defiant Catholic priest (1878-1961). One of the best summaries and analyses of the Czech ethos of resistance though the history was presented by Roman Jakobson in his book *Wisdom of Ancient Czechs: Memorable Foundations of National Resistance* (1943).⁹³

The basic axioms and morals of Bohemian ethos are seemingly simple, but powerful. As the first preserved Bohemian poem, an eulogy on the Bohemian rendering of the Bible written in about 863, says it: "*Let us hear, from now on with your own reason.*"⁹⁴ The Bohemian (Czech) being is the idea of equality in justice being God projected on the earth.⁹⁵ This open relatedness of God and being is

⁹² In September 1992, this Chalupny's observation was recalled and reinstated by Pavel Tigrid who, however, remained blind to its apparent charge of self-criticism. [Pavel Tigrid, *Jak to bylo*, (Praha, Lidove noviny, 1993), pp. 28-29] Pavel Tigrid later became for a while a Czech Minister of Culture noted by his faulty treatment of his ministerial responsibilities.

⁹³ Roman Jakobson, *Moudrost starých Čechů: odvěké základy národního odhoje*, (New York: Československý národní kroužek, 1943).

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁹⁵ This idea is voiced in a Prague fragment from the Xth century. [*Ibid.*, p. 43]

translated into material existence by language which has been thus a link between being and a national Czech existence from the beginning of political life in Bohemia.⁹⁶

Equality in justice *qua* just weighing of one's existence and in freedom of everyone to chose one's openness towards Being (and, thus, one's graveness or grave) *does* not amount to sameness. Faith, including one's trustfulness in keeping promises, and language (that is, anthropomorphism of faith) converge in the idea of the nation that is to be safeguarded politically by the state, but, nevertheless transcends state authority.⁹⁷ Consequently, the nation is not to be determined as much by the state, but by its innate capacity to create its political statehood. Therefore, Bohemian patriotism, as Masaryk pointed out, becomes serious when it takes care of the state. The state is a political substantiation of the nation while national substance is not exhausted by the state. And the nation is in danger when it loses sense of the state.⁹⁸ In this regard, Růžka Preisner, a Czech philosopher, rightly stressed that "without the state, only savages, criminals, slaves, or saints can exist."⁹⁹ The state-making capability should serve as a *public opening* that breaks through the enclosure and dispersion into insignificance. It challenges, strengthens and unifies the standpoint of a concrete shared existence through time and space as a *post* in its vital exposure *before* Being, that is, in its being *for* it. Publicity (openness) is the entrance for the common good and justice (measure) into existence, also because without openness

⁹⁶ Roman Jakobson, *Moudrost starých Čechů: odvěky základy národního odboje*, op. cit., pp. 47-48.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 131.

⁹⁸ On the summary account of the relevant views as formulated by the political and cultural personalities of the Czechoslovak Republic (Tomáš Masaryk, Karel Čapek, F.V. Krejčí and others) see Jaroslav Krejčí, *O českosti a evropskosti*, I. díl, op. cit., pp. 19, 94, 128, 136, 158.

⁹⁹ Růžka Preisner, *Česká existence*, op. cit., p. 125.

such a thing as "significance" cannot exist – it is always a sign for something *else*.

Openness or one's exposure also means justice – also because being itself is radically open, thus, the same is expected from us.

However, openness is also freedom. Therefore, freedom, essential human freedom, is freedom for (shared) justice, for a just measure. Justice is our occurring in and courage for existential exposure. The state is the force that should uphold this shared exposure to justice.

In this sense, to reveal is to awake. This is also the meaning of Masaryk's dictum that the state can be maintained only by freedom (justice).¹⁰⁰ Because this principle of a nation means to live in a human togetherness, the state should be the balanced, measured-up and mutually "polite" or "polished" Apollonian form holding up this togetherness in one whole, while allowing it to grow and develop and maintain its interrelatedness and openness towards the outside. Necessarily, skinning the state off cannot be anything but a barbaric and vulgar crudeness of Marsyas's punishment that is a form of death.¹⁰¹ As Masaryk insisted: "To de-Austrianize [or de-Germanize, that is, away from Böhmisches nihilism] means to acquire a sense of the state and statehood [standpoint in being], of a democratic statehood."¹⁰² This concept of the state and nation is transcendent – open towards humanity. It is an openness that is a medium of approximation between humanity and nation and together with the overarching sacredness of Being. Moreover, the exposure is an act qua action. This

¹⁰⁰ Rto Preisner, *Ceska existence*, op. cit., p. 125.

¹⁰¹ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 47, 133.

¹⁰² Karel Capek, *Hovary s T.G. Masarykem*, op. cit., p. 271.

exposure deepens, substantiates and justifies our own being and our humanity. The depth of exposure is the ground for our condition of seriousness.¹⁰³ As Masaryk stressed, humanity is made profound by action.¹⁰⁴ Here, the Bohemian ethos also radically diverges from nihilism. To this effect, Masaryk realized:

The slave has always the manners of its master and resorts to revenge whenever he can.¹⁰⁵

Inhumanity, brutality are a fruit of a slave's spirit, of both slaves and slaves' masters: slavery and its masters condition each other. No humanness is possible without a mutual trust, a pious man is not afraid of a man.¹⁰⁶

This trust is what makes a man at home in being. In addition, such openness, including courage towards exposure and ability to *stand up* in it and hold one's standpoint, needs to be *cultivated, recreated* and *cared for*. In the sense of the word, openness for being also means enlightenment and as such should be also a concern of education. The concern for measure is the vital content of morality.¹⁰⁷ Only by striving for this openness, the wholeness of being can become a source of revitalization by responding back to our accountability and, thus, gathering us in itself and also for ourselves again. Hence also such a fundamental importance of language

¹⁰³ Cf. Jaroslav Krejčí, *O cestě a evropskosti*, 1. díl, op. cit., pp. 96, 113, 135.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., pp. 56, 59-60.

¹⁰⁵ Karel Capek, *Rozhovory s F.G. Masarykem*, op. cit., p. 12.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 213.

¹⁰⁷ Jaroslav Krejčí, *O cestě a evropskosti*, 1. díl, op. cit., pp. 49, 53-54. Our own meaningfulness is *the mean* between the impossible high (God) and impossible low (beast-devil), in the dynamics of "with-in" and "with-out," between being expressed and impressed. The "I" divides space and time. The "I" implies division, as well as decision, i.e. act both action and exposure. In this regard, it is important to maintain our standpoint of facing being and not trying to turn our back on it.

that unlocks and unconceals the common spaciality of beings without negating and abolishing them as such. This constant arising and opening up to a stand in being a life is also the path of dealing with death, while (nihilistic) cowardice is nothing but *warding* this being off. As the old Czech proverbs say:

Who does not trust oneself, despairs of the whole world.

Make yourselves a sheep [coward-servant] and the wolf will devour you.

Violence multiplies if it does not meet resistance.

If you are afraid of death, you are not worthy of life.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ Quoted in Jaroslav Krejčí, *O českém a evropském národu*, 2. díl (O českém národním charakteru), (Ostrava: Amosium servis, 1995), p. 72.

CHAPTER 5

MARXISM: GENEALOGICAL UNDERGROUND OF BÖHMISCH NIHILISM AND DEATH

5.1. Marxism: Böhmisch Nihilism Going Under

In the previous chapters, we have seen that Marxism not only promulgated modern Böhmisch nihilism, but had also been both a commanding doctrine and political force for a great part of contemporary Czech history. This comprehension allows us to disclose and treat Marxism as a gateway into a larger underworld of meanings pertaining to nihilism in which Böhmisch nihilism is grounded both as one of its significant determinants and as a particular case. Our questioning is thereby following nihilism in its overall Nietzschean drive of 'going under' - in this context, downwards closer to its essence otherwise covered by changing momentary political phenomena.

To question means to *trace down* so that answer becomes a dying of the concealed, and questioning of a source of life. This quest is possible only if one can make plausible a presumption that, even if we live at the end of history and under a sway of nihilism, only such a man who cannot question has died (in a sense of humanness). Notions which we may extract from such an inquiry should, therefore, open for us deeper roots (context) of Böhmisch nihilistic uprooting and homelessness in being. In return, this should help us to seize, or to use Heideggerian language, *enframe* what *enframes*, in our case Böhmisch nihilism, through answers forced out of its own background, thus, compelling it towards our visibility of light.

Such an understanding also points towards a evident congruence between

Böhmisch nihilism and the Hegelian end of history. Therefore, it can be assumed that these failures delivered by Böhmisch nihilism may be in their turn part of a broader "failure," if not a swindle, that is, part of a larger frame. In this sense, our discussion will be focused now more on the level of the underlying strategy and structure of the nihilistic project *qua* war. To this effect, the task is not only to prove here that the essence of Marxism is nihilism, but also to reveal the inner structure and context of the Marxism in this regard.

5.2. Hegelian Mobilization of Falsity: Absolute Power?

We are indebted to Eric Voegelin who, as one of the greatest (yet to be fully appreciated) thinkers of our century, had the courage to name Marx a conscious intellectual "swindler" which is itself a connotation quite unusual in the academic world. Yet, it offers a critical approach to Marx's own "criticism" and has a definite potential to reveal surprisingly new insights into what Marx actually accomplished.¹ Voegelin also indicated the nature and the "necessity" of the appearance of Marxism as *an organic child* of Hegel's project and system:

If he does not want to be laughed out of court as a *Schwaermer* or a crackpot, the philosopher must tie his Messianic ambitions to a reasonably successful looking political force of his time.²

As Ferdinand Peroutka put it, "the proletariat had muscles that the group of

See in Dante Germino, *Beyond ideology, The Revival of Political Theory*, (New York & London: Harper & Row, , 1967), p. 178.

² E. Voegelin, "Hegel - A Study in Sorcery," *Studium Generale*, 24 (1971), 339. Cf. Karl Marx, *The Revolutions of 1948*, op. cit., p. 20. As Marx himself explained, one should appear as to speak for all in order to get all the power because "our own power does not suffice," consequently "it is only the name of general interests that a particular class can claim general supremacy." [Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, op. cit., p. 36]

revolutionary professionals did not have.⁴ Hegel's self-denying ideas were in need of vulgarization and the mob. To this effect, Marxism was a system of flattery that turned Hegel and his program seemingly on its head. In Arendt's words:

[It] began to tell the mob that each of its members could become such a lofty all-important walking embodiment of something ideal if he would only join the movement. Then he no longer had to be loyal or generous or courageous, he would automatically be the very incarnation [of virtues or vices] ...⁵

Tying up of the Messianic Idea with a real political force was the great achievement of Marx who indeed succeeded to capture the workers' energy, will and thinking and enframe it within Hegelian dialectics of negative nihilism.⁵ As Peroutka stressed, Marxism thereby became a "tunnel" for Hegel's spirit into the world.⁶ But it also meant that, if there was any swindle committed on the part of Marx, its originating substance and mechanism are to be verified and considered also in relation to Hegel himself.

Hegel himself and even more his main "court" interpreter, Alexandre Kojève, coincidentally also a Marxist, provide a rather revealing concept whose vigour lies in overthrowing all measures-borders of traditional piety with a transcendent belief in the truth and human integrity-boundedness, that is, in going to the end of an undaunted effrontery and extreme onesidedness of slave's

⁴ Ferdinand Peroutka, *Demokraticky manifest*, op. cit., p. 35.

⁵ H. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, op. cit., p. 249.

⁶ From a position of the great operator of the Hegelian system, Marx, however, reproached his teacher for being too "abstract." [See Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, op. cit., p. 215]

⁷ Ferdinand Peroutka, *Demokraticky manifest*, op. cit., p. 78.

resentment and his will to power.⁷ In simple words, Hegel discovered and elaborated the "absolute power" of falsity. Being had become a pretence refuted by time until the 'emancipated slave' has accomplished with Hegel and Napoleon the end of time *qua* history that obliterates for good the categories of truth and lie. In this spirit, everything, that *is*, is treated as false in relation to death (non-being), the "ultimate" truth and commanding nihilistic deity.⁸ The nihilistic *credo* 'everything is permitted' can be read *inter alia* as 'all crimes and lies are permitted and possible, truth and justice are not.'

Hegel's power is a *negation* of *what is* and becomes "Absolute" when it succeeds in the *separation* of the being from itself, that is, both from its given being and meaning: "capability of *disengaging* the meaning from Being, of *separating* essence from existence."⁹ Evidently, an ultimate separation is death. In other words, Hegel overcomes the truth by its death in time. In this regard, it is worth recalling Socrates's fundamental idea of death according to which death is *separation*: "Death, I think, is actually nothing but the separation of two things from each other, the soul and the body."¹⁰ But, contrary to Hegel, Socrates did not

⁷ A. Kojève, a Marxist who went back to Hegel, thereby also unveiled the hitherto concealed nature of Marxism as such. With regard to Czech political thinking, it was Jan Patočka, a disciple of Husserl and Heidegger, who did not only introduce the Heideggerian wave of nihilism into Czech political thinking, but also, "extraordinarily contributed to the discovery of the real Marx" by "renewing the sensibility for Hegel." In this way, as L. Hejdanek, a Czech dissident thinker stressed, Böhmsch Marxists, that is, the current Böhmsch elite, allegedly "found an interpretation and needed take-off for new, suddenly remarkable, philosophical world achievements in that new, deeper continuity built upon Marx, the philosopher." [*Krestane a Charta '77, Vyber dokumentu a textu*, (München: Opus Bonum, 1980), p. 229]

⁸ See, for example, respective parts of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* and *Logic* in Frederick G. Weiss, *Hegel: The Essential Writings*, (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1974), pp. 44-123.

⁹ Alexandre Kojève, "The Idea of Death in the Philosophy of Hegel," *op. cit.*, pp. 125-126, 130.

¹⁰ *Gorgias* 524b. Socrates also adds: "So after [the soul and the body] are separated, each of them stays in a condition not much worse than what it was in when the person was alive." As I understood it, for Socrates is not death the ultimate or revolutionary truth, but merely an

elaborate on this basis an *a priori* premise and "art-knack" of recurrently cheated and cheating life, systematically applied by a cunning slave, but a noble philosophy of justice and measure of the good.

Moreover, by separating that which separates (death) from its measure and justice, Hegel injected a contradiction (meaningless death) into the very essence of being; from within planted death is to overwhelm being and produce a non-being in its place.¹¹ In doing this, Hegel built his system of that death-reifying sorcery on a defying premise according to which "the errors committed by man *endure* indefinitely and . . . man could be defined as an error that is preserved in existence, that *endures* within reality."¹² In this way, Hegel arrived back at a conclusion that man "can *live* his error or in error."¹³ For Hegel, such living in a lie is a real [rational] life.¹⁴ Or as Nietzsche declared, "in our times falsehood itself has become flesh and even genius . . . we are psychologically considered, false -"¹⁵ Life and man then become but an eternal circle of rational lies that is wound up in death, another "error" that makes life and everything else *err*, that is, death is posited as the only error or failure entrusted with "the absolute power" and domination over all the other failing truths.¹⁶ In "nullifying" nature, all other truths

opportunity for judgement and return to the measure and balance.

¹¹ Ferdinand Peroutka, *Demokratický manifest*, op. cit., p. 95. Hegel's Super-Ego's own self-alienation and lostness is forcibly implanted in the process into the body of the whole humanity. See Eric Voegelin, "On Hegel - A Study in Sorcery," op. cit., p. 361.

¹² Alexander Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 187.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 187. Italics added.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 187.

¹⁵ F. Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and The Case of Wagner*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), p. 192.

¹⁶ See Alexander Kojève, "The Idea of Death," op. cit., pp. 124-127, 130, 133. In *The Antichrist*, Nietzsche similarly argues about "Jewish people" who were to "divine a power in these instincts [of decadence] with which one could prevail against 'the world.'" [F. Nietzsche, *The Portable Nietzsche*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1982), p. 593] For Nietzsche's concept of "error": " . . . the error here is radical, that is that which determines the very essence, that it is the

and beings, death ceases to be an error and becomes (again) the undisputed and unquestioned absolute power (truth).¹⁷ This doctrine-program of a death conquest charges a "moral error (= a crime)" to be "transformed into 'truth' or virtue."¹⁸ According to Kojève, "man who errs [lies] is a Nothingness [with a big letter] that nihilates in Being."¹⁹ Such a Hegelian man, therefore, negates his own falsity not by *justice* or *adjusting* it with a view to some common standard or law, but in a negative way, by annihilating the other's *remembering* of his lie and positing the falsity as nothingness overriding all that is, including justice and punishment (he "nihilates in Being" and imposes a crime as a "virtue"). In other words, hatred of a nihilist justifies itself by itself, so does his falsity. As Dostoyevsky's "underground" nihilist put it, "I hated you already because of the lies I had told you."²⁰ Apparently, the Absolute Truth of Hegel's system and nihilism presupposes and demands a lie ("error") in order to be at all. In the "progressive" development of the lie ("the truth is an error that has become true"),²¹ that he has to "will the power" in order to establish the equivalence or ambiguity between itself and the truth by removing the latter.

That enthronement and worship of the lie betrays on part of a nihilist a deep anxiety of truth or "shying back from truth" that is dangerously "polluting his [perfect] thought." Truth is the obstacle standing in his path, a "limitation" that has

substance." [Ibid., p. 613] And again, where Paul may be well substituted by Hegel or perhaps by Nietzsche himself: "Paul simply transposed the centre of gravity of that whole existence *after* this existence;" [Ibid., p. 617] and "when one places life's centre of gravity not in life but in the 'beyond' - in *nothingness* - one deprives life of its centre of gravity altogether." [Ibid., p. 618]

¹⁷ Alexander Kojève, "The Idea of Death," op. cit., p. 133.

¹⁸ Alexander Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, op. cit., p. 189.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 187.

²⁰ Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *Notes from Underground & The Grand Inquisitor*, (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1960), p. 108.

²¹ Alexander Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, op. cit., p. 189.

to be "purified" away, hence a notion of truth as "dirty." This finds expression in Hegel's diagnosis of "the existential state of the enlightened intellectual" as *Angst vor der Wahrheit* and *Furcht vor der Wahrheit*.²² To this effect, as Eric Voegelin put it, Hegel took a truly radical decision to cultivate and "develop a false self" and "let his false self engage in an act of self-salvation."²³

The result is a self-referring and self-confirming totalitarian system of the Absolute Truth *qua* universal falsehood, an absolute reduction of being to the Archimedean point of the ego, that is, to death, to nothing. It is a man's standpoint in being devoid of any point. As a result, man is forced either to communicate only in signs or to lie (in the language of images-screens).²⁴ The concept of "negating and self-negating error," that once mattered, is supplemented at the end of history by the truth that means nothing together with man. In the sense of the postulated impossibility of action, the death-truth is doomed to be still-born, and it is only the opinions about nothing that would matter in a world of technological magic where "all is possible."²⁵ The inability of politicians to act politically becomes a reason of their popularity, people have been taught to love their pettiness, cowardice and betrayals. A flux of fluidity superseded stability. As Hegel prescribed it, no meaning and being are allowed to become "fixed" or

²² Eric Voegelin, "On Hegel - A Study in Sorcery," op.cit., pp. 346, 349-350, 354-356, 360.

²³ Ibid., p. 362.

²⁴ The concept of the languages of signs and symbols-images is elaborated in Tom Darby, *The Feast*, op. cit., pp. 138-156, 189-190, 210-214, 221, 223-227.

²⁵ Nietzsche defined this as "practical nihilism" that is saying: "nothing [is] true than that you should be right than that *your* truth should be proved right." [F. Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), p. 25] According to Barry Cooper, m-asses now rule - the serious and stupid ones, modern successors of the ass from Zarathustra's cave. And so he asks: "Should the stupid be the masters of the earth?" Barry Cooper, "Nihilism and Technology", Tom Darby, Bela Egyed and Ben Jones, eds., *Nietzsche and the Rhetoric of Nihilism*, (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1989), pp. 176-181]

"stable." Stability (demanded, for example, by Aristotle) is perceived by Hegel as an impermissible danger to his Absolute Spirit so that people should "not be permitted to take root and to become fixed in this process of isolation."²⁶ In other words, by ever-changing points of reference and of what the phenomena have in common, the truth is to be isolated, entrained and then dispensed of. To this effect:

the government must shake up the systems from time to time by wars, to injure and disturb thereby the order and the right of autonomy that are granted them, and through the labour imposed [by warfare] to let the individuals know their master, [i.e.] death, individuals who, by plunging themselves in these systems, get detached from the whole. . . . Through this dissolution of the form of the fixed-and-stable-subsistence, the Spirit [State] removes-the-danger of the fall into natural empirical existence.²⁷

That constant dissolution and change of meaning and being has a double function: 1) to shake, brake, uproot and annihilate what is, 2) while covering up what has been done and what is still willed to happen.²⁸ Truth is overpowered by

²⁶ Alexandre Kojève, "The Idea of Death," op. cit., p. 144. Apparently, when one is uprooted, totally separated, he cannot "fix" even himself.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 144. Clearly, Hegel is here least concerned with the freedom of man who, apparently in a slave-like status, has to be taught by terror to recognize 'his master.' In Hegel's view, man "must remain" (be kept as) a negative flexibility (fluidity), he "must not become something fixed-and-stable" [my italics]. [Ibid., p. 143] Understandably, when nothing is allowed to be 'fixed' or stable, then no meaning can be fixed or grasped; nothing can be determined or confirmed except for the self-determining will of the tyrant that alone is in a position to confirm oneself, although in an extremely negative way. In this regard, men would be eternally condemned to be a lie. The Czech language has a clear understanding of this problem: to be able to determine or read anything (*ustanovit*), it must be somehow stabilized (*ustáleno*). The word 'stable' is related to the verb "stand", as is the case in Czech - *stat* (to stand) and *stálý* (stable), while the word "lie" (*lež* in Czech) also denotes a position that is directly opposite to standing. Moreover, 'standing' is also inherently tied to the capability of defence and fighting, as denoted in the expression "battle station" (*stanoviste* in Czech). A lying enemy is usually a dead one. Consequently, that who lies, cannot stand (up-right), and that who cannot stand, is condemned to a lie. Thus, (to be) a lie is a defeat (of man).

²⁸ According to Voegelin, these "difficulties [ever-changing meanings of the words and concepts] ... make it impossible to understand the purpose of the *grimoire* without a code at hand that will permit decipherment page after page." [Eric Voegelin, "On Hegel - A Study in Sorcery," op. cit., p. 364, cf. also, ibid. p. 363, 365]

fleeting information or by a picture. In other words, to devour-kill everything, this nothing has to reduce everything - to itself.²⁹ In this way, a deliberate violence is done to the words and their meanings, and the previous common human experience is emptied of its content. The resulting emptiness of human experience can be then re-filled by propaganda of any program that, however, boils down to the will of the arising Hegelian Super-Ego. This also explains why Hegel's science had not been so long truly appreciated. Its hidden experience had first to "develop from a personal *malaise* of existence to a social disease."³⁰ From an ideal concept as a programme, it had to be made into a prevailing reality. In this sense, a Böhmisch nihilist may also be defined as a Hegelian 'man who errs [and] is a Nothingness that nihilates in Being.' Because, nation and state (as forms of *standing* together) are essential political stand-points that help us orient in the spaciality and timeness of being, nihilism is forced to seize them and turn them into lies or falsity, as already documented by concrete evidence in relation to a particular case represented by Böhmisch nihilism. At the same time, our ability to see it indicates that we are already in an advanced stage of realizing its program.

This apocalyptic system of Hegelian falsehood offers to man in principle "freely," besides vices and a state of permanent guilt, one main freedom - the freedom of violent death.³¹ Togetherness in such a post-historical (idiotic) dying is embodied in the Universal and Homogeneous State, the "coldest death and the most pointless, with no more significance or importance than the act of cutting a

²⁹ Cf. Alexandre Kojève, "The Idea of Death," op. cit., p. 130: "This Nothingness nihilates as [the] Action ... nihilates by annihilating this Being, and therefore [also] by annihilating itself ..."

³⁰ Eric Voegelin, "On Hegel - A Study in Sorcery," op. cit., p. 335.

³¹ Alexandre Kojève, "The Idea of Death," op. cit., p. 140.

cabbage in two, or than to take a gulp of water." Thereby, for Hegel, man realizes himself as being by letting one murder oneself "coldly and pointlessly."³² In this way, this freeing to death actually is a *(pointless) willing of death* (by the victim).³³ Peace is reduced to an utter impossibility, to an "absolute contradiction."³⁴

Yet, all this concern with justifying a lie may also imply that Hegel himself somehow *knew* that his death is a lie because man cannot invent death himself, he can only *imitate* or *mediate* it, thus he cannot even know fully what it is. Killing can be his, but not the death itself; this transcendence of human limitedness always leaves an open possibility for justice-judgement-readjusting of being. In fact, this innate relatedness between nihilistic death and falsity was later also revealed by Kafka who pointed out that all deceptions and lies are in principle and ultimately tied to death.³⁵ Thus, what Hegel did, Marx operationalized, and the Böhmisches experiment has tried in practice, is a man's *hubris*, effrontery in relation to being and attempt to prove that *everything* can be separated and forced out of existence. Such a murder by a lie is not the truth, as Hegel himself seems to admit, but it does not mean that this would make the lie less serious or dangerous; neither a

³² See Alexandre Kojève, "The Idea of Death," op. cit., pp. 136, 141. In his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel uses essentially the same imagery where senseless death appears as his notion of "universal freedom" to be achieved by his Spirit: "The sole work and deed of universal freedom is therefore *death* [Hegel's emphasis], a death too which has no inner significance or filling, for what is negated is the empty point of the absolutely free self. It is thus the coldest the coldest and meanest of all deaths, with no more significance than cutting off a head of cabbage or swallowing a mouthful of water." [Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, op. cit., p. 360] In the true order of being, death as a power is not meaningless, but is essential for the renewal of the measure and harmony of being; in this way, death is part of ontological justice - something Hegel tried to exclude from his system together with love.

³³ See Alexandre Kojève, "The Idea of Death," op. cit., p. 140.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 151.

³⁵ See Franz Kafka, *Dearest Father: stories and other writings*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1954), op. cit., p. 46 (aphorismus 99)

murder becomes benign simply because it is wrong. It, therefore, follows, that justice is also a matter and measure of our own seriousness. In fact, justice is seriousness, an acknowledgement of gravity and boundedness of being, embodied, for example, in the institution of oath and honour that also were the first to be overthrown and broken on the part of Böhmisch nihilism in decisive moments in 1938, 1948, 1968 and 1992.

However, neither that imitated death and falsity will prevail on their own, this Hegel is ready to acknowledge: thus, a believer in the Hegelian system (a self-conscious nihilist) "must necessarily have as his goal the death of the other," that is, "the objective-reality of death."³⁶ Death and falsity become "a *project in discourse*."³⁷ It is a project of violent death and falsity under which being should be reduced to nothingness and emptiness.³⁸ In so far as this is successful, the other being is impelled to will its own falsity, nothingness and death. In other words, the other is *made* to will only the will of the Absolute Super-Ego (Hegel). As a result, the other (man) *is not*, he *only will be* - outside of human time - in the *will* of the Hegelian ruler.

That consummation of freedom cannot but amount to an unprecedented slavery where the slave would not be even any longer conscious of himself, his slavery or the falsehood of his own existence and identity. A man in such bondage cannot even know what he is doing, or for what he has been used. He is out of context with himself. He would be only able to know himself as a pure form, a

³⁶ Alexandre Kojève, "The Idea of Death," op. cit., p. 151.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 131.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 151. Hegel himself calls this absolute reduction by death as "flatness" that is functional in so far as it permits "the general will to be accomplished." [Ibid., p. 141]

relation of the master, the Absolute Super-Ego. Consequently, this war of death has *de facto* only one casualty, that is, man.

In this way, we have seen that Hegelian falsity is a function of man's death that, in turn, is transformed into an empire of reanimalized-domesticated men (slaves). That post-historical death of man in a form of the enslavement and *breeding* of man as a reanimalized creature is also where the three chief Hegelian strategies of death, war and falsity apparently converge and unite. Because of its bias desiring future death, this Hegelian crusade is bound to be directed mainly against all potential³⁹ (future) enemies in order to preclude man as a potentiality, so that at the end the Hegelian Ego "only encounters the Ego" and becomes "one Absolute."³⁹ When the enemy is defined as in terms of a *potential* adversary, then *everyone* is to be treated as a hostile element. Therefore, it does not matter who one is, but what one might (not) be - coincidentally, this is also the frame of a *priori* logic and reasoning applied and tested by the political police.⁴⁰

Politics becomes policing, and policing substitutes politics, while politicians become actors and/or police agents that either produce lies or are hunting lies of others. Thereby, only one "lie" is held to be right, which is consequently a "necessarily present" part of "the final shape" of Hegel's Absolute Truth because what is false is "the negative of the substance," and the substance is in Hegel's view also "negative," hence also "false" and "empty" with regard to a truth. The truth is for Hegel only a [dead] difference between various falsities.⁴¹ The falsity "necessarily present" in the final Hegelian shape of the "truth" is an individual

³⁹ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, op. cit., pp. 590-591.

⁴⁰ Cf. B. Chapman, *Police State*, op. cit., p. 114.

⁴¹ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, op. cit., pp. 22-23.

"self-interest" which realizes itself as the "universal End."⁴² In this regard, Kafka could not but pose himself an uneasy and crucial question: "*Can you know anything other than deception?*" The point is that the self-preservation of a nihilist depends on the preservation of deception - he knows that the good is distinguishable, but he does not know the good as such, he knows only negatively by the means of the evil. As Kafka put it, if he turns in the direction where a deception or vice had been annihilated, he "would turn into a pillar of salt."⁴³

Not accidentally, for Hegel, the notion of "Absolute Freedom" is related to terror. Here, Hegel also explains his goal, as well as what Marx tried to introduce in practice, following Hegel's imperative of generating and fixing class differences within the framework of the Hegelian death project:

In the work of destruction absolute freedom discovers what it is ... The terror of death is the intuition of the negative essence, quivering between its *empty poles* (God and matter). The *universal will pursuing nothing* ... the absolute negativity [Hegel's absolute freedom] *cannot help generating class- and position-differences within itself which it ruthlessly keeps in their place by sheer terror*. From this reign of terror [Hegelian] Spirit is unable to return to the concreteness of culture and faith. It is universal will which in its ultimate abstractness has nothing positive left in it [*italics added*].⁴⁴

In the Hegelian spirit, this "unfulfilled [absolute] negativity of the self, *with its senseless pursuit of death*," can then "swing into absolute positivity" when "*the* [Hegelian] individual" becomes the pure, universal and Absolute will inasmuch as the government [of the Universal and Homogeneous State] "is necessarily

⁴² Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, op. cit., p. 545.

⁴³ Franz Kafka, *Dearest Father: stories and other writings*, op. cit., p. 47.

⁴⁴ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, op. cit., pp. 567-568.

individual."⁴⁵

Summarizing the aforementioned, it can be inferred from the gathered evidence that Hegel's system is a philosophy of death, but also a radical, revolutionary philosophy embracing falsity as its own child. Dostoyevsky, grasping the essence of nihilism and interconnections between nihilistic death, slavery and lie, concluded: "[The spirit of death] accepts lying and deception, and lead men consciously to death and destruction, and yet deceive them all the way so that they may not notice where they are being led, the poor blind creatures may at least think themselves happy on the way."⁴⁶ In this way, Hegel elevated falsity both as necessity (essential also for his own system) and as the absolute source of freedom.⁴⁷ Abolishing the traditional truth (of justice), Hegel discovered the sinister force of a lie and set it up to mobilize and expand it into a systemic whole. However, as Kafka realized, when one accepts lie as a necessity, "it turns lying into a univesal principle."⁴⁸ It seems to me that nobody dared or had the capability not to identify oneself so fully with the dangerous and destructive potential of falsity in such a titanic scale before Hegel. Both Nietzsche and Marx came only after the foundations had already been laid by Hegel. After 1989, the world appeared to become more Nietzschean than Marxist, as if Marx was undergoing with the collapse of the socialist bloc his political clinical death, while Nietzsche was being resurrected from the dead together with a revival of the master's

⁴⁵ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, op. cit., p. pp. 568, 567. Italic added

⁴⁶ Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground & The Grand Inquisitor* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1960), p. 138.

⁴⁷ Cf. Josef Skvorecky, *Illay z Ameriky*, (Toronto: Sixty-eight Publishers Corp., 1990), p. 153.

⁴⁸ Franz Kafka, *Parables and Paradoxes*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1958), p. 79.

appeal.⁴⁹ Marx's operationalization of Hegel was also of fundamental significance for the evolution of Böhmisch nihilism whose elucidation, therefore, requires establishing 1) to what extent Marxism can be revealed as a (political) swindle; 2) if nihilism is the essence of Marx's doctrine; and 3) what concepts and precepts underlie it. Deliberately embracing falsity as an essential part of its genesis, nihilism cannot but continue and pursue it further to its logical end. Franz Kafka desperately tried to combine this secret of nihilism with a self-absolving, but ever-fading hope: "All this is a continuation of the lie; but if I am consistent in it, it approximates the truth in its effect."⁵⁰

5.3. Marx's Operationalization of Hegel's Spirit and Falsity

We have seen how essential for the animation and functioning of Hegel's system is the principle of falsity. It may be assumed that, in order to put this dialectic falsity into effect another deliberate falsity would be required, at this time, on a massive scale inasmuch as Marx's operationalization was transposing Hegel's spirit from its armchair to the streets, that is, realizing its "materialization" which was also to include the Hegelian end of history encoded as Communism. To this effect, Marx renamed Hegel's imperative of "separation" as "alienation" and enforced it as "the sole commanding method" that is "turning alienated man

⁴⁹ As Nietzsche put it: "Paul wanted the end, consequently he also wanted the means. What he himself did not believe, the idiots among whom he threw his doctrine believed. His need was for power ... he could use only concepts, doctrines, symbols with which one tyrannizes masses and forms herds." [Friedrich Nietzsche, "The Antichrist", in *The Portable Nietzsche*, op. cit., p. 618] In a similar way, Nietzsche provided another hindsight with regard to Hegel and his end of history and man: "[I]t would *not* be necessary! But is highly probable that it will *end* that way, that you end that way - namely, 'comforted,' as it is written ... 'comforted metaphysically' ..." [Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, op. cit., p. 26]

⁵⁰ Franz Kafka, *The Diaries of Franz Kafka, 1914-1923*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1949), p. 154.

and alienated nature into alienable [and] saleable objects."⁵¹ Coincidentally, Marx being of a distinct bourgeois origin became himself a sort of primary practical trial in alienation, having gone over to the "alien" body of the workers.

In *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx's own position and motivation are part of the Communist platform. As Marx put it, "a small section of the ruling class cuts itself adrift, and joins the revolutionary class" *because* this class "holds the future in its hands."⁵² Only shortly earlier in the text, it was not merely "a small section" of self-alienated bourgeoisie, but as many as "entire sections of the ruling class" who "supply the proletariat with fresh elements of enlightenment and progress."⁵³ In this Communist "anti-bourgeois" constitution, Marx is able to praise the bourgeoisie as a "refreshing" and "enlightening" carrier of progress.⁵⁴ It is as much significant as astonishing that large introductory parts of *Manifesto* are nothing but a litany of somewhat arrogant fascination with and accolade of the "revolutionary" role of the bourgeoisie (the adversary of the working class) in destroying the old world and its material "revolutionary" remaking. Marx lauds the bourgeoisie for reducing humanity to nothing but a "naked self-interest" covered only "the icy water of egoistical calculation" and stripping families "to a mere money relations;" for allowing only one freedom - freedom of trade, as well as "uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions and everlasting uncertainty." In Hegel's spirit, Marx praises a lack of stability, that is, those conditions under which "all that is solid melts into air," and "all that is holy is profaned." And not

⁵¹ Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, op. cit., p. 39.

⁵² Karl Marx, *The Revolutions of 1948*, op. cit., p. 17

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

the least, he commends the bourgeoisie for "showing for the first time what man's activity can bring about."⁵⁵ This already appears as a mere reinstatement of the chief commandments of nihilism: 'everything is possible' and 'everything is permitted.'⁵⁶

Marx, as a knowledgeable 'bourgeois ideologue cut adrift', is well cognizant of the fact that the chief force that actualizes and makes revolutions is *money and credit*.⁵⁷ In this way, he entertains no illusions. Thus, he explains that the immediate cause of the revolution in Germany in 1848 was a problem of crediting.⁵⁸ Similarly, in 1848, a shortage of money and credit made possible the revolution in France,⁵⁹ as well as in Austria.⁶⁰ Marx stresses that the English and American bourgeois revolutions began with a refusal of supply-money as well.⁶¹ Consequently, for Marx, money and credit are the primary weapon of revolution.⁶² As a good Communist, he threatens the "counter-revolutionary" governments of Europe - with money:

If we assume that the counter-revolution lives throughout Europe through *weapons*, it will die throughout Europe through *money*. The fate that will annul the victory of the counter-revolution will be general European *bankruptcy*, the *bankruptcy of the state*. The points of bayonets will break

⁵⁵ Karl Marx, *The Revolutions of 1948*, op. cit., pp. 70-72.

⁵⁶ H. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, op. cit., p. 369. Arendt also supplies here the remaining part of the nihilistic law: 'everything is possible and nothing is true.' Consequently, the first part of the commandment cannot be true either, while, indeed, the truth is not "nothing." This, however, already lies beyond the framework of nihilistic discourse.

⁵⁷ In this regard, Marx seems to state with a certain self-satisfaction: "Money has no master", but masters cease to be masters once their money has run out." [Karl Marx, *The Revolutions of 1948*, op. cit., p. 190]

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 190.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 208.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 268.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 262. We may only add that also the Great French Revolution of 1789 began by the convocation of the three estates in order to rectify state finances.

⁶² Ibid., pp. 202-203.

like brittle firewood on the points of economics.⁶³

At the same time, Marx has actually very little to say on the revolutionary character of the proletariat beyond its impoverishment, uprootedness and quantity. It is however notable that, in disregard of his own theory, he was conversant with the fact and knew that proletariat had been "*artificially produced*."⁶⁴ In this sense, it is notable that the alienated worker is defined as an alien's worker.⁶⁵ Who is the alien? Marx himself. It may be safely deduced from the following passage belonging to Marx's "early writings" where "*the alien man*" and "*the non-worker*" are synonyms:

the *real, practical* attitude (as a state of mind) of the worker in production and to the product appears to the non-worker [the *alien man*] who confronts him as a *theoretical* attitude . . . [the alien non-worker] does everything against the worker which the latter does against himself, but he *does not do against himself what he does against the worker* [only the last italics are mine].⁶⁶

In this way, *appropriation* by the alien man appears as the *alienation* of the

⁶³ Karl Marx, *The Revolutions of 1948*, op. cit., p. 113.

⁶⁴ Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, op. cit., p. 58. In this light, it is also necessary to understand Marx's true, sincerely brutal and later obscured definition of capital as being nothing but the "power of command" over man. [Ibid., p. 85] Capital is rightly defined as 'stored up labour,' that is, *stored-up, warehoused man*. [Ibid., p. 85] The evident affinity of that concept of capital with Heidegger's concept of man as standing reserve cannot be coincidental. In the *Manifesto*, Marx states that capital as power of a war-like command over man that tries to hold a monopoly over the future is power of (social) egoism that is 'independent and has individuality.' [Karl Marx, *The Revolutions of 1948*, op. cit., p. 81] Moreover, capital, as well as Marxism, makes man his own enemy, dependent not on himself but on capital or Marxism so that man becomes his own 'alien and hostile force.' [Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, op. cit., p. 123] The deliberate making of the capitalist economy and the proletariat as a *political* act was proved convincingly by Karl Polanyi, apparently the greatest political economist of our century. [See Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957)]

⁶⁵ Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, op. cit., p. 130.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 134.

worker from himself and *alienation* of the alien man as *appropriation* of the worker.⁶⁷ In that Hegelian spirit, the essence of man (*qua* Marx) is "the quest for an *alien* being" which is but "an avowal" of man's death as the goal.⁶⁸ Alienation is Marx's god and his own essence, it is "*an inhuman power that rules over everything*."⁶⁹ Moreover, such a nihilist (Marx himself?), the German 'Ich' worships the omnipotence of alienation and:

regards the slave labour of others, human *blood and sweat*, as the prey of his cupidity, and who sees mankind and himself as a sacrificial and superfluous being. Thus he acquires a contempt for mankind, expressed in the form of arrogance and the squandering of resources ... He regards the realization of the *essential powers* of man only as the realization of his own disorderly life, his whims and his capricious, bizarre ideas.⁷⁰

Alienation (that is war) projected by Marx into a universal destiny and mode of being becomes an urge to liquidate the idea that something can be owned by *somebody else*: these are viewed as temporarily lost spoils that are to be expropriated from others defined to this effect as "nullities." Everything that exists is thus perceived as one's future possession.⁷¹ It is a program of defying egoism. Accordingly, Marx sees capitalism as *universal* prostitution where the bourgeois also "comes within" the category of prostitutes.⁷² Apparently, Marx's "universal prostitution" is also the final (Communist) apex of "private" appropriation.

In this way, Marx's Communist world view is also inherently bound by that crypto-bourgeois concept of private property exalted by Marx as "the *only* policy,

⁶⁷ Cf. Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, op. cit., p. 133.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 166-167.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 178.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 178. This may be well an attempt at a self-portrait by Marx himself.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 208-209.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 156.

the *only* universality, the *only* limit and the *only* bound," that is, as the sole universalizing medium whose totalitarian expansion, as prophesied by Marx, "is obliged to discard [all the remaining human-conditioned] hypocrisy and to show itself in all its cynicism [nihilism]."⁷³ In other words, Marx admits that the concept of such "private property" does contain *hypocrisy* whose truth (what it truly means) can be unveiled only in a moment when the underlying cynicism nihilism is accomplished and dominating enough to be shown naked. Consequently, both hypocrisy and its truth could be then "discarded." As demonstrated on the preparation of the political changes in Czechoslovakia (see particularly the second chapter), the nihilistic swindle provides some truth about what is or has been, but makes 'what is' into a lie by controlling and concealing "why." Truth and time are thereby enframed and removed by a lie or ignorance with regard to the future (as long as there is such a thing as the future) as if the false future would make anything in the Orwellian sense false as well.

The Communist Manifesto supplies further evidence that amounts almost to a self-confession of "the *bourgeois* ideologists, who have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movement as a whole [my italics]."⁷⁴ In other words, Marx is here declaring that he *knows the final destination of the (Hegelian) program of history*, and that this had *raised* him above those who do not know it.

In this regard, it may be worth asking whether Marx's appraisal of the

⁷³ Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, op. cit., p. 148.

⁷⁴ Karl Marx, *The Revolutions of 1948*, op. cit., p. 17. In *The Manifesto*, Marx does not see the cause of the economic crises in the lack of money supply or maldistribution, but in material overproduction or, even more simply, it is allegedly "because there is too much civilization." [Ibid., p. 73]

intentions ascribed to "the lower middle class" could not have a broader validity for other "bourgeois ideologists" as well: "[they] defend not their present, but their future interests, they desert their own standpoint to place themselves at the level of the proletariat."⁵⁵ Marx's Communist (or a bourgeois-ideologue-turned-Communist) was clearly begotten by Hegel's Absolute Spirit, who, after transforming itself into its "Communist" moment, "represented the interests of the movement as a whole"⁵⁶ because it had "over the great mass of the proletariat the advantage of clearly understanding the line of the march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement."⁵⁷ Evidently, Marx was confident that the proletariat was (to be) deprived of the "advantage" of "clearly understanding" where it was "pushed forward" by the alien avantgarde that alone ought to possess the concept and knowledge of "the ultimate general results" awaiting the workers at the end of their march.⁵⁸ Therefore, despite all the rhetoric of flattering the proletariat with their revolutionary and historical role, Marxism actually was always careful to adhere to its imperative that "the revolutionary consciousness could be instilled in the proletariat only from the outside."⁵⁹

Additional insightful evidence in this respect was supplied by Hannah Arendt, whose words that "[Marx's] loyalty and integrity in describing phenomena as they presented themselves to his view cannot be doubted"⁶⁰ are remarkable.⁶¹

⁵⁵ Karl Marx, *The Revolutions of 1948*, op. cit., p. 77.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 80. Marx as a true child of Hegel's spirit declared: "But practice is only the exception, while theory is the rule." [Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, op. cit., p. 27] In the same way, he was positive that "philosophy can only be realized by the abolition of the proletariat, and the proletariat can only be abolished by the realization [death] of philosophy." [*Ibid.*, p. 59]

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 79-80.

⁵⁹ Ferdinand Peroutka, *Demokraticky manifest*, op. cit., p. 34.

⁶⁰ H. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, op. cit., p. 105.

Arendt maintains that "Being and Appearance part company forever and this - as Marx once remarked - is indeed the basic assumption of all modern science."⁸² This schism between Being and Appearance is, therefore, also the "basic assumption" of Marxism itself. According to Arendt, from the very beginning there exists a "distinction between the doctrine for the initiated and propaganda for the outside world."⁸³ In this way, Marxism appears in Arendt's description as a sort of entertainment in hands of the ruling supernational elites.⁸⁴ Arendt further stresses this point by explaining that "mob leaders" of mass movements "*formulated and only reversed the bourgeoisie's own political philosophy [my italics]*" which, being "always 'totalitarian'," treats politics only as "the facade for private interests."⁸⁵ Consequently, if we use the Hegelian device of "the negation of negation," Marxism could appear as having accomplished its self-consciousness when it confesses its sin of being a false bourgeois consciousness of the working class, that is, a bourgeois world view turned on its head, but not losing thereby necessarily its essence.⁸⁶ In other words, as Arendt indicated, Marxism was "carefully organized ignorance" of the masses.⁸⁷ Quite logically then, Arendt sees "convinced" Communists as being "just ridiculous," while, however, admitting that this stupidity-ludicrousness of sincere or successfully deceived Communists can

⁸² However, Arendt's claim that Marx was "exclusively preoccupied with class struggle" and that he "utterly neglected political questions" belongs to a class of Arendt's statements that call for a certain caution. [H. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, op. cit., p. 34]

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 105., p. 275.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 334.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 325-326.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 329. In other place, Arendt asserts that the "not infrequent instances" of the "impregnation of the proletariat by the spirit of a son of a millionaire appears as a 'calculated' and 'not so far-fetched revenge upon the Christian peoples.'" [*Ibid.*, p. 77]

⁸⁷ Cf. Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, op. cit., pp. 210-211.

⁸⁸ H. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, op. cit., p. 244

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present a menace to their own Communist regimes.³⁸ Obviously, a swindle may be sustained only as a swindle, and too much seriousness would bring it a self destruction.³⁹

Finally, we learn from Arendt that totalitarianism *qua* total nihilism equals the bourgeois will minus hypocrisy, that is, the bourgeois will to power "untainted by concessions to Christian tradition," freed from "all social restraints" and "cleansed" from all human bounds.⁴⁰ Its goal is simple and straightforward, a Hobbesian "Victory of Death" that would "envelop the whole earth in its tyranny."⁴¹ It is (to be) a global "society of the dying," "world of living dead," "world of living corpses" or the "Empire of Death on the earth."⁴² It should be one global order with "one authority, one way of life, one ideology."⁴³ In such an order, the accountability of the rulers to the people should "lack that structure of consequence and responsibility."⁴⁴ This nihilism is about creating a new world where "doing good becomes utterly impossible."⁴⁵ The abyss of nihilistic falsity stretched between its rhetoric and essence thereby opens wide.

The nature of that veiled linkage between nihilism and Communism was already known to Fyodor Dostoyevsky. Thus, in Dostoyevsky's novel *The*

³⁸ H. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, op. cit., p. 428. In this light, modern totalitarian leaders are in principle mob leaders "whose moral standards and political devices so closely resembled those of the bourgeoisie," yet "the masses do not inherit, as the mob does - albeit in a perverted form - the standards and attitudes of the dominating class." [Ibid., p. 307]

³⁹ Coincidentally, this was also exactly the very tactic applied with such a devastating efficiency by the "good soldier" Svejik. He pretended to take the hypocrisy of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy too seriously, and, as a result, he destroyed its pretentious legitimacy. Svejik is the chief hero-archetype of Jaroslav Hasek's renowned novel *The Good Soldier Svejik*.

⁴⁰ H. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, op. cit., pp. 156, 190, 327.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 146.

⁴² Ibid., pp. 413, 416, 419, 422, 424, 427-428, 430, 433-434. On the strategy of the world conquest see also ibid., pp. viii, 28, 170, 340, 376, 378.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 429.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 418.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 424.

Possessed, the initiated leader, Verhovensky (that is, "The Supreme"), cannot help but unmask his identity to a candidate for a Dionysian nihilistic god in somewhat unpolished words: "I am a scoundrel, of course, and not a Socialist. Ha ha!"⁹⁶ Dostoyevsky neither doubted that the immediate goals of socialism-nihilism consisted in a complete overthrow of consciousness by the means of atheism and materialism and de-nationalization that, in turn, should pave the way for nihilating man and dehumanizing mankind for the sake of a global tyranny.⁹⁷ As Dostoyevsky pointed out, after mankind is thereby reduced to biology, it would "subsist only at the level of the controlled common consciousness," while "personality and humanity are relinquished to the ruler, who alone remains intact in the exercise of reason and freedom."⁹⁸

The para-bourgeois nature of Marxism is further traceable in a number of Marx's basic concepts. Marx postulated a concept of the state that can be separated from the politic body of people and thus turned into a private commodity for appropriation: "a state may be a *free state* without man himself being a *free man*."⁹⁹ Marx thereby tore apart Aristotle's definition of man as a political being apart into an existential schizophrenia: citizen (bearer of human togetherness) and man (egoist) are for him two different beings. He sides with the latter.¹⁰⁰

Similarly, according to Marx, "security is the supreme social concept of

⁹⁶ Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Possessed*, (New York: The Modern Library, 1963), p. 427.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 75, 235, 253, 274, 247, 393, 425.

⁹⁸ Ellis Sandoz, *Political Apocalypse: A Study of Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor*, (Louisiana: Louisiana University Press, 1971), p. 188.

⁹⁹ Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, op. cit., p. 11.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 24. The same view is expanded by Arendt who also complements it with concrete historical material and subordinates it to the notion of "the privilege to exploit and oppress." [Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, op. cit., p. 4 and further especially pp. 11-34]

*be everything.*¹⁶²

We have seen that Marx's doctrine, if critically examined, bears evident signs of bourgeois nihilism formally turned on its head, but nevertheless maintaining its nihilistic essence and fundamental goals that have really little to do with empowerment of the working people. This nihilistic tenet known as Marxism further appears as a systematic operationalization of Hegel and his imperative of death. In this way, it is both a vulgarization and (needed) massification *qua* political commercialization-commodification of Hegel that, to this effect, had necessarily to turn out as a swindle, thereby multiplying and materializing on a large scale the Hegelian notion-principle of falsity. It is fundamentally a form of radical and extreme egoism pursued with a deadly seriousness and practised as a (veiled) total war against all the non-ego's being. Its method is to induce or force the victim to cooperate in the implementation of its own self-annihilation. Its "universalism" is sharply biased by a distinct self-universalizing ego and profoundly shaped by a given Germanic ethos, which form its genesis, inner determinateness (essence) and direction. In this light, Marx can be seen rather as a war stratagem applied on a massive scale as a significant *part* of a larger scheme or nihilistic drive than a self-subsisting systemic totality.

Consequently, the formal death of Communism, as we knew it in Eastern Europe and Russia, in 1989-1991, might not be considered as the death of Marxism *qua* nihilism, but merely as an end of one transient stage in the making of the end of history *qua* the Universal and Homogeneous State. This indicates that the roots of Böhmisch nihilism and Marxism run much deeper and, apparently, are

¹⁶² Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, op. cit., p. 56. Marx's own emphases.

them with another designation-code which overhauls the old essence of the word, however, still veiled and hidden behind the former and parasitising on it.⁹⁹ Thus, 'emancipation' is not a liberation of man as a human being from bonds of injustice, as one might expect, but man's political death and his substitution by animal. It does not denote reaching a positive goal or achievement, but the annulment and abolishment of the "emancipated," its death.¹⁰⁰

It is also this Marx's attitude towards (the gift of) being and life, known in the nihilistic discourse known as the concept of 'the given' that further reveals Marx's ego-centredness and nihilism.¹⁰¹ It is egoism first and foremost. Consequently, we are here face to face with an *emperia* of unprecedented and extremely "consequential" egoism which, thus, rightly carries the name *absolute*. It is expressed in Karl Marx's pronouncement that "*equality* is nothing but the German 'Ich = Ich'".¹⁰² This epitomises an equation where egoism = egoism beyond which nothing else is allowed to exist.¹⁰³ Consequently, the existential mode of such *Ich-absolute* cannot be but an absolute war against all the *non-Ich*

⁹⁹ Cf. Eric Voegelin, "On Hegel - A Study in Sorcery," op. cit., pp. 337, 342-346.

¹⁰⁰ Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, op. cit., p. 51.

¹⁰¹ The concept of "given-being" denoting life and existence as that which is interior and should be despised and sentenced to annihilation, comes, of course, from Hegel. Kafka rendered the nihilistic concept of hated givenness in a way that basically conforms to Hegel's and Marx's way of hating: "I, who for the most part have been a dependent creature, have an infinite yearning for independence and freedom in all things. ... Every relationship that I don't create or conquer by myself, even though it be in part to my own detriment, is worthless, it hinders my walking, I hate it or am close to hating it." [Franz Kafka, *The Diaries of Franz Kafka*, 1914-1923, (New York: Schocken Books, 1949), pp. 166-167] Similarly, Kafka maintains that "I can't revolt against the law of nature [and thus against the parents] - and so hatred again and only hatred." [Ibid., p. 168]

¹⁰² Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, op. cit., p. 175. This equation-historical-imperative belongs to Hegel who thereby completed the famous Cartesian dictum. On this notion of Hegel's ego-circularity see G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, op. cit., pp. 489-490.

¹⁰³ Canetti's "difficult-to-resist suspicion" arrived at after a profound analysis of the phenomenon confirms to the stated: "It is difficult to resist the suspicion that behind paranoia, as behind all power, lies the same profound urge: the desire to get other men out of the way so as to be the only one; or, in the milder, and indeed often admitted, form, to get others to help him become the only one ..." [Canetti, *Crowds and Power*, op. cit., p. 462]

being. In the spirit of nihilism, Engels also confirmed that such a complete equality is "willing nothing" in the place of the others and of what is.¹¹⁴ As Sigmund Freud, a classic of Böhmisches nihilism, put it, egoism, love for oneself, knows only one barrier: the others, the 'objects'.¹¹⁵

Thus, it is a Hobbesian war of Hegelian *Ich* against all. Its radical expansion is the only way in which this egoism of the *Ich* is able to subsist. If war could be used in the past as a way for making, forming or liberating man as a political being, it degenerates in hands of the Absolute Ego into a tool of unmaking, deforming and controlling what is left of man. In this way, war is both politics and replaces politics. Thereby, if it was traditionally held that a man enters war in order to achieve peace and create, war enters a man to destroy him. In this regard, Marx sees God as a dangerous competitor (enemy) that may share in the property of his own ego. Marx therefore declares: "the more of himself man attributes to God the less he has left in himself."¹¹⁶ For Marx, being a "subject", that is, an ego, means striving to "be alone," where "alone" becomes all.¹¹⁷ Being objective means to have "a source of life outside oneself."¹¹⁸ For the Marxian subject, nothing should exist outside its own ego. All grace and givenness should be expropriated so that one would "owe his *existence* to oneself."¹¹⁹ In accordance with the creed of nihilism, Marx also defines such an existence of the ego as a

¹¹⁴ Frederick Engels, *Anti-Dühring (Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science)*, (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1976), p. 129.

¹¹⁵ Sigmund Freud, *A General Selection from the Works of Sigmund Freud*, edited by John Rickman, (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1957), p. 184.

¹¹⁶ Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, op. cit., p. 122.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 207.

¹¹⁸ Cited in Ellis Sandoz, *Political Apocalypse: A Study of Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor*, op. cit., p. 116.

¹¹⁹ Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, op. cit., p. 207.

"non-being" or death."¹²⁰

In this way, even a man's birth is seen as an unpleasant embarrassment from the standpoint of the Super-Ego and his absolute truth. Similarly, grace appears to a (Marxist) nihilist as disgrace. The gift of grace as life coming from man's beyond is resented and sacrificed in a world where everything, including man, should be merely made (out of nothing).¹²¹ Egoism is for Marx the all powerful explanation and key. In Marx's view, everything is reducible to the Hegelian opposition of *in itself* and *for itself*, that is, of egoism in itself and for itself. "all other contradictions and movements are merely the *appearance*, the *cloak*, the *exoteric* form of these two opposites."¹²²

"Selfish struggle" should lead to Communism.¹²³ In this way, the whole of human history is reinterpreted as an Hegelian process of a self-creation of egoism *qua a man qua a bourgeois*,¹²⁴ that should culminate in appropriating "all species-powers," that Marx defined earlier as *money*.¹²⁵ Marx also knew that

¹²⁰ Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, op. cit., p. 207.

¹²¹ Arendt operationalized the Hegelian ethos of "mere givenness" into a political and new ethical codex and prescriptions: "the more highly developed a civilization ... the more they will resent everything they have not produced, everything that is merely and mysteriously given to them." [H. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, op. cit. 296; see also *ibid.*, pp. 435, 437] This war with everything given ought to include man's own existence as a man. [*Ibid.*, p. 438] For Arendt, "the merely given" equals "a permanent threat to the public sphere." [*Ibid.*, pp. 296-297] The given is "the alien." [*Ibid.*, p. 297] At the same time, she is conscious of the fact that hatred of "everything [man] did not make himself" is "criminal." [*Ibid.*, p. 434] Admittedly, "the greatness" of ego-self-reproduction-madness is "crushing" and "without precedent." [*Ibid.*, p. 437] That globalist Super-Ego "resents the very fact that ... is not the creator of the universe and himself." [*Ibid.*, p. 438] Arendt also knows that resentment is "the psychological basis of contemporary nihilism." [*Ibid.*, p. 438] For Arendt, grace (of love) yet exists, but only as a private and "unpolitical" property. [See also Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, op. cit., p. 242]

¹²² Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, op. cit., pp. 200-201, also 204.

¹²³ Karel Marx, *The Revolutions of 1948*, op. cit., p. 16. In this regard, Marx considered selfishness as the basis of human existence and was demanding that it be universal and extreme, while denouncing what he saw as a "modest egoism" of German morality. [Karel Marx, *Early Writings*, op. cit., p. 56]

¹²⁴ Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, op. cit., p. 202.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 202-203 and 192.

accomplishment of egoism amounts to a deliberate establishment of "universal nullity."¹²⁶

Significantly, it was Marx, in translating Hegel's thought into an implementable war strategy, who sided with an Hegelian abstract concept of *civil society* against the concrete institution of *the state* and declared the spirit of *civil society* to be the Hobbesian *bellum omnium contra omnes*.¹²⁷ War becomes the spirit, and the spirit turns to be war. In Marx's rhetoric of nihilistic (un)concealment, man of civil society is presented as a "real being" but "an illusory phenomenon, that is, *how* he appears is false, while man partaking in the state (in political togetherness) is allegedly merely an imaginary being. These "appearances" (including the state) ought to be "rationalized," that is removed, in the "real" future of Marx.¹²⁸ Marx's concept of "real" boils down to egoism which is in a state of "permanent revolution" launched against the state.¹²⁹ In Marx's discourse, we therefore witness a transposition of the "real" private ego and its inflation into an abstraction called *civil society* that set out to realize itself by a death of the state and negation of political nations. In Marx's view, *only* when the real "individual man" [egoist] devours or "absorbs" the "abstract citizen," human emancipation will be complete. The egoist will become a "*species-being*" who will organize all powers of mankind as his own.¹³⁰

Marx stresses squarely in accordance with the discourse of nihilism that "social, and thus real," that is egoism, is actually "nonexistence" [death], that is,

¹²⁶ Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, op. cit., p. 205.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

'plunging from a fulfilled nothingness into absolute nothingness.'¹³¹ Consequently, if Communism is for Marx the culmination of history – and the same is claimed for 'nonexistence' – progressing to 'the absolute nothingness' as a final fulfilment of egoism, then Marx uses those terms as synonyms. Consequently, we are told that (Marxian) nothingness can *really* exist only as *abstracting*.¹³² Because nothingness cannot be what it is not, it can abstract nothing from itself. It can *abstract* only from being by tearing it apart and destroying it.

Accordingly, a closer scrutiny also shows that Marx's Communism coincides with a community of lust, envy and labour.¹³³ Indeed, very little, if anything, separates in principle the "crude" stage of his Communism from Hobbes' state of nature *qua* a state of all-out war where, "in the relationship with *woman*, as the prey and the handmaid of communal lust, is expressed the infinite degradation in which man exists for himself; for the secret of this relationship finds its *unequivocal*, incontestable, *plain* and revealed expression."¹³⁴ The victorious Communist regime would "emancipate" proletarians by extending their proletarian status to "all men" or to all "animals." *Simultaneously* with this reproletarianization and reanimalization of the world, private property would remain *the* relation ruling over that community and its links to "the world of things."¹³⁵ Consequently, such "Communism" will be hardly distinguishable from a capitalism "common" to all. Indeed, it is foreseen as nothing more than "a community of

¹³¹ Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, op. cit., p. 139.

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 200.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 153-154.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, op. cit., p. 154.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 153. Marx was initially open about the fact that his Communism equalled a suicide of the proletariat: in a revolution, as Marx saw it, the proletariat was to commit their *salto mortale* – a mortal leap. [See Karl Marx, *The Revolutions of 1948*, op. cit., p. 36]

work and of *equality of wages* paid out by the communal capital, by the *community* as universal capitalist."¹³⁶ Communism therefore equals "universal private [bourgeois] property."¹³⁷ Marx also sees it as a form of "camouflaged" universalism of bourgeois envy and lust:

[that] negates the *personality* of man in every sphere [and] is only the logical expression of private property, which is this negation. Universal *envy* setting itself up as a power is only a camouflaged form of cupidity which re-establishes itself and satisfies itself in a different way.¹³⁸

According to Marx, that "universal envy" will actually find in Communism its "culmination" while simultaneously "levelling down" man to "a *preconceived* minimum."¹³⁹ Therefore, as Marx put it, his Communist "Universal and Homogeneous State" is a world of "universal prostitution."¹⁴⁰ In this way, the proletarian revolution was to give "complete freedom to the social character of the means of production," that is, to a fully rationalized egoism of the Hegelian Ego beyond which, in Communism there should be "no extraneous forces."¹⁴¹ Egoism will be thereby completed by bringing about the death of human togetherness *qua* polity and the state that would thus "become superfluous."¹⁴² In this way, "the struggle for individual existence comes to an end."¹⁴³ The satiated will of such super-egoism will be the sole law.¹⁴⁴ Perhaps, not surprisingly then, Marx

¹³⁶ Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, op. cit., p. 154.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 152.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

¹⁴¹ See Frederick Engels, *Anti-Duhring*, op. cit., p. 367.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 369, 363.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 366.

¹⁴⁴ See *ibid.*, pp. 366-367.

redefines history *qua* progress as a way in which "man is regressing to the *cave dwelling*, but in an alienated – malignant form."¹⁴⁵ Or as Engels affirmed, "the brutish state of nature appears as the peak of human development."¹⁴⁶ In its essence, it is hardly more than a mighty simplicity covered by an elaborated system of terminological screens.

In a further phase of the project that is to follow upon the first stage of Communism *qua* universalized capitalism-prostitution, private property will be still preserved. However, the peoples will already be "liberated" from polity and the state. Marx, therefore, presupposes that man will be "liberated" from himself as a political being, while remaining alienable and commodifiable by private property, that is, completely defenceless vis-à-vis the universalized egotism of "the individual man." In this Communism, its subjects will "have well understood the concept, but not [yet] the essence."¹⁴⁷

The "essence", that is, the truth of Marxism, would be revealed only in the next, final and would-be eternal stage where man would gain or rather would be compelled to "freedom" – to be animal: "the animal becomes human and the human becomes animal."¹⁴⁸ In this way, the human is "emancipated" by being completely replaced by animal – social – natural – according to Marx's understanding of these terms.¹⁴⁹ Nietzsche's "eternal recurrence of the same"

¹⁴⁵ Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, op. cit., p. 177.

¹⁴⁶ Frederick Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, op. cit., p. 352.

¹⁴⁷ Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, op. cit., p. 155.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 125, 155.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 154-155. See also Karl Marx, *Economy, Class and Social Revolution*, ed. by Z.A. Jordan, (London: Michael Joseph, 1971), pp. 303-304. On a review of Nietzsche's notion according to which "there never was yet a natural humanity," and related Nietzsche's call for establishing man as beast see Leo Strauss, *Studies in Political Philosophy*, (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 189. Arendt, however, illuminated this point more clearly. As she stated, man can be dominated only as "the animal-species man." [Hannah Arendt,

thereby becomes what Marx calls a "complete radical return."¹⁵⁰ At this ultimate stage of the project, a man *qua* species being becomes the Creator who "produces man, himself and other men," that would leave nothing beyond or above that universal and absolute self-making.¹⁵¹ Grace, givenness, and independence would have to be completely erased from the mind of that Communist animal man.

Would this last stage be Communist? Perhaps not. As Marx put it, "Communism is the necessary form and the dynamic principle of the immediate future, but Communism is not itself the goal of *human* development—the form of *human* society [my italics]."¹⁵² Marx is, however, clear that it would result in "total emancipation" or "*total redemption of humanity*" that is immediately decoded as "a *total loss* of humanity."¹⁵³ This would be only in accordance with Marx's stipulation that it is "a great step forward" if one is capable to see the existence of *human beings* as "*indifferent* or indeed harmful."¹⁵⁴ Marx hereby merely confirms himself as "the alien being" who is doing against the other all that he does not do against himself. This apocalyptic fantasy is summarized by Marx as consisting in

The Origins of Totalitarianism, op. cit., p. 428] Similarly, Arendt also speaks of "enforcing 'the nihilistic generalizations which maintain plausibly enough that all men alike are beast [my italics]' [Ibid., p. 426] Consequently, man is for her "something highly unnatural." [Ibid., p. 426]

¹⁵⁰ Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, op. cit., p. 155.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 157, 206. For Arendt, "it is that from now on man is the only possible creator of his own laws and the only possible maker of his history." [H. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, op. cit., p. 437] However, Arendt admits that to face such man's "absoluteness" of man "only a *supreme calamity* could have forced us." [Ibid., p. 437] She concludes that "it is quite conceivable that one beautiful day a highly organized, mechanized, and centralized humanity may decide that it would be better for the whole to do without a certain part." [Ibid., pp. 437-438] "Modern man has come to resent everything given, even his own existence—to resent the very fact that he is not the creator of the universe and himself." [Ibid., p. 438] In this regard, Arendt calls for "the right *never* to be dependent upon some inborn *human dignity* [my italics]." [Ibid., p. 439] "Nonexistent" human dignity as humanness is in Arendt's view "the 'possibly most arrogant myth we have invented in all our long history.'" [Ibid., p. 439]

¹⁵² Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, op. cit., p. 167.

¹⁵³ Ibid., p. 58.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 138.

"taking from a man his own powers, and to give him in exchange alien powers."¹⁵⁵

If this destiny is selected for humanity, then, as Marx put it, "the suppression of self-estrangement follows the same course of self-estrangement," or, as I understand it, the establishment of evil follows the same course of evil.¹⁵⁶

The enemy is man who is seen by Marx evidently through bourgeois glasses: "the human being had to be reduced to his absolute poverty, in order to be able to give birth to all his inner wealth."¹⁵⁷ Marx further delineated the sub-project of *material and spiritual* misery into the three subsequent stages or kinds of progressive misery:

- 1) "a declining state of society" with "increasing misery of the worker" [the XIXth century?],
- 2) "complicated misery in a progressive state" [the XXth century?];
- 3) "the final state of stationary misery."¹⁵⁸

Marx, again negating the Marx, the Marxist-materialist, further outlined a step-by-step plan for disposing of man's previous ideas and way of thinking that he denigrated in other places as mere products of material production or as "prejudices."¹⁵⁹ It is essentially a sequential order of targets marked for annihilation that Marx outlines as follows: 1) criticism of religion, 2) criticism of law, 3) criticism of politics.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁵ Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, op. cit., p. 30.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 152.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 160.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 24.

¹⁵⁹ See, for example, Frederick Engels, *Anti-Duhring*, op. cit., p. 33.

¹⁶⁰ Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, op. cit., p. 44. Arendt defines the outline of progressive death of man as follows: 1) killing man as a juridical person; 2) murdering man as a moral person; 3) reproduction of "living corpses;" human death as sacrifice is then made futile because it becomes or is presented as "inefficient" by being barred from access to human (collective) memory ("no witnesses, no testimony"). [H. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, op. cit., pp. 422-424]

The succession of tactical steps in superseding spirals of war dialectics can be also followed along Marx's dialectical diagram whose summary appears as follows: *quality* — *quantity* — *measure* — *being* — *phenomenal being* — *actuality* — *concept* — *objectivity* — *absolute idea* — *nature* — *subjective spirit* — *ethical objective spirit* — *art* — *religion* — *absolute knowledge*.⁶¹ On the basis of our precedent findings, Marx's view of Hegel's dialectical progression could be also translated into a language of nihilistic *politics* because, as Hegel taught us, the rationality of this diagram — as well as the other — is also "real." The outline then appears as a scheme of organizational and spiritual equalizations-negations that could be interpreted in the following form: *quality qua political man* superseded equals *quantity qua civil society becoming masses becoming horde*, *quantity* superseded equals *measure qua will to power*, *measure* superseded equals *being qua organization*, *being* superseded equals *phenomenal being qua apparent organization*, *phenomenal being* superseded equals *actuality qua opinion*, *actuality* superseded equals the *concept qua nothing*, the *concept* superseded equals *objectivity qua alienated subjectivity*, *objectivity* superseded equals the *absolute idea qua death*, the *absolute idea* superseded equals *nature qua will-made*, *nature* superseded equals *subjective spirit qua superman*, *subjective spirit* superseded equals *ethical objective spirit qua universal private property*, *ethical spirit* superseded equals *art qua animalization*, *art* superseded equals *religion qua Dionysian man-god*, and *religion* superseded equals *absolute knowledge qua eternal empire of death*. The final destination is expressed in Marx's phrase revealing the final destination of his Germanic equality "Ich — Ich": "I am nothing and I should

⁶¹ Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, op. cit., p. 212.

be everything. ¹⁶²

We have seen that Marx's doctrine, if critically examined, bears evident signs of bourgeois nihilism formally turned on its head, but nevertheless maintaining its nihilistic essence and fundamental goals that have really little to do with empowerment of the working people. This nihilistic tenet known as Marxism further appears as a systematic operationalization of Hegel and his imperative of death. In this way, it is both a vulgarization and (needed) massification *qua* political commercialization-commodification of Hegel that, to this effect, had necessarily to turn out as a swindle, thereby multiplying and materializing on a large scale the Hegelian notion-principle of falsity. It is fundamentally a form of radical and extreme egoism pursued with a deadly seriousness and practised as a (veiled) total war against all the non-ego's being. Its method is to induce or force the victim to cooperate in the implementation of its own self-annihilation. Its "universalism" is sharply biased by a distinct self-universalizing ego and profoundly shaped by a given Germanic ethos, which form its genesis, inner determinateness (essence) and direction. In this light, Marx can be seen rather as a war stratagem applied on a massive scale as a significant *part* of a larger scheme or nihilistic drive than a self-subsisting systemic totality.

Consequently, the formal death of Communism, as we knew it in Eastern Europe and Russia, in 1989-1991, might not be considered as the death of Marxism *qua* nihilism, but merely as an end of one transient stage in the making of the end of history *qua* the Universal and Homogeneous State. This indicates that the roots of Böhmisches nihilism and Marxism run much deeper and, apparently, are

¹⁶² Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, op. cit., p. 56. Marx's own emphases.

also very concrete. Evidently, we are here dealing with a certain ethos archetype whose illumination requires a further inquiry into its underlying spiritual substance that also probably co-determine its phenomenal organization and structure. Man keeps on being by questioning death.

CHAPTER 6

THE SPIRIT AND BEING OF NIHILISM

6.1. The Nihilist: Slave of Death?

Here, we begin to question the spirit and being of nihilism as such. As Rio Preisner and T.G. Masaryk before him founded out, "a critique of Marxism [and we can add that of Böhmisches nihilism] is inconceivable without a critique of metaphysical rationalism and German idealism with Hegel as its head, not to mention the phenomenological and existentialist derivations of idealism."¹ In this regard, Preisner also realized that the Hegelian system, as well as all the various forms of similar philosophical and political programs based on the imperative of God's death-murder, are also negating Czech existence not only as the cultural dimension, but in its very being. Either Czech being overcomes the danger of nihilism or will fall to "the level of a mere ahistorical appearance," that is, out of being.² Vaclav Cerny, a first-class Czech thinker who has been after 1989 often misquoted and misused by the Böhmisches elite (Vaclav Havel, Milan Uhde and others), also rejected what he defined as "the Babylonian captivity of the Czech spirit by the Wallhal of Herders, later by Hegels, then perhaps by Husserls" wherein Czech being sinks into "Germanic fogs."³ According to Cerny, a nihilistic intellectual "will perhaps fight sincerely for the values of the Absolute ... but, in reality, he will be helping the Totality that is only the hypocrisy of the Absolute."⁴

If the ground of Bohemian (Czech) being is piety and positive faith, Hegel

¹ Rio Preisner, *Ceska existence*, (London: Edice Rozmluvy, 1984), p. 286.

² *Ibid.*, p. 7.

³ Vaclav Cerny, *Pameti*, (Toronto: Sixty-Eight Publishers, 1982), p. 87. Cerny's statement actually reconfirms Masaryk's precedent observations of the dependence of German philosophy on the cult and mysticism of death.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 447.

posits in a place of piety his (political) narcissism (termed as "recognition") and, accordingly, replaces God as the Absolute Being by nobody but himself. In this way, God becomes a Germanic man, Marxian *Ich*. It is far from certain that such a man is really a God, but the obvious result is that he ceases to be for others a human. Such a God is, however, not self-saturated or idle, but also tries to negate others as humans, "expanding [as much as possible], spreading through the whole domain of the reality given to man and in man."⁵

This Absoluteness-own-Deity-desiring ego thereby declares nothing less than that it has embarked upon cultivating his egoism as the new universal measure of things.⁶ In the case of Bohemia, this means not only Germanization, but also imposing, "expanding" and "spreading" all the properties of such a self-deifying concrete being, including all its complexes, symptoms, deficiencies and inner diseases. As long as this ego knows that as far as he is "a non-totality, he is not absolutely for himself."⁷ Thus, it is only death of others that is seen as the sole means for healing its God complex. To satisfy one's divine and exclusive vanity-hatred in a form of its "unsurpassable and unmodifiable totality," the ego invents, contrives and, where possible, pursues a total war of extermination.⁸

Retrospectively, history is then understandably seen only as the autobiography of that ego-God which Hegel set upon to record in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*. It can be summarized in a human language as a story wherein the man-God first becomes split and lost because he was a coward and

⁵ Alexander Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, op. cit., p. 82. The emphasis was made by Kojève himself.

⁶ Alexandre Kojève, "The Idea of Death in the Philosophy of Hegel," op. cit., p. 149. In other words, the measure is de facto the (total) success of death. [See, *ibid.*, p. 149]

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 150.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 117, 152.

weakling.⁹ This coward then goes through a dialectical progression of self-deceptions and deceits until he thereby reaches at the end of history the Absolute Wisdom, that is, he completes his self-diagnosis and self-consciousness, and is recognized as the Absolute Spirit.

In this way, Hegel also had to give account of what he had been, and of what he had held the mankind to have been. Significantly, it is essentially a history of a slave.¹⁰ Thus, for Hegel, the whole human history begins with enslavement, that is, with a duel between two egos fighting to death for being recognized by the other.¹¹ It quickly, however, turns out that the duel to death was not actually so deadly serious: both rivals survived, although both of them with two different deformations of consciousness. The falsity of this struggle for recognition would have been established at the very moment when one of the men would have fallen dead, thus losing their capacity to recognize anything. The surviving victor demanding a confirmation of the universal validity of his ego by the other man would not consequently become any "wiser" either. The wisdom and power of the newly born master is, therefore, conditional upon the opinion of the subjugated and

⁹ F. Dostoevsky, whose classic insight into nihilism is in many ways unsurpassable, noted with regard to the "house of the dead": "No woman in the world could have been as womanish as some of these murderers." [F. M. Dostoevsky, *Memoirs from the House of the Dead*, (New York & Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 14]

¹⁰ In this regard, Dostoevsky's nihilist from the "underground" confessed: "I was a coward and a slave and I thought it ... But I did not only think it, in actuality it was really so." [Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground & The Grand Inquisitor*, (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1960), p. 39]

¹¹ Hegel thereby reduced the Hobbesian war of all against all to a mere dyad and with (the subsequent multiplication of) this dyad he accounted for the whole ethos of the West. Franz Kafka attached to this Hegelian primordial duel his interpretation that is both true and more transparent than the Germanic language of Hegel: "The dead Don Quixote wants to kill the dead Don Quixote, however, he needs a place that is alive, and this he searches for with his sword [or pen]. Both ceaselessly and in vain. Engaged in this occupation the two dead men, inextricably interlocked and positively bounding with life, go somersaulting away down the ages." [Franz Kafka, *Dearest Father: stories and other writings*, op. cit., pp. 69-70]

crippled man, respectively upon his (external and internal) slavery. The outcome of the duel is decided in the favour of that combatant who can better and more efficiently deceive and *imitate* the size of his power and nature of intentions, and who can *seize the spirit* of his enemy and *wish* it as he likes. Thus, his will is also *the future* of his enemy. Who holds and knows the future, holds it all the time. He is a god.¹² Only the slave is allowed to undergo a development that becomes a prolonged treatment of his *cowardice* and *resentment*. As long as the slaves could still will differently than their master wanted them to will, these orders appear in the framework of Hegel's discourse as "abstract" and "false." The false consciousness of the slave and deficiency of the master brought about by the combat is the reason and engine of the subsequent progress of the Spirit and also makes possible an account for the necessity of Hegel as a thinker. Clearly, if the duel ended up with one or both of the rivals dead, there would have been no history of the West and no place for Hegel's Absolute Wisdom. Thus, the initial clash of two Egos, resembling the Biblical Adam who, being here multiplied or, better, divided into two, had to be imperfect in order to create a space for the subsequent perfection of that deadly strife *qua* death of humanity.

Hegel's world history is thereby inherently tied with the dynamics of cowardice (not justice) and comes to an end with its consummation as a negation of the negation (denial of denial). At the end of the historical process, the coward is finally free from his deficiency by avenging himself on the rest of humanity and having his spirit redeemed and recognized as the Supreme and Absolute. Under

¹² Cf. Leo Strauss, *Studies in Political Philosophy*, (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 237.

that rule, the slaves can only "desire the desire" and "will the will" of the Über-Ego.¹³

After a painstaking and whirling journey, Hegel's spirit finally reaches its final destination in a form its revealed absolute truth. The reward is an ultimate revelation, which confirms our growing suspicion: the slave and the master had been all the time the same person, and the Hegelian Ego had fought nobody but itself! The mystery of the Hegelian dyad is unveiled.¹⁴

This unification of a split personality also explains why the slave after his initial defeat marks with the initial sin of the fear of death (cowardice) all subsequent "generations" of slaves so that, in Hegel's interpretation, no slaves were later capable of rebellion. The only independent activity they pursued was thinking up and improving self-justification of their cowardice and suppressed egoism.

Several things should be stressed in this regard. Importantly, the Hegelian slave, who is the dominant part of the Ego, is unable to fight in an open and direct way.¹⁵ Its chief tactic is *cunning*. (Internal) circumvention (Heidegger's "enframing") is used as a form of conquest.¹⁶ Being weak, it fights by the way of

¹³ G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, op. cit., pp. 111-118. See also Alexander Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, op. cit., especially the first four chapters; as well as Tom Darby *The Feast*, op. cit., pp. 95-107.

¹⁴ As Sandoz stressed, Dostoyevsky's Grand Inquisitor, Hegel's literal twin, wants to have mankind as his "accomplices" and witnesses that would reassure him that he is "a cosmic necessity," that is, the apex of human freedom and its norm. [Ellis Sandoz, *Political Apocalypse: A Study of Dostoyevsky's Grand Inquisitor*, op. cit., p. 158]

¹⁵ In this regard, Kafka's comments are again revealing: "There are two kinds of fighting. There is chivalrous fighting, in which the forces of independent opponents are measured against each other, each one remaining alone, losing alone, winning alone. And there is the fighting of vermin, which not only sting but at the same time suck the blood too to sustain their own life. That is, after all, what the professional soldier really is, and that is what you [meaning his tyrannical father] are. You are unfit for life." [Franz Kafka, *Dearest Father: stories and other writings*, (New York: Schocken Books, . 1954), p. 195]

¹⁶ See, B. Chapman, *Police State*, op. cit., p. 75.

others' weakness. In its death wish, it needs to be shielded — by private language, ideology, technology, money or hirelings. Consequently, it has to be somebody or something else who is fighting for the ego's sake. Efficiency of that form of combat increases proportionally to the incapacity to think and act on the part of others. The misery of that self-conscious nihilist is also his secret. Moreover, the slave of death is not merely dead for himself and others as a human being, he is also innately involved in the death or murder of God.¹⁷

6.2. Nihilism: The Murder of God

The Hegelian ethos of an existential curse, where only the weaker side remains vital and, in its oneness torn out of measure and harmony, is bound to negate God, has its important predecessor in the Old Testament. It is the also-history-making story of Jacob:

So Jacob was left alone, and a *man* wrestled with him there till daybreak. When *the man* saw that he could not throw Jacob, he struck him in the hollow of his thigh, so that Jacob's hip was *dislocated* as they wrestled. The man said, '*Let me go, for day is breaking*', but Jacob replied, 'I will not let you unless you bless me.' ... The man said, 'Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel [God strove], because *you strove with God* and

¹⁷ In this regard F. Dostoyevsky stressed: "Any man who has once tasted this dominion, this unlimited power, over the body, blood, and spirit of a human creature like himself ..., any man who has tasted this power, this boundless opportunity to humiliate with the deepest degradation another being made in the image of God, becomes despite himself *the servant* instead of the master of his own emotions. Tyranny is a habit; it has the capacity to develop and it does develop, in the end, into a disease. I maintain that the best of men may become coarsened and degraded, by force of habit, to the level of a beast. Blood and power are intoxicants; callousness and perversity develop and grow; the greatest perversions become acceptable and finally sweet to the mind and heart. The man and the citizen perish eternally in the tyrant, and a return to human dignity, to remorse and regeneration, becomes almost completely impossible to him. Besides this, example and the possibility of such an arbitrary power act like a contagion on the whole of society; such despotism is a temptation. A society which contemplates such manifestations calmly is already corrupted at its roots." [F. M. Dostoevsky, *Memoirs from the House of the Dead*, op. cit., pp. 236-237] Italics added.

with men, and *prevailed* [my italics]."¹⁸

The essence of this account carries a charge strikingly resembling a heresy. Jacob was fighting a "God," who feared daylight, and then received from this man-like would-be-God an assurance that he *prevailed* over God. However, considering the experience of Hegel's spirit, the duel of Jacob may also be interpreted in a more mundane and quite meaningful way - that Jacob, like his much later impersonalisation in the personality of Hegel, struggled not with God but actually with himself. Hegel was able at the end of his journey to re-establish the impaired unity of his identity, although in a form of the identity of being with non-being. Because Jacob believed that he defeated God, we are forced to conclude that Jacob, in his own view, had to become a God himself. In the same way, as Hegel's Spirit, Jacob was facing only one problem - to make anybody else *recognize* this fact.

Freud's account seems to support the validity of that observation. For Freud, *the* beginning of collective identification and history is "the primordial murder of the father [God]."¹⁹ This God had been "the ideal of each one of them, at once feared and honoured" until he was "cut to pieces."²⁰ Freud also unveiled the necessity of the subsequent disguise-coverup of this primordial and then apparently repeated murder of God:

It was then, perhaps, that some individual, in the exigency of his longing,

¹⁸ Genesis, 32:24-32.

¹⁹ Sigmund Freud, *A General Selection from the Works of Sigmund Freud*, edited by John Rickman. (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1957), p. 203.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 203.

may have been moved to free himself from the group and take over the father's [God's] part ... [the hero] *disguised the truth with lies* in accordance with his longing ... The hero was a man who still appeared in the myth as a totemistic monster ... The transition to the hero was probably afforded by the youngest son, the mother's favourite, whom she had protected from paternal jealousy, and who, in the era of the primal horde, had been the father's successor ... the woman, who had been the prize of battle and the allurements to murder, was probably turned into the seducer and instigator to the crime ... The lie of the heroic myth culminates in the deification of the hero. Perhaps the deified hero may have been *earlier* than the Father God ... [my italics]²¹

It may be noted that Freud's "hero" has with Jacob conspicuously so many features in common that one cannot but think that they might be essentially the same person. Important is also Freud's stress on the womanish character or the lack of the virtue of manliness on the part of the patricidal murderer. Freud also made a claim that "although claimed as the hero's personal deed, the murder was a collective act."²² The hero's tactics is also of significance. The hero used his own weakness as his chief weapon: "[the hero] represented himself to the father surrogate as being stupid, that is to say, harmless."²³

In this light, the ethos of the Old Testament would have to be also reconsidered from the point of view of the suspected murder of God. In this way, the Bible could be also seen as the probably most original genesis of nihilism and the (later apocalyptic) struggle with its evil. The well-known conversation of Eve with the snake in Paradise unveils Eve's desire *to be (like) God*. How? By discovering the know-how of evil that would separate itself from God's creation because until then "God saw that it was very good."²⁴ This turns to be man's

²¹ Sigmund Freud, *A General Selection from the Works of Sigmund Freud*, op. cit., pp. 203-204.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 203.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 204.

²⁴ Cf. Genesis 1:13, 18, 31 and Genesis 3:4-6.

denying or forgetting God. In this way, the fall would be not so much an expulsion as man's own run-away from God (or from the place of the murder). Inevitably, this also equalled to man's flight from himself - a desperate run until the Hegelian end of history. God's simultaneous questioning 'Where are you?' also confirms that man's murder of God made man lost himself.²⁵ Where can man, who fled from God and himself, be? Today, we know Hegel's right answer: his abode is nothingness (a being without the God) that condemns man to slavery, existential weakness, and to death. Man as a God's substitute (the snake) "shall crawl, and dust [he] shall eat."²⁶ This nothingness is where man = death. Moreover, the abode of the false man-god is ordered to be in the underground or underworld: "They shall strike at your head, and you shall strike at their heel."²⁷

The Testament thus denotes a man, who has desired to displace God and be God himself, as an Achilles' heel of mankind. In fact, the man-god thereby appears as the devil. At the same time, the self-deified man is, however, identified with stuff that never holds firmly together on its own: "Dust you are to dust shall you return."²⁸ In this regard, the question posed in Genesis 'Who and from whom turns away?' is crucial. It is about turning the order of things upside down and inside out. It is a loss of the holy wholeness of being. It was apparently a man-wishing-to-be-like-God who was "tempted to contemplate [this kind of death]," as Eve did. Importantly, that turning away from God (his murder) was also symbolized as the devouring of the speech of original humanness (the forbidden

²⁵ Genesis, 3:10.

²⁶ Genesis, 3:15.

²⁷ Genesis, 3:15.

²⁸ Genesis, 3:19.

fruit) that did not separate good from God.²⁹

The story of Babel, that, coincidentally, also frequently reappears as part of contemporary nihilistic imagery, could provide further important indications in this regard. In particular, it may be assumed that language itself was to be inseparably tied to religion and an understanding of God. In this way, language was a medium of Being and its togetherness between God and man. Since the story of Babel maintains that mankind (or a significant part of it) had "once upon a time" one language, it would seem to suggest that this commonality of language also probably corresponded not merely to one people, but also to one shared basic faith.

Wilderness, as we learn, however, prevailed over "building the city."³⁰ The story of Babel would be then another account of the existential separation, dispersion and segregation from the original religion-ethos and apparently also from the (common) God. Such a comprehension would also be in accordance with Hegel's extolment of *separation*, that is, including that of man from God, as man's supreme power. An elevation of a patriarch of one tribe as God, being atheism in disguise, could hardly be maintained within the framework of one language and traditional faith. Notably, as Machiavelli, the father of modernity, already observed, changes of a language can be compared to floods with regard to their power to destroy human memories, continuity and previous forms of togetherness of being.³¹ The puzzling and self-contradictory resentment, despotism, vanity and meanness of the figure of the Divine Father appearing in different places in the

²⁹ Genesis, 3:6.

³⁰ Genesis, 11:9.

³¹ On the significance of Machiavelli's conclusion with regard to the discourse of nihilism, see Leo Strauss, *Studies in Political Philosophy*, op. cit., pp. 225-228.

Old Testament may also be sought in this direction of self-deification

The death of God and nihilism have been usually seen as a relatively modern invention whose roots could be sought in the XVIIth century (Descartes and Hobbes). Our inquiry would, however, indicate that the death of God did not occur at the end of history, but rather already at its very beginning, coinciding with the fall of man. This patricide was then gradually expanded and reproduced in the course of the history of the West. God's murder could be thus a secret of the Old Testament. However, it is obviously only at the end of history when the story of this secret could be revealed to a moribund mankind whose last task is to recognize it together with their own demise. In this regard, the riddle of the "devil" seems to be man's own affair, and the apocalyptic confrontation between god and evil becomes a man's deadly fight between man *qua human* and man *qua man-god*, where the devil is a man who posits himself as a God and thinks himself to become one when he achieves one thing - other men's recognition of his Deity.

Nietzsche's great opus supplies powerful evidence in this regard, already indicating the achieved or soon-to-be-achieved consummation of the power-desire and absolute self-deification of that egoism of a man, the "murder" of God. Nietzsche's writings can be actually seen as a monumental, titanic attempt to expose *and* justify, as well as to romanticise such self-deifying atheism of the "priests" and their struggle with own slavishness. In this way, Leo Strauss also understood the meaning of Nietzsche's aphorism 51 in *Beyond Good and Evil* as saying "there are no saints, no holy men in the Old Testament."¹² In fact, Nietzsche himself pointed out there that all these prophets represented only one

¹² Leo Strauss, *Studies in Political Philosophy*, op. cit., p. 179.

thing - their will to power."³³ Similarly, Strauss affirmed that Nietzsche, in the immediately following aphorism on the Old Testament, commended the greatness of the Old Testament for its (well concealed) atheism that created the holy God after its likeness as an embodiment and product of its will to power.³⁴ It can be added that Nietzsche was praising there the Old Testament for restraining God's grace selectively according to the imperatives of an "order of rank" and power of a concrete man.³⁵

To this effect, Nietzsche apparently tried to inspire a new "cheerfulness" of brute and mean egoism thought as a new Dionysian religion of an Overman. Thus, his "gay science" or "Joyful Sophia" full of resentment, hatred and sickness set out to desensitize man and prepare him for his own defeat and death. Nietzsche says that God had already been dead for centuries, perhaps, for *thousands* of years while mankind continues to live in a Platonic cave where his shadow is still shown to ordinary, uninitiated people. But a moment is promised when even that shadow (picture-screen) will be vanquished. Until then mankind is merely entertained in its prison-cave by its (future) unseen masters: hence politics as *entertainment*.³⁶

At the same time, Nietzsche, however, also stresses that the murder of God had to be undertaken several times inasmuch as man kept on living.³⁷ In several

³³ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, translated by Walter Kaufmann, op. cit., p. 65.

³⁴ Leo Strauss, *Studies in Political Philosophy*, op. cit., p. 179.

³⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, op. cit., pp. 65-66.

³⁶ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, translated by Walter Kaufmann, (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), p. 167 (aphorism 108). On the concept of politics as entertainment, its lack of *seriousness* and its close relation to the end of history see a "hidden" polemic between Carl Schmitt and Leo Strauss in Heinrich Meier, *Carl Schmitt and Leo Strauss: the hidden dialogue*, (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1995).

³⁷ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, op. cit., p. 321 fn.

places. Nietzsche states that the murder of God is a whole historical process that mankind needed for being ready to accept its own death. Necessarily, the religion of the man-God is morbid, death-bound: the churches, as well as men are prisons of death, the "tombs."³⁸ In addition, murdering God equals "unchaining" the earth from heaven and light (truth).³⁹

Nietzsche further proclaims the death of God to be a collective murder. The whole mankind is listed as alleged accomplices.⁴⁰ Why? Perhaps, because Nietzsche perceived the power of nihilism as *de facto* absolute (already postulated by Hegel) and thus absolutely defining everybody in the image of the Super-Ego, the God's murder. And guilt is a bondage. Sentencing mankind to this collective guilt would imply a collective suicide of mankind. The guilt of men is also necessary for relinquishing their powers to a man who is either sufficiently bold or arrogant to occupy the place of God - it should be a man *qua all earthly space*. Other men *qua time* are to be negated by then so that no human time could intervene in the hegemonic space of the Super-Ego whose sign is *death*. This space (the Universal and Homogeneous State) should lack history for the sake of its own security. The centre of gravity of that ascendance of a man to be worshipped as God is reserved for Europe (whose centre is coincidentally Germany or Bohemia).⁴¹ Nietzsche believes that "*their* sea" of death already lies open - as never yet before.⁴²

Finally, we may learn from Nietzsche's "graffiti" (probably thought as

³⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, op. cit., p. 182.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 181.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 181 (aphorism 125).

⁴¹ Ibid., op. cit., pp. 279-280 (aphorism 343). The same is confirmed by Heidegger. [See Martin Heidegger, "Only a God Can Save Us," op. cit., p. 113]

⁴² Ibid., op. cit., p. 280.

one's epitaph) that Nietzsche also belonged to those who took seriously their divinity: "'God is dead.' Nietzsche. 'Nietzsche is dead.' God."⁴³ Evidently, a self-conscious nihilist believes that he can fully and really live only after his *death*, being unable to be in agreement with a human life: hence the ambiguity of terms in the rhetoric of nihilism. The said also reveals atheism as unbelief in God to be either a form of hypocrisy or naivety - unless one knows who occupies the place of God, and can "recognize" it.

The notion of man-father-God also appears to be the key to Marx's article "On the Jewish Question" where Marx again overcomes Marx, the Marxist. The question of a man-father to be recognized (for example, by the means of money) as God is defined by Marx as "*the general question of the age*."⁴⁴ The basis of the new world religion of man-God is profane egoism.⁴⁵ This god of "*practical need and self-interest*" is "the jealous god ... beside which no other god may exist" because "money abases all the gods of mankind and changes them into commodities."⁴⁶

According to Marx, "human emancipation will be only complete when the *real, individual man has absorbed into himself* the abstract citizen [my italics] ... [and] has become a *species-being* [mankind]."⁴⁷ To this effect, that man-God has to "recognize and organize his own powers (*forces propres*)" as truly egoistic (for himself) so that politics (the realm of togetherness) is no longer separable from his *ego propre*.⁴⁸ Marx knows that this requires "a reduction of man" and "an

⁴³ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, p. 321 fn.

⁴⁴ Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, op. cit., p. 7.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 36.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 37.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 37.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 37.

emancipation of civil society from politics."⁴⁹ That enthronement of man-God *qua* global tyrant establishes egoism in a place of all human bonds and "dissolves the human world into a world of atomistic, antagonistic individuals."⁵⁰

Leo Strauss's political philosophy, as expounded particularly in his final, posthumously published works on Plato (that is, he preferred Plato to Socrates), is worth noting in this regard. Strauss's texts are distinguished by a strong dose of subtle and sophisticated cautiousness, under a closer scrutiny they nevertheless disclose their 'uncanny guest' of nihilism. Strauss himself traces this ethos of his back to a patriarchal atheism contained in the Old Testament. The earth, as Strauss proposes, was created before God; the earth is more important than heaven (that is, implicitly more important than God); heaven is lower than earth; vegetation is more essential than the sun and probably was not created by God; "heavenly light-giver" is dead, it is "lower than the lowliest living beast" and "serves the living creatures, which are to be found only beneath heaven;" the heavenly being was "not made to rule over the earth, *let alone over man* [my italics]; man is "the peak of creation" who can "alone change his 'ways';" it was apparently a collective body of "gods" who have been creating man in their image, after their likeness.⁵¹ The God of the Old Testament is a truly jealous father who leaves no room for any femineity beside *Him*: "hence creation is not begetting [life-giving]."⁵² It can be assumed that somebody or something else should take care of begetting if this is not part of the "making" by this Straussian Deity. Strauss further stresses: "on the

⁴⁹ Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, op. cit., pp. 29, 31.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39.

⁵¹ Leo Strauss, *Studies in Political Philosophy*, op. cit., pp. 152-153.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 153.

basis of the biblical account of creation one could doubt whether He created any beings ..."⁵³ For Strauss, evil is a distinct property of man and, consequently, "the mysteries of God are the contradictions regarding God."⁵⁴

According to Strauss, knowledge of good and evil itself provides what is "sufficient" for man to guide himself (without God).⁵⁵ Strauss accuses having the faith in God as infantilism, allegedly revealed so by the very Bible: while being with God, man, as Strauss put it, "not being a child he [man] was to live in a child-like simplicity and obedience to God."⁵⁶ In Strauss's view, the God of Genesis himself believes that man was *alone* (that is, the man of Genesis was not in companionship with God, or that he was alone because he was God). Thus, a woman was created from an (impotent) man, essentially as a merely temporarily separated part of his own ego.⁵⁷ This man's loneliness apparently from God was "not good," thus, quite probably it was evil itself. Strauss further claims that the woman "surely knew the divine prohibition *only* through human tradition [that is, apparently only from her boss, Adam]."⁵⁸ We are free to assume that Strauss suggests that Eve sinned only against that "human tradition" being her commandment, that is, against Adam (*her* God). It appears that Eve's sin might be reduced to the seduction of Adam. Eve's transgression broke Adam's self-sufficiency and created for his egoism a radically new problem in face of his children that were to survive him. The discovery of begetting and, thus, death-overcoming life of humanity may indeed be a fulfilment of the snake's promise of

⁵³ Leo Strauss, *Studies in Political Philosophy*, op. cit., p. 154.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

⁵⁷ See, *ibid.*, p. 155.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

gaining immunity from death. Moreover, man (Eve), by a seduction, became "like one of us [gods], knowing good and evil."⁵⁹ Definitely, Adam's tree of choice was not the tree of life. He could eat from it, but he did not.⁶⁰

History as a process of struggling with that "alienation" of life from the self-sufficient frame of the ego has begun. Hence the "inheritance" of original sin. It is indeed curious and astonishing how much tenacity and cunning has been put up by that nihilistic egoism in its radical hatred and resistance vis-à-vis humanity, its civilization and culture.

As Strauss further notes, "the account of the race of Cain culminates in the song of Lamech who boasted to his wives ... of his being superior to God as an avenger ... Civilization and piety are two different things."⁶¹ God's covenant with Abraham is interpreted as God's obligation that "well-nigh universal wickedness will no longer be punished with well-nigh universal destruction;" the containment of wickedness is merely relegated to a problem of the division of mankind.⁶² Hence, a probable belief in immunity to judgment and punishment. Abraham's God also restrains his freedom of will and choice and bounds himself eternally to the chosenness to one given entity. It appears that he becomes *de facto* a subject-servant of Abraham who "had acted as if he had some share in the responsibility for God's acting righteously."⁶³ This God is strictly elitist and exclusive because "what is known of Him is only what He chose to communicate by His word

⁵⁹ See Leo Strauss, *Studies in Political Philosophy*, op. cit., op. cit., p. 157.

⁶⁰ See, *ibid.*, p. 157.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 160.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, op. cit., p. 161.

through His chosen servants."⁶⁴ It also presupposes that apart from a few initiated, the rest *do not wish* to know God's word immediately.⁶⁵

On the basis of his analysis of Nietzsche, Strauss also points out that the planetary rule of the overman will be guided "invisibly by the philosophers," the [atheist] priests of the future, and will be exercised from a united Europe (with a probable centre of gravity in Germany?). Apparently, the overman is a god, and the god is a tyrant.⁶⁶ He is the Law who leaves no room for other "cultures."⁶⁷ Straussian "philosophers of the future" are apparently also the neo-Platonic or Heideggerian gods who are to return as the new elite of mankind from their underworld.⁶⁸ Strauss also implies that the "victors of the world history" should be former "enemies of God" transformed into his "friends." Their dominance then arises as a kind of necessity, although it requires to cultivate "the art of war and conquest" and to dispense with the expectation of God's own miracle.⁶⁹ It will be an "unprecedented iron age."⁷⁰ Freedom is "destined to perish" and will coincide with "the annihilation of the human race."⁷¹ It will be (is) an age of the total rule of an atheistic religion that ought to be "the adoration of the Nothing."⁷² This Nothing is also defined as (peoples') stupidity.⁷³ But "divinizing the Nothing" needs "a long preparation."⁷⁴

⁶⁴ Leo Strauss, *Studies in Political Philosophy*, op. cit., p. 162.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 163.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 224. Strauss also stresses a relatedness of Machiavelli's notion to the Old Testament.

⁶⁷ Cf. ibid., p. 244.

⁶⁸ See ibid., p. 33.

⁶⁹ Ibid., pp. 204, 207. Strauss also concludes that "there cannot be a great nation comprising all nations." [Ibid., p. 209; cf. ibid., pp. 241-242]

⁷⁰ Ibid., pp. 32-33.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 180. Strauss here explicitly refers to Engels.

⁷² Ibid., p. 180. With regard to atheism compare also ibid., pp. 206-207, 209.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 181.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 181.

It is also Strauss' understanding that "in Hades there is not the distinction between the laws and the rulers (those who execute the laws)," consequently, "in Hades, the miscarriage of justice is not possible," evidently because there is no *justice* in our sense - all there is is only the will of the rulers who are one with their Nietzschean will to death.⁷⁵ Here, we can quite safely venture to say that the Universal and Homogeneous State is nothing but exactly such a sort of Hades built on earth. Referring to the Bible, Strauss reduces wisdom to fear - fear of the Father and, thus, to man's alienation from God.⁷⁶ Equality lies in "the power of killing [murdering] others."⁷⁷ That understanding of death's omnipotence delivered by a man leaves no "spare" place for God. Crimes are moral if they "pass the test of being universalized [recognized], *i.e.* of being possible principles of universal legislation."⁷⁸

Strauss also gives us a clue to the question why the radical atheism requires not only the death of God, but also of man (who is free to think and, thus, to distinguish good and evil). Interpreting the motives of the Athenian elite to execute Socrates, Strauss explains: "They expect by killing [Socrates] to get rid of the necessity to give an account of how they live."⁷⁹ This is one of the briefest and most straightforward admittance of the innate linkage between atheism and human death. It has to exclude Socratic questions from the open market and the public to enable private terror. Silence (lack of speech) leaves man defenceless.⁸⁰ It is an

⁷⁵ See Leo Strauss, *Studies in Political Philosophy*, op. cit., p. 65.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 145-146. The said inevitably comes out from Strauss's interpretation of Kant's idea.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

⁸⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 86.

Apocalypse abstracted from the Judgement.

That wisdom of being oneself and absolute, however, needs a minor cosm(et)ic operation for its certain completion - to remove the interference of any being-above-the-ego in the process of this self-diagnosis. All other men, initially being merely a more or less disinterested, non-aligned audience during the fatal struggle fought by Hegel with himself, had to be gradually drawn into the Leviathan of his Ego as unconscious actors and accomplices. All other men are to share in and succumb to that universality sickness. Subjection to nihilism transforms men as potentially objecting *objects* into *subjects* whose separate identities had *gone under* and vanished in Hegel's tyrannical Super-Ego (the Heideggerian *Subiect-um*).

6.3. Tyrannical Father, Internal Slave, Nihilistic God

This trans-historical ethos of God's murder, death and slavery found its powerful articulation in Kafka's opus, especially in his "Letter to His Father" (Dearest Father) that unveils and exposes the nature of the man-god, the Dionysian deity of nihilism.⁸¹ In particular, nihilism is the most radical and self-conscious form of atheism, is a creed based on a premise that there is an individual who believes that he should be a God even if it meant the end of mankind.⁸² To this

⁸¹ How much determinative for Kafka was that absolutism of his Father is apparent from Kafka's painful acknowledgement: "My writing was all about you." [Franz Kafka, *Dearest Father: stories and other writings*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1954), p. 177]

⁸² In this light, nihilism is but a logical and ultimate consummation of atheism where a radical and self-conscious nihilist is bound to arrive. As Dostoyevsky's nihilist put it: "If there is no God, then I am God." From this "self-redeeming" creed of nihilistic egoism, follows another fatally inevitable conclusion made by nihilism: to prove one's absolute self-will one must commit either a suicide or massive murder, it is death that is to determine and confirm the deity of nihilist. Death is seen as the all-powerful means for imposing the absolute possessiveness of the Ego over the world. [Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Possessed*, op. cit., p. 627] Dostoyevsky then proceeds to

effect, nihilism works on the realization of this axiom, preparing and clearing the way for nihilistic Führers *qua* Gods.⁸³

It was Sigmund Freud who first revealed that Nietzsche's Overman, that is to be expected at end of history, is anything other than that "dreaded primal father" turned into a mass ideal for mankind. Such a man who fails as a human, but aspires to be a God, would enforce and then "fulfil" wishes of the masses "to be governed by unrestricted force." This ultimate slavery and breeding men as animals is to embody "an extreme passion for authority" and universal "thirst for obedience."⁸⁴ In other words, it would amount to be a collective descendance of mankind into Marx's apocalyptic imperative *Ich = Ich*. This, if taken seriously, as nihilism wants to do, means in Kafka's words, "shutting oneself off from everyone to the point of insensibility" and "making an enemy of everyone."⁸⁵ To this effect, *Ich = Ich = All* also means that this tautological nothingness of self-absolutizing *Ich* declares anything else as "worthless."⁸⁶ This *Ich*, a tyrannical father who fails to be a true father, declares to be "the measure of all things" and holds any law as

unconceal this key tenet of nihilism still further in the form of a nihilist's own confession: "I can't understand how an atheist could know that there is no God and not kill himself on the spot. To recognize that there is no God and not to recognize at the same instant that one is God oneself is an absurdity else one would certainly kill oneself Now I am only a god against my will and I am unhappy, because I am *bound* to assert my will. All are unhappy because all are afraid to express their will [to be God] ... I am killing myself to prove my independence and my new terrible freedom." [Ibid. pp. 629-630] In a sense, this is also confirmed by A. Kojève who said that "to take nihilism seriously is to commit suicide." Immediately, Kojève, however, questioned the seriousness or sincerity of Hegel by asserting and, thus, also justifying the necessity of Hegel's Absolute Spirit that for Hegel "only the Nihilist who *remains alive* is interesting," that is, it is the Nihilist who is either too cowardly or clever, in both cases *false*, who became the genre of Hegel's world history and spirit. [A. Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, op. cit., p. 54]

⁸³ See Martin Heidegger's interview for *The Spiegel* "Only a God can save us," op. cit., and his essay "The Age of the World Picture" in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, op. cit., pp. 115-154.

⁸⁴ Sigmund Freud, *A General Selection from the Works of Sigmund Freud*, op. cit., p. 198.

⁸⁵ Franz Kafka, *The Diaries of Franz Kafka, 1910-1913*, (New York: Schocken Books, , 1965), p. 297.

⁸⁶ Franz Kafka, *Dearest Father: stories and other writings*, op. cit., p. 35 (aphorism 6).

a disgraceful and demigrating his own Divinity.⁸⁷

Kafka's writings are a profound and often tragic testimony of how that dreaded father so resembling the God of the Old Testament draws his powers from a *weakness* that he vainly tries to heal by revenge. That weakness was his secret⁸⁸ and could not manifest itself otherwise than in negativity.⁸⁹ By the means of this negativity, Kafka's father, like Hegel's Absolute Spirit, "ruled the world from his armchair."⁹⁰ Through a terror of his negativity, the father made Kafka internalize himself with an idea of life as an "undeserved gift"⁹¹ and shut Kafka "almost for no reason" out of the world and love.⁹² The reason was *merely* Kafka's own existence. The father's sadism turned into the son's sense of inferiority toward other people⁹³ and kept him in a status of a permanently 'guilty' slave "who in his worthlessness could *only pursue backstairs methods* [my italics]."⁹⁴ If Kafka's father viewed his son as his own enemy, it should be then less surprising, that practically the whole world appeared to him hostile as well. Accordingly, Kafka's father defined his employees as "paid enemies."⁹⁵ That tyranny of a self-deifying man is infanticide, producing a child-like adult instead of a man.⁹⁶ Ultimately, this dictatorship of negativity imposes and teaches the value of death as its final goal and escape. In this way, it is a radical reduction of being and its ensuing expulsion into nihilism: "And so if *the world consisted only of me and of you*, a notion I was

⁸⁷ Franz Kafka, *Dearest Father: stories and other writings*, op. cit., pp. 146, 148-149.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 168.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 182.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 152.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 143.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 160.

much inclined to have, then *this purity of the world came to an end*, by virtue of your advice, the *filth* began with me [my italics]."⁹⁷

Importantly, this extreme self-glorification essentially amounts to an exaggerated opinion of one's own complete impunity, that is the practical side of the nihilistic axiom "everything is possible."⁹⁸ Heidegger's God (initially identified by Heidegger with Hitler) appears here paradoxically as a resenting and avenging weakling, somewhat paradoxically drawing strength and power from the negativity of weakness to become a superman, a new universally recognized master. As Hannah Arendt acknowledged, the will to power is "the vice of the weak."⁹⁹

Not accidentally, Hegel defines the chief mode of existence as desiring, not loving. For Hegel, man *is actually not* because he is desire-bound.¹⁰⁰ In this way, the Hegelian man as a distinct species is fashioned in the likeness of what is not, constantly losing himself in the future - in a time that is always escaping ahead of his present. Desire is a projection. However, by making a projection, a man also rejects a part of himself, seemingly injecting it outside. The etymology of the word "desire" supplants the fallacy of our memory and is, therefore, revealing: "desire" is derived from Latin "desiderate" composed of a prefix "de-" and "sidus" (star).¹⁰¹ Consequently, man is projected (expelled) literally into an "outer space," into nothingness with regard to himself.¹⁰²

⁹⁷ Franz Kafka, *Dearest Father: stories and other writings*, op. cit., p. 186.

⁹⁸ F. M. Dostoevsky, *Memoirs from the House of the Dead*, op. cit., p. 133.

⁹⁹ H. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, op. cit., p. 203.

¹⁰⁰ See Tom Darby, *The Feast*, op. cit., pp. 90-93, 96-97, 113, 117.

¹⁰¹ Josef Holub, Stanislav Lyer, *Stručný etymologický slovník jazyka českého se zvláštním zretelem k slovům kulturním a cizím*, (Praha: SNPS, 1978), p. 121.

¹⁰² On the fundamental relevance of the Galileo telescopic perspective-projection of man for the Hegelian politics and technology ("conflating static/perfect nature and historic/corrupt man," thus corrupting space and making a "perfect" man *qua* god) see, for example, Tom Darby, "Three Waves of Technology," *Literary Review of Canada*, No. 95, November, 1995: 4. Also Hannah

This essence of desiring was revealed by the story-teller Michael Ende who established that a wish or desire is not neutral. They separate not only space, but also men and time. They are doing violence not only to the object, but also to ourselves. Making a wish, a man *de facto* wishes away a part of himself as well. Every wish means a loss of some memory so that a gain of man's willing enhances his own forgetfulness. By merely willing, a man grows more stupid: wisdom falls apart and he is able to assemble only oneself *qua* nothing. If a man does not know or does not remember what he is actually doing in his egoistic willing, his desiring would at the end dispose of him, emptying completely his identity. As Michael Ende stressed, "without a past you can't have a future."¹⁰³ When all the memory is surrendered or exhausted, man cannot any longer even will.¹⁰⁴ He dies as a human and becomes reduced to a basic biological denominator of metabolism with no autonomous will of his own.¹⁰⁵ The most radical wish is to become a God. As Ende put it, in a moment when a man makes a wish to be a god, he loses the gift of life and descends into a world of madness which Ende named "the City of the Old Emperors" who turn there into "the Know-Nothings."¹⁰⁶ These emperors - like Emil Hacha in his final days - know any longer neither who they are, nor where they are. This is the price to be paid. Nietzsche's extolment of the Dionysian ethos of madness and unbounded forgetfulness, that Heidegger defined as "a hidden stylistic law of historical destiny,"¹⁰⁷ is evidently the reappraisal of the Universal

Arendt, *The Human Condition*, op. cit., 1959, p. 265-270.

¹⁰³ Michael Ende, *The Neverending Story*, op. cit., p. 323.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 321-325.

¹⁰⁵ On this concept of reanimalization of man, see, for example, Tom Darby, *The Feast*, op. cit., pp. 99-102, 172, 181, 210.

¹⁰⁶ Michael Ende, *The Neverending Story*, op. cit., p. 321.

¹⁰⁷ See Heidegger's interview for *Der Spiegel* "Only a God Can Save Us," op. cit., pp. 107-112, especially, p. 112.

and Homogeneous State, the kingdom of such Emperors, men-god, from the position of a 'going-under' nihilist.¹⁰⁸

Our findings show that a man, who thinks of himself as a God, has a life-complex. As Kafka put it, "[he] cannot come to terms with his life while he is alive," but nevertheless he wants to be the sole "real survivor" - after the death of everybody else.¹⁰⁹ He is a slave of death. A slave of death who, "shying away from the balance of life," wants to be a master and thus "is on his way to becoming a tyrant."¹¹⁰ Paradoxically, such self-deification, if examined, appears as a sign of existential weakness. As such a god-human is dead. *Qua* death, he wants to be the All. It means that a man-god can subsist only by thinking and making death, that is, himself. Because he is apparently not God, he is forced to *imitate*. Hence his embracement of the ethos of death is *de facto* a matter of necessity. He is an actor who, however, takes his role with a fatal seriousness; he is nothing but the role. And importantly, imitation is a death of the spirit.¹¹¹

A man-god is further forced to keep doubting and suspecting almost paranoically whether he is really a God, and not rather a man whose desire to kill God makes him ugly, weak, and ridiculous.¹¹² In fact, evidence suggests that this

¹⁰⁸ Moreover, as Kafka realized, the progression of nihilism and its success can only be achieved as a deliberate, self-conscious and thus "rational" insanity: "Out of fear of madness I sacrifice whatever headway I might make ... no bargains are possible at this level. ... But in that event I shall be snapped up by madness - for to make headway one must want to, and I did not." [Franz Kafka, *The Diaries of Franz Kafka*, 1914-1923, op. cit., pp. 218-219]

¹⁰⁹ Franz Kafka, *The Diaries of Franz Kafka*, 1914-1923, op. cit., p. 196.

¹¹⁰ Franz Kafka, *The Complete Stories*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1971), p. 217.

¹¹¹ Frantisek Palacky, *Dejiny narodu ceskeho v Cechach a na Morave*, op. cit., p. 278.

Frantisek Palacky was an outstanding scholar of the XIXth century who became the founder of Czech modern historiography.

¹¹² As Kafka acknowledged, the nihilistic man-god is "in the main afraid that this ridiculousness [of his claim] will make him even older and uglier ..." [Franz Kafka, *Parables and Paradoxes*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1958, p. 45)] To do justice to the genius of Hegel, one may also add another Kafka's observation: "There are among them the most ridiculous things, which is not so very astonishing, for the extremely ridiculous and the extremely serious are not far removed from

is exactly what the Hegelian man, in his deep self-consciousness, actually *knows* as his deep, uncanny secret about himself.¹¹³ The man-god's *spirit* thus becomes an egoist's *desperation* of such uncertainty. Hence Hegel's intensive preoccupation with universal recognition and attempts to justify falsity as the ground of his Absolute Spirit.

It can be concluded that Hegel's project of nihilism as the will to power is a willing of what is not. It is the will to the end. It is the will to nothingness as the end of what is. It is a dictatorship of the will to death. As Eric Voegelin established, Hegel's philosophy is essentially a form of war with man: "it is not the Socratic practice of dying - it is the equivalent of death."¹¹⁴ Every man is physically mortal, but in the Hegelian system, man *must consciously choose* to die.¹¹⁵ A man void of God (avoiding God), who tries to fill this ontological emptiness-syndrome by being the God himself, is a Nietzschean man-rope that is used for binding other men, forcing them to stumble and fall into his own abyss.¹¹⁶ Hegel's end of history is, therefore, the epoch where the will to power identifies itself with *the will to death*.¹¹⁷

It can be concluded that the Hegelian spirit is *innately* negative. Its negativity is a weakness transcending into outward powerful, although usually

each other." [Franz Kafka, *The Castle & The Trial*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968, p. 480) On the connection of vanity, nihilistic ugliness and death-ethos Kafka noted: "Vanity makes ugly, ought therefore to kill ..." [Franz Kafka, *Dearest Father: stories and other writings*, op. cit., p. 77] According to Dostoyevsky, it is exactly "the ugliness" of nihilism that will kill it.

[Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Possessed*, op. cit., p. 726]

¹¹³ See, for example, Franz Kafka, *The Diaries of Franz Kafka, 1914-1923*, op. cit., p. 217.

¹¹⁴ Eric Voegelin, "On Hegel - A Study in Sorcery," op. cit., p. 341

¹¹⁵ On the conscious, deliberate choice of death as a program-project, see Alexandre Kojève, "The Idea of Death in the Philosophy of Hegel," op. cit., pp. 124, 136, 140-1, 148, 150-2.

¹¹⁶ Franz Kafka, *Dearest Father: stories and other writings*, op. cit., p. 64.

¹¹⁷ See "On the New Idol," the first part of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, in *Portable Nietzsche*, op. cit., pp. 160-161.

disguised aggression.¹¹⁸ The Hegelian spirit is *enslaved* to that negativity and weakness, consequently, it cannot appear as its own master otherwise than in a moment of its own death. In this light, the Hegelian gigantic system is a laborious and complex attempt to rationalize and explain away Hegel's malady of being a slave of death and nothingness. The nihilist is a man who wants a purified "new" future because his deadly enemy is his own past which oppresses him.¹¹⁹ He *suffers from reminiscences*. Therefore, he wants to escape into a no-time. That escape is necessarily aggressive and destructive. At the same time, the nihilist has to exist somehow in the real world, while contemplating and preparing his Divinity. For this sake, he needs both protection and arms preferably in such way that he not be exposed or have to struggle directly.

Both imperatives are secured by technology that, in this way, resembles more a blinding shield or secret chains than a sword. Money is in this regard also one of the essential forms in which such (political) technology appears. As Heidegger put it, technology is the "enframing" of man, that "not only conceals *a former way of revealing* [my italics]," but it also conceals its own revealing and essence as well.¹²⁰ Nihilism is thus also a blinding power that thereby preserves itself, while its essence alone *sees and knows*. This blindness also includes forgetfulness. The enemy who is blind is helpless, and that who forgets to fight is helpless as well.

¹¹⁸ See Sigmund Freud's paper "Negation" in Sigmund Freud, *A General Selection from the Works of Sigmund Freud*, op. cit., pp. 54-58, also p. 36. Freud is right in stating that negation is "intellectual acceptance of what is repressed, *though in all essentials the repression persists* [my italics]." As he put it, 'No' is "the hallmark of repression," for example, like 'Made in Germany'. [Ibid., p. 55]

¹¹⁹ Cf. Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, op. cit., p. 81; Sigmund Freud, *A General Selection from the Works of Sigmund Freud*, op. cit., pp. 7-9.

¹²⁰ M. Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, op. cit., pp. 26, 27.

6.4. The Technology of Nihilism as Screening off Being and a Screen-Picture

We already know that nihilism subsists as *imitation* that can be also considered in our context as a form of camouflaging. Both modes are inherently tied to the notion of picture and appearances. The essence of picture-appearance lies in separation being a distinct form of forgetfulness qua blindness.

Every good picture requires that we forget to treat it merely as what it is - a picture. In this way, every picture is a sort of accepted and shared forgetfulness. It is an intervention, a certain artificiality and violence. Hence the primordial fear of images and pictures, and related taboos witnessed among primitive peoples who were still able to remember a picture as a dangerous power that can "steal" their soul or part of their being.

Significantly, the practical realization of Hegel's project of a human closure relies on the generation of pure, sterile relations (forms) emptied from their substance, as embodied in money, in particular, and in technology, in general. It translates the Hegelian truth and lie into practice. It is thus technology that is, to use Hegel's language, "the magical-force which transposes the Negative into given-Being."¹²¹ Technology as a screen is this Hegelian magical "force of separation."¹²²

Self-conscious nihilism actually knows well that it "cannot annul the knowledge of good and evil," but it can "confuse it," that is, "remove" it from man by tearing up the context apart and separating man from it.¹²³ The technology

¹²¹ Alexandre Kojève, "The Idea of Death in the Philosophy of Hegel," op. cit., p. 125.

¹²² Ibid., p. 126.

¹²³ Franz Kafka, *Parables and Paradoxes*, op. cit., p. 33. Or as Robert Musil put it, "mummified, as everything becomes when it is torn out of its own context, loaded with the tyrannical spell of all that will now remain eternally the way it is." [Robert Musil, *The Man without Qualities*, Volume I, (London: Secker & Warburg, , 1979), p. 22]

of nihilism is, therefore, of a peculiar kind: it is not primarily a protection of man against nature, but first of all a system of aggressive defences against man: it is man who is laid on the Baconian racks asked to give his reasons for being.¹²⁴ Such technology is a power of negative re-presenting wherein the (wall) presented before us is screened off and deprived of its power of self-articulation. Man appears to have all his existence and power appropriated and assembled in the self-sustained medium of his re-presentation which tends to tear itself completely apart and live its own independent life for man.

Re-presented reality is thus a form of being which is repressed and imprisoned within a given *frame*. Such representation tears being and its appearances apart. It is a thinning and screening-off of the substance so that man in the mirroring of such screens has reduced himself to an appearance or screen; hence politics as theatre. This screen or wall captures man's projections and impresses him as being itself the world which it hides and encloses. Its peculiarity lies in the fact that this technological screening and picture-making uses man's own energy and disposition to generate self-excuses and self-delusions. This presencing mirrors back man's own flattery. Its relative efficiency, therefore, consists in turning its victim-object into its (unconscious or ignorant) accomplice and mobilizing the Freudian death-wish on the part of the object that is presented as pleasure and convenience. Self-defeat is thereby posited as the self-gratifying path of least resistance. In this way, it kills by taking human piety-dignity and freedom to think and distinguish away from a man. It is thus a materialized rhetoric of

¹²⁴ See Franz Kafka, *The Complete Stories*, op. cit., p. 241.

persuasion to commit suicide. Its strength is man's weakness.¹²⁵

Man is compelled to "read" this externally pre-formed presencing that captures his attention and binds him to ignorance about good and evil, that is, about himself as well. He thus remains a know-nothing. What he is presented with, are signs and links between signs, while the keys for their true deciphering are usually "outside" the picture. Being outside the picture or image, these clues, the withheld and concealed political capital, are nevertheless firmly anchored in a given time and space: they do exist and are concrete.¹²⁶ Ultimately, we may suspect that there is a political simplicity of a man-god, man *qua* nothing, hidden behind complexity of screens that veil or deny their essence, while negating the existence and meaningfulness of others, reproducing it as a picture caught by the Heideggerian "enframing."

Those man-made images and screens (for example, money) then become customary and are inscribed in man's "set of mind" as *fetish*.¹²⁷ Therefore, alleged

¹²⁵ The above is basically a mere reinstatement and summary of Socrates's arguments against nihilistic politics defined as rhetoric *qua* knack of flattery. As Socrates showed, under a sway of such politics, the soul is not able to hold the measure (to be "just"), to hold itself as a whole and keep being in itself - it is "leaky" and "rotten." Such souls are those of fools "for their untrustworthiness and forgetfulness makes them unable to retain anything." The soul turns into an recurring flux of in- and out-pouring emptiness instead. [Plato, *Gorgias*, (Indianapolis & Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1986), particularly, *ibid.*, *Gorgias*, 493-494]

¹²⁶ According to this concept, a man who belongs, as Hegel put it, "in the midst of those who know themselves as pure knowing," that is, who is initiated into the secret of Hegel's sorcery, becomes a God. In other words, the secret of Hegel's wisdom is the deadly seriousness of a self-designation as God. In this regard, Voegelin remarked: "we must conclude that in 1807 Hegel has become God." [See Eric Voegelin, "On Hegel - A Study in Sorcery," *op. cit.*, pp. 347-348, 365]

¹²⁷ Significantly, the political concept of fetish was elaborated by Marx as one of the key elements of his political economy. In this regard, Marx somewhat boastfully inferred: "The bill of exchange is the real god ... [this] god is only an illusory bill of exchange ... the mode of perceiving nature, under the rule of private property and money, is a real contempt for, and a practical degradation of nature ... contempt for theory, for art, for history, and for man as an end in himself - is the *real, conscious* standpoint and the virtue of the man of money." [Karel Marx, *Early Writings*, *op. cit.*, p. 37] Franz Kafka describes this phenomenon of the inscription of the enframing screens into man's mind in his novel "In the Penal Colony" [Franz Kafka, *The Complete Stories*, *op. cit.*, pp. 140-167]. There an apparatus inscribes *death* (this is what that inscription and enframing is about) into man under close observation of another man. Admittedly,

automatism and self-autonomy of technology are just another self-perpetuating delusion and, thus, merely a made-up picture.¹²⁸ Perceiving in images is a property of mass-herd thinking. As Freud noted:

a group has no critical faculty, and the improbable does not exist for it. It *thinks in images*, which call one another up by association (just as they arise with individuals in states of free imagination), and *whose agreement with reality is never checked by any reasonable function* ... Anyone who wishes to produce an effect upon it needs no logical adjustment in his arguments; *he must paint in the most forcible colours, he must exaggerate, and he must repeat the same thing again and again* [my italics].¹²⁹

This mass/herd way of thinking and being is a form of an hypnotic state, a state of *night*¹³⁰ so that the relations between a man as an image and institution or

it is "a hard task to decipher the [death] inscription" on one's own body. [Ibid., p. 150] When the inscription is complete and, thus, fully legible and understandable, man is (to be) already dead. During its application, merely a discussion of methods, not of substance, is allowed. [Cf. ibid., p. 155] Thus, enframing is a death punishment of man. In other place, Kafka also points out that the borders of the frame (frame of enframing) has to be policed and guarded rigorously all the time. [See ibid., p. 207]

¹²⁸ This fatalist picture of technology is, for example, presented in Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967). In Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, op. cit., the process of man's political mortification is also presented also as a kind of determinism. The alleged emancipation of labour (although "emancipation" has here a Marxian ambiguity of meaning) and its "haseness" are depicted as the main force of degeneration.

On the notion of "picture," compare also Heidegger's essay "The Age of the World Picture" where the whole man's existence is depicted as abiding (merely) "in the picture," and man himself is but a picture. By the means of "picture", the background is presented by Heidegger as a "disguise" of what is by making it appear "flat" and "devoid of background." By turning other men into mere images, the Absolute Ego-Subjectum "frees himself to himself," "is transformed into an exceptional being" and makes himself absolutely "secure." [Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, op. cit., pp. 115-154]

¹²⁹ Sigmund Freud, *A General Selection from the Works of Sigmund Freud*, op. cit., p. 172.

¹³⁰ See, ibid., pp. 171-172. Not accidentally, the notion of night has also been embraced by the present Böhmsch nihilists as part of their principal symbolic imagery, language-code and denotation of its "burrow" and ethos. For the formulation of *night* as a political and philosophical imperative and code-term of present Böhmsch nihilism see Jan Patocka, *Kacířské eseje o filosofii dejin*, (Praha: Academia, 1990). On its further elaboration see, for example, an article by a dissident Tomas Halik, "Ego Dormio" in Marketa Goetz-Stankiewicz, eds., *Good-Bye, Samizdat*, (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1992), pp. 275-284; on the Czech version see Tomas Halik, "Ego dormio" in Vaclav Havel, eds., *Hostina: filozofický sborník*, (Toronto: Sixty-Eight Publishers Corp., 1989), pp. 161-163. An examination of the nihilistic use and abuse of the

money as another image appear as a collective hypnosis, intoxication by nothingness.¹³¹ In other words, it is a modernized form of Socratic cage.

Thereby, the Nietzschean snake (and its symbolism) enters our view again and is back in the picture. Screens and pictures keep man as if in a perpetual dream presented as a true reproduction of life.

There is one important peculiarity upon which rests the power of nihilism: that the picture (veil) is to be taken for what it is not - for a picture (veil). The shadow on the cave's wall must not be seen or remembered as a produced shadow. Hence this is the self-reproducing schizophrenia of the nihilists themselves who are forced to step into and live in their own picture by the supreme force of irony and the merciless logic of their rulership lying in *picture-manipulation*.¹³²

Instead of interacting with other men, man is moved into a technological seclusion where he associates only with pictures. Consequently, these pictures

notion of night would definitely offer further keys to the illumination of the nature of nihilism: at present it, however, falls beyond the given framework of the present research. Here, I can only note that the symbol of night is related in the discourse of nihilism to a longing for the eclipse of self-consciousness ultimately leading again towards death or for the "return to a mother's womb" as a place of "perfect" happiness and safety (this is again related to the underlying Oedipus complex-syndrome); it also denotes the idolatry of secrecy; night covers one's ugliness; it "homogenizes;" it is a time of blissful forgetfulness etc. It also symbolizes the underworld of nihilism.

¹³¹ Ibid., p. 192. Importantly and also ominously, Freud notes that terror is a very opportune means of collective hypnosis. [See *ibid.*, p. 193]

¹³² In order to affirm what they really are, such nihilists have to surrender their own identity in the process, losing their own faces in their own picture. Havel's plays and public speeches supply an abundance of precious material in this regard. Here, at least one representative example taken from Havel's speech delivered in Denmark on May 28, 1991 might suffice; Vaclav Havel stresses: "Is it possible to *imagine* any other more attractive way than to reassure oneself on one's won existence and its *weight* than that offered by political power? ... [politics] is the creation of those supremely *apparent impressions* of one's own existence on very broad environs ... [It is exactly] this possibility of self-confirming oneself ... [it is about] the desire to confirm *to oneself* that I have a meaning and thereby I am than about really serving the [general] cause ... Inadvertently, we [that is, Havel] have already begun to resemble rather noticeably the condemnation-deserving predecessors. It is disturbing to us ... but we have ascertained that simply we cannot resist it or are unable to do so ... Being in power, I am permanently suspicious of myself ... [I am] a *prisoner* of my own position, my privileges, my function [my italics]." [Vaclav Havel, *Vazeni ohcane*, op. cit., pp. 81-85]

become his main living experience. Such a man knows the world and other men only as pictures (which he usually does not make himself). This spells a decisive loss of man's ability to judge. In this way, man is transformed into his own tomb. He is an empty sign to be administered by somebody or something else and is recast as a mere *presenting-and-scenting* of death. Such a man is not what he is, but what or whom he re-presents. He lives in his presented copy which is not necessarily bound by its original. His wishes become his own self-forgetfulness. Man void of himself, while encountering his own reflections, is forced to *avoid* his own being. This negative dialectic is a sorcery of folly realized by forcing man to forget what is beyond himself - all the things under his feet and above him.¹³³ That man, who does not know *what (he) is*, is a fool.

The effectiveness and efficiency of the whole system of Hegel's and also Marxist dialectics can be ultimately reduced, as Marx himself observed, "to the single dogmatic antithesis between [his] own cleverness and the stupidity of the world."¹³⁴ It depends on one of the most impaired modern faculties of man - on the (in)ability to see and read, and to listen and speak. Moreover, this basic quality of humanness can be preserved only by man's responsiveness to *justice* which is an ongoing struggle for upholding the harmony of being and its precarious measure (that what is *just*). In this way, justice is the imperative of return, not as resentment (this is what nihilism prescribes), but as re-mem-ber-ing of what we have been and who we are. Therefore, seeing-reading and listening-speaking are sensible only as the way of judgement. Man is a being who is able to *participate* in

¹³³ The allusion to the charge against Socrates is not accidental. Cf. Plato, *Apology*, 18b, 19b-c, 23d. In other words, this folly has become possible, because we "forgot" Socrates.

¹³⁴ Karel Marx, *Early Writings*, op. cit., p. 196.

judgement.

Consequently, human seeing-reading and listening-speaking are a mutual obligation of human *re-collection*. Without such gathering of human togetherness in time and space, man cannot stand, and his faculties of humanness fall apart and disperse into nothingness. Therefore, if the nihilistic technology encircles (enframes) man with a system of screens and screening, where only the veil (screen) or veiling (screening) are unveiled, it is important to remember what we have been before and remember that we are *directly* presented with a play of frames appearing as Kafka's Chinese walls.¹³⁵ Confusion of man's recollecting is what the veil is *made* for.

Technology is a complex system that dictates and induces man's *blinking*, that is, his dis-membering which gradually leads to his own eclipse. *Blinking* means a loss of the *context*.¹³⁶ It is exactly the task of the political technology of nihilism to make a man "blink" as often as necessary. In this way, as Kafka already knew, "deceptions are more frequent than [real] changes."¹³⁷ Without possessing the essential context, man becomes lost in the curse of mere discourse. He becomes *digitalized* and nothing but a *virtual* image. Merely his own shadow. As Kafka stressed in his *Castle*, "if one has the strength to look at things unceasingly, so to speak without blinking, one sees a great deal; but if one falters

¹³⁵ On Kafka's concept of 'the completion of the Chinese Wall' and its close connection with the paradigm of the Tower of Babel see, for example, Franz Kafka, *Parables and Paradoxes*, op. cit., pp. 25, 35. It also needs to be added that, as Heidegger told us, the self-conscious nihilists are waiting for their Dionysian god to tear apart at an appropriate moment all these screens and veils and to establish a direct tyranny of death. We were also told that the arrival of that god is under preparation. [See M. Heidegger, "Only a God Can Save Us," op. cit., pp. 107, 110, 112-113, 116]

¹³⁶ Franz Kafka, *Amerika*, (New York: A New Directions Paperbook, 1962), p. 13.

¹³⁷ Franz Kafka, *The Castle & The Trial*, op. cit., p. 296.

only once and shuts one's eyes, everything instantly slips away into darkness."¹³⁸

As Paul Goodman, commenting on Kafka's aphorism, said, not-blinking means: keeping your eyes open — keeping the way to knowledge open.¹³⁹

Technology (as politics) intentionally disrupts and interrupts man's continuity. To this effect, screens and pictures are also constantly changed and kept in a constant fluidity, whereby a succession of labels and images are presented as would-be substantial or radical change. It is an organized "chaos" of screens and names. These modifications, being modes of the same essence, thus appear as a confused and confusing motley of political cosmetics, make-up or superficial displays, as in the case of Böhmisch nihilism and its examined metamorphoses. In this way, nihilistic "revolutions" revolve around the same centre as Nietzsche's recurrence of the same - nihilism. Thereby, nihilism tries to achieve exactly against what Socrates warned: "For it's shameful thing for us, being in the condition we appear to be in at the present - when we never think the same about the same subjects, the most important ones at that - to sound off as though we're somebodies. That's how far behind in education we've fallen."¹⁴⁰ Socrates also knew, without attaching to his accusation any Hegelian flattery and apology, that such a political "craft" is *slavish and servient*.¹⁴¹

Without attaining and upholding continuity, man is left desperately *thin* and shallow; he is an empty thing. Technology as a screen is also stupid in a sense (and it is its effective weapon) that it cannot answer the most important human

¹³⁸ Franz Kafka, *The Castle & The Trial*, op. cit., p. 447.

¹³⁹ Paul Goodman, *Kafka's Prayer*, (New York: Hillstone, 1976), p. 9.

¹⁴⁰ Plato, *Gorgias*, 527d-e.

¹⁴¹ *Gorgias*, 518a.

questions. Technology both as a frame and picture has all its answers predetermined by a specific, yet seemingly absent bias. In this way, it is essentially *reactionary*.¹⁴² It is a picture and hollow framework kept separate from its own essence - as Heidegger states, the essence of technology is *not* technology.¹⁴³

Consequently, questioning and thinking of technology alone cannot lead too far, in any case, not back to a man. The context of the We (the science of conscience) or continuity is a fight for retaining, being retained by, and contained in humanness. In this way, continuity is one's human content and stores up one's limits, boundaries, measure and balance - between the beast and God. In return, continuity of the context is the only force powerful enough to contain death. It is maintained and mediated by *thinking*. *Thinking* as a path to wisdom, the overarching context of being, also provides man with the way out of the *thinning* of the human essence. Without remembering (context of one's being) barred by screens and Hegelian falsity about man and his past, present and future, neither speech nor thinking are possible. It is the Hegelian and Marx-extolled death of philosophy. As Michael Ende in his *Neverending Story* told us, "without a past you can't have a future."¹⁴⁴ When all the memory is surrendered and exhausted in the Hegelian night of forgetfulness and blindness, man cannot even make a wish any more.¹⁴⁵

In this way, Kafka's comparison of (death) politics with building the 'Tower of Babel' is absolutely relevant and valid. Only this time, it is not about

¹⁴² Cf. Leo Strauss, *Studies in Political Philosophy*, op. cit., p. 80.

¹⁴³ M. Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology*, op. cit., pp. 3-35.

¹⁴⁴ Michael Ende, *The Neverending Story*, op. cit., p. 323.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 321-325.

disbanding tribes and languages, but about dispelling man himself. The veil veils *almost* all. This "*almost*" shows that man has been reduced to a minority. But it is necessary to remember this "*almost*" and hold to it and take man *seriously* finally for what he truly is. Being hypnotized by a hermetic picture, man cannot see. The lack of light outside stifles his inner light. It is this light that connects time through space, creates space and transcends the gravity of our situation, by unveiling the nothingness, emptiness and poverty of a nihilistic eclipse.

However, technology as screen without man is empty. It is only a cage, frame or form. Admittedly, it is somewhat paradoxical that it was not a professional philosopher or political scientist, but a writer of fiction stories, Michael Ende, who was able to reveal in his famous modern fair tale *The Neverending Story* (a fiction about the real fiction or virtual reality of our contemporary empire of nothingness) that the magical mystery of technology is actually such *emptiness*. Technology as such is empty unless it is moved and sustained by its essence - by the will to power of a man. As the goddess of darkness Xayide pointed out with regard to her robots-soldiers-labourers (read "standing reserves"): "It's because they're empty that they do my will. My will can control anything that's empty."¹⁴⁶

Marx's Song of Songs deifying the deity of Money from his early writings is an enthusiastic glorification by a young initiate of such a power of screening off humanity and dissolving universal homogeneity. It shows on the practical example of money (a form of technological power) the aforementioned. Marx's little piece, "Money," is, therefore, not merely a self-styled confession of love, but, more

¹⁴⁶ Michael Ende, *The Neverending Story*, op. cit., p. 286.

importantly, it provides precious insights into the Hegelian magic of (political) technology. Money (technology) is the God-Creator of the Heideggerian world as picture. That which exists can do so only through the medium of a picture (money). The picture itself is nothing, and yet everything that exists is in a state of existential dependence on this intervening medium of nothingness. In this way, nothing is allowed to exist in any other way than going through the mediation of veiled screens (like money). Mediation exhausts all that is man. All existence is thus but a mediation - by the means of appearance, dead stuff or a bill of paper. In Marx's view, power [of a nihilist] is the power of artificial meditation. Moreover, Marx also thinks that he is all that exists, that is, a God, thanks to that power of money: "that which I can pay for (i.e. which money can buy), that I am, the possessor of money."¹⁴⁷ Marx feels, although not exactly in a typical Communist spirit, that "what he is and can do" is due to the power and mediation of money and does not depend at all on his true character and faculties:¹⁴⁸

I am ugly, but I can buy the most beautiful woman for myself. Consequently, I am not ugly, for the effect of ugliness, its power to repel, is annulled by money. As an individual I am lame, but money provides me with twenty-four legs. Therefore, I am not lame. I am a detestable, dishonourable, unscrupulous and stupid man, but money is honoured and so also its possessor ... Besides, money saves me the trouble of being dishonest; therefore, I am presumed honest. I am stupid, but since money is the real mind of all things, how should its possessor be stupid? Moreover, he can buy talented people for himself, and is not he who has power over the talented more talented than they?¹⁴⁹

Nihilism-controlled technology (including money) serves, as the "universal

¹⁴⁷ Karel Marx, *Early Writings*, op. cit., p. 191.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 191.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 191.

agent of separation."¹⁵⁰ It is nihilistic monopoly over mediation, that is also a monopoly over meaning and value. It is the universal means standing for the essence which deliberately:

changes representation into reality and reality into mere representation. It transforms real human and natural faculties into mere abstract representations ... [Money] changes fidelity into infidelity, love into hate, virtue into vice, vice into virtue, servant into master, stupidity into intelligence and intelligence into stupidity.¹⁵¹

It transforms being into its opposite, into that "which it is not."¹⁵² It is "the power to confuse and invert all human and natural qualities, to bring about fraternization of incompatible"¹⁵³ that has been built and accumulated for a long time inside politics for their destruction. In this way, it is definitely biased against the good, the non-inverted healthy being. Because it is in its essence a leading form of veiled war, it appears as an absolute monopoly on relations and connections in society. This force appears as blind because it is blinding. It is parasitic and superfluous and, yet, was imposed as "the bond of all bonds."¹⁵⁴ It is image-making and image-reality control. Jealous monopoly on lie: a relation is accepted as valid and effective only if cleared and recast into representation by this very specific and concrete type of mediation. What this mediation does not process, annihilate and sanctify as its lifeless subject and reserve (property), is denied to be real or rational, it is not meant to matter.

This negative mediation (money) is what binds the Marxian man to human

¹⁵⁰ Karel Marx, *Early Writings*, op. cit., p. 192.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., p. 193. Marx's selection of equivalents (opposites) is also noteworthy.

¹⁵² Ibid., pp. 191-192.

¹⁵³ Ibid., p. 192.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 191.

life and man, and society to him.¹⁵⁵ As Marx put it, it is "the universal whore the universal pander between men and nations."¹⁵⁶ According to Marx, this screen is "the alienated and self-alienating species-life of man, the alienated power of humanity."¹⁵⁷ The nihilistic imperative 'everything is possible' is enabled through this enframing, being a (political) monopoly on relation-making.¹⁵⁸ Finally, Marx implies that this way of rootless existence is also a virtue made out of necessity where form (shaping) is a substitution for the lack of content (substance). It is a substitution for impotence.¹⁵⁹ Technology as a screen is, therefore, a licence to hypocrisy that covers up what the phenomenon is not.

Such technology as a screen and screening, which puts into effect the Hegelian spirit, is consequently set up in such a way as to enforce the exchangeability of truth and the lie, constantly dissolving anything that is by what it is not and producing the Nietzschean sameness or Kojévian universal homogeneity. A man, who became lost in this picture and is screened off from God, being and himself and from being, exists only as a *function* of nihilism and its death.¹⁶⁰ These screens are not made as the Apollonian form to hold a being together, but to "defend injustice."¹⁶¹

Moreover, these screens of deadness cannot be arbitrarily *organized*.¹⁶² As Socrates indicated, to know and judge a phenomenon fully (nihilism), the

¹⁵⁵ Karel Marx, *Early Writings*, op. cit., p. 191.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 192.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 192.

¹⁵⁸ See *ibid.*, p. 192.

¹⁵⁹ See *ibid.*, p. 194.

¹⁶⁰ Alexandre Kojève, "The Idea of Death in the Philosophy of Hegel," op. cit., p. 134. In this regard, Nietzschean Last Man would perhaps better be called No-Man.

¹⁶¹ Cf. Plato, *Gorgias*, 480c.

¹⁶² Cf. Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground & The Grand Inquisitor*, op. cit., pp. 43-44.

phenomenon should be dead: its spirit "stripped naked of the body" [its screens].¹⁶³

To examine the structure of nihilism is, therefore, to undertake an anatomical operation on its body as a completion of its death, after other screens have been stripped down.¹⁶⁴

6.5. The Structure of Nihilism and the Universal and Homogeneous State

According to Hegelian science, there *is* only space.¹⁶⁵ In this way, nihilism strives to reduce the open multi-dimensionality of being, that also includes both time and space, to an ostracised space of death. Heidegger, in his turn, revealed that *what is* is the essence of technology. It stands for a nihilistic Being appearing in the world and is "destining" the human world.¹⁶⁶ "Destining" itself also denotes a *destination*, as a final place or position. Consequently, we may conclude that the essence of technology posits and thinks itself as a space. At the same time, man is defined by Hegel as time.¹⁶⁷ We also already know that Hegelian science is an announcement that both man and time had come to an end. Thus, what remains is only to have Hegel's Absolute Spirit organized and expanded into a Hegelian space of the world.

Consequently, Hegel's system is apparently operating with two different concepts of men: one is (ordinary) a man formerly *qua* time, now a living dead, who is said to have been terminated by Hegel's self-thinking deity, and the other is a post-historical Hegelian man-god *qua* space. In this way, a closer scrutiny

¹⁶³ Plato, *Gorgias*, 524d.

¹⁶⁴ Cf. *Gorgias*, 523d-e.

¹⁶⁵ See, for example, Tom Darby, *The Feast*, op. cit., p. 139.

¹⁶⁶ See Heidegger's essay *The Question Concerning Technology* in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, op. cit., pp. 30-34.

¹⁶⁷ Tom Darby, *The Feast*, op. cit., pp. 90-93, 140-141.

reveals that Hegel's system actually operates with two ranks of men: one who "has renounced itself" and "proves itself" by ceasing to be, and the other who becomes the Absolute Spirit by the means of self-denial of anybody else for the sake of the latter's Absolute *Ich*.¹⁶⁸ Even death requires that there is at least sole survivor who can *mean* it.¹⁶⁹ In particular, Hegel's system stems from a positive existence of a particular "self-consciousness" which does not want to commit necessarily a suicide, but "always has a tendency to *extend* itself as much as possible," so that it "spreads through the *whole* domain of the reality given to man and in man."¹⁷⁰ As Arendt put it, human space being the sole human reality is designed only for some and not even all the time.¹⁷¹ According to Arendt, this modern space is not sustained by virtues, justice, togetherness, tradition, judgement or even by a common destiny but only "power is what keeps the public realm, the potential space of appearance between acting and speaking men, in existence."¹⁷² Or as Cooper put it, the world of technological no-men is "held together by force and by propaganda and lies."¹⁷³ Hence, the question concerning the essence of technology in particular and nihilism in general is a quest after the spatial system of death.

According to Kojève, the structure of Hegelian world-historical being, is a

¹⁶⁸ See, Alexandre Kojève, "The Idea of Death in the Philosophy of Hegel," op. cit., pp. 146-147.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., op. cit., p. 128. The said conclusion is also confirmed by in the following Hegelian dogma: "I cannot know myself in the consciousness of the other ... except to the extent that I posit myself in his consciousness as being, *in my exclusion to him, a totality of exclusion* [that is, as] *having his death as [my] end* [my italics]." [Ibid., p. 149]

¹⁷⁰ Alexander Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, op. cit., p. 82.

¹⁷¹ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, op. cit., p. 199.

¹⁷² Ibid., p. 200.

¹⁷³ Barry Cooper, *Action into Nature*, (London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991), p. 180.

plain circle – that is, a line enclosed in Hegel's tautological absolute circularity.¹⁷⁴

This scheme appears as perfect and simple, thus seemingly fulfilling Hegel's own criteria of correctness, but it is exactly its perfect simplicity that makes it too simple to be true. In other words, knowing the depth of Kojève's understanding of what Hegel did, one cannot dispose of an unavoidable suspicion that Kojève knowingly sacrificed the truth for the simple perfectionism of his nihilistic rhetoric so that his circle, although partially correct, is rather another example of the Hegelian-Marxian art of falsity. In particular, this structure of the Absolute Spirit can be correct only under a condition that Hegel's *Ich* exist all alone in the world, hunting its own tail round the circle.¹⁷⁵ Because Kojève was a Marxist and, thus, also to a certain extent a realist (although in the sense of Marxian cynicism), he thereby obscured and concealed the structure of Hegel's Absolute Power. Namely, the Universal and Homogeneous State is not universally

¹⁷⁴ A. Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, op. cit., pp. 105, 119. According to Robert Musil, the nihilistic (non)being is an encircled, closed-in emptiness that looks "like a ring." What is here essential is that nothing: "after all there's nothing in the middle of it, and yet it looks just as if that were the very thing that is important to it." [Robert Musil, *The Man without Qualities*, Volume II, (London: Secker & Warburg, 1961), p. 80] Consequently, nihilism as a project is not much striving to construct a whole, but a hole of being. [See *ibid.*, p. 336-338]

¹⁷⁵ To use Musil's words, "imagine a badger that does not know whether it is a badger or a brock, a creature that has no conception of itself; it is not surprising if in some circumstances it is thrown into fits of terror by its own tail." [Robert Musil, *The Man without Qualities*, Volume II, op. cit., p. 182]

homogeneous in the absolute sense - there is at least the Hegelian individual *Ich*, as God, and the rest of moribund humanity turned into post-historical animals: as animals they cannot possess Absolute Spirit because they are themselves its property.

Moreover, we assume in the extreme case that everybody were to be Hegelian Gods, the Hegelian system of supreme egoism would turn into nonsense. This means that Hegel's Absolute Spirit is neither equal to the post-historical slaves of Hegel's Ego, nor it would apparently like to presume its equality with the stupidity of the Last Men. A master is not his dog. Notably, Hegel himself never forgot about these distinctions.¹⁷⁶ This is not really a trivial question, that could be dispensed with a reference to Hegel's definition of man as nothing, because the Hegelian regime faces in this way nothing less than the rest of mankind that Hegel's Ego has to overcome, while the circle suggests that it is running only after itself alone. All this points towards at least two orders of rank as so tirelessly argued and called for by Nietzsche throughout his works. In other words, Kojève's circle covers by its simplicity post-historical Overmen and all those with regard to whom they can be superior by one single line. Neither it shows the primordial split of Hegel's Spirit-Ego and the mortified and cut off "appendix" of the former aristocracy (masters). Evidently, that kind of freedom enjoyed on the part of Overman or Hegelian God is drastically different from freedom and essence forfeited by other men at the end of history. The nothingness of these two freedoms substantially differ - one is self-will as nothingness of absolute vanity, and the other is nothingness as absolute absence of any will.

¹⁷⁶ See, for example, Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, op. cit., pp. 360-361, 567.

The person who brought to the surface an account of the structure of the Hegelian Super-I-go was the classic poet of Böhmisch nihilism, Franz Kafka, who described himself as "a visitor among the dead."¹⁷⁷ In this regard, one can apparently agree with Kafka that "nothing superhuman happens anywhere, if one looks at it in the right perspective ..."¹⁷⁸ We can assume that this could also apply to Nietzsche's Superman. In particular this means that the world regime of nihilism can be disclosed in its whole most easily from the place from which it was created. From the same place it can also be condemned and destroyed.¹⁷⁹ The existence of two basic orders of rank can be the starting point in our quest. In this regard, Kafka pointed out:

It would seem clear that the two worlds do exist ... And moreover the division seems to me to be much too definitive, dangerous in its definiteness, sad, and too tyrannical. Do I live in the other world, then? Dare I say that?¹⁸⁰

Kafka's fundamental notion of *the Castle* is a further clue. Thus, while preserving Kojève's partially correct circle as an essential part of the whole, a preliminary design of the nihilistic organization of power can be suggested at this

¹⁷⁷ Franz Kafka, *Dearest Father: stories and other writings*, op. cit., p. 230. We may suppose that the notable fact that it was Franz Kafka who revealed the structure of the nihilistic world-organization, was not only a matter of his unique genius and internal struggles, but that the uniqueness of the frontier-defining position of Bohemia vis-à-vis nihilism and Kafka's personal experience were apparently another indispensable factor that made Kafka's account possible. Thus, according to Musil, "[history] evolved not from a centre, but from the periphery, from minor causes." [Robert Musil, *The Man without Qualities*, Volume II, op. cit., p. 69] In 1947, Paul Goodman concluded that "the writings of Kafka appear less and less strange and more and more the plain reality." [Paul Goodman, *Kafka's Prayer*, op. cit., p. xix] The said is also confirmed by Kafka's own acknowledgement that his writings were "a leap out of murderers' row;" it was a "higher type of observation" and "seeing of what is really taking place." [Franz Kafka, *The Diaries of Franz Kafka*, 1914-1923, op. cit., p. 212]

¹⁷⁸ Franz Kafka, *Letters to Friends, Family, and Editors*, op. cit., p. 108.

¹⁷⁹ Franz Kafka, *Dearest Father: stories and other writings*, op. cit., p. 95.

¹⁸⁰ Franz Kafka, *The Diaries of Franz Kafka*, 1914-1923, op. cit., p. 216.

point in the following way:

Here, *the Castle* epitomizes the structure of power, while *the (global) Village* symbolizes people placed and organized under the rule of the nihilistic regime.¹⁸¹ Kojévian circles, being projections of the circular singularity of the Hegel's Ego on the top, are here reproduced at every level of the castle-village system, while all of them are part of the same. Moreover, the structure is made in such a way so that the circles at every level of the building obscure and prevent the clear sight through all the "floors." Within the castle-made projections, there can be in principle an infinite number of posited contradictions and antagonisms within the village of people that put different factions and section of the population

¹⁸¹ On Kafka's notion of falling from "the corner" into "the circle" of the evil see Franz Kafka, *Dearest Father: stories and other writings*, op. cit., p. 298.

against each other, while the overall structure is maintained as one whole.¹⁸²

Nevertheless, even this scheme, though providing further insights into the body of power, is not sufficient and hence satisfactory for explaining a greater part of the essence of nihilism. At least, several other fundamental moments need to be taken into consideration: 1) the proportion of *the Castle* versus *the Village* is clearly overemphasized on the account of the latter;¹⁸³ 2) the design should in correspondence with phenomenon of Nietzsche's *going under*, that is, in this context there should be a realm of the underground-underworld as the true seat of power of nihilism that would also be in conformity with other nihilistic notions-imperatives such as uprooting, radical reversal and mafia-type organizational frameworks;¹⁸⁴ and 3) the layout should also show the Hegelian mechanism of falsity, that is, the nihilistic doctrine of appearances that includes the adoption of Galileo's form of view-projection.¹⁸⁵ This further means that within such a

¹⁸² In his *Trial*, Kafka noted: "They were all colleagues [wings of the same], these ostensible parties of the Right and the Left ..." [Franz Kafka, *The Castle & The Trial*, op. cit., p. 59, see also p. 320]

¹⁸³ Thus, according to Dostoyevsky, the nihilistic world design of death presented as "a final solution to the question of the division of mankind into two unequal parts" envisaged the following: "One-tenth enjoys absolute liberty and unbounded power over the nine-tenths. The others have to give up all individuality and become, so to speak, a herd, and, through boundless submission, will by a series of regeneration attain primeval innocence, something like the Garden of Eden. They'll have to work, however. The measures proposed by the author for depriving nine-tenths of mankind of their freedom and transforming them into a herd through the education of whole generations are very remarkable, founded on facts of nature and highly logical." [Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Possessed*, op. cit., pp. 410-411]

¹⁸⁴ On the underworld and elite-mob as the realm of nihilistic power see, for example, Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, op. cit., pp. 10, 37, 69, 73, 107-108, 122, 116, 155-156, 190, 201-202, 204, 207, 216, 225-226, 242, 249, 307, 311, 325, 327, 329, 333, 434. As Kafka stressed the commanding method is that of *descent*. [Franz Kafka, *The Complete Stories*, op. cit., p. 336]

¹⁸⁵ On the fundamental relevance of Galileo's telescopic perspective-projection for Hegelian politics and technology that "conflates static [perfect] nature and historic [corrupt] man," thus corrupting space and producing a "perfect" man *qua* god in the nihilistic world of opinion-view, see, for example, Tom Darby, "Three Waves of Technology," *Literary Review of Canada*, No. 95, November, 1995: 4. Also Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, op. cit., p. 265-270. Identifying being with knowing in the form of this one-sided form of perception meant that being was reduced to visualized appearance inasmuch as opinion as a view rejected not only faith, but also other non-

framework, the institutions "should have two-fold existence, that is, on the one hand, it's necessary they should exist ... on the other hand, it's necessary that they shouldn't."¹⁸⁶ Or as Arendt stated: "The technique of duplication [of apparent and essential institutions], certainly useless for the direct overthrow of the government, proved extremely fruitful in the work of undermining existing institutions and in the 'decomposition of the status quo.'"¹⁸⁷ All these requirements are met by a scheme that copies and combines a design of telescope (veiling-unveiling dialectics - manipulated *space*) and that of sand-glass (the principle of clock, that is,

"apparent" manifestations of being. In this way, being is allowed under this regime to exist only as Heideggerian "picture." Only that which is presented "exists," that is, put into the sight of the viewers. All that is found beyond the frame of the "picture" of the nihilistic rule is denied the fact of its essential existence. In this way, the real world is projected-expelled into outer space together with man so that man remains on earth only as the nothingness of a reflected view-picture and opinion. Again, in this way, seeing does mean the same as knowing because it is dependent on a given set of "optics" and position *qua* point of view. This manipulation of viewing and being which is essentially only a matter of *organizing interrelated positions qua points of views into a system* in a particular way where every single position-lens is blind on its own or cannot grasp-hold the whole - all the beams-information are gathered only in one final focus-place (the Archimedean point) of the system from where its holder "casts his net over the globe itself." [See E. Darby, "Three Waves of Technology," *op. cit.*, p. 4] The nature of this Heideggerian unveiling which veils is preserved in the etymology of the word *observing* which is derived from the Latin *observatio* (to watch, to guard) and is innately related to *observantia* that means, and this is important, "strict preservation of *ritual*." [Josef Holub and Stanislav Lye, *Stručný etymologický slovník jazyka českého*, *op. cit.*, p. 315] This means that all this "magic" consists in observing-conserving and following certain *formal arrangements-rituals* which are hidden and kept secret from the public view.

¹⁸⁶ Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Possessed*, *op. cit.*, p. 321.

¹⁸⁷ Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, *op. cit.*, p. 357.

manipulated time)

A great amount of revealing evidence with regard to such a design was provided by Franz Kafka. His works represent in this regard truly precious reports

on nihilism brought to mankind from inside of nihilistic order.¹⁸⁸ This nihilistic structure appears as a world-order turned upside down where Kafka's *Castle* = Kafka's Burrow = underworld = underground = grave = Tower of Babel.¹⁸⁹ The power of the underworld is established as a new "force of gravity" as an overcoming-undermining of seriousness [essentiality] of being by reproducing an apocalyptic "fall" of mankind. Only now, however, it is without any world to go to or stand upon.¹⁹⁰ The whole building thus resembles an open gigantic tomb that

¹⁸⁸ Kafka wrote: "I have changed my place, *I have left the upper world* and am in my burrow ... *It is a new world, endowing me with new powers ...* [italics added]." [Franz Kafka, *The Complete Stories*, op. cit., p. 341] On January 28, 1912, Kafka noted: "I am now a citizen of this other world, whose relationship to the ordinary one is the relationship of the wilderness to cultivated land ... in this world it is possible even for the humblest to be raised to the heights as if with lightning speed, though they can also be crushed forever ..." [Franz Kafka, *The Diaries of Franz Kafka*, 1914-1923, op. cit., p. 213] "And I long to say a last goodbye to everything up here, to go down into my burrow never to return again ..." [Franz Kafka, *The Complete Stories*, op. cit., pp. 335-6] Kafka's inner struggles and oscillations mark all his writings.

In his speech delivered in Jerusalem on April 26, 1990, Vaclav Havel did not only confirm the validity of Kafka's evidence, but he identified himself with the personality of Kafka: "[I have] a feeling that the only one who understands Kafka is nobody but me, therefore, nobody should interpret his work for me ... I am even deep in my soul convinced that if Kafka had not existed, and if I could write better than I can, I would write all his works myself ... I have always been finding in Kafka a great part of my own experience with the world, with myself and my own way of being in this world ... [I am] in a black hole that encircles me ... As if I was always running behind a platoon of strong and self-confident men, as if I could never reach them, not to mention, to be equal to them, I am essentially detestable to myself, and it appears that I only deserve a general ridicule ... my inner feeling of being excluded and not included, being somehow disinherited and ontologically inappropriate ... is the hidden engine of all my strenuous efforts ... all the good that I have ever done, I did perhaps *only to cover my almost metaphysical feeling of guilt* ... only to defend my constantly questioned right to exist ... I have thereby opened my cards more than I should have ... but [the reprimand-punishment] is exactly what I expect and what I deserve ... I am constantly ready for the worst [italics added]." [Vaclav Havel, *Projevy*, op. cit., pp. 100-103]

¹⁸⁹ On the interrelatedness and correspondence of the notions of *the Castle*, *the Burrow*, *underworld* and *grave* see Franz Kafka, *The Complete Stories*, op. cit., pp. 325-259; Paul Goodman, *Kafka's Prayer*, op. cit., pp. 118, 193; Franz Kafka, *Dearest Father: stories and other writings*, op. cit., p. 297. As a matter of fact, the concepts of the *Tower of Babel* and *wall* and their relation to nihilism were not Kafka's own inventions; they were first exposed in Dostoyevsky's novels. Moreover, Dostoyevsky's used the terms *Crystal Palace* and *mouse-hole* (burrow) for what Kafka defined as *the Castle*, while Dostoyevsky's notion of an *anthill* denotes Kafka's *village*. [See, for example, Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground & The Grand Inquisitor*, op. cit.; cf. Ellis Sandoz, *Political Apocalypse*, op. cit.]

¹⁹⁰ In other words, the Biblical Fall is turned into a constant "falling" into the finiteness of the Hegelian Evil-Ego. [See Franz Kafka, *Dearest Father: stories and other writings*, op. cit., p. 38 (aphorism 39); Franz Kafka, *Parables and Paradoxes*, op. cit., p. 123] Consequently, nihilism can also be defined as a deliberate falling a victim to the Biblical temptation: "Once again, ... [the

undermines and devours humanity, cutting off its roots in Being, space and time. It attacks man by attacking the ground of his stance ("as though the ground were giving way under every one's feet").¹⁹¹ In other words, such a design embodies a strategy that "creates a Void and then into there flood the life of time and the world."¹⁹² In this way, the regime *qua* grave orders being into its "systematic disorder" with itself,¹⁹³ falsifying and absorbing it into a closed system-structure of death, "a strictly ordered whole" of emptiness and non-being of appearances and images.¹⁹⁴ Therefore, there are two distinct worlds: the veiled, hidden one that is the true seat of power, and another visible system of formal power that is but "the illusory emptiness;" according to Kafka, everybody is considered as part of the property possessed by the "invisible" nihilistic order hidden behind apparent

devil] showed him all the kingdoms of the world in their glory. 'All these,' he said, 'I will give you, if you will *only fall down and do me homage*.'" [Matthew, 4:9]

¹⁹¹ Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Possessed*, op. cit., p. 334. On the notion of voidness created as if "under the feet" see also Franz Kafka, *The Complete Stories*, op. cit., pp. 247-248. Dostoyevsky described this phenomenon of undermining mankind by the nihilistic elite from below in the following way: "[It was] the idea of systematically undermining the foundations, systematically destroying society and all principles; with the idea of nonplussing every one and making hay of everything, and then, when society was tottering, sick and out of joint, cynical and sceptical though filled with an intense eagerness for self-preservation and for some guiding idea, suddenly to seize it in their hands, raising the standard of revolt and relying on a complete network of quintets, which were actively, meanwhile, gathering recruits and seeking out the weak spots which could be attacked." [Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Possessed*, op. cit., pp. 680-681] In other words, the nihilistic regime is an organized morbidity where, according to Kafka, "the best resource is ... to make yourself an inert mass ... to enlarge the final peace of the graveyard and let nothing survive save that." [Franz Kafka, *The Complete Stories*, op. cit., p. 398] In this light, the realm of the "upper" caste can be seen as a man-made hell of perversity as Dionysian-like "mysteries" of pleasure and excitement, that is to rule over the graveyard of mankind. To this effect, Havel's plays provide plenty of material; the orgies are presented there, however, in a truly Böhmsch "diminutive" fashion - as petty, superficial, shallow and rather ridiculous if, not boring. In addition to the above cited Petr Uhl's program of "social self management," on the idoltry of "demonism" of "orgastic sacramentality" as "exacerbation of the Secret," that should include sexuality in particular, see its philosophical elaboration by the spiritual father-leader of contemporary Böhmsch elite, Jan Patocka, *Kacírske eseje o filosofii dejin*, op. cit., pp. 108-126. Patocka's account of the orgastic dimension represents by far most of the content in the chapter titled "Is Technological Civilization Decadent, and Why?"

¹⁹² Paul Goodman, *Kafka's Prayer*, op. cit., p. 13.

¹⁹³ Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Possessed*, op. cit., p. 681.

¹⁹⁴ Franz Kafka, *Amerika*, op. cit., p. 84.

screens and systems of screening.¹⁹⁵ As Havel put it in his play *The Beggars' Opera*, which is about building and expanding a totalitarian system of state-power organized as mafia: "Nobody knows about our organization, and yet everyone serves it! ... Who does not know that he serves, always serves the best! Bonne appetite!"¹⁹⁶

Because of the old traditions, inertia and magics of projections and picture-reflections, people look for their (nihilistic) elites upwards, but the point is that in the case of the nihilistic order, there is *nothing* "up there." There is but the emptiness of illusions. Nihilism, thus turning and steering views-pictures away from itself in the very opposite direction, blinds and precludes true seeing. In this regard, Nietzsche's Zarathustra tries to say to the people in the market that "above" there is nothing more than illusionist entertainment embodied in the tightrope-walker and his performance in the air. However, it is all what the ignorant Last Men want - merely to be entertained, while Nietzsche's Zarathustra shows that the seriousness of nihilism is *downwards* where lies a dead man. The meaning of the overman *shall* also be "the earth."¹⁹⁷ Therefore, the "above" of nihilism is actually "below" - in the underworld of humanity.

It is "below" because it is a concealed empire built outside and against the

¹⁹⁵ Franz Kafka, *The Castle & The Trial*, op. cit., pp. 3-4.

¹⁹⁶ Vaclav Havel, *Zebracka opera*, op. cit., p. 85. Similarly, Paul I. Trensky, noted that the devil of Havel's play, appearing as a "narcissistic self-indulgence on the part of the author," is "a nihilist, the spirit of negation, who does not snare souls by promising material riches, but by *undermining* their resistance through the loss of trust in life's general meaning [*italics added*]." Trensky then had to ask "whether Havel's autobiographical surrogate did not succumb to the devil's plot after all, by being seduced to the sin of pride." [Paul I. Trensky, "Vaclav Havel's 'Temptation Cycle'," *Czechoslovak and Central European Journal*, Vol. 10, Winter 1991, No. 2: 91-92]

¹⁹⁷ Nietzsche, *The Portable Nietzsche*, op. cit., pp. 122-130. The story further reveals that the concern of Zarathustra (personalized nihilism) is a dead man: "For he wants to perish." [*Ibid.*, p. 127, 132-133]

law and justice. Being founded as radical exclusive egoism, it is a radical antithesis of the state as open polity of just balancing and gathering humanness in the togetherness with Being. In this way, the nation stripped off its defence, the legal state, becomes a mere Hegelian-Marxian "society" or masses to become later a herd-horde that is ruled and directed from "below" - by the lawlessness and often still formally illegal will of the mafia-elite (mafocracy). Only facing, that is, standing up against such nihilistic death provides a way from its fatal enclosure.

Consequently, Marx was in a certain sense correct in assigning the determinative role to the "base," that is, to the substructure from where the dependent "superstructure" of the nihilistic world is derived, shaped, corrupted, controlled and exploited. The essence of this substructure is, however, not merely economic or material. Its power consists rather in power of (veiled) organizational griding or webbing, being the Hegelian "absolute" power of separating and homogenizing, that binds the world and nations. This substructure, Marx's "base," is thus technologically formed. In this universal world subjugated by its underworld, the rulers hold *both* the conscience and bread of the people in their hands.¹⁹⁸ Dostoyevsky's *Grand Inquisitor* further explains: "When they obtain bread from us, they will of course clearly see that we take the bread made by their own hands from them to distribute it to them, that there is no sort of miracle there."¹⁹⁹ It is the ideology (control of conscience-guilt by making people commit the evil) and technology (*qua* screen - for example, that of interest rates and debt-guilt-enframing) that falsify the real, and present a false and subjective evil as real.

¹⁹⁸ Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground & The Grand Inquisitor*, op. cit., p. 133.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 134.

rational and objectively inevitable.²⁰⁰ It is a creation and reproduction of real and rational falsities *qua* nonentities.²⁰¹

Consequently, these two worlds are to each other as a "hell of virtue" (*the Village*) and "a heaven of vice" (*the Castle*); the latter being posited efficiency of the evil prescribes the inefficiency of virtue on the earth.²⁰² The substructure is Kafka's *Castle-Burrow*, while the superstructure is the *Village*, the realm of labouring servants, that is, people.²⁰³ These are two different post-historical worlds: the 'standing-reserve' of mankind *qua* machine-like tombstone inscribing on itself Kafkean death sentence and the grave of vice and lust below.²⁰⁴ They also present two different "times" conforming to the two orders of ranks. For the upper ordinary world, time is being abolished all except for its biological dimension, while the ruling evil acts as if from eternity or no-time because from merely biological time it is inaccessible.²⁰⁵ Consequently, people and rulers are strangers or rather aliens to each other.²⁰⁶ The underworld holds: the realm of Heideggerian "everydayness" in Hegelian falsity so that humanity is transformed by the

²⁰⁰ Dostoyevsky's *Inquisitor*, speaking about building "the terrible tower of Babel" as the bread-giving evil, stated: "No science [technology] will give[people] bread so long as they remain free. In the end they will lay their freedom at our feet, and say to us, 'Make us your slaves, but feed us! They will understand themselves, at last, that freedom and bread enough for all are inconceivable together ... They will be convinced, too, that they can never be free ...'" [Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground & The Grand Inquisitor*, op. cit., p. 127]

²⁰¹ Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Possessed*, op. cit., p. 447.

²⁰² See Franz Kafka, *The Diaries of Franz Kafka*, 1914-1923, op. cit., p. 192.

²⁰³ Cf. Franz Kafka, *Letters to Friends, Family, and Editors*, op. cit., p. 273.

²⁰⁴ In this connection, Kafka reported: "This filth is the nethermost depth you will find; at the nethermost depth there will be not lava, no, but filth. It is the nethermost and the uppermost, and even the doubts self-scrutiny begets will soon grow weak and self-complacent as the wallowing of a pig in muck." [Franz Kafka, *The Diaries of Franz Kafka*, 1914-1923, p. 114] It is a realization of the Biblical image of the evil of man entering the swine: "Then went the devils out of the man and entered into the swine." [Luke, 8:32-37] This was already noted by Fyodor Dostoyevsky. [See Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Possessed*, op. cit., p. 664]

²⁰⁵ See Paul Goodman, *Kafka's Prayer*, op. cit., p. 206.

²⁰⁶ Franz Kafka, *The Complete Stories*, op. cit., pp. 243, 248-249.

underlying nihilism into "an endlessly recurring zero."²⁰⁷ As a result, this New Order (global nihilism) prevents "the true World" from intervening in *the Castle* because it cannot gather itself together.²⁰⁸ The regime of nihilism, being turned on "its head," is organized irresponsibility set up in such a way as to ensure "the impossibility of direct conflict [and exposure]."²⁰⁹ In other words, under such a regime, "the true World" cannot remember or know itself. It is fragmented, separated and turned against itself by a nihilism-organized imitation of death that, in turn, forms mankind into a homogenized "unity of lifeless matter" in the form of the Universal and Homogeneous State.²¹⁰ It is such death that is binding mankind and its murderers in one system. The determinative factor is reduced to mostly informal, backstage *connections vis-à-vis the underground Castle*.²¹¹

The double nature of this nihilistic order produces double roles and double-faced rulers who are facing at the same time their commanding underworld and the entertained "above," showing to each of these distinct world different faces and

²⁰⁷ Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground & The Grand Inquisitor*, op. cit., p. 32.

²⁰⁸ Paul Goodman, *Kafka's Prayer*, op. cit., p. 246.

²⁰⁹ Such conditions, screens, customs and norms are created that *de facto* absolves the man-god and his "community of believers" from responsibility for their doings. [See Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground & The Grand Inquisitor*, op. cit., p. 22; Paul Goodman, *Kafka's Prayer*, op. cit., p. 175]

²¹⁰ See Franz Kafka, *The Castle & The Trial*, op. cit., p. 281. This post-historical unity of mankind in deadness was presented by Dostoevsky as a system of instituted totalitarian war against man: "Every member of the society spies on the others, and it's his duty to inform against them. Every one belongs to all and all to every one. All are slaves and equal in their slavery. In extreme cases he advocates slander and murder, but the great thing about it is equality. To begin with, the level of education, science, and talents is lowered. A high level of education and science is only possible for great intellects, and they are not wanted. The great intellects have seized the power and been despots. Great intellects cannot help being despots and they've always done more harm than good. They will be banished or put to death. Cicero will have his tongue cut out, Copernicus will have his eyes put out, Shakespeare will be stoned ..." [Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Possessed*, op. cit., p. 424]

²¹¹ See Franz Kafka, *The Castle & The Trial*, op. cit., pp. 395-396.

identities.²¹² Consequently, their schizophrenia and split personalities are a must for the maintenance of such power. In this way, people's communications with the formal "authorities" becomes from the point of view of *the Castle* "a practical joke."²¹³ In this regard, Kafka further explained: "You haven't once up to now come into real contact with our authorities. All those contacts of yours have been illusory, but because of your ignorance of the circumstances you take them to be real."²¹⁴

Consequently, *the Castle* is in the underground where also lies its meaning and secret.²¹⁵ As Kafka stressed, "a new secret doctrine" consists in "the assault on the last earthly frontier launched *from below*."²¹⁶ Not coincidentally then, Marx defined Communism (his goal) as world-wide prostitution. It is the "panders" of the nihilistic underground, who strive to extend their rule into a "global" or

²¹² As Kafka put it, "Maybe he really is chief tax-collector. But is that all?" [Franz Kafka, *Parables and Paradoxes*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1958), p. 165] Similarly, Kafka asks: "Then why does Barnabas doubt that the official who is referred to as Klammm is really Klammm?" [Franz Kafka, *The Castle & The Trial*, op. cit., p. 229] On the radical separation of the visible and real roles see also Franz Kafka, *Parables and Paradoxes*, op. cit., pp. 164-165. Some examples in this regard, substantiating the reality of Kafka's account, surfaced during the investigation of the Velvet "Refoolation." Thus, Bartuska recorded a testimony of Otakar Pilsky, the former chief of the inspection of the Czechoslovak Ministry of the Interior, who said on January 3, 1990 to the parliamentary committee that his task was also "to control the man whom you know under the name Lorenc," evidently implying that he might know him under other name. [Vaclav Bartuska, *Polojasno: Patrami po vinicich 17. listopadu 1989*, op. cit., p. 89] On other occasion, a former Deputy Interior Minister Prusa told Bartuska: "For example, I had been working here for three weeks with the former chief of the intelligence department ... preparing a strategy for the negotiations with the KGB. And only at the airport in Moscow I found out that this guy had a completely different name. As a matter of course, the Russians came and called him his right name. Here, nothing is real." [Ibid., p. 184]

²¹³ Franz Kafka, *The Castle & The Trial*, op. cit., p. 94.

²¹⁴ Ibid., p. 93.

²¹⁵ Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground & The Grand Inquisitor*, op. cit., p. 33; Franz Kafka, *The Complete Stories*, op. cit., p. 304. In this connection, Kafka also declared: "From outside [with regard to people] one will always triumphantly impress [false] theories [opinions-views] upon the world and then fall straight into the ditch one has dug, but only from inside will one keep oneself and the world quiet and true." [Franz Kafka, *Dearest Father: stories and other writings*, op. cit., pp. 66-67]

²¹⁶ Franz Kafka, *The Diaries of Franz Kafka, 1914-1923*, op. cit., pp. 202-203. Italics added.

"planetary system."²¹⁷

The crucial discovery made by the movement of nihilism was to build a new *Tower of Babel downwards* (Nietzsche's *going under*), that is *inter alia* a direction away from God. It is also a *letting-down*. It, therefore, epitomizes a conscious decision to build a hell.²¹⁸ It is an all-embracing *entombing* in a post-historical temple of death, out of ontological weakness.²¹⁹ In this way, *the Tower of Babel* has become *the pit of Babel*.²²⁰ As Kafka put it: "Nothing, nothing, nothing. Weakness, self-destruction, tip of a flame of hell piercing the floor."²²¹

Importantly, it is death, itself a product of the fear of death, that is due to provide and ensure its unshakable foundation.²²² Apparently, nihilism assumes that the most secure position is that one which is the most akin of death because it is viewed as indestructible.²²³ Accordingly, the speech of *the Castle* is death too.²²⁴ This nihilistic building is to be constructed in such a way so that "one can never be dragged out of it again by anybody."²²⁵ It is an apocalyptic home built out of fatal

²¹⁷ In this regard, Robert Musil stated: "The role of finance at the present day seemed to [a knowledgeable nihilist] similar to that of the Catholic Church, a power exerting influence from behind the scenes, unyieldingly yielding in its intercourse with the ruling powers ..." [Robert Musil, *The Man without Qualities*, Volume I, (London: Secker & Warburg, 1979), pp. 234-235]

²¹⁸ As Kafka stated in this regard, Evil is "the bricklayer." [Franz Kafka, *Dearest Father: stories and other writings*, op. cit., p. 368]

²¹⁹ Kafka said: "I dream of a grave, deep and narrow ... and nobody would ever see us any more." [Franz Kafka, *The Castle & The Trial*, op. cit., p. 182] See also Franz Kafka, *The Diaries of Franz Kafka*, 1914-1923, op. cit., p. 217; Franz Kafka, *The Complete Stories*, op. cit., pp. 339, 399-40, 433; Franz Kafka, *Dearest Father: stories and other writings*, op. cit., pp. 36, 74; Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground & The Grand Inquisitor*, op. cit., p. 11.

²²⁰ Franz Kafka, *Parables and Paradoxes*, op. cit., p. 35.

²²¹ Franz Kafka, *The Diaries of Franz Kafka*, 1910-1913, op. cit., p. 294.

²²² Cf. Franz Kafka, *The Complete Stories*, op. cit., p. 238. On the interrelatedness between the new Tower of Babel, man-made apocalypse and death see Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Possessed*, op. cit., pp. 6-7.

²²³ Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground & The Grand Inquisitor*, op. cit., p. 31. Cf., for example, Franz Kafka, *Dearest Father: stories and other writings*, op. cit., p. 349.

²²⁴ See Paul Goodman, *Kafka's Prayer*, op. cit., p. 227.

²²⁵ Franz Kafka, *The Complete Stories*, op. cit., p. 299.

fear because the nihilist can trust nothing but death *qua* nothing.²²⁶ From the psychological point of view, the Tower of Babel is "fundamentally reconstructing the inside of a mother's [womb]" with its "hidden opening, the mysterious passages" and unborn state of "perfect" homogeneity, un-consciousness, un-conscience, peace, security and ideal egotism.²²⁷ Identifying oneself with that underground order, a man is placed, as Kafka stressed, "once and for all outside our people, outside our humanity."²²⁸

Importantly, *the Tower of Babel* is the hiding place-burrow of the Hegelian "Imperial Ego" who is nobody but the tyrannical Father.²²⁹ Thus, according to the Böhmisches (initiated) nihilist, "it is almost always one individual who is the chief shareholder, a person unnamed and unknown to the general public, *screened* behind those whom he sends along in his place ... though the initiated know, of course, it is not usual to speak of it."²³⁰

The reign of that Hegelian Super-Ego over the underworld is said to be passed over as "paternal heritage."²³¹ This power is then translated and operationalized into a system that allocates identities and roles, while keeping their secret.²³² Even here in the regard of the more important positions, the connections

²²⁶ Franz Kafka, *The Complete Stories*, op. cit., pp. 335, 338; Franz Kafka, *Letters to Friends, Family, and Editors*, op. cit., p. 338.

²²⁷ Paul Goodman, *Kafka's Prayer*, op. cit., p. 225.

²²⁸ Franz Kafka, *The Diaries of Franz Kafka, 1910-1913*, op. cit., p. 26.

²²⁹ Consequently, as Kafka put it, the most powerful position in the state may be found under such conditions in someone's kitchen:

- "The higher officials keep themselves well hidden. But he's sitting in a chair of state."

- "That's all invention," said Leni, with her face bent over his hand. "Actually he is sitting on a kitchen chair, with an old horse-rug doubled under him."

[Franz Kafka, *The Castle & The Trial*, op. cit., p. 135]

²³⁰ Robert Musil, *The Man without Qualities*, Volume II, op. cit., p. 420. *Italics added.*

²³¹ Franz Kafka, *The Diaries of Franz Kafka, 1914-1923*, op. cit., p. 213; Paul Goodman, *Kafka's Prayer*, op. cit., pp. 13-14, 251.

²³² Franz Kafka, *The Castle & The Trial*, op. cit., p. 28; cf. Franz Kafka, *Amerika*, op. cit., p. 21.

are apparently transmitted as inheritance, and because of their sensitivity tend to be "confined to certain families."²³³ In this regard, Musil also pointed out: "This system of 'indirectness' [screens of Babel above the man-god] developed to the point of virtuosity ... The button one presses is always white and shining, and what happens at the other end of the line concerns other people who are, again, not those who press the button."²³⁴ This ensures the anonymity and impunity of the underground rulers, as well as the efficiency and security of the mechanism.²³⁵ Such a *pit of Babel* is a specific technology of power that does combine idea and practice because it is done through men. Its essence is a realization of the power will of "the distant and invisible interests of distant and invisible masters."²³⁶

According to Kafka, the "antechambers of *the Castle*," that is, the places occupied either by the formal rulers or eventually by the lowest informal servants, is the utmost limit which the outsiders, that is, people, are allowed to approach.²³⁷ To this effect, "the most visible points" of the system have to be emptied of the essence or authentic power, otherwise, as Kafka indicated, security of the nihilistic order would be brought down relatively soon.²³⁸ Consequently, "unrecognized posts often carry more influence with them than the official ones."²³⁹ Confidentiality of the essentiality of positions acts as a blinding power so that those with positions are not to know themselves what they are actually doing.²⁴⁰

²³³ Franz Kafka, *The Castle & The Trial*, op. cit., p. 190.

²³⁴ Robert Musil, *The Man without Qualities*, Volume II, op. cit., p. 421.

²³⁵ Paul Goodman, *Kafka's Prayer*, op. cit., p. 176.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, op. cit., p. 197.

²³⁷ Franz Kafka, *The Castle & The Trial*, op. cit., p. 461.

²³⁸ Franz Kafka, *Parables and Paradoxes*, op. cit., p. 185.

²³⁹ Franz Kafka, *The Castle & The Trial*, op. cit., p. 185.

²⁴⁰ Franz Kafka, *Amerika*, op. cit., p. 218.

All this boils down to the notion of visibility.²⁴¹ As Milan Kundera put it in his comments on Kafka, "the power which becomes less and less transparent ... demands from citizen that his life should become as transparent as possible."²⁴² Necessarily, this kind of system is rather costly - its great amount of waste is programmed and is part of the game. It is, in fact, particularly this waste of men, resources and time that creates the "efficient" screens covering the system.

The whole structure of the global order can be schematically divided into three major parts: *the Castle* itself, *the Village* and the crucial "joint" in between which is the state turned upside down (in terms of its main responsibilities), kidnapped, and alienated by the underground *Castle*. This corresponds to Kafka's three (principal) circles. The innermost (lowest) circle (*the Castle*) is the seat of power that orders a man (Kafka) that "he must not live." The outermost circle (*the Village*) is the realm of an ordinary man who acts more in fear than in understanding and is "merely terribly ordered" by the mediate or mediating circle of rules, laws, and the government. At the same time, the system is made in such a way so that the two circles of ordinary human life and the state are permanently collapsing and gravitating toward the inner one - as if merely by virtue of their sheer "weight."²⁴³

²⁴¹ T.G. Masaryk concluded that the operationalization of the Hegelian murder of philosophy, like Marxism, "is no longer a philosophy at all, but simply a *world outlook* which has to establish [organize] its validity ...[my italics]" [Erazim V. Kohak, ed. and translated, *Masaryk on Marx, An Abridged Edition of T.G. Masaryk: Social Question: Philosophical and Sociological Foundations of Marxism*, (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1972), p. 72]

²⁴² Quoted in Manfred Jahnichen, "The Destruction of a Myth: The Novel as a Possibility for the Exploration of Human Existence," *Czechoslovak and Central European Journal*, Vol. 10, Winter 1991, No. 2: 98.

²⁴³ See Franz Kafka, *Dearest Father: stories and other writings*, op. cit., p. 301. Jakub Deml, a Czech rebellious priest and outstanding poet, noted in this regard: "You are right: the most convenient life on this earth is that of an abyss: it does not make a single move and everything that it needs falls into it. But, my God, what does it take until it is hollowed!" [Jakub Deml, *Rodný kraj*, (Praha: Československý spisovatel., 1967), p. 191]

Such a design requires that society is tied, mapped and controlled by grids of "personal connections" which run "behind the scenes," that is, behind the official screens of power. Such "connections" de-substantiating the formally transparent, accountable and open state of affairs become the new commanding substance. The ends of these grids are firmly held by *the Castle*. Consequently, the prime backbone and nerve system of this order is necessarily based on the secret-police-type enframing.²⁴⁴ The system tends to become a totality so that everybody is forced, as if by *circumstances*, to participate in the parallel griding-society of the underworld.²⁴⁵ Consequently, *the Tower of Babel* can be also defined as a building made of grids *qua* men.²⁴⁶ Supervised ignorance of men-knots enframed in such a web is an imperative of blind obedience.²⁴⁷

The Archimedean, as well as Achilles's point of the system is the link-point, gate, joint between the underworld and human substructure, whereby the concealed and hidden has to be somehow unveiled, sanctioned and transmitted to people. This point of entrance is thus the key post, as well as the necessary "fundamental defect" (opening) in *the enframing Chinese Wall* of nihilism.²⁴⁸ The

²⁴⁴ Dostoyevsky compared members of the nihilist movement to "flies caught in a web by a huge spider." Suddenly realizing this, "they were furious, but they were trembling with terror." [Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Possessed*, op. cit., p. 561]

²⁴⁵ Franz Kafka, *The Castle & The Trial*, op. cit., p. 189.

²⁴⁶ Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground & The Grand Inquisitor*, op. cit., p. 22.

²⁴⁷ Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Possessed*, op. cit., p. 556.

²⁴⁸ Of course, nihilism would prefer "closing off entirely the opening through which one flows forth into the world." [Franz Kafka, *The Complete Stories*, op. cit., p. 322; Franz Kafka, *The Diaries of Franz Kafka, 1914-1923*, op. cit., p. 223; see also *ibid.*, p. 104] But the ironic tragedy of nihilism lies in the fact that it cannot be entirely done because nihilism as a post-historical slavery exists only as a global form of parasitism on the dead body of mankind (its labour) that requires that there still should be something to parasite on, that makes some kind of interconnections with the other world inevitable. Similarly, the technology of screens and images can be efficient only if they still parasite on some reality or real experience, although placed in a corrupted or false context. It is also almost impossible to make any connection strictly a one-way avenue. In this regard Kafka stressed: "It is impossible ... to accomplish the negative, unless you draw on a positive energy [the other] that is not striving [is dead]." [Paul Goodman, *Kafka's*

state torn away from its nation and turned against it is the decisive part of this Kafkean gate. In this way, the state functions like a two-way vent that helps to communicate the orders of *the Castle* to the upper *Village*, while preventing a rebellion of *the Village* against *the Castle* by taking the dissatisfaction and resentment on itself. People's logical alienation from that state is, however, channelled into support of dismantling the *nation* state. Thus, criticism becomes an inconsiderate rejection of one's own potential defence, that only enhances self-alienation and one's own vulnerability.

Generally, the mediating circle is not only the state absorbed by the underworld mafia, but all the Kafkean "gatekeepers" whose "job" is to make the human standing-up fall into the Biblical dust of nothing, thus, "preparing the way" for the apocalyptic beast (man-god) or "the great Madame."²⁴⁹ In this light, Kafka stated: "Often you can recognize yourself, if you pay attention, in the face of the servant at the door."²⁵⁰ In the same spirit, Kafka described his own position of gatekeeper as being "above an infernal abyss" above which, in turn, people are held tied together and kept hovering in ambiguity of being by invisible ropes of screens.²⁵¹ These gatekeepers are, however, only the shadows of the real rulers who are "living under another name."²⁵² In the similar way, they were addressed in Dostoyevsky's novel:

But you are abstractions, you are shadows, you are nothing. And nothing

Prayer, op. cit., pp. 12-13]

²⁴⁹ Franz Kafka, *The Diaries of Franz Kafka*, 1914-1923, op. cit., p. 179.

²⁵⁰ Franz Kafka, *The Diaries of Franz Kafka*, 1910-1913, op. cit., p. 23.

²⁵¹ Franz Kafka, *Letters to Friends, Family, and Editors*, op. cit., p. 12.

²⁵² See Franz Kafka, *The Diaries of Franz Kafka*, 1914-1923, op. cit., p. 214; Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Possessed*, op. cit., p. 520.

can come from nothing. You are foreign ideas. You are a mirage, You do not stand on soil but on air.²⁵³

The public gatekeepers of the underworld are connecting post-historical masters (the inside of *Castle*) with the post-historical animalized slaves (the outside *Village*), while keeping the inside "burrow" unfathomable.²⁵⁴ They are thus *the Wardens of the [Babel] Tomb*.²⁵⁵ Moreover, they are also the Marxian or Nietzschean gravediggers who are charged with burying mankind alive:

[Their] conduct can make one think of the corpse of a drowned man which, borne to the surface by some current, bumps against a tired swimmer, lays its hands upon him and would like to hold on. The corpse does not come alive, indeed is not even saved, but it can pull the man down.²⁵⁶

Every crime, including this, is in need of cover-up (screen) and alibi. It is provided by ideology and technology as part of the delusional projection of the apocalyptic glass-sand. In this regard, the guardians of *the Tomb* also appear "in a state of delusion."²⁵⁷ As such, they are permanently split in-between the two worlds, between crime and guilt, between their formal and real identities, responsibilities, and roles where both parts of the character are often mutually in a radical contradiction. This breaks apart the context as the gathering of meaning into systematic confusion.²⁵⁸ Schizophrenia is postulated as a must:

²⁵³ Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground & The Grand Inquisitor*, op. cit., p. 228.

²⁵⁴ See Franz Kafka, *Amerika*, op. cit., pp. 195-200.

²⁵⁵ Such is also the title of one Kafka's stories. [See Franz Kafka, *The Complete Stories*, op. cit., pp. 206-219]

²⁵⁶ Franz Kafka, *The Diaries of Franz Kafka*, 1910-1913, op. cit., p. 28.

²⁵⁷ Franz Kafka, *Parables and Paradoxes*, op. cit., p. 73.

²⁵⁸ Franz Kafka, *The Complete Stories*, op. cit., p. 245.

He with his modest character! - It's the modesty of the one half, for he needs all his energy for the second half which scrapes together the foundations of something like the Tower of Babel. To hinder this work should be the sole policy of all those who are interested in their personal existence, in the principality, in the Princess, and possibly even in the Prince [the formal ruler *qua* gatekeeper and guardian of the beast].²⁵⁹

This Archimedean point of the nihilistic order is both gate and wall: "What used to be a dividing thread is now a wall, or a mountain range, or rather a grave."²⁶⁰ Marxian burying of the state is thus elucidated as being essentially a burying of mankind as we have known it. To this effect, it turns the state upside down. The construction of Kafka's *Chinese Wall* (Heidegger's enframing) turns to be an excavation of grave. Kafka also gave us an account of how the *Chinese Wall* had been built: "[B]efore the first stone was laid, the art of architecture, and especially that of masonry, had been proclaimed as the most important branch of knowledge throughout the whole area of a China that was to be walled around, and all other arts gained recognition insofar as they had reference to it."²⁶¹ The state turned upside down was apparently conceived as a kind of "undestroyable" cathedral built "with the wrong side out," that is, with the man's beats (gargoyles) protected inside and sacral images exhibited in place of the beasts as its facade. Because the project of death is nothing but a drastic and extreme reversal of humanity and its previous history, the construction of *the Wall* and *the Tower* of the Universal and Homogeneous State was to be gradual and piecemeal.²⁶² In this

²⁵⁹ Franz Kafka, *The Complete Stories*, op. cit., p. 217. The ancient Chinese war strategists already knew the danger: "If private affairs are carried over into public life, people will be of two minds ... If people are of two minds, the country will be in danger." [Zhuge Liang and Liu Ji, *Mastering the Art of War*, op. cit., p. 57]

²⁶⁰ Franz Kafka, *The Diaries of Franz Kafka, 1914-1923*, op. cit., p. 216.

²⁶¹ Franz Kafka, *The Complete Stories*, op. cit., p. 236.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 237-238, 241.

regard. Kafka also stressed: "Of course the script can't be a simple one; it's not supposed to kill a man straight off ..."²⁶³ Obviously, the apparent complexity and strategy of indirect, outflanking manoeuvre (enframing) was as much a means of defence as that of offence. However, the fact that Kafka was able to account for it and that we can already observe it ourselves is a clear sign that the building of the post-historical empire has significantly advanced. It began to *matter* and concerns now most of us. As Kafka put it, "the news of the building of the wall now penetrated into this world - late ..."²⁶⁴ The finishing of *the Wall* as a global or total enclosure of mankind in the cage-grids of nihilism equals the expropriation of the state by the underground of nihilism. According to what Kafka wrote in this regard, it appears that the structure was in principle completed around 1917-1919, that is coincidentally also the time of the Russian socialist revolution.²⁶⁵

The Wall as the alienated state and control over the world as (Heideggerian) picture signifies reduction and mortification of the human will.²⁶⁶ It is the "frontier" between the (human) man and the other, occupied, guarded and "policed" by the latter.²⁶⁷ This frontier-wall instead of being a measure of balancing has thus become a shield of nihilism and cage for humanity.²⁶⁸ This *Great Wall* is to be a confinement of questions and to prevent "the return of the repressed."²⁶⁹ In this connection, Kafka further stated: "The Great Wall alone

²⁶³ Franz Kafka, *The Complete Stories*, p. 149.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 248.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 235; Paul Goodman, *Kafka's Prayer*, op. cit., p. 235.

²⁶⁶ See Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground & The Grand Inquisitor*, op. cit., p. xii.

²⁶⁷ Franz Kafka, *The Complete Stories*, op. cit., p. 207.

²⁶⁸ See especially Kafka's story "The Great Wall of China" in Franz Kafka, *The Complete Stories*, op. cit., pp. 235-248, also Franz Kafka, *Dearest Father: stories and other writings*, op. cit., p. 36.

²⁶⁹ Paul Goodman, *Kafka's Prayer*, op. cit., pp. 236-238.

would provide for the first time in the history of mankind a secure foundations for a new Tower of Babel. First the wall, therefore, and then the tower."²⁷⁰ It is to protect the man-god-emperor, not the people.

By the means of *that Tower of Babel*, the denial of God is organized, and "the founder [of the Tower of Babel - the man-god] tears himself free from the Good, becomes incarnate."²⁷¹ At the moment of the completion of the cage grave of Babel, the final sacrifice-murder of mankind is to be definitively proclaimed.²⁷² According to Dostoevsky, "that is some sort of biblical spectacle, something like Babylon, some prophecy of the Apocalypse coming to pass before your very eyes."²⁷³ In the meantime, this coming apocalyptic order appears as the "biggest" and yet "ever-enlarging theatre in the world," so that it can be easily assumed that "there are almost no limits to it."²⁷⁴ Yet, Kafka's hero himself cannot avoid a deep suspicion that "though all your endeavours were aimed at establishing the victory of the Castle beyond any doubt," and even if "the Castle in itself is infinitely more powerful than you are; nevertheless there might still be some doubt whether it will win ..."²⁷⁵

6.6. Nihilistic Hatred: Departure from Being

How can death be overcome? The ethos of the Czech language, as well as of other Slavic languages, the Hegelian displacement of destiny by a universal and

²⁷⁰ Franz Kafka, *Parables and Paradoxes*, op. cit., pp. 25, 23.

²⁷¹ Franz Kafka, *Dearest Father: stories and other writings*, op. cit., p. 75.

²⁷² Franz Kafka, *Letters to Friends, Family, and Editors*, op. cit., p. 285.

²⁷³ Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground & The Grand Inquisitor*, op. cit., p. 182.

Goodman suggested in this regard that "morally it has miserable defects." [Paul Goodman, *Kafka's Prayer*, op. cit., p. 117]

²⁷⁴ Franz Kafka, *Amerika*, op. cit., pp. 279-280.

²⁷⁵ Franz Kafka, *The Castle & The Trial*, op. cit., p. 477.

homogeneous space of the Hegelian Ego exempt from repercussions of justice is not acknowledged. In particular, in Czech, both "destiny" and "fate" are unified in one single word *osud* that actually means "assignment" and "judgement" whose ground is justice. Life is thus understood as one's trial during which man chooses his own deeds and own way of life as a (meaningful) fulfilment of his *osud*. Justice is thus realized in the form of *osud* where death is its essential part and condition. Space and time are united by the notion of *way* that revolves around justice and is liable to open examination and judgement. Con-science and *consciousness* (*svědomí* and *vědomí*) are not just a dialogue or dissonance between me and I (as it is the case with Hannah Arendt), but is rooted in a *We*, which is also the traditionally sovereign place of God.²⁷⁶ Our modern experience with nihilism has made it evident that *We* without God is false, empty, and lethal for us.²⁷⁷ In turn, this crucial commonality of *We* is impossible without thinking it and acting upon it

²⁷⁶ See Hannah Arendt's article "Thinking and Moral Considerations: A Lecture," *Social Research*, No. 38, 1971: 417-446. First, Hannah Arendt separates thinking from knowing (good and evil), then reduces thinking to the Cartesian *ego cogito (ergo) sum*, where it is only the ego that thinks itself. On this basis, it is understandable that she cannot find any ground for evil or good - something she has probably hoped for from the beginning. Yet, in the second half of her article, she cannot help but stumble over the phenomenon of conscience that is *still* there. The very word "conscience" indicates some togetherness. In order to avoid good and evil that is dangerously lurking through conscience, she sets for another reduction and separation by de-constructing conscience into an "intercourse between me and myself," so she goes back to the ego, but multiplies it or rather *splits herself* at this time by two. Whence the ego *knows* that the other myself is evil or how it comes that I can know this myself as a "murderer," she cannot tell and yet she uses these apparent truths as if they were given *a priori*. Finally, a reconciliation is sought in delegating conscience to the realm of ostensible ego-solitude (so again to the exclusiveness of ego, or to the egoism of conscience) and as a mere "side-effect" and "by-product" (of what? one may be compelled to ask); in terms of time, conscience is delegated to *night* and, more importantly, locked exclusively in *post factum*. However, one may clearly feel how Arendt herself could have been tormented: "[the ability to tell right from wrong] may indeed *prevent catastrophes, at least for myself, in the rare moments when the chips are down* [my italics]." [Ibid., p. 446]

²⁷⁷ Notably, *thinking* self-conscious and active nihilists are well aware of this need for a God. See the already mentioned account of Martin Heidegger, "Only a God Can Save Us," or his concept of "fundamental *subiectum*" of a man (Nietzschean superman) turned into God and thus standing for the world as *Being*, that is the *We*, a vision-project elaborated in his essay "The Age of the World Picture" in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, op. cit., pp. 115-154.

in a way that creates a meaning and our share in it. Thinking and action, *when shared*, create both human space and time, thus, also make a new breath for mankind. Creation is mutual opening. Consequently, participating in thinking and action makes human space and time open-ended because their results are unknown beforehand. The affirmation of this essential open-endedness of Being is initiated, maintained and constantly resurrected by the euphony of timing, parting, sharing and measuring that also includes death as part of the balancing and measuring judgment. To this effect, a necessary prerequisite of salvation is recovering the *human* virtues like courage wisdom, justice, courage and moderation.

It is necessary to return to Socrates who, while standing on a trial and himself facing death, claimed that there are things that are faster than death.²⁷⁸ What are those "things"? Apparently that what has been made so scarce (this scarcity being a man-made *fact* of our age): thinking and action. Yet, it is evident that thinking and action are necessary conditions for knowing. Action *qua* thinking and action *qua* act are in this context an exposure of this apocalypse-like beast. He who knows its essence is also able to hold it.²⁷⁹

It was not really a matter of Socrates' inability or failure, as nihilism likes to see it, that Socrates gave only open-ended answers. On the contrary, he was too wise to be enframed in the fallacy of nihilism or pursuing nihilism himself. The dialogue *Gorgias*, as well as others of Socrates's last dialogues, make it quite clear that he was well aware of the inherent danger confronting humans and realized that to give complete, perfect, ready-made and instant doctrines would be false and

²⁷⁸ Plato, *Apology*, 39b.

²⁷⁹ On the concept of such knowing "in the utterly primordial sense" see Heidegger's interview "Only a God Can Save Us," *op. cit.*, p. 109.

nothing but nihilism. This is why he refrained from prescribing definite definitions.

In this way, Socrates recognized the courage of heroes of ancient times only in relation to justice (that evolved later into the art-quality of *conscience*). Justice was demanded by wisdom, the highest art of knowing and being in the *dôme* [*dom* in the Slavic languages] of the *We*. Moreover, the notion and experiencing of *We* was impossible and inviable without God. To maintain and raise the vital link of the *We* with God and, thus, to let the *We* as such endure was a heroic deed. It was the hero who connected the mortal with the divine and eternal.²⁸⁰ Wisdom as the measuring criterion and justice as the measurement requires moderation, that is, respect for measure.²⁸¹ These virtues were part of man's true way of living. The ultimate measure was the God and man's openness toward Him. A hero without these virtues was impossible.

It is, therefore, not a coincidence that the reevaluating of virtues by Machiavelli undertaken in his *Prince* as a basis of modern politics amounted to the death of heroes *qua* heroes. Modern heroes tend to be dispensed of in favour of conspirators or paid collaborators. Cowardice has been discovered as more "efficient" and profitable in relation to the needs of the system. Independent-minded heroes (evidently, no heroism is possible with a slavish mind) have become either the first targets for extermination or primary concern for the secret police. Instead of a culture of virtues cultivating the capability to *stand up*, the post-

²⁸⁰ The concept of justice as harmony, balance, togetherness and openness of Being and its relation to heroic virtues are well presented in Socrates' dialogue with Gorgias and Callicles, see Plato, *Gorgias*, 503e-504h, 507c, 508a, 509a-10a, 521d, 527d-e.

²⁸¹ In the Czech language, measure is *míra*, and *mír* means world (the *We*) and also peace (with such togetherness), thus embracing both a state of being and a way of being. This is further enhanced by a series of words grouped around the verb *mirít* denoting notions of aim, direction and harmony.

historical culture appears as a cultivation of weakness, stupidity and vices of the masses.²⁸² As Kafka explained, nihilists "prefer to undo the knowledge of good and evil" because they "wish to rest" [from the anxiety of justice] for an ever-lasting moment. Therefore, nihilism is "an attempt to falsify the fact of knowledge [of good and evil]" by "trying to turn the knowledge into the goal [a Hegelian "dialectical" process]."²⁸³

At this point, we can better understand from where Hegel departed, and of what his project consisted. In the preface to his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, now the Bible of the death of man, Hegel declared: "To help bring philosophy closer to the form of Science, to the goal where it can lay aside the title 'love of knowing' and be *actual* knowing - that is what I have myself to do."²⁸⁴ The Hegelian project of death, therefore, separates *love* from *knowing*, assuming that the Ego would thereby confer on itself Absolute Being and Wisdom. Our inquiry showed that, in such a nihilistic ethos, *love* is actually substituted by total *hatred*.²⁸⁵ Consequently, instead of philosophy, Hegel founded what can be called not the *Absolute Wisdom*,

²⁸² As a nihilistic initiated leader in Dostoevsky's novel *The Possessed* put it, "the essence of our creed is the negation of honour," that is an "advocacy of a right to be dishonourable" and to "dishonour." [Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Possessed*, op. cit., p. 394]

²⁸³ Franz Kafka, *Dearest Father: stories and other writings*, op. cit., p. 44.

²⁸⁴ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, op. cit., p. 3.

²⁸⁵ As a matter of fact, analyses of nihilistically oriented personalities show that the decision-discovery to separate love from knowing is not really a matter of deliberate choice, but is rather made out of necessity - because of the impotence to love. Hegel's System is also apparently a titanic attempt to justify and cover such a defect by the means of his Absoluteness. All that "love" boils down to a various kind of possessiveness, egoism, narcissism or revengefulness. [See, for example, Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground & The Grand Inquisitor*, op. cit., p. 15] The nihilist from Dostoevsky's underground states in this regard what applies to nihilism in general: "I had never in my life ever been able to imagine any other sort of love ... [than of tyrannizing] ... I always began it with hatred and ended it with moral subjugation, and afterward I could never imagine what to do with the subjugated object." [Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground & The Grand Inquisitor*, op. cit., p. 111] Similarly, a nihilist character in Dostoevsky's *Possessed* states: "I could never love any one, and that there was nothing here but lust." [Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Possessed*, op. cit., p. 717]

but *phobiosophy*.²⁸⁶ The fatal irony is that Being does not know any neutral or completely sterile ground. It is an illusion or delusion.²⁸⁷

The point is that love itself is a way of knowing inasmuch as knowing is a way of love. Life is impossible without love and vice versa, while death might seem to a man as being in need only of oneself. What is positive (Being) is innately tied to an underlying love. Essentially, knowledge is both a *realizing* and *relation* with regard to being. One can venture to say that it is love that makes one's relation and realization the most *meaningful*. As Jan Hus, the Czech priest-martyr of the XVth century stated, the more you know Being rooted in God, the more and better you love the truth, the more you love, the more the others will also love you.²⁸⁸ Such is also the essence of philosophy as the human art of loving to know and of knowing to love. Without loving the meaningfulness of being is lost. This is also, but *negatively*, proven by the Hegelian system: its post-historical reduction of man to metabolism, loss of speech and meaning, abolishment of politics and death of man all clearly testify to that. Moreover, when love, knowing and being are separated, the result is inevitably Hegel's death of humanity and the end of history in the form of the dictatorship of a hateful and resentful self-absolutizing Ego that realizes its falsity.

In this way, Hegel's phobiosophy had then only one way - its circular, self-referring dialectics of the *negation* and *the negative*. The knowledge of this Ego is

²⁸⁶ It is notable that *phobiosophy* is clearly a contradiction of terms: a form of knowledge which is a hatred of knowledge, or a form of knowledge how not to be. When one is not, one cannot even know it. Practically, it, therefore, can exist only as a knowledge and know-how of hating.

²⁸⁷ Thus, Jan Hus stated: "It follows that nobody can be neutral as far as virtue or vice are concerned since one must be either in the God's grace and outside the grace, thus, no human life can be neutral." [Mistr Jan Hus, *O cirkvi*, (Praha: Nakladatelství CSAV, 1965), p. 169]

²⁸⁸ Jan Hus, *Dcerka: o poznání prave cesty ke spasení*, (Praha: Křesťanské nakladatelství, 1946), p. 8.

also a knowledge, but of a different kind. It is not the Socratean *human* wisdom where the wisdom with regard to the measure *qua* justice *qua* harmonic beauty *qua* love is our share in the true Being. Hegel's being is knowing and willing nothingness.²⁸⁹

Consequently, there are in principle two ways towards Absolute Being: either absolute love or absolute hatred accessible only to a God. Hegel wanted to be a God, and, knowing the weakness of the slave, he chose the way of hatred as the more feasible one. This required that men surrender their ability to distinguish and decide between good and evil which is "the human wisdom perhaps" of Socrates which this ancient philosopher tried to revive among his co-citizens.

To obliterate this kind of knowledge that makes us human, nihilism, knowing that evil is a property of weakness, holds that people are and should be kept too "weak for the good," while a universal and homogeneous weakness (The Universal and Homogeneous State) is a nihilistic "democracy" where "the evil is [as if] for everybody" as the lowest common denominator and bondage.²⁹⁰ As Kafka himself pronounced, a completely definable and finite "knowledge of oneself [Hegel's absolute spirit-self-consciousness] is something only Evil has;"

²⁸⁹ Again, Dostoyevsky, the great master of nihilistic psychology, revealed in a succinct the spiritual interrelatedness between the project of death and the corresponding inner state of mind: "We are even oppressed by being men ... [so, we] try to contrive to be some sort of *impossible* generalized man. We are *still* born, and for many years we have not been begotten by *living* fathers [living God], and that suits us better and better. ... Soon we shall somehow contrive to be born from an idea [ideology]." [Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground & The Grand Inquisitor*, op. cit., p. 115] Italics added.

²⁹⁰ Ibid., pp. 43-44. Kafka *de facto* repeats what Dostoyevsky's Grand Inquisitor had already declared - the ethos of "democratic" weakness: "Yes, we shall set them to work, but in their leisure hours we shall make their life like a child's game, with children's songs, choruses and innocent dances. Oh, we shall even allow them sin, they are weak and impotent ... We shall tell them that every sin will be expiated, if it is done with our permission ... And they will have no secrets from us. We shall allow or forbid them to live with their wives and mistresses, to have children or not to have them - depending on their obedience - and they will submit to us gladly and cheerfully." [Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground & The Grand Inquisitor*, op. cit., p. 134-135]

and his means is the dialogue of the negative (negation of negation).²⁹¹ In fact, nihilism is also a belief that it discovered the meaning of the Biblical fall, and hence the purpose and direction of world history as being the time (history) and fulfilment of death. Thus, siding with death, it assumes that is riding the most powerful world-historical force of history, somehow not realizing that it is doing so, but - and this is important - in the *negative* way.²⁹² This negative "completion" of history consists in organizing human death on a global scale. The decisive deficiency of the Hegelian spirit is its ontological impotence: it cannot give life, it can only destroy it.²⁹³ Nihilism is, therefore, a radical and serious attempt at a man-god, that is, an Anti-Christ.²⁹⁴ Socrates was wise as a human, Hegel was wise as a living dead. Here, the choice is fundamentally a question of man's *character*: "The humane and the violent apply different norms."²⁹⁵ Without *caring*, being falls apart or rather a man falls "away" from it. In this sense, a man with a character = *caretaker*.

Summarizing our previous discussion, the end of history as the death of humanity can be apparently overcome by man whose time is *the present* and which

²⁹¹ Franz Kafka, *Dearest Father: stories and other writings*, op. cit., p. 75.

²⁹² Hegel and Marx provide plenty of evidence to this fundamentally *negative* way of realizing destiny, history and power held as *the* omnipotent magic. This belief is also the basis of the "Platonic" discourse of Leo Strauss, which presents one of the most recent reconfirmation of that ethos together with its broader context. [See Leo Strauss, *Studies in Platonic Political Philosophy*, op. cit.] This was also known to Kafka who in this spirit defined the evolution of mankind as "a growth of death-force." [Franz Kafka, *Dearest Father: stories and other writings*, op. cit., p. 101] In other place, Kafka also announces that it is believed [by nihilism] that "this world can be destroyed only by means of being carried to its logical conclusion, and not by renunciation; and this means, of course, that carrying it to its logical conclusion can only be a series of acts of destruction, but within the framework of this world." [Ibid., p. 90] Kafka, however, also knew and was also able to admit that "with this you deny the Creation of the World and refute yourself." [Ibid. pp. 91-92]

²⁹³ Cf. Franz Kafka, *Dearest Father: stories and other writings*, op. cit., p. 196.

²⁹⁴ Dostoyevsky's nihilist admits: "I do believe in the devil, I believe canonically, in a personal devil, not in an allegory ..." [Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Possessed*, op. cit., p. 697]

²⁹⁵ Zhuge Liang and Liu Ji, *Mastering the Art of War*, op. cit., p. 9.

returns to and intervenes in the space of the world by holding man and being open for a quest and question.²⁹⁶ In this way, death can be overcome by a man who is able to gather together his human faith, space and time into his human presence and ultimately making God present for man again. In other words, overcoming death is a matter of justice.²⁹⁷ Death is a necessary part of Being, but not the whole. And moreover, there are a plurality of possible deaths, some lead to humanity, and some the other away - into the nothingness of the evil.

²⁹⁶ In the Czech language, time is "čas", while "part" is "část". "Part" as a necessary prerequisite for participation ("účast") in Being also requires time to achieve a synthesis of man with space and time, thereby accomplishing a human harmony with Being. In this sense, the art of being is also the art of p-arting.

²⁹⁷ In the Czech language, the notion of measure is recognized as fundamental in the interrelatedness of meanings contained in the words "míra" (measure), "mír" (peace and world), "umírání" (dying), "usmířit" (to reconcile), "mířit" (to proceed toward, to take aim, aspire) etc.

CHAPTER 7

THE ARCHIMEDEAN POINT AND EXTERNALITY OF BÖHMISCH NIHILISM

Examining the demise of Czechoslovakia within the context of nihilism and the making of the Universal and Homogeneous State, it can be concluded that the gathered evidence and findings provide a good degree of substantiation for the initial hypotheses. In particular:

- 1) the systemic nature of the "failures" of the Czech (Böhmisch) elites appears to prevail over mere unplanned contingencies. Moreover, the apparent "mistakes" or "errors" can be seen to a great extent as instrumental for the implementation of the nihilistic project. In this regard, Böhmisch nihilism may be viewed quite reasonably as a co-defining and border-setting moment-experiment in the making of the post-historical Universal and Homogenous State;
- 2) the commanding principle of (Böhmisch) nihilism is (political) death of man as human. This is politically achieved by negating the *political* dimension of man as embodied in a political body of the nation and the state. The nihilism-expropriated state thereby forfeits its very political purpose. In the concrete case study of Bohemia, this practically amounts to a tendency to dismantle the nation and its state and assimilate them in a body of Germanic 'being' that appears as a grounding spirit of nihilism.
- 3) the inquiry into different phases, that appear as mutual negations, shows their underlying essential rootedness in a totalizing ego-consciousness of nihilism;
- 4) the essence of Marxism lies in nihilism as well. Such a notion also helps to elucidate further the essence and dynamics of the post-Communist transformation;

5) it also became evident that the recovery of existential meaning is as much a matter of justice, as an imperative of overcoming nihilism *qua project of death and politics of death*. This presupposes a radical unconcealment of the underlying essence of Hegelian apocalyptic politics, philosophy and death-ethos, its technology and structural set-up. Admittedly, this is also what the precedent question has been aiming at. In this regard, the apparent dependence of the Czech (Böhmisch) elite on external factors can also be reconsidered in the light of such nihilism and in the framework of its dialectical projection of the negative presented in the concrete dichotomy of *the Castle and the new Village of Babel*.¹

From the late 1930s onwards, Czechoslovakia, respectively Bohemia, has been subjected to external dominance, control and dictate that has been at a radical variance with the historical Bohemian ethos which acknowledges the human *ability, dignity and freedom* to distinguish and *tell* the good (justice) from the evil (injustice against man) through the commonly established and shared *open* conscience of being and belonging (principle of *philosophy*). As such, it is a consciousness of commonly agreed (conservative) measure and self-restraint. It can be defined as the independent, sovereign (*svěbytný*) aristocracy of spirit that knows good and evil and because of that insight it is able to strike and maintain orderliness and balance, as well as its accountability. Here, the aristocracy of spirit is not a privilege to claim and withhold something that others should not have, but a concrete duty, a bond of responsibility that transcends *Ich – Ich*. It is the ability to decide and stand up to that decision, while consciously identifying

¹ As A.H. Hermann noted, "a prisoner who begins to see himself with the eyes of his jailers and adopts their view of himself will sooner or later suffer a disintegration of his personality." [A.H. Hermann, *A History of the Czechs*, op. cit., p. 296]

oneself with conscience, that is, with the chosen context (ethos) of belonging to all those who have been before and will be after us. It is an allegiance to a concrete character. Such aristocracy of spirit is the same as a cultivation of character (virtuousness) and dignity of man. In this way, there is only one true "choseness" that consists in choosing knowingly one's true *character*.² Such is also the meaning of the original notion of aristocracy and *arete*.³ Nihilism offers either a Nietzschean "blond beast") and/or a "man without qualities" - non-character = negative nothingness.⁴

Notably, Musil's "man without qualities" is in principle Skvorecky's coward who, being fear of the other (death), desires at the same time to be determined and "filled" by it: "And all he knew was that he needed it because he

² On that (Bohemian) notion of conscience and character see Jan Hus, *Dcerka: o poznani prave cesty ke spaseni*, op. cit.

³ See Aristotle, *Politics*, Book III, chapters IV, VI, VII, IX, XII, XVII, XVIII; Book IV, chapters VII-IX; Book VII, chapters I-III, XIII-XV.

⁴ On the nihilistic concept-ideal of "man without qualities" see the monumental work by Robert Musil, *The Man without Qualities*, Volume I, (London: Secker & Warburg, 1979); Robert Musil, *The Man without Qualities*, Volume II, (London: Secker & Warburg, 1961); Robert Musil, *The Man without Qualities*, Volume III, (London: Secker & Warburg, 1965). A "man without qualities" can be defined as "a nihilist, dreaming of God's dreams - in contrast with the activist, who is, however, with his impatient way of acting, a kind of God's dreamer too, and anything but a realist ..." [Robert Musil, *The Man without Qualities*, Volume I, (London: Secker & Warburg, 1979), pp. xxiii-xxiv] Musil also defined such a man of nihilism in the Hegelian fashion as "nothing":

"He is a man without qualities!"

"What is that? Clarisse asked, with a little laugh.

"Nothing. That's just the point - it's nothing!"

[Robert Musil, *The Man without Qualities*, Volume I, op. cit., p. 70]

In this light, the Böhmsch elite is evidently created and shaped in the image and likeness of such a "man without qualities" who is shaped, defined and filled completely "by the [external] other," that is, by the "active nihilistic [Germanic] superman" who as the true Hegelian Ego recognizes itself in the former void of qualities (character), and absorbs and annihilates it. The nothingness of the man without qualities is, therefore, basically passive (dependent), while the other nothingness is aggressive and commanding. Of course, both cannot be completely separated from each other, but are evidently moments or phases of the same. Coincidentally, Robert Musil was himself a Germanized (assimilated) Bohemian. Before Musil, the phenomenon of a characterless nihilist (a man *qua* nothing) fearing "an active man of character" had already been observed by Dostoyevsky, [See Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *Notes from Underground & The Grand Inquisitor*, op. cit., p. 5]

was a coward; that he knew "5 Because nothingness cannot exist on its own except, perhaps, as a contemplated state of death, it always has to rely on some Archimedean point outside itself, while the aristocracy of character grows from trust, confidence and self-reliance - all that the Hegelian Spirit delegated (with regard to itself) only at the moment of man's death at the end of history. In other words, character is a question of reliability, hence the prestige of ancient aristocracy preserved is to a certain extent till today in the officer's rank of some armies (*důstojnictvo*).⁶

It is evident that sole concentration on the Czecho-German struggle is by itself negative, because, as the language itself indicates, struggling 'against' amounts to struggling 'with.' In this way, struggle itself is already a (too often inevitable) form of dependence. Fighting as such is by its nature not creative, but essentially destructive. On the other hand, the encounter also unveils the vital need-imperative to examine, redefine and gather again one's conscience, consciousness and character. It is, therefore, a question of wisdom and character whether the choice is the negative (either as surrender or hatred) or the positive asserting and remembering who we truly are in our own right. Nihilism is an opting for the negative, for dependence.⁷ In this way, all that matters to the

⁵ Robert Musil, *Five Women*, (New York: Delacorte Press, 1966), p. 179.

⁶ The Czech word for officers *důstojnictvo* still preserves this ancient ethos. It is related to the adjective *důstojný*, meaning "dignified" or "honorable," which is still used with regard to priests in such expressions as *důstojný (ctihodný) otec* (Father). It is derived from the verb *dostat* that literally means "to stand up to one's word or promise." [See Josef Holub and Stanislav Lyer, *Stručný etymologický slovník jazyka českého*, op. cit., p. 136]

⁷ Thus, according to Vaclav Havel, the Czechs [should] "define themselves not only politically, but also philosophically by their attitude towards Germany and the Germans and [should] delineate by the type of this attitude not only their relation towards their own history, but also a form of their national and state self-consciousness [existence]." [*Zemědělské noviny*, February 18, 1995, p. 4] Italics added.

Böhmisch "man without qualities [character]" is "to make things into what they are not."⁸ His task is, therefore, "to do without any meaning in life."⁹

The continuous tight identification with dependence on external powers by the Czechoslovak (Czech) political caste, their alienation from own authenticity and concealed embracement of nihilism have been crucial for the establishment and progression of a trend whose recent culmination (fall) was a relatively voluntary surrender and demise of the Czechoslovak state by that Böhmisch elite. Such dependence can be defined as a *systematic external restriction of freedom of choices*, decisions and actions of the country leading to a systemic reproduction of relative backwardness, underdevelopment or one-sided development that can be traced in politics, economy, social stratification, and culture (ethos of dependence determinism and mentality). This externally imposed restrictions and conditions systematically depreciate and devalue the potential of the nation, that is thus precluded from being utilized in the really effective and efficient way. Dependence is a system of deliberately produced waste and weakness. The essence of that dependence phenomenon is a deficit of identity and character that is then often covered up and/or betrayed by its apologetic slavishness or aggressive hysteria.¹⁰

The dependence of Böhmisch nihilism on the outside power is both cruel

⁸ Robert Musil, *The Man without Qualities*, Volume I, op. cit., p. 161.

⁹ Ibid., p. 255.

¹⁰ See Jaroslav Krejci, *O cestství a evropanství*, I. díl, op. cit., p. 17. Such nihilistic (negative) dependence caused by a lack of strength *qua* character ultimately enslaves man to the final weakness - to death and hatred of life. Thus, for Havel: "It is really difficult to say why a person should live. Of course: we did not give ourselves life, so we have no right to take it away. But what if someone replies that he never asked God for it in the first place? And what if he tells you that it's all the same to him who gave him life, it's he who has to live it, and not the one who gave it to him. Or if he replies that, if God gave him life, he forgot to give him *strength of character to bear it* [italics added]" [Vaclav Havel, *Disturbing the Peace: A Conversation with Karel Hvizdala*, op. cit., p. 188]

irony and uncanny evidence of falsity of the Böhmisch would-be men-god. They cannot play Gods and have their luxury without a permission and blessing by another power. Being essentially "without [own unalienable] qualities," Böhmisch nihilism depends on an external will for the choice and assignment of transient qualities, labels and images.

Political technology of forming (screens and screening) thereby become a sort of political cosmetic. Concretely, it also means that the secret of the being and identity of the Böhmisch elite is not owned by the elite themselves, but is a foreign possession. This is, however, also means a structurally reproduced "externality" of the Böhmisch elite with regard to own nation. This foreign determinative will is what can be defined as the fixed "Archimedean point" of Böhmisch politics. For a great part of post-1945 era, this Archimedean point was anchored in Moscow. After 1989, following the dismantlement of Communism, the elite needed a new external Archimedean point, as a source of its legitimation, power and political ideology. To this effect, the system of Böhmisch dependence found another anchor in Germany and the European Union, appearing as systematically growing radical "asymmetries" of political and economic gains, losses and one-sided, "voluntarily demanded" conditionality.¹¹ Alternative policies were blocked or "screened out" by

¹¹ See, for example, Kalypso Nicolaidis, "East European Trade in the Aftermath of 1989: Did International Institutions Matter?" in Robert O. Keohane, Joseph S. Nye, and Stanley Hoffmann, eds., *After the Cold War: International Institutions and State Strategies in Europe, 1989-1991*, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard UP, 1993), pp. 207, 242-243; Stephen Haggard and Andrew Moravcsik, "The Political Economy of Assistance to Eastern Europe, 1989-1991", in Robert O. Keohane, Joseph S. Nye, and Stanley Hoffmann eds., *After the Cold War: International Institutions and State Strategies in Europe, 1989-1991*, op. cit., p. 255; Jeffrey Sachs, "Western Financial Assistance and Russia's Reforms", in S. Islam and M. Mandelbaum, Ed., *Making Markets*, (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1993), pp. 168-169; Marzia Mariotti, "EEC Policies towards Eastern European Countries", *Moot-Moot*, No. 3, 1993: 151, 153; *The European Agreement Concluded between the Czech Republic and the EU on 4.10.1993*, COM(93) 386, see especially Preamble and Article 6 and 117; Jeanne Kirk Laux, "From South to East? Financing the Transition in Central and Eastern Europe", in M. Molot and H. Von Reikhs, *Canada Among*

the previously established and currently reshaped *substructures* of pervasive dependence. Such a dialectic unity of continuity and discontinuity, in the case of Böhmsch nihilism, led to its preservation and further emancipation in a new setting and balance of power. The Böhmsch elite thereby found another life opportunity in a *new quality of dependence and alienation*. In this regard, the principal responsibility always belongs in the final to the domestic elite. Only in the very extreme case of death, no freedom and possibility of choice and action are available.

The nihilistic "physics" of the Archimedean point formulated by Kafka has obviously become the commanding law of such Böhmsch dependence: "He found the Archimedean point, but he used it against himself; it seems that he was permitted to find it only under this condition."¹² In this way, Böhmsch nihilism obtains its power and identity from outside, but only under a self-defeating condition of self-negation and denial. Inevitable, such projected existence becomes a Nietzschean *going-under* that is pushing and crushing the elite constantly *down*

Nations 1994: A Part of the Peace, (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1994), p. 179. In this regard, Jeanne Kirk Laux particularly stressed that "political conditionality gained a high moral tone with endorsement of liberal norms by the post-Communist regimes ..." [Ibid., p. 193] The identification of the elite with liberal values in general and with the European Union in particular has been a function of fostering its revamped identity. Without external support and acceptance, the post-Communist elite would have its internal legitimacy greatly weakened, if not undermined. By willingly accepting another dependence, the (post)Communist elites were in return promoted to the rank of liberals and democrats. Essentially, the new form of dependence appeared to be rather a merely *organizational and technical (technological)* problem on the part of the elites that resulted in a removal of obsolete screens and labels. As a result, the former power brokers continue keeping a *decisive comparative advantage of power* over the mass of the populations, and a new quality of underdevelopment is underway. As a result, the gap in macroeconomic performances between the Eastern European economies and those of EU has widened. In this regard, Prime Minister Klaus revealed that the growth of the GNP is "for the evaluation of the success of the reform all but irrelevant." [*Hospodarske noviny*, June 29, 1994, p. 1]

¹² Quoted in Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, op. cit., p. 248. Cf. Franz Kafka, *Dearest Father: stories and other writings*, op. cit., p. 378. Commenting on Czech-Böhmsch history, A.H. Hermann indicated that the need to cling to an outside source of existence takes place when the internal one is missing. [A.H. Hermann, *A History of the Czechs*, op. cit., p. 299]

by the means of "leverages" and control of the externally located, alien Archimedean point of its support and stability. It conspicuously resembles a deal with the devil. When demythologized, one reveals a fatal banality of an agent: whatever is done is improper because it is alien and, thus, self-destructive.¹³

The problem of that elite then becomes a problem of "Trojan horse" for the nation, as noted by Jaroslav Krejci with regard to the events of 1938, 1948 and 1968; the demise of Czechoslovakia in 1992 may be added to the list.¹⁴ In this regard, the Munich syndrome appears to be still cultivated and kept on the part of the political elite.

Obviously, when there is a lack in their own content and spirit, (dead) form becomes all. In this connection, it is also noteworthy that Havel is himself aware of the existing problem. "Until we understand how disastrous is every Munich like policy," Havel affirmed, "we will never have a firm or healthy ground for our future political behaviour."¹⁵ In other words, the mechanism of such Archimedean point of dependence is an institutionalized inferiority complex used here as a political force and tool.¹⁶ Interestingly enough, such nihilistic dependence also closely resembles a state normally associated with drug addiction. Havel's account formally ascribed to the latter dependence might also have a broader (political) validity. According to Havel, "dependence on drugs or alcohols is always

¹³ As Kafka stated: "Everything I possess is directed against me; what is directed against me is no longer a possession of mine." [Franz Kafka, *Letters to Friends, Family, and Editors*, op. cit., p. 65] On Havel's notion of the "aesthetics of banality" stemming from "spiritual and moral impotence" and "cultural castration" see Michaels Simmons, *Nesmely prezident* [The Reluctant President], (Praha: Volvox Globator, 1993), p. 115. In this regard, Ferdinand Peroutka stressed that hypocrisy, either imposed or voluntary, has always a price that is paid by the spirit (soul) of a man. [Ferdinand Peroutka, *Demokratický manifest*, op. cit., p. 104]

¹⁴ Jaroslav Krejci, *O cessivi a evropanskvi*, 1. díl, op. cit., p. 177.

¹⁵ Vaclav Havel, *1992 & 1993 (projevy)*, op. cit., p. 100.

¹⁶ Cf. Allan Bullock, *Hitler and Stalin: parallel lives*, op. cit., p. 363.

Twins

*Thy and I entwined
close our eyes
behind us*

We mean thyme to me and thy

*In a simple bloom
the body becomes the word
and feeds time*

So does all of We in you and I

Blázenci

*V objetí za sebou
zavíráme oči
Ty i Já*

Mezíme se spolu v tymuán

*Tvaroslovi boků
prosta i kvemata
a také materi*

Taková jsou všechna rymvja

Prague, 1987

something more than a mere sickness." In Havel's account, "a man found himself in a vacuum . . . as if he had no *firm point* to hold to, as if he had no horizon (measure) to which he could belong, as if he had lost all that integrates in his *picture of the world*, as if he had lost an *anchor* in nature and universe [my italics]."¹⁷ Gradually, such spiritual and political dependence evolves into what can be termed as a self-styled "cage" or "prison" syndrome on the part of thereby "captivated" or "kidnapped" elite. This phenomenon has been frequently reflected upon in in Havel's diagnosing speeches:

In prison, you are like a child in that everything is decided for you by someone else [that is by the invisible master *alias* the *absent spouse*] . . . [who] is the only member of his real world with whom he can correspond; [you] can see her occasionally, for a brief visit, and therefore she becomes the central representative of that real world; she is its ruler and its still centre, and ultimately she becomes the only focus of all his hope, and the only assurance that life has a meaning.¹⁸

According to Havel, "defending one's identity . . . is only possible if one has a solid, lasting, life-giving a meaningful relationship with the 'non-I'" that he deciphered in other place as being a certain "regime" (his "non-I").¹⁹ Interestingly, Havel describes in the same way his key (and cryptic) concept and experience of "the absolute" (horizon) that is also his "point of stability," "the deepest of anchorings," "the basis for the identity of all things," "the anchoredness in the

¹⁷ From Havel's speech delivered at an international conference on the prevention and treatment of alcoholism and drug addiction in the USA in June 1994 as quoted in Slavomir Ravik, *Bylo nebylo: Průvih po českou, červen 1994*. (Praha: Alternativy, 1994), p. 45.

¹⁸ Vaclav Havel, *Disturbing the Peace: A Conversation with Karel Hvizdala*, op. cit., pp. 156-157. Italics added.

¹⁹ Vaclav Havel, *Letters to Olga*, op. cit., pp. 301, 9.

absolute," or "the firm point."²⁰ For Havel, it is this "absolute horizon" where "everything is completely evaluated and assigned a meaning."²¹ All this points towards the "absolute" power of the *external* Archimedean point that both elevates from the nihilistic underworld and buries there the identity-pictures of Böhmisches nihilism. Consequently, the Böhmisches nihilist "remains outside himself, he stands beside himself, whatever he tries to do about it, and the only exceptions are precisely those rare moments when somebody else would say he was 'beside himself'."²² Moreover, because of the externality of such Archimedean point *qua* root, the elite is uprooted and cut off in relation to own nation, their foundation of legality and legitimacy towards which the elite is thus acting in "a motivational void." The cohesiveness of the state is disrupted: the externally built links do not hold together with the existing body of being. The parasitic externality can be imposed only *negatively*, for example, by the means of police-administration, corruption, swindle or violence. Only in this way, it is possible to keep the Hegelian truth of projections and images in place of reality.²³

Importantly, Havel thinks that this "absolute horizon" absolves him from the commitments and responsibility with regard to the "concrete" life: it is "the *only true*, firm and final focus of his relating to the world [my italics]," and "the only genuine 'coordinates' of his true identity."²⁴ In the same spirit, Havel's

²⁰ Vaclav Havel, *Letters to Olga*, op. cit., pp. 157, 230, 243. With regard to his cipher-concept of "the absolute horizon" = his "Being," Havel rather frankly admitted that he "is not entirely happy ... [if he is forced to] throw a little light on this rather cryptic 'Being' ..." [Ibid., p. 358]

²¹ Ibid., p. 240.

²² Robert Musil, *The Man without Qualities*, Volume III, op. cit., pp. 278-279.

²³ Cf. Jadwiga Staniszkis, *The Ontology of Socialism*, op. cit., p. 11; Ferdinand Peroutka, *Demokraticky manifest*, op. cit., p. 89.

²⁴ Vaclav Havel, *Letters to Olga*, op. cit., p. 357.

"absolute horizon" discloses a coincidental congruence of appearance and reality and its *double*, split nature: "Thus if it seemed at first that my responsibility – as responsibility 'toward' – simply meant responsibility toward my immediate surrounding, to my 'non-I' ... then it is obviously not entirely true: I am genuinely, fully and reliably responsible for my immediate surrounding only if that responsibility is permeated by, based on and subordinated to my responsibility toward my 'absolute horizon'."²⁵ In fact, a congruence between Havel's "absolute horizon" and the really existing is not merely spurious or accidental, but false since, according to Havel, the modern world "is driven by forces that *utterly betray* particular horizons and particular responsibilities [*italics added*]"²⁶

Accordingly, Havel confesses that he has disdain for "what merely [concretely] is." To this effect, this Heideggerian disdain extends to "the general 'moral' norms" that Havel sees as a way of "surrendering to herd life."²⁷ In

²⁵ Vaclav Havel, *Letters to Olga*, op. cit., p. 357; cf. *ibid.*, pp. 268, 294

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 295. In this regard, a "particular" givenness of "Czechness" is for Havel something like his "fair hair" or his "sex." [Vaclav Havel, *Disturbing the Peace: A Conversation with Karel Hvizdala*, op. cit., p. 178] With regard to his "sex," Havel, however, stated that "the penis is a barrier to communication between me (or a man) and women (or a woman)." [Quoted in Robert B. Pynsent, *Questions of Identity: Czech and Slovak Ideas of Nationality and Personality*, op. cit., p. 34; cf. Vaclav Havel, *Letni premiant*, op. cit., p. 19] Consequently, if Havel ascribes to his "absolute horizon" omnipotence, he affirms or admits (dialectical) impotence on the part of the "particular." This alienation from the "particular" is also a basis of Havel's character. This "gulf" of alienation had also separated him, as he stated, from "ordinary Czech peasant kids." In this regard, Havel stressed: "Whenever I tried to create the opposite impression it was always an attempt to compensate for my lack of confidence [or hatred]. These traits also explain to some extent some aspects of my writing ... I understand the desire to become accepted by the world, to gain the natural sense of belonging, and at the same time I am aware that this goal is forever beyond my reach. The sense of absurdity ... stems from the same source ... [However, in this way] I was able to see everything from the bottom. Reaction to reality became an automatic reflex for me." [Antonin J. Liehm, eds., *The Politics of Culture*, (New York: Grove Press, 1968), pp. 378-379]

²⁷ Vaclav Havel, *Letters to Olga*, op. cit., p. 294. Interestingly, the former chief of the Czechoslovak secret police, Alojz Lorenc, was also seeking his "firm point" in the Faustian fall into the depth of the absolute "non-good": "I knew that I could not live my life without trying to measure the depth of my capabilities and dimensions. The price of such an attempt was not decisive for me. So, there was my firm point." [Alojz Lorenc, *Ministerstvo strachu*, op. cit., p. 20]

Havel's view, whatever he does is "blessed" and absolved by "the assumption of [his divine] immortality - that is, by an 'absolute horizon'."²⁸ In this way, the nihilistic belief in one's immortality can apparently become a self-justifying device.

As a result, the Böhmisches nihilist is stretched like a Nietzschean rope-man between two externalities - between *the Castle* of the Hegelian Super-Ego (global man-god) and the (local) *Village* of reanimalized slaves. He helps to built and maintain the former by destroying the latter, thus undermining his own support in the "particular" world. He thus *extends* himself negatively against being. To this effect, the Böhmisches nihilist has to keep slicing, splitting and amputating his identity as a necessary precondition and mode of both his preservation and desolation.²⁹ The more he is stretched, the *thinner* he is, being extended negatively away from oneself. Havel's account is notable: "This dividing of my self ... kept getting deeper, this splitting of my 'I' into an alien [that failed] and a living, present, genuine 'I' ..."³⁰ According to Havel, such a "separated being" is the "dramatic essence of his humanity" (its absence); to achieve his view of the wholeness would mean for Havel "going *back* to Being as the firm *vanishing* point [his spiritual or political complete alienation or deadness], to that absolute horizon of his relating [his *Castle-Burrow*]."³¹

However, because the nihilist is a coward who has moreover to act in the

²⁸ Vaclav Havel, *Letters to Olga*, op. cit., p. 241.

²⁹ On Havel's notion of "the lost fullness of Being," his existential "Half-Being" and "striving for his missing second half" see *ibid.*, p. 329. Similarly, Musil's literary hero is a feminine character who "had an awareness of herself as of a feeble, ineffective waving with the stump of an amputated arm." [Robert Musil, *Five Women*, (New York: Delacorte Press, 1966), p. 141]

³⁰ Vaclav Havel, *Letters to Olga*, op. cit., p. 350.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 369. Italics added. Cf. Robert Musil, *The Man without Qualities*, Volume III, op. cit., pp. ix, 44, 279-280, 282, 303; Robert Musil, *Five Women*, op. cit., p. 141.

substructure of the everyday world, his complete "going-back" is impossible as long as he exists. Because the truth of the nihilist is buried and kept separately in the underground burrow, his "separated" existence appearance role in the everyday world is bound to be destructively false or absurd.³² As a result, the nihilists also rule the world by the means of falsity and absurdity.³³ For Havel, that secret of his identity is the basis and guarantee of his "uniqueness." However, such "uniqueness" has also its price: he is permanently haunted by the fear of losing his hidden identity - by a possibility of exposure.³⁴ Consequently, "a search for the meaning of life" would be with regard to Havel a process of (fatal) unmasking.³⁵

Böhmisch nihilism is, therefore, by its very ontological nature a dependent sort of subjectivity at least in two principal ways: 1) being intrinsically dependent on another deeper underworld of externally located power, and 2) existentially being in need to parasite on the alienated body of concrete being - on the state and the nation of labourers and workers. Both these "externalities" are crucial for the establishment and expression of the *negative* political subjectivity of such nihilism: the negative has always to have something to be abstracted from.³⁶

³² The point is that in this way the strength of such nihilism is merely projected: the projection of power "thrown out" from *the Castle* into the world hides its underlying defects and weakness to bear life and being. In Havel's play *Redevelopment or Slum Clearance*, the Principal Project Director summarizes the said as follows: "... I despise myself, I hate myself, I'm sick of myself ... I'm so adverse to life ... at least sleep ... a kind of substitute for the non-existence I crave. Every night before I drop off I make a wish, that I won't wake up in the morning, *that everything will be over, finished!* ... I've become incapable of getting pleasure out of anything ... My life is nothing but a tiresome duty, a source of endless suffering. Which I then inflict on others ... What's the sense in living a life that's lost its sense?" Other character of the play retorts: "It's just attention-seeking: you're trying to involve other people in your problems so as to find a kind of self-justification in their anxiety [projected and produced by the nihilistic Ego], some external [negative] proof that you actually exist. The fact is, you exploit everybody around you! You're like a spoilt child [my italics]!" [Vaclav Havel, *Redevelopment or Slum Clearance*, op. cit., p. 7]

³³ Cf. Jadwiga Staniszkis, *The Ontology of Socialism*, op. cit., p. 12.

³⁴ See Vaclav Havel, *Letters to Olga*, op. cit., p. 294.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 243.

³⁶ Cf. Jadwiga Staniszkis, *The Ontology of Socialism*, op. cit., pp. 13-14.

The principal defect of this negative ethos of nihilism is evident. As the author of *The Cowards*, Josef Skvorecky, critically concluded, "nothing can liberate from slavery that is in us."³⁷ It is because the "cure" is not only taking place merely within the frame of the projected picture of the world, but the disease "cures" itself by its own expansion. However, being able to exist only if expanding, nihilism thereby tries to expand its sickness and defects and inject them in the world as well. In this regard, Ferdinand Peroutka stated: "[The professional revolutionary nihilist] imposes his own [one-sided] character on the whole and tries to see to their transmission [also] by the means of education ... so that he would be recognized - together with his evident deformation [of character]- as the generally valid character, and his goals and methods would be accepted as the essence of the whole mankind."³⁸

It can be, therefore, concluded that the Böhmisches ethos as (experimental) nihilism belongs to the underworld of the Hegelian spirit that "supports death and conserves itself in it."³⁹ It is organized in a form of frames-grids-screens of mortification (like the system of nomenklatura) cutting and running through the society. This structure is, in its turn, projected and held by an external Archimedean point of power that appears as being close to Uhl's call for a "remote-control administration" of the Hegelian Universal and Homogeneous State or to what Musil called "the World (terrestrial) Secretariat for Precision and the

³⁷ Josef Skvorecky, *The Engineer of Human Souls*, op. cit., p. 55. Thus, the Hegelian struggle and defeat of the slave is constantly being reproduced on the part of Böhmisches elite.

³⁸ Ferdinand Peroutka, *Demokratický manifest*, op. cit., p. 38.

³⁹ See Alexandre Kojève, "The Idea of Death in the Philosophy of Hegel," op. cit., p. 125. The Böhmisches man without qualities nodded: "There have long been technical means of making useful things out of corpses, sewage, scrap and toxins, it is just about time it became possible for psychological technique to do something similar." [Robert Musil, *The Man without Qualities*, Volume I, op. cit., p. 312]

Spirit."⁴⁰ In this way, nihilism together with its global "government" appear to us, to use the words of a German scholar E. Gebhardt, as "the God of the Sea, Proteus, who could take on himself any appearance except for his own, nobody, therefore, knew who he really was."⁴¹

As Jung with regard to the mind and Voegelin with regard to history stated, a human being is not permitted to have his Archimedean point "outside" without committing a (spiritual or political) suicide or succumbing to madness.⁴² Man is a being that is able to know the bounds of evil and good. Such knowledge is a source of man's dignity and positive freedom to master oneself. This mastering oneself is, however, impossible without a piety. The *hybris* (overbearing) and narrowness of nihilistic consciousness of ultimate reduction is "always the shortest way to the insane asylum" (or to fatal despotism).⁴³ God-bound piety is also our (archetypal) foundation of being from which "in reality we can never legitimately cut loose."⁴⁴ In this way, man's salvation lies in a rediscovering and new remembering of one's place within the *overarching context* of being.⁴⁵ This means to step from man's "I" *qua* single-pointedness of nothingness into the "I" *qua* word sentenced to be shared in the wholeness of the holy Being.

⁴⁰ Robert Musil, *The Man without Qualities*, Volume II, op. cit., p. 366; Robert Musil, *The Man without Qualities*, Volume III, op. cit., p. 187.

⁴¹ Quoted in Jaroslav Krejci, *O cesství a evropanství*, 2. díl, op. cit., p. 184.

⁴² C.G. Jung, *Psyche and Soul*, a selection of writings, (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1958), p. 61; Dante Germino, *Beyond Ideology, The Revival of Political Theory*, op. cit., p. 177.

⁴³ C.G. Jung, *Psyche and Soul*, op. cit., p. 330.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

⁴⁵ As Jung stressed, such was also the original essence of religion. The very word "religion" is derived from Latin *religio* that means "linking back [with the roots]." [*Ibid.*, p. 123]

Twins

*Thy and I entwined
close our eyes
behind us*

We mean thyme to me and thy

*In a simple bloom
the body becomes the word
and feeds time*

So does all of We in you and I

Blizenci

*V objetí za sebou
zavíráme oči
Ty i Já*

Méníme se spolu v rymuán

*Tvaroslovi boků
prosta i kvemata
a také materi*

Taková jsou všechna rymyjá

Prague, 1987

CHAPTER 8

CZECH CHARACTER: CULTIVATING PIETY OF BEING

8.1. Sources of Being and Character

Our analysis of nihilism and its Böhmisches manifestation clearly points to the fact that "another possibility" might exist, although the nihilistic drive tries either to conceal or remove it. Otherwise, the astounding phenomenon of Czech survival and existence would remain unfathomable. Our task here is to bring that way of living back in the form of our own *recollectedness*, by attempting to establish some of the key elements of such being. This means to reassume the continuous quest for the truth and love of being as formulated by Jan Hus, the Czech reformist priest who died at the stake, giving his death as an ultimate guarantee of his love for the truth: "Remember who you are, from where you are and where you will go."¹ In the same spirit, Jan Hus also stated shortly before his death: "I must search for the footprints of the ancients, by which they escaped from the hunting of the devil."²

Czech ethos (or Czech Bohème) represents an archetype, that is, both an architectonic appearance and home of being whose elucidation can suggest a possible direction of human salvation at the nihilistic deadlock of history, and whose visions and ideals, if the positiveness of being (*klad*, *soulad* and *ladeni*: contribution, affirmation, asset; harmony, symmetry; and tuning-up with Being) is to be preserved, would be worth retaining as guides in living.³ In this regard, as

¹ Jan Hus, *Dcerka: o poznání prave cestv ke spasení*, op. cit., p. 10.

² John Hus, *The Letters of John Hus*, op. cit., p. 44.

³ Cf. Rudolf Stary, "Hermes jako novopohanské božstvo," *Prostor*, 23, March 1993: 58. In this regard, Pavel Klikar, a Czech musician, noted that "the greatest misery of our present is over-measure [*premíra*];" whereas if one is in accordance with being (its tune), "there is a feeling of clear consciousness-sensing how it ought to be, how it ought to appear" because a clear tuning-up

C. G. Jung stressed, "nations have their own, very particular psychology, and, therefore, they have also their own kind of psychopathology."⁴ This also means to continue on the way of Czech thinkers and politicians such as Karel Havlicek Borovsky and Tomas Masaryk who realized as a result of their criticism that one must leave the path of German philosophy which gives "too little for life and too much for death."⁵

This evidently presupposes that one chooses his way of being as a responsibility for who one is. This responsibility is also what can be defined as one's dignity that is lacking or insufficient unless it is fulfilled by action, and opens and shows itself as action that confirms the trustfulness of such responsibility-dignity.⁶ This trustworthy responsibility also determines how much a man matters (weighs) as a human.⁷ To act in this way means to "come to know oneself first: who is he? what sort of man? where is he? and where is he going to be?"⁸ On 13 June 1415, on the eve of his execution, Jan Hus remaining truthful to himself wrote: "*Always keep in mind what you are, what you were, and what you will be.*"⁹

In this regard, we have basically two principal sources of self-knowledge at

"goes immediately into the depth" so that "any clear interval contains in itself a certain radiance, certain sharpness, clarity, energy." [Pavel Klikar, "Ciste ladeni", *Prostor*, 23, March 1993: 157-158]

⁴ Quoted in Rudolf Stary, "Mundanni astrologie, kolektivita (narod) a horoskop statu," *Prostor*, 23, March 1993: 177.

⁵ Ferdinand Peroutka, *TGM predstavuje plukovníka Cunninghama*, op. cit., p. 88.

⁶ Jan Hus, *Postilla: Svate pameti Mistra Jana Husa, mucednika Bozeho na evangelia, kteraz se ctou pres cely rok*, (Praha: Jos. R. Vilimek, 1900), p. 25.

⁷ Thus, in the Czech language responsibility also means *závazek* that is related to such words as *váha* (weight), *rovnováha* (balance), *vazba* (bond, tying up into the context), *vazat si* (to respect, to esteem), *navazat* (to continue, to follow up, to resume) or *uvaha* (consideration), as well as *uvazovat* (to think).

⁸ Jan Hus, *Postilla*, op. cit., p. 25.

⁹ John Hus, *The Letters of John Hus*, op. cit., p. 168. My italics.

our disposal, history and language. However, in both cases our present situation is not an easy one. Especially, when Arendt publicly appreciated and confirmed what has become in the meantime quite evident that the elites pursuing the nihilistic projects of conquests "had convinced themselves that traditional historiography was a forgery in any case, since it had excluded the underprivileged and oppressed from the memory of mankind."¹⁰ To restore history, however, requires first to renew man's *presence* in being. Thus, Milan Machovec, a Czech historian, was right in stressing that the existence of history as such is impossible without the meaningful present, without man's capability to act and think that maintains the context of being as a living whole: "*History appears (arises) only as a contact of the present life with the past life.*"¹¹ In this way, history as a depth of spirit in time being "history, in the higher and true sense of the word, appears only where the nation struggles against the odds with *free* will, having been *spiritually awakened* and united in the state for the common purposes by its *own laws*, and where such a struggle is so appealing (distinguished) that also its memory gladly resumes itself [my italics]."¹²

In other words, recollection of self-knowledge renews itself by the continuity of one's responsibility and struggles. To this effect, we need both courage and wisdom. In this regard, it is vital to resume in the search for the common rootedness and our location in being the principle of *reciprocity* (*vzájemnost; uzajamnost*) that was wisely laid into the foundation of the general spiritual renaissance carried out in the nineteenth century against all the possible

¹⁰ Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, op. cit., p. 325.

¹¹ Milan Machovec, *Josef Dobrovsky*, (Praha: Svobodné slovo, 1964), p. 170.

¹² Frantisek Palacky, *Dejiny narodu ceskeho v Cechach a na Morave*, op. cit., p. 4.

odds. In the contemporary terminology, the notion of *reciprocity* as inter-cultivation of living spiritedness can stand for what is understood as "comparative analysis."¹³ Thus, to unearth and understand better history and being of the Czechs would particularly require a comparative examination of ethos, history, languages and thinking, for example, with regard to the Serbian origins of the Western Slavs.¹⁴ The broad vision and erudition of the former generations of scholars had been in this century reduced to a narrow, almost slavishly exclusive Germanic focus and dependence, that as a phenomenon only further supports the validity of Arendt's aforementioned acknowledgement of the deliberate imposition of (historical) self-forgetfulness.¹⁵ In this regard, knowing oneself is a barrier, a

¹³ On the notion of "reciprocity" see, for example, its account by Masaryk in Tomas Garrigue Masaryk, *Česka otázka: snahy a tuzby národního obrození, Náš nynější krize: pad strany staročeské a počátkové směru nových*, (Praha: Svoboda, 1990), pp. 44-51.

¹⁴ Thus, the scholars in the nineteenth century already knew that, "with regard to their origin, the [Western] Slavs called themselves ... generally Serbs." [František Palacký, *Dejiny národu českého v Čechách a na Moravě*, op. cit., p. 23. Thus, the "Slavs" appeared relatively late in history - only around the fifth or sixth century A.D. - simply because the "Slavs" had existed a long time before, but "hidden" under other collective name(s). Apparently, the spread of the name "Slavs" (those who "glorify the name of their God" - *slavi slávu jméno Boží*) was emphasizing a distinct religious characteristic of these people in the times of the rising Christianity. [See *Velesova kniha*, op. cit., p. 19, 7, 9] This mechanism of "lostness" in time due to the change of the name is also evidently valid for the Czechs and their "strange" identification with the "Bohemians." What had been known to scholars more than one hundred years ago, has been only very recently re-learned and rediscovered, although it is still limited to rather narrow a circle of scholars. [See, for example, *Velesova kniha*, translated by A.I. Aronov, (Moscow: Menedzer, 1994); A.S. Kajsarov, G.A. Glinka and B.A. Rybakov, *Mify drevnih slavjan*, (Saratov: Nadezda, 1993); Olga Lukovic Pjanovic, *Srbi ... narod najstariji*, Vol. I-III, (Beograd: IPA Miroslav, 1993, 1994); Boris Rehinder, *Zivot i religija Slovena prema Vles knjizi*, (Beograd: IPA Miroslav, 1996); Nikola Jeremic, *Srpska zemlja Bojka*, (Beograd: IPA Miroslav, 1993). In this regard, it can be also noted that, for example, the major flaw of the works in the etymology of the Czech language also suffer from their slavish efforts to explain Czech words by German when they can be much easier, meaningfully and logically understood on the basis of the Serb language or even to explain German words with help of the original Slav roots. However, the knowledge of Serb is apparently exactly what has been lacking on the part of the authors. Moreover, recent studies clearly indicate that the Serb [Slav] language is genealogically older than German and not vice versa, that is, it is quite close to the so-called Indo-European proto-language. [Cf. Josef Holub and Stanislav Lyer, *Stručný etymologický slovník jazyka českého*, op. cit.] Understandably, this problem of "originality" also concerns the interpretation of Czech mythology.

¹⁵ One of the most recent examples is a study Vladimír Karbusický, a Czech professor who, after his emigration in 1968, has been working since then in Germany. In his study that contains a number of interesting and revealing comparative analyses, he tries to present Czech mythology as a

measure taken with regard to what is due, against falling down into the Leviathanian pit of nihilism.¹⁶ In this way, science also becomes a dimension of conscience by unveiling our "indebtedness to the past, to ancestors" and thus responsibility toward the future," thus giving a new, modern meaning to Latin *religio*: to know oneself is to know one's conscience in the togetherness with Being.¹⁷

In addition to history, language is other essential *empiria of life and being*. It is a shrine of common experience and ethos. Every language represents a distinct set of emphases and differently built and linked meanings, relations to being and symbolic connections. Language is obviously also the oldest living monument (*památko*) and memory of man that does not recognize anybody's exclusive monopoly.¹⁸ According to the Czech reformist priest, Matej of Janov (1350? 1393), knowing the essence of being is, however, open only to the insight

mere late imitation or story-making on the basis of German models, disregarding the fact that mythologies have evolved through ages, adjusting their structure to new perceptions and realities. Similarities or elements paralleling German and other legends are a normal phenomenon that is not limited only to Czech myths (nobody lives in isolation); what is, however, more interesting is that their basis or underlying ethos is clearly distinct. In other words, Karbusický is very good at elucidating the technical side of stories (form), but misses either consciously or unconsciously the spirit (content) - the point. [See Vladimír Karbusický, *Báje, mýty, dejiny: nejstarší české pověsti v kontextu evropské kultury*, (Praha: Mladá fronta, 1995)] Another example is a book by Bohuslav Hlinka who also argues that Czech myths have almost no historical foundation. See Bohuslav Hlinka, *Spor o praotce Čechy*, (Praha: Práce, 1984). Similarly, as was the case in Karbusický, Hlinka "seeks" the substantiation of his arguments in wrong times and wrong places where, understandably, he cannot find what is not there. The point is that the original historical and geographical basis of Czech mythology was probably much older, as in cases of other mythologies, and very probably not necessarily tied in its origin to the end of the first millennium A.D. and to the to given location of the Bohemian lands as defined in the IX-XIIth centuries. It would be rather more logical to expect that the origin of these myths lies further deeper in the ancient past and that it also came to being possibly in different localities than that of the present Bohemia.

¹⁶ Cf. Antonín J. Liehm, eds., *The Politics of Culture*, (New York: Grove Press, 1968), p. 307.

¹⁷ Jan Hus, *Dcerka: o poznání prave cesty ke spasení*, op. cit., p. 7. Hus further emphasized: "Conscience is self-knowledge, that is, [wisdom] by which man knows himself." [Ibid., p. 13]

¹⁸ On the interconnection of Czech ethos and language see, for example, Milada Součková, *The Czech Romantics*, (The Hague: Mouton & Co, 1958), pp. 20-21.

presented in the free togetherness of loving as a *living presence* not as the dead past; so, (the being of) language too can be known only to that one who loves it, that is, who cultivates-practises it with love.¹⁹ Such active love is the true art of piety and its cultivation. Only in this "narrow" sense, we can say together with Jakub Deml that "our language, language of our love, is our native abode."²⁰ Openness to love and piety is the secret of *good or noble infinitude of being* while nihilism sees infinitude either as bad or dangerous and tries to "check it within the confine" of the Ego(ism).²¹

8.2. Hold of Being as Art of Piety

Whereas nihilism is a totalizing eclipse of egoistic self-reference (snake's biting its own tail) "through the will to will"²² or through nothingness hunting own nothingness in the world, the word *Bohème* coincidentally denotes two essential elements of "tuning-up (synchronicity) with Being": 1) "art" (of being), rendered in Czech as *umení* with its Slavic root *um* (meaning not simply art, but first of all wisdom, reason, inner and inter-harmony, and spirit-poised playfulness) that goes directly back to "proto-Indo-European" (proto-Slavic) *aum* ("to come into being," "to emerge," "to appear"),²³ that is, to come into being in accordance and balance with Being; and 2) piety as the all-permeating imperative and knowledgable

¹⁹ Matej z Janova, *Výbor z Pravidel Starého a Nového Zákona (Regulae Veteris et Novi Testamenti)*, (Praha: Blahoslav, 1954), p. 218. Consequently, a true philosopher, as well as a true poet should be lovers. In this sense, Jan Hus also affirmed the knowledge of the truth presupposes love-piety so that the truth often finds a more fertile ground among the ordinary people than among "the experts of the world." [Jan Hus, *Knižky o svatokupectví*, (Praha: CSAV, 1954), p. 100]

²⁰ Jakub Deml, *Rodný kraj*, (Praha: Československý spisovatel, 1967), p. 200.

²¹ Tom Darby, *The Feast*, op. cit., p. 149.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 4.

²³ Josef Holub and Stanislav Lyr, *Stručný etymologický slovník jazyka českého* op. cit., p. 457.

acknowledgement of man's polydimensional measure-restraint, as well as openness in the face of Being.²⁴ In this spirit, Jan Hus stated: "So, the more you will know yourselves, the more you will know the God; and the more you will know the God, the closer you will come to Him and the more you will love Him; and the more you will love Him, the more He will love you too."²⁵

In this regard, one's place in being is that which *makes sense*, which is positively posited *in the direction (sense) of* the holy wholeness of Being. As Jakub Deml stated: "Thus, it has been learned that the beginning of *life* is piety (*bázen*)."²⁶ Piety is man's rootedness in the Tree of Life (*kdo se korig, stává se korenem stromu*). One can also say that piety is the salt of being (*pokora je korením byti*). As Jakub Deml put it: "And, kneeling, I was bowing to the God [*korig jsem se Bohu*] for that he has unveiled the heaviest secret: my own name ..."²⁷ The innate connection of impiety and uprootedness was already known as a phenomenon to Matej of Janov in the fourteenth century: "That [egoistic] self-love is, therefore, the root (*koren*) of the life of hypocrites ... [thus their fruit] is deadly [literally translated 'death-bringing']".²⁸ Or in the words of the Czech humanist, the "teacher of the nations", Jan Amos Komensky (Comenius), "like

²⁴ The author draws his understanding of piety from Socrates' *Euthyphro*, see Plato and Aristophanes, *Four Texts on Socrates*, translated by Thomas G. West, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1992), pp. 41-61. See also a related account of another Platonic thinker - T.G. Masaryk in Alan Woolfolk and Jonathan B. Imber, eds., *Constructive Sociological Theory: Thomas G. Masaryk*, op. cit., p. 112.

²⁵ Jan Hus, *Dcerka: o poznání prave cesty ke spasení*, op. cit., p. 8.

²⁶ Jakub Deml, *Hrad smrti*, (Brno & Praha: Jota & Arca JIMFA and Paseka, 1992), p. 44. It is also noteworthy that Deml announced this imperative of piety in his poem titled *The Castle of Death*. As a matter of fact, Jakub Deml poetic and philosophical epic *My Friends and Miriam* is a pure hymn of human and humanizing piety. They deserve to be called a modern Czech Gospel, their strength can be compared only to the Biblical Songs of Songs. [See Jakub Deml, *Miriam - Moji pratele*, (Praha: Odeon, 1990)]

²⁷ Jakub Deml, *Miriam - Moji pratele*, op. cit., p. 75.

²⁸ Matej z Janova, *Vybor z Pravidel Stareho a Noveho Zakona*, op. cit., p. 204.

trees without roots [*korenü prázdní*] they are torn up: so that [together with them] everything slowly fades out and is in danger of falling."²⁹ Coincidentally, in the old Czech language, the impious (uprooted) person was denoted as a "light," "empty" or "extirpated" human being. As such, it was also a designation of a prostitute (a person who, because of his inner emptiness, can be filled literally with anything).³⁰ One may also recall that Marx coincidentally defined his "Communist" ideal as a system of universally expanded "prostitution." What Marx and other nihilists consciously embraced as their ethos of the universal betrayal of being, the Czech religious reformists had chosen of their free will to reject. So, Jan Zizka, the invincible military leader of the Hussites, stated: "Who is unfaithful to the God, will be such also towards men."³¹ In Czech, the word for unbelieving (*neverit*) emphasizes its connotation with treachery (*nevera*).³²

Bohème also contains a sound *Boh* that is linked to the "Indo-European" radical *Bhu*, *Bheu* meaning "to emerge," "to be powerful of its own to stand and remain upright."³³ It further contains a connotation with the Czech word for God (*Bůh*) or proto-Slavonic *Bog* that are, in turn, also related to "proto-Indian" *Bhaga* ("giving nourishment, richness, and fertilizing").³⁴ Hence, the notion of piety-transcendence and its intrinsic connection with the "Bohemian" being-art which points towards the underlying notion of the art (*um*) of knowing how to live that

²⁹ Jan Amos Komenský, *Dvoji poselství k českému národu: Ksaft, Smutný hlas*, (Praha: Vyšehrad, 1970), p. 16.

³⁰ See, for example, Jan Hus, *Knížky o svatokupectví*, op. cit., pp. 59, 65, 147; Jan Hus, *O církvi*, (Praha: Nakladatelství CSAV, 1965), p. 249.

³¹ *Staročeské vojenské rady: Hajek, Václav, Zizka, listy a kronika*, (Praha: Orbis, 1952), p. 11.

³² On the use of the notion of unbelieving in this very sense see, for example, Jan Hus, *Postilla*, op. cit., p. 59.

³³ M. Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, op. cit. p. 71.

³⁴ Miroslav Holub and Stanislav Leyer, *Stručný etymologický slovník jazyka českého*, op. cit., p. 102.

might have laid into the original name of the people and country. Thus, according to Frantisek Palacky, the affinity towards the sacredness (*bohovost*) is what gives life a meaning so that the spirit does not sink into nothingness, but is all ready to stand up upon a call. Only thus, action can appear, and other existence is not worthwhile.³⁵ This sacredness (*boznost*) was also posited by Tomas Masaryk both as the foundation and *telos* of all the human efforts. Masaryk understood it as "a togetherness and likeness of the God, that is, a *participation* of the God's nature and image of the God's being in a man" or as "man's true content" where humanness finds the full consummation-justification of its essence.³⁶ In other words, through respecting the sacredness of Being, a man finds also respect for other human beings and himself. Masaryk, therefore, concluded that the essence of one's being is substantiated by religious (going deep to the roots) receptiveness of the grace to be.³⁷

8.3. Czech Bohème: In the Beginning Was the Word

The crucial importance of the fact that the Czech ethos has been from very onset based on the "rock" of the positive belief that the begging of all the things was not the nihilistic "nothing," but *the word* cannot be understated.³⁸ The Word is

³⁵ Frantisek Palacky, *Dejiny narodu ceskeho v Cechach a na Morave*, op. cit., p. 4.

³⁶ Tomas Garrigue Masaryk, *Jan Hus a nase obrozeni a nase reformace*, (Zurich: Konfrontace, 1979), p. 63.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 68-69.

³⁸ This deep understanding of being probably a very ancient memory that could be related to the making of the proto-Slav language as a medium of being, common religion and recording (writing). The scale of the present work does not allow me to enter deeper into the investigation of this interesting phenomenon. The idea of original nothingness appears in the traditional Judeo-Catholic interpretation taken from Genesis in the Old Testament (Genesis, 1:1-2). On the pronouncement of the Word-God as preceding "all the things" see John, 1:1-4. In this regard, it is also often assumed that "the name Slovak like Slav derives from *slow*, the word in all Slavic languages for 'word' or 'speech,' as opposed to the German (*Nemec*) who is dumb (*nemý*) in the sense of being unable to talk." [Hans Brisch and Ivan Volgyes, eds., *Czechoslovakia: The Heritage*

understood as the eternal and inseparable co-substance of Being, the God.³⁹ As Roman Jakobson stressed in this regard, it was not accidental that 'In the beginning was the Word' were also the first words translated by Cyril into the Slavic language from the Bible and later appearing as an indispensable introduction to Genesis, and, thus, to the whole Bible.⁴⁰ Between the Word and nothing there is a radical difference that separates the path where humanness is worthy of warranting-standing for its own word (worthy of not lying) from those that "lie" desperately low.⁴¹ The one is rewarding and can bestow a meaning even upon death as manifested by Socrates, Jesus, Hus and others who were "lovers of the truth," while the others are "banally evil" or essentially futile.⁴²

The ethos of piety towards the word and hence language permeates both Czech religious and political thinking particularly because the word makes

of Ages Past, East European Monographs No. LI, Boulder. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), p. 54]

³⁹ Matej z Janova, *Vybor z Pravidel Stareho a Noveho Zakona*, op. cit., p. 102. Or as Jakub Deml defined it 600 years later: "What is heard is." [Jakub Deml, *Miriam - Moji pratele*, op. cit., p. 47] Thus, for Deml, the human soul is the God's voice, "eternity breathed in time." [Ibid., p. 48] Deml again affirms: "The only source of life and founder-maker of destiny is *the word*. I may say anything: none knew or acted without having heard before. This law is valid for the whole life of man ..." [Jakub Deml, *Rodny kraj*, op. cit., p. 86] "Then I saw out of your grace that distance and nearness are one, and that all the things both visible and invisible have been made through the word." [Ibid., p. 93]

⁴⁰ Roman Jakobson, *Moudrost starych Cechu: odveke zaklady narodniho odboje*, op. cit., p. 185.

⁴¹ In this regard, Matej of Janov identified the nothingness ascribed to the beginning with the nocturnal emptiness of a man who avoids the God. [Matej z Janova, *Vybor z Pravidel Stareho a Noveho Zakona*, op. cit., p. 132]

⁴² However, if one departed from nothing, one also turns (returns) into nothing, and such is also the briefest story of nihilism expanded from "nothing" in two sentences. In this regard, Marketa Goetz-Stankiewicz hit the bull's-eye when she established that "in a way all Havel's writings are a critique of the reassuring first line of the Gospel according to St John: 'In the beginning was the Word'." [Marketa Goetz-Stankiewicz, *The Silenced Theatre: Czech Playwrights without a Stage*, op. cit., p. 73] In the light of the already said, it is evident that Havel's propensity to oppose and "criticize" that ethos and its "critique" is not really accidental either. As Preisner noted, "Communism [and nihilism in general] teaches us that nothingness is the first beginning, even the precondition, the most fundamental possibility of human glorification (*oslava*) of the God, that the glorification of the God is identical with nothingness that the God changed into creation." [Rio Preisner, *Ceska existence*, op. cit., p. 90] Preisner rejects such self-defeatism of humanness.

possible, *when used with piety and caution*, to share and communicate the truth, the experience of being, and distinguish between good and evil. According to Matej of Janov, man is born as human through the word of the truth; the word transcends death *qua* nothingness and has power to resurrect.⁴³ The word is life-giving.⁴⁴ It abides among (in) us.⁴⁵

Matej of Janov, therefore, held that, "after a prolonged [spiritual] starving and chewing in vain the fruit for swines," humankind would be renewed by *poiēsis*, the word, that is, by the art of being that would reunite in man the separated trinity of being, word and truth.⁴⁶ In this spirit, Jakub Deml also declared: "Philosophy has the truth and system, whereas the poem has philosophy and beauty, and beauty is never a daughter of philosophy, but always a wounder of life."⁴⁷

8.4. Man's Essence: Freedom to Know Good and Evil and Love Good

Importantly, *slovo* (the "word" in Czech) is etymologically intertwined with the idea of *freedom* - *svoboda* in Czech, *sloboda* in Serb, Slovak, and local dialects: truth requires freedom, and freedom, in turn, is validated as meaningful by the truth.⁴⁸ In this way, *slobo-da* (freedom) is the achieved unity of the word

⁴³ Matej z Janova, *Vybor z Pravidel Stareho a Noveho Zakona*, op. cit., p. 63.

⁴⁴ Ibid., op. cit., 73.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 98.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 129.

⁴⁷ Jakub Deml, *Miriam - Moji pratele*, op. cit., p. 129. Poetry as the art of making life *qua* love restores life. [Ibid., p. 129] From that point of view, Milada Souckova also commented on Karel Hynek Macha's romantic poem *May*: "It was May and though lilacs were in bloom, the air was gloomy and cold. Mortal anguish and the galleys awaited not merely Vilem, 'the woodland lord,' but the entire nation. As in the last canto of *May*, the sole transcendent value seemed to that of poetry." [Milada Souckova, *The Czech Romantics*, op. cit., p. 86]

⁴⁸ Josef Holub and Stanislav Lyer, *Stručný slovník jazyka českého*, op. cit., p. 424.

(eternity) and the concrete *place* of our standing in space and time ('here and now'). Ultimately, it is the unity of man's efforts and grace (*dar*: "gift") that creates and "tunes-up" together (the harmony of) beauty.⁴⁹ Thus, the consummation of freedom is the *free* unity (consubstantiality) of man and God.⁵⁰

Accordingly, for the Czech ethos, the concept of freedom is not negative in the sense of the Hobbesian *absence of external impediments*,⁵¹ that also defines the (absence of) essence of the Hegelian man, the nihilist.⁵² The Bohemian concept of freedom is positive man's *freedom to know* (separate) good and evil and to freely choose good or evil. Man needs both this kind of *human* wisdom and freedom for rejecting evil.⁵³ Such freedom is also the essence of man as a human being. As Jan Hus stated, everybody is given, together with knowledge of good and evil, freedom to decide to live for the truth or to live a lie.⁵⁴ Man is free to choose to believe in the God or to be an atheist or nihilist. One can posit oneself 'beyond good and evil' or surrender the knowledge of good and evil, but as Nietzsche showed himself in numerous examples, one thereby posits oneself *under* humanity

⁴⁹ Tomas Garrigue Masaryk, *Ceska otazka*, op. cit., p. 82.

⁵⁰ Matej z Janova, *Vybor z Pravidel Stareho a Noveho Zakona*, op. cit., p. 53. Jakub Deml also saw freedom as "the divine gift (grace)" and because of this it is rooted in eternity: "Earth and stars will vanquish, but not freedom. [Jakub Deml, *Miriam - Moji pratele*, op. cit., p. 16]

⁵¹ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, op. cit., XIV, 2 (p. 79).

⁵² As Masaryk put it: "The old God creates; but the new Hegelian gods do not know how to create; they criticize the work of the old God." [Erazim V. Kohak, eds., *Masaryk on Marx, An Abridged Edition of T.G. Masaryk: Social Question: Philosophical and Sociological Foundations of Marxism*, (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1972), p. 358]

⁵³ Jan Hus, *O cirkvi*, op. cit., p. 171. The same concept of freedom to choose between evil and good as the essence of man was revived by F. Dostoyevsky in his polemic with nihilism, while the Grand Inquisitor holds against Christ: "Did you forget that man prefers peace, and even death, to freedom of choice in the knowledge of good and evil?" [Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground & The Grand Inquisitor*, op. cit., p. 129; cf. *ibid.*, p. xx1] The same notion of freedom was again pronounced by Ferdinand Peroutka who defined freedom as "a complex cultural deed-work, body of laws ... that *polity* granted to itself." [Ferdinand Peroutka, *Demokraticky manifest*, op. cit., pp. 99, 163]

⁵⁴ Jan Hus, *Postilla*, op. cit., p. 240.

and surrenders his own humanness. As has been stressed earlier, all the rhetoric of being 'beyond good and evil' aside, the self-conscious nihilists know all too well what they have chosen on their own volition - the *other* side of the apocalypse.

The word is the truth, and the truth is in the final instance the God; in this light, man was born not out of nothing, but from the truth. Man becomes who he is through the truth. The truth is the law. A man should act in accordance with it inasmuch as the more enlightened or more darkened state of the truth found in him allows him here and now.⁵⁵ However, only in the truth can man *endure*.⁵⁶ Anyone, who is without the truth and its word, is a slave.⁵⁷ And who is dead (as a human being), "has no free will to resist [the evil]."⁵⁸ Thus, the highest freedom for man is freedom to know the *living* truth in its fullness:

If someone is satisfied with a mere aroma, I strive for the bread, not for its aroma, not merely for taking part, but to achieve fullness; I do not want any water, but the source of the water of life; not the shadow, but the body; not the beams, but the sun; not the heard word of faith, but its essence; not the concealed one; but the revealed; not a food merely for the soul, but that one for the whole man because I believe that *it will be proper and just to seek freedom* through which Jesus the Lord has liberated us.⁵⁹

The truth epitomizes man's ascendance: only the man ascending towards the word of the truth can remain "upright" and "awakened."⁶⁰ In this way, for Matej of Janov "being free" equals to being "worthy of [the truth]" (*hodný*); moreover,

⁵⁵ Matej z Janova, *Vybor z Pravidel Stareho a Noveho Zakona*, op. cit., p. 53.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 216.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 228.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

⁶⁰ See a letter by Jan Zizka to the citizens of Domazlice in *Staroceske vojenske radv: Hajek, Vlcek, Zizka, listy a kronika*, op. cit., p. 17.

hodný also means good.⁶¹ Consequently, freedom and truth are something that one has to *deserve* - by freely choosing to serve it. The word then becomes flesh when a man *stands* for it.

8.5. The Word: The Art of Conscience, the Art of 'We'

The roots of this Bohemian (or Serb-Slavic) ethos and its continuity go actually very deep - as far as the very beginning of the "Indo-European" civilization. Notably, like the Word from the gospel of Saint John, that Cyril was compelled to translate to the Slavs as the very first message of the Bible, the sacred word *aum* also "was in the beginning" and "was uttered before the creation of the world." To pronounce *aum* means to say *um*. In the Slavic alphabet "*hlaholice*," the word was written as VM where "M" was a symbol of thinking (*Myšlení*) and the sign "V" (pronounced as "U" and earlier standing for OU) epitomized "learning" and "knowledge" (*Učení*).⁶² This places learning-knowing *within* the knowledge of creating. *Um* is thus the art of knowing, the art of being. Evidently, the understanding was from the very beginning that no true learning is possible without piety towards the teacher and wisdom.

"Coincidentally," *um* is also the most fundamental, elementary, simplest and yet the most comprehensive notion in the Slavic languages - it is truly the beginning of the beginning.⁶³ In Czech and in Serb, *um* means reason, mind,

⁶¹ Matej z Janova, *Vybor z Pravidel Stareho a Noveho Zakona*, op. cit., p. 115.

⁶² Olga Lukovic-Pjanovic, *Srbi ... narod najstariji*, Vol. III, op. cit., pp. 190-192, 222-224.

⁶³ Matej of Janov stated: "We abide by the understanding that the source of all the plurality of things and all the knowledge is one. It is, therefore, necessary that everything return in the same way to the same and gather there. And the one will be thoroughly one, thoroughly simple and the very true beginning of everything, and in its simplicity and oneness, it will apparently gather all of Being, ability and action of all the hosts." [Matej z Janova, *Vybor z Pravidel Stareho a Noveho Zakona*, op. cit., p. 58] According to Hus, "[the Word is] the common created essence which is the

understanding, ability to see and make, while *umění* means in English, "art." The verb *umět* is usually rendered in English as "to know" or "can" that, however, lacks the notion of *internally* grasping-knowing the essence of the given thing or art present in Czech. Till today, the highest praise of a performance of a folk song is an acclamation "*umu*" whose meaning can be translated as 'he truly knows his art.' In this sense, the adverb *umělý* did not originally mean "artificial" as the opposite to the natural, but denoted the fact that the truly "artificial" and "natural" are essentially the same property of Being. Consequently, art was not a separation of man from the nature of Being, but, on the contrary, a way of abiding in the togetherness and wholeness of Being. In this way, the Serb language also preserved such words as *umilan* (kind, pleasant, dear) and *umiliti se* (to become good, kind and beloved). Consequently, to know (*umět*) is to find-know one's worthiness, goodness towards Being *qua* God.

The key significance of the character realized as and through the art of being and thinking had already been unveiled by the father of the Czech resurrection, the priest and scientist, Josef Dobrovsky, who wrote: "In mankind lured to the extremity, the Slavic *um* purely [essentially] understood is the least corrupted. German reason should not be slighted; however, it cannot counterpoise our *um*."⁶⁴ According to Masaryk, "Dobrovsky was [himself] led not merely by his

first created being and is communicated to every individual creature." [John Hus, *The Letters of John Hus*, op. cit., p. 210]

⁶⁴ Tomas Garrigue Masaryk, *Česka otazka*, op. cit., pp. 34-35. Germanic reason is essentially thinking in terms of *ratio*, that is, of *separation and cutting* (*řez* in Czech) which is the art of death or anatomy performed on dead bodies. *Ratio* is itself removed at the end when everything has been cut apart, and what remains is Hegel's nothing. Consequently, such reasoning gives only knowledge about *dead bodies*. *Um qua* thinking, on the other hand, upholds and cultivates the living wholeness: its essence is the art of creation, not of destruction. It learns through making and taking care of. To this effect, Jan Hus also stressed that the art-word-God is a recollection for life: according to the gospel of Luke (11:23), "he who does not gather with me scatters!" [Jan Hus,

Slavic heart, but by the Slavic *um*.⁶⁵ In the same spirit, Palacky defined humanity as the piety towards the togetherness through this art of being (*um - božnost*).⁶⁶

Thus, every true art is a practice in piety

At the same time, the art of being is the art of choice: excellency (*vybrannost*: "sophistication", "nobility"; *vyborny*: "excellent") is a mastery of deciding (*výbor*: "council"; *výber*: "selection"), in contrast to the concept of the "garbage bin" of the universal and homogeneous egotism of nihilism. The door into being is the Word, and the Word is the Art (*Um*). This way is really "narrow" and cannot be arbitrary. The art of being becomes the art of practised *justice*: being and its wholeness can be entered only through the art of choosing, deciding and making, while the harmony and balance of being is preserved and further cultivated: to enter being means to enter it through the sacred community with God.⁶⁷

*Um thereby becomes open to be shared, appearing as My (We)*⁶⁸ that "stands in your midst, [even] without your knowing it."⁶⁹ *Um* (to know how to be) and *umeni* (turning this wisdom into the art of making) is Deml's words "[our] synthesis of the body with the spirit, earth with heaven;" *um qua my* is "the stubborn remembering of a lost paradise."⁷⁰ *Vetvici se um* (developing, branching

Postilla, op. cit., p. 90]

⁶⁵ Tomas Garrigue Masaryk, *Ceska otazka*, op. cit., p. 36.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

⁶⁷ On the notion of justice as art see Jan Hus, *Postilla*, op. cit., p. 396. In this regard, Jan Hus included in his work the following quotation ascribed to Aristotle: "Every evil man is unwise (uncareful) [*neumělý*]; since he is evil, he does evil; and who does evil, goes astray; and who goes astray, does not know what he is doing; and who does not know what he is doing, is unwise [*neumělý*]." [*Ibid.*, p. 118]

⁶⁸ Jan Hus, *Postilla*, op. cit., p. 206.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 23; cf. John, 1:27, 24.

⁷⁰ Jakub Deml, *Miram - Moji pratele*, op. cit., p. 136.

out, self-concretizing *um*) appears both as *vedomi* (consciousness) and *svedomi* (conscience). The metamorphosis of *um* into *vedomi* (consciousness), *svedomi* (conscience) and *vedy* (sciences) is seen as a process of *blossoming* (*k-vest*: "to blossom," to "grow;" *k-vetenstvi*: "inflorescence;" *kver*: "flower;" *kveten*: "May").⁷¹ Consequently, both consciousness and conscience are essentially art (*U'm in blossom*), whereby science, art and human psyche become one again. In this regard, *rozum* (reason) is also part of *um*, being derived from it and representing the ability of discriminating (suffix *roz-* means "from," "apart," "away," "dis-," "dia-"), while striving for an order (*řád*).

In this light, the imperative to know oneself is actually the art of 'We,' the art of our conscience: "And certainly, if a man were often looking into himself and were seeking himself, then he could know the God too."⁷² And to "look inside *and* see oneself" (*vider*; *vid*: "aspect of eternity in time") also means to choose-determine *thoughtfully and freely* one's way-character-imperative-guidance: "Piety consists in reason and will, in reason that distinguishes (determines) what should be obeyed, and in will that agrees with what commands."⁷³ Notably, the ability to distinguish is a property of the noble mind, while the slavish spirit is characterized by the lack of such a 'human condition.' Consequently, to distinguish and to be distinguished is to choose where and to whom one belongs. Depending on one's choice, *We* becomes either a quality (*vlastnost*; *vlast*: home, fatherland) of

⁷¹ Thus, Jan Hus spoke about "the God who lets grow." [Jan Hus, *O církvi*, op. cit., p. 71] And Frantisek Palacky understood the [blooming] beauty of being [*krása*: "beauty"] as a way out of spiritual and human stunting-diminishing (*za-krsání*). [See Frantisek Palacky, *Depřív narodu českého v Čechách a na Moravě*, op. cit., p. 7]

⁷² Jan Hus, *Postilla*, op. cit., p. 25.

⁷³ Jan Hus, *O církvi*, op. cit., p. 147.

togetherness, or a merely expanded egotism of nihilism without qualities."⁷⁴ To be, therefore, means to know the essential and to tell it from the worthless.⁷⁵

In this way, *um* being the art of justice can also be seen as freedom *qua* art. As Jakub Deml stressed, "*umeni* (art) is a harmonized freedom of orderliness" that transcends death into eternity, subduing "the dance of death" by the overarching context of Being.⁷⁶ Consequently, the Word of Art ("God's law"), our conscience (*s-vedomi*: conscience as co-seeing, knowing together), is the *measuring* measure, not death.⁷⁷ Conscience of the togetherness is our inner guarantee that we would hold ourselves against fragmentation and dispersal.⁷⁸ This is possible because conscience is transcendent in relation to time and is in the final instance the Wisdom (*UM*).⁷⁹ Our human duty is not to "fall apart," to alienate ourselves from *the truth of our context* (belonging), conscience, built and cultivated through the ages.⁸⁰ Thus, the question of man's character is: "Does the Word thrive through you?"⁸¹

⁷⁴ Cf. Jakub Deml, *Miriam - Moji pratele*, op. cit., p. 89.

⁷⁵ On that Slavic ethos as embodied in the deity of Svatovít (the All-Seeing, the Divine-Sight-Light, the Living Being) see B.A. Rybakov, *Jazycestvo Drevnih Slavian*, (Moscow: Nauka, 1981), p. 604. Svatovít (Serb Svetovid or St. Vid) was evidently also the God of Conscience, as also manifested in the Christianized figure of St. Sava: Serb *savest*: "conscience." It is also noteworthy that the main cathedral in Bohemia is St. Vít cathedral of Prague Castle. While hardly anybody remembers the alleged saint monk from Italy, the Slavic etymology of *vit/vid* unequivocally points back to the original Slavic ethos.

⁷⁶ See Jakub Deml, *Miriam - Moji pratele*, op. cit., p. 111.

⁷⁷ Jan Hus, *O církvi*, op. cit., p. 131.

⁷⁸ In this spirit, J. A. Komenský, while revealing his deep understanding of the essence of *um*, complained in a moment of crisis and spiritual decadence that was later called "The Age of Darkness": "[You are in such a state of peril] because you have lost the *key* of *umeni* [key-art of being and the soul] ... whereas your fathers were masters in upholding order, discipline, unity and internal gracefulness towards each other, without being externally compelled to it out of necessity or forced by the state authorities." [Jan Amos Komenský, *Dvoji poselství k českému národu: Ksaft, Smutný hlas*, op. cit., p. 15]

⁷⁹ See Jan Hus, *Dcerka: o poznání pravé cesty ke spasení*, op. cit., p. 13.

⁸⁰ See Jan Hus, *Postilla*, op. cit., p. 111.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

My-I'm (being) is the fruit of the Tree of Life. It is presented as the sacred "marriage" or "intertwining" between the divine (symbolized by the God-Father) and human (symbolized in the name of Mary) "the flower of their love has become a ripe fruit: *We*."⁸² Love towards God is thereby intertwined with and open to love towards other human beings.⁸³ The realization of *um* is the appearance of human being and identity. As such it requires that the potentiality of being be opened up and maintain its openness: the former is the secret of action-appearance and the latter is the secret of trinity: both moments are part of the same phenomenon of humanness. Both acting in accordance with and on the basis of *um* and one's identity in trinity can appear and endure only in the *positive symmetry, harmony and balance* with regard to the holy wholeness of being; thus, *klad* "positiveness," "affirmation," "asset;" *ladnost*: "harmony," "beauty," "fairness;" *nálada*: "humour," "frame of mind;" *klást*: "to lay," "to spread;" *klas*: "ear of corn;" *základna*: "foundation;" *poklad*: "treasure."⁸⁴ Thus, the Slavic notion of fortune (*štesn*) is the *positive* "meeting" (*setkání*), unification of the cycles of a man and beings and their defending- shielding-off (*zašticení*), it is the positive gathering-tying-up of a man in the wholeness with Being.⁸⁵ In this regard, there seems to be a high degree of probability in an assumption that to know and understand this ethos is possible only with one's own "tuning-up" into that "fair

⁸² Jakub Deml, *Miriam - Moji pratele*, op. cit., pp. 121, 133. My italics.

⁸³ As Jan Hus stated: "And those with whom the truth walked could not be without loving." [Jan Hus, *Postilla*, op. cit., p. 136]

⁸⁴ Furthermore, *Lada* was also a name of ancient Slav feminine deity related to harvest, marriage and life cycles, thus epitomizing the qualities of that ethos of the overarching positiveness of Being.

⁸⁵ The letter "S" was a symbol of wholeness, still retained as the prefix and preposition in the sense "with;" as such it also symbolized "the Word" (*slovo*) and "strength" (*sila*). [See Olga Lukovic-Pjanovic, *Srbi ... narod najstariji*, Vol. III, pp. 210, 222, 224]

frame of affirmative mind" and sense of human humour so that within it spirit and being can appear, inspire and grow.

8.6. Bohemian Emergence, Merging, and Symmetry of Being, Action, and Appearance

How does *um* emerge as the genius of Bohemian being? Interestingly, the Czech words for "the beginning" - *začátek* and *pocátek* - point themselves *beyond* the beginning. They are composed of the verb *čiti* ("to begin," "to beget," "to act," "to do") and prefix *za/po*, both meaning "behind" or "after," while the verb *čiti* has also the meaning of "sensing," "perceiving" and also "caring for/about."⁶⁶ Consequently, the beginning itself is preceded by acting and making the essence of *um* to appear-emerge, while maintaining responsibility, caring for the appeared being. The potential contained in *um* (the Word) is *carried out* as phenomena of human *poiēsis*. Being requires a *decision* between acting (inviting into being: *uvítání*; introduction: *úvod*; *veda*: "science," cf. *veda* in Sanskrit; *vedet*: "to know;" the common root *vid*) and nothingness-death (*cin* versus *nic*: "nothing;" *nicit*: "to destroy;" *nicotnost*: "worthlessness;" *nicema*: "scamp," literally "man embracing nothingness," "destroyer").⁶⁷ Wisdom as *vedení* is on the side of creativity. Our own existence indicates what kind of decision lies in the foundation of our world.

The etymology of *cin* (act) and *cinit* (to act) affirms in this regard the ontological substantiation of the Bohemian ethos: *cin* originally denoted "order" or

⁶⁶ See Josef Holuh and Stanislav Lyer, *Stručný slovník jazyka českého*, op. cit., p. 113.

⁶⁷ In this way, Nietzsche's name (itself of a Slavic-Polish origin) belongs to those particular coincidences that sometimes appear as if to bear witness to the ironical playfulness of history.

"way" (as ordering); the "old-time Indian" variant of the Slavic verb *cinít* is rendered as *cinoti* that meant "to put in order," "to arrange," and, importantly, also "to connect," "to link," that is, *connecting-gathering dominates here over separation* (death). Greek *poieō* ("to make," "to create") also retains a relation to the verb *cinít* and its variant *konat*.⁸⁸ *Cin* (or *vý-kon*) is also contained as a morpheme in the other closely intertwined notions such as *ctít*: "to honour;" *citít*: "to feel;" *ukázání se*: "showing itself;" *úkaz*: "phenomenon;" *kázání*: "sermon," "lecture," "preaching;" *prikázání*: commandement; *kázen*: discipline; *skutek*: "dead," "feat;" *skutečnost*: "reality" (as what is made and created).

Such ethos is also reflected in the tradition of Bohemian thinking. Jan Hus stressed that the divine law (word) is "fulfilled by [human] action" (*plnen skutkem*).⁸⁹ *Skutek* (action, deed), in the sense of fulfilling *um*, does not come from nothing, but from one's will-agreement with *um* ("*privolení*": "agreeing," "joining;" cf. *vůle*: "will") that is essentially love towards the sacred (cf. Serb *voliti*: "to love;" Czech *volba*: "choice").⁹⁰ In this way, to arise (*vzniknout*) is to excel (*vyniknout*) as the "negation" of one's nothingness (*nicotnost*). To arise also means to be introduced, to be led into being by the Word-Knowledge-Seeing (*uvítán, veden vedením-videním*), and to know (*vedet*) is to be "victorious," to "prevail" over death (*zvítezt*; Serb *vitez*: "hero"). In other words, being is to be won as indicated by the dichotomy of essentially one morpheme *byt(d)-vit(d)*: "being-winning." Both being and winning can appear and endure only if they are in accordance with *um* and grounded in it. Human existence thus lies in the art of

⁸⁸ Josef Holub and Stanislav Lyer, *Stručný slovník jazyka českého*, op. cit., p. 112.

⁸⁹ Jan Hus, *Sermo de pace: Rec o miru*, (Praha: Česká křesťanská akademie, 1995), p. 55.

⁹⁰ See Jan Hus, *Postilla*, op. cit., p. 87.

"learning how to walk between time and eternity."⁹¹

To this effect every true belonging requires endurance, that is, a certain way of coping and dealing with the "no" (*ne*) of the flowing "now" (*nyni*) of appearance-newness (*novina*) and disappearance (*neni*). Here also lies the trap of Hegelian (mere) negativity. In other words, it is the question of the sustainability of history and human (Bohemian) identity in history.

In this regard, the Bohemian ethos continuously develops its art of being that conspicuously resembles what can be ascribed as the "Apollonian" ethos. In particular, this continuity is expressed in Czech by the notion of *dení* (recurring appearance of stories, that is, one's own context of being, that matters and is worth remembering) and *událost* (event); both words are derived from the verb *dít* ("to come about," "to occur," "to be done"). Moreover, the Czech word for history is *dejiny* (also from *dít*). One of the original meaning of the fundamental verb *dít* was "to posit," "to give," "to add (*positiveness*) to being" (*klást*); the Greek root *thē-* (Latin *fak-*) was, for example, derived from its original form *dhē-*. In this regard, of particular importance are those meanings that appear in words made of the same root *de-/di-*: *nadeje* (hope), *delat* (to work), *dílo* (work, deed), *soud* (judgement, court), *soudný* (*discerning, discriminating, judicious*), *osudný* (*fatal, fateful*), *dít* (to give/deliver a word/speech, to make a speech), *odít* (to clothe, to array), *odev* (clothing), *divat se* (to watch and follow with love and awe), *div* (wonder), *dívka* (originally a woman desiring to have children), *díte* (child).⁹² History is, therefore, *nadeje* (hope) that there is time-space for man (to

⁹¹ Jakub Deml, *Miriam - Moji prateci*, op. cit., p. 46.

⁹² Miroslav Holub and Stanislav Lyer, *Stručný slovník jazyka českého*, op. cit., p. 128.

he made) where one can find oneself, while learning to unveil eternity in time. History is identifying a man with the unity of the trinity of man, woman and child, that introduces a man and his continuity into the wholeness with Being. History further requires that one discerns his true word in the world and makes it into one's deed. To achieve this (to realize the truth) is deemed to be heroic (Serb *dici se*: to raise above, to excel; *dika*: praise, honour; *dican*: glorified, famous, excellent): one cannot become glorified or heroic by embracing licence to nihilistic weakness. In this regard, history as time is man's trial that requires that one uses judiciously one's freedom to discern good and evil. In this connection, it is symptomatic that nihilism chose to identify *a priori* history with man's fall (failure). The essence of history is not negativity or negation, but unveiling-creating-making man a whole being, to use the Biblical expression, who "knows how to walk *with* the God," not how to be alone.

Other intrinsically related meanings that developed from the root *de-/di* are contained in such words as *rozedneni* (dawn), *den* (day), and *dno* (bottom, ground, bed) that are grounded in a notion of (ascending, arising, rasing, appearing) light.⁹³ In this regard, it is also notable, that the archetype of humanness is connected with the idea of Day of Judgement, not with the Night of Judgement. Moreover, it also needs to be added that the letter "D" in the ancient Slavic alphabets symbolized the (Divine) good (*Dohro*).⁹⁴ These words, in turn, are related to the verb *b-dit* (to be awake, to watch, to keep an eye on something like on one's way of living) with its variants connected with the verb *budit* (to wake up, to revive, to rouse, to call

⁹³ Miroslav Holub and Stanislav Lyr, *Stručný slovník jazyka českého*, op. cit., p. 118. Latin *deus* and *Jupiter*, as well as Greek *Zeus* and *Dios* are also derived from this root. (Ibid., p. 117)

⁹⁴ Olga Lukovic-Pjanovic, *Srbi ... narod najstariji*, Vol. III, op. cit., pp. 213, 222, 224.

forth, to raise) and *bud-* -- "I am spiritually alive; my soul is alive; I am awake;" that is, one's mind is prepared, ready for what is to come (the verb *bud-* is used for the future tense of the verb "to be").⁹⁵ All this can be summarized as an idea of man's history that starts from the rootedness of man in his freedom to discern good from evil, and then is able to raise to the knowledge of life, finding and keeping (an eye on) the good and presence of the sacred within: as the state of one's own spirit. Symbolically, it is a realization of the unity-synthesis of "appearing and standing-up," "looking; and seeing," "becoming and coming to oneself."

Thereby, one fulfils the oneness-identity of the beautiful trinity: *(po)divat se* (to come to visit, to look, to watch, to wonder), *videt* (to be able to see, to find, to know), *být* (to be, to settle); this ontological trinity of oneness can be also presented as the meaningful synthesis of *div-vid(t)-byt* where *div*: wonder of being; *vid*: way of being; *byt*: home of being. To the trinity of *div-vid(t)-byt(bud)* correspond the trinity of time: wonder, givenness and death of the past (*dát*: to give; *dávno*: long ago; *dávno*: ancient; *dav*: originally "anxiety;" now also a "mass of people;" English death also belongs to this morpheme, originally denoting death by stifling: *udušení*; "soul": *duše*);⁹⁶ the present of knowing-realizing (*vid* > *veda*; *vit* > Latin *vite*, *vital*);⁹⁷ and the spiritual awakening, conquering, building and ensuring of one's future (*budovat*: to build; *dobudu*: "I will conquer"). One cannot be separated from each other without slighting man's own being and identity. On this way of being, the purpose of history is to create new life (not

⁹⁵ Miroslav Holub and Stanislav Lyer, *Stručný slovník jazyka českého*, op. cit., pp. 91, 102. Etymologically, the name *Buddha* also belongs to this root. [See *ibid.*, p. 91]

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

⁹⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 466.

death as nihilism would like to have it).⁹⁸

According to traditional interpretations, the word "history" itself is derived from the root *(v)id-* (sic), respectively from Greek *(v)eidenai* rendered as knowing by experience-observation, or as defining "the position in which a man is placed through having *seen*." In this regard, other derivations are interesting: *histōr*: that who investigates and, thus, knows; *historia*: investigation; *historein*: to hear witness, *historiē*: hearing of witness, establishment of facts.⁹⁹ Comparing the meanings and forms of all these words, the following "irregularities" are evident: the meanings of the alleged original root *(v)id-* or its later Hellenized *eidenai* are related to the notion of history, but they connote rather seeing-knowing, than investigating-knowing as clearly emphasized by all the derivations; they evidently stress the need of going behind mere seeing in a sense of an *active*, prolonged and laborious, if not even painful, following-unveiling-unearthing of the trace; further, the attached *tōr* is here presented as a mere appendix without any real meaning of its own: thus constructed *vid-tōr* was to give finally *histōr* (where *-dt-* was to change into *-sr-*).

All these somehow dissonant "complexities" would rather suggest that there was another etymological foundation that would be more simple and without these contradictions. In fact, here etymology provides us again without some of these insights that may actually help us to correct some of the "forgeries" of history and

⁹⁸ Thus, other original meaning of the root *dhē-* was to "breastfeed." [Miroslav Holub and Stanislav Lyr, *Stručný slovník jazyka českého*, op. cit., p. 121]

⁹⁹ See *ibid.*, pp. 62, 179; Herman Frankel, *Early Greek Poetry and Philosophy, A history of Greek epic, lyric, and prose to the middle of the fifth century*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975), p. 336; in this connection, Frankel also gives English *witness* and German *wissen* (to know); both these words also point towards the original form *vid(t)*.

identities too often imposed by the more aggressive party. Thus, it is probably characteristic that history itself is a dispute: therefore, it is not accidental that one is compelled to investigate the investigation (history) or the investigated, that is, "historical."

Surprisingly or not (it depends on the point of view), there does exist a word that appears to put all the discrepancies back in order. The word is Serb (Slavic) *istraga* that means exactly *investigation, tracing down, search, hunt*; some of its derivations are, for example, *istraziti*: to investigate, to examine, *istrazivac*: investigator, analyst, detective. The etymology of this word provides further evidence in this regard. *Istraga* is composed of two particles - *is(t)* and *trag* where *trag* = trace (similarly the traditional explanation of the word *tragedy* by *tragos* = billy-goat, that is, by clothing the actors into billy-goat's fur seems not very serious, but rather comic; more probably, as well more logically, it denoted a play about becoming a hero by searching - *traganje* - after one's identity, destiny and truth).¹⁰⁰

Is is a prefix that means not only "out of" or "from," but also "to the very end," "thoroughly," "fully," "completely," that is a true (complete) unconcealment of the concealed (cf. Greek *di-*, *dia-*, and Latin *dis-*).¹⁰¹ As such it

¹⁰⁰ Cf., for example, Miroslav Holub and Stanislav Lyer, *Stručný slovník jazyka českého*, op. cit., p. 447.

¹⁰¹ In the Slavic languages other forms of the same preposition appear as *vy-* (pointing towards *vid*) and *roz/raz* (*ra/ro* is another fundamental morpheme of the Slavic languages denoting the idea-principle of stance, place, standing and its developing, opening up for Being; the Slavic river *Volga* was originally called *Ra*; similarly, the ancient Slavs had also called themselves *Rasi*, *Rascani* etc.; one of the names of the Slavic Deity was *Rod*; *narod* = nation; *rodina* = family, fatherland; *rodit* = to beget; *rehjata* = children; *rod* = clan; *úroda* = harvest; *h-roh* = grave; *priroda* = nature; *red/rád* = order; *rozvoj* = development; *rozum* = reason; *ravan* = originally noble [not racist]; *robit* = to work, to do, to produce; *rost* = growth; *raj* = paradise etc.). [See, for example, Andjelija Stancic-Spaiceva, *Najstariji jezik Biblije ili jedan od najstarijih kulturnih naroda*, (Beograd: Sloga Dusana Popovica, 1929), p. 27]

is related to the notion of Being (that what is as it is) epitomized by the Serb (Slavic) verb *jest* = to be (*si, jest* = English "is;" *(je)sam* = (I) am; cf. Slavic *sam* = alone: by itself: that what is itself: it is what it is). All this denotes the notion of wholeness and togetherness.¹⁰² The origin of the fundamental morpheme *is* is evidently of very ancient origin that goes back probably to the very foundation of our civilization and culture. It, thus, also reveals what is the commanding spiritual basis of our humanness.

In particular, in the old Slavic alphabets, *Is* was a name of the letter "i" that is also used in the Slavic languages as a conjunction "and," thus, affirming the positive openness and complementarity of Being. As such, *Is* symbolized in the Serb-Slavic alphabets Being in the sense of its infinite *spaciality*, denoting at the same time the "wonderful" number eight as the consummation-wholeness of being in history: *osam* (eight) = *o-sam* = *sedam* (seven) in "O" - in the eternal circle of Being.¹⁰³

In this way, *Is* stands for the Truth of Being. Again, this is also

¹⁰² The original root of this verb "to be" is held to be "Indo-European" *es/s* that is not in contradiction with the said. Moreover, the key letter "S" also stresses here the symbolic idea of wholeness with its evident symbolism of openness. [Cf. Miroslav Holub and Stanislav Lyrer, *Stručný slovník jazyka českého*, op. cit., p. 210]

¹⁰³ In other variants of old Slavic alphabets, the letter "I" stands for the number "10," that also contains the same idea of striving towards the wholeness of being. [See Olga Lukovic-Pjanovic, *Srbi ... narod najstariji*, Vol. III, op. cit., pp. 190, 222, 224, 258] On the concept of "8" as a completion-consummation of the wholeness as symbolized by the letter "S" (S > 8) compare a poem from a collection of Kirillo-Belozerskij monastery recorded by a priest Varlaam in 1476 *O rodnyh videnijah* that describes in eight lines this Slavic concept of history of the universe as a fulfilment of the seven historical eras-stages in the eighth one, the seventh one is defined as "eternal torture" (of egotism?). Every era is defined as "*videnje*" or as a birth of a distinct form/art of being-knowing. Moreover, it is also important to note that *videnje* is here defined as a specific form of the verb "to be" realized in the world (this understanding is still preserved in Czech where the grammatical aspect of the verbs is *vid*). [B.A. Rybakov, *Jazycestvo Drevnih Slavyan*, op. cit., p. 453] It is notable that, in his *Pansophia*, Jan Amos Comenius also elaborated a concept of eight "worlds," eight stages of being that epitomize the emancipation of the universe from the God and its return to the God through man's creative activity. [See Robert Kalivoda, *Husitska epocha a J.A. Komenský*, (Praha: Odeon, 1992), p. 296]

unequivocally confirmed by a series of other Serb (Slavic) words where *Is* appears as *ist* = true; that which *is*; certain: *istina* = truth, justice: *istiniti* = reliable, veritable; *istinski* = true-original; *istovetan* = identical; *isti* = the same; *obistiniti se*: to be confirmed, to happen as prophesied or predicted; Czech *jistota* = guarantee, certainty etc. In the old forms of the Serb (Slavic) alphabets, the sign "I" (*I*) was appearing along the letter "H" that was used (apparently also as the particle *ji-* in many Slavic words) as a sign for extolment or emphasis (to "*h-eigheten*" the meaning) and was placed to this effect at the beginning of the word (*h-rad*: castle; *h-ruza*: terror - *různý*: other; *h-ra*: play; *hynout*: to cease to be < *ini*: other; *h-ubit*: to exterminate < *ubit*: to kill; *h-rdina*: hero < *rod*: who is born; a child of Being).¹⁰⁴ Moreover, the symbolism pertaining to the signs "I" ("H") and "S" points to a deeper meaning (also with regard to the scheme of the Hegelian world as demonstrated in chapter 6). In the Slavic alphabet *hlaholice* (= glorification, praise of Being) or *glagolica*, these signs appear as the following

¹⁰⁴ See A. Stancic-Spaiceva, *Najstariji jezik Biblije ili jedan od najstarijih kulturnih naroda*, op. cit., p. 30. It is also worth noting that the letter-symbol "H" itself was originally convertible with "S." [Olga Lukovic-Pjanovic, *Srbi ... narod najstariji*, Vol. II, op. cit., p. 191]

graphic symbols:¹⁰⁵

Letter 'I'		called 'ISA' = Spatiality of Being
Letter 'I'		called 'I' or 'IZE' = Conjunction with Being
Letter 'S'		called "Slovo" (Word) -> UM

These symbols are revealing the essence of human being. Thus, "to be" (*i* + *s* = the verb *is* = *participation-interconnectedness-openness* in Being - the God) is a synthesis of the Word (*Um*) with one's being, or one's being and God's Being through the Word (the *art*). It also shows that the enclosure by nothingness is in principle always pierced through, "broken up," opened up and transcended by Being, *um* and the word (the truth). In other words, it is a "circle" (or triangle), but a circle that is opened up through and into the infinity of Being.

This ethos of humanness is also contained in the symbolic message according to which the ancient Slavic alphabets were ordered, thus, further indicating that the Slavic identity was really (materially) tied to the phenomenon of creating a written language that both contained their ethos and religion: different variants-interpretations of that credo-ethos of humanness always carry essentially the same meaning: "I [the Lord] am the tree [also book] of *Vid* [knowing;

¹⁰⁵ See Olga Lukovic-Pjanovic, *Srbi ... narod najstariji*, Vol. III, op. cit., pp. 222-223; *Velesova knjiga*, op. cit., p. 231.

consciousness; conscience); the word [fruit] is good; [you shall] think as human people and [shall] say [confirm, stand for; literally "make solid"] the word of learning strongly ¹⁰⁶

History can thus be defined as (to be) "true investigation." "investigation of the truth," "investigation of one's identity" - through the examination of the evidence of the past. It is an art that is based on a conviction that the truth always leaves a trace behind. Evidently, it is very close to philosophy except that it does not require explicitly "love" (it accuses and defends) and focuses on what has already happened and has been experienced. History as every true art is, however, to be practised with a view to justice, and to do that one cannot hate justice. In this light, one can also better appreciate the urge of nihilism in general and of Hegel in particular to wind up the investigation of the truth (with a view to justice), that is, to close up history.

History is in this context a constant question of man's identity that can be achieved *only if one is not out of tune with Being*, that is, only being in love with the truth and in a search after it. This is clearly indicated by the interrelatedness of *dilo* (work, deed), *odit* (to clothe, to array), *odev* (clothing), and *divat se* (to watch and follow with love and awe) within the context of history: the imperative is to match-create the "Apollonian" harmony-unity of form and content; admittedly, it is the most difficult thing to do, a task that can never be completed. With the advent of the *phenomenology of humanness*, the question "how" (*jakost* - "quality" - of being and knowing; *jak?*: "how?") is essentially always in the final instance the question "who" (gathering all the qualities of being and knowing into

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Olga Lukovic-Pjanovic, *Srbi ... narod najstariji*, Vol. III, op. cit., p. 210.

identity). To this effect, the Bohemian ethos has always been a delimitation against one-sidedness, ego-singularity or flatness of nihilistic egotism. The Bohemian (Slavic) notion of identity is a question of trinity and its wholeness. In this regard, Ferdinand Peroutka stressed:

The essence of the [true human] ideal is the ability to keep all the powers of human character in balance. The word 'man' is the honorary title for such dramatic unity wherein no element is not exterminated *a priori*, but that holds everything in order ... Temperament combined with discipline [*kázen*: being able to discern the word] is the precious thing under the sun ... Such a proportional (symmetrical) personality resists every dogmatism that would like to drive the world into the fence of some one-sidedness.¹⁰⁷

Thus, the art (learning) of balance is the art (task, creed) of man. Such is also the Bohemian ethos.¹⁰⁸

8.7. TYMYJÁ: Thyme (*Materídouška*) of Being

Our quest (*istraga*) after our identity within Being is a search after its phenomenology *and* stability; it is a search after realizing-knowing and realizing-making the truth at home within and among ourselves *qua* humans. Consequently, it is a matter of *sustaining* the appearance of the truth in the living world. As already the English word "truth" and also the word *istraga* suggest, it is a search after trinity.

In this regard, negative *dialectics* (the archetype of duel, that is, a mere dichotomy of friend versus enemy), including its Hegelian absolute radicalism,

¹⁰⁷ Ferdinand Peroutka, *TGM představuje plukovníka Cunninghama*, op. cit., pp. 72-73; see also *ibid.*, p. 75.

¹⁰⁸ See *ibid.*, pp. 72, 77.

appears to be absolutely insufficient: absolute egotism splits up into two, thus, producing dialectics of (absolute) self-negation that ends up either in nothingness (banality) or death (either as suicide or murder). Nihilistic egotism boils down to a search of a world that would be nothing but an absolute narcissistic self-reflection appearing as "the absolute terror of absolute anarchy of absolutely lonely egoists."¹⁰⁹ As Socrates told Callicles, there is always *something* that humans have in common that ultimately pertains to some sort of love.¹¹⁰ However, a mere recognition of the other ("you") does not really solve the problem of negativity: as such, it is still a reproduction of the Hegelian model of the split personality projected into antagonism between the master and the slave (master's *alter-ego*).¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Rio Preisner, *Ceska existence*, op. cit., p. 153. Thus, analyzing Hegel, Masaryk summarized the essence of Hegel's mono-dialectics as follows: "If, I, the subject, *alone exist*, and I am the great Ego, the absolute Ego, then of course the external world (Non-Ego) must be my creation - I am, after all, god." [Erazim V. Kohák, eds., *Masaryk on Marx, An Abridged Edition of T.G. Masaryk: Social Question: Philosophical and Sociological Foundations of Marxism*, op. cit., p. 56] "Others seek to escape the dreadful subjectivism and their dreadful loneliness by forcible escape from themselves ... Egotism both here and there. Some die of egotism, others kill from it." [Ibid., pp. 358] "Kant said that a man thinking about himself alone will go mad. Really, the subjectivistic man feeds on himself and so destroys himself." [Ibid., p. 95] On the critique of this nihilistic centrism in German thinking (Hegel, Marx, Husserl, Heidegger; Preisner also added Sartre's existentialism to this group) see Preisner's excellent analyses in Rio Preisner, *Ceska existence*, op. cit., pp. 150-153] With regard to Heidegger, Preisner noted: "For Heidegger, the relation between 'I' and the other is the mysteriousness of death ... thus trying to solve the relation of 'I' towards the other [on this absolute basis] ... Only the knowledge of nothingness as his goal and end of all the there-being is, according to Heidegger, a possibility to recognize others [as dead] ... 'I' recognizes the other in all its 'objectivity' and 'sovereignty' [only] because this objectivity and sovereignty, as well as the recognition, end up in nothing. The recognition of the other becomes identical with making it into nothing. Being together is thus only a prescription of mutual 'ontological' annihilation." [Ibid., p. 152]

¹¹⁰ Plato, *Gorgias*, 481d. In this regard, Zdenek Hajny, a Czech artist, stressed the need to go behind one's own "me," behind the anthropocentric or egocentric approach and "to listen to the voice [the Word] which is not the voice of chaos, aggression or hatred, but that of harmony and order;" thus, at least "since the times of Plato and Pythagoras, we know that the ruling principle of the universe is not a disintegration and destruction, but a creative energy - harmony and beauty." [Zdenek Hajny, "O hledání cesty, výstave s pocitacem a drobné perle," *Prostor*, No. 23, March 1993: 153]

¹¹¹ Thus, in this very sense of positing merely the other is one's own *alter ego*, Erazim Kohák, a Czech political thinker, declared that he had overcome the Cartesian fallacy, not realizing that he preserved and actually reproduced the schism of egotism only in a somewhat modified form of the same tautological ethos of centrism: "The primordial experience of mine is actually not only 'I,' but it is always You and I, *Alter at Ego*. My *alter-ego* (sic), my neighbour, my counterpart in the

The split egoist, even if appearing as Hegel's Absolute Spirit, thereby appears as if being able to count only to "two" only to retreat afterwards back into his universal and homogeneous unity of "one" that, however, and falls apart into nothingness.¹¹² As Jan Hus put it, "a man who is only by himself will be found by the evil."¹¹³ Jakub Deml also noted: "Who does not have love, who wants to be only alone, in oneself only, who does not want to be, who does not want to love beyond oneself, a fellow person, is barren, infertile and noxious ... such a man is a false prophet."¹¹⁴

For Jan Hus, friendship is crucial for any art of creation.¹¹⁵ To see-realize a closeness with another being is to close on nothingness symbolized by the notion of "human touch" (*doryk*; *stisk*) where *porýkáni* (struggling) becomes *setkáni* (meeting) that *poskýtá* (offers, makes appear, calls into being) a live becoming. Man discovers the phenomenon of togetherness through shared *concern*. That what touches is presented by "you" that changes strange and alien into personal, without becoming assimilated as a property (Czech *doryk* = touch = 'into You,' *TY* = you). *Ty* is thus a test of our trustfulness and justice 'here and now.' As Jakub Deml indicated, to be is to see a human "you."¹¹⁶ In this way, salvation is also essentially a search *with men*,¹¹⁷ as long as there is freedom of human friendship,

dialogue, is the inseparable element of my own being. [Erazim Kohák, *Narod v nás: Česká otázka a ideál humanitní v období normalizace*, op. cit., p. 24; see also, for example, Robert Young, *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West*, London & New York: Routledge, 1990]

¹¹² On the ontological notion of dyad cf., for example, Herman Frankel, *Early Greek Poetry and Philosophy, A history of Greek epic, lyric, and prose to the middle of the fifth century*, op. cit., p. 276.

¹¹³ Jan Hus, *Dcerka: o poznání prave cesty ke spasení*, op. cit., p. 28.

¹¹⁴ Jakub Deml, *Miriam - Moji pratele*, op. cit., p. 105.

¹¹⁵ Jan Hus, *Sermo de pace: Rec o miru*, op. cit., p. 41.

¹¹⁶ Jakub Deml, *Miriam - Moji pratele*, op. cit., p. 18.

¹¹⁷ Jakub Deml, *Hrad smrti*, op. cit., p. 63.

there is always a hope for man.¹¹⁸ Similarly, harmony of identity and being requires more than one tone: "Your heart beats, but if it is not thereby *touching* [*nedotýká-li se*] every being near to you, its beat is empty (in vain), with no echo, how could it create a song!"¹¹⁹ Jakub Deml, therefore, sees human love is the art of "*rozšumotání duší*" (letting the spirit speak) "on the threshold of eternity."¹²⁰ A man, in whom however, "the mirror of his life" does not find presence of human love, is viewed as a waste that is "falling through his internal darkness."¹²¹ It is this friendship that binds man to humanness, is its ultimate essence and makes the human condition approachable and relevant to us; without it, man recognizes himself "as if being in a state of nakedness."¹²²

This human condition appears as work, but its essence is love for another human being that should be practised as the art of courage (*umení statečné*).¹²³ Such ethos also contains an old wisdom that is expressed in a Slavic proverb: "*Those who do not acknowledge brothers as brothers will acknowledge foreigners as their masters.*"¹²⁴

Again, the ancient roots of this ethos are reflected in the Slavic words for

¹¹⁸ Jakub Deml, *Miriam - Moji pratele*, op. cit., 81. So, to kill man is "to lure, force him out to such a distant place which human friendship cannot see." [Jakub Deml, *Rodný kraj*, op. cit., p. 80]

¹¹⁹ Jakub Deml, *Rodný kraj*, op. cit., p. 140.

¹²⁰ Jakub Deml, *Miriam - Moji pratele*, op. cit., p. 81.

¹²¹ Jakub Deml, *Slepeje*, svazek X, (Vranov nad Dyji: Votohla, 1993), p. 23.

¹²² Jakub Deml, *Domu*, (Brno: Nakladatelské konsorcium Jota & Arca Jimfa, 1990), p. 83.

¹²³ Jakub Deml, *Miriam - Moji pratele*, op. cit., p. 124; Jan Hus, *Knížky o svatokupectví*, op. cit., p. 92. In this spirit, the famous battle hymn of the Hussites "You are the Lord's Combatants" (*Kto sú boží bojovníci*) stressed: "Do not fear those who can destroy/ The flesh: so God commands/ That we might give our lives in love/ For friend and fellow man ... Shield him who stands by you/ | L. Matejka, J. Mersereau, Jr. and D. Welsh, *Anthology of Czech Poetry*, (Michigan: Michigan Slavic Publications, 1973), pp. 72-73]

¹²⁴ Paul R. Radosavljevich, *Who are the Slavs?*, Volume I, (Boston: Richard G. Badger, 1919), p. 28. Paul R. Radosavljevich, *Who are the Slavs?*, Volume I, Richard G. Badger, Boston, 1919, p. 28.

marriage that are firmly anchored in the notion of sacredness: *svatba* = marriage; *svat*, *starosvat* = guest at wedding; Serb *svatovski* = wedding, bridal; *svaty* = sacred, divine, saint.¹²⁵ In this regard, Czech uses a distinct notion of *blizni* that is untranslatable directly in English, but is essential for understanding the ethos. *Blizni* denotes "friend," "fellow," "neighbour," "human," "twin" and is derived from a concept of "proximity," "nearness," "closeness," "affinity" (*blízkost*). *Blizni* is essentially our human companion who comes together with us from the same word of spirit.¹²⁶ It was always related to goodness and love, and as such it might be rooted in an idea of a herald who precedes, announces, brings close to us or opens times of happiness.¹²⁷ In this sense, human "you" is, therefore, a guarantee and condition that allow the prevention of egoistic sameness and monotony (like the end of history), thus being one of the necessary prerequisites for cultivating life.¹²⁸ *JÁ* (I) and *TY* (YOU) are, therefore, engaged together in the pursuit (*volení-lovení* = to love-hunt) of the Word of Being and catching with the *tune* that *um* has placed in us:¹²⁹

Knock, and it will be opened for you (in plural - *vám* in Czech) ; why did not the Saviour say: 'Knock, and it will be opened for (singular) you?' To give a sign that heaven and paradise are never going to be opened for one

¹²⁵ Milan Machovec, *Josef Dobrovsky*, op. cit., p. 219.

¹²⁶ See Jan Hus, *Postilla*, op. cit., p. 156.

¹²⁷ On the Czech concept of human fellowship (*blizni* and *blíznost*) see, for example, *ibid.*, pp. 314-315.

¹²⁸ Frantisek Palacky, *Dejiny narodu ceskeho v Cechach a na Morave*, op. cit., pp. 6-7.

¹²⁹ In this sense, in Czech *myslenka* (idea) is etymologically related to *myslivost* = hunting, being in its essence *MY-Slovo* (WE-WORD), cf. Greek *mythos* = word. [Cf. Miroslav Holub and Stanislav Lyer, *Stručný slovník jazyka českého*, op. cit., p. 303] As every true piety this requires that one chooses this path of affirmation voluntarily and consciously - with a "good will" (*volně* = *dobrovolně*). [See Jan Hus, *Knížky o svatokupectví*, op. cit., p. 149] To love consists in human freedom to choose (cf. Czech *volba* = choice and Serb *voliti* = to love), and to choose is to care. [*Ibid.*, p. 92]

single man. Who loves is already not alone. Satan wanted to be alone, he is, therefore, outside heaven, outside the paradise because not even God Himself wants to be alone, being Love. Knock, and it will be opened for you (in plural). Who is knocking? Two hearts against each other on the thin doors of time.¹³⁰

This "musical" or poetic ethos going very deep into history to the beginnings of civilization is essentially a pious recreation of identity in trinity. Thus, the Slavic ancient religion, "being of the same origin as the old Indian religion," was from its onset a monotheism based on the principle of divine trinity that "permeates as the ubiquitous life-giving power of light through the whole universe."¹³¹ The truth of 'the three' creates man.¹³² According to Jan Hus, "And

¹³⁰ Jakub Deml, *Miriam - Moji pratele*, op. cit., p. 80.

¹³¹ Frantisek Palacky, *Dejiny narodu ceskeho v Cechach a na Morave*, op. cit., pp. 23, 52. On the principle of trinity in the ancient Slavic ethos, whose roots go beyond 2000 B.C., see particularly *Velesova knjiga*, op. cit., pp. 7-19; cf. Boris Rebinder, *Zivot i religija Slovena prema Vles knjizi*, (Beograd: IPA Miroslav, 1996), pp. 41-52. On the continuity of the principle of trinity in Czech thinking from the Hussites through Czech reformation to Jan Amos Comenius see Robert Kalivoda, *Husitska epocha a J.A. Komensky*, (Praha: Odeon, 1992), p. 47. Thus, Comenius saw a major deficiency in Campanella, but also in Parmenides and Aristotle "that they explained the world only by the means of two principles between which there is only a struggle, not a growth." [Ibid., p. 210] Comenius also perceived trinity as a principle that is also present in the phenomenon of time; Comenius thereby presented a human alternative to the Cartesian system of the ego. [Ibid., pp. 210-211] Comenius thus synthesized theology and philosophy into theosophy. The essence of Comenius's notion of spiritual and ontological trinity of Being can be summarized as: 1) trinity as an explanatory and creative method of Being; 2) interconnecting the divine principle with the human element through trinity; 3) overcoming anthropology that is based on the dominance of "sin" and "guilt" in man's historical destiny. [Ibid., p. 229]

On the spiritual and ontological symbolism and meaning of "two" whose reconciliation gives rise to a trinity, "one third of which is transcendent," cf. C.G. Jung, *Psyche and Soul, a Selection of Writings*, op. cit., p. 21. Thus, Michael Ende shows (in a true Bohemian spirit) the secret of Being-Life at the end of his modern Odyssey where a child faces and overcomes the threat of nihilism. There the forces of good and evil, while holding each other, are the necessary frame, boundary, shape of what appears, but they are not Being-Life itself. Keeping up the bonds, they thereby "guard the Water of Life." In this way, knowledge of good and evil is essential for keeping up one's existence in the context of Being, but it does not give life as such. If separated or abstracted from Being, knowledge of good and evil "means very little, if anything," to use Socrates's words from his *Apology*. As Matej of Janov stressed, when a man loses God, he becomes a burden for himself." [Matej z Janova, *Vybor z Pravidel Stareho a Noveho Zakona*, op. cit., p. 90] Man "stands empty" in such a voidness of life. [Jan Hus, *Postilla*, op. cit., p. 67] Knowing is not yet being-creating. In a sense, this frame-limit of good and evil is death (like Hegel's circle), but it only helps to make Being appear in the world. Hegel sees inside his circle of death only emptiness, void, thus only whirling round along the edges as its resentful outsider. In this sense, he was "merely" dead, that is, "split" away from the heart of Being, "thrown out" on

when the three things [the Holy Father, the Son and the Spirit] are enacted [through the concord of reason, will and memory], then they hold in it an image and likeness of the Holy Trinity that has created you, and powerfully, wisely and freely so."¹³³ Consequently, "man's spirit abides in the likeness of the Saint Trinity" so that the Saint Trinity has also invested man with its identity in trinity; however, by succumbing to nothingness, a man "desecrates" and "loses the likeness and image of the Saint Trinity;" without God (identity in trinity), there is no identity of man: to be introduced into oneself means to be introduced into the faith of the Trinity.¹³⁴ In relation to man, the law of trinity lies in two commandments: to love the God and "to love your human fellow as yourself."¹³⁵ It is also indicative that in the times of true knighthood and nobelty, "good friend" (*dobrý druh*; *druh* = literally my other, second) equaled "courageous friend" (*statečný druh*).¹³⁶ The ability for realizing TY (YOU) through courage and love thus affirms the humanity of JÁ. It can be, therefore, concluded that both internal peace of man and "good *polity*" are based on the harmony within trinity epitomized by God, other humans and oneself; when some element is lacking or denied, war, both within and without oneself, appears instead of peace.¹³⁷ Facing his trial, Jan

the margins of non-being. Ende's message is: who finds love in oneself would then hear the song of Life:

I am the Water of Life,
Out of myself I grow.
The more you drink of me,
The fuller I will flow.

[See Michael Ende, *The Neverending Story*, op. cit., pp. 365-369]

¹³² Jan Hus, *Postilla*, op. cit., p. 183.

¹³³ Jan Hus, *Dcerka: o poznání prave cesty ke spasení*, op. cit., p. 9.

¹³⁴ Jan Hus, *Postilla*, op. cit., pp. 215-216. It is noteworthy that Jan Hus was also using the principle of trinity as a basic methodological rule in his works. [See Jan Hus, *Knížky o svatokupectví*, op. cit., p. 9]

¹³⁵ Jan Hus, *Postilla*, op. cit., p. 340.

¹³⁶ Miroslav Holub and Stanislav Lyr, *Stručný slovník jazyka českého*, op. cit., p. 129.

¹³⁷ Jan Hus, *O církvi*, op. cit., p. 202.

Hus wrote: "For if there should be peace between men, it is necessary to conclude before peace of man with God and peace of man with oneself."¹³⁸

The notion of TYMYJÁ (YOU-WE-I) was in principle formulated by Jakub Deml: "Three make a company (society). What kind of company is it? It is: *já*, *ty* and *my* (I, you, and we)."¹³⁹ In other words, a man cannot embrace God alone (without humanness), neither is there any true love without the experience of the sacred and piety as the ultimate congruence and congruity between both human "me" and "you."¹⁴⁰ To gather oneself together again as man requires that one comes together with humanness and God.¹⁴¹ And as Jan Hus said, "if you recollect a memory of the God, you will not go far."¹⁴²

This also means to realize-know *um* (the Word) as a potentiality, one's power (something that every man has in principle inside him),¹⁴³ whose realization as *life* requires a creative synthesis of acting-unveiling whereby *um* becomes for us

¹³⁸ Jan Hus, *Sermo de pace: Rec o miru*, op. cit., p. 39; John Hus, *The Letters of John Hus*, op. cit., p. 111.

¹³⁹ Jakub Deml, *Miriam - Moji pratele*, op. cit., pp. 132; see also pp. 91, 141, 194.

¹⁴⁰ Jakub Deml, *Rodny kraj*, op. cit., p. 27; Jakub Deml, *Miriam - Moji pratele*, op. cit., p. 135.

¹⁴¹ See Matej z Janova, *Vybor z Pravidel Stareho a Noveho Zakona*, op. cit., p. 56.

¹⁴² Jan Hus, *Dcerka: o poznani prave cesty ke spaseni*, op. cit., p. 10.

¹⁴³ In this regard, Latin *possibilitas*, *potentia*, *possidere* point towards Serb *posedovati* (to possess, to own) where *po-* is a common Slavic prefix and the root *sed* has a meaning of "founded, conquered, established, or created place" (*seder*: to sit, be seated, settle, get hold of, fit, *sedlo*: saddle; *sad*: orchard, gardens, park; *posed*: property, lookout; *sidlit*: to live, stay; *sidlo*: seat, place of a ruler, ancient inhabited place; *sediste*: residence, place-office; *sazer*: to put, place, lay, seat, commit, plant, bet, insert, mount, deal a blow, see to something; *obsadir*: to occupy; *sadba*: seedling; *sedlak*: peasant-landowner; *zasada*: principle, maxim, code; local names *Sedlice*, *Sedlcany* etc.). The prefix *po-* appears to be related to other prefix *ob-*; their original meaning seems to denote not so much "power" as such (that probably evolved later from the notion of "occupied place"), but the idea of (a specific power of) "enframing," "delimiting," setting boundaries "around" predominantly by the means of two opposites (*oba* = two in the sense of both). Consequently, as such, *potentiality* or *possibility* remain akin to the essence of Hegelian dialectics that, however, fails to raise as the unborn child to the third element of life-creation (*um*). Here also lies the fallacy of policies of occupation: they lack life, the spiritual strength, cannot make the word "happen" and end up in negating the potentiality of being and life as such.

a realized *MY* in the "nowness" of our world.¹⁴⁴ Life thus arises as a mutual *service* between the human and the word (*um*): it is human to serve the truth (Being).¹⁴⁵ In making thereby *um* manifest in the shared world of *ours*, humans acknowledge *de facto* that there is one common basis from which everything has arisen, that there is one common law according to which or against which everything is defined, and that everything is alive through sharing the word of the spirit. Such achieved togetherness in *Um* is then "the highest identity, the perfect equality, full and harmonic likeness, therefore, there are not three forms or three rules, but one law for all."¹⁴⁶ Similarly, *um* where realized appears as *MY* in a form of *mysl* (mind) or *myšlenka* (notion, thought) that can be shared.¹⁴⁷ This, in turn, means to "take part in the right order and in goodness of Being."¹⁴⁸ *Myšlení*

¹⁴⁴ On the etymological intrinsic relation between *my* (we) and *ny* (Czech *nyní* = now) see Miroslav Holub and Stanislav Lyer, *Stručný slovník jazyka českého*, op. cit., pp. 302, 313; in old Czech, the accusative of *my* was *ny* as preserved in an Old Czech hymn "Hospodine, pomiluj ny" (O, Lord, give us the grace of your love). It is also interesting to note that in Czech, "accusative" is traditionally related with the verb "to see" (*videt*; again derived from *vid*) not from the verb "to accuse" like in Latin and English.

¹⁴⁵ As Jakub Deml put it, "we are like air through which one light comes through." [Jakub Deml, *Cesta k jihu*, (Tasov: 1935), p. 37. It may also be noted here that the very word *service* and *serve* was previously related to the notion of *guarding* (see Latin *servare* = to watch, to keep; hence conservation, preservation, reserve). Yet, the very ancient root *serv* goes still further back to the deepest origins of "Indo-European" culture and the collective name *Serbs*. [Cf. Miroslav Holub and Stanislav Lyer, *Stručný slovník jazyka českého*, op. cit., p. 55]

¹⁴⁶ Matej z Janova, *Vybor z Pravidel Stareho a Noveho Zakona*, op. cit., p. 52.

¹⁴⁷ Without living in and according to *um* (the truth) through *My* (togetherness), "man is nothing as far as it lies only in him alone." [See *ibid.*, p. 53; cf. Jan Hus, *O církvi*, op. cit., p. 207]

¹⁴⁸ Matej z Janova, *Vybor z Pravidel Stareho a Noveho Zakona*, op. cit., p. 54. The modern Bohemian (Czech) *MY* was born through the Hussite rebellion and reformation as "a proud consciousness of honour which is claimed elsewhere only members of a certain class or caste;" essentially this shared honour of being appears as an "honour of the language, *honor linguarum* [as a proven *conjunction* of man with Being]." In this way, *jazyk* (language), as a community for "ja" ('I') was used as a synonym for the nation. It was also realized that the language is also what connects the past with the present, thus, creating a common ground for creating the future. In this way, the Hussites not only realized, but also revived *bohémici germinis nobile genus*. [Robert Kalivoda, *Husitská epocha a J.A. Komenský*, op. cit., pp. 110-111] The Hussites also established the law of the truth as *lex Dei* (*sola lex*: only the law) as the ground and criterion of legitimacy and legality of the government: "The revolution is legitimate because the government, which tries to destroy the law, has become illegal." [*Ibid.*, p. 134]

as a form of ontological togetherness is thereby a power of recollectedness in the oneness of the God's truth. In this regard, Matej of Janov wrote:

I want, my Father, that they be one as we are one - me in them and You in me - that they be led well into unity ... [Your Truth] reassembles what has been dispersed ... [while] the Antichrist is noted by dispersing ...¹⁴⁹

Um is the manifested and materialized in this gathering of man together as the free art of conscience that includes all art, science, thinking, acting and making - such a whole man becomes holy.¹⁵⁰ It is also where the love of another human being should ultimately find itself.¹⁵¹ In this regard, conscience is a mastery of justice and reciprocity through which shared notions (naming) are set up, confirmed and tested: *vzájemnost* (reciprocity) belongs etymologically to the verb *jmouti* (to have, to take out into existence) that also gives *jemný* (fine, exquisite, choice), *vzácný* (rare, uncommon, precious, costly, distinguished) and probably also to *jméno* (name).¹⁵²

In the same spirit, Jan Hus identified love with the art of "making somebody distinguished" (*vzácný*), that is also the art of not retreating from the

¹⁴⁹ Matej z Janova, *Výbor z Pravidel Starého a Nového Zákona*, op. cit., p. 77.

¹⁵⁰ See Jan Hus, *O církvi*, op. cit., p. 221; John Hus, *The Letters of John Hus*, op. cit., pp. 59-60; Jan Hus, *Postilla*, op. cit., p. 76. Or Jakub Deml put it, "your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit (*chrám*)." [Jakub Deml, *Miriam - Moji pratele*, op. cit., pp. 91-92; cf. Jan Hus, *Postilla*, op. cit., pp. 381-397] Deml further noted: "And one may also wonder how our ear leads a precise demarcation line between *kostel* [= church; *kostel* revokes Czech *kost* = 'bone') and *chrám* (temple)." Deml seems to identify the former with "disgust." [Jakub Deml, *Rodný kraj*, op. cit., pp. 164, 168]

¹⁵¹ Thus, Deml wrote: "I love you in the God, from the God and towards the God. From the God: because he has sent you to me and me to you." [Jakub Deml, *Miriam - Moji pratele*, op. cit., p. 18]

¹⁵² Miroslav Holub and Stanislav Lyer, *Stručný slovník jazyka českého*, op. cit., pp. 207, 473. As Jakub Deml put it, "Faithfulness (trustfulness) requires refinement ... Trustfulness is the secret of life and untrustfulness is the secret of death ... Who can be trustful becomes original." [Jakub Deml, *Domu*, op. cit., pp. 14-15.

truth = not doing injustice to one's fellow and friend.¹⁵³ Consequently, conscience as peace-making is the art of measure.¹⁵⁴ In this way, the strength and decision for conscience *qua* love, pave our way to humanity (*k lidem* = towards people) and to peace (*klid*) in oneself that, however, is not given by a man, but by the Word that cannot be "passed by" by man's questioning in this regard.¹⁵⁵ The spirit of truth thereby finds its home in man and with man.¹⁵⁶

In this regard, it is also notable that the ancient Slavic ethos perceived the universe (Being) as being a unity of three elements: *jav*, *nav*, *prav*. *Jav* is the world of existence, appearance, and our living; *nav* is the realm of retreat for the dead; both *jav* and *nav* are two opposing sides of the circularity of being; however, there is also *prav* that *opens* up this circularity to a higher meaning. *Prav* is the wholeness of the Truth and Justice from where the knowledge of creation and life arises, presented as the deity of *Sacred Vid* who unites the truth (*prav*; *pravda* = truth, justice) and appearance (*jav*; *jev* = phenomenon, appearance). Only in holding to the ideal of the truth, according to the Slavic creed, man can sustain and keep oneself in the world of *jav* (existence, appearance): truth protects from nothingness. Truth was symbolized as light that epitomizes Being (God), appearance and the ability to see and know. To this effect, in the Slavic languages, light coincides with the notion of the world and divinity: *svetlo* (light) - *svet*

¹⁵³ Jan Hus, *Postilla*, op. cit., p. 393; Otakar Odložek, *Jan Hus*, (Chicago: Geringer Press, 1953), p. 64.

¹⁵⁴ Jan Hus, *Knizky o svatokupectvi*, op. cit., p. 148; Jan Hus, *Postilla*, op. cit., pp. 254, 399; Jan Hus, *Sermo de pace: Rec o miru*, op. cit., pp. 22-23, 33, 35.

¹⁵⁵ Jan Hus, *O cirkvi*, op. cit., pp. 86, 193-194, 225; Jakub Deml, *Miriam - Moji pratele*, op. cit., p. 192, 167.

¹⁵⁶ See Matej z Janova, *Vybor z Pravidel Stareho a Noveho Zakona*, op. cit., p. 72.

(world) *svatý* (sacred, divine).¹⁵⁷

The etymology of *um* confirms and elucidates this interconnectedness of ontological trinity still further. In particular, the verb *umer* (derived from *um*) is innately related to the verb *jevit* (*au* > *av* > *ev*).¹⁵⁸ Obviously, any separation of *jav* (existence, appearance) from its life-giving ground of *um* (truth, justice), that is, separation of form from the essence of Being, forces man into the realm of death (*nav*) as a wasted possibility. Without this connectedness (context), man is weak (Czech *únava* = fatigue, tiredness, weariness; feebleness; boredom). Moreover, the affirmation that something "is" (*je*) also seems to require at least implicit a synthesis-commonity of triad, where preserving and cultivating, not negating, all three elements is an evident condition of the very possibility to state and know anything: *já* (I) + *jiny* (other; different) = *je* (something is) where the third underlying element "is" is an essential condition that should be present on part of 'I' and the other at the same time.¹⁵⁹ Moreover, the capability to be different also needs to be inherent in 'I.' Thus, every moment of the equation contains the triad in itself simultaneously. In other words, *difference* (distinguishability) is a prerequisite of knowledge, as well as of being, while the distinct and different is still held and preserved as part of the wholeness of Being. Understandably, such difference does not have necessarily to be hostile; it rather seems that hostility arises as part of animosity that also separates itself at least on one side against the common Being. Similarly, to "speak" (cf. Serb *javljati se sa*

¹⁵⁷ Boris Rebinder, *Zivot i religija Slovena prema Vles knjizi*, op. cit., p. 44-45; *Velesova kniha*, op. cit., pp. 7-11. In this regard, Jakub Deml noted: "Who already was in the light, that will return to the light, that is with the light." [Jakub Deml, *Rodny kraj*, op. cit., p. 143]

¹⁵⁸ Miroslav Holub and Stanislav Lyer, *Stručný slovník jazyka českého*, op. cit., pp. 208, 457.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Matej z Janova, *Vybor z Pravidel Stareho a Noveho Zakona*, op. cit., p. 59.

recju: "to appear with a word") denotes that one arises, raises up, and as such it requires a certain ground that others also share.

In addition to the magic "3" frequently used in Czech myths and fair tales (including three Fates), the sense of the trinity of being is deeply ingrained in the Czech language. The notions appearing in relation to the ontological principle of trinity shed further light on the underlying ethos of Being. In this regard, the morpheme *tr* (*tri* = 3) is a fundamental orientation and relatedness of one's being towards *Um*. To this effect, I attempted to select some of these notions in the following order: *střed* (middle; a sense of God-centrism); *prostředek* (middle; means); *vstříc* (setting up to meet somebody/something); *vetřít se* (to intrude, to get inside); *střetnutí* (meeting; duel); *vstřebat* (to absorb); *nitro* (inside; soul), *jitro* (morning, dawn); *protřelý* (worldly-wise); *obestřít* (to envelop, veil); *prostrít* (to strew, spread, lay; is related to *prostor* = space); *jítřit* (to stir); *stridný* (being awake, balanced, rational); *střízlivý* (sober, not mad); *ostrit* (sharpen, strengthen); *tribit* (to preen, sift out, refine, sharpen); *tridit* (to classify, grade); *střici* (to avoid bad, evil); *šetřit* (to spare, observe, investigate, examine); *trítmat* (to hold, often a weapon); *treba* (originally necessary, expected sacrifice; now used in the sense of "necessity"); *ošetřit* (to treat, cure, heal); *trvat* (to last; to endure; to insist).

In this way, the concept of trinity unifies the notion of the omnipresent, yet concealed *Um* (wisdom-spirit of Being) with Being as *space* (*Is*) and its realization through human (shared) *wit* (this English word is conspicuously close morphologically with Slavic *vid*, while its meaning is yet even closer to the Slavic notion of *um*). It is also interesting that, coincidentally, when all three elements are

put together *TY-MY-JA*, as occurred to me several years ago in writing a poem (without being able to "give account for" or grasp its underlying essence or meaning), the word strikingly resembles *thyme* whose other Czech synonym *materidouska* belongs to the most beautiful of Czech words. Both words, *thyme* and *materidouska*, bear essentially the same meaning: *thyme* is related to Greek *thymos* (breath, spirit, fragrance, scent); *materidouska* is rendered as "a piece of breath-inspiration by the spirit-soul of the (God's) Mother:" consequently, its connotation arouses a feeling of love and piety such as appears in the Christian ethos in relation to Saint Mary.¹⁶⁰ In this way, the principle of the Father's order is balanced in man by the acknowledgement of the principle of the life-giving Mother that also measures (*meri*) man (his justice) by his death: in Czech, measure (*míra*), death (*smrt*), *usmírení* (reconciliation), world and peace (*mír*) are of the same etymological origin.¹⁶¹ In this way, what is the end is also the beginning.¹⁶² And, as Jan Hus said, "who will know all the things in the light of the Holy Trinity will not wander any longer."¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰ Miroslav Holub and Stanislav Lyr, *Stručný slovník jazyka českého*, op. cit., pp. 284 . 455. The trinity of love and piety seems to be also carried in the French *je t'aime* (J-T-M). In this regard, it is also noteworthy that in the Slavic languages "truth" (*pravda*; *istina*) and "justice" (*spravedlnost*; *pravda*), as well as "death" (*smrt*) are of feminine gender, while *um*, *vid*, and *byt* (being, being at home) are masculine. On the ancient Slavic (humanizing) symbolism of mother within the universal order ("napisat' zenu v celoveceskí obraz") see B.A. Rybakov, *Jazycestvo Drevnih Slavjan*, op. cit., pp. 38, 43, 455-456.

¹⁶¹ Cf. Miroslav Holub and Stanislav Lyr, *Stručný slovník jazyka českého*, op. cit., pp. 293, 300.

¹⁶² This "feminine" dyad of life-death is also contained in the Czech word for woman = *žena*. It is derived from the root *j(g)en* that also appears in words for harvest (*žen*, *žnou*) and perishing (*hynout*; cf. Serb *ginuti*). [See *ibid.*, pp. 480-481] A similar dichotomy is present in the Slavic root *hran*: Czech *chránit* = to defend, to protect; Serb *hrana* = food; Serb *hraniti* = to feed; Serb *sahraniti* = to bury; *zachrániti* = to save.

¹⁶³ Jan Hus, *Dcerka: o poznání prave cesty ke spasení*, op. cit., p. 50. According to Jan Hus, "the fulfilment of one's eternal life lies in knowing the Trinity." [*Ibid.*, p. 49]

8.8. Abiding in the Harmony of the Diverse (Malebna velebnost)

The ethos of spiritual balance and symmetry requires a strong sense of detail and measure within an experienced live context of being.¹⁶⁴ As Masaryk stressed, one cannot love abstractly.¹⁶⁵ Similarly, according to Jakub Deml, "love, which could not rely on something material on this earth, on the visible things that change and grow, would have nothing to do and would also gradually lose its memory."¹⁶⁶ This love of the concrete (detail) is essentially a synthesis of two qualities - the art of Being as it appears freely and spontaneously in man's vicinity and man's own thoughtful art (*um*) of being; it is a synthesis between nature and freedom, and between nature and culture whose common task is a creation and preservation of life. It is also a synthesis of the sacred hiddenness in nature and holiness concealed in human labour.

Human participation is decisive. As Jan Hus put it, "it is not that the place hallows man, but man hallows the place."¹⁶⁷ Thus, such spiritedness as man's task

¹⁶⁴ Thus, for example, Milada Souckova, comparing Czech and German fairy tales with the same subject of "the magic pot," observed that, in comparison with the German tale, the Czech images were more concrete and related to a concrete place. Whereas the German tale "concludes with a picture of pure phantasm," the Czech one is "full of realistic details," being one with the genius of the place: "The Czech mountain of 'sweet soup' is ... framed in realistic details of agricultural pattern of life ... In contrast to the chimerical German image of the sweet-soup mountain, the portrayal of the Czech peasants returning from the field to their village ... is eloquently concrete. The magic pot appears not merely as a fantastic adventure in the lives of the two women, but as a symbol of an unusual dramatic event which jarred the entire village community out of its daily routine." [Milada Souckova, *The Czech Romantics*, op. cit., pp. 103-104; cf. *ibid.*, p. 52]

¹⁶⁵ Erazim Kohak, *Narod v nas*, op. cit., p. 118. Kohak himself speaks about a sense of "the concrete present" and context of the real. [*ibid.*, pp. 22-23] Kohak further defined this as the Bohemian "ability for drawing through detail, intensive experience of detail" that developed because, as he sees it, "a nation under constant pressure cannot allow itself to overlook anything, to waste anything; everything must be experienced and evaluated into depth." [*ibid.*, p. 119]

¹⁶⁶ Jakub Deml, *Rodný kraj*, op. cit., p. 74.

¹⁶⁷ Jan Hus, *O církvi*, op. cit., p. 81; see also p. 64. The same idea that is man, that is, his work and effort that makes the land "hallowed" also appears in the collection of Czech myths by a Czech writer Alois Jirasek: "So, [a hard-working people] came and reclaimed the untilled land; they made it fertile (*zvelebil*) by a hard, toilsome work and made it hollow by their sweat and blood in many a battle, defending the land conquered by labour and their language." [Alois Jirasek,

is a striving for a unity of greatness and sublimity or human sublimation of the revered. The greatness is not conquered in this way by vastness, but by depth. It is about conquering-revealing in things their beauty, grandness and sublimity of being.¹⁶⁸ *Velebnost* (the reverend on the great scale) is refined by man's presence and reveals itself to man as transcendent in the concrete that includes man-made things: man has to "work out" his way to the grandness of Being through his own learning and experience. If approached and mastered as art, it then appears as *malebná velebnost* ("painting the greatness in a human likeness" in a sense of co-enrichment of eternal and minute).¹⁶⁹ A. H. Hermann called this Bohemian quality "a unique sense of harmony" whose origin he was in "the formative influence of baroque" when there appeared a distinct type of Czech baroque ecclesiastic and countryside architecture that was renowned by a creative harmony of the mind and landscape.¹⁷⁰ In other words, it is the art of active, practical piety and love that Jan

Staré pověsti české, (Praha: Albatros, 1988), p. 12] "What have they seen, was in their likeness ... the whole way of the land." [Ibid., p. 16] On the concept of the Bohemian genius of the place see also Frantisek Palacky, *Dejiny narodu ceskeho v Cechach a na Morave*, op. cit., pp. 3-4, 24. Cf. Jakub Deml, *Rodný kraj*, op. cit., pp. 129, 196-197, 199-200. In this regard, Jakub Deml also believed that "the meaning of history runs parallel with the meaning of the landscape." similarly, in his opinion, it is possible to "read" the interconnectedness of dead, living and yet unborn men also from the face of the land. [Ibid., pp. 74-75]

¹⁶⁸ Jan Hus, *Postilla*, op. cit., p. 316; see also Jan Amos Komenský, *Dvoji poselství k českému národu: Křesť, Smutný hlas*, op. cit., p. 54.

¹⁶⁹ *Velebnost* (grandness-sublimity) as an experienced quality of being is etymologically anchored in the notion of greatness (*veliký* = great) and is related to *velebit* = command, praise; *velit* = command, order; *uvelebit* = *velebný* = sublime, grand; *velebný* = reverend (priest); *zvelebovat* = to improve, refine, promote; as well as to *vůle* = will; *vůli* = to choose; to love (in Serb). [See Miroslav Holub and Stanislav Lyrer, *Stručný slovník jazyka českého*, op. cit., p. 464] According to Matej z Janova, *velebný* = worthy of awe and admiration. [Matej z Janova, *Výbor z Pravidel Starého a Nového Zákona*, op. cit., p. 101] *Malebnost* (literally picturesque) appears as an opportune "complementary opposite" to the notion of *velebnost*, further emphasizing the sublime character of the grandness of being. In particular, *malebný* (picturesque) related to the idea of painting (*malířství*) points towards the essentiality of man's knowledge and activity. There is further a close morphological (and possibly also etymological) affinity with the adjective *malý* (small).

¹⁷⁰ A.H. Hermann, *A History of the Czechs*, op. cit., pp. 68-69. In my view, the influence of the baroque was important (as well as the then political conditions that did not allow the national spirit to manifest itself in other fields); however, the landscape itself and new style would not

Hus postulated as man's imperative (command) whereby man learns to respect oneself through the created and *sublimated grandness* (truth and grace) of being and becomes at home in the world.¹⁷¹ The cultivated sense of the sublime grandness is essentially the art of human presence.¹⁷² To be present means to *have a stance* in the present; as Deml put it, "everybody is fair in his right place."¹⁷³ And because a man realizes in this way that his own stance cannot be a *total* one, his position is that of openness towards the togetherness of Being (God). Enlightened by such a deep understanding of piety, Jakub Deml said: "But I love this land, because it will raise from the dead ..."¹⁷⁴

8.9. The divine principle and I (*Reka and Jez*)

At this point, we can approach the phenomenon 'I' on the ground of its overarching context of Being with regard to which 'I' (*JÁ*) establishes itself through both openness and integrity. Here, the underlying metaphor is not that of nihilistic "burrow," but that of being in the light, in the word: for there is no place for life to hide.

This *zosobnení* (personification) of being appearing through trinity (ground of stability) becomes in time the cross of life which is then to be passed on to a

suffice if there had not been already an essential spiritual foundation.

¹⁷¹ See Jan Hus, *Knížky o svatokupectví*, op. cit., p. 79; Matej z Janova, *Výbor z Pravidel Starého a Nového Zákona*, op. cit., p. 246. In this connection, Matej of Janov uses expressly the notion of *velebnost* which he sees as a pious relation of everyday life; at the same time, he prompts that "no picture should be an idol." [Cf. Jakub Deml, *Domu*, op. cit., p. 37]

¹⁷² Matej z Janova, *Výbor z Pravidel Starého a Nového Zákona*, op. cit., pp. 122-123.

¹⁷³ Jakub Deml, *Miriam - Moji prarodi*, op. cit., p. 196.

¹⁷⁴ Jakub Deml, *Rodný kraj*, op. cit., p. 201.

child.¹⁷⁵ Trinity becomes a way of being. In this regard, being becomes personal in 'I,' while its affirmative *zosobneni* (my appearance) is possible only because there is what is: Being. Consequently, Being as a condition of any existence is also necessarily one's axis (*osa*; *osnova* = foundation) - the principle of the divine.¹⁷⁶ *Zosobneni* (personification) of being is consists in finding a place (home) in being (cf. Serb *soba* = room) through establishing a sense of the *proper* and experience of belonging (*patričnost*: a quality of belonging, guarding, relatedness, measure, fitness, justice; proper; due;).

Every *zosobneni* (personification) and its quality are a matter of measure (*osa* = axis; *osobnost* = personality versus mere *osoba* = person), while the divine comes to our world through us. Without experiencing the axis of Being, (as nihilism again proves negatively), man loses his sense of identity. As already said, it is because *the ring of 'I'* is thereby empty: *the river* of live being is missing within. The river is the gathering place and force of our 'Is.'¹⁷⁷

The Bohemian ethos reveals a deep sense of such open integrity of 'I' and its conjunction, where the ego is essentially a sense of conscience towards both the outward world and that inside. A synthesis of these two world connected and yet separated by the ego is not achieved on the basis of the ego, but through Being (*um*). Such understanding is again firmly rooted in the language. The word (*slovo*) appears in live time as *rec* (speech) that by its very nature implies an association

¹⁷⁵ In this sense, Jakub Deml also defined his notion of life-giving cross: "The world, as you know, flows only horizontally ... but the cross has also another beam [light] ... The sun is not a symbol for me, but a doer!" [ibid., p. 163]

¹⁷⁶ On Jakub Deml's notion of the internal "divine principle" see, for example, Jakub Deml, *Miriam* - *Moji pratele*, op. cit., p. 24.

¹⁷⁷ Cf. Jakub Deml, *Miriam* - *Moji pratele*, op. cit., p. 71.

with the notion of river (*řeka* = river; *řeciště* = river-bed).¹⁷⁸ It is also indicative that, in Czech as well as in English, to "speak well" means to speak *fluently* (*plynne*), that is, to be in accordance (harmony) with, "tuned-into," the being and spirit of the language.¹⁷⁹ River as the spirit is also a way that leads 'I' to humanity¹⁸⁰ where, as Vaclav Cerny put it, "the past continuously endures for ever in the present and indefinitely grows into the new, unknown and unimaginable future."¹⁸¹

In this sense, particularly interesting is an older form of the Czech 'I' (*JÁ*) which was *JÁZ* (preceded by an older form *JAZ*).¹⁸² Notably, the form *JAZ* carries a close resemblance to the Czech *jez* = weir (wall or similar structure built across a river). Indeed, the synthesis of both notions of *JAZ-JEZ* and *REKA* appear to embody perfectly the way of the human *JÁ* ('I') that holds as a (multidimensional)

¹⁷⁸ Schematically, we can express this as *slovo* (word) + *čas* (time) = *řeč* (speech). Notably, the same root *rek-irok-* also appears in the Czech word that connotes a period of time which unites both the cyclical and unilinear principles of time: *rok* = year. [See Miroslav Holub and Stanislav Lyr, *Stručný slovník jazyka českého*, op. cit., pp. 389, 395] The notion of "river" also expresses what Jung defined as a "wholeness that leads to a shifting of the centre of personality from the ego to the self." [C.G. Jung, *Psyche and Soul*, op. cit., p. 147] When a man loses his Self, he "becomes ego-centric, lonely, disoriented, and weak." [Carl G. Jung, *Man and His Symbols*, (New York: Doubleday & Company Inc., 1969), p. 207] On Jakub Deml's identification of the self with a symbol of river see Jakub Deml, *Miriam - Moji pratele*, op. cit., p. 146.

¹⁷⁹ Other proof: most men can recognize with such an astonishing sense of certainty musical harmony and "pure" tone. In this regard, Franz Kafka provides an example of a deeply sensible man, yet caught in the nihilism of his time and thus finding oneself "out of tune with being." He suffered from his unmusicalness that he considered as evidence of his inability for life; moreover, the (internal) voices drove him almost to a paranoid anxiety. He considered such voices as "devilish." At the same, he saw salvation as possible only in work or music. [Franz Kafka, *Letters to Friends, Family, and Editors*, op. cit., pp. 258, 391;] Kafka also confessed: "I hate Werfel, not because I envy him, but I envy him too. He is healthy, young and rich, everything that I am not. Besides, gifted with a sense of music ... and I am entirely shut off from music." [Franz Kafka, *The Diaries of Franz Kafka*, op. cit., p. 176; see also p. 182]

¹⁸⁰ Cf. Carl G. Jung, *Man and His Symbols*, op. cit., p. 95.

¹⁸¹ Vaclav Cerny, *Pameti*, op. cit., p. 87.

¹⁸² See, for example, an account of a Czech medieval poem in Jarmila F. Veltrusky, *A Sacred Farce from Medieval Bohemia Masuckar*, (Michigan: Horace H. Rackham School of Graduate Studies, the University of Michigan, 1985), pp. 338, 348; see further Miroslav Holub and Stanislav Lyr, *Stručný slovník jazyka českého*, op. cit., p. 205]

ring around its axis of the God, while being both integral and open, as well as essential.¹⁸³ *JEZ* is a necessary condition for *communication* between *um* (the word of Being) and human speech, it is also a conjunction-water-shed between time and eternity.¹⁸⁴ *JÁ* as *JEZ* holds being, but it can never hold it all inasmuch as *JEZ* is never more than the river.¹⁸⁵ In fact, this is but another form of describing the above given symbols-notions of Being as embodied in its signs "I" and "S." In this light, it also appears that the cross of the self needs to be seen not merely as a combination of two lines, but that of two distinct space-time "quaternities" interwoven and open into each other. Such a relation also enables what Jung defined as "the just-so-ness" - a sense of natural measure: "If one studies the nature of water, one sees that it fills a pit only to the rim and then flows on ... The abyss is not filled to overflowing, it is filled only to the rim."¹⁸⁶ If the divine principle can also be seen as an axis (yardstick) and ultimate ground of human sincerity, *JÁ qua JEZ* is a quality of its transparency.¹⁸⁷

River is here a metaphor, but also much more. It has also been a concrete experience and understanding of human relatedness and place in Being:

What else, I ask, does the shining river mean than the Spirit .. that goes

¹⁸³ In a similar sense, Carl Jung posited the ego as being on the conscious surface of the psyche illuminated both from within and without where the psyche also evolves and grows, and the ego constitutes only a small part of the overall psyche. However, he saw the ego and its deeper self as a structure of a cell or nuclear atom, while in our scheme *um* (Being pervades and links all that is). [See Carl G. Jung, *Man and His Symbols*, op. cit., pp. 161, 166]

¹⁸⁴ See Jakub Deml, *Miriam - Moji pratele*, op. cit., p. 81.

¹⁸⁵ On the interrelatedness of the notions of oneself ("sluice-gate") river and speech cf. *ibid.*, p. 136.

¹⁸⁶ Carl G. Jung, *Man and His Symbols*, op. cit., p. 209; C.G. Jung, *Psyche and Soul*, op. cit., p. 242.

¹⁸⁷ See Jakub Deml, *Miriam - Moji pratele*, op. cit., p. 141.

around, that is, from Christ to God and so hence it returns here and there so that the Spirit comes back to us in its course ... The division of waters is, however, an attribution of grace.¹⁸⁸

The river is, however, connected not only with arrivals, but also with departures¹⁸⁹ where our being lives in choosing between the Tree of Life and the Tree of Death, between two "shores of eternity," that is, not only between ways of living, but also those of death. Both the Trees appear as the beginning and the end, two sources of being. All depends on *who* is coming to them, and what he brings.¹⁹⁰ As Jakub Deml noted in this regard "With so much of defiance or desire man seeks Death, and keeps meeting Life. And when he becomes inflamed and seeks Life, he keep meeting Death; so does the one who does not seek personally ..."¹⁹¹ What is man to seek then? And can one find what one seeks?

8.10. The Way of Human Personality: *Quaternito* of Cross

In facing the trinity of being, we are, however, at the same time put up against the Socratic question: "where is the fourth?"¹⁹² As Jung elucidated:

Fourness is a symbol of wholeness, threeness is not ... one triad always presupposes another, just as high presupposes low, lightness darkness, good

¹⁸⁸ Matej z Janova, *Vybor z Pravidel Stareho a Noveho Zakona*, op. cit., p. 98. On Hus's notion of "grace flowing in time" (*casná tekoucí milost*) see Jan Hus, *O církvi*, op. cit., p. 44.

¹⁸⁹ On the symbolism of death with regard to the river (death as dispersion in nature or "sinking") see, for example, B.A. Rybakov, *Jazycestvo Drevnih Slavjan*, op. cit., p. 378.

¹⁹⁰ Matej z Janova, *Vybor z Pravidel Stareho a Noveho Zakona*, op. cit., p. 98; Jakub Deml, *Miriam - Moji pratele*, op. cit., p. 12.

¹⁹¹ Jakub Deml, *Rodny kraj*, op. cit., p. 71.

¹⁹² See the discussion of Socrates's question from the dialogue *Timaeus* in C.G. Jung, *Psyche and Soul*, op. cit., p. 92.

evil. In terms of energy polarity [threeness] means a potential, and where a potential exists there is a possibility of a current, a flow of events, for the tension of opposites strives for balance. If one imagines the quaternity as a square divided into two halves by a diagonal, one gets to triangles whose apices point in opposite directions. One could therefore say metaphorically that if the wholeness symbolized by the quaternity is divided into equal halves, it produces two opposing triads.¹⁹³

Four stands for [live] eternity and totality.¹⁹⁴ Jung further noted that "to produce the fourth is the most difficult;" it almost appears as if one tried to solve the riddle of "squaring the circle."¹⁹⁵ In this regard, a certain hint of possible direction is given in the "enigmatic" axiom of Maria the Jewess (or Copt) that was particularly emphasized by Jung: "Out of the Third comes the One as the Fourth."¹⁹⁶ Jung, moreover, also revealed that in the ethos of the West, the self appeared in the image of the cross that is a prime symbol of fourness.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹³ C.G. Jung, *Psyche and Soul*, op. cit., p. 91, see also pp. 101-102.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 166; cf. also p. 21. Similarly, Pythagoras identified four (square) with the most perfect number, as well as with justice. [See Herman Frankel, *Early Greek Poetry and Philosophy, A history of Greek epic, lyric, and prose to the middle of the fifth century*, op. cit., p. 276] On the interpretation of the symbolic syllable *AUM* (*Um*) in terms of fourness see Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), pp. 130, 265-267.

¹⁹⁵ C.G. Jung, *Psyche and Soul*, op. cit., p. 92.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., pp. 274-5. In this connection, Jung implied that it "presumably means that when the third produces the fourth it at once produces unity." [Ibid., p. 94]

¹⁹⁷ See Carl G. Jung, *Man and His Symbols*, op. cit., pp. 243-244. Importantly, Jung also documented on the transformation of the cross from the equilateral cross to the Latin elongated cross (upward moving of the centre of the Christian cross) the propensity of the spiritual center to move upward that symbolized the tendency to project the earth [material, dead] into the sphere of the God, displacing the latter. Ultimately, the ego moved into such an "asymmetrical" position (self-deification) that it conceived itself as the dominating and determinative factor, thereby actually moving away from the vertical axes anchored in God. The depth and height of the sacred was replaced by the "universal and homogeneous" flatness of the Ego. [See *ibid.*, p. 244] Consequently, the tendency of modernity was not to cultivate or fill the spaciality of being, but to reduce its spiritual dimensions to the singularity or baseness of the ego (cf. Hegel-Kojévian circle). In this regard, it would seem that Christ died on the cross-tree of death, thus foreshadowing and heralding our age of death. In this connection, Rio Preisner stated: "Europe is losing the sense of history, of its own history." In his view, the sense of history should be restored as a "consciousness of the historical goal which is Christ incarnated in history ... as an act of identification of the God with the created, earthly reality." [Rio Preisner, *Ceska existence*, op. cit., p. 49]

On the notion and imperative of "cross" as human identity see Matej z Janova, *Výbor z Pravidel Starého a Nového Zákona*, op. cit., pp. 42, 207, 131; Jan Hus, *Knížky o svatokupectví*, op. cit., p. 59; Jan Hus, *Postilla*, op. cit., pp. 384-385. Also according to Deml, "the human body rests (abides) on the axes of the cross." [Jakub Deml, *Hrad smrti*, op. cit., p. 17]

A further clue is provided by Jan Hus who defined fourness as two sets of dyads: water (space) and fire (spirit), life (humanity) and death.¹⁹⁸ Similarly, Jakub Deml also pointed as the key significance of death (and life) in this regard, relating it moreover to the Bohemian ethos and destiny: "And, so, the way [to Bohemia] has always led here through the crossroads of Death."¹⁹⁹ Thus, the question is what has been missing so far in our discussion of trinity that allows the appearance of life and death? The answer is evident: *time*.

The recognition of time as the essential element of identity was also made in Hus's appeal where, moreover, the fourth (time) is innately related to the notion of *the cross*:

So, we too ... *during this time as long as we are alive* shall not put down our cross, while unyielding and *enduring* [insisting] on it, as He *endured* on His own until the spirit also tells us to rest from our labour. Don't listen to anybody who commands you to descend from the cross ... We shall stand on the cross ...²⁰⁰

It is apparent that, for Jan Hus, time is a condition of the wholeness of human identity embodied in the cross: only with death, the imperative of the cross as a way of *enduring* one's identity ceases to apply: the viability of *the cross* as human identity lies in time. In this way, *time* as the fourth element introduces into the spatial trinity a moment of *recurrence* (cycle) and *openness* (progress) through time. The geometry of spirit becomes animated whereby the created space of time

As a matter of fact, the religion of the pre-Christian Slavs included baptism (*křest* - related to solstice) and the symbol of cross (*kříž*; both notions of *křest* and *kříž* appear as being etymologically related, cf. also *hrich* = sin). [See Boris Rehinder, *Života i religija Slovena prema Vies knjizi*, op. cit., pp. 86-96]

¹⁹⁸ Jan Hus, *Postilla*, op. cit., p. 281.

¹⁹⁹ Jakub Deml, *Rodný kraj*, op. cit., p. 69.

²⁰⁰ Jan Hus, *Postilla*, op. cit., p. 134. Italics added.

allows for freedom and change, as well as for justice to intervene to readjust the measure of things. In this way, time is both the completion of the trinity and its openness into a new beginning: it completes by opening and opens by completing. Thus, the advent of life and death, the rejuvenation of being and creation (creation means making something "new," that, in turns, requires that there is "now") are possible only in time. In this regard, time is also a proof of *live* eternity. In the light of that dynamic quality of time, the self as the quaternity of the cross is not so much an isolated or fully definable body (or sum of knowledge) but rather *a way*. In short, human identity (its trinity) is completed and simultaneously overcome by the birth of a child (*qua* deed *qua* creation) through which the being "shines forth."

Jakub Deml, the poet-philosopher of the Bohemian soul, portrayed the time-cross identity in the image of a tree (flower) of life:

If [our being] were depicted as a diagram, one would draw a vertical (stem) from which beams are coming above delineated by a circle (outline of head). The vertical means: I am Miriam [Marry], I grow from the Czech soil and tower from earth to heaven, I am upright, determined and I won't succumb to tempests that want that everything lie on the soil, as a mean and egoistic man strives to bow everything down, overthrow and uproot every being, every idea, every feeling, every beauty and every thing exclusively to his own profit, towards earth, money and vanity. I raise from heaven to the earth, to the clouds and the sun because I want light and growth. The beams mean: I am rich in the gifts of spirit and body, and 'dear' is the God's attribute. But my brother ... sincerely wishes me all this beauty and all this goodness, and, therefore, I am 'his.' Because of this, he calls me: My dear Miriam. And 'my' is a pronoun possessive and definite.²⁰¹

In this regard, Deml also used the imagery of a flower as the symbol of self

²⁰¹ Jakub Deml, *Miriam - Moji pratele*, op. cit., p. 133. Deml also define here the "fruit of the tree [of life-death]" as "We."

that, abiding between eternity and time, between God and 'here and now', finds itself and its own transcendence in a recollecting piety:

The fleurette consists of a stalk, which is firmness because a stalk is like a spear thrown up by a soldier's hand; the shape of the flower chalice means: I am a vessel because I want that no single drop be poured in vain as a sacrifice through which I am wounding my desire; I want to catch as many beams as possible, this is why I am growing so much! The stamens are saying: I don't want to touch you with the stalk that is too much tied by earth and resembles it, but my desire is so holy that I am attacking you with what is the finest in me. I have dispersed the hit and attack of my stalk (says the flower) into a host of stamens ... The strips of my chalice are like palms, and my stamens are like fingers, but more gentle than fingers of man. And the pistil, the golden edge of my spear, leads the stamen into a battle where I am bleeding with bloom.²⁰²

What all these poetic images express is the notion of the spaciality of being that is pervaded, inspired and made by the presence of the divine (*um*: eternal live presence),²⁰³ pretty much in the likeness of a live countryside in the spring that has both a promise of life and hope. It is the affirmative spiritedness that opens man towards nature (the land) and nature towards man and binds them together in their deeply experienced reciprocity.

8.11. Bohemia and the Castle of Death

Jakub Deml was very well aware of the fatal danger represented by the

²⁰² Jakub Deml, *Miriam - Moji pratele*, op. cit., p. 135.

²⁰³ This omnipresence, as well as centrality of the divine (principle) was also philosophically elaborated by Jan Amos Comenius in his major work *The Depths of Security*. According to Comenius, the ego moves around its divine centre that is common to humans from which it comes and where it returns. The ego(-centre) is a means of the divine, as Comenius himself pointed out, "this is also why any means of a thing is called a centre" (in Czech *prostředek* : means, centre; *sřed* = centre). The divine centre is a realm of peace, the realm of the ego, being on the edge of the divine, is "an eternal commotion" (*kolotání*). The ego should not become a "personal idol." [Robert Kalivoda, *Husitská epocha a J.A. Komenský*, op. cit., p. 260]

nihilistic politics of death. In fact, he not only defined the danger as the death of man, but also gave us a description of *the Castle of Death*. "A certain word waits for every man," he said, "I was awaited by Death and it is my own name."²⁰⁴

In his view, it would be "the very last attack of the evil" that would try to persuade man that what is, is "only evil" and there is ahead only a "disappointment of Death that is not fair."²⁰⁵ For Deml, a (Böhmisch) nihilist is essentially a dead courier of death who has a replaceable face.²⁰⁶ The nihilistic order is a "burrow-like architecture," "underground labyrinth," "artificially made and illuminated cave," and "residence" of a very intelligent, yet doomed being ("spider") that "kills by nothingness and devours by emptiness," but towards which "it is impossible to be any longer permissive": it needs to be brought up into the light of day.²⁰⁷

The empire of death is "a global city"²⁰⁸ where the power-holders "rule, but do not live: like a mirage of the racks."²⁰⁹ Yet, "for some time, it would be necessary to live in that Tower, filled with sacraments, so that people know what disgraceful and abominable things it conceals."²¹⁰ Then, "one day, the devil would see that he is the king of the earth," but it would be merely "the first death" - "further, *Caesar* cannot go." The first death of man brought by nihilism would be undone through "a second death."²¹¹ This requires man's action in the *Castle of*

²⁰⁴ Jakub Deml, *Rodný kraj*, op. cit., p. 71.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 47.

²⁰⁶ See Deml's story "Stranger" in ibid., pp. 66-67, 63-64.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., pp. 40-42.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., pp. 206-207.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 112; see also ibid., p. 82.

²¹⁰ Jakub Deml, *Slepeje*, op. cit., p. 16.

²¹¹ Jakub Deml, *Rodný kraj*, op. cit., p. 58. As Milan Machovec stated, regimes imposed on the nation "had [seemingly] easily won almost all the people, but rarely *the whole man*. [Milan Machovec, *Josef Dobrovsky*, op. cit., p. 20]

Death.²¹² This action is possible because "Death [not Hegel's death with a "d"] has bequeathed [us] freedom to fulfil [our] task" to choose between love for good and man's "little" (banal) death.²¹³ This freedom of Death (not "death" as man's "freedom" to commit a suicide or murder) and its ultimate affirmativeness rooted in Being is also its own self-transcendence which is also there to be shared with man. Such a positive freedom is the source of redemption and salvation.²¹⁴ In this regard, the Bohemian ethos was already defined by Jan Hus and the Hussites unequivocally: "Christ, not the Pope!"²¹⁵ And Masaryk, renewing Czech statehood, also confirmed as a political program: "Jesus, not Caesar!"²¹⁶

In order to understand the drive of nihilism, as well as a possible way of salvation suggested by Matej of Janov and Jakub Deml it is necessary to consider the meaning of the beginning of history and, thus, also its end in relation to the Tree of knowledge of good and evil (the Tree of Death). The oldest (Slavic) mythology throws some light on the unsaid side of that symbolism of death, revealing it as a phenomenon of "a missing Mother" or absent Goddess in Biblical paradise. Analyses of the most ancient myths carried out by B.A. Rybakov illustrate that originally there was a deity of the "Great Mother," the goddess of the cosmos. This later developed into two goddess (according to Rybakov around 4000 B.C.): a mother and daughter as symbols of balance and change; only later

²¹² Jakub Deml, *Hrad smrti*, op. cit., p. 68.

²¹³ Ibid., pp. 68-69.

²¹⁴ Jakub Deml, *Miriam - Moji pratele*, op. cit., p. 81.

²¹⁵ Jan Hus, *O cirkvi*, op. cit., pp. 111-112; Alan Woolfolk and Jonathan B. Imber, eds., *Constructive Sociological Theory: Thomas G. Masaryk*, Transaction Publishers, (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 1994) op. cit., p. 271.

²¹⁶ Tomas Masaryk, *Nova Evropa*, (Brno: Doplněk, 1994), p. 192; cf. ibid., p. 29. Masaryk also added: "such is the slogan of democratic Europe, especially with regard to that Caesar as he was raved by Mommsen giving hereby the ideal of pan-German imperialism. [Ibid., p. 192]"

appeared the figure of God, the Father. Gradually, the two goddess were drawn from heaven underground, often thereby symbolized as dragons. Then, another remarkable metamorphosis happened: the two goddess (mother and daughter) changed into "trees" and reappeared from the underworld. Whereas the ancient Slavs then accomplished a synthesis of the spirit through the notion of trinity and the light, the two Biblical trees can be apparently understood as the unacknowledged, concealed and, thus, "disharmonious" principle of femininity in the Judaic account (that points again to the role of the tyrannical father), later mitigated by Saint Mary and reconciled in the Holy Spirit.²¹⁷

In this light, the problem of death appears as that of separation in a double sense: a separation of time (life and death) from Being and split of life from death: Hegel seems to try to "reconcile" this by subsuming life by death that, however, in his case, also dispenses with the distinction of good and evil and, thus, also with the meaning of death itself (at least as a difference between death as such and murder). As we have seen before, time (life and death), however, represents only one dimension of being (*um*, space, time, human being ...). As Jakub Deml said: "[Human] wisdom is more than life [and death], and love more than wisdom."²¹⁸ Similarly, this also testifies to the fact that 1) Being is not reducible to death; and 2) death itself as a phenomenon is neither definite nor singular: thus, it *is*, but it is

²¹⁷ B.A., Rybakov, *Jazycestvo Drevnih Slavyan*, op. cit., pp. 6, 62, 66, 189, 201-202, 204, 366, 383-384, 393-417, 456, 465, 470, 475, 478, 479, 480-484, 496, 515, 593, 599-601. This crucial (absent) part of the wholeness of being and its importance with regard to death was also known to Jan Hus who stressed that "the resurrection of God was announced through women," and, thus, "we are searching for Christ [and the Live Spirit] *together* with these women." [Jan Hus, *Postilla*, op. cit., p. 133] Jakub Deml also realized that death itself is part of affirmative Being (God) and he found its symbol in Saint Mary. [See, for example, Jakub Deml, *Miriam - Moji pratele*, op. cit., pp. 20-22, 132] On the metamorphosis of the tree into the cross see Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, op. cit., p. 355.

²¹⁸ Jakub Deml, *Rodny kraj*, op. cit., p. 71.

itself overcome by and within the overall context of Being. Moreover, this also indicates that death is not merely a problem of time or a matter of an abstracted life-death relation, but that it needs to be "remembered" as a quality of creativeness of and within *Um* (*realized dimension and measure of being*). In other words, we should keep in mind that there is an essential difference between (total) *separation* (loss), that is, absolutely "abstract," hence impossible death,²¹⁹ and *distinguishing* when something is different, but it is still treated, recollected, remembered or loved. What is separable from Being is falsity which is, as nihilists realized themselves, nothing. However, nothing is nothing. It cannot undo Being, it cannot murder God.²²⁰ Nothing can fulfil only its own nothingness.

It is evident that our power to recollect (not only achieve oneness, but also to see it) is not grounded elsewhere - in *um* (the word) that underlies and overarches our being. That is, death is always concrete and particular; if it were absolute or total, nothing would exist, nothing would be born, nothing would be remembered. Thus, even death can and is recollected by being.²²¹ Humanity would not know the affirmation of creation and life - *child*. And "child" also needs to be understood here in its broader sense as a positive deed of the art of being. Thus, our *telos* is not the gratification and fulfilment of our egoism by subsuming in it everything else. As Jan Hus reminded us by quoting an old Czech proverb:

²¹⁹ As Deml indicated, such total, absolute death is a "delusion" and "lie." [Jakub Deml, *Rodný kraj*, op. cit., p. 94]

²²⁰ "And Mary says: 'There was not yet the abyss [emptiness], and I had already been begotten.' But, why, my Holy Mother, why had you already been begotten before the abysses? Already before the traps [in Czech here "*pro - pastmi*": *propast* = abyss; *past* = trap]? 'So that no one can have an excuse that it was the God's guilt that he has died. Help had been begotten earlier than the injury.'" [Jakub Deml, *Miriam - Moji pratele*, op. cit., p. 48]

²²¹ Thus, Jakub Deml, upon inquiring about the possibility of such an abstract (total) death, concluded: "It is impossible *not to be*." [Jakub Deml, *Rodný kraj*, op. cit., p. 178]

"What one will be sowing here, one will harvest [here *ziti* = to gather, harvest; but *also* to live] after death."²²²

The task of humanness consists in a *child* - to" die for a being that one can love."²²³ Such is one's salvation. In this way, death becomes Life, and thus Beauty: where life is death, and death is life.²²⁴ This "highest beauty is [also] the highest justice."²²⁵ And justice is the renewal of everything which is worthy of its remembering in and through Being.²²⁶ In the same spirit, Matej of Janov stressed, "the law of perfect justice" is love: to fulfil justice is to fulfil love.²²⁷ Consequently, death is also tied to justice and is its certain possibility. In this way, life can be seen as a span *given* to us for our own defence.

To love is *to be with*, the nothingness of man's emptiness removes being

²²² Jan Hus, *Dcerka: o poznani prave cesty ke spaseni*, op. cit., p. 20.

²²³ Jakub Deml, *Hrad smrti*, op. cit., pp. 68-69. In this way, *child* is both death and life of the mother (or father). [See Jakub Deml, *Rodny kraj*, op. cit., p. 70] The unifying and redeeming power is love. And Death as such Love is according to Deml only "newly born" and "very young," while "the world is too old." [Jakub Deml, *Miriam - Moji pratele*, op. cit., pp. 26-27]

²²⁴ Jakub Deml, *Hrad smrti*, op. cit., p. 89; Jakub Deml, *Miriam - Moji pratele*, op. cit., p. 17; Jakub Deml, *Rodny kraj*, op. cit., p. 207. In this regard, Deml also defined the revealed oneness of the biblical tree as the Tree of Beauty. [Jakub Deml, *Miriam - Moji pratele*, op. cit., p. 23] On the notion of uniting both Trees of Life and Death into the Tree of Beauty of Being and into a *new* beginning see Jakub Deml, *Miriam - Moji pratele*, op. cit., pp. 97, 99. As Deml revealed it: "My Sister, your heart is a closed garden, and in the middle there is a tree of life." [Jakub Deml, *Miriam - Moji pratele*, op. cit., p. 33] Such a revealed (tragic) Beauty of Death, as Deml stressed, is a matter of "knowing oneself" where one's sacrifice is redeemed by the highest sacrifice on the part of Death which is Love on the part of Being. [Jakub Deml, *Rodny kraj*, op. cit., p. 46] "Thus, when I say 'the Castle of Death,' as if I were saying: I firmly know what is love." [Jakub Deml, *Miriam - Moji pratele*, op. cit., p. 110; cf. Jakub Deml, *Rodny kraj*, op. cit., p. 45]

Hussite Utraquism (receiving both holy bread and wine) was an early demand on the part of Czech 'being' to carry out the redeeming salvation and unity of the separateness of life and death through the spirit, its *wholeness*. Only such a wholeness was rightly seen as a "spiritual medicine and food of immortality." [Matej z Janova, *Vybor z Pravidel Stareho a Noveho Zakona*, op. cit., p. 21] Matej of Janov also rightly understood that the sacrament of both ways (bread and wine) is essentially and foremost the sacrament of the Word. [Ibid., op. cit., p. 105]

Jung saw wine as the embodiment of masculine principle and bread as that of feminine one where "bread also represents the physical means of subsistence, and wine the spiritual." [C.G. Jung, *Psyche and Soul*, op. cit., p. 168, 203]

²²⁵ Jakub Deml, *Miriam - Moji pratele*, op. cit., p. 130.

²²⁶ See Milan Machovec, *Josef Dobrovsky*, op. cit., pp. 222-223.

²²⁷ Matej z Janova, *Vybor z Pravidel Stareho a Noveho Zakona*, op. cit., pp. 62, 118.

from man and man from oneself as well.²²⁸ And the child is that through which one includes oneself into the river of the Spirit where "crucified Jesus is the tree of life from this and other side of the river ..."²²⁹ This "wholeness without losing anything revives everything that is."²³⁰ The spirit becomes the word of man and, thus, also man's "internal source of the water of life through Jesus who rests in us."²³¹

Death is thereby hallowed.²³² In this art of that *spirit*, there is a "perfect" reconciliation and synthesis of one's life and death.²³³ In the child, what was in the "two" becomes one and "omega returns back to alpha."²³⁴ Death and life thereby become a practised art of wisdom 'at the feast of Being.'²³⁵

In this way, death or life at this 'feast of Being' is a question of one's merit in justice and the truth. To this effect, life is practising and experiencing the knowledge of good and evil where the evidence of one's standpoint and his worthiness is man himself: either one has overcome one's ego and, thus, has reached *transcendence*, or he has *gone under* and is not.²³⁶ Here, death teaches us to live, love, suffer, work, wait, and keep the word.²³⁷

Justice is in this sense a confirmation and revelation of the nature of our

²²⁸ Matej z Janova, *Vybor z Pravidel Stareho a Noveho Zakona*, op. cit., pp. 78-79.

²²⁹ Ibid., pp. 97-98.

²³⁰ Ibid., p. 99.

²³¹ Ibid., p. 99.

²³² In this way, one needs to understand Deml's connotation of death as "holy." [See, for example, Jakub Deml, *Miriam - Moji pratele*, op. cit., p. 19]

²³³ See John Hus, *The Letters of John Hus*, op. cit., pp. 109-110.

²³⁴ These were also the words with which Matej of Janov concluded his work. [Matej z Janova, *Vybor z Pravidel Stareho a Noveho Zakona*, op. cit., p. 267] On the notion of the oneness of death and life see *ibid.*, p. 99.

²³⁵ See *ibid.*, p. 115. Everything that "takes away from the essence of man is not from the God, but only from people who love only themselves." [*Ibid.*, p. 242]

²³⁶ Cf. Jakub Deml, *Miriam - Moji pratele*, op. cit., p. 11.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

own choice and way of living: either a character (in the Word of Being) or nothing (nihilism).²³⁸ A human choice is to strive for "the virtue of *dying holy*" that consists in learning the art of love, piety, thought, courage, self-restraint, judgement, work, and life.²³⁹ To come into the world, a *live child* needs both the Word and human character, ours is to give the latter.

How can a *live child* become out of voidness of character or nothing? The art of being is, therefore, also an art of *caring* about one's character, that is, for that what one *gives* to others. In this regard, one's character is one's asset, one's worthiness.

To realize the presence of the divine *Um* is to come to know one's *human* essence.²⁴⁰ According to Deml, such a recollection of man in wholeness has begun as a day of eternity "at midnight, in the deepest darkness."²⁴¹ This also brings history into the present and frees the search for the truth from the dead past, so that history becomes history of the living truth, a search for what *is* ("*co jest*"), announced by Deml as an unveiling of the History of Omnipresence (*Historie Vsudypřítomnosti*): everything that is, is present again with us.²⁴² Wisdom and courage make the Present into the present for us. To love what is thereby *given* to us is *human*.²⁴³ And "to live fully in the present [or in the presence of the God] is essentially the same as living in freedom [cf. *volnost* =

²³⁸ Cf. Jakub Deml *Rodny kraj*, op. cit., p. 95.

²³⁹ Ibid., p. 100.

²⁴⁰ The etymological rootedness of "human" in the Slavic *um* was probably first realized and analytically substantiated by Franciscus Maria Appendini (1768-1837) who wrote "The Grammar of the Illyrian (Serb) Language" (1808). [See Olga Ljukovic-Pjanovic, *Srbi ... narod najstariji*, Vol. II, op. cit., pp. 244-245]

²⁴¹ Jakub Deml, *Miriam - Moji pratele*, op. cit., p. 52.

²⁴² Jakub Deml, *Rodny kraj*, op. cit., p. 51; cf. *ibid.*, pp. 210, 219.

²⁴³ Ibid., p. 209.

freedom; Serb *voleti* = to love]."²⁴⁴ Deml wished that in this Omnipresence of the Spirit, where the Word becomes the Voice (*Hlas*; cf. *h-las* > *lās-ku* = love), "every heart found its voice and let it rest for a while in its word ..."²⁴⁵

The omnipresent *Um* as the spirit of ultimate affirmation is the truth of love and the truth of justice. The recollection of wholeness, therefore, lies in our being with the truth and its liberation in man.²⁴⁶ Humanness is thus a character of piety. To be *human* is, therefore, a free service of fulfilling one's commandment-calling by Being (*volání*; cf. Serb *voleti* = to love; Czech *milovat* = to love; *volba* = choice; *volnost* = freedom; *svolit* = to agree, to accept). As Jan Hus formulated it:

Seek the truth, hear the truth, learn the truth, love the truth, say the truth [*prav pravdu*], hold the truth, defend the truth till death.²⁴⁷

To liberate the truth is to liberate man. As Deml stressed, "every man is able to prey [find God] or defend and preserve the truth and law if he is fully free."²⁴⁸ Also as the Hussites well realized, the law of Being equals truth and piety where piety is *the conjunction* between the Word and man.²⁴⁹ The way is then free for man to *ohlásit* (announce) and *hlásit* (voice and preach) the Word in the world where freedom is *svoboda Slova* (freedom for the Word; *slovo* = word; *svoboda*, *sloboda* = freedom), as well as *volnost milosti* (freedom of love-grace *qua* clear

²⁴⁴ Jakub Deml, *Rodný kraj*, op. cit., p. 204.

²⁴⁵ Jakub Deml, *Miriam - Moji pratele*, op. cit., p. 24.

²⁴⁶ Jan Hus, *Postilla*, op. cit., pp. 174-175.

²⁴⁷ Quoted in Matej z Janova, *Vybor z Pravidel Stareho a Noveho Zakona*, op. cit., p. 277; see also Jan Hus, *Postilla*, op. cit., p. 187; Tomas Garrigue Masaryk, *Jan Hus a nase obrozeni a nase reformace*, (Zurich: Konfrontace, 1979), p. 6.

²⁴⁸ Jakub Deml, *Rodný kraj*, op. cit., p. 160.

²⁴⁹ See *Ze starych letopisu ceskych*, (Praha: Svoboda, 1980), p. 152.

openness). Consequently, man *qua* human is a realized openness-freedom in the wholeness of Being - the knowing (*umni*) God. Here, our *vedomí* (consciousness, knowing) finds its home in *Boží s-vedomí* (conscience of God).²⁵⁰

In this spirit, Matej of Janov stated:

We know that we have crossed from death to life because we love our brothers ... Who does not love remains in death. Thus, those who love what is not their good, or who love inordinately, do not hold to the rules of the Truth and, therefore, they love death of their soul and, consequently, they hate their soul because, essentially, they would like to give their soul ... darkness and death.²⁵¹

In this way, religion, politics and science become one art of *con-science*.

As Masaryk pointed out: "Religion is not a theory, but practise. Religion is what I call an internal [essential] life."²⁵² In other words, *humanity* is anchored in God's *Um*. To be appreciative of the present God is the opposite of destroying oneself.²⁵³

²⁵⁰ Cf. Serb *savest* = conscience; *sveti* = sacred; *svet* = world; *Saini Sava* = a Serb saint; *Sava* = a Serb river. Thus, according to Jan Amos Comenius, it is freedom that makes man in the likeness of the God. Consequently, as Robert Kalivoda put it, "it is the openness of history that corresponds to the freedom of man ... recovering the lost human essentiality is not a matter of 'natural mechanism,' but a result of man's free activity; a recovery of man's essence also means its enrichment and growth; it is not a simple return. In this way, Comenius surpasses Rousseau ..." [Robert Kalivoda, *Husitska epocha a J.A. Komensky*, op. cit., p. 215]

²⁵¹ Matej z Janova, *Vybor z Pravidel Stareho a Noveho Zakona*, op. cit., p. 60; cf. 1 John 3:14.

²⁵² Quoted in Ferdinand Peroutka, *TGM predstavuje plukovníka Cunninghama*, op. cit., p. 79. Or as Robert Kalivoda, one of the leading Czech historian, who recently died, defined it, "the central principle of Czech reformation is the principle of law, God's law which is the alpha and omega of its thinking ..." [Robert Kalivoda, *Husitska epocha a J.A. Komensky*, op. cit., p. 11] The principle of *sola lex* (only the law) is then the basis for *active faith* (*cinná víra*) that should pervade all of Christian life as opposed to formal institutionalism, formalism or justifying by a mere faith (as for example, it is present in Luther's teaching as a principle of *sola fides* - only the faith - which is completely unacceptable with regard to the ethos of *lex*). [Ibid., pp. 14, 16, 155] Deeds and actions are, therefore, an indispensable part of one's piety and humanness. [Ibid., pp. 46-47] In this regard, one of the Hussite articles ran: "No true deed is not just as long as it opposes God's law, and God's law is the measure of all the laws (*quodnullum jus fori habet justitiam, si sit contra legem dei, et quod lex dei est regula omnium legum*)." [Ibid., p. 14]

²⁵³ Jan Hus, *O církvi*, op. cit., p. 162. The Slavs derived their name from the way they practised their piety: as glorifying the Word - *slavit Slávu* (*Slovo*). *Sláva* (*svátek*) = glory; name's day: 'words and names are sacred.'

Thus, coming to the end of our discussion, we can state what has been all the time present here: the Bohemian (Czech) ethos is not exclusive nor specially distinct from other forms of *human* piety with regard to Being. It has only enabled us to discover and open another window into man, a human being. Thus, what has stood here for the Bohemian ethos has been and is first and foremost *the phenomenology of humanity*.²⁵⁴ As Jung stressed, man's main purpose is "*to be human*."²⁵⁵

Such a spiritual and ontological reformation is a "restoration of *human sovereign freedom to know and do good (svěprávnost) and honour-dignity (důstojnost)*, such is also the meaning of Christ's historical intervention."²⁵⁶ Through such a return and new growth of humanness, as Jan Amos Comenius put it, "what is injured or separated is again wisely (*umele*) repaired and integrated (*napraveno neb vpraveno*; cf. *pravda* = truth); what then stands in wholeness (*celost*) should be strengthened in its stance ..."²⁵⁷ It is, therefore, up to us, as Jan Hus put it, "to hear" the word and "to learn that we *are* human."²⁵⁸ Here also lies man's redemption and manly answer to nihilism.

"With the Word is God in us, we are in Him."²⁵⁹

²⁵⁴ Stanley B. Winters, ed., *T.G. Masaryk (1850-1937)*, Volume I, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), p. 38. Through its rootedness in Being, the Bohemian (Czech) ethos thus transcends itself and reveals its transnational and universal essence of humanness. [Robert Kalivoda, *Husůvská epocha a J.A. Komenský*, op. cit., pp. 47, 49]

²⁵⁵ Carl G. Jung, *Man and His Symbols*, op. cit., p. 202.

²⁵⁶ Robert Kalivoda, *Husůvská epocha a J.A. Komenský*, op. cit., p. 253.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 257.

²⁵⁸ Jan Hus, *Dcerka: o poznání prave cesty ke spasení*, op. cit., p. 8.

²⁵⁹ Matej z Janova, *Vybor z Pravidel Starého a Nového Zakona*, op. cit., p. 106.

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