

# CZECH SOCIOLOGICAL REVIEW



*Spring*

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# CZECH SOCIOLOGICAL REVIEW

Institute of Sociology, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic

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The **CZECH SOCIOLOGICAL REVIEW** is a scholarly review open to the discussion of all professional and societal problems, sociological theory and methodology, and the dissemination of the results and interpretation of sociological research. Its attention is directed towards the development of the field and its teaching, while simultaneously striving to contribute to the solution of the practical problems of Czech social and economic politics.

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## A Hundred Years of *The Czech Question*

### Editorial Introduction

Certain jubilees are productive not only because they consolidate historical consciousness, but also because they consolidate societal systems. Indeed, the commemoration of the hundred years since the publication of Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk's *Česká otázka* (The Czech Question, Prague 1895), an unusually influential book in the Czech context at the time of its appearance and still stimulating today, brings us back to some basic semantic centres in the life of Czech society – to the problems of national identity, political orientation, cultural self-confidence, moral self-reflection, national character, historical self-understanding etc. General forms of the nation's political culture, formations of the *raison d'Etat*, value hierarchy and the like continue to formulate around such books, and are equally important to understanding that culture's concrete historical-social expressions and their transformations.

The fact that *The Czech Question*, when carefully read, does not strike the reader as antiquated, stale and uninteresting indicates that it touches upon issues which have not ceased to interest and excite us. Masaryk undoubtedly had a strongly developed sense of the deeper layers of the crisis which the modern European faced. Everything he wrote was a reaction to this crisis. Nevertheless, he also proposed possible positive – i.e., humanistic and democratic – solutions and, what is more, committed himself as a politician to practical endeavours which were to transform his ideas into reality. Masaryk sought to see the so-called Czech question, the recurring problems of the non-pragmatic bases of the Czech present and future, in more general European and universal contexts. In his opinion, it is only in this wider context that Czech history attains its full meaning. Masaryk's knowledge of Europe, Russia and the United States helped him not only to see the Czechs and Czech political life critically, from the outside, but also to formulate a well-founded, positive political programme for a small nation from its „historical core“. Masaryk's pursuit of a global view, his contemplation of the individuality of historical events through the prism of suprahistorical ideas and his analysis of national life in the light of supranational – i.e., general human – principles, are what make this work inspirational even today, and not only for the Czech reader.

From this point of view, the decision made by the editorial board of *The Czech Sociological Review* to devote the first issue this year to Masaryk's *The Czech Question* was not an act of reverence, intended merely to supplement the series of commemorative acts which have taken place or are still to come this year.

We consider Masaryk's *The Czech Question* to be one of the fundamental works in the integration of the Czech ethnicum in the European context. At the same time, this very fact also means that it is not possible to deal with this work uncritically and eulogically, without regard for the experience acquired over the past hundred years. In the collection of articles presented here, the reader will therefore also find studies which criticise some aspects of Masaryk's thought or which interpret it in less traditional contexts. Masaryk – an intellectual examining the European situation at the end of the 19th century from an unusual perspective, i.e., from the complementary perspectives of positivistic science and the religiously-oriented philosophy of individual responsibility – could not ignore the internal difficulties, contradictions and dangers threatening Czech

society. It is interesting to note how critically he looked at Czech situation of the time, in spite of the undoubtedly positive signs of economic and social development of that society at the end of the 19th century. He certainly registered them; what he was worried about, however, was the intellectual and moral quality of Czech life at that time. And it is his very capacity to see the hidden risks behind the contemporary positive picture of society that makes Masaryk so stimulating for us today. This combination of critical opinion both from the outside and in – aiming at the formulation of a philosophically-based programme for one of the small Central European nations – is an exhortation for us to discuss *The Czech Question* within the pages of *The Czech Sociological Review*. Due to the fact that we consider *The Czech Question* to be one of the fundamental studies aiding the integration of the Czech ethnicum into European thought and life, we are publishing the following articles in English. Thus we seek to contribute to the commemoration of the hundredth anniversary of the publication of Masaryk's book.

For Czech readers too, reflection on this work is, in our opinion, important as the new Czech state, its politicians and citizens, have to rethink the long-term programme for the country and redefine its geographical position.

The multifaceted questions dealt with by the contributors to this issue essentially reflect the richness of ideas of the author whom we are commemorating. Certain themes are worthy of note, both for their general relevance and their parallel treatment by several authors. First: how is Masaryk's book, upon which we are all reflecting, to be understood? To reiterate what is pointed out by Otto Urban, Miloš Havelka, Eva Broklová and, indirectly, by Ernest Gellner, Masaryk's aim was not to reconstruct history in a historiographical sense. Rather, he had in mind a philosophy of history and sought to unveil the specific role of Czechs in history's general 'programme'. It is also possible, as M. Havelka points out, to describe Masaryk's book as a „special thematisation of history“ in E. Nolte's sense. Masaryk's aim, however, is not only to understand Czech history, but also to identify permanent, recurring positive motives of activities in the Czech community through the ages. He is concerned with the search for continuity and „Czechness“, which would – at the same time – function as a legitimation for political action.

The question is, then, what are the positive elements of this „Czechness“. It is on this point, of course, that the authors diverge. E. Gellner does not consider it possible to accept the concept of something permanent that defines an ethnicum during all phases of its existence. Other contributors try to salvage something of this continuity.

This issue is connected with another significant motive, namely Czech history's inclusion within the great European history. There are two aspects of this motive: the factual and the normative. As to the former, we shall probably join Masaryk in a revival of inquiry into our links with the intellectual development of the great European countries as into our contribution to this development. This is a much needed kind of cultural geopolitics. The second aspect is no less important. Here, as both M. Havelka and O. Urban point out, Masaryk answers the Czech question posed by Gordon Schauer: will the Czechs be able to bring some significant contribution to the pantheon of humanity? Essentially in the spirit of J. G. Herder, Masaryk expressed his belief in the mission of individual nations in the orchestra of all those forming humankind. Even if today we were to attempt to base the relationship between universalism and plurality of values and lifestyles pursued by individual nations on assumptions than differ to those made by Masaryk, we would end up with similar results. Masaryk tried to reconcile European universalism with nationalism. In this context, most of the contributors stress, E. Brok-

lová particularly emphatically, Masaryk's merit in linking the Czech question to the European one. In his studies on democracy and its significance in both remote and recent Czech history, Masaryk reacted vigorously to the European intellectual problems of his time, and his persistent appeal that Czechs should participate in the discussion on democracy in the European context, remains to this day a positive challenge. It should, however, be added that such a stress on democracy did not appear explicitly in *The Czech Question*, but in its sequel, i.e., in *The Making of a State*.

The third issue we emphasise is Masaryk's realism and his critique of historicism. In our collection of articles, this theme is dealt with in an original way by both Jaroslav Střítecký and Jiří Musil, while Ernest Gellner and Eva Broklová deal with it indirectly. The most frequently quoted sentence from *The Czech Question* in the articles is the one which states that priority should not be given to the evolution of things, but to the things themselves. Even if the comments – e.g., Havelka's – stressing the platonic roots of Masaryk's understanding of history are undoubtedly correct, it would be interesting to reflect upon other possible interpretations of Masaryk's realism.

A non-traditional and, in the Czech milieu, less frequent interpretation is applied in J. Střítecký, M. Havelka's and J. Musil's comments on Masaryk's theory concerning the crisis of modern European culture. Havelka and Střítecký consider Masaryk's ideas to constitute a basically conservative perception of the general crisis of modern times. Havelka sees this thesis corroborated both in Masaryk's appeal to revive religion and in his stress on the religious aspect of the Czech question. J. Musil also points to the importance of religion to Masaryk's thought, linking *The Czech Question* with his essays on *Modern Man and Religion*. Ernest Gellner's contribution on the wider consequences of Masaryk's philosophy can be considered the most original. In his view, Masaryk's concept of history as the work of Providence – which should, of course, be aided, but which can also be relied on – poses many risks. If Providence plans evolution from theocracy to democracy, then all those who are on the side of Providence act in harmony with „History“. Therefore they are strong. Strength and truth are linked : he who is on the side of truth will win. But what if it so happens that those representing historical truth, i.e., democracy, fail? As they did, for example, in Munich? Shock follows, with the consequence that the community searches for a better expression of historical truth and for alternative external support. According to Gellner, this happened to the Czechs after World War II. Marxism and the alliance with the Soviet Union became the new support.

Leaving aside the question as to whether this pro-Soviet orientation was accepted by most Czechs, we find in Gellner's account a rational sociological core. Although Masaryk stressed individual responsibility, in referring to Providence, he contributed to the exaggerated Czech reliance on history. Thus, doubtless unintentionally, he strengthened one of the features in Czech behavioural patterns that Gellner – adopting D. Riesman's term – calls „otherdirectedness“. As J. Musil mentions, however, there are other interpretations of the same phenomena: the concepts of both synergy and complementarity. Human beings can and should co-operate with Providence, just as they should combine the rationality of modern science and economy with individual ethical responsibility for their actions. In this interpretation of Masaryk's thought, the apparently incompatible elements – rationality and morality – can be considered two complementary pillars of European civilisation.

Miloš Havelka, Jiří Musil

# THE CZECH QUESTION ?



THAT IS THE QUESTION...



# A Hundred Years of the „Czech Question“ and *The Czech Question* a Hundred Years On

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**Abstract:** In general, it can be stated that Czech political culture circles around certain semantic centres (national identity, political orientation, cultural self-consciousness, moral self-reflection, historical self-perception etc.), whose varying conception presents a theoretical foil at different points in time which makes the understanding of the most concrete socio-political phenomena possible. Masaryk's work, *The Czech Question*, represents one of the first and most influential attempts to structure these 'centres' within the framework provided by the philosophy of history. The analysis of Masaryk's conception in this article is linked with concrete socio-historical events (the quarrel over the authenticity of ancient Slavic manuscripts, the so-called civilisation crisis at the end of the last century, concrete national, political and social tensions, the asymmetry between the precapitalist and capitalist throughout Austro-Hungary etc.). In such a way, it is demonstrated how Masaryk's religious-humanistic conception of the meaning of Czech history would necessarily be subject to liberal-economic critique. Masaryk's interpretation of Czech history can be understood as a search for an alternative to political liberalism. It was the Czech politician, Josef Kaizl (Minister of Finance of Austria-Hungary, 1888-1889) who rejected both Masaryk's extremely one-sided view of the political economy and his highly compensatory conception of politics (which Masaryk called „apolitical politics“). The author presents the debate between Masaryk and Kaizl as the problematic relationship between pragmatics and principles in politics.

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Every formula by which we express the sense of history is only a reflection of our revived inward nature.

Wilhelm Dilthey

Wouldn't it be wonderful if philosophy resurrected a nation, a nation which shed its blood first of all for the freedom of thought?

T. G. Masaryk 24. 3. 1879 to Leandr Čech

It would be difficult to find another nation in Europe other than the Czech nation which would devote so much intellectual endeavour to philosophical and historical self-reflection, which would, after so long a time, in fact, more than one hundred and fifty years, attempt to formulate the supranational and extra-national foundations of its national existence in order to seek a more profound justification of its being. The modern Czech national identity, risen from the Revival and reworked *ex nihilo*, was still not deemed a matter of course well into the 19th century. The intrinsic side to the endeavours to find the spiritual foundations of national existence, however, is not only an attempt to anchor

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it in philosophical-theological and generally humanist conceptions. What must be part of this is a constant renewal of self-reflection, a constant – often exalted – return to similar considerations from the point of view of form and content. Czech self-reflection, whether anew of the most critical or mythogenic nature, returns from the period of the high Revival to our contemporary lives, with certain interludes but always with a similar urgency and with inner ideological contexts. Accompanying this, naturally, are the stereotypes, „catching up with the West“, „opening the doors to Europe“ and the „return to history“. If we disregard the specific aims and arguments of Baroque and early revivalist linguistic „defences“, considerations of this type have been put before us in varying forms, contexts and dimensions (from scattered notes, feuilletons and treatises to independent books) and, above all, in varying depths: once, for example, as a reflection on „the vocation of our Czech lands... the inhabitant of Slav and Germanic origins... from the point of general development“ [Smetana 1960, I: 148], at another time as the question of „a small nation“ [Kollár 1831] and sometimes in the form of the problems of the Czech mentality, national psychology and character [Chalupný 1910, Fischer 1926, Peroutka 1924]. We have encountered them in the form of questions relating to the sense and possibilities of the Czech language and Czech culture, the sense of the existence of the independent Czech nation alongside other larger, stronger and more productive cultures in Europe, and relating to the sense of the National Revival in general [Schauer 1886a, b]. These issues became apparent to varying degrees through the reflections on the Czechs' relationship towards neighbouring states – for example, the attempt at linking the philosophy of Czech and Austrian history – [Tomek 1854], they stood in the background while attempts to seek the roots of our political and cultural orientation were being made; they are similarly important for an understanding of the thematisation of the cultural individuality of central Europe [Kundera 1984] and, after him, a number of others). One could not overlook the remarkable *Otázka židovská ve světle české otázky* [The Jewish Question in the Light of the Czech Question] by Jindřich Kohn [1936, I], nor F. V. Krejčí with his „Czech and European moral issue“ [Krejčí 1894] and František Götz [1936]. The prospects of the „Czech question“ in the broadest sense of the word, i.e. as the question of the sense, identity and prospects of Czech national sentiment or even the long-felt unease or indeed, the risk related to political, national and cultural „being“ in central Europe could certainly be used to explain certain later historical, political and moral thinking (and the polemics often relating to them). Here we could include the discussions on *Czech destiny* by Václav Havel, Milan Kundera, Jaroslav Střítecký and Lubomír Nový at the end of 1968 and the beginning of 1969 in *Literární noviny*, *Zitřek* and collected in *Host do domu* [*Host do domu* 1968, 1969a, 1969b], then the debates in samizdat literature and texts printed in exile for Charter 77 *Právo na dějiny* (A Right to History) [see, e.g. *Právo...* 1984 and *Dokumentace...* 1985] and finally the debates surrounding Podiven's work *Češi v dějinách nové doby* (Czechs in the History of a New Age) [Podiven 1992]. No can one fail to mention Patočka's comprehensive essay *Co jsou Češi?* (What are the Czechs?) [Patočka 1993], *Naše nynější krize* (Our Present Crisis) (and other works) by Karel Kosík [1993] and also *O češství a evropanství* (On Czech National Sentiment and Europeanism) by Jaroslav Krejčí [1993] if we are to name works which were made available to a wider readership during the past era. The comprehensive, synthetic attempt by Jan Křen, *Historické proměny češství* (Historical Changes of Czech National Sentiment) [Křen 1992], occupies an exceptional position in the current

perspective of the Czech question. And we could go on to name many more works and writers devoted to this theme...

From the time Masaryk gave his speech in the spring of 1895, the formulation of the *sense of Czech history* stood at the centre of attention surrounding the „Czech question“, both in the context of world history and, in particular, with regard to its internal sources. Thus possibilities were introduced for reflection upon the Czech contribution to humanity and progress upon the interconnection between this contribution and the extra-historical moral principles as well as for reflections on the historical shift of Czech history. Masaryk thus found himself above and beyond his earlier geopolitical and cultural-political formulations, although his politically legitimising intentions were preserved. In 1888, the „Czech question“ was for him a „Slav-West question“ and „...a German question at the same time...: if it is our fate, that we, the Czechs, are surrounded by the German element, it is less crucial for the Germans that the Slav wedge is thrust into their body and that it is a much shorter distance from the last Czech region to their capital city than from their furthestmost region to the centre of the Slav lands...” [Masaryk 1888]. Five years later „...we are all posing a fundamental question: what is the position of our nation and what are its characteristics in amongst other European nations, what is our position in the development of humanity... we want to know our individuality, we want to define what is ours, we want to determine what we have given others and what we have received from others... for we must know how to continue in our development, what we have, what we must do, in what direction we must go.” [Masaryk 1893: 2]. The philosophical emphasis uniting the *inner* components of the „Czech question,” that *theory of continuity* [Patočka 1969: 463] of Czech history, of course, was not received without intense intellectual debate [see, e.g. Kaizl 1896]. Out of almost a half-century of *disputes concerning the sense of Czech history*, in which, apart from T. G. Masaryk and Josef Pekař, historians (Kamil Krofta, Jindřich Vančura, Zdeněk Nejedlý, Jan Slavík, Jaroslav Werstadt, Karel Stloukal and philosophers Emanuel Rádl, F. M. Bartoš, Josef Ludvík Fischer, Karel Kupka, theologists Konstantin Miklík, literary scientists and publicists such as F. X. Šalda, J. B. Čapek, Jiří Jareš, Jaroslav Prokeš and others) repeatedly participated, an almost idiosyncratic Czech philosophical discipline accompanied by a richly elaborated literature arose. In this context, one should mention, in particular, the philosophical- methodological discussions (Pekař – Slavík) of the 1930s, which brought the *debate on the sense of Czech history* back to the Weberian problems of the constitution of historical knowledge (Wertbeziehung) and its objectivity (Wertfreiheit). The fundamental texts on the *debates on the sense of Czech history* from the years 1895-1938 were published in the spring of this year by the author of this essay [Havelka 1995].

The all-embracing term, the „Czech question“, according to which reflections of this type are generally classified or under which they appear together of themselves, denotes nothing individual nor something which could be categorically overlooked. It is stratified not only from an interpretative and thematic point of view but also from one of inner development: the history of the problem of contemporary Czech national sentiment, the justification and building of a national, cultural and civilised identity is older and, on the whole, less clear-cut than the history of the unified identification of this problem. From this perspective the problem of the „Czech question“ (with a small „q“) should not be interchangeable with Masaryk’s solution of it in his work *The Czech Question* (with a large „Q“) nor with its definitions and appendices, in particular,

included in *Naše nynější krise* (Our Present Crisis) and in *Jan Hus*, the first publication of which took place one hundred years hence.

In the general context of the „Czech question“ and, particularly, regarding its form within the debate on the sense of Czech history – which is genetically and structurally a part of its formulation and its solution – what should not be overlooked is the fact that we are dealing with a special, in many respects, unique manner of thematising history as well as with its special reflections which have not been completely accounted for in accepted views of history. Here, one cannot speak only of specialist historiography in the full sense of the word, nor of the traditional philosophy of history: this is not exclusively a matter of diagnosing the present, nor of cultural criticism or a critical theory of history and society. This view cannot be presented as the theory of history, nor the theory of historical knowledge, nor even the theory of politics.

In this context, we encounter elements and motifs from all the above-mentioned approaches simultaneously (the German historian Ernst Nolte, at the end of the 1980s, attempted a similar approach with the analysis of the term *reflections on history*) [Nolte 1990: 5]. What ultimately unites these various authors, despite their differing methods, is the motivating character of their perspective and its *programmatic nature*. Their ideas on what constitutes Czech history is thus motivated in that its justification and purpose is an interest in Czech contemporary life to be understood from a perspective which embraces the Czech past. From this past, then, the Czech future should also be oriented. The past and the reflections there upon should assume, to a certain extent, the function of the theory of society; they become not only the basis for the clarification of national identity, but also serve as the legitimising base for political negotiation as well as, in certain cases, as the theory on the special integration of the individual into society, the creation of the Czech „mentality“.

The thinkers of the „Czech question“ are, then, those philosophers and historians, politicians and theologists who expressly formulate the question of understanding and the programme of Czech contemporary life in such way that uncertainty stands against certainty, problem-creation against apodictic reasoning, activity against contemplation, subjective political awareness against distanced objectivity.

Every attempt at reformulating the present form of the „Czech question“ must necessarily mean the historicising of its Masarykian concept. This is historicising in both senses of the word: both from the point of view of the obsolescence of its solution in the *religious concept of Czech history* and of the period and personal contingency of its formulation in general. The historical background on which Masaryk's solution becomes visible, i.e. the historical tangibility of the problems, the unique character of the events and the period backdrop of evaluation have a stratification similar to the theme itself:

1) Let us consider the spiritual context with the specialist and, at the same time, generational *debate on the authenticity of the so-called Královédvorský and Zelenohorský manuscripts*, forged during the Romantic period of the National Revival, proclaimed the oldest Czech literary monuments. The *battle of the manuscripts*, which flared up in 1886, became, for a considerable period of time, the actual and symbolic spiritual centre which led to the refinement of political and scientific standpoints, to the conceptional and personal division of those participating in the argument and finally to the change in perspective. Apart from its realistic, demythologising and cultural cleansing function, as opposed to the „noble“ beginnings and the dignity of the tradition on which the majesty

of truth is built, the manuscript debate, ultimately enabled a transition to another, new situation for the nation, corresponding more to forms of self-esteem. It did not, however, lead to the failure of the historical methods of legitimisation of political endeavour, but did devalue the extreme forms of pseudo-historical self-stylisation and non-critical traditionalism for the future. Masaryk's frequent critiques on *historicism* were also critiques of these concepts.

On the other hand, of course, one of the symbols of national self-esteem no longer held any significance. The empty space it left, then, could have been filled by „less controversial“ values, for example, the „scientific“ construction of the religious sense of history.

2) From the *point of view of civilisation*, this was a situation whose moments of crisis were manifested in Europe at the end of the century in various areas during certain periods with varying degrees of intensity and consequences. They arose from classical liberalism and related to the processes of economic, political, administrative, social and cultural modernisation which liberalism triggered in a similar way to that in which it helped promote „trends in the rationalisation of life and the world“ [Weber 1920: 5] and displayed a certain demythologising and secularising force. In consequence, they led to the emancipation of the individual, both from confinement within the church and dependence on the state. These processes were revealed amidst the chaos of cultural and moral values and with a relativist current between ideas, the disintegration of tradition, the shift of political and power interests, the imperial ambitions of states, the rise of new groups and classes and the intensification of social and political conflict. With this came growing anti-Semitism and reactionary anti-enlightenment linked with traditionalist and conservative trends. Apart from the processes of modernisation and secularisation of life, one may also speak of the radicalisation of group, national and state interests and needs and the „ideologisation of ideas“ associated with them [Bracher 1982: 15].

Masaryk wished to react to this situation in his *Czech Question*, a situation which was deemed to be an acute crisis of life and orientation, with particular regard to the needs of national society. The work of the same name, however, was merely meant to form part of a more philanthropic concept which was only partially fulfilled. As Masaryk's publisher, Vasil K. Škrach, points out [Škrach 1948: 621], the prerequisite for overcoming the crisis was to take the form of the formulation and analysis of two further *questions* which were broader in content and complementary to each other, namely *religious* and *social* questions. It would seem that this accommodated Masaryk's fundamentally conservative vision of the general crisis of the time: he could not (and did not wish to) understand the crisis as a problem of progress, i.e. according to Hegel, as an „energy“ of the self-propelled historical changes or from the Marxist point of view, as the eve of revolution, nor „existentially“, as the continually reproductive and fundamentally fatal situation of man and his culture. Masaryk understood crisis chiefly as a „challenge“ for renewal, i.e. as something which can essentially be resolved and eliminated with intellectual and moral endeavour. That is also why he placed reformation, legal opposition and minor tasks against revolution, violent revolution against spiritual revolution and, against armed revolution, the revolution of heads and hearts.

3) With the concept in which „reality demands the real value of possibility“ [Škrach 1936: 631], Masaryk wanted to address the *issues of Czech national society* of his time as well as their *general* political and cultural orientation. It seems that the decisive trait of this period was the fundamental debate between, on the one hand, the actual

economic position of the Czech Lands, the increasingly settled if then incomplete Czech national society, between cultural, educational and democratising and the chiefly economic productivity of the civil-bourgeois elements of this society and, on the other hand, their tangible political opportunities, political influence and the general political task of the Czech nation within the framework of multi-national and – if a matter of the political elite – principally pre-capitalist, namely feudal, monarchy. From here, from this asymmetry between the actual position and the incomplete political prospects, grew the need for the reformulation of political interests and orientation.

The symbolic moments in this rise of the Czech national society which occurred during the whole of the 19th century were the division of the Prague university into Czech and German branches (1882), the founding of the first scientific-critical periodical (*Athenaeum*, 1883), the attainment of a majority in the Czech assembly (1883), the granting of equal status of the Czech language with German internal official spheres, i.e. in relation to the parties and self-governing offices, this took the form of the publication of the so-called Stremayer provision (1880) and the change of the election procedure to the commercial chambers (1884). The most telling phenomenon, however, was undoubtedly the defeat of the Old Czech Party in the 1881 elections. This could be understood as a political symbol of departure from the old, traditionalist concept of national life and its duties.

Only scepticism towards what had occurred until then and criticism of what was outdated could introduce a new perspective in a situation of change: from a cultural solidarity dependent on civilisation. The Czechs developed into a self-reliant national society whose democratism and liberalism – as Jan Křen recently emphasised [Křen 1992: 79] – were ahead of the other Central European nations. Czech development and national change naturally had to influence the manner and content of further questioning.

At this time, it acquired its most radical form in the writings of Hubert Gordon Schauer. His famous treatise „Naše dvě otázky“ (Our two questions) were: „What is the task of our nation?“ and „What is our national existence?“, appearing in the first edition of the realist *Čas* publication [Schauer 1886a] The answer given is sceptical, extremely emotive and, to this day, still cause for concern. The results of the revival of the nation, its situation and prospects which the majority of Schauer's contemporaries considered matter-of-fact, are here seen as problematic from the points of view of culture and civilisation: „...if our national existence is worthy of this endeavour, is its cultural worth so much? (...) Is our national fund such“ that it would convince the national revivalist and awakener that „...if they preserve the language for the people, they also preserve it for their own thinking world, that the elimination of the language would be a real ethical shame, that they would thus be preserving a type which, in the pantheon of humanity, holds a sturdy, valid and independent place? If the answer to the question is affirmative, we are given an assurance: our intelligence will have a sufficient domestic source of inspiration and a people, a nation befitting itself and, at the same time, which finds itself in complete accordance with the ideal world order. Then all external endeavour will be futile, at least, very exacting and Europe, learning to value our being, will not consent so easily to its destruction.“ [Schauer 1886a: 2-3]

Here was the formulation of the concept of nationhood which diverged from established forms of contemporary understanding thereof. The mass criticism at that time did not acknowledge Schauer; his scepticism turned chiefly against empty, purely revivalist forms of linguistic identity surviving from the National Revival and his questions

were, to a considerable extent, issues of a constituted, modern, civil, clearly structured and politically and nationally chiefly self-confident Czech society. The demand that the Czech intelligentsia assume the leading roles in political life was, in Schauer's viewpoint, in fact directed against both certain Germanising and Russophilic trends. Most of all it reflected the new situation of national society for it was, at the same time, a question concerning the function of its political and cultural elites. One could also consider symbolic the fact that Schauer, in later discussions on the sense of Czech history, was ignored and misunderstood, just as the possibility of a more sociological formulation of the „Czech question“ as emphasised by him was disregarded. (The only attempt to recognise it was contained in the „Česká krise – česká otázka“ (The Czech crisis – the Czech question) by O. Jozífek (i.e. Jaroslav Dyrhon) from 1902.)

It was Masaryk who enlarged not only upon Schauer's criticism of Czech politics which „does not look further than from one case to the next“, but also on his conception of the nation as a task and the parallel of „preserving one's own thinking world“ in connection with „the ideal world order“ [Schauer 1886a: 3]. He also stressed „our participation in the world's struggle for truth, rights and humanity, our initiative participation in European affairs“ [Schauer 1886a: 3]. We find a further parallel in both writers, in particular, is the general emphasis of the supranational ideals, the „consciousness of moral vocation“ [Schauer 1886a: 2] through which national existence assumes its sense and objective. It will probably be necessary to point out in greater detail to what extent Ernest Renan (1882), in his concept of the nation as a „choice“, stood for Schauer's „existentialised“ concept of the nation as a conscious „responsibility“ and „choice“ and to what extent he influenced Masaryk [Renan 1993].

While for Schauer, the „consciousness of the moral calling“ of the nation was a product of history, a „solid and continual context between the past, present and the future“ [Schauer 1886a: 2], Masaryk's realistic viewpoint had an anti-historicist edge: „Things, not history, things, not development (...) learn to recognise them everywhere, things that are everywhere and their core! The development of things is not of real importance for the spirit...“ [Masaryk 1948a: 150,161]. Thus, for him, the task of knowledge could not be a mere accumulation of facts or their causal interpretation, but the comprehension of their sense which points behind reality and above it. It was remarked more than once that Masaryk's own „...enduring, typical fondness (...) for the description of the historical development of ideas and trends“ [Chalupný 1948: 422] did not correspond with his criticism of historicism.

Like the majority of critics at that time, Masaryk also distanced himself considerably from Schauer, albeit for rather non-theoretical reasons. On the one hand, probably because he himself was considered by certain groups and for a certain period of time to be an author or, at least, an instigator and spiritual father of a treatise so greatly criticised, on the other hand because Schauer seemed too radical to him (i.e. revolutionary). Pragmatic reasons also certainly played a role. Masaryk admitted to Karel Čapek much later: „...I think that they put it in because they didn't have enough contributions. It was an impossible situation... The very next day I took myself off to reprimand Herben...“ [Čapek 1946: 71]

4) Seven years after Schauer, after his conceptual formulation of the „Czech question“, and five years after Masaryk's „geopolitical“ *Západní slovanská otázka* (The Western Slav Question) [Masaryk 1888], the *political situation* also began to take shape - after the fall of the Taaffe cabinet and the creation of a government led by Alfred

Windischgrätz, whose declaration in November of 1893 and approval of a state of emergency in Prague and the surrounding areas led to the further, already tangible radicalisation of the Young Czech opposition. One of its leaders, deputy Josef Herold, seized the first opportunity which arose and, at the spring session of parliament, turned to the ministerial chairman with the inquiry as to how the government intended to resolve the „Czech question“.

The idiom which was to express the dissatisfaction of the Czech party with the existing resolution of constitutional, political and nationality issues, after Windischgrätz's refusal that, from his position as chairman of a coalition government, he could not accede to the „Czech question“, began to circulate and structure various positions more strongly around itself, to steer negotiations and, above all, emphasise various values. As Otto Urban pointed out, its contents were enlarged to the spheres concentrating on society, culture, economics, feminism, Jewish-assimilation: „the ‚Czech question‘ (...) became the complex of all problems whose common denominator was the reformistically conceived endeavour to democratise (...) society“ [Urban 1982: 438].

The non-productive nature and, chiefly, the lack of prospects of the policies of the Young Czech party whose opposing stance (from the first third of the 1890s) continued to be contained in the mere negation of the government by means of technical obstructions in parliament and went so far as to generate the irresponsible radicalisation of public opinion (for example Josef Kaizl privately spoke of anarchy, disorder, foolishness and knavery [Kaizl 1909, III]), finally resulted in the mutual political and conceptual division of the realist politicians – T. G. Masaryk, Josef Kaizl and Karel Kramář – who had joined the Young Czech deputy club during the elections of 1891 with great intellectual and moral ambitions, perhaps with a feeling of superiority, but chiefly with certain claims to relative independence.

Masaryk, in this new situation, urged his two colleagues to recognise the need for the realists to jointly abandon the Young Czech ranks; when he could not convince them, he set out a mandate himself in October 1893. He tried to orient his critical stance on Czech politics of that decade towards a theoretical- philosophical point of view.

The result was three books, published in 1895-1896, *Česká otázka* (The Czech Question), *Naše nynější krise* (Our Present Crisis) and *Jan Hus*, of which the first was the most important. The *Question* of the title, a phrase which Masaryk used frequently, was used astutely here – not in its ordinary, more or less merely propagandist sense. For Masaryk it was always a synonym for a problem which had, in some way, already been identified, namely – in the broadest sense – to discover that, in our knowledge of things, there is something not quite right and this something must be examined. Unlike today's concept of political and social *questions*, whose symbols are a questionnaire and, perhaps, an electoral card, Masaryk always wanted to probe ever more deeply. His formulation of the *question* was always contingent on the basic possibility of the kind of *answer*, which remains timeless. Its final justification is, then, metaphysical; it cannot be merged with the contemporary, sceptically based concept of knowledge as a process of never-ending questioning (and the process of imperfect, incomplete, processive and „only“ falsifiable answers associated with it). Masaryk was convinced of the chance for a more valid possibility of answering, set „beyond“ or directly „above“ (from a Platonic viewpoint) the concrete nature of history and reality. Thus it could not merely have been a question of some constructivist communication of sense for the „senseless“, nor the sense of history – generally at best arguable – hidden within the individual dramas of history.

For him, sense was something tangible. Masaryk believed that the existence of the world and the existence of nations have their final purpose, that *Providence* and its plan exist, a certain enlightening objective setting down the foundation stones of the development of the world and its internal regularity, which is also directed at the conduct and spiritual productivity of both nations and the individual. Thus the history of individual nations cannot be coincidental, „for manifested in it is a definite plan of Providence“ and it is, then, the task of historians and philosophers to intercept this plan, to seek within it and define a place for its nation while the nations should act accordingly, „with the fullest and clearest consciousness (...) in all work, including political occupation“ [Masaryk 1948a: 3].

Masaryk's philosophy of history is realistic in the Platonic sense. The reality of ideas and their metaphysical affinity which, in the end, endure all historical phenomena and phenomenal changes, then afforded a direct link between the Czech reformation and the National Revival, leading Masaryk to emphasise a unified act of the Czech past. The ideal identity of the spiritual sources of national history was set against the historical continuity of Czech national identity as affirmed by Pekař (and against the discontinuity of Czech national identity presented by modern Czech historiography).

It is the clarification of the sense of the historical struggle of the Czech nation – as stressed by Masaryk – which can become a plausible basis for the exposure of the deficiencies of Czech life in the present, as well as the clarification of the sense and criticism of what exists; we then have the prerequisite for the creation of the political will which would exceed the limits of restricted party spirit, superficial nationalism and, finally, national cultural and civilised independence. It should be stated that the implementation of a national programme is possible only as that of a certain morally historical plan, that which makes it impossible for national self-determination to become a mere isolating event, an expression of national defiance and particular interests. Unity with world history, formulated in the demand for the Czech contribution to it and in the projection of a path of world history as a necessary foundation for humanity and democracy (in later formulations) – such are the most fundamental prerequisites for the fulfilment of national life and its political activities.

In his „Czech national philosophy“ – as it was termed by J. S. Machar [1895] in a review of *The Czech Question* at the time – Masaryk probably reconstructed this „plan of Providence“ in the following way: Our revivalists found a firm foundation for their attempts to outline the concept of humanity. From a philosophical point of view, they leaned on Herder's philosophy of history, and naturally supported the Czech reformation, Hus, Hussitism, Chelčický, the Czech Brethren and their humanitarian ideals. Thus the post-White Mountain anti-reformation void was filled. Our National Revival remains logically and eternally linked with the reformation. Dobrovský, Kollár, Šafařík and Palacký are essential bearers of their ennobled traditions, the defenders of freedom of conscience and promoters of the fraternal ideals of humanity. Our national reawakening is, then, a totally organic historical development. The humanitarian ideal, declared by Dobrovský and Kollár, is, according to Masaryk, our national responsibility, a direct expression of the understanding of those plans of Providence. Hus died a martyr's death because of these ideals. The Czech humanitarian ideal, the Czech idea of Brethren, these are leading Czech notions „for the whole of humanity...“. Thus wrote Masaryk in his *Czech Question*, a stance defended by his followers even though it became clear that Dobrovský was not very familiar with the Old Unitas Fratrum. The affair, however, was

not so simple. Masaryk was not a historian. Nevertheless, in his philosophical construction of Czech history, he maintained a rational stance, namely that Czech historical continuity was not renewed on the basis of Baroque patriotic historicism, but rather on the Enlightenment-inspired negation thereof, with perhaps hidden Protestant motifs. For the most part, it was for him a question of the whole context of history, so that beyond the frontiers of empirical historiography, but, at the same time, with its help, he could found and justify a programme for present and future discussion. It is with this positive impetus that the *Czech Question* both begins and is concluded: „if the Czech word were enough for our forefathers, we must work to ensure that the word is created with the Czech spirit...” [Masaryk 1948a: 229-230].

In spite of all assurances that „the Czech question was not conceived in the sense of political practices“, but in a broad, apparently sociological context, (today we would naturally use the term *socio-philosophical*, or Nolte's abovementioned concept – *reflections on history*), Masaryk's publications from 1895 received great acclaim, a response which could be seen chiefly as party-political in nature. In the end, however, Masaryk was aiming at this domain even when he was „only“ postulating a philosophical view.

It comes as no surprise, therefore, that even Masaryk's co-fighter of a short period before, the liberalist economist and politician Josef Kaizl, saw the issue of the *Czech Question* in a similar manner to the majority of his contemporaries, i.e. with emphasis on Masaryk's second publication, the more or less politico-scientific *Our Present Crisis* [Masaryk 1948b] and the perspectives therein. One should be reminded of Kaizl's lengthy polemics with Masaryk, termed *České myšlenky* (Czech thinking) [Kaizl 1896], for two reasons: On the one hand, with its historiographical arguments it anticipated Masaryk's criticism of the extra-historical interpretation of the Czech revival and Czech history in general with which the „Goll school“ later advocated (whether it was a matter of Kaizl's accent on the internal national bond of Czech history) the interpretation of the National Revival or, in particular, the reference to the ambiguity of Masaryk's concept of humanity. As Kaizl pointed out, Masaryk's interpretation leaned on „the previously elaborated notion of origin and contexts“ which he did not abandon „even when the facts went against it unequivocally“ [Kaizl 1896: 12]. The concept of fraternal humanity as the central historical and even political tradition which is apparently directly linked with Czech enlightenment, according to Kaizl, was, in the end, not philosophical but religious. It contained a preconceived idea of the differentiation between reformational humanity, i.e. Christian-fraternal, and humanity which has been „despiritualised“, an enlightened and liberal humanity, while trying to place the first, fraternal humanity before the second concept of enlightened humanity. According to Kaizl, associated with this was Masaryk's criticism of „liberalist indifference“, liberal „non-truth“ and the seemingly inauspicious moral and social effect [Kaizl 1896: 16-18], taken from the heights of Platonic realism. Liberalism, according to Masaryk „supported the work of the counter-reformation with its „imperfections and weaknesses“, „philosophical negations and moral and social patchwork“ with which it was supposed to have „thwarted the endeavours of the revivalists“. The revivalists, on the contrary, in Masaryk's words „revived the nation with their reformist ideals which, despite all counter-reformational endeavours, were not completely forgotten“ [Masaryk 1948a: 118, 1948b: 384-387 etc.].

For Kaizl, however, it was not just a matter of denying Masaryk's reduced, theistic and anti-enlightenment interpretation of the National Revival, but also of Masaryk's explicitly anti-liberalist grasp of Czech philosophy. Masaryk's views on the state –

which, apparently, is not the most important thing for a nation („...we had a state and we lost it“ [Masaryk 1948a: 123]) – could not suit Kaizl's practical-political background. In particular, he denied Masaryk's „socialisation“ of the state and inferiority of state and political life in favour of spiritual life, state independence in favour of spiritual independence. Kaizl [1896: 113-137] feared the underestimation of the productive functions and strengths of the state; „freedom“ and „organisation“ were a more practical formulation than „spiritual independence“ and a „sense of history“. He clearly felt that here was the root not only of Masaryk's very unilateral attitude to national economy but also of his highly ambiguous (regarding its compensatory nature) conception of politics, which Masaryk himself conceived as „apolitical politics“ [Masaryk 1948a: 165,173].

The culturally critical potential of Masaryk's interpretation of Czech history (which, together with liberalism, in fact also made an issue of the processes of the modernisation of national society, its secularisation and modern emancipation of the individual and his „despiritualisation“ as something critical) was to reassert itself several times, for example, in, the interwar period with Emanuel Rádl [1925] and Konstantin Miklik [1931]. The quest for the extra-historical often ends in the moralisation of the present. *The Czech Question*, which seeks reasons and the sense of a particular Czech national essence, for the continuity of history and a historical place for a nation, the possibilities of the political existence of Czechs and their state, their cultural identity and political orientation, their vocation and special characteristics etc. – was afforded yet another dimension by Masaryk, the dimension of moral responsibility and the critical obligations of intellectuals *sub specie aeternitatis*. Their defence of freedom and individuality against the socialising pressures of modern rationality and the technologisation of the world, is willing to place the pathos of authenticity above „mere“ authority. The problem lies, however, in that our situation is not a metaphysical but a pragmatic one.

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# One Hundred Years of *The Czech Question*

A Historian's Account

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**Abstract:** In view of the fact that Masaryk's *Czech Question* was often misinterpreted, both at the time it first appeared and later on, the paper begins with a description of the actual state of the society at the time Masaryk's work was written. Czech society is considered on three interrelated levels: that of internal life, the broader level of its position within the Hapsburg monarchy and finally the still broader context of Central Europe and Europe. Masaryk conceived his Czech question as a sociological problem, although in fact it was not a sociological but, in modern terminology, political analysis based on historical material. The historical material helped Masaryk find arguments to support his basic thesis. Masaryk thus created a certain scheme of periodisation which was later to become both the object of criticism from historians and self-corrections. Masaryk's arguments are based on the thesis that the Czech question is one of humanity or religion. Although this thesis was derived from historical reality, it was supposed to have a certain historical value itself. Masaryk the religious thinker and reformer thus linked Czech national feeling with metaphysically conceived values, bestowing a new quality upon the Czech national consciousness. In the eyes of contemporary historians, Masaryk's interpretation of the Czech history is outdated, although its inspiring character as a critical reflection remains. The real situation of contemporary Czech society being completely different today, the potential conception of the Czech question must also be rephrased.

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In his work, *Česká otázka* (The Czech Question), Masaryk expressly stressed that it was merely „bits“ from his thinker's workshop; decades later, as president of Czechoslovakia, he repeated this on various occasions. He himself thus warned against attaching too much value to any of the statements and conclusions contained within, and did not insist on their unquestionable applicability. At the same time, he never admitted to any doubts concerning the main point of the Czech question as an intellectual, moral or, as he himself wrote, religious question. The fact that he „wrapped“ the core of his conception in historical subjects and wrote dozens of pages „about something else“, could and did become the cause of many misunderstandings resulting in complicated disputes and pseudodisputes. Nevertheless, he did achieve one of his main aims: he provoked the Czech intellectual public to critical self-reflection on the foundations of the very existence of the Czech society.

Not everyone, however, understood this initiative in the way Masaryk had intended, especially after he had solved the Czech question in practice during World War I and had become the leading authority not only on the solution to the question, but also on its interpretation. Therefore, original critical self-examination of Czech society was often mistaken for reflection on Masaryk's conception of the Czech question. Masaryk became

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the criterion or the hub of apologetic or polemic interpretations while Czech reality was often perceived and interpreted not directly as such, but through the comments and interpretations of Masaryk's followers and opponents. The Czech question was laden with an „historical burden“: it was not by chance that Masaryk also inspired disputes over the meaning of Czech history, nor that historians reacted to his suggestions in a very lively manner. The Czech question was thus considerably lessened, retaining the form of 19th century classical historicism, however little Masaryk had wished this. In most cases the Czech question became a question about the meaning of Czech history, with the only alternative to this being the more or less ingenious journalistic reflections on „what are we like“. No really modern analysis of the Czech question, combining historical, sociological, economic, legal, literary, art-historical, psychological etc. elements, has yet been written: hence Masaryk's suggestion remains an open challenge.

Before outlining the way in which Masaryk and some others reflected on the Czech question at the turn of the century, it is worth taking a look at a very rough outline of what Czech society of the day was like. This can be done on three related and interlocking levels: on the level of the „interior“ life, i.e. those autonomous processes which are in progress within the life of the national society, on the broader level of its „outer“ basis in the Hapsburg monarchy and finally on that of the still broader basis of the Central European or European context.

1. It is a fact that during the 1860s and 1870s, Czech political leaders did not achieve recognition of the Czech society as an independent state and political subject. All constitutional federalist projects, whether they were federalist in the sense of ethnic or historically-legal federalism, or autonomistic, remained in fact unfulfilled wishes. The Czech political public was frustrated by the fact that the great projects of the day remained unrealised, although this did not represent a block to all possibilities of further development. Civic rights, guaranteed by the December Constitution of 1867, safeguarding, among other things, free national development, offered a more limited nonetheless sufficient space for asserting demands for national emancipation. This was clearly manifest, especially after 1880, when Czech political leaders abandoned the fight „against the state“, in the sense of passive resistance towards the whole constitutional system, and started the fight „over the state“, i.e. the active politics of using the legal possibilities of asserting partial assets (or „crumb“ assets, as they were called in those days). The maximalistic project of constitutional law was formally maintained and remained the hub of Czech politics, although it was shifted to more mature and favourable times.

The partial gains were indeed, if judged by the maximalistic project, mere crumbs. However, in reality they meant much more and were, among other things, a source of important structural changes within Czech society as well as one of the essential factors in its „maturing“ into a modern national community. After the 1930s, Czech society became increasingly industrial while Czech capital started to dominate the economy of the Czech lands, as with the growth of Czech banking capital and the emergence of a majority of Czech entrepreneurs in the chambers of commerce and trade. Modern industry, with its partially hired labour force, joined the strong and relatively prosperous agricultural and craft sectors of the Czech economy. The anniversary exhibition of 1891 showed clearly how actively the Czech community had participated in the general economic development; the extensive building and investment activity, continuing until the beginning of World War I, confirmed this fact. With all the natural and inevitable variations, all

sectors of the modern economy underwent a very positive development, particularly from the 1890s onwards.

Czech culture also experienced a no lesser and indeed more marked development. This did not lie simply in the above-average results of artistic and scientific endeavour, but even more in the fact that from the 1880s, the institutional grounds of modern Czech education were in essence established and illiteracy practically eradicated among the Czech community. The average quality of general education increased, particularly following the development of the secondary school (Gymnasiums) and other specialised school systems; from 1882 there was also a Czech university in Prague. Publishing activities were expanding, new public cultural institutions, such as museums, galleries, libraries etc., were founded and various cultural activities were developing, whether professional or amateur (theatre, singing, music ensembles, activities in physical education and sports etc.). From this point of view, the balance of Czech cultural life at the turn of the century was far from unfavourable.

The consequences of the economic and cultural development were inevitably reflected in the social and political sphere and influenced further development after the 1889-1891 crisis. Czech society, divided both socially and in opinion, was no longer able to accept the conception of „unified national politics“ as the prominent (Old-)Czech National Party (with František L. Rieger and František Palacký at its head), had advocated from the beginning of constitutional political life in the 1860s. The conception of „national unity“, more or less authoritatively laid down, was dictated by the original weakness and relative limitations of Czech activities in the middle of the 19th century; by the end of the century, however, the society had developed past this point. There had been differences of opinion among Czechs from the beginning of the process of Czech national emancipation, but it was only from the 1890s that Czech society, less structured in terms of opinions, became distinctly diversified and pluralistic, with a variety of attitudes and differences in the social and political spheres. Disputes and discussions, including the debates on the Czech question, were an inseparable part of this process. Czech society towards the end of the 19th century was a politically vital national community.

2. The inner growth of the Czech society was nevertheless making its position within the Hapsburg monarchy increasingly more complicated. The key to this position were Czech-German relations within the Czech lands themselves. In the German environment before 1886, the Czech Lands had been considered part of „historical Germany“ and, at the same time, as an inseparable part of an integrated unit together with the Alpine countries. Czech political independence, in both the national and the legal sense, was a legacy of its historical past such that if a specific autonomous status were granted to the Czech lands, then it could only be within the broader state unit of Germany and Austria. The society on their territory was not an independent political subject, regardless of its national character.

Czech politics of national and political emancipation were based on entirely contradictory assumptions, and from the point of view of both historical and natural law, stressed the independence of Czech society and from the 1860s on, also that of the Czech lands. The dismissal of the Hapsburg monarchy from the newly constituted Germany in 1866 and the recognition of the historical state law of Hungary in the following year played a decisive role. For a long time Austria-Hungarian dualism eliminated all broader federalist conceptions and Czech politics was „pushed back“ to Hungarian positions.

It was then that the continuing Czech-German dispute about the character of the Czech lands started again in an extremely urgent form. It was solved, basically to the benefit of Germans, by the constitution of 1867 and by holding back Czech attempts to revise it in 1870-71. German political leaders from Bohemia and Moravia strictly rejected any idea of a united political Czech nation (in terms of language, a Czech and German nation!) and the life of the German national community in the Czech lands was associated solely with the existence of a (smaller) non-Hungarian Austria. The Czech side initially rejected this „disfigured new formation“ absolutely and withdrew into offended ignorance. The immovability of both standpoints resulted in a stalemate and a solution to the political position of Bohemia or the Czech lands could only be achieved after the prior consensus of the Czech and German politicians in these countries. From this point of view, activities in Vienna, of both the sovereign and the central authorities, were limited considerably until the end of the monarchy. The position of the Czech lands within the Hapsburg monarchy, this being the only alternative that was considered by the leading Czech political parties and movements before 1914, was primarily a question of Czech-German relations within these countries.

Czech activity after 1880 was limited to the current constitutional system, but its tendency was towards the revision of the system in the sense of the original constitutional aims, as German representatives quickly realised. The growing strength of the Czech community inevitably meant a relative weakening of the German one and aroused „defensive“ tendencies, attempts at „seclusion“ and administrative „separation“ of the Czech and German parts of Bohemia. The Czech side reacted to the attempts to „chop up“ Bohemia with intensified national irritation and newly repeated appeals to „raise the fallen banner of constitutional law“. The Czech-German tension culminated for the first time in 1886-1890 and again, on a broader basis and with more serious consequences, in 1896-1899.

In relation to this, it is important to mention the two conceptionally different meanings of the Czech question. The Czech question meant one thing in the political, legal and indeed territorial sense, and had a different dimension in the political-cultural and language sense. The Czech question in the legal-political and territorial sense was above all one of the position of Bohemia, while Moravia and Silesia were only indirectly involved; the question of Czech-German relations (in Bohemia) was an essential part of it. The Czech question in the cultural and language sense exceeded the borders of historical-political details and involved above all the „inner“ possibilities of development of the national society, with all questions of relations only indirectly included. Until the 1890s, no major distinction was drawn between the two meanings since the Czech question as a cultural and language problem was not perceived as a „question“ in the Czech environment and all attention focused politically on the legal and territorial aspect. It was only Masaryk who turned the problems of the inner life of Czech society, which had not until then been sufficiently reflected upon, into a „question“.

Growing tension in Czech-German relations was progressively blocking the possibility of a satisfactory and generally acceptable solution concerning the position of the Czech community within the Hapsburg monarchy. This caused an apparently paradoxical situation: Czech society was more and more „growing into“ Austria and participated in Austria's economic and cultural flourishing, much to its own benefit. Moreover, with the exception of the upper echelons of the army and diplomatic service, which remained the domain of German-Austrian, Hungarian and Polish elites, the Czech contribution to the

state administration was constantly growing both in the Czech lands and in the central offices in Vienna. This „ingrowing“ did however have its limits, which were subjectively felt more distinctly than before due to the developing „expansion“ of the Czech society. Czech society at the turn of the century was capable of self-government, not just in theory but in practice. There were enough qualified and professionally well-prepared politicians and bureaucrats. The fact that even after great disputes and often long struggles, the Czech community gained only „crumbs“ resulted in frustrating feelings of envy and often caused a lukewarm or even alienated relation to Austria.

National and social questions were more and more often combined at the turn of the century, when the mass political parties and movements started and the working class, the urban middle class and the rural population all became active. The Czech-German dispute thus took on a new aspect: a number of social questions were interpreted as nationalistic questions while nationalism itself was „enriched“ by facts of modern race theories, which added to the original differentiating signs (historical and non-historical nations; civilised and uncivilised nations, culturally mature and immature nations etc.); biological signs (valuable or superior nations, flourishing or degenerate nations etc.).

3. The position of the Czech society within the Hapsburg monarchy depended in particular on the solution to Czech-German relations in the Czech lands; its position within the broader European context depended on the position of the monarchy in Europe, which from 1879 meant above all on German-Austrian-Hungarian relations.

The Czech political programme was in essence based on the conception of a powerful and independent Hapsburg confederation of states as a power bloc „between Germany and Russia“. When Palacký first formulated this programme in 1848, the Hapsburg monarchy existed as a hub for the crystallisation of a great mid-confederation of states, but modern Germany did not exist in the political and territorial sense and, from the point of view of the specific ethnic and political situation, there was in fact no modern Russia either. The Polish question, which involved Germany, the Hapsburg Empire and Russia, remained open, but there was also the Balkan question. Palacký's idea of the centralisation of three powers – Germany, Russia and the Hapsburg monarchy as an umbrella confederation for all small nations from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea and the Aegean Sea – was „incomplete“ in political terms and only in the long-term a far-reaching „revolutionary“ programme. The preconditions for its possible realisation were internal changes within the Empire itself (the application of the principle of ethnic federalism under a constitutional monarchy) on the one hand and, on the other, the ability of the monarchy to become a real centre of crystallisation, around which other national societies could „cluster“.

Neither of these preconditions was met. The change from absolutism to constitutionalism was more complicated and difficult after 1849 and the result of the internal political transformation of the monarchy did not meet with the original idea of the programme. Moreover, after the defeats of 1859 and especially 1866 (but indirectly also after the German victories in 1870/71) the monarchy lost any possibility of participating effectively in decisions on European issues and of pursuing active power politics. Modern Prussia-Germany was dominant in Central Europe, and Russia did not intend to give up her ambitions in the Balkans. The second-rate position of the Hapsburg monarchy as a tolerated traditional power was clearly confirmed at the Berlin Congress in 1878: any active politics „between Germany and Russia“, which would lead to the realisation of the original assumptions, was out of question. If there were comments about Austria-

Hungarian dualism as a „monarchy at will“, the same could have been said to apply to the wider European context after 1878. Small European nations „between Germany and Russia“ did not become the subject of European politics, but the subject of German, Russian and indirectly also other countries' interests.

All the outward attributes of Hapsburg power were, however, maintained and, in terms of area and number of inhabitants, the empire on the Danube was a unit that was not easily ignored. It ensured a certain stability in the south-eastern part of Central Europe, neutralised national conflicts within this region and limited both German and Russian ambitions. Its „retarding“ or „restraining“ role consisted to some degree in this.

This role was exploited during World War I, but the Czech community (with the surrounding German areas!) became more sensitive and perceptive to certain tendencies which had been obvious long before 1914. It was impossible not to take into account the enormous economic and political expansion of Prussia-Germany, which from the 1890s onwards was more and more often linked with demands for „world assertion“ (Weltpolitik, Weltmachtstellung). Not only the Hapsburg monarchy, but also the „new“ Prussia-Germany was to play the leading role in the reconstruction and reorganisation of the political arrangement of Central Europe; the Mitteleuropa plans originating during World War I were merely the results of these tendencies. The young publicist Hubert G. Schauer recognised the new situation in the Czech environment very clearly as early as the end of the 1880s and, through his „two questions“, gave the Czech question the very form to which Masaryk reacted several years later: Given all the inherent difficulties and complications, were there real reasons to develop an independent Czech national feeling as a purposeful and equal part of European culture and civilisation along with the dynamically developing German national feeling, and if there were such reasons, what were they? The questions and doubts themselves could not, of course, be dismissed through a little suggestive Schauerian questioning.

At the same time, it is remarkable how the idea that the Czech existence was not to be taken for granted, thus formulated, appeared in a period both of obvious inner strengthening and of the formation of Czech society as an established national community. There were, however, no real reasons for anxiety; Europe was apparently proceeding towards a promising future in which all conflicts would be solved positively and rationally and all civilisation and cultural substances created by the „revolutionary“ 19th century, would be fully realised.

The fact that Czech society was gradually advancing under the conditions of the gradual decline of the Hapsburg monarchy gave the Czech question potentially broader European dimensions. This, however, only became fully clear in 1914 and the years following.

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Hardly any period is fair to itself or capable of balanced critical self-reflection. Periods of questioning in particular are scarcely favourable as most of the questions asked anticipate a biased answer and require a „solution“ in terms of politics or ideology. This phenomenon is quite natural as no historical period to date has had a real reason for self-satisfaction and there were, are and always will be sufficient reasons to ask questions.

The turn of the century was almost a classical period of question-posing and casting certainty into doubt. The laws and assumptions of the natural sciences were being revised or relativised, the social sciences were losing their positivistic optimism, the ba-

sis of the aesthetic perception of the world was overturned and modern psychiatry was cynically proving to people that they were not „masters in their own homes“. Everything became or was perceived as „not self-evident“ and questionable, beginning with great political and state issues, through the whole complex of social issues to seemingly marginal and normally stable relations between generations, sexes and the like. From the point of view of technological progress, however, the process of social modernisation was proceeding smoothly and undisturbed; the „uncertain“ world was changing day by day, new discoveries and inventions were being made with self-assurance and self-evidence. Unsure and doubting, people were daily overcoming their limitations.

Intellectual modernism, scientific, political and artistic, was not only searching for an explanation of the new period, but was also trying to give it a more precise form and style. People were aware of the extent to which the pre-modern political and social problems continued to survive under the surface of the dazzling machine society. The critical balance of the dying 19th century was usually not only an analysis of the past, but also contained far-reaching and sometimes quite bizarre projects and constructions of political, social, aesthetic or other nature. On the one hand, there was the scepticism and tiredness of the idleness, mediocrity, unoriginality and consumption of the „modern times“; on the other hand, tough and ruthless criticism was the only solution to the possible „reform“ in the desirable direction. There was too much motion in the period to be able to stand back and consider things with a sufficiently distant „detached view“.

It was this swift flow of disputes into which Masaryk plunged with his individual view, although *The Czech Question* of 1895 was neither his first nor his last contribution to the topic. Masaryk's whole literary and political work revolves around the topic and therefore it is not possible to take this text out of its broader context. It does, however, have its specific place and character, particularly with respect to the declaration of its title.

This specific character comes from the very conception of the work. Masaryk writes in the first sentences of the preface that he intends to analyse the problem from the point of view of sociology, not politics. Whatever my view of this may be, I cannot help feeling that the contrary is true. Nowadays, this work could possibly be regarded as political, but at the time of its origin it had and indeed still has very little in common with real sociological analysis. Masaryk was, of course, familiar with the sociology of the day, but as an author he was also able to present it in a remarkable way, as for instance in his doctoral thesis and in a number of other texts.

We can only guess at Masaryk's real reasons for presenting his work thus. Perhaps he really believed he was dealing with the original sociology of the Czech question. He perceived the society in which he lived largely through the Czech politics of the time, which of course was for him a more than sufficient subject of criticism. And he urgently reminded that society what it should be like.

There is, however, another possible explanation. Masaryk must have known that he had written a political work in which he had fallen back on history to justify his basic thesis – that the Czech question is a question of humanity and religion. At the same time and for a number of reasons he did not want to and could not write an historical work. He treated historical facts and dates as „sociological data“ in the sense of his conception. It can be seen as understandable, in view of the state of the political literature of the day,

that he did not term his work political, as the common Czech political pamphlets could hardly claim any scientific value.

Two problems arise at this point. The very fact that Masaryk drew on historical matter and arranged it in a certain way inevitably aroused a reaction in the circles of professional historians. Masaryk not only gave his own reasons for the „meaning of Czech existence“ and perhaps the „sociology of Czech history“, but he also created, intentionally or not, a particular scheme of periodisation and therefore a certain philosophical-historical conception of Czech history as such. Moreover, he crossed swords with historians all the more when he dared touch on modern history, i.e. in his analysis of 19th century developments, ground almost untrodden by historians at that time. I find it a very important and still underestimated fact that the first notable works of professional historians on the developments of the 19th century were published only after Masaryk had published his *Czech Question*. From the point of view of research it was certainly a disadvantage, although welcome from the point of view of Masaryk's conception and intentions. If the historians of the day did not regard the 19th century as „history“, for which various reasons were given, then Masaryk of course was not tied by any historiographical conception in his explanation of the 19th century and he could state with clear conscience that his work was nonhistorical.

The reality was, however, more complex. In studying and selecting historical material and facts, Masaryk inevitably depended on existing historical studies; he therefore indirectly took over a particular view of history. The classical history of the 19th century – the Czech positivistic history of the end of the 19th century being in some way a completion of this tendency – reduced the historical process to religious, political and cultural history. Moreover, the whole process was often, for quite topical political reasons, „nationalised“. Nations as „legal and moral beings“ (Palacký) were basically standard categories, „natural“ components of the human community. Therefore it was possible to construct Czech, German, Hungarian etc. history back to the very distant past and „nationalise“ medieval state formations and political systems as their „own“ national property. This conception made it possible to look in a relatively non-historical way for rises and falls in the life of the national community, periods of flourishing and „revival“ and, conversely, periods of dark ages, dormancy and paralysis.

Masaryk took into account this way of conceiving history, using it to justify his own theses. The history of Czech literature met him halfway, as the first great synthesis of modern Czech literature was then under way (Jaroslav Vláček and his school). He accepted the term of national language and literary revival as it became common in the literature of the Czech environment in the 1880s, but his aims went further: the linguistic and literary revival was for him simply a means and an outer demonstration of a moral revival, in which lay the very essence and core of the meaning of Czech existence.

Masaryk had no further need of historians. In the sense of his conception of realism (it is necessary to reveal things in their essence and see their changeability over time as mere „phenomenal“ form) he sought and found „genuine Czech national feeling“, i.e. the essence of the special Czech nature, in the humanity of the reformation Brethren. The more the national community approached the „self-awareness“ of this essence, the more it lived a really authentic life and flourished in all ways. On the other hand, the more it lost this consciousness and became more distant from itself, the more it declined, placing its very existence in jeopardy. Once found and recognised, the essence was the criterion for the quality of the national existence and life. At the same time, Masaryk could be

even more sure that his ideas were not in great contradiction to the basic outline of Czech history: the Czech reformation was generally understood as the real rise of the Czech national feeling, while the „non-Czech“ anti-reformation was a clear cause of its gradual decline. It was therefore only natural that Masaryk saw in the modern national reformation efforts a „return to the basics“, i.e. to the original genuine Czech feeling and he nominated it as „the second Czech reformation“. The Czech question for him was not state-political or nation-political, linguistic or literary, but in fact religious. Thus it could have and in his conception did have a more general, broader human meaning. Only as such, could or could it not have some sense as a „world question“.

This way of defining the Czech question immediately became and continues to be a frequent cause of embarrassment and misunderstanding, although Masaryk himself gave a clear explanation and „opened the essence of existence itself“, in particular in the *Ideály humanitní* (Ideals of Humanity) of 1901 and in a number of discussions, studies and speeches. Whoever Masaryk was, a professor of philosophy and sociology, president of the Czechoslovak Republic, a politician and a member of parliament, I see him above all as a great religious thinker and reformer. This was the essence of his personality and all his public activities – the stances he adopted to questions of various kinds originated in this. And it was precisely this side which, for various reasons, used to be pushed to the background. To this very day there has perhaps been no really expert and systematic interpretation of Masaryk's work. The fact that Masaryk was very critical of all institutionalised forms of religious feeling and belief does not alter the matter. On the contrary, he was perhaps the only European thinker at the turn of the century who was strictly against the Catholic Church in particular, not from the point of view of materialism or positivism, but from the point of view of higher, gospel-inspired spirituality. Man trying to achieve „godlikeness“ (Palacký) and „humanness“ (Masaryk often used the singular, for instance when he distinguished strictly between democracy as the rule of people and anthropocracy as the rule of man) were the central motifs of Masaryk's religious reflections, although they had very little in common with religion conceived in terms of the church. If the „Masaryk question“ is still open, then it is especially so on this point.

It is important to point out here that through his conception of the Czech question, Masaryk brought a much deeper awareness of the inner character of the Czech feeling and a qualitatively new content to Czech national awareness and nationalism. Against the often meaningless and „flag-waving“ political or cultural (language) nationalism, which rarely needed any more profound reasons and was often intolerant, Masaryk set his national awareness, conceived in terms of humanity, which was fundamentally tolerant in its very essence and moral reasoning. Masaryk defined Czech national awareness as „self-awareness“ and not in opposition and therefore in possible confrontation with the awareness of other nations. Schauerian questions in the form in which they had originally been posed were for him no longer questions.

The whole matter did however have its tricky points. As Masaryk put the categories of humanity and human brotherhood in very close relation to Czech feeling, he gave the latter certain generally human dimensions, but at the same time a certain exclusive messianic role, and he confirmed ideas about the overall positive content of real Czech feeling. With respect to the fact that the humanity of the brethren was more an ideal than a reality in Czech society towards the end of the last century, it was often possible to question humanity in various political disputes and clashes in senses which did not correspond or were contradictory to Masaryk's intentions.

Masaryk's *The Czech Question* was one of the most important Czech political works of the turn of the century and is today an inspiring historical document, a superb „bit“ from the workshop of the Czech political thinking of the time. As a possible pattern of (sociological, historical etc.) interpretation of the Czech question it is, both in detail and as a whole, antiquated. Indeed, Masaryk himself contributed to this to a considerable degree! (The exception is the religious-reforming dimension of Masaryk's thinking, on which point Masaryk probably is not antiquated.)

The first of Masaryk's critics, his colleague and, for a long time, political partner Josef Kaizl, pointed to one of the basic problems of Masaryk's historical construction: in trying to explain the Czech existence wholly from the inside, Masaryk completely ignored or even rejected the stimuli of the enlightenment and liberalism which, together with the historical reminiscence of the Hussite period, had played a role in the creation of the modern Czech consciousness. A void thus appeared between the two „Czech reformations“, in contradiction to reality. The whole problem was later shifted even further by a great dispute concerning the meaning of Czech history in which an influential group of catholic-oriented Czech historians around Josef Pekař attempted to fill this emptiness by a positive appraisal of Baroque Czech feeling as an authentic basis for modern national life. Modern Czech national consciousness was thus derived from three different sources: the Bohemian Brethren (Masaryk), Czech Baroque Catholicism (Pekař) and Czech liberalism reflecting European thinking of the turn of the 18th century (Kaizl).

When Masaryk had an opportunity to solve the Czech question in practice after 1914, he corrected or modified, directly or indirectly, a number of his ideas. He did not and could not accept Pekař's view but he was more open to Kaizl's attitude. If from the mid-1890s, he was to reject in *The Czech Question* the ideals of the French Revolution and its definition of humanity as unacceptable rationalism, in practice after 1914 and indeed in his later texts (*The World Revolution*), he was much more open to the inspiring ideas of the French and American revolutions. The idea of the Czechoslovak state was for him a synthesis of the ideas of the original Bohemian Brethren and the ideals of world democracy. Masaryk certainly felt and knew that by his actions he was writing a new „Czech question“.

At the beginning of the 20th century, another of Masaryk's colleagues, the national economist and sociologist Albin Bráf, pointed indirectly to another dimension of the Czech question completely omitted by Masaryk. He created a conception of three phases of the Czech national revival and he spoke about language and cultural revival (by the middle of the 19th century), political revival (from 1848 until then) and finally about economic revival, which was more or less a task for the future. Unlike Masaryk, Bráf and his disciples were sensitive to the current economic and social problems, perceiving their importance for the further development of Czech society. It is surprising that Masaryk, who published extensive criticism of Marxism shortly after *The Czech Question*, avoided dealing with economic issues in relation to Czech reality. This said, it is understandable that they did not fit organically into his conception. He did not, however, feel the need to express himself on these issues at a later date and, indeed, did not do so.

From the point of view of contemporary history, Masaryk's interpretations of the Czech past are outdated. The conception of the content of the historical process is different today (it is a structured complex of phenomena of an economic, social, cultural, political or intellectual character, or an anthropological-civilisation process). The state and its functions are today conceived in a different and more distinct way, as well as various

legal and political systems. The nation is conceived in a different way today, despite continuous discussions (and in relation to this the very expression „national revival“ in inappropriate). Far greater attention is paid to the legal and technological conditions of individual or group economic activity, to demographic, climatic and other aspects. History, doubtless like any scientific discipline, has no need to search the past for the specific grounds of national existence. It would be pointless either for individual historians or whole teams to search for it as it simply is not there.

Moreover, within one hundred years of the publication of Masaryk's *The Czech Question*, Czech society has undergone a very complicated and often difficult development; in spite of this, it is today politically and culturally quite clearly a member of the European community (regardless of the actual administrative participation in official structures). After the essential system changes at the end of the 1980s (the analogy with the conditions one hundred years ago is clear), it also has the opportunity to become a really modern civil national society. I have the feeling that if Masaryk were writing his *Czech Question* today, he would cast off the „historical crutch“, although the idea of human brotherhood, not conceived as an exclusively Czech quality, but included in the message from the ancestors, is a value which cannot be questioned. The more so in that so far, it has had too little weight in the liberty – equality – fraternity triangle. The problem of human brotherhood is no abstract idea today, but a concrete matter (Masaryk, as is well-known, liked things in concreto) concerning the personal, mental and physical culture and hygiene of the individual.

It is in this that I ultimately see the real essence of the Czech question of today.

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THE CZECHS ARE MASOCHISTS..  
THEY'RE ALWAYS PUNISHING THEMSELVES  
FOR THEIR FAULTS



AND OTHER NATIONS ?



THEY'RE PROUD OF THEIRS...



# The Meaning of *The Czech Question* Today

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**Abstract:** The following study concentrates on two issues: first, on Masaryk's own reflections on and interpretation of the political and cultural crisis of the Czechs at the end of the 19th century and, secondly, on the question as to what extent *The Czech Question* still says something to generations nearing the end of the 20th century. Masaryk's reflections on the Czech crisis are closely linked to his essays on *Modern Man and Religion*. In his interpretations of the modernity crisis and the Czech question, one discovers a social dualism which, at first sight, may seem contradictory. In Masaryk's view, however, this dualism of rationality and religiously anchored humanism forms the very core of the modern European spirit. The author of the article explores Masaryk's ideas as an effort to combine moral rationality in Durkheimian terms with Weberian rationality, i.e., with *Zweckrationalität*. The most compelling moment in Masaryk's thought is his insistence upon the inseparability and complementarity of both types of rationality.

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*Česká otázka* (The Czech Question) is the result of two processes: firstly, of the deepening political crisis in the Czech lands in the 1880s and 1890s and secondly, of Masaryk's growing awareness of the precarious Czech situation in this period. The crisis was of an intellectual and political nature. Old political programmes, as formulated mainly by Palacký, had lost their attractiveness. The new political force, i.e. the Young Czechs' Party, was, however, neither able nor willing to formulate a clear strategy for the land, while other newly-formed parties were concerned mainly with their particularistic goals. The situation can be described as an ideological vacuum which was accompanied by a lack of reputable leaders. The fact that Thomas Garrigue Masaryk saw the crisis from two angles is also relevant both in the light of his interpretation of the intellectual history of modern Europe, and in the spirit of his basic philosophical ideas. These ideas had already been formulated in his study on suicide, in his essays on Plato, Hume and Buckle, as well as in his lectures on Comte and John Stuart Mill at the Viennese university.<sup>1</sup> Already, in that early period – which includes twelve years of his life in Vienna and the first years in Prague – his sociological approaches to the history of modern Europe were being shaped, as was his fundamental thesis concerning the necessity of religion in human life, and his conviction that the crisis of modern humanity is a religious one. Even by that time, he had constructed an unusual link between Comtean positivism and a deep, personally experienced and felt religion. Without understanding this polarity in Masaryk's thought, an authentic and correct interpretation of *The Czech Question* is not possible.

The following study is not aimed at analysing the political crisis in the Czech lands during the first years of Masaryk's stay in Prague, this crisis having already been

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<sup>1</sup>) On Masaryk's activities in Vienna see [Král 1947].

analysed many times, by many authors.<sup>2</sup> Our attention is concentrated on the second process: on Masaryk's own reflections on and interpretation of the crisis. The second part of the study seeks to answer the question, to what extent – a hundred years after its publication – *The Czech Question* still says something to generations of people nearing the end of the 20th century. The study should also identify both what remains up-to-date and appealing to us and what is outdated and irrelevant.

### Masaryk's Concept of the Czech Crisis and Interpretations of his Views

It is surprising how many interpretations of Masaryk's *The Czech Question* can be identified. Even his contemporaries understood him in a variety of different ways, this variation continuing today. This is partly due to Masaryk's own formulations – politically, he was a man left of the centre, and therefore did not utter radical, one-sided opinions, but rather linked elements usually considered heterogeneous or even conflicting; thus he himself stimulated various interpretations of his own ideas.

A much stronger source of this variability in interpretations, however, were and are the differing critical approaches adopted by his commentators.

Those generally sympathising with Masaryk explain the genesis of *The Czech Question* in roughly the following way. When Masaryk was preparing the book, Czech politics had been undergoing a prolonged crisis. „The time of enthusiasm for the policy of passive resistance and the fight for the renewal of the Czech state on the historical constitutional law (...) was over. Promises dating from the time of the so-called Fundamentals<sup>3</sup> failed (...) Palacký was dead, František Ladislav Rieger – politically guided by Clam-Martinic – was at that very time compromised by so-called punctuations.<sup>4</sup> There was no leader who would give the nation a new, strong political program“ [Trapl 1948: 151]. The new political movement which was gaining leadership in Czech society, i.e. the Young Czechs' Party, practised pragmatic policies without any clear goals, without any compelling ideas. The Social Democrats did not yet have an elaborated national programme for the Czech lands, and the rising agrarian movement predominantly defended the interests of their own social group alone, i.e. the interests of the farmers. Political Catholicism had an excessively narrow confession-based orientation.<sup>5</sup> Masaryk, who, for a short time had been a member of the Young Czechs' Party (1891-1893), was intensely aware of this ideological vacuum. In comparison with his experience from the intellec-

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<sup>2</sup>) See the earlier studies by [Denis 1904, chap. 3; Srb 1901, Tobolka 1932-1937, Heidler 1914]. Among the new studies see [Křížek 1959, Garver 1978, Vojtěch 1980].

<sup>3</sup>) The term „Fundamentals“ was used to describe the agreement in the year 1871 between the Austrian Government, represented by A. Schäffle, and the politicians representing the Czech Lands. The „fundamental articles“ incorporated some unimportant parts of Czech historical state laws into the new constitutional framework of the Hapsburg Empire established by the 1867 Austro-Hungarian Compromise.

<sup>4</sup>) F. L. Rieger, one of the representatives of the Old Czech Party, signed with the German representatives at the Czech Diet an agreement on the division of the Bohemian territory into a bilingual zone (German-Czech) and a monolingual zone (German only). The agreement was labelled „punctuations“. The victory of the Young Czechs' Party at the 1889 elections prevented, however, the implementation of the „punctuations“.

<sup>5</sup>) At the end of 19th century, the majority of the Czech population was Catholic, but Czech Catholicism was traditionally lukewarm, differing in this respect from Polish or Slovak Catholicism. The political appeal of the Catholic parties always remained relatively low.

tually dynamic, modern and cosmopolitan Vienna<sup>6</sup> of those times or from his journeys to Western Europe and the USA, he probably felt, very bitterly, the narrow-mindedness and parochial nature of Czech thought. He feared that the Czechs – regardless of the fact that the Bohemian economy was at the forefront of modernisation in the Empire – were not well-prepared for the confrontation with the newly emerging world, led by countries which were rapidly modernising their economies, their policies, as well as their *Weltanschauung*.

A lack of space does not allow us to add to this short account of the external factors in the genesis of *The Czech Question*, the views expressed by conservatives, liberals or marxists.<sup>7</sup> An analysis of these critical views would itself be an interesting study. Here we can only stress that in the interpretation of the meaning and impact of *The Czech Question* – which was definitely not just a theoretical, but a deeply political work, a kind of manifesto – the critics' perspectives played a decisive role.

Today, it is useful and productive to study *The Czechs Question* by applying two interlinked steps:

1. to define and summarise the philosophy of history which Masaryk used in his analysis of Czech history and society and of Czech revivalists' and political leaders' work;
2. to consider which ideas of *The Czech Question*, after one hundred years, have retained their vigour and interest to people of our time, and which, on the other hand, we feel to be irrelevant for us and can only be considered components of a historical document.

### Masaryk's Philosophy of History – The Background of His Czech Programme

Thoughtful, critical but sympathetic comments on Masaryk's philosophy either describe it as „...a synthesis of platonic mood with modern positivistic-scientific criticism“<sup>8</sup> or speak about a deep discrepancy between his stress on individual responsibility – which is anchored in Christian religion whose loss is, in Masaryk's view, one of the main causes of the modern tendency to suicide – and his positivism, expressed, among others, in his agreement with many of Auguste Comte's fundamental theses.<sup>9</sup> He agrees with Comte's theory of the evolution of society, with Comte's interpretation of the crisis of modernising societies, i.e. with the stress on the transition from the theological phase to the scientific phase. Masaryk accepts Comte's ideas on the emotional bases of morality and on the importance of consensus between different parts of the social system. The fact that Masaryk combined these positivist ideas with his individualistic psychology of responsibility has led many critics to blame him for syncretism or even eclecticism.

When writing *The Czech Question*, Masaryk was also, most probably, preparing his essays on modern man and religion, a work which is considered by some commentators to be one of his most original contributions to the understanding of the European

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<sup>6</sup>) The best account of Masaryk's years in Vienna can be found in [Čapek 1928-1935]. Compare also [T. G. Masaryk... 1992].

<sup>7</sup>) The conservative views were best expressed by [Pekař 1929]. The liberal position in the discussion was represented mainly by [Herben 1927, Rádl 1925 and Slavík 1929]. The Marxist and left-wing criticism was expressed by Zdeněk Nejedlý in his unfinished monography, by J. L. Fischer [1926] and by František Fajfr [1982] and by Otto Urban.

<sup>8</sup>) See the note in [Patočka 1991: 30] where he quotes Em. Rádl.

<sup>9</sup>) The agreement with Auguste Comte is stressed by Jan Patočka [1991: 31].

modernity crisis. *Modern Man and Religion*<sup>10</sup> is based on the ideas already expressed in his „*Suicide*“, published in Vienna in 1881 [Masaryk 1981]. To try to understand the hidden, less explicit meaning of *The Czech Question*, without a knowledge of this wider context of Masaryk's efforts to understand the crisis of modern man, would be a mistake.<sup>11</sup>

In *Modern Man and Religion*, as well as in some parts of *The Czech Question*, one can discover a social dualism which at first sight may seem contradictory. However, one can interpret this dualism rather as testimony of Masaryk's conviction that there are two complementary pillars of European social thought: rationality and religiously anchored humanism.

That basic duality, full of tension, with which Masaryk was able to live and which he moreover used as the basis of his activities, could be – at the risk of oversimplification – expressed in the following way. On one hand, Masaryk positively appreciates individualism, individual responsibility, rationality, purposefulness, critical spirit and realism. For him, for example, „humanistic endeavours must be practical, must lead to some results.“ On the other hand, he simultaneously lays stress on solidarity, on efficacious social love, on humanity, on the emotional roots of morality and on practical, socially oriented policy. He often speaks of the „solidary organisation of all mankind“.

Some authors of the interwar period considered such a combination impossible and stressed, in their interpretations and critiques of Masaryk, that his concept of humanity is in fact one-sidedly individualistic.<sup>12</sup> In the short post-war period 1945-1948, when it was still possible to write freely about Masaryk and with the intention of understanding him, it was more frequently and more correctly stressed that the roots of his political theory, i.e. the idea of humanism, are a synthesis of ethical individualism and socialism [Trapl 1948: 152].

To express Masaryk's philosophy purely in narrow terms with political connotation would, however, be to underestimate the real importance of his approach. In his dualism, Masaryk touched upon the basic issues of the „Organisation des Sociétés Supérieures“, in Durkheimian language [Durkheim 1893], but also the Weberian duality between *Wertrationalität* and *Zweckrationalität* [Weber 1964] as well as Tönnies' distinction between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* [Tönnies 1887]. In this respect, Masaryk was a typical member of the fin de siècle Europe, reflecting in particular the

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<sup>10</sup>) Masaryk's book *Modern Man and Religion* [Masaryk 1934] was published in 1934 in Prague. It was a re-edition of his articles from the journal *Nová doba*. The articles were published in the years 1896-1898 [Masaryk 1896-1898].

<sup>11</sup>) In a discussion on this article, Ernest Gellner stressed the fact that Masaryk was working on two levels: He was concerned with the crisis of modern man in general, the loss of religious faith and the transition to a technological society; he was also working on the level of the specific, small nation, which was, as it were, „incomplete“, without its own state, without a full upper class, without a fully complete high culture and so on. This, Gellner believes, to be the clue to understanding him. Masaryk finally found a position which enabled him to offer an answer applicable at both levels simultaneously. This surely is the heart of the story.

<sup>12</sup>) Among those authors who stressed that Masaryk's concept of humanity is individualistic number Zdeněk Nejedlý, Josef L. Fischer and František Fajfr.

tensions within the Hapsburg Empire in which, as Ernest Gellner<sup>13</sup> shows, the conflict between the partisans of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* was particularly acute. It should be stressed however, that in *The Czech Question* these dilemmas of modernity are not explicitly mentioned, but rather form a philosophical context from which Masaryk tried to both understand the revivalist Czech thought and to formulate his own programme.

Like Durkheim, Weber and Tönnies, Masaryk also perceived the epochal meaning of the transition of European societies from traditional, corporatist, non-contractual and relatively closed and non-mobile ones, to a modern society based on markets, industry, contractual solidarity, a developed division of labour, mobility and individualism. Masaryk moreover stressed that modernisation also means a development from theocracy to democracy. This transition also implicitly meant a shift from the revealed religion to an inner and personal one. This led him to lay stress on his reflections of the meaning of Czech history, on the Protestant tradition (Hussitism, Bohemian Brethren) as being the most positive element of Czech thought. He considers Reformation to be a step towards Enlightenment in general and the inspiration for Czech revival specifically. Reformation is also a base of modern democracy. Masaryk, however – and this is important –, did not link modernisation with secularisation and was convinced that religion would not die, even though a deep change of religion was needed.

For many contemporaries, Masaryk's own concrete concept of religion is unacceptable. However, what is still attractive is his search for a unity between what Ernest Gellner calls „rationality in the Durkheimian or generic sense“ and the „specific rationality“ of Max Weber. Masaryk would agree with Weber that the transition from societies which had been organised by the first, generic rationality and which were communitarian, into societies with the predominance of Weber's *Zweckrationalität*, is one of the greatest changes in human history. He would also consider this change as predominantly positive – being unable to see the ensuing disenchantment as clearly as Weber. He would, however, have stressed that even after such a transition, we would not manage to live with reason alone, with *Zweckrationalität* alone. This modus of rationality does not suffice to answer the questions of how to live, what to do. The deepest layer of Masaryk's thought, which was incidentally the basis of *The Czech Question*, consists of his insistence on the inseparability and complementarity of both types of rationality.

In *The Czech Question* there are many passages where documentation of this dualism can be found. Masaryk positively appreciates the rationality as well as the critical and scientific spirit of Dobrovský, and pays considerable attention to the role of science in formulating his own programme. In his opinion, Czech thought is often too vague, irresolute and weak and suffers from a kind of irrationality, an opinion he often gives voice to. On the other hand, however, he considers it a positive feature, that so many revivalists were fighting for freedom of thought. He mentions mainly Dobrovský, Kollár and Havlíček, in this context.

In *The Czech Question*, Masaryk also frequently expresses his opinion concerning philosophical as well as political realism. He shows high esteem for Karel Havlíček whom he considers „...a man of the present or rather of the future (...) modern, progressive.“ Realism is, in Masaryk's view, closely related to a practical approach to life. But

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<sup>13</sup>) Ernest Gellner stressed this polarity in the introduction to his lecture on Wittgenstein and Malinowski delivered at CEU Prague in February 1995.

he would not have accepted being called a pragmatist. He was considered a practical idealist, stressing purposeful activity.

The other side of his rationality, which can be described as moral rationality, can also be easily documented. In the first place, it is his strong accent on humanity: „Humanity is our ultimate goal, national and historic... Humanity is the Czech Programme“ [Masaryk 1969: 240]. It should not, however, be a matter of sentimental rhetoric. In accordance with his Protestant ethic, stress is again laid on work: „Humanity is not sentimentality, but work and more work.“ [Ibid.: 220]

There are some passages in *The Czech Question* where Masaryk deals with the concepts of nation and nationality, but these are surprisingly few. He also stresses a wider responsibility and solidarity among the Czechs, unromantic, unsentimental love is often mentioned and Chelčický is taken as a model. One feature should perhaps be underlined in this context: Masaryk quotes both Karel Havlíček and his stress on the value of ordinary people's common sense very positively. He also admires such common sense in some parts of new Czech literature.

Among the categories expressing communitarian orientation in Masaryk's programme are his proposals to start social reforms. He points out that „...the social question is also a Czech question par excellence“ [Ibid.: 173]. The roots of his demands for social reforms are ethical – his calls for the improvement of the conditions of the working classes are linked to the teachings of the Bohemian Brethren. In his version, social reform should not, however, be conceived in a narrow technical sense: political life in its entirety – education, labour legislature – needs to be reformed, needs to be socialised.

### **What Is Still with Us and What Belongs to History**

The dominant motive of Masaryk's philosophy is undoubtedly his endeavour to find answers to the following questions: how to be both modern and moral, how to do away with myths, how to assert the role of science in society, how to be practical and efficient while at the same time conserve religion and faith in God, how to live sub specie aeternitatis and, last but not least, the role for a small nation in the modern world. In *The Czech Question* Masaryk disaggregated these great issues into several smaller ones and tried to apply his results to the Czech problems of his time.

### *Realism versus historicism*

In several parts of his book, Masaryk criticises Czech thought for its exaggerated historicism. By historicism he means the interest in the past, in history and the effort to understand the social and cultural life by explaining it genetically. He considers as legitimate the fact that historicism was strong in the writings of authors concerned with the past, i.e. P. J. Šafařík, Jan Kollár and evidently, František Palacký. But historicism was not cultivated solely by historians and archaeologists, but by many other social scientists. According to Masaryk, the Czech revival movement was, in general, heavily oriented towards history; while justified in the first phase of the revival, this approach later began to become somewhat of an obstacle. Historicism „leads in many ways to trajectories unduly conservative.“ [Ibid.: 159] The first Czech revivalist who laid stress on the need „to dive into the present and, from the understanding of reality, draw one's national strength“ [Ibid.: 159] was Karel Havlíček. Masaryk sincerely agreed with him, and it is interesting to observe what reasons he gave for his opposition to historicism. The predominance of historicism exerts an unfortunate influence on people, leads to vagueness, irresolution:

„man gets lost in the idea of flow and permanent change.“ [Ibid.: 160] Against the traditional Central European – and one may say German – historicism, according to which: „...we cannot fully understand anything human unless, among other ways of apprehension, we understand it genetically, i.e. in its growth, in its evolution“,<sup>14</sup> he placed his realism. To use his words: „...try to understand always and everywhere the things and their core. The priority for thinking is not the evolution of things, but the things themselves ... the attention should not stop at understanding the historical change.“ [Masaryk 1969: 160] When reading his critical notes on historicism, one feels that he was aware of the difficulties and dangers of the predominantly German philosophical orientation of Czech thought at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries. In this respect, it was most probably his intellectual experience from Vienna university, which had, thanks to the Austrian positivists and mainly thanks to Franz Brentano, endowed him with a critical view on the predominance of historical approaches in the social sciences. Masaryk probably registered the famous *Methodenstreit* between Schmoller and Menger,<sup>15</sup> there being no doubt that he sided with the analytical Menger. We can therefore – in accordance with today's interpretations – classify him as a member of the „Austrian school“ and of the wide stream of Austrian rationalists and analysts, to which Karl Popper, among others, belonged. Karl Popper's words of admiration for Masaryk, delivered when he received a honorary doctorate from Charles University in Prague, 1994, testify, from another side, to the affinity of Masaryk's thought and critical rationalism. Even if Masaryk's critique of historicism had other sources than Popper's *The Poverty of Historicism*, (i.e. a perplexing combination of Plato's essentialism and the positivism of Auguste Comte and J. St. Mill), both men laid similar stress on the social and political dangers that historicism engenders. And this, of course, is a theme which, at least in the Czech Lands, still numbers among the most discussed.

*Rationalism versus vagueness and „phantasticism“*

In *The Czech Question*, Masaryk does not explicitly speak about the tension between rationalism and romanticism. It seems, however, that even when writing his book on Czech problems, he reflected, in the second plan, upon the „split of the soul into emotions (accompanied by the will) and reason“. He points especially to the rationalism of Dobrovský, Kollár and, of course, Havlíček and greatly appreciates Palacký's testament, from which he quotes with sympathy, among others: „The need is now to educate ourselves and to act in obedience to the command of cultivated reason.“ [Masaryk 1969: 139] Nevertheless, it seems to Masaryk that Czech life suffers from „its own lack of virility connected with a strange phantasticism...“ [Ibid.: 62]. There is no doubt that Masaryk lays stress on the need for rationality in political life and blames the Czechs for their tendency to romantic vagueness and fogginess. This is connected with his rejection of various kinds of myths. Contemporary commentators of his work would, however, hold against him – as did his opponents in the past – that in *The Czech Question* he himself created a new version of myth, based on an ahistoric reconstruction of Czech history. There seems to be no doubt about it nowadays. However, what remains alive, even in the

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<sup>14</sup>) Description of historicism as expressed by Albion Small [1924: 21].

<sup>15</sup>) The exchange of views between Gustav Schmoller, who represented the historical approach in economy, and Karl Menger, who supported the analytical views, occurred in the year 1883. Masaryk's „antihistoricism“ can be compared to that of Husserl and Malinowski.

present day, is his plea for a rational, realistic and practical policy, and his rejection of irrational philosophies, one-sided subjectivism and voluntarism.

### *Programme or Laissez-Faire?*

The title of the book was *The Czech Question*, which to an English person or anyone thinking in the English tradition, for example, may be almost incomprehensible. In fact, the title was meant to signalise the search for a reliable foundation for „...internal policies, ethical and cultural progress.“ [Trapl 1948: 166] Masaryk also characterised his intention that his book should be a general cultural programme. Implicitly, he frequently asks in his texts: Should we formulate a programme? Do we need a programme? Does modern policy need to state its goals? Is good policy merely the delimitation of the space within which spontaneous forces can be expressed? Here, Masaryk is full of tension and his position sometimes hard to understand.

When writing his book, Masaryk had not then laid stress on the concept of democracy or liberalism; at that time he did not explicitly concentrate on these problems. We know that his opinion on democracy crystallised in the years 1907-1914, more than ten years after the publication of *The Czech Question*. Masaryk's comments on liberalism, as compared with those on democracy, were, however, more frequent in *The Czech Question*, although short and unsystematic.

In spite of the non-existence of explicit and systematic views on these issues, in spite of all indistinctness, Masaryk's opinion on the relation between programming and leaving the life of the national community to drift, can be reconstructed. It is already evident that when reflecting on his book, Masaryk did not approve of the laissez faire principle in its most frequently used social and cultural meaning. This is documented by the very decision to write a book which would offer a programme. In Masaryk's opinion, the search for a general programme anchored in philosophical principles, especially in times of crisis, transition, turn, is inevitable.

Masaryk expressed his views only on the „basics“ of Czech policies, on the main goals which should be pursued and on what, in today's terms, could be called political culture. It was not his aim to define concrete political guidelines. He understood his programme as a general orientation. Only in some fields, in social and educational policies, for example, was he more explicit. However, *The Czech Question* contains in nuce two of the general ideas which were later to become the basis of his practical policies. First, the conviction that democracy is not only a state and administrative form, but a concept for life, a *Weltanschauung*, he often speaks in this context about „democraticism“. Thus, even when writing *The Czech Question* – this being by its very formulation – Masaryk leaned towards the positive concept of democracy: democracy is not only a frame, it can also be defined by certain goals.<sup>16</sup> From what has been said equally ensues Masaryk's attitude towards the liberalism of both his times and his region. It was basically negative. This is most evident in his commentaries concerning Josef Jungmann. It is necessary to add, however, that Masaryk incorrectly identified the term liberalism with indifferentism. He was convinced that a genuine human being who really wants to achieve something, cannot – after all – be a liberal.

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<sup>16</sup>) Masaryk did not discuss democracy in *The Czech Question*. His positive concept of democracy was formulated later, mainly in the years 1907-1910.

Many of our present, ongoing discussions, held of course in another language and in other contexts – and perhaps with less clarity – concern issues that were raised for the first time in Masaryk's book: What should remain outside political and legal regulation and what should be regulated? What is and should be left to the free moves of market forces and what, on the contrary, should be taken out of this free-moves field? And if it is taken out, which mechanisms should decide about those parts of social life which are not subject to the market? There is no doubt that the queries Masaryk raised one hundred years ago are relevant even for contemporary Czech generations.

### Czechs, Germans and Slavs

In Masaryk's political thought, few motives are repeated so often as his discussions on the relationship between Czechs and Germans. His own opinion in this respect changed – in response to European history, to the evolution of the Hapsburg monarchy and to the evolution of Czech society itself. Certain biographical facts also played a role here. His mother had attended a German school, his own schooling was predominantly German, and he studied at the university of Vienna. He was bilingual and, as a university student, asked himself whether it was possible „to belong to two nations“ [Ludwig 1935: 105].

When writing *The Czech Question*, his attitude to „Deutschtum“ (German-ness) and to Austria differed from the one he was to adopt later, i.e. after the law-suit with Lueger, after the Zagreb trial and the Friedjung affair and especially during and after WWI. His intellectual evolution from *The Czech Question* to *New Europe* [Masaryk 1920] and *The Making of a State* [Masaryk 1925] is marked by his growing nationalism.

When writing *The Czech Question*, Masaryk disagreed with Palacký, who considered our history a fight against German-ness. Masaryk admits that this is an important, but not the main, feature of Czech life. He pleads for a positive definition of the Czech programme and refuses to build the nation's identity vis-à-vis Germany. He himself documents this positive approach in the last chapter of his book on Czech problems. There he makes no mention whatsoever of the relations with Germans nor of those with the Austro Hungarian monarchy, stressing only what the Czechs should do with themselves and their own culture.

In other chapters of *The Czech Question*, Masaryk explicitly supports Palacký's „Idea of the Austrian State“ and is, in a way, more pro-Austrian than Palacký in his old age. He requires „a genuine and strong interest in the fate of Austria“ and wants the Czechs to work for the progress of a whole Austria. From Masaryk's many notes on Germany, German philosophy and literature, one can sense the attitude of a man who was thoroughly acquainted with German culture in its strength as well as in its weakness and who also knew about its decisive influence on Czech thought. At the same time, he evidently wishes to see Czech culture built up, primarily on its endogenous foundations, which he considers sufficiently strong. In his opinion, political philosophy should be more oriented on English, French and American thought. This is already the attitude of a self-confident European who has overcome his dependency on an influential neighbour. And this rational, calm, self-confident while at the same time co-operative spirit, which lays stress on universal values, is the core of Masaryk's relationship to German-ness at that time. It had not then been changed by his later, negative experience and his political engagements. It is this very spirit of *The Czech Question* which can be considered inspirational even in our times, probably more so than that of his later works.

When Masaryk was preparing his programme, he did not think intensively about the Czechs' relation to the Germans alone, but also about Slavonic culture. In Čapek's *Talks with TGM*, he explains: „The problem which interested me most at that time was Slavness. I have felt it, though vaguely and more through a kind of anticipation, since childhood.“ [Čapek 1946: 99] He studied Russian literature intensively, was interested in Poland and worked politically with Serbs and Croats. So in the 1890s, he was well acquainted with Slavonic cultures. In *The Czech Question*, he devoted more space to matters connected with Slavness, panslavism and slavophiles than to relations with the Germans and Austria. He registered Kollár's panslavism, Dobrovský's deep sympathies for Slavonic peoples and, of course, Havlíček's mistrust of Czarist Russia. At the same time, however, he stated realistically that in spite of verbal enthusiasm for the Russians, the „Germans remained our teachers“ and that the Czechs had more contacts with the Germans and the French than with the Russians. In fact, according to Masaryk, the Czechs' relationship with Slavonic people (mainly Russians) was, with the exception of some individuals or groups, rather superficial. Masaryk himself, after having thoroughly studied Russia, after having been there three times (1887, 1888, 1910) and after having visited L. N. Tolstoy, summarised his attitude towards Russia as follows: „On the whole, I brought back from Russia the same as Havlíček did: a love for the Russian people and an aversion to the official policies and to the ruling intelligentsia.“<sup>17</sup> *The Czech Question* shows that he already had this feeling in the nineties. Masaryk also rejected the attempt of some Czech liberals – and Catholics – to „regenerate“ the Czechs by linking up with the Cyril and Methodius traditions.<sup>18</sup>

All his studies in Germany, Austria and Russia served as a basis for political decisions and for what, in modern terms, would be called the geopolitical orientation of the Czechs. His critically expressed reflections on the Czechs' situation at the end of the 19th century were somewhat one-sidedly based on an analysis of thought and of political vision. In *The Czech Question*, we scarcely learn anything about the country's economic strength, about its dynamic development in the nineties, about the social forces and groups which influenced Czech policies. What is lacking is a Weberian type of analysis of the sociological bases of power in the Czech lands and of the political preferences of social groups. Nevertheless, Masaryk did see the consequences of the choices between different options that the Czechs faced.

After Palacký and Havlíček, Masaryk knew that the Czechs had, in fact, only three options: austroslavism, panslavism and an attachment to Germany. The last one could not, at that time, be considered. He rejected the second and rationally accepted the first, on certain assumptions, i.e. on the condition that the Czech position in the Hapsburg monarchy would improve and on the condition of the internal democratisation of the Empire. In *The Czech Question*, he strongly interceded for this option, and was therefore accused by certain parts of the public an „austrophile“. As often happens in history, none of these theoretically possible options materialised. The modernisation process of the Czech lands and, connected with it, Czech nationalism, as well as the implacable logic of

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<sup>17</sup>) For the quoted attitude towards Russia as expressed by Masaryk in [Čapek 1946: 100].

<sup>18</sup>) The Czech intellectuals who supported the Cyril and Methodius traditions – among them mainly one of the leaders of Czech liberals, i.e. Karel Sladkovský – hoped that by the revival of this tradition, a bridge to the old Slavs would be created, as well as a link to the Czech reformation representing the efforts to return to the roots of true Christianity.

the political philosophy that Masaryk himself had adopted, i.e. left-wing liberal democracy, made him accept, shortly before WW1, a fourth option. The outbreak of the war made him fight for it: the aim was to create an independent Czech state, which would become, according to his later reflections (1915), part of a new Central-European federation of free nation states. The geopolitical pillar of *The Czech Question*, i.e. Austroslavism, had collapsed, but he laid more stress on the other pillar, the one that remained: to form a modern Czech society based on western political philosophy. Masaryk and his collaborators were compelled to quickly build up a new geopolitical structure, based primarily on the relationships to France and, secondarily, to Great Britain. Masaryk overestimated the stability of this anchorage as well as the West's interest in Central Europe.

Today the situation is different, but in the approach to our geopolitics, we can exploit Masaryk's experiences. Again, there are several options, some of which are of course new:

- 1) joining the European Union, either with an acceptance of the decisive influence of Germany on Czech Republic or with the cultivation of relationships between the Czech Republic and other EU members;
- 2) forming a looser political union in Central Europe;
- 3) trying the „Norwegian“ way. In the game there is, of course, a fourth option which is not a Czech choice but one, which de facto Czech politics have to face: i.e. the building up of a new cordon sanitaire between the „Fortress Europe“ and the unorganised East of the continent. That forces exist in Europe which support such a solution cannot be doubted. Masaryk's realism, linked with a positive vision, are a useful compass when reflecting on the new situation of the country. In its method, approach and clarity of views, *The Czech Question* thus remains inspirational even today.

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# The Price of Velvet: Thomas Masaryk and Václav Havel

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**Abstract:** The study is concerned with the specific nature of two velvet revolutions in Czech history – in 1918 and 1989 – and with the philosophy of the two men who lead them – T. G. Masaryk and V. Havel. Havel opposed an indisputably repulsive regime, whereas Masaryk stood against a regime that he was to reject late in life and after much hesitation. That is why Masaryk had to seek deeper reasons for the revolution, i.e., the Czechs' departure from the Hapsburg empire. He legitimated the renewal of the Czech state with his specific concept of the philosophy of history. The world evolves from theocracy to democracy, the Czechs having provided the impetus to this trend in the past (i.e., in the Hussite movement), but having lost touch with this democratisation process after the Battle on the White Mountain. With their fight against absolutism and the establishment of a democratic state, they returned, in Masaryk's view, to the mainstream of European history. This reliance on the meaning and strength of democracy was destroyed by the Munich Agreement, the resulting shock decisively contributing to the radical change in the Czech political and geographical orientation, i.e., in the search for another philosophy of history in Marxism. Havel has not constructed his political vision on the philosophy of history but on the belief in democratic values. Both men, however, stress moderation in political changes and implicitly accept a rather high level of continuity with the overturned political structures. The price of such a velvet approach in politics can, however, be high and have long-lasting effects on the political culture of a country.

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There are some marked similarities between Masaryk and Havel as well as some significant differences. Both are 'President-Liberators', who helped bring about, or at any rate, give form to, the transition from a repudiated regime, to one more liberal and in due course endorsed by the nation. Masaryk actually found himself being formally attributed this title: somehow, I have the feeling that this precedent will not be followed in the case of Havel. Both were/are intellectuals and moralists, deeply concerned with the moral basis of politics, and in particular, the moral basis of their own participation in politics. Each had, in the days which preceded victory, been part of a small minority of opposition to the regime which they eventually replaced.

Havel opposed a regime which was vile, and outstandingly repulsive even by the exacting standards, in these matters, of 'really existing socialism'; Masaryk, by contrast, opposed a regime whose condemnation remains profoundly contentious, and which he himself only came to reject very late in life, under the impact of rather exceptional circumstances, and after prolonged inner hesitation. Havel's great moral achievement was to defy the revolting communist regime at all and to show that someone at least had the

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\*) This article is based on a review of Václav Havel's [1992] *Summer Meditations on Politics, Morality and Civility in a Time of Transition*.

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moral fibre to do so; Masaryk's achievement, prior to his fateful decision early in the course of the First World War, was not to defy the regime – he was an active participant in it as a Member of Parliament and in other ways – but to fight moral though unpopular causes which often infuriated his compatriots more than the regime. He took a firm stand in support of the unmasking of fraudulent manuscripts intended to demonstrate Czech medieval glories and a firm stand in a ritual murder accusation against a Jew, notwithstanding the fact that in his inner feelings, as he later confessed to Karel Čapek, he never overcame an instinctive negative reaction to Jews. To infuriate both the national vain-glory and the anti-Semitism of his co-nationals – what a strange way to political fame, or notoriety, for a man who finally made his mark on the world scene as a great *nationalist* leader! There is, however, logic in this paradox: his nationalism was only justified, as he came to explain in his writings, due to the implementation of an inherently moral historic plan.

In each case – and this is very significant – the transition from the repudiated *ancien régime*, to the more democratic new order, had a *velvet* quality. The complicity in the course of transition with the previous, disavowed regime, has profound implications for the nature of the moral problems faced by the respective Master of Ceremonies, so to speak, of each of the Transitions. This is especially true in Havel's case.

The original declaration of the Czechoslovak state in Prague on 28 October 1918, had a profound, historic-philosophic meaning for Masaryk, which he expounded in detail: it terminated the links between the Czech nation and the Hapsburg dynasty, which in turn stood for theocratic absolutism and the Counter-Reformation. Political absolutism, Masaryk was to say contemptuously, was derivative from Church absolutism: 'the theory of the monarch's and state absolutism is nothing but the kibitzing of the theoreticians of clerical absolutism and dictatorship'(!) as he says in *Světová revoluce* [Masaryk 1925: 573]. The absolutists of the state, whilst eager to liberate themselves from Church tutelage, were at the same time most eager to inherit some of its infallibility. In this work, incidentally, he also stressed, very early, the manner in which the infallibility of Bolshevism and that of the Counter-Reformation lead, along an identical path, to the Inquisition. His early rejection of Leninism – in this he resembled Russell – was based precisely on the fact that he saw, in its appalling proclivity to Infallibility doctrines and feelings, precisely those trails which he rejected (even in their attenuated, age-softened form) in the regime he eventually overturned. One should add that Masaryk's appreciation of Bolshevik realities was based on an intimate, deeply affectionate, but illusion-free knowledge of Russia. But the main point is the *meaning* of the first Czech revolution of this century for its acknowledged leader (who was, after all, a professional philosopher and a professor). What did it mean to him, why did it fit in with the wider meaning of history?

What the event in the end meant to him is clear. It has a double meaning, though the two themes are related, and confirm each other. On the one hand, the establishment of the Czech state is not an isolated event: there is absolutely nothing *Sinn Fein-ish*, of 'ourselves alone', of a proud national self-sufficiency, about Masaryk's thought; there is no question of going it alone, either ideologically or in political action. Quite the contrary: the Czech revolution is both vindicated, and incidentally, made feasible, by the fact that it is a part and an example of a much wider and global process, a replacement of theocracy and absolutism by democracy, which incidentally carried with it the independence or self-determination of nations. There is not the slightest element of defiant affirmation of the will of one nation: national independence is both validated and made possible by

being part of a much wider, and *deeply moral*, process. There is a kind of other-directedness about Masaryk's thought which is characteristic of the modern Czech spirit, or was until recently, and which inspired both Masaryk's philosophy and his political strategy. The political aim had to be vindicated as a corollary of the overall historical trend, and the strategy consisted above all of doing things which would persuade the leaders of world opinion that Czechs were worthy members of the world-historical club. He was a little inclined to confuse the acceptance of the Czechs by History with their acceptance by the Great and the Good in the West: consequently, he confused national policy with national image-creation and propaganda, and encouraged, unwittingly, the illusion that if this enterprise were successful, the nation would be safe. To believe or presuppose all this was to overrate the firmness, and dedication to the Democratic Direction of History, amongst Western leaders. No wonder that Munich was a trauma for the nation which became, to a considerable extent, Masaryk's reverent disciple.

So, a great deal will depend on whether he did indeed understand the wider process of history correctly: some of his compatriots, early and late, had their doubts on this score, and the debate concerning Masaryk's reading of history is one of the most interesting themes in Czech intellectual life. Incidentally, Masaryk's 1925 book was in due course translated into English as *The Making of a State*, whereas the Czech title means *World Revolution*. The English version can be justified on the grounds that it gives the reader a far more accurate account of the actual contents of the book, which is a fascinating description of Masaryk's activities and thoughts during the First World War period, and which eventually led to the establishment of the Republic. A subsidiary reason for the English title is that the Western publishers did not like the Bolshevik-sounding stress on *revolution* in the title. But in a deeper sense, the English title is an appalling mistranslation: the Czechs weren't creating their own state out of some capricious wilfulness or opportunism; they were, on Masaryk's account, doing it because this was part of an overall trend which was both global and deeply moral. Masaryk wanted it clearly understood that he would not be seen indulging in state-creation, unless it was manifest that it was morally right to do so *and* history had decreed that it should be done – and these two conditions were linked to each other, for history did not do things lightly or without good cause. Like the men who drafted the American Declaration of Independence, he was not going to indulge in state-creation lightly, without due cause and deep philosophic reflection. No State Formation without Philosophic Justification! The victory of their nationalism was the victory of democracy, reason, sobriety, scepticism, individualism. It was not something to be undertaken lightly.

But, and this is the second theme in Masaryk's interpretation of the great transformation, the Czechs weren't merely jumping onto a bandwagon, belatedly and without having made much of a contribution to it. They had once, in the late Middle Ages and early modern times, been at the very heart and forefront of that movement which they were now re-joining: *that* was the deep meaning of Czech history. The Czech Hussite proto-Reformation of the early fifteenth century was crucial and was followed by the socially radical practice of the Taborites ('Tabor is our programme' was one of Masaryk's mottoes); by the militarily brilliant defence of this movement by Jan Žižka in defiance of the crusading and imperial forces; and a little later, by the elective monarchy of George of Poděbrady, with his historically premature scheme for international peace and security. All this showed that the Czechs were not passive beneficiaries, but distinguished

contributors to that movement which had at long last prevailed in 1918, and which amongst other things established the Czechoslovak state.

The Czechs had been deprived of this distinguished and pioneering role in the world trend towards democracy by the outcome of the Battle of the White Mountain, and the whole meaning of Masaryk's revolution was precisely the reversal, after 300 years, of the verdict of that battle. Otto von Bismarck was another person who, it appears, once spent an entire night pondering on 'what if' the Battle of the White Mountain (which in 1620 decided the victory of the Counter-Reformation in the Czech lands, and excluded the Czechs from the political map of Europe for 300 years) had only gone the other way: Czech Bohemia would have remained Protestant, it would have aligned itself with Protestant Prussia, Austria would have remained an insignificant Marchland, and Protestant Bohemia would have helped Prussia to dominate the Danube valley and open the way to Baghdad. (To dream of beginning the *Drang nach Osten* in the seventeenth century would seem anachronistic, but let that pass.) Masaryk's opponents, as he himself mentioned [Masaryk 1925: 595], invoked Bismarck's one-night reverie in justification of their Catholicism and Austrophilia: what a good job we *did* indeed lose on the White Mountain, for otherwise the Prussians would have Germanised us in the course of using us as their Protestant allies. This is of course the Austro-Slavism argument, clearly articulated in 1848, and much vindicated in the age of Adolf and Josef: without something like a Hapsburg Danubian empire, we (and other small nations of Central and south-eastern Europe) are caught between German expansionism and Russian autocracy. Masaryk himself was much worried by the latter, and not insensitive to the force of this argument throughout his earlier years.

It is possible to criticise Masaryk's philosophy of history, which he used to justify the creation of the Czechoslovak state, from a number of quite distinct positions. It is possible to say that it is too optimistic and rationalistic, that it overrates both the Enlightenment and the commitment of the West to it. History is not guided by a Providence which acts as a guardian angel for liberty and reason: the forces which were unleashed in the 20th century are less being than that. The age of Hitler and Stalin gave much support to such a reaction, and it was voiced by the philosopher Jan Patočka when, in a samizdat publication, he observed that Nietzsche might have been a better guide to the realities of our world. Ironically, by the end of the century, looking back at the successive elimination of both Right and Left anti-democratic regimes, the Masarykian vision seems to have come back into its own, as Jiří Musil has observed. For the time being, it looks as if the democratic liberals may have inherited the earth...

It is possible to criticise him as a historian. Is it really correct to see the early 15th century Hussites as precursors of the French Revolution, or is this, on the contrary, an utter anachronism? Did the Hussite handling of religious deviants really anticipate modern theories of the rights of man? The doubts concerning Masaryk's interpretation of the 15th century go hand in hand with more immediate doubts concerning his perception of his *contemporary* compatriots: he may have committed an error not only concerning the Czechs of the 15th century, but equally concerning those of the 19th and 20th. Are their roots really in the heroic turbulence of the 15th century (whether on behalf of a precocious Enlightenment, or, on the contrary, of a mediaeval religious enthusiasm), or rather, in a localistic, inward-turned reaction *against* the Enlightenment? The Enlightenment centralised and consequently Germanised, and the initial „Awakening“ of the nation at the end of the 18th century was provoked by the opposition to this tendency. The Hussite

theme was only injected into the national movement subsequently. This counter-interpretation can and does invoke conspicuous features of modern Czech character, the thrift and caution above all. Thinkers such as Peroutka, Patočka and Pekař did indeed make this point against Masaryk. It is to be noted, as an example of Masaryk's personal liberalism, that when Peroutka published a book stressing this view, Masaryk arranged for him to be provided with funds enabling him to found a journal (*Přítomnost*, which did in fact become the best and most influential intellectual periodical of the First Republic).

At a more abstract level, his very approach to history is open to criticism: the very pursuit of a national essence, stretching from the Middle Ages to the industrial world, is highly questionable. A historian such as Pekař would hold not merely that the real Czech soul is located in 18th century peasant baroque and not in 15th century extremism but would also point out that Europeans of any given period share more with each other, than members of nominally continuous ethno-linguistic groups share over generations. Europe at any one time is a unity, but the „same“ nation over time is not. Ironically, the sentimental particularist Pekař had a more realistic sense of European unity, than the more universalistically minded Masaryk. Part of the nationalist programme was to endow each nation, and particularly one's own, with a permanent character and role and its own contribution to the concert of nations. This is probably an illusion.

These philosophical and historiographical disputes are not without important practical implications. The First Czechoslovak Republic, dominated by the spirit of Masaryk (*une dicature du respect* as the French put it), had a foreign policy based on philosophy. National security depended on being locked into the French-led system of alliances, involving, on the one hand, the USSR, and on the other, the three states of the Little Entente. This provided not simply a link with the French Army and its allies, but also, with the Spirit of World History: France and the West incarnated the movement of mankind towards democracy and reason, which, in the long run, was irreversible and invincible. So the French alliance was a philosophical as well as a military commitment.

1938 and 1940 put paid to all this. The lesson was bitter and sank in deeply. From then on, it was possible to go in a number of directions. History *does* have an underlying direction, but it is not the one recognised by Masaryk, but perhaps the one announced by Marx. That path was of course taken by the Communists and their fellow-travellers, indeed by all those who organised and accepted the events of February 1948. Of course they were not allowed to say it in those words, but they *could* have said in 1948 – we are only applying Masaryk's doctrine as explained in his *World Revolution*: there is indeed a world-historical and authoritative trend, but we have made some adjustments, in the light of the events of 1938, 1940 and 1945, concerning the identity of the forces which really overcome the old regimes.

It was also possible to take quite a different turn: Masaryk's vision, which led to such disaster in 1938, is a form of a delusion of grandeur. It really casts us for a greater role than too bitter. Let us attend to our own garden. Small is beautiful, especially now that our own little garden has been cleansed of most foreigners (and our own Mezzogiorno has declared independence, letting us get on with the job without the interminable need to worry about its amour propre). Something of this spirit perhaps underlies the curiously pragmatic, not to say opportunistic Europeanism of the current Czech regime. There is an eagerness to enter Europe, without any conspicuous interest in whether Europe stands of 1789 or anything of the kind: what we want is your market not your soul. Apart from that we wish to be masters in our own house and are not eager to hear

any homilies about our treatment of gypsies. Our contribution to the world- historical process does not interest us greatly and we are not interested in the job of being the West's missionary in the East. Masaryk's problems have no need to learn political table manners and have little interest in whether they are acquired by those to the East of us.

It really looks as if the nation vacillated between an openness which is at the same time unduly other-directed, and an inward-turned self-sufficiency. Patočka claims that at the beginning of the national revival, there was a deference to Catholic Europe and a desire to re-establish oneself in its eyes, regain Hapsburg favour, perhaps make Prague the centre once again. Then came a certain flirtation with panslavism, though on the whole, the rational Austro-Slav argument prevailed – a Danubian federation would be the best protection from German domination and Russian autocracy. Masaryk in the end turned his back on both these options and, in the name of respect for the great liberal undercurrent of history (allegedly expressed in Bohemia by the Hussites and the Brethren, but aborted on the White Mountain), committed the country to a client-like Western orientation which then received a rude shock at Munich, and led to the replacement of the West by Moscow. (When the Pole wrote his book on „Elephants and the Polish Question“, the Czech wrote *his* on „The Soviet Elephant – our glorious model“. ) Now, after all this pursuit of models, a new inwardness, confident of its capacity to participate in Western affluence, but otherwise abjuring more generous aspirations, with a Prime Minister who incarnates this mood, and a President who conveys a deep disquiet about it.

But anyway: for Masaryk, the momentous events of October 1918 in due course became, all at once, the fulfilments of history's deepest design, and a long-delayed correction of the 300-years-old distortion of the history of his own nation. All this being so, one would expect at least a little drama and blood, especially in view of the fact that some of those who had striven for the moral trend of history, had been executed for High Treason against the Hapsburg monarchy. Not a bit of it. Though the phrase was not yet current, the revolution and transfer of power of 1918 already had a velvet quality. Masaryk stresses the calm, bloodless character of this *coup d'état (převrat)*. He himself distinguishes it from a revolution, and notes it only happened after a revolution in Vienna, and after the collapse of the Austrian front in Italy. Everything was done by negotiation, not by violence. It took a fortnight to complete the process: technical problems, Masaryk observes, made it impossible to proceed faster. The new authorities were first of all recognised by the old ones as *jointly* competent and co-responsible (something to be repeated in the second historic vindication of democracy, by Havel, against a much nastier autocracy). It was surely no accident, Masaryk observes, that the new authorities first of all took over the supply ministry, thereby ensuring themselves the control of the military [Masaryk 1925: 475]. He notes that otherwise the military constituted a grave danger to the newly proclaimed political order, but with supplies well under control, they could be brought to heel.

In Havel's case, the transition was similarly courteous and so to speak technical. He had helped overturn an exceptionally nasty and totalitarian regime (none of this could be said of the order displaced by Masaryk), but it all seemed to be a matter of request and agreement: „...even the Communist president resigned at our request (*sic*)“, he notes with pleasure and a touch of surprise. This revolution did indeed proceed in the idiom of requests and resignations.

Once upon a time, Czechs used to throw the agents of foreign powers out of the window of Prague Castle: the first time round, onto pikes, the second time, onto a soft

dungheap; but the third time round, a polite request for resignation is graciously accepted, and incidentally, an Assistant Satrap turns around and becomes the new Prime Minister. He was not thrown out of a window of Hradčany Castle. This time, there would have been no dungheap to soften his landing. It is all part of a tradition.

The interesting thing is that Prague Castle has in this century experienced virtually the entire gamut of possible regimes: Hapsburg Counter-Reformation traditionalism, Masarykian liberalism, Hitler, a short interregnum, Stalinism, another interregnum, Brezhnevism, and now Havel. But, every single time, the outgoing powerholders negotiated, haggled a bit if they could, and *signed*. President Hácha signed to Hitler, General Toussaint, commander of the German garrison in May 1945, negotiated his retreat with the Czech National Committee. Even K. H. Frank, the last Reichs-Protektor, finding that the Czech negotiators disliked addressing him and preferred the German soldiers, politely resigned so as to aid the negotiations. (This did not however save him from being publicly hanged in Prague about a year later.) Beneš handed over power to the communists, Dubček signed to Brezhnev, and Masaryk and Havel both tell us in detail how they indulged in political conveyancing. Havel, for instance, tells us with pride [Havel 1992: 23] how even the dropping of the term 'socialist' from the official designation of the country, which in other ex-communist countries was 'dealt with... in an hour', was in Prague carried out with parliamentary propriety. Come to think of it, Prague must possess a unique store of experience in Political Conveyancing, and the Law Faculty of Charles University really should institute a special Chair in this discipline. (All this procedural fastidiousness did not at all times prevent a fair amount of murder taking place after some at least of the negotiated transfers of power, notably in May 1945 and after February 1948, but that is another matter.) This is not necessarily a bad thing – why should changes always be hallowed by blood, why should partnership of past and present not also be reached across revolutions? – and maintain the rules of courtesy? – but it may on occasion also raise moral problems. It was not quite the same problem for Masaryk as it is for Havel, but it is interesting to see how they face their respective dilemmas.

Masaryk's problem was that he had to explain why the Hapsburg empire, which he had supported for so long, had after all to be destroyed. It could not have been quite so evil, if it had been endorsed for so long. Masaryk, who saw clearly the effects of Counter-Reformation and Bolshevik infallibilism, did not consider the possibility that sanitised, mellowed authoritarianism may be a useful ally of democracy. Many feel nostalgia for it now: better Franz Josef than Josef! Masaryk himself conceded [Masaryk 1925: 449] 'after all, we had, almost all of us, for so long maintained and defended the necessity of the Austrian empire to the whole world!' So what had changed now? The Hapsburg empire had failed to improve itself, he would say, and so the confrontation of the First World War had to be seen as the struggle between democratic good and authoritarian evil. As one of his most eloquent, and ambivalent, critics, Václav Černý, observes [Čapek and Hrubý 1981: 106], this led him into one or two contradictions. One arose from the somewhat strange inclusion of the Czars in the camp of liberal democracy. The other was far more serious: the overrating of the allegedly unambiguous, and it would seem definitively victorious, democratic revolution, the 'World Revolution' which gave his book its original, Czech title.

This belatedly acquired conviction led to the implicit, but deeply pervasive syllogism, which imbued education in the republic which Masaryk set up. The West is democratic, the West is strong, it is democratic because it is strong and strong because

democratic, and because this is the way world history is going. We had been in on this splendid movement sooner than most, as early as the fifteenth century, we had been unjustly deprived of our birth-right, but now we are safely back where we belong, and so we are indeed safe, for the democratic West is very powerful, and all's well with the world. I had my primary education, and two and a half years of secondary education, in Prague schools, and I can only say that this message emanated, unambiguously and confidently, from the portraits of the President-Liberator which adorned every schoolroom. Major premise: world history is our guide and guarantor. Minor premise: world history has chosen democracy and the West as its agents, and therefore they are irresistible, and their allies (notably ourselves) are safe.

Now what happens to people who very deeply internalise the entire syllogism, notably its major premise, but who are suddenly subjected to a dramatic and traumatic demonstration of the falsity of the *minor* premise? Precisely this is what happened to the Czechs in 1938 and 1940. Munich demonstrated that the West was neither firm nor loyal to its democratic acolytes. As Thurber might have said, there is safety neither in numbers nor in democracy nor in anything else. The humiliatingly quick defeat of the French Army in 1940, previously vaunted as the best in Europe, in 1940, conducted the lesson. But what if the major premise continues to be persuasive, and the historical Trend is still authoritative? But a new minor premise is now available: history appears to be endorsing a new force in the East, capable of defeating the Germans who had defeated the French. The expulsion of three million Germans, fear of German revenge (a fear very vivid after 1945) and the recollection of Munich, all jointly propelled any waverers to the same conclusion: there can be no thought of resisting Stalin.

I do not wish to caricature Masaryk. There can be no questions of his endorsing democracy simply because he believed in to be strong and victorious. He valued it for quite independent and moral reasons, but he *also* believed it to be vindicated by manifest historic destiny. And here the trouble is not merely that the verdict of history is not quite so unambiguous, as his critics insist (Patočka, Černý, *Masaryk in Perspective* [Čapek, Hrubý 1981]), but, more seriously: the syllogism which he prepared, and which the educational system set up under his authority inculcated, led inevitably – given the replacement of the falsified minor premise by what then seemed to be the historically correct one – to the passive acceptance of 1948.

The truth is both ironic and bitter, but inescapable: Masaryk's philosophy of history did eventually lead to 1948. Nothing could be further from his wishes or values, but the iron laws of logic lead to this conclusion. If it is *World Revolution* which provides the signal for the correct political direction in Prague, but if (in the light of further events) Western democracy turns out to be a feeble, disloyal and ineffective agent of that great revolutionary trend, but a more powerful and steady herald appears to the East... well then, the conclusion is easy to draw. Those who carried out, and those who accepted, the communist coup of 1948, were acting in harmony with the syllogism which Masaryk had taught them so insistently: they continued to respect the major premise which affirmed the authority of World History, they merely replaced the minor premise discredited by Munich by a new one concerning what now seemed the dominant thrust of history, and proceeded in accordance with conclusion. The *World Revolution* must be implemented in Prague.

Havel's problem, and his solution, are rather different. Havel, unlike Masaryk, does not face the awkward question of why he had turned against a system which he had

accepted and endorsed for so long, and within which he had worked comfortably. Masaryk openly reports how, early on during the First World War, he went to see the Hapsburg viceroy in Prague, a man who was alleged to have in his possession a list of people due for eventual arrest, which included Masaryk's own name. , (He) was a decent man, and it was possible to talk with him fairly openly.' How cosy, how *gemütlich*, personal- political relations were in those days! No, Havel does not face this problem, the system he opposed was unambiguously repulsive, and Havel had always opposed it, at considerable cost to himself.

Havel's problem is not why he had turned so late against a system previously held tolerable and worthy and capable of reform, but rather, why, given that the system had been overturned, so much of its heritage was tolerated. Why quite so much velvet? Why try to reassure the old apparat by choosing one of their number for the first free prime minister? Why so much concern with technical continuity of government, somewhat more justifiable in 1918 – the *ancien régime* had the legitimacy of genuine antiquity, and it had no horrifying crimes against humanity on its conscience, whereas the communist one had been guilty of 40 years' sustained mendacity, much murder, sustained blackmail of its own citizens through educational persecution of children; and it was also guilty of high treason and collaboration with a foreign occupation. There are of course good reasons for being soft on the erstwhile collaborators with totalitarianism, and for leaving them with their gains: it is better that they should go and enrich themselves further, rather than smuggle their money abroad; and it is better that they should try to save themselves by conversion to the market, investing in capitalism the funds stolen under communism, than by turning to chauvinism. (One reason for the inevitability of the Czech-Slovak split is that the Czech apparat seems to have chosen the former option, and the Slovak one, the latter - and the two strategies will not mix.) Also there are too many of those who in one way or another were compromised with the previous regime, too many borderline cases, too many factual ambiguities. There is a plausible theory which maintains that right-wing dictatorships can be liberalised far more easily than left-wing ones, because the old powerholders can be offered the retention of their wealth as their reward for surrendering power, whereas in left-wing totalitarianism there is *only* power, and no wealth, in the technical sense, available for retention. The Czech velvet revolution would seem to provide a counter-example to this: ill-gotten gains, and insider information and positions, are used by the old gains, and insider information and positions, are used by the old apparat to turn themselves into the *nouveaux riches*. It may be good for the economy, but all the same, it does leave a bad taste in the mouth of many, including Havel himself.

Havel's own most strongly expressed complaint concerns the moral decline: ,society has freed itself, but in some ways behaves worse than when it was in chains' [Havel 1992: 2]. There is a great deal that can be questioned, in both parts of this statement. Did *society* free itself? On the very next page, Havel himself remembers that ,a handful of friends and I were able to bang our heads against the wall for years by speaking the truth about Communist totalitarianism while surrounded by an ocean of apathy.' This society had accepted the communist regime, without enthusiasm but with resignation, to such an extent that when liberation came from outer space, those liberated quite literally could not believe their luck, and kept looking over their shoulders nervously for some new set of tanks to arrive to put a stop to it all, though this time there was no place for those tanks to come from.

There is a blatant contradiction between crediting the victory to his society, and also castigating it – correctly, alas – with apathy. And two pages later, once again, he claims victory, not, this time, for society at large, but for his own moralistic style: ‘Communism was overthrown by life, by thought, by human dignity’ [Havel 1992: 5]. Was it indeed? Masaryk defended his ultimate political option by a philosophy of history which is interesting, stimulating, contentious, and which turned sour and fatal for the nation politically re-established in its name: but it deserves discussion. Havel’s political philosophy – uncompromising decency in the face of sleazy, cynical opportunist and unscrupulous dictatorship – is heroic and humanly admirable: when, however, it is presented as a *theory* of how such dictatorships can be overcome, or when he goes as far as to say that this was the *only* way to do it [Havel 1992: 5], it becomes absurd, indefensible, and can easily be refuted from evidence provided by himself. Two senses can be attributed to Havel’s motto *Living in Truth*: it can mean (1) not allowing oneself to be bullied into affirming falsehood by a vicious regime, and (2) not allowing oneself to indulge in high-minded illusions because they make one feel good. Havel’s record under (1) is superb. But it would not be altogether easy to give him a clean bill of health under (2).

This contradiction in Havel’s thought is taken to task, for instance, by one Peter Fidelius (a pen-name assumed in the days of clandestinity, but which the author chooses to continue to use) in *Literární noviny*, a Prague literary weekly, of 6 June 1992. Either communism was destroyed by something other than our society, says the author, or our society cannot be quite as rotten as Havel complains: he himself, Fidelius, says he inclines to the latter alternative.

But the first option seems to be endorsed from a surprising source: Petr Pithart, Prime Minister of the Czech lands after the Velvet Revolution, who begins by noting that he had only used this expression in quotation marks: what he means is not that it failed to be velvety, but that there was no revolution. With brutal candour, he says that he refuses to use the term revolution, that there had been no conflict, that the decomposing communist power had only lasted as long as it did because ‘we’ had tolerated it, that amongst comparable communist societies we had been the last, and arrived ten minutes after midnight. He proceeds to excoriate the post-velvet authorities (clearly including himself) for culpable light-heartedness and benevolence, notably in being soft on the old power-holders in the Ministry of the Interior. The paper quoting these remarks (*Necensurované noviny*, no. 12, 1992, a fortnightly) does so with an ironic *No Comment*, as if to say ‘listen who’s talking...’.

Pithart is an erstwhile dissident, and earlier still a communist, who, while dissident, wrote and published, in samizdat and abroad, under the per-name Sládeček, a remarkable analysis of Czech history and of communist guilt (in which he shared), named simply ‘68. Pithart clearly has a penchant for *mea culpa* self-analysis.

Of the three positions, Havel’s, Fidelius and Pithart’s, it is the third which would seem to be correct. Communism was not destroyed by society or by honesty, it could dominate the former and contain or corrupt the latter: it was, whether we like it or not, destroyed by consumerism and Western militarism, plus an outburst of decency and naivety in the Kremlin. Faced by a double defeat in both the consumption and the arms races, the Soviet leadership chose to liberalise politically, in the simple-minded and quickly refuted expectation that this would rapidly lead to an economic improvement. To their credit, a measure of liberalisation was to their taste anyway, whilst economic

liberalisation went against the social grain. In consequence, Eastern Europe, some of which was supine, and some of which would have settled for far less liberty than has now fallen from heaven, is free.

So Masaryk's and Havel's moralisms are not the same, and they do not face the same problem. Masaryk was a bit of a puritan as well as a moralist. He does not merely see the link between Counter-Reformation and Marxist Infallibilism; he also dislikes Catholicism for its transcendentalism, which drives its acolytes into that sexual mysticism so conspicuously present in modernist literature, and which Masaryk heartily disliked. It is Catholics, not Protestants, who are susceptible to this. This view led him into difficulty in the case of D. H. Lawrence, whom he was obliged to declare an exception.

Both Masaryk and Havel are open to the accusation that they take far too seriously the Czech national motto, *Truth Prevails*. It cannot be relied upon to prevail, even in the long run, and, as Keynes said, in the long run we are all dead. Masaryk used as his background premise a view of the dominant position of democracy in the contemporary historical process, a view which let down those who put their trust in time, in the days of Hitler and Stalin. To do him justice, Masaryk only seemed to embrace this views wholeheartedly when he had a need to justify his choice in the 1914-18 war: previously he struggled on two fronts, defending concrete social realism against the more extreme romantic historicists. Havel, a superb playwright but an amateur social theorist, puts his trust, not in an overall historical theory, but in the eventual victory of simple decency. In as far as he is saying that decency should be maintained come what may, one can only admire him. When he says that this is politically effective and that there is no other way, one must part company with him. Illusions will not do anyone any good.

What had really prevailed in 1989 was consumerism and the all-European endorsement of a system which satisfies its imperatives, as against one which conspicuously fails to do so, and is oppressive and sleazy into the bargain. Democracy and decency obtained a free ride to victory on the back of the consumerist triumph, and while we must be duly and deeply grateful for that, it is dangerous to delude oneself and suppose that they owed the victory to their inherent political appeal. In an ideal world this would be so, but in the world as it is, this is doubtful. We must of course admire those who had bravely stood up for decency even when it was not victorious but perilous: this is why both Masaryk and Havel deserve our admiration. But it does not mean that we must also accept their general theories concerning why victory was guaranteed. Real loyalty to Masaryk lies in respecting truth, however unpalatable, and not to his specific views on history.

The two men differ considerably in what they have to offer on that point. Masaryk's theory is worked out with academic craftsmanship; it is also contentious, and did, ironically, at a later point, lead the nation in a direction he would have abhorred. Havel's theory is one he only affirms when he formulates his credo, but also proves to be mistaken when he concretely describes what actually happened, or when, in his splendid plays, he lays bare the mechanics of how it happened. Communism was not, alas, overthrown by life, by thought, by human dignity, as he affirms. In his realistic moments, in his literary descriptive work, Havel knows better. There he describes, with superb irony, precisely how it is that truth does/did *not* prevail. The society Havel knows and analyses so well, and now also excoriates, accepted communism, without enthusiasm but with resignation. Masaryk's conception of democracy was somewhat Protestant and puritan, and he would, I think, have been embarrassed by some of the allies it acquired in its

second coming (a permissivist pop culture and the Counter-Reformation Church). He would probably have shared some of Havel's disillusion, and deplored some aspects of the contemporary scene which are less unacceptable to Havel.

Masaryk's philosophy of history is open to objections: Havel lacks a philosophy of history, but the cluster of ideas which acts a surrogate also deserves critical scrutiny. There seems to be a mixture of moralism, populism, decency and romanticism. Havel is confused both on the question of what it was that brought down communism, and how one is to face the demoralisation which follows it. Communism was *not* brought down by decency or internal opposition, but by the recognition in the Kremlin that it had lost both the arms and consumerist races, and by the decision to try to correct this by emulating rather than blackmailing the West. We must be grateful for that decision whilst noting that, from the viewpoint of the interest of those who made it, it probably was not the best option. We must be grateful for *their* relative decency of the time, but not credit the local decency of dissent, brave and admirable as it was, for more effectiveness than it had.

As for providing a moral basis for late industrialism or for a society converting with dreadful speed from communism, that is indeed a problem. Sheer human decency is admirable, but on its own, it is no more likely to attain such an end than it achieved the end of communism. I do not myself believe that this important endeavour will benefit greatly from the phenomenological or Frankfurt traditions of thought, which threaten to slip into at least part of the vacuum left behind by Marxism. A woolly anti-scientism certainly will not help: science may be dis-enchanting, but it is *not* dogmatic. It is really very wrong to confuse these two things: because science destroys illusions, which it does, it in no way follows that it therefore protects some other dogma from scrutiny. To assimilate the scientific spirit to Marxism is the height of unfairness: Masaryk, at any rate, was utterly lucid on this point and saw that Marxism and science were mutually incompatible. What the scientific spirit does undermine is claims to unsymmetrical, hence inegalitarian, privileged sources of knowledge (whether Revelation or Revolution). But the fact that it undermines *your* illusions does not mean it enshrines anyone else's. This is a tempting, but wholly impermissible inference.

Still, there is a link between the two men. Havel is enough of a child of Masaryk's republic to recognise explicitly the principle honoured by the first Czechoslovak state, that only professors are fit to be heads of state. When he comes to dream aloud and paint the idyll of the Czechoslovakia which he is trying to build [Havel 1992: 102 an.], he says, in so many words: 'At the head of the state will be a grey-haired professor with... charm.' This is indeed the Masarykian model of presidency. The First Republic only had professional presidents: non-professors, let alone non-academics, need not apply. Even the potential rival of Beneš for the presidency, who was critical of Masaryk as a historian, was a rival *professor*. Had the timing of the collapse of Marxism been different, Prague would no doubt have had a President-Professor in Jan Patočka, and tradition would have been upheld, but times have changed, either that or no professor with an appropriate record was available.

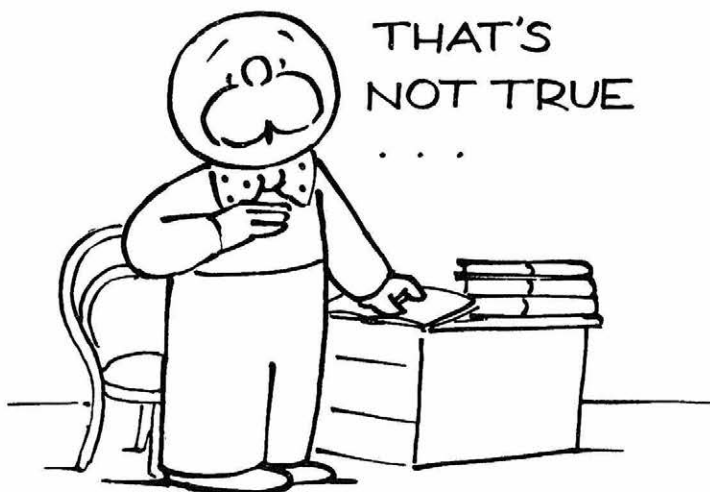
So the professor offered us an overall theory of what is happening and should happen, whilst the playwright brilliantly described how what really does happen is manipulated into being, whilst saying something quite different in his professions of faith. Perhaps we need a combination of the two. The French have Racine to tell them how men should be, and Corneille to tell them what they are really like: the Czechs have, in

Havel, a person who performs *both* tasks, one as theorist and the other as playwright. But it will be interesting to see whether professors or playwrights make better presidents.

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# The Czech Question A Century Later

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**Abstract:** The *Česká otázka* (The Czech Question) by Masaryk is the supreme work of Czech national mythology. It is true that the author had already been filled with the spirit of a positivistic critical science, but he also embraced the Czech National Revival. The aim of the study is to analyze the reasons for this asymmetry. The study points out the fundamental differences between contemporary interpretations of Masaryk and interpretations during his lifetime: the Czech people participated substantially in the economic miracle which took place in the Czech lands in the latter half of the 19th century, and constituted the third largest nation in the huge Central European empire. They did not suffer from such a marked 'small nation' complex as their descendants of today. That is why Masaryk conceived his *Czech Question* as a view of what had been achieved, and as an ideological basis for the social modernization and political efforts of that time. Masaryk replaced Comte's vision of an industrial society with the concept of democracy: this concept is very broad and does not dwell on political definitions only. Masaryk, as an expert in theoretical and political socialism of that time, relates national emancipation to social emancipation. This would correspond with Western European models if it were not for Masaryk's efforts to incorporate into this framework archaic elements of the early Czech national imagination, as well as the Slavonic idea which lost its viability in the Czech modernization process as early as the mid 1840's. The reason for this strange syncretism was pragmatically political: the shaping of the Czech myth towards the social issue also means the shaping of the social issue towards the Czech myth. An originally conservative critic of modern culture, Masaryk addresses, as a practical politician, the new massive and rapidly growing power of social emancipation, i.e. primarily the working class and the social democratic movement. He wants to bring these under control by transferring them from the cosmopolitan platform of socialism to the Czech national movement which, for this purpose, he interprets as the 'philosophy of Czech national history'. This should be seen in connection with some events of the Czech and Central European political scenes of that time, and with Masaryk's efforts to find a strong starting position in Czech and Central European politics.

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Masaryk's *Česká otázka* (The Czech Question) is the foremost work within Czech national mythology. Even though its author was influenced by the critical spirit of the positivist branch of science [Střítecký 1995], he focused his interest on the Czech national revival which, in 1894, could already be accepted as a historical fact in need of interpretation. That is also why the work represents a kind of inventory summarising all that had already been achieved.

Czech national society existed then not merely as some kind of revivalist dream and programme, but was already fully developed in all its components, and an internally

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characteristically differentiated civil society. During the second half of the 19th century, the Czechs succeeded in performing an economic miracle: while in 1850 there was no such thing as a purely Czech stock capital, by the end of the century it had already outdone the capital of the German banks [Galandauer 1990] in Bohemia. Of course, this occurred within the framework of a rapid transformation of an agrarian society into an industrial one, a change which was not specifically Czech. Nonetheless, they constituted a relatively strong and consolidated group in the area which ultimately contributed about 80 % of the industrial production of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy [Urban 1978]. Thus, although in contemporary European dimensions, the Czech problem might seem a marginal one, at that time, it was definitely another story. Czechs were forming the third most numerous community within a gigantic empire, such that settlement of the legal and constitutional relations with them therefore became one of the most pressing questions for Austrian internal policy since 1848.

This has misled Marxist writers into stating that the whole Czech national revival movement was a reflection of the creation and rise of Czech bourgeois society. If that were true, then the whole Czech national revival would have had to happen no earlier than the 1880s, and not almost a century before! In addition: where are the economic and social causes for the formation of two national civil societies rather than a single one in the lands of the Bohemian crown?

The ethnic explanation has simply been a construed later instrumental fiction. For sure: German and Czech speaking people have been living here for centuries. The Josephinist delatinisation had replaced a dead and originally liturgical language with a spoken one – German. In addition to the germanisation, which had no nationalistic intentions, this brought significant confusion to the linguo-ethnic situation. All of those who had higher than basic education were educated in the German language. And so it was with the Austrian Slavs.

In addition, there was the Czech territorial anti-Josephinist opposition here: a conservatively aristocratic one. Against Viennese centralism, it emphasised the dignity of the long historical tradition of the Kingdom of Bohemia. They began to support patriotism directed towards the land and the local independence of culture, out of which was to grow, for example, the Prague cult of Mozart, and even the cult of the Czech language, which had once been prevalent in the land.<sup>1</sup> The consequence, when in 1775 Pelcl published Balbin's *Obrana jazyka českého* (Defence of the Czech Language) written one hundred years earlier, was a revival of the baroque tradition of the cult of Saint Wenceslas, which was conceived as a programme.

The modern Czech self-image rests on three things: 1) We suffered for three hundred years (counting, of course, up until 1918); 2) Hussitism was the peak of Czech history and an expression of the Czech national character; 3) The cultural language was codified and the Czech cultural world was built.

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<sup>1</sup>) Czech was often used in the Czech parliament, both as means of protest and applying pressure against the first Hapsburg monarchs: cavaliers who spoke not only Latin and German, but frequently also Spanish and other languages, addressed them on official occasions in Czech, therefore requiring interpreters. The estates thus symbolically demonstrated who was the master of the country and out of whose will the Hapsburg monarchs ruled [Janáček 1987: 77ff., 89ff; Střítecký 1990: 41ff.].

The first two theses have facilitated the transition from the patriotism directed towards the land, as opposed to the nation, (land-patriotism) to Czech nationalism. The third has united all the various national cultural activities. It worked in two directions: on the one hand, enabling the integration of world cultural treasures into the Czech milieu, while on the other, separating this milieu from others, for example from the German one.<sup>2</sup>

1) The interpretation of the Bohemian uprising of the estates 1618-1620 was at first dominated by the spirit of land-patriotism, which was soon replaced by the national spirit. The repressions after the battle at the White Mountain were thus explicated as a national catastrophe, even though it was a catastrophe in quite a different sense of the word: within the framework of the harsh recatholisation of the land, the attempt to establish a system of democracy of the estates was crushed. The Jesuits, who, in their attempt at the creation and formation of local Catholic elites, developed a modern school system in the country and did not hesitate to give education even to young men of lower origin, have, in the Czech self-image, become a symbol of anti-Czech hatred exercised not only at the denominational, but also on the national level.<sup>3</sup>

2) The high regard for Hussitism was at first connected – as a contrasting background – to the constitutionally interpreted version of the battle at the White Mountain and to the revivalist attempts. Although today, it is mainly known from Palacký's presentation, its prehistory extends to the Josephinist times, when it harmonised with attempts to commemorate the past grandeur of Bohemian history. Surprisingly, the first great enlighteners were Catholic.<sup>4</sup> The focus of their interest was certainly not so much the inter-

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2) Separation from German cultural patterns was the primary, but not the only function here. Even in Jungmann's generation, the independence of the Czech linguistic culture was proved, for example, by versalogical comparison with French or English poetry. Independence from West European cultures was often philologically proved through demonstration of the Czech phonetic system's resemblance to the ancient Greek Attic; the opinion that Slavic languages are closer to the ancient Indo-European foundations than the other languages of Europe was also frequently expressed. Karel Havlíček Borovský's polemics of the 1840s were at the forefront of the separation of the Czech world from pan-Slavism [See Macura 1983].

3) A picture of the Dark Times became commonly known thanks to a novel by Alois Jirásek of the same name. Alois Jirásek was a rightist conservative nationalist writer of historical novels which enjoyed such popularity that even the Czech communists adopted them (through Zdeněk Nejedlý's mediation) as an interpretation of the progressive national traditions. Thus far there is a lack of analysis which would show to what extent Jirásek simply popularised the individual schemes of the Czech self-image and how much he actually created them.

4) Over the period 1780-1785, Kašpar Royko (1744-1819) published *Geschichte der großen allgemeinen Kirchenversammlung zu Kostnitz*. This work was the first attempt to rehabilitate Jan Hus. It was translated into Czech by a professor of pastoral theology, Václav Stach (1754-1831). To this very day, the question of Jan Hus has remained a sore point for Czech Catholics. At the Second Vatican Council, the Prague archbishop Beran sought Hus's rehabilitation. In 1990, on the occasion of his first visit to Prague, (the first time a pope ever visited Prague!), Pope John Paul II considered it important to state in his address to the leading representatives of Czech public life that he saw Jan Hus as a priest of high moral integrity. Contemporary Czech Catholic historiography tends to appreciate the pre-Hussite and early Hussite socio-critical preachers as envisaging a necessary reform of the Church which was consequently ruined by the Hussite wars and the split of the Church during the Reformation.

denominational controversies, but a rehabilitation of the time when Bohemian affairs stood at the centre of European attention.

František Palacký accomplished two things: he restylised the history of the countries of the Bohemian crown into a history of the Czech nation in Bohemia and Moravia; he transformed Thierry's theory of conquest (*Histoire de la conquête de l'Angleterre par les Normands*), which was commonly used by even liberal German historiography, (Georg Gottfried Gervinus) into a vision of the historical struggle of the free-thinking Slavic mentality with the authoritative German one.

Hussitism was treated by Palacký as the highest expression of the Czech democratic mentality. According to his interpretation, the Hussites sought to accomplish what was successfully carried out many centuries later by the large nations of Western Europe and North America. Thus he connected the Czech self-image with the world of liberalist ideas in Western Europe. In this respect, the Czech grand récit differs from other Slavic nationalisms.

Thanks to this connection, Palacký's history of the Czech nation, written according to the Protestant view, could become the modernisation ideology of an already recatholised or secularised nation and thus be shared by the lower Catholic clergy, which played an important role in the first phases of national agitation and propaganda.

3) Dobrovský's codification of the modern cultural Czech language derived from the language of the 16th century, which had been the golden age of the elder Czech literature. Here, already, we can see the influence of the first thesis (concerning the post-White Mountain catastrophe): the Czech of post-White Mountain times, that is the spoken language, was seen by Dobrovský as a language in decline. Yet Dobrovský had no practical intentions: in the spirit of enlightenment, he sought the purest language system possible. It was only his pupil, Josef Jungmann, who made the revival of the Czech language a national programme.

Dobrovský's codification gave the impression that the Czech language was in decline, indeed it had already perished. In the works of Jungmann's generation, that is of the generation which successfully transformed Dobrovský's more or less theoretical codification into common use, laments as to the awful fate of the Czech language repeatedly occur. This constellation is very interesting from a sociological perspective. The anxiety over the apparently jeopardised mother-tongue<sup>5</sup> can actually be traced to an anxiety of social origin: anxiety connected with the traditional social structures<sup>6</sup> which

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<sup>5</sup>) In reality, Czech was spoken by a large part of the population and was not threatened by germanisation at all. The problem lay in the dominant position of cultural German as well as in the fact that the Czech spoken was not the language codified by Dobrovský, so that even the Jungmannite patriots whose mother-tongue was the commonly spoken Czech had to learn it anew. This situation is documented by one contemporary anecdote, according to which a Czech student, after having heard the poems of Čelakovský, claimed in confusion: „I almost understood it, it is as if written in Czech!“ [Cited from Macura 1983].

<sup>6</sup>) The Czech revivalist movement was long, indeed until the times of Havlíček, characterised by this conservatism, hence the frequent connection made between linguo-national agitation and the conservative criticism of capitalism. See for example Tyl's dramatic tale *Strakonický dudák* (Piper of Strakonice) or the sharper play (in this respect), *Jiříkovo vidění* (George's vision): the Czech man should not get seduced by cosmopolitan entrepreneurs (in *Strakonický dudák*, this seducer has features later ascribed to the Jews), but should live in harmony with the spirits of nature and

felt rightfully threatened by the Josephine attempts at modernisation. And it was within these very structures that Czech was often, if not always, spoken. A substantial part of the German population of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia was in the same situation – except for the fact that they lacked a reason as to why the problem of systematic social change should be spelled out in terms of a language problem, since cultural German commonly existed, indeed was socially dominant.

If we see the whole problem without prejudice then we can see it as issuing from a delatinisation that got out of control. The lack of control consisted in provoking unintended consequences. In general everything went according to the rules already set for the rise of modern nations by Benedict Anderson [1983] – if it were not for the fact that instead of the creation of one national society two gradually arose: the Czech and the German. All other national concepts functioned as they did anywhere else, forming the basis for an intended horizontal national society. Its homogenising element can be found above all in the requirement of general participation, not just the participation of a narrow national elite: 1) in the replacement of the old liturgic language which was originally prevalent in the cultural world, in diplomacy, administration and schools with a living, spoken, lay language; 2) in the end of the social order's orientation to the hierarchy of lordship, based in the transcendent sphere; 3) in the gradual elimination of time and history from the process of secularisation, the void thus generated being filled by new meanings of the concepts of time, rule and society. History was no longer the history of salvation or the history of a political state. It had become the history of nations. It is not necessary to emphasise that this was a replacement of one myth with another, not a demythologisation for the sake of factually correct contents.

The change from a sacral community into a lay one in this region was common to all nations, as was the secularisation of the language. The peculiarity of Czech linguistic nationalism was the fact that it did not and could not focus on overcoming the dominant function of a sacral language. It had focused on a secondary sacralisation of the Czech language as of a sacred thing shared by the Czechs alone [Macura 1983], since spoken German had in fact replaced Latin before the beginning of the Czech revivalist attempts.

The transcendent foundation of the structures of lordship was attacked much later in the Czech movement and with far weaker emphasis. It became more energetic later in Havlíček's utilitarianism, in the politics of the Young Czechs party<sup>7</sup> – and with Masaryk, who made democracy's victory over theocracy one of the key points of his philosophy of history. Masaryk has typically restylised the well-known scheme of positivism: he replaced Comte's vision of industrial society – which comes from Saint-Simon – with the concept of democracy. That is why Masaryk's concept of democracy is so broad and is not exhausted by any political definitions. Its connection with the concept of humanity (whether inspired by Comte, Plato or Herder it is difficult to decide), enables Masaryk to base it in religion. This occurs in a strange mixture of sociologisms which hold religion

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the good fairies of his village home. Later, this conservative tune of solidarity among those who, for all the differences in their fortune, power and state, somehow belong together, sounds in Czech idealism. In Dvořák's *Jakobín*, based on a script by the daughter of an important Czech politician, Rieger, Czechs possess what few have: their own, clearly, openly and consciously counter-revolutionary opera of the highest musical standards!

<sup>7</sup>) Julius Grégr characteristically argued with the political consequences of Palacký's refined Kantianism: „I prefer 200,000 guns to the categorical moral imperative!“.

in high esteem, but only because of its socially cementing function – a wholly non-religious aspect and attempt to delineate and include in general education the contents of religious values. This connection of inconnectibles, unimaginable in a modern discussion, is presented by Masaryk as a given. The authority of science then allows a cover-up, not only of a renaissance of pre-scientific transcendental prejudice, but also of their most strange synthesis. Masaryk, who was in his heart an inherently conservative critic of the democratisation of culture [Střítecký 1995],<sup>8</sup> has learned how to talk the progressivist civil jargon; whatever he feels or wants, the only way he can formulate it is to phrase it as if it were either an unavoidable historical necessity or a truth from which there is no escape and where no charity applies.

It is necessary to analyse the above-discussed role of modernisation in relation to the connection between the pre-modern traditionalism and progressivist jargon. The Theresian and Josephinist state intentionally strengthened itself through the secularisation process. Since the Austrian radical modernisation did not come from below, it could not initially be supported by national concepts engendering a sense of belonging and national identity in people. This developmental tendency was, however, interrupted by the paradoxical influence of the French revolution, which had mobilised local reaction instead of the oppressed masses. The Enlightenment inspiration survived for quite some time in the realms of culture and science – in the Czech world as well (Jungmann) –, but expired rather quickly in social and political spheres. An exception and a late blossoming of this Enlightenment tradition was Bolzanism.<sup>9</sup> Although quite influential in the Bohemian intellectual environment, it was never fully appreciated as an alternative, and was fully extinguished by the events of 1848-49. Still, in the 60s of our century, during the time of political amelioration which encouraged intellectuals to reflect once again upon the debate as to the meaning of Czech history, it was Jan Patočka who sought to emphasise Bolzanism as an alternative [Patočka 1969]. He received little support, however, because the other participants of the discussion were too well educated in the Czech self-image to question its basis. All they wanted was to be acknowledged by the governing power as the sole heirs of the Czech national tradition.

Bolzano's alternative was lost in the happenings of 1848-49. The revolution was welcomed both by the Czech and the German speaking public. Together with the Czechs, the German intellectuals signed the petitions for the equal status of both languages as well as for the legal independence of the lands of the Bohemian crown within the context of the Austrian state. The growth of the Czech element was seen by them as a natural expression of the generally desirable relaxation of that situation. Soon after the so-called fight for Frankfurt began, however, these two national societies' inevitable drift apart. Until that time, all nationalist activities occurred on lingually neutral ground, despite potential animosities.

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<sup>8</sup>) Masaryk's conservatism manifested itself sustainingly in, for example, his dislike of modern art.

<sup>9</sup>) Bolzano advocated the perception of the population of the Bohemian lands as a historical and political nation of two tribes – one Czech-speaking and the other German-speaking. This nation should emancipate itself on a civil basis, whereupon the language problems could be solved and good will granted pragmatically.

František Palacký made it known in his *Dopis do Frankfurtu* (Letter to Frankfurt) of April 11, 1848 that from the Czech point of view,<sup>10</sup> the possibility of unification with Germany, even though liberated at that time, was out of the question. The nationalist motivation lead him not only to defend Czech independence, but also to defend the Austrian state, which would, according to him, have to be transformed in accordance with the spirit of modern times. The German liberals read with slight disbelief that the Danube was „unser aller wahre Lebensader“, that it was unacceptable for Vienna to become a mere regional centre and that if there were no Austria, we would have to invent one. The Bohemian kingdom indeed used to belong to the Roman Empire of the German Nation,<sup>11</sup> but according to František Palacký, that was not a union of nations, but of rulers. Later, events proved Palacký right in the sense that the Frankfurt parliament did not dare accept the radical solution, while the compromising idea of the union of semi-autonomous dukes with fully autonomous people proved practically impossible.

The fight for Frankfurt broke out. The Czechs developed a massive propaganda campaign against the elections to the „German“ parliament. A German liberal newspaper made the following comment on this on May 2, 1848 „Böhmen aus dem deutschen Staatenbund zu lösen würde bedeuten, sie dem russischen Einfluss und der panslawistischen Propaganda zu überlassen. Es wäre einem Selbstmord Deutschlands gleich. Die Tschechen in Böhmen haben keine andere Wahl, als Deutsche zu werden – oder nicht mehr zu existieren. Das selbständige slawische Staatsleben in Böhmen zu zulassen würde bedeuten giftigen Schwert in Brust Deutschlands einzuschlagen (...) Den Tschechen wünschen wir ihre Sitten, ihre Sprache und Erinnerungen, sie müssen sich aber von allen Versuchen lossagen, sich von der deutschen Geschichte zu lösen. Sie müssen das deutsche Gesetz für das ihrige annehmen und einhalten.“ [„To release Bohemia from the German confederation would mean abandoning it to Russian influence and panslavic propaganda. It would amount to suicide for Germany. The Czechs of Bohemia have the choice of becoming German, or ceasing to exist. To permit the existence of an independent Slavic state in Bohemia would mean plunging a poisoned sword in Germany's breast. (...) We wish the Czechs to have their own customs, language and memories, but they must renounce all attempts to disengage themselves from German history. They must accept and observe German law as their own.“] The government in Vienna, under siege from the German and Hungarian speaking revolution, had no other choice but to allow elections for the Frankfurt parliament. In Bohemia, there were elections in a mere 19 of the total 80 electoral regions, i.e. only in the German speaking ones. The Czechs boycotted the elections altogether.

It was the Moravian parliament which, on April 14, 1848, was the first to revolt against the Czech position. They sent an address to the emperor which was motivated

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<sup>10</sup>) Palacký's authority gave his point of view the character of a norm. Nonetheless, there were tendencies among Czechs to demand a union with the free Germany. Hence, František Matouš Klácel was inspired by a fellow brother in the Augustinian monastery in Brno, Franz Thomas Bratranek, to propagate this position in Prague [See Loužil 1971: 13]. The circle around Frič thought along similar lines.

<sup>11</sup>) This concept is frequently nationally misinterpreted. It arose as a designatory name of the Empire in deep Middle Ages, in times when the dream of the universal Christian state proved impossible and when the Empire, with a few exceptions – like the Czech one – was uniting the German speaking population.

more by patriotism than pro-German feelings and in which they protested against the requirement of the legal independence of the lands of the Bohemian crown!

The Germans founded the *Constitutioneller Verein* in May 1848 which strategised the propagation of the elections in Frankfurt. They held conventions of the secretariats of German towns, communities and constitutional unions. The reason for this was not on the whole national, but it was easy to make it a national issue. The main issue was the Frankfurt elections, but within the same framework we also find the requirement for the abolition of regional borders and the dissolution of constitutional arrangements, as well as a will to implement the regional arrangement on the basis of national principles. Such an arrangement could only be achieved at the expense of a massive transfer of people or the change of nationality of a substantial part of the population; moreover, it would mean the annexation by Germany of a considerable part of the historical whole of the Bohemian lands. Here we can also trace the first hysterically protectionist attitudes: in April 1848, a *Verein der Deutschen aus Böhmen, Mähren und Schlesien zur Aufrechterhaltung ihrer Nationalität* (The Union of Germans of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia for the Preservation of their Nationality) was founded in Vienna.

It was and is sad that the cause of this turmoil, which was bound to have fateful consequences, was the first elections to a real parliament. These were not the only elections, however: there were also the elections in the Austrian parliament which stimulated ardent Czech participation. In the end, the Austrian parliament met in Kroměříž and in Vienna, making decisions of an importance which should not be underestimated simply because they were ultimately dispersed by governmental power! This paradox could have shown the German liberals in Bohemia the instability and uncertainty of their situation. Yet it was the subsequent era of Bach's absolutism that confronted them, as well as everyone else, with completely different questions. And by then it was too late: identity, however unstable, was already considered a clear and indubitable matter – it was a national identity.

Masaryk was well aware of all this. It is therefore puzzling that he adopted the Czech nationalist metanarrative, completed it, and made it into a programme which he claimed to be the philosophy of Czech history.

Of course, our main intention is not to show in what details Masaryk erred and was inaccurate. The matter is not even that the slavophilic Masaryk ignores, for example, the existence of the Ukrainian nation or that in the Polish issue, he clearly takes the Russian side [Masaryk 1990: 50] – he also chooses or disregards parts of the historical material for a given purpose and, with the solemn countenance of a positivist, ponders the Slavic character, as if something like it existed. Masaryk perceives, classifies and, without the slightest trace of artistic insight, comments on works of art solely from the point of view of their real or alleged cognitive content or from the point of view of their moral utility.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> We learn in the *Česká otázka* that in *Babička* (Grandmother) by Božena Němcová, a Czech inhabitant of a village was found and that in *Baruška*, the social question of women, domestics and prostitution is touched upon [Masaryk 1990: 115]. Disgusted by the Parisian decadence, Masaryk reproaches the younger Czech literati for imitating daringly cosmopolitan models instead of describing the dramas of the Czech soul [Ibid.]. Masaryk shares the conservative nationalist illusion that the Czech folk song provided the model for Czech national music to be adopted by our gifted composers, from which we can see that not only did he misunderstand music, but he

A number of arrogantly unfounded attacks – irrespective of the weakness of his argumentation regarding historical facts – proves the Christian stylisation of his philosophy of Czech history to be dishonest. In positivism, which, in spite of partial criticism is a significant aspect of science for Masaryk, there are only hard facts and the method of their organisation. In the 1890s, a developed Czech society was already a fact. Of course, we can question the method...

If the philosophical and political direction of realism were to lie in the criticism of historicism, as its founder Masaryk was fond of saying, we should not be surprised by its poverty and sterility. Masaryk's criticism is not actually a methodological criticism of real historicism, (developed in the German historiography), a modified version in our milieu being represented by Goll's school, it is a criticism of the early revivalist attempt to legitimise the national movement through the vision of the glorious Czech past. Masaryk's generation did not feel comfortable with this element of the former territorial patriotism: it did not separate Czech from German society clearly enough. In political practice, this meant a reduction of the Czech problem to a legal programme. For Masaryk too, political independence was a desirable goal, although insufficient on its own. He calls for a complex completion of the national revival, an embracement of the natural sciences, technology, enterprise, a real and yet moral politics. Above all, however, he calls for a revolution of the spirit, a practical and socially broad realisation of morality and education. Only in this way, and not by some historicising patriotism [Ibid.: 155, 277] could the Czechs become a truly modern nation. In Masaryk's argumentation, we can already hear the proud spirit and real political demands of an already formed Czech civil society.

Masaryk connects national with social emancipation. The collective function of nationalist concepts dominates in the classical West-European sense: everybody, not only elites, is a part of a nation. Masaryk says we are giving the workers stones instead of bread – even though they too are Czech. Social democracy has to be taken seriously – it has to become an organic part of national unity. The modern national movement is politically and socially democratic [Ibid.: 159]. The struggle for language is also a class struggle.<sup>13</sup>

It is indeed strange that while arguing thus, Masaryk constantly draws upon the charismatic powers of the names Palacký, Havlíček and Kollár! New social groups, above all the working class, should be incorporated into the national community through a vast realisation of humanity – humanity being in fact the uttermost core of the Czech programme, the meaning of Czech history, the most precious disposition of the Slavic and, above all, the Czech character.<sup>14</sup> Humanity directs the Czech myth towards the social question, which conversely means the inclination of the social question to the Czech myth. In *Otázka sociální* (The Social Question), Masaryk even feels related to the origi-

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also misunderstood Smetana's programme, even though he commented with confidence on both [Ibid.: 116].

<sup>13</sup>) Masaryk notes with sympathy the development towards a full appreciation of the national side of the socially emancipatory attempts of the social democratic movement: social democrats are no longer anationally cosmopolitan, but stand both for the freedom of a nation and for its international status [Ibid.: 149].

<sup>14</sup>) In addition to this positive feature, Czech nature also has negative features which should be overcome [Masaryk 1990: §§ 79-86].

nal motivation of the socialist theories, including Marxist theory: the goal of modernisation should not lie in the accomplishment of capitalism and the resulting system of ownership, but in the realisation of humanity [Masaryk 1948a: 156]. The only point of divergence lies in the fact that Masaryk sees the ideal of humanity as an idea arising from reformation, and not in the materialist way. He draws upon anticipation of the Czech reformation,<sup>15</sup> in one breath connecting the concept of humanity with being Czech-Slavic, to natural rights and enlightenment inspirations. According to him, humanism is work, work, and more work [Masaryk 1990: 156]: that is, the liberated work of free people, versatile social work, work in building a humanely dignified world. In such a light, work would unite us with other Slavs, but also with other nations, in accordance with the Herderian spirit [Ibid.: 179].

Already in Masaryk's doctoral work examining suicide as a widespread social phenomenon of the modern times, we can clearly see the element of conservative criticism of modernism, with its hateful, quasi-Nietzschian farsightedness which is seen to annihilate the culture of the heart [Střítecký 1995]. Religion plays an extraordinarily important role as it does later in Durkheim's sociology: it is understood in the purely Comtean spirit as an important factor in social integration, i.e. for its function, not its contents. While this feature is still present in the *Česká otázka* (The Czech Question), there is also a new tune, appreciating real, positive religiosity regardless of denomination.

All of this occurs within the criticism of Czech liberalism, which Masaryk finds devoid of and indifferent to values. We have to realise that this criticism is intended as a timely move to distance himself from the Young and Old Czech party movements which, in Masaryk's opinion, constituted an insurmountable crisis at that time. Masaryk had already had problems with integration in the Czech political spectrum, and when he realised that a new structure of political parties and movements was growing, he sought to draw the consequences in time. It is rather surprising that exactly at this moment he focused anachronically on nation – an entity which, like a person, undergoes historical trials. He sees those as trials of the Czech national character.

It was then that he tried to revive the tradition of the Czech metanarration and reform it in such a way that he could claim himself the only rightful heir. No wonder the first serious critic of this turn was his former colleague, Josef Kaizl (1854-1901): against Masaryk's abstractly superficial criticism, the latter defended the concrete liberal democratic positions. He clearly saw the factual indefensibility of Masaryk's manoeuvre, in which Masaryk searched the 19th century Czech movement both for something that was not there as well as for its political goals [Urban 1982: 44 ff., Kaizl 1896]. Under the pretext of criticising national conservatism, Masaryk, the man who would later be revered as the paradigm of a democrat, launched a harsh attack (and there Kaizl would agree) on the democratic wing of the Young-Czech politics and the so-called progressiv-

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<sup>15</sup>) He rightly criticises (albeit with a somewhat nationalist political tendency) the fact that Czechs were incapable of throwing out Matěj z Janova and other pre-Hussite and early Hussite preachers: it would have shown the world right away the whole meaning of the Czech struggle! For this reason, he ignores similar older phenomena such as the Waldenses, the heresies of the socially critical, the Franciscan attempt at regeneration through poverty and the inclination to an almost Buddhist felt nature, etc.

ist movement of the Czech youth [Masaryk 1990: 193-345] from clearly conservative positions.

For this, he mobilised his lofty explicated tradition of Czech Protestantism, revised Palacký's philosophy of Czech history which was based on a liberal reading of Hussitism in the moralist and religious sense, and set forward the task of completion of a purely Czech reformation, the only adequate expression of the Czech character, as the immediate national goal. In this way, the national stream would be joined by real emancipatory attempts at democracy, by the progressivist attempts of the youth as well as by the new class conflicts [Ibid.: 277]. This would be a unified stream governed by the patriarchal authority of one of the nation's fathers. For all the religious pathos, Masaryk wrote quite clearly: the issue is not a protestantisation of the recatholicised or already largely secular nation, the issue is the struggle for the people [Ibid.: 156 ff.]. It is here that the emphatic Us and They took hold. The Germans actually only secondarily become the paradigm of an enemy, a point on which Masaryk repeatedly corrects Palacký and Havlíček. Against this background which is presented as natural, we see features of a new, more present enemy which embraces all those who do not listen to Masaryk and his wife Charlotte: the Catholic clergy are now just a symbol of adversaries of the new times; in many details Masaryk understands them well, demonstrating this knowledge openly.

More dangerous by far are the realistic liberal politicians, eventually the revolution-minded socialists. Socialists can be nationalised, integrated into the national whole, but the cosmopolitan liberals cannot. Their devastating pressure is to be stopped by Chelčický, Komenský, Kollár – and Jesus Christ [Ibid.: 175 ff.].

This is Masaryk's rendition of Hussitism. It is nowhere near as sympathetic as Palacký's interpretation or the widely accepted public perception. Masaryk does not completely spare even Jan Hus: unlike Wiclef and Luther, he knew how to die, but not how to live [Ibid.: 174]. A Czech reformer – his orthographic reform having survived the longest – was subjected to retrial four hundred eighty years after his death. Masaryk praises him for preaching a reform of morals and of the state and not really touching on the teachings of the Church [Ibid.: 173]. Nonetheless, he remains an impersonation of the Czech weakness of innate character. According to Masaryk, Czechs are of a critical, humanist nature, but their positive emotional fervour, in ecstasy reaching up to martyrdom, is not balanced by sufficient strength of reason. They are unable to accept rationally the consequences of their own daring [Ibid.: 174 ff.]. Taboritism seems unnatural to Masaryk: merely a nice attempt ending in moral chaos [Ibid.: 173]. Czech utraquists who in fact attempted to establish Czech democracy, that is the political vision which was highly modern at that time (as we can see from the Dutch example), are judged by Masaryk with even less sympathy: they forgot their national and social task of emancipation, they abandoned Masaryk's and allegedly also Chelčický's ideal of humanity and natio-social solidarity, and even though they won at Lipany in 1434 they voted for the reinforcement of serfdom in 1487. They therefore fully deserved their doom which came in the failure of the uprising of the estates in 1620 [Ibid.: 177]. Masaryk goes on to state bitterly that we are even now on the stage of Husitism – where we will remain until we undo the happenings of 1487 [Ibid.: 177].

Moreover, Masaryk does not hesitate to replay the theme which Havlíček had already so categorically interrupted in the pre-March period in his article *Čech a Slovan* (A Czech and A Slav): the Slavic theme. Hence the strong presence of Kollár there! Masaryk belonged to the reconstructors of scientific and practical interest in the Slavic

problem. Unlike the generation of Kollár and Jungmann, he did not limit himself to a more or less philological interest. Masaryk knew Russia and analysed it as a sociologist – and a politician. The more obvious is the combination of the practical cognitive interest with the out-dated Kollarian ideology of Slavism. This ideology includes some Herderian and romantic elements out of which it once grew, but in Masaryk's writings its meaning is pragmatically political. In the 90s, the split of the Austrian state had occurred to no one, but the Slavic card played an important role in connection with the Balkan policy of Vienna; it was therefore more than natural that it be reflected even in internal Czech politics. This can be seen most clearly in Kramář's case. Even though later he was to move away from Masaryk's political conception, the coercive political motive was and to certain extent remained identical.<sup>16</sup> In the *Světová revoluce* (The World Revolution) [Masaryk 1925], Masaryk later presented a critique of tsarist Russia from this very point of view: it had entered the war without sufficient consideration, without a true Slavic conception, and as a result, had succumbed to chaos and became the weak spot of democracy in the world, struggling for the new Europe with powers of theocratic origin and nature. It is a sensitive political mind which describes here the weight and strength of the pro-Russian inclinations of the Czech public, and considers it a factor which must be taken seriously, if for no other reason than because the opposing groups – due to a lack of information or an overestimation of the Russian possibilities in the first phase of the war – counted on it politically.

Conversely here, neoslavic fictions incidentally coincided with the paranoically hysterical horror of the lingually and politically German opponents of the mortal jeopardy threatening Europe: the Russian panslavic agency. Masaryk, however, tried to escape this trap by reformulating neoslavism in terms of an accomplishable programme of cultural synthesis: *Ex oriente lux, but also ex occidente* [Ibid.: 452 ff.].

According to Masaryk, the Czech mediating role lies not only on the East-West axis, it not only holds the position of a bridge between the two cultural worlds,<sup>17</sup> but lies in their synthesis. It is of little importance how concretely Masaryk imagined it: of significance is the syncretic focus of the thought. It is present on all different levels: we encountered it in the combination of the positivistically sociological understanding of religion with the pathos of a concrete faith; in the combination of the Herderian and romantic Slavophile fictions with the factual curiosity which makes Masaryk a first-rate expert on Russia; in the combination of the deliberately adapted version of Palacký's liberal philosophy of Czech history (which ends in a quasireligious vision of history of na-

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<sup>16</sup>) For the abovementioned reasons among others, Kramář's neo-Slavist line was later censured and banalised. Even if we cannot but agree with Masaryk's political procedure against the Kramář strain of nationalism after 1918, we should not forget that before World War I, Kramář was not only a russophile, but also a significant critic of the Russian imperialist policy which used pan-Slavism as an excuse; his criticism at this point was far more considerable than that of the pragmatically calculating Masaryk.

<sup>17</sup>) Even though Masaryk polemised with this favourite Czech idea in *Česká otázka* and elsewhere, it was to find voice again and again in variously modified images up until the 1970s. In 1945-1948, it facilitated the transition to the Communist dictatorship; after 1956, it fostered the Czechoslovak versions of the third way between capitalism and socialism. It was the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia (1968) which definitively shattered this illusion which had been shared by many Czech communists and non-communists alike.

tional salvation and uses, God knows why, the spell of the names Chelčický, Komenský, Kollár and Havlíček) with the realistic calculation of the contemporary politics; in the combination of popular emancipatory pathos concerning humanity, civilisation and progress with the crudely conservative criticism of modernism; in the combination of the repeatedly propagated and realised idea of popular education with the scornful criticism of the consequences of the democratisation of culture [Střítecký 1995]; in the combination of the exaggerated veneration of the Czech reformation with the ruthless denunciation of leading and other representatives; in the combination of scientific exactitude with the unbridled philosophico-historical and ethnically characterologic fantasising. Explosive polarities which are not necessarily mutually exclusive in discursive critical thinking fuse and merge into emotionally compelling patterns of imaginative thinking based on analogies and myth,<sup>18</sup> in which the catholically educated, positivistically scientifically trained and politically legitimising mind eager for significant action seeks a law-like order. Methodologically taken, it was a clear but consciously risked regression: by implementing partial factual data, scientific cognitive procedures and considerations into a pre-critical analogical discourse, the whole Czech myth was made to look more scientific, which meant above all its subjugation to a controlling authority. The famous fights for the *Rukopisy* (The Manuscripts) whose falsity among experts was a public secret anyway, undoubtedly served not only the promotion of an objectivist self-confidence in the Czech science, but also to construct the authority of its leaders. A scholar who was on the path to becoming at least a Central European Durkheim has yielded to the pressure of national metanarration and restylised himself into its prophet; hence, having to rot in Prague anyway, he could at least enter with the desired effect a political scene whose rejection of his extreme ambition had come from all sides and far outweighed its welcome, so that he had no other choice but to formulate and create his own programme and start off in his own direction. The spirit of realism, so difficult to express through its content, is defined by this distancing function itself. Masaryk saw this better than other realists. He did not hesitate to take the rational discursiveness and positively scientific cognitive attitudes into an efficient propagation serving the colouring of the philosophico-historical treatment of the Czech historical mission and fate and turn it into a moralist folklore which adorned, in modern fashion, the hopelessly pre-modern yet common and thus easily mobilisable vision, a vision which this mind, unburdened by the duty of criticism and self-criticism,<sup>19</sup> developed from many often incidental analogies.

It is fortunate that we did not only have Masaryk, but also Hašek. The Czech tendency to see themselves and be seen by Švejk discloses the compulsion to escape the almost unbelievable stylisation by conversion to an anti-myth. All of that, however, took place solely within the tricky sphere of fiction. Švejk himself is not only a disguised pacifist disclosing the absurdity of circumstances: there is also he himself, and in this very dimension he carries his message. Ironically, he reveals the social basis of the modernising emancipation of the common folk. He is a perfect impersonation of a Czech folk

<sup>18</sup>) On the basis of material from the early Czech revival movement, Macura [1983] has convincingly proved the syncretic character of the analogical discussion.

<sup>19</sup>) This received sharp critical opposition from the top representatives of Czech positive science – above all by historians – whose influence Masaryk largely used in the Manuscript arguments, and against whom Masaryk never, even at the zenith of his power, exacted any revenge, displaying, instead, a tolerant nobility of spirit.

Prager who escaped being a peasant and turned into a worker. We can see his village origin in the deftness with which he steals dogs. He is comprehensible to the world, more so than the stubborn pre-Hussite preachers, heroic Hussite hetmen, more than the twenty-seven Bohemian gentlemen who died by the executioner's hand in the Old Town Square, more than Amos Komenský, the Teacher of The Nations, or Tomáš Masaryk himself. To Švejk, being Czech is not a problem. It is given just like any other incidence of life: pure coincidence which does not follow from any philosophy of national history, and which furthermore, is not in need of one. Josef Švejk is quite an exemplary being who looks after himself, who, in hoping peacefully for death, fills his time with worries without giving a damn for the extent of their authenticity. In him, we can see a fully accomplished, all-systematising Enlightenment ideal of Reason which longs for the homogenisation of the manifold. It is no accident that Švejk's face resembles the opposite round part of a body: just like that hole, one witnesses in the tirelessly chattering mouth his permanent ability to render anything devoured into the homogeneity of excrement. Truth wins in him, as it is written to this day on the presidential standard fluttering over the Prague castle. He also reveals the truth about the Czech character: Švejk does not win because of any strength of character, but because he does not know anything of the kind, does not possess it and takes no risks. As an unintended outcome of the modern emancipatory process, he impersonates the socially and nationally authentic mode of existence; that is why he simply laughs in face of the humanitarian ideal of a perfectly patient, conscious, industrious, educated, abstinent, jogging, and with the exception of being uncompromisingly virtuously highly-principled, tolerant citizen, who, if necessary, returns wrong for wrong. At this obedient free citizen and all of its national variations, he simply laughs.

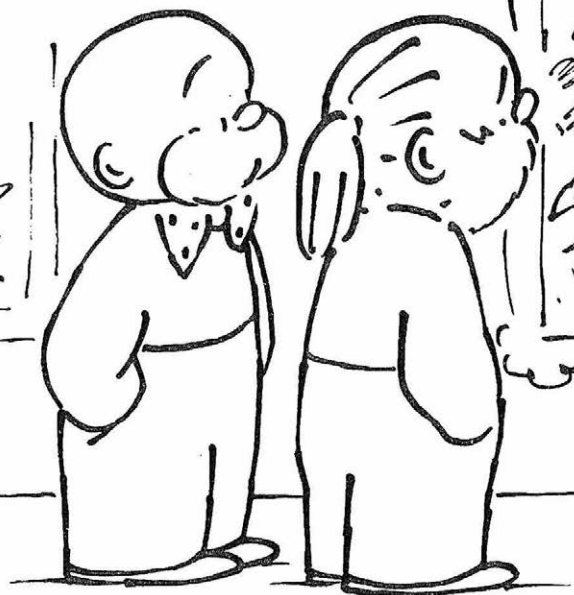
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WHICH PERIOD  
OF CZECH HISTORY  
WOULD YOU LIKE  
TO LIVE IN ?



ONLY ONE ...  
THE WEEK AFTER  
OUR VICTORY OVER  
THE CZECH AMAZONS



# One Hundred Years of the Czech Question

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**Abstract:** The Czech question arose as a result of Masaryk's decision to create different politics and affect the thoughts of Czech people. For this purpose, he wanted to establish how the Czech nation lives culturally. He wanted to grasp the meaning of Czech history. It was an attempt to present the Czech nation as a European nation, and Masaryk wanted to contribute to the process of identification of the Czech nation with Europeanity. Masaryk's real message resides in realism as both direction and method. Part of it was the concept of a democratic state, and the struggle to realise it, on the basis of the character of the Czech people. With the first Czechoslovak Republic, the link was constituted between Czech national life, European and world democracy. The borders within the state never divided the Czech nation and other national groups, but did divide democrats and opponents of democracy. A determining factor in maintaining democracy and the basis for later efforts for its renewal was the democratic political culture. Today's expression of realism is Václav Havel's establishment of the „time of the eternal search for the truth“ in Czech-German relations. At the end of the road is the possibility of identifying both nations with the European idea.

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In order to determine whether one hundred years after its first publication, Tomáš G. Masaryk's *Česká otázka* (Czech Question) has maintained its validity as originally formulated, or whether it has lost its topicality, it is necessary to answer some related questions and analyse several problems.

## The Czech Question

What was the Czech question, both when it first arose and later? The answer to this question, as in many other cases in Czech history, is to be found at the very source, i.e. Masaryk's *Czech Question* (this, even though the creator of the stereotypical interpretation of the Czech question was the critical historian Josef Pekař),<sup>1</sup> who queried the role of the Czech question as an account of Czech history, finally to reject it. But indeed, was the Czech question really an account of Czech history? The attentive reader will not fail to note Masaryk's full attention to the reformation and its role in Czech history, nor his indications that certain parts of its history should be modified, and that the anti-reformation epoch had not yet been satisfactorily processed. The main emphasis, however, relates to the present of those days, later, and, indeed, our times. This is why the Czech question remains topical today, a topicality we shall illustrate. The outer indication of its validity is the publication of the *Czech Question* at a difficult time in Czech history, a time in which Masaryk's appeal to the rootedness of the contemporary situation in the reformation would have been insufficient.

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<sup>1</sup>) Josef Pekař (1870-1937), the important Czech historian, who strove for objective historical knowledge.

## Nation-natio

According to Masaryk himself, the work *The Czech Question* was born of his decision to „make a new, revivalist history, to affect the thinking of our people“ [Čapek, K. 1968: 94]. He wanted to „discover (...) how, as a distinct nation, we live culturally, what we want, what we hope for.“ (E. B.'s emphasis). He thus sought to define the meaning of Czech history [Masaryk 1969: 7]. It was an attempt to present the Czech nation as a European nation and to distance himself from the nation-people, a delineation which, in Ortega y Gasset's typology, signifies „...a society constituted by a series of traditional habits that have their origin in chance and historical changes“ [Ortega y Gasset 1993: 5]. A European nation, on the other hand, signifies a nation which „became a ,nation' (*natio*) (...) because the *particular life* of the traditional habits (...) has included life forms that – though merged with the traditional – wished to represent ,a method of being a person' in an elevated sense; meaning to precisely demonstrate a better way to be a person, and which is thus thoroughly argued and prepared for the future.“ The aim was to find the individual way in which a particular nation expresses „the unified European culture (...) experienced by every nation (...) in its own way“ [Ortega y Gasset 1993: 383]. The year of the publication of *The Czech Question* was also the period in which it became necessary to establish whether the „village people, labourers, craftsmen“ of 1704, who alone did not abandon the Czech language (Frozín, A.: Obroviště mariánského atlanta) [Broklová 1992: 12], and who in the following two hundred years underwent huge changes, could now consider becoming a European nation. Eventually too, it was time to establish what it was still lacking in such a process and answer the disturbing questions posed by the present.

## The meaning of Czech history

Masaryk analysed the social and literary development up until his own time in order to clarify those relations within the national existence which were to form the basis for his active contribution to the process of identification of the Czech nation with Europeanity. This was best recognised in 1968 by Professor J. B. Čapek, who, in his orientation, was very close to the reformation: „Masaryk, however, was not only concerned with the question of historical continuity, but also with the philosophical and at the same time topical and programmatic **question of the meaning of Czech history**.“ He considers Masaryk's **intense relationship to the spiritual and moral message of the Czech reformation** to be significant [Čapek, J. B. 1968: 17] (E. B.'s emphasis). Of further significance is the meaning of the Czech reformation to the creation of a democratic value system.

The historian, Josef Pekař, Masaryk's main opponent in the question of the meaning of Czech History [Pekař 1990: 383-405], postulated that there is no meaning to be found in history. Entire human generations, however, formulated the goals of their acts and vested them with meaning. The historian then encounters these orientations and (here one can agree with Pekař) „...will hesitate to give a straight-forward answer to the question: what is the meaning of Czech history“. An interpretation opposing Masaryk's is presented in *Geschichte als Sinngebung des Sinnlosen* by Th. Lessing, where it is proposed that „history has neither meaning, nor development, nor goals, nor laws; all this is invested into it by the present, the myth of history creating and through the evaluation thereof fulfilling...“ [Pekař 1990: 385]. This, however, does not negate the fact that his-

tory is the future of the ever-growing body of the past, which, from the point of view of historical actors, has been anticipated in gradual goals.

Indeed, Masaryk numbered among those who repeatedly placed the present in future history, actively creating it. Pekař's error was that he polemicised with Masaryk as with a publicist or philosopher „whose knowledge of the development of historical facts is not so deep or at least, consistent“ [Pekař 1990: 384], while Masaryk was, above all, a politician. Pekař was finally to realise, if only partially, that „the whole of Masaryk's concept related in its creation to the need for propagation, to the need for decision in the fight of the born thought“ [Pekař 1990: 383]. He himself understood Czech history not as the work of autonomous Czech development, but as „a part (...) of European life“ [Pekař 1990: 387]. In this he did not differ substantially from Masaryk. The difference was rather in what and how the historian Pekař and the politician Masaryk gave expression to their respective concepts.

Pekař seeks the meaning of history as something „primary or eternal in history“ [Pekař 1990: 385], rejecting perceptions which propose that „individual nations would be the carriers of given ideas“. Pekař supports this thesis by arguing that he never encountered such formulations. However, the historiography of such ideas, or the programmed direction of individual nations at given times can, for instance, be identified in the leading representatives' formulation of these nations or, indeed, in the realisation of these nations by the people, even if not given a priori. It depends more on use, on agreement, as to which, among the possible goals, will be accepted, and which of them will become an historical force. The degree of its visibility furthermore varies from nation to nation.

In the end, Pekař concludes that the meaning of our history is national thought [Pekař 1990: 402], as opposed to Masaryk's religious thought. The opinion that „nicely, surprisingly“, Masaryk changed his older theory [Pekař 1990: 402] demonstrates the misunderstanding as to Masaryk's conception of the Czech question. Nevertheless, to be content with enumerating the differences between the author of the *Czech Question*, Masaryk, and his opponent, the historian Josef Pekař, would be an unsatisfactory answer to the question raised above : it would give little credit to the author. We would thus be avoiding „our true and great history“ [Masaryk 1969: 182].

### Our two questions

How did Czech society of the time address the question of its history? In 1886, public opinion was recorded in response to Hubert Gordon Schauer's two questions: *What is the purpose of our nation? What is our national existence?*. Having opposed the militant nationalists and supported Schauer's article, T. G. Masaryk was thought to be the author – this despite his reservations about it. It therefore became necessary either to answer the question or to take a position on the problem raised by Schauer: „*The nation will be insured if its striving is in accordance with the ideal world order*“ [Opat 1990: 164]. The first programme of the Czech question as a political question dates from this period [Opat 1990: 183-4], and is contained in Masaryk's works of the 1880s. As a result of Masaryk's role in the written debate, „the practical effect of his programme effort was (...) actually more effective and far-reaching in its consequences than (...) texts of a decade later [Opat 1990: 184].

What, then, is the issue Masaryk expresses through the *Czech Question*? The work deals with problems of the present, which Masaryk clarifies through interpretation of the past. He does, however, consider that „we need above all an understanding of the present

and this we do not gain sufficiently from Palacký and his direction. Historicism has lead even Palacký down the wrong conservative tracks“ [Masaryk 1969: 159]; „...we see only our past greatness“ [Masaryk 1969: 159]. „...Havlíček has already shown how we should immerse ourselves in the present and draw our national strength from the awareness of facts“ [Masaryk 1969: 159]. He approves of Havlíček, who stated that „our life is more important through future generations and closer than the life of our far ancestors“ [Masaryk 1969: 159]. He called both for comparison with other nations and self-knowledge [Masaryk 1990: 183]. However, we would do an injustice to Palacký if we failed to mention Masaryk's observation about him: at the beginning of his scientific work, he attempted to deepen the „supreme idea of humanity“ and „show (...) in his History of the Czech Nation“ an ideal of humanity: „...through love for my nation I still always value human and scientific good over national good“ [Masaryk 1990: 20]. In Palacký, „he found his own conception of the Czech question, the evaluation of the Czech reformation and the humanitarian ideal.“ [Čapek, K. 1969: 101].

### Realism

Masaryk's real contribution, though, is what he understood by realism: „...**realism** is not and does not intend to be (...) a party alone, it is a **direction and a method**. (E. B.'s emphasis) Realism resists historicism, excessive historicism [Masaryk 1969: 171]. Things are the motto of realism, including, for Masaryk, not only the national but also the philosophical opinion and the philosophical method. „Conflicts with journalism on their own lead realism onto political ground. (...) Political tactics must correspond to the idea of humanity, thus carefully making use of all modern steps in all areas of social administration. Conservatism turned towards the past, towards historicism (...) is its substance, radicalism does not look to the past, through logic, and through a frequently false logic corrects the present – realism does not give up the past, but ties it to the knowledge of things, particularly the present... We want a reasonable and honourable tactic, just as honourable to ourselves and to others. Czech politics must cease to be ‚political‘. No flattery, because there will be no extravagance.“ [Masaryk 1969: 174-175]. In Masaryk's eyes, it was a fatefully deluded notion that „all our history is nothing more than a constitutional fight against the Germans and the (Austrian) government. (...) We developed positively as well, our development has its own content in which the antagonism against Germans played an important, but secondary role. In this way realism, in the most important question of all, differs from (...) today's common politicising. It is a requirement of politics to be absolutely active and positive, let us finally allow ourselves to be bigger – we are not as small as our patriotic snivellers claim.“ [Masaryk 1969: 176.] According to Masaryk, it was also necessary to struggle against validated obsolescence.

### Realism in politics

Through his own activities during the First World War, particularly in his orientation towards democratic power, programme concepts and finally the *Declaration of Independence* of October 1918, Masaryk demonstrated that he understood the needs of the nation and its contemporary possibilities, both conceptually and as a political tactic. The twenty years of the first Czechoslovak Republic constitute the proof thereof. The Czechoslovak Republic was the basis of what was to be the future Czechoslovakia. This state cannot be omitted from any formulation of the Czech question as a political programme of the Czech nation. It was one of the most stable democracies in Europe, if we

consider the results of comparison among four western European states, Germany and Austria. The average duration of government in the Czechoslovak Republic (over one year) was reached in only two of the six mentioned states: the United Kingdom and the Netherlands [Berg-Schlosser and Müller-Rommel: 252]. Conversely, the importance of political culture is increased by the fact that this instability led to the collapse of the democratic political system in Germany and Austria alone, whereas it expressed itself as an insufficient reason for collapse in France and Belgium. Majority support for democracy was not even affected by the threat of fascism in Czechoslovakia. Problems related to the crisis of democracy were not solved by Czechoslovak politicians on the basis of the empirical requirements of change, but rather on the basis of democracy (for instance, against the excessive split of political parties by the reduction of their number through electoral reform). They did not allow the political self-destruction of democracy through undemocratic steps against anti-state and disloyal forces oriented towards authoritarianism and totalitarianism.

With exceptional skill, Masaryk evaluated the possibilities and needs of his nation, its need for democracy. With regard to the structure of the Czech nation, which, through misfortune, was robbed of its intellectual elite and most of its nobility, he could consider the significant reduction of differences in the population as an existential democratic measure, as it was in Tocqueville's account of American democracy [Tocqueville 1992: 39]. A certain level of nivelisation, achieved in most nations through anti-feudal revolutions [Nipperdey 1990],<sup>2</sup> the success of democracy contingent upon dealing with feudalism or even by means of national socialism [Steinbach 1993: 5], was thereby made possible. The people of a nation in a democracy are equal, they are not differentiated in the political system.

It was only after the Munich agreement that the parliamentary democracy gave way to totalitarianism in Czechoslovakia. The arrival of left-wing totalitarianism occurred in a very different manner to the arrival of fascism in Germany. The German voters went to the poles, which they knew were to be the last, and gave the party which had informed them this was to be so almost 44 percent of their votes. In contrast, the success of the Communist Party in 1946 was, to a considerable extent, based on the votes cast by the „May“ Communists, who voted for the former on the basis of the connection they perceived it to have had with the liberation of Czechoslovakia in May 1945 [Broklová and Brokl 1991]. Besides, there was nothing in the KSČ (The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia) programme that spoke of communism: it was a programme for the construction of a „happy society“, in accordance with post-war radicalism; nor were those to be the last elections [Broklová 1991, Broklová 1993b]. At the outset of 1948, the Moscow Kominform continued to accuse the Czechoslovak Communists of parliamentary fetishism for their attempts to achieve power through parliamentary means. This too was a result of the political culture originating from the first republic.

The failure to solve questions of nationality in the pre-Munich Czechoslovak Republic is a matter of vision. The results of the parliamentary elections (1920, 1929, 1935, but also 1925, when the Luda Party entered the governmental coalition) and the municipal elections of March 1938 demonstrate the consensus of Slovak voters for a common Czech and Slovak state (for details, see [Broklová 1993a]). Furthermore, German activism, which was, to a certain extent, the result of Masaryk's realism (giving E. Beneš, as

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<sup>2</sup>) Nipperdey, Th. (1927-1992), probably the greatest contemporary German historian.

early as October 29, 1918, the task of negotiating with the Germans, and initiating later negotiations as well), saw favourable election results, until the German national socialist organisation developed. Even after that, the border was no longer one between Germans and Czechs, but between democrats and non-democrats, as is demonstrated by the admission of German immigrants from Hitler's Germany into Czechoslovakia.

### **An independent state**

1918 – the year of the establishment of the Czechoslovak state – was the peak of the modernisation process, particularly in the area of state politics. It saw the death of feudalism, which had lasted throughout the Austrian era, particularly in the acquisition of political rights in a democratic state denied the Czech nation by the Hapsburg monarchy. A compromise allowing participation in political rights in Austria was granted the German but not the Czech bourgeoisie. The Austrian elite was not bent on compromise in these matters. The classical bourgeoisie, however, requires a political democracy to strengthen its economic position [Dahrendorf 1961]. The basis was the establishment of the Czechoslovak state, which solved the problem of equalising the rights of the Czech people in relation to other nations and, internally, the equalisation of their rights as people in a democracy. For this reason, democracy is considered to be a necessary condition for the existence of the Czech nation, in the sense of a European nation (*natio*).

With the first Czechoslovak Republic, the relationship between Czech national politics and European and world democracy was constructed. „...The nation (...) included in its specific life of traditional habits, (...) such life-forms as to represent, a means to be a person, albeit blended with tradition“ [Ortega y Gasset 1993: 6]. The idea of the Nation – the Czech Nation, participating in the ideas of European humanism and democracy – and the idea of a Czechoslovak nation – in the western European sense – as a political nation, was a „vigorous programme for the future“ [Ortega y Gasset 1993: 6]), and represented the possibility of a civilised solution to nations and nationalities (according to Ernst Nolte it permitted the construction of the state [Nolte 1968: 295]), whose identity was ensured by a high level of tolerance – respect for one's neighbour and their different culture.

Whereas European nations-nations sometimes remained without future, without further projects, without creative aspirations prior to the Second World War, from the second half of the 1930s the Czech nation was obliged to mobilise its strength for the defence of democracy and nation. The crisis of European democracy reached its culmination in the sacrifice of this democratic state to Nazi Germany. The Czech question remained an integral part of the European question even during the Second World War [Masaryk 1990], also because „the fate of individual states is to a great extent tied to the development of conditions in other states“ [Záděra 1933: V, 5]. Society did not look on passively at the changes in conditions, but, in accordance with its possibilities, in struggle abroad and at home, participated actively in the renewal of democratic conditions in the world. After a short democratic interplay, in a situation of internationally dominant totalitarian forces, a communist regime was installed in this part of Europe.

### **1968, 1989**

Society turned to the requirement of the renewal of democracy in 1968. Among others, playwright Václav Havel formulated the requests of the opposition party [Havel 1968]. After the demise of all forms of democratic forces, intellectuals adopted an attitude of

protest. Indeed, it is part of the democratic tradition of the Czech nation that Czech intellectuals always managed, to paraphrase Benedetto Croce [Croce 1938: 168], „at least (...) theoretically or only mutely protest and show the way towards the future“. In contrast to this, after the dissolution of the Frankfurt parliament, educated Germans „almost all changed their sympathies, or even their political and historical criteria“. According to Croce, their damage to the political education of the nation was greater than that of the rulers. Until November 1989, these intellectuals set the example for the nation with their attitude, just as they have done throughout the entire course of Czech history. If hesitantly at first, Czech society finally joined them. The material conditions in which this society lived in real socialism believed no serious deficits and could thus be a stabilising factor for the regime, as it was, for example, in neighbouring Germany.<sup>3</sup> Nonetheless, Czech society chose to renew the democratic structure of society. In the elections that followed, it first expressed its „No“ to the communist regime, and then gave its votes to parties which promised to take strong measures for the renewal of democracy.

### **Realism today**

According to J. B. Čapek, Masaryk became „a living argument for his philosophy of history, and not only history“. If it is our aim to understand Masaryk's concept of the Czech question, we must, even today „immerse ourselves (...) in the present,“ as Masaryk and Havlíček did, for „...our life is more important...“ [Čapek, J. B. 1968].

After various adventures, Václav Havel fully took upon himself, as President, the yoke of the Czech nation's status in Central Europe. In the preceding period, he had tried to formulate the contemporary Czech question, striving to express what of the nation-people, after fifty years of both totalitarianisms, constitutes the contemporary nation-natio. He thereby reminded other European nations of their past, what they were and what they should be according to their perceptions. This is yet another reason for Václav Havel's intellectual and political success, abroad as well as at home.

The last attempt of this type was the effort to mobilise Czech-German relations, which have always acted as an indicator of Germany's intentions in Europe. Part of these relations is the definition of borders, which the politician Václav Havel established after five years of expressing regret over the expulsion of the German inhabitants from Czechoslovakia. He established the „time for the external search for truth“ as an expression of realism. After Václav Havel's expression of regret at the crimes linked to the „wild expulsion“, the German side should logically have answered with some gesture, probably in the form of compensation to the Czech victims of fascism during the Second World War (compensation long since extended to Poland). The German side, however, expected concession from the Czech side, particularly after the division of the Czechoslovak state. As a political principle, however, democracy is not divisible into policy put into effect towards larger and policy towards smaller or small states. Both states enjoy

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<sup>3</sup>) The abovementioned comparative research of four western European states, Germany and Austria, shows that in the countries with a political culture appropriate to democracy, socio-economic factors do not carry such weight as in Germany. Holland of the mid-1930s was one of the countries the hardest hit by economic problems. Unlike Germany, however, this did not prove to be a factor working against democracy in Holland [Berg-Schlosser and Müller-Rommel 1987: 252]. Peter Steinbach also emphasises the significance of economic reconstruction for the stability of democracy in post-World War Two Germany [Steinbach 1993: 5].

the possibility of identifying themselves with the European idea. It is difficult to estimate what would follow if this opportunity had not been seized: The last time such an opportunity arose was in the period following the First World War, but was to flounder with the collapse of parliamentary democracy in Germany.

History provides more than one warning against the disrespect harboured by Czech neighbours or co-inhabitants of the late Austro-Hungarian monarchy. The unwillingness of the landed nobility to accept the unifying role of the Czech lands in the person of Přemysl Otakar II might once have caused the demise of a longer central-European order,<sup>4</sup> better organised than the blind anti-Turkishness of the Hapsburg dynasty, in which the Germans later feared democracy because of the Slavs' numerical dominance. It would be a shame if the current aim of European co-operation were once again to flounder – this time due to the unwillingness of the Germans to respect the opinion of its central European neighbour, a disrespect no doubt based on their business with larger neighbours and their indifference to smaller ones. We would do well to keep the opinion of the young Dutch generation in mind.<sup>5</sup> For until now, we have resisted perceiving behind this attitude an effort by Germany to achieve by peaceful means what it did not achieve through war (including support for Turkey's participation in the European Community).

The most recent address of president Václav Havel addressed the question of the intellectual's role within a democracy. The warning provided by the Weimar democracy, where intellectuals were unable to participate in the population's identification with the democratic regime and therefore became disappointed critiques of the regime, belongs to a different cultural area. And an intellectual who takes upon him/herself the formulation of the positive political goals of a democratic regime cannot be intellectually disqualified.

**Conclusion:** the Czech question is the formulation of a political programme of democracy for the Czech nation. As the question of a democratic programme and a human ideal was and is still valid, it pervades Czech history, the Czech nation returns to it continuously, because it is both internally and externally existentially tied to democracy. Masaryk's efforts brought about the first Czechoslovak Republic, through which the relationship between Czech national life and European and world democracy was renewed. From the point of view of the structural securing of democracy, the example of Masaryk's democratic republic has, until now, not been fully appreciated – this republic, which was exceptional for its political culture which bridged the many deficits in the construction of the political system, in the sense of Masaryk's postulate: „We shall not have democracy if we rely on laws alone.“ In this too, the Czech question was a programme and realism a method. In fulfilling this statement, the Czechs set themselves apart from most central European and eastern European nations, the latter of which es-

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4) Přemysl Otakar II was a strong representative of the landed principedom in Austria, who wanted to break the dominance of noble landlords. He succeeded, though often only through violence, to get back prince land rights and territory. He was a talented financial and administrative politician, of high organisational aptitude. After his death, he was celebrated especially by the Viennese. Nonetheless, G. F. Litschauer concludes that the establishment of the state by Otakar ultimately solved nothing. The particular significance of the Czech lands was the connection between North and South, and not that the Czech space would acquire leadership [Litschauer 1965: 55-57].

5) Only two percent of the younger Dutch generation consider Germans to be enemies.

tablished democracies after the First World War, but failed to maintain them due to their insufficiently developed democratic political cultures. After the Second World War, democracy set up mechanisms – that worked only thanks to political culture – into the structure of the system (here, in the Czechoslovak Republic, the constitutional inclusion of political parties with definitions of their obligations functioned as delineations of the politicians' responsibility for the democratic state).<sup>6</sup>

The mainstream of Czech national organisation could live with limited nationalism thanks to its humanitarian content. This content was provided by Masaryk, who thus linked the Czech nation with European life. It is up to us to renew and maintain this tradition.

Even our current „realism does not abandon the past, but ties it to the awareness of things, particularly the present...” [Masaryk 1969]. It was and is necessary for the future of the nation to specify what the nation lives by, what it wants and what it hopes for. This is the message of Masaryk's *Czech Question*. This is where its continuing validity originates.

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## The Deconstructed *Informátor* and the Social Construction of the Czech Nation

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**Abstract:** This study attempts to demonstrate the validity of two theses: (1) Deconstruction is a non-standard analytical procedure, which is closely tied to social constructivism. (2) Social constructivism can be interpreted either as anti-objectivist (and thus also anti-Marxist), or as anti-conservative (that is, anti-traditionalist). Similar kinds of post-modern thought can have either a liberal or a neo-Marxist orientation. Vladimír Macura's novel, *Informátor*, is analysed in this context, and in relation to the historian Dušan Třeštík's claim that the Czech nation was „invented“ in the 19th Century.

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Today we know that deconstruction, that much loved post-modern and post-structuralist method (according to some post-structuralism and post-modernism are one and the same), whose aim and intent is to demystify a text and reveal its inner arbitrary hierarchies and hidden assumptions or hypotheses, latent metaphysical structures, ambivalences, blindness, and logocentricity. At least that's what Pauline Marie Rosenau writes in all good faith. I won't dare quote what Jacques Derrida writes about such things as that is really something for the initiated, and even though I am a teacher by profession, the very idea that I should explain to someone what the difference is between *Destruktion* and *kritischer Abbau* in Heidegger and real deconstruction in Derrida would ruin my normally quiet sleep. That is something that only the good Lord knows, plus perhaps Stanislav Hubík and certainly the Editor of the *Sociological Review*, since he knows everything. For a long time now I have had the suspicion that deconstruction is only for the elect, since it cannot be compared with a standard methodology, it doesn't have any explicit rules, and it does call for some special gifts. In the Czech Lands there are a few literary critics who possess these, Miroslav Petříček junior and Zdeněk Konopásek, who apparently deconstructed Ivo Možný, allegedly to his great satisfaction as the deconstruction took years off him.

I started to have horrible doubts about deconstructing Vladimír Macura's book *Informátor*, which was a candidate for this task, when I read that Christopher Norris, who is an indisputable authority in matters of deconstruction (although what is authority really in our post-modern era?) says that *every understanding is a lack of understanding or a defective understanding. For him every reading can be to some degree both a bad reading and a reading which selects certain details at the expense of others which could be equally justified from a critical point of view*. My doubts were strengthened by J. Hillis Miller (not to be confused with the Czech sociologist Vladimír Müller, who I suspect knows how to deconstruct but is keeping it quiet – his frequent visits to the German cities famous for their deconstructive activities would seem to point to this). Miller wrote

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that *deconstruction deconstructs itself since it creates new and different labyrinthine fictions whose authority is undermined by the very fact of its own creation*. Paul de Mann did undermine my forces somewhat with his thesis that *in the act of deconstruction, nothing must be accepted, but there is also nothing that must be rejected*, but eventually he calmed my methodologically aching spirit when he reassured me that *in the final analysis the text deconstructs itself*.

While I now know what deconstruction is, I still do not know how to do it and it seems to me that I am not alone in this. I originally attributed this to my grey hair, but even the young and undeniably educated Jennifer Lehmann failed when she tried to deconstruct Durkheim. She left the title of her book as it was (*Deconstructing Durkheim*) but in the end she recognised that what she was doing with Durkheim was not deconstruction because deconstruction is a *sceptical, undermining, decentering, antifoundational and processual* critique of absolutely everything including the concept of things. And she couldn't manage that because she, *unlike the deconstructivists, accepts that social structures really do exist and that they determine social behaviour both positively and negatively, that they are ultimately intelligible and recognisable, and that social science is therefore possible*. She voluntarily abandoned the idea of deconstructing Durkheim and proceeded to the premise of a critical structuralism which she founded herself. That can be best termed post-post-structuralism, as in fact it suggests.

I have been toying with the heretical idea of deconstructing *Informátor*, the book by the Czech writer and literary critic Vladimír Macura, since I read with pleasure and without irritation (that's what we deconstructivists are like) some articles by the historian and post-modern writer Dušan Třeštík. He wrote that the Czech nation was *invented* by the Czech revival in the last century and that it is now time to *reinvent* it differently. The panic and consternation of the direct descendants of our great Jans – Jan Hus, Jan Žižka, St. Jan Nepomuk, St. Jan Sarkander and Jan Patočka, our Václavs – the First, Second and Third (I'd rather leave out the Fourth in view of his alcoholic leanings, although he did issue the patriotic Kutná Hora Decree), the founder of Czech journalism Václav Wladivoj Tomek and of course Václav Havel, as well as our Karels – the Fourth, Karel Hynek Mácha, Karel Havlíček Borovský and the minister of industry Karel Dyba, was entirely predictable. If I hadn't known that for the deconstructivist the aim or intention of the author is not to be considered even in moments of human weakness, I would say that it was undoubtedly a quite intentional calculation on the part of the author. He wanted to provoke the traditionalist and often intellectually limited patriots with the idea that the Czech nation is not something „absolutely natural“ which has come down through the centuries as an unchanged entity which is always deserving of respect. And if it was invented once in the 19th century, why couldn't it be reinvented - and bettered? Třeštík did not of course say anything that we (or at least we late modernist) sociologists had not known for a long time – that all social phenomena are (in one way or another) *social constructions*, and in this sense they are continually being „reinvented“. Social constructions (and thus inventions) are just as much social problems as schizophrenia, gender as homosexuality, crime as genius. That is at least the theory of Theodore R. Sarbin and John I. Kitsuse, who rely not only on the classical social constructivism of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, but also on the classical Chicago school of Alfred Schütz and the classical ethnomethodology of Harold Garfinkel... Even those readers who are most scientifically in tune must realise that the concept of „classical“ is in fact a social construction par excellence and that in this sense it really is „invented“. So are „classics of

marxism-leninism“ – and what classics they were! We first constructed them (not we of course, only „some of us“) and then we destroyed them and denied them the status of classics – and here of course it was „all of us“. After November 1989 it was no heroic action to cry out that Marx never had been a classic, when even President Havel, in announcing the renaming of the Engels Embankment in Prague, said that Engels was an obscure German philosopher, while Rašín, our own Czech financier, was a really nice chap who the whole world knows and appreciates.

Heavens, I begin to wonder if I am not getting everything mixed up – from deconstruction to construction, from deconstructivism to constructivism – can they really go together? But to be serious, I have always had a suspicion that this whole pleasant post-modern game is just jazzing up Mozart (as Adorno would see it) or a rock or heavy metal version of Verdi (The Grand March from Aida and the song of the Slaves from Nabucco, as I would see it). In other words, in other systems of discourse or speech, it is a case of variations on a well-known theme and of solutions that may be unrevealing but are shocking in their radical shrewdness. It would perhaps be more precise to say that what modern sociologists (perhaps like our Masaryk – and there would be a serious subject for serious deconstruction) see as a *problem*, post-modernists see as *facts* we have to live with. And to live with as happily as possible, just as we must sometimes learn to live with a serious illness. The wicked Miloš Havelka (Editor of this Journal) even pinched the word that I had thought of for this fact: *agreeing* (*cultural criticism has become mere agreeing*). Cornelius Castoriadis even wrote his fearful study *The Retreat from Autonomy: Post-Modernism as Generalised Conformity*, but then what can you expect from a late neo-marxist? Thus the path from social constructivism to deconstruction is simple, because it is in the logic of the things themselves, since if something exists it has some logic. The authorities Sarbin and Kitsuse cited above say that *the social constructivist trend within sociology has recently been greatly stimulated by an infusion of vigorous post-modern, post- structuralist and deconstructivist debate, which sociology has borrowed from literary criticism*. And there it is! Heaven be praised that the good old constructivism that I know so well is all I need to deconstruct the *Informátor*.

If the readers feel that I still cannot grasp the heart of the matter, that is of the *Informátor*, then they can rest assured that the rule of the discourse will not be disturbed, since *digression* is the sign of the new style, rather than strict, rectilinear (let alone causal) logic. Before starting with the *Informátor* and so with how the Czech nation was invented, I cannot resist one more digression. In the years of the Marxist famine we were philosophically sated (satiation in time of famine is perfectly possible in post-modern terms) with leninist assertions that matter is objective reality which exists independently of our consciousness and is only reflected and copied by it. Similar satiation came from the Marxist thesis that social being is primordial and social consciousness only secondary, inferred, dependent on being and simply not independent. After this satiation in famine the ideas of social constructivism appeared to us in central Europe as a vision. They seemed very anti-marxist since they were anti-objectivist and from a certain (single) angle so they were. In a similar way post-modernism has, from a certain (single) angle, a radically liberal course... in which we in the Czech Lands (thanks to Bělohradský, Třeštík and Steigerwald) are used to seeing as the only possible one. Post-modernism and its constructivist predecessors cannot however be considered as evil spirits and one of their faces cannot be absolutised (and anyway what is absolute in this relativised world?). As early as 1986 in *The Salisbury Review*, two undeniably serious ladies,

Caroline Cox and Rachel Tingle published an indignant article with the symptomatic title of *The New Barbarianism*. In this the classic of social constructivism, *The Social Construction of Reality*, appeared as a seed of the devil which undermined not only the traditional concept of objectivity (tradition is a virtue) and so the traditional concept of objective truth, but also all the institutions for the transmission of knowledge: academic standards of knowledge thus become only bourgeois survivals in *a merely bourgeois conception and a relic of a bygone era*. This however opens up the way for the most frequent alternative to conservative thought – marxism and all the variations of anti-government, anti-American, anti-NATO and anti-western crypto-marxism, to be explicit, anti-racism, anti-heterosexism and Worlds and Peace Studies. All these ideas with their relativism and their constant insistence on the context of every assertion make it possible to never find anything positive to say about the history of the West and its cultural traditions and values.

If anyone thinks that marxism, with its ideological absolutism, can be anything except relativism, they are making a big mistake. Marxism has its classical epistemology constructed on the concept of „concrete historical progress“ and the „concrete historical concept of truth“. These concepts are rather more than relative and more than contextual. The conservative ladies Cox and Tingle were not therefore so far from the truth as it may seem to us here in the „concretely historical“ central Europe. From this point of view, while the radical post-modern discourse would be just as legitimate as any other, it is far from seeming as objectionable as Dzugashvili's famous objectivist definition of the Georgian nation *the nation is a fixed society which emerges in the course of history, of people linked by a common language, land, economic life and psychological disposition, expressing itself in a common culture*. Since there does not seem to be a single possible constructivist conception of the nation, according to which the nation is the result of free choice of free individuals (Renan) or the product of permanent interaction and negotiation of people. The nation can of course be understood as something once effectively invented (*a semantic, interactive and negotiated construction*), which may from time to time be repeated so that the objectively non-existent entity of the nation was in some way redefined. This is the context to which Vladimír Macura's book *Informátor* belongs.

There are various possible readings of this book, which is almost a collector's item, (by Favia International, Praha 1993, 193 pp) and all of them are equally legitimate, since we know something about the „death of the author“ and the author's independence of the Reader has never been cast in doubt. Thus Macura's book can be read as a) the story of Johann Mann's unfulfilled love for Miss Rajská, thus as a love story; b) as a discussion of power and human frailty and cowardice, thus as political fiction; c) as a more or less realistic picture of life in Czech society in the 19th century; d) as a tale of the birth of the Czech intelligentsia, thus as a historic illustration; and finally e) as a tale about how the Czech nation was invented and of the role of the state police in this, thus as a study in the philosophy of history. To tell the truth, for me as an independent reader, as a love story it is not much, as political fiction it cannot compare with the Forsythes... That leaves only the study in the philosophy of history (the main thing would be to be convinced of this), but we do not know if this is what the author really wanted. Taking Derrida's teaching that *a text does not have anything in common with the author as a real person*, there is no reason to even try to ascertain this intention. There are therefore various possible hypotheses, all of them equally legitimate, but we will stick stubbornly to the supposition that Macura's work is a brilliant lesson about what social constructivism

is. Macura's book can be read as a story about a story, that is as a sort of multiple tale, artificially created but not contrived, so that even the undemanding post- modern reader will in the end be familiar with it. Macura recounted the relatively simple story of a certain Johann Mann, a Czech cursed with a weak national consciousness, who in the 1840s met the attractive Antonie Reissová, who had taken the patriotic name of Bohuslava Rajská and who had patriotic fervour to spare. He falls passionately in love with her, and his blind love leads him into mischief, which in turn leads him into the hands of the Empire's secret police, etc. – it is not done to say how the story in a story ends. Macura's Johann Mann, probably in an attempt to rationalise his base collaboration with the secret police (although this is baseness on the level of the 19th century in the Austrian Empire), writes a *novel* in which he shapes his „real“ story into a likeness in which he himself has a much better and more acceptable guise. In this sense Macura's book is also a story about the appearance of Paretian derivations, Freudian rationalisations and fictionalised ideologies of all types. Mann's novel falls into the hands of the secret police, of a confidential court counsellor, who kindly starts to advise Mann how to write a novel! He is of course pursuing his own egoistical aims since he is hoping the novel will tell him what the police really want to know. Mann is not that far from the idea that *literature and life are bound together by a threat of innumerable connections*. But the counsellor also has his idea of the social function of literature and his is clearer than Mann's, as he knows full well that *literature has a great responsibility since its task is not to arouse emotions but rather to awaken love for the throne and the officers on which the throne depends*. Macura's book can however be read in yet another light, that is as a story about everything that can be constructed in literature and in life, and in life as literature, since Richard Harvey Brown has told us that society is text, nothing more and nothing less. And in Macura's story there is more than enough that is constructed. The novel *Informátor* itself is probably a construction of Macura's, because I do not suppose that he found it lying already complete in the Dvůr Králové or on the Zelená hora, as the famous counterfeit Manuscripts of Václav Hanka (yet another Czech Václav!) were said to have been found. Moreover, the main character constructs the novel *Patriotic Love* (Probably Macura wrote this as well, although the deconstructivist reader has every right to see it in a contextually different light). The very fact that Mann became an informer is re-constructed as follows: the counsellor explains to Mann kindly that he is not a snooper but an informer and that an informer is someone who forms something. This reconstruction was of course possible in a period when confidential court counsellors had received an education in the humanities, something that was not so common in the twentieth century. Although Heydrich did play the violin... So here the Czech nation is being formed. It forms itself, takes shape, creates, constructs, in brief it invents itself. In the following passage from Macura's work, the main character Johann Mann regards this behaviour with the justifiable suspicion of the regular reader of Kučera's *Central Europe*.

*What is so wonderful about resuscitating a long defunct language? One which has once sounded so quaint somewhere in the fields and pastures. Enough. What is the sense in bringing even more chaos into this Babylonian world? Isn't the language of Hegel, Kant and Goethe good enough for us to understand each other?*

*But Mann knew that this already could not speak to skeletons. And Lenny is one of them. Lenny with her spread legs and not worrying about whether you said gib mir or give it to me. As long as you put the money on the edge of the table (p. 125)*

We can pass over the erotic which has slipped in there in its post-modern way, but we cannot pass over Lenny: a simple girl of the people (the nation?) who leaves the village where she first gave herself for money to Mann, and goes to Prague to devote herself in a cosmopolitan way to a traditional cosmopolitan craft, with a well-developed sense of market reasoning. She is one of the few sympathetic figures in Macura's tale.

Czech patriots did not of course only revive the language, but they in fact built, they constructed. Almost all the characters of Macura's story have their historical basis: Karel Slavoj Amerling (1807-1884), Antonie Rajská (1817-182), Count Lev Thun of course, but also Cyril Kampelík (18-5-1872) and the Emperor Ferdinand, not to mention František Ladislav Čelakovský (1799-1852), who makes a fleeting appearance in order to lure Rajská from Mann, of course wordlessly. Thus the historically based Amerling claims without historical foundation:

*I need people, people with a sense of being Slavs, Founders, builders of the cathedral of the Slav soul. The builders of Budeč. Do you know, my friend, what Budeč is? Budeč mean someone who builds! Someone who does not perish, but survives. Budeč is the seed of our future. But Budeč is also someone who awakes, arouses from two centuries of sleep! Budeč is a word but it is a word which means the world. (p. 50)*

Amerling's words make me think of Czech Heideggerians of the 1980s, but at least we know what Amerling really constructed: He could not quite get to grips with Budeč, but with the language yes. Anyway Macura's book is mainly about language and signs, as it must be when the author, if we accept his existence as an objective reality, as Derrida says we should not, is a linguist, a literary historian and a practising semiotician. The whole construction of the Czech nation is primarily a construction of a language, or more precisely of signs.

There are two processes running through the whole text: the process of attributing signs (and thus meaning) to phenomena which previously lacked them (the homeland being the perfect example); and the process of endowing meaning, of setting signs, thus of the process of semiotics, on phenomena whose original character and foundation were intended for something else. This was for example with the ball, as Mann sees it:

*But a ball is a ball. And if a young girl beckons to you, your heart begins to thump, making you unnaturally disturbed. That is why you go to a ball in Prague. You may say, „What is so special about that Prague ball?“ In Vienna as much as in Prague, in Buda as in Solnohrad, a ball is always a ball, sometimes better, sometimes worse, but always a ball. My dear people, I can see that you are not impressed with this fashion for Czech balls. Every German word there will cost you twenty fines. And they dance around Jungmann's dictionary set on a marble plinth surrounded by white lilies and red roses. Do you want to know what this dictionary of Jungmann's is?. It is just a collection of worlds which Czechs do not understand and Germans cannot even pronounce. It is the bible of the Czech patriots. (p. 100)*

And there we are. A German and Germanness are a necessary opposition. Of course as Miloš Havelka says (plenty of quotes from Havelka provide an easy reason for publication in this journal), *understanding oneself, a certain society, a certain artistic direction, certain scientific forms are created only in the distinction from what is different, and so in comparison and relations. Identity is established only on the basis of relations with the other and with its negation.* Macura's book can therefore be seen as an illustration of Havelka's thesis (and maybe of Levi-Strauss) and Macura (we need not

speak of Johann Mann) far preceded the action of Smířeni (Reconciliation) and the conflict over the Sudeten German question.

The fascination with signs is absolute in the actions of the characters in Macura's book. They take new names and thus create themselves, constructing themselves socially (*she gave me a name as if she was my creator and I accepted that name and thus created her*). For love of Antonie, Johann took the name of Vratislav:

– *You must choose a patriotic name, my friend of the people. You shall be Vratislav! In memory of the fact that you came back to us, from abroad to your homeland. That you turned to Slavonic things!* (p. 58)

We should not forget that Masaryk also created and reformed his identity, and before taking the more cosmopolitan Garrigue, he used the very patriotic Vlastimil („he who loves the home country“ since Tomáš was not enough). Fortunately for us he did not keep that Vlastimil. To get to the end of the story, if we read it as a story of the social construction of the Czech nation, Mann's reflections on the Czech national anthem, whose name is such for Czech patriots that it need not be recalled:

*Tomorrow man will understand how strange it is that the patriotic visionaries love this song so much... If they knew that it comes from a comedy! Wie sentimental! das Lied eines Blinden! The skinny lawyer clinked his money in front of the harpist and called for the Song of blind Mars. That's what they call it. And the harpist knew it and its words. And half the people in the tavern, not only the students, sang it together. It is a song of the blind.*

*And that is why it is so eloquent. Just for that reason. Because the blind, eyeless skeletons love the song of the blind best. It gives them a view of a beautiful land. And they are blind when they do not sense the irony. That the blind man sings about a beautiful land. What a spectacle! And they are even more blind when they do not see that spectacle also means scheinbar. Seemingly beautiful. They should sing – Oh my land among the bones! But they look straight in front of them with their eyeless sockets, anxiously shut off from what is going on around them.* (p. 47)

The nation as it is in Macura's tale (and why not believe it) was not constructed either by the forefather of the Czechs on the Říp calling out to *Love and multiply!* or by the analogous appeal of the Czech revivalists. Nor did the nation construct itself socially by the natural process of constructing a certain number of children, who acquire the same language and live in similar surroundings (that is too objectivist a construction and if conscious would be social engineering in the Popperian sense and the Stalinist form), but... that is exactly what Macura's book is about. It can also be seen as an example of sociological narrative, about which Josef Alan writes so well that its aim is *to tell the story of events in their natural contexts*. But how does Macura know those *natural contexts*? Did he not construct them too? And what if everything had been completely different – and not only with Johann Mann and Antonie Rajská? Then it would be necessary to write another story which would of course be just as legitimate as Macura's, alias Mann's, alias the court counsellor's.

A propos of the counsellor – Johann Mann of course knows that the behaviour of the Czech patriots is sheer folly and that these skeletons can never get to the nature of things. The Czech nation is a pure fantasy of visionaries, of madmen. He is a person of refinement whose outlook has nothing in common with them... and the counsellor, like the good policeman he is, knows himself. He knows what the Empire has to fear and that

the real madman is not the one who does mad things but the one who sees them as nothing:

– „*They are all crazy but not dangerous.*“

– „*Ah, so they are all crazy,*“ drawled the counsellor. „*All of them are crazy. And what about you? What about you, Mr Mann? In Vienna you go around with that trouble-maker Kampelik. You are mixed up with that ultra-slavist Reissova. And when Vienna gets too hot for you, you come to your friends in Prague... And all of them are crazy! So are you normal, Mr Mann, you who steal the carriages of knights? You who write those doubtful Slavonic papers for Count Thun, you who help Miss Reissova with her Slavonic encyclopaedia? Have you, Mr Mann, ever seen a civilised country where women write encyclopaedias? Like those misguided French who threw half the world into chaos? You who implore Amerling not to forget to give you work in your crazy Budeč – are you not crazy?*“ (p. 131)

The Counsellor understood and his own actions had their own relevance. So in the end wasn't it von Muth, the Confidential Court Counsellor who constructed the Czech nation? If that was the case then I would ask for the copyright on this fact, which is not entirely in line with Macura's report.

P.S. And where does Macura's book belong from the point of view of post-modern deconstructivist intertextuality? Where else than with Jirásek's novel *F. L. Věk*, with the study by Vladimír Macura, *Znamení zrodu* (The Meaning of Birth) and of course first and foremost with Masaryk's *The Czech Question*. Quod erat demonstrandum.

MILOSLAV PETRUSEK studied at the Faculty of Philosophy in Brno, has lectured in sociology and participated in several large empirical research projects. During the normalisation, he was prevented from working in sociology and, with Josef Alan, edited the samizdat review *Sociologický obzor* (Sociological Horizon). After November 1989, he became Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences of Charles University, Prague. Other publications: *Sociologie a literatura* (Sociology and Literature, 1990), *Alternativní sociologie* (Alternative Sociology, 1992) and editor of the encyclopaedia *Sociologické školy, směry a paradigmata* (Sociological Schools, Trends and Paradigms, 1994).

### **The main theses T. G. Masaryk's *The Czech Question***

#### **The Efforts and Aspirations of National Revival**

The birth of the modern Czech nation, the so-called national revival, is connected with the European Enlightenment. In our milieu, the question of freedom was at the same time connected, in the philosophic sense, with the question of religious freedom. National revivalists found a solid basis for their efforts in the conception of humanity as a universal principle. This conception was most precisely formulated by Jan Kollár, who based it upon Herder's philosophy of history and the reformatory past. Organic reference to the Czech reformation, to the traditions of the Bohemian Brethren and Hussites made it possible to span the rift created by the counter-reformation and to continue there where the reaction had impeded development. The national revivalists – Josef Dobrovský, Jan Kollár, Pavel Josef Šafařík, and František Palacký became, at the same time, defenders of the sacred traditions of the Czech reformation and freedom of conscience; they proclaimed the ideals of humanity proposed by the Bohemian Brethren. The national revival is consequently an entirely, organic historical evolution: the modern idea of humanity organically perpetuated in the endeavour of the Czech reformation. Our national revival is the continuation of reformatory ideas for the sake of which Jan Hus underwent martyrdom. The idea of humanity was elaborated by the Czech reformation into the form of pure humanity and universal brotherhood and bequeathed us. In this respect, humanity is something specifically Czech and, at the same time, a contribution to all mankind. It was not only an instrument of the Czech revival, but also today its sense. Hence, the emancipation of the nation is limited by humanity. As there is a continuity between the reformation humanity and the revival humanity, it is possible to talk of the unity and continuity of Czech history and its final sense, which is religious. This, since ethical questions are always religious and religious questions are always ethical.

*Miloš Havelka*

## **A Selected Bibliography of the Most Significant Works by T. G. Masaryk**

### **Americké přednášky (American Lectures)**

A collection of lectures from the year 1907 held on the occasion of Masaryk's participation in the congress named „Free Thought“ in the USA. The lectures concern the contemporary situation and the emancipatory efforts of the Czech nation, as well as the questions of free thought, its development and social significance, especially in relation to religious and social questions.

Published: 1907 (Chicago), 1929.

### **Blaise Pascal, jeho život a filosofie (Blaise Pascal, His Life and Philosophy)**

Originally a lecture introducing a new, at that time, unusual perspective on the problems of science, morality and religion based upon the principles deduced from a specific understanding of Pascal's work. Hence an emphasis on this philosopher's role in the milieu oriented to German philosophy.

Published: 1883, 1930.

### **Cesta demokracie I., II., III. (The Way of Democracy I, II, III)**

Thus far a three-volume publication collection of Masaryk's speeches, essays and literary critiques from the time of his presidential mandate. It demonstrates the scope of Masaryk's philosophic activity, the profundity of his ideas, the range of his interests. It documents Masaryk's view and standpoint on the important political and cultural events of that particular period.

Volume I – 1918-1920 – published: 1933, 1934, 1939

Volume II – 1921-1923 – published: 1934, 1938

Volume III – 1924-1928 – published: 1994.

### **Česká otázka. Snahy a tužby národního obrození (The Czech Question. The struggles and desires of the National Revival)**

The cornerstone work, with which Masaryk entered into the controversy concerning the sense of Czech history. He answers the question as to what conceptual sources enable the Czech nation to become an active participant in world history and to align itself with the most developed nations in the world. He points to the global dimensions of the Czech question. The idea of emancipation, by means of moral religious reform, is both the substance of Czech history and the necessary basis for world progress. He develops his idea about the ethical and reformatory content of Czech history through examples of the literary work of J. Dobrovský, J. Kollár, J. Jungmann, F. Palacký and K. Havlíček.

Published: 1895, 1908, 1924, 1936, 1948, 1969, 1990.

### **Ernest Renan o židovství jako plemenu a náboženství (Ernest Renan on Jewry as a Race and Religion)**

Published: 1883.

**Ideály humanitní (The Ideals of Humanity)**

Masaryk fully presents his idea of humanity as a relation of reciprocal respect, based on an understanding the extra-individual meaning of human life and, hence, the ensuing the principia of ethics and morality. From his humanitarian standpoint, he presents a critique of the most important conceptual trends of his time. He concentrates especially on questions of their ethical doctrine and how they solve the question of the individual's role as an active creator of history.

Published: 1901, 1919, 1920, 1927, 1930, 1937, 1945, 1968, 1990; in English: 1938, 1969, 1971, 1972; in German: 1902, 1935; in Ukrainian: 1902; in Polish: 1905; in Hungarian: 1923; in Rumanian: 1923; in French: 1930; in Esperanto: 1931; in Spanish: 1934.

**Jak pracovat? (How to Work)**

Lectures from 1898 on effective work in philosophy.

Published: 1925, 1926, 1927, 1930, 1939, 1946, 1947, 1977, 1990; in Ukrainian: 1930.

**Jan Hus. Naše obrození a naše reformace (Jan Hus. Our Revival and Our Reformation)**

This work belongs to a broader complex concerning the sense of Czech history. Therefore, according to the author's desire, this work is published along with *The Czech Question* and *Our Present Crisis*. Here, Masaryk formulates most expressively the thesis, that the conceptual content of Czech national history is religioethical and is expressed in the reformational ideas of Hussitism and the Bohemian Brethren embodied in the work of J. Hus and J. A. Komenský. The reformation tradition thus stands at the very origins of national revivalism.

Published: 1896, 1899, 1903, 1923, 1925, 1979, 1990; in Serbo-Croatian: 1923.

**Karel Havlíček. Snahy a tužby politického probuzení (Karel Havlíček. The Struggles and Desires of the Political Awakening)**

Published: 1896, 1904, 1920.

**Moderní člověk a náboženství (The Modern Man and Religion)**

A collection of Masaryk's articles originally published in the magazine *Nová doba* (New Time) over the years 1896-1898. Among them, a philosophical psychological analysis of Goethe's Faust, Musset's Rolla and other literary characters of contemporary literature which simultaneously evaluates the ethical and moral aspects of outstanding modern philosophers. He deals in detail with in symptoms of moral, ethical and religiously-psychological character the XIXth century human being. He postulates a deep crisis of personality and inner disturbance of the intellect, will and feelings of this individual as a consequence of his/her lost relation to the true God. He pursues the earlier points of departure from the work „*Suicide...*“

Published: 1934; in English: 1938, 1970; in Hungarian: 1935; in Slovak: 1936.

**Naše nynější krise. Pád strany staročeské a počátkové směrů nových (Our Present Crisis. The Fall of the Old-Czech Party and the Origins of the New Trends)**

An experiment to philosophically pinpoint the reasons behind the crisis in the attempted national-political emancipation of the Czech nation, as presented by the most eminent representatives of Czech political life at the end of the XIXth century. Masaryk sees the causes of this situation above all in the vagueness of conceptual stances assumed by

politicians at that time, which is, however, the consequence of a lack of understanding for the more common meaning of Czech national life and the more impressive ideas hence emerging. These ideas are substituted by utilitarian and egoistic points of view which cannot become a mobilising factor in a wider political effort by the Czech nation.

Published: 1895, 1920, 1925, 1930, and again together with the *Czech Question*.

#### **Nová Evropa. Stanovisko slovanské (The New Europe. The Slav Standpoint)**

This work deals with a project for the political and national arrangement of Europe after the First World War was ended by the victory of the Entente states. Accent is placed on the rearrangement of Central Europe after the supposed disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian constitutional monarchy. The principal conception presupposes the balance of the powers of small states, the task of small Central-European nation states as the eastern boundary of the German invasion, and the close collaboration of new states with the victorious Great Powers, all with the aim of safeguarding the European balance of power and breaking German aggression.

Published: 1920, 1921, 1939, 1994; in English: 1918, 1972; in German: 1920, 1922, 1976; in Lusatian: 1922; in Serbo-Croatian: 1920.

#### **Problém malých národů v evropské krizi (The Problem of Small Nations in the European Crisis. Inaugural Lecture at the University of London, King's College by Professor Th. G. Masaryk, Late Professor of Philosophy at the Czech University of Prague)**

The specific problem of small Central-European nations, of their evolution, emancipatory efforts and their future was already emphasised by Masaryk in his inaugural lecture at the University of London in December 1916.

Published: 1926; in English: 1916; in French: 1916; in German: 1922, 1973.

#### **Nutnost revidovat proces polenský (The Necessity to revise the Polná Case)**

Published: 1899; in German: 1899.

#### **Význam procesu polenského pro pověru rituální (The Meaning of the Polná Case for Ritual Superstition)**

Published: 1990; in German: 1900.

Two of Masaryk's interconnected polemics against the anti-Semitism in Czech society of that time. It is a critique of prejudice in the trial against Leopold Hilsner.

#### **O ethice a alkoholismu (On Ethics and Alcoholism)**

An essay concerning the ethical situation of the society of the time. It focuses on the sociological-psychological and ethical roots of alcoholism and the destructiveness of its consequences on social ethics. It is a demonstration of Masaryk's intense interest in the improvement of life, especially the life of the lower-born social strata.

Published: 1912, 1920; in German 1906; in Ukrainian; 1923; in Serbo-Croatian: 1924, 1929; in Bulgarian: 1931.

#### **Otázka sociální. Základy marxismu sociologické a filosofické (The Social Question. The Sociological and Philosophical Principia of Marxism)**

A detailed analysis of some important aspects of Marxist doctrine. It pays especial attention to those questions that lead in Marxism to the teaching about the class struggle, the

revolution and the revolutionary party. The critique is conducted from a humanistic point of view. Masaryk holds the social question to be one of the most pressing contemporary problems demanding a constant attempt at reform.

Published: 1898, 1936, 1946, 1947, 1948; in German: 1899; in Russian: 1900 (selection).

**Palackého idea národa českého (Palacký's Idea of the Czech Nation)**

A philosophically-directed study of the development of Palacký's idea of the Czech nation as embodied in historical works, political thoughts and praxis. Masaryk remarks that the idea has political, national, social and cultural dimensions in Palacký and prepares the ground for the Czech emancipation programme on the principle of humanity.

Published: 1912, 1926, 1947, 1948; in German: 1898.

**Počet pravděpodobnosti a Humeova skepse (Probability Calculus and Hume's Scepticism)**

Here Masaryk makes use of the probability theory to counter the sceptical-agnostic element of Hume's teaching.

Published: 1883, 1930; in German: 1884.

**Praktická filosofie na základě sociologie (Practical Philosophy on the Basis of Sociology)**

A collection of Masaryk's lectures, named after the course held at the Faculty of Philosophy of the Czech University of Prague, in which various sociological, social, political and philosophical problems were considered.

Published: 1885.

**Právo historické a přirozené (Historical Law and Natural Law)**

The article examines the Czech emancipatory movement and its claims from a political-philosophical point of view. It tries to establish a certain standpoint independent of the one-sided conservative adherence to historical state law and by the liberal appeal to the natural law of national liberty.

Published: 1900.

**Problém malého národa (The problem of a Small Nation. Translation of a lecture given at the university extension course in Kromeriz on April 16 and 17, 1905)**

A lecture given in Kroměříž in April 1905. A study on the specificities of the cultural and political position of the Czech nation in Central Europe. It is focused on the question of the national self-consciousness and self-realisation in relation to the objective possibilities of a specific period.

Published: 1937, 1946, 1947, 1990; in English: 1973.

**Rusko a Evropa (Russia and Europe)**

An extensive study, the aim of which is both to identify the specificities of Russian social-political life and to determine their origins. The first two volumes contain an overview of Russian history from the IXth century to the year 1918, an analysis of the work of distinguished Russian philosophers and political thinkers, especially those of the XIXth century, and of the social-political trends of that time. The third volume researches the origins of the abovementioned specificities, analysing the creative work of notable Russian writers of the XIXth century such as F. M. Dostojevskij, whom Masaryk considered the most representative of Russian culture while at the same time closely

bound, by means of his fictional characters, to the problem reflected in all European literature of that time.

Published: 1919-1921, 1930-1933; in German: 1913, 1994; in Serbo-Croatian: 1923 (selection); in Italian: 1925; in English: [The Spirit of Russia] 1919, 1955, 1961 (Volumes I and II), 1967 (a selection from Volume III), 1968; in Japanese: 1962-1966.

**Sebevražda hromadným jevem společenským moderní osvěty (Suicide as a Mass Social Phenomenon of the Modern Enlightenment)**

Masaryk's first extensive scientific monograph focusing on a significant sociological-psychological phenomenon. This work already contains nearly all the theoretical principles of Masaryk's further anthropological reflections. Here he produces detailed research of statistical data on suicide. He comes to the conclusion that the actual cause of the increase in suicides is to be found in the spiritual sphere. The rational man of the post-enlightened XIXth century loses the religious understanding of God and thus even the relation to a deeper sense of his life, thus leading him to find the solution to this difficult life situation in suicide.

Published: 1904, 1926, 1930; in German: [Der Selbstmord als sociale Massenerscheinung der modernen Civilisation] 1881, 1982.

**Slovanské studie I. Slavjanofilství I. V. Kirejevského (Slav Studies I. Slavophilia of I. V. Kirejevskij)**

Published: 1889, 1893.

**Studie o F. M. Dostojevském (A Study on F. M. Dostojevskij)**

Published: 1932.

These are two studies dealing with distinguished writers and philosophers in Russia of the XIXth century. He concentrates on the analysis of their world view, on an explanation of the causes of the specificity of Russian culture and on the role of the literature in the process of Russia's Europeanisation. He endeavours an ethical-psychological analysis, especially of Dostojevskij's work.

**Svět a Slované (The World and the Slavs)**

Published: 1916, 1919, 1924.

**Světová revoluce (The World Revolution)**

A collection of reflections and memories (authentic recordings of a lot of actions, appointments, meetings), of the author's activity during the First World War. There are many philosophical-political, geopolitical and ethical reflections on the contemporary situation of the world struggle between democratic powers and their opponents.

Published: 1925, 1925-1930, 1930-1933; in English: [Making of a State] 1927, 1969; in German: 1925, 1927; in French: 1930; in Hungarian: 1928, 1990 (selection); in Russian: 1927 (Prague); in Ukrainian: 1930; in Polish: 1932; in Japanese: 1932; in Chinese: 1933; in Serbo-Croatian: 1935; in Slovene: 1936.

**Eine Untersuchung über die Prinzipien der Moral von D. Hume**

Published: 1882 in German.

**V boji o náboženství (In the Struggle for a genuine Religion)**

A work emphasising the ethical and humanising meaning of a real and genuine religious stance for modern man to combat scepticism and confessional formalism.

Published: 1904, 1932, 1947.

**Základové konkrétné logiky (The Principles of Concrete Logics)**

A specially conceived introduction to the philosophical methodology of sciences. He constructs a systematic structure for the abstract, theoretical and practical sciences and presents the fundamental principia of his „realistic method“.

Published: 1885. Completed and expanded in German under the title *Versuch einer konkreten Logik* 1887.

**Juvenilie (Juvenilia)**

The first volume of T. G. Masaryk's Publications includes journalistic works on various philosophical, political and psychological topics from the years 1876-1881. A wide purview of Masaryk's scientific interests and the depth of his interest in public life is demonstrated in this work.

Published: 1993.

*The underlined year of publication means the first edition in a magazine or in a book of papers, is now unavailable. Dates in italics indicate publications in Czech language from exile publishing houses.*

*Jan Pochman*

## **The Czech Question: People and Events**

### **The Old Czechs**

The earliest Czech political party was established in the beginning of the 1860s as a conservatively oriented party of entrepreneurs and landowners. Among its founders were the historian, František Palacký, the politician František L. Rieger and the lawyer, František A. Bare. Although its official name was The National Party, the delineation, 'Old Czech', became part of the political jargon as a result of the clash of opinions concerning its programme and strategy in 1893. The party programme had as its basis the Czech Historical State Law, thus allowing for co-operation with the Czech historical nobility. The last leader of the party was K. Matěš, who, from the early 1890s, was steadily to lose power. With the beginning of the Czechoslovak Republic, the Old Czech (along with other political parties), joined the Czechoslovak National Democratic Party.

### **The Young Czechs**

Originally, they formed the liberal-democratic wing of the National Party (the Old Czechs), from which they separated after a heated debate at the Congress at the end of 1864. The Young Czechs also endorsed the Historical State Law, but rejected the Old Czechs' programme of passive national resistance, stressing instead economic liberalism, civic equality and self-government. They were profiled as national and anticlerical. The founders of the Young Czech Party were Julius Grégr, Karel Sladkovský and Josef Barák. Karel Kramář and Alois Rašín, two of its last leaders, adopted a strong anti-Austrian stance during the First World War and belonged to the central organ of the home revolt which carried out intelligence and conspirative operations in the Czech lands (i.e. the Secret Board of the Mafia). After 1918, they joined the Czechoslovak National Democracy.

### **The Královédvorský and Zelenohorský Manuscripts**

These form a cycle of alleged old Czech epic, epic lyric and lyric poems, originating from the beginning of the 19th century influenced by the romantic conception of the nation and its culture. The custodian of the museum collections and the librarian, Václav Hanka, and his colleagues (known as Hanka's company) F. Hořčíčka, J. Linda and A. V. Svoboda, are considered to be the authors of the manuscripts. These poetically valuable falsifications were intended to prove the existence of home creation and their Slav roots prior to the Western-European influence of. Their patriotic tenor, emphasising the idea of national individuality and defence against intruders inspired both Czech literature (J. Zeyer), painting and plastic art (J. Mánes, J. V. Myslbek) right throughout the 19th century.

In 1886, the first articles in the magazine *Athenaeum* from the pen of the linguist, Jan Gebauer, and the philosopher and sociologist, Tomáš G. Masaryk pointed to the inauthenticity of the manuscripts. These articles were immediately rebuffed by certain experts. This controversy expanded into a discussion on the principles of scientific research, soon extending beyond the university and scientific milieus, evoking vehement objections and a quasi-denunciatory reaction from nationalist-conservative circles; thus it became a political affair. Gebauer, Masaryk, the historian Jaroslav Vlček and the palae-

ographer Josef Truhlář were confronted with opposition from the historians Václav Vladivoj Tomek and Josef Kalousek, the literary historian Josef Jireček, the linguist Martin Hattala, the literary theorist František Zákrejs and the politicians Julius Grégr, František Ladislav Rieger, among others. Nevertheless, it was scientifically proven that the Manuscripts were indeed falsifications.

### **František Palacký (1798-1876)**

One of the most extraordinary personalities of Czech public life of the first half of the 19th Century, a historian and politician, an aesthetician and literary critic, and co-founder of the Old Czech Party. His most significant work is the five-volumed History of the Nation in Bohemia and Moravia, originally written in German. The conception of national history and of the Czech political history was constructed upon the romantic idea of the historical struggle between the Slavs (as the principle of ethical force) and the Germans (as the representatives of absolutism, authority and brute physical force). For Palacký, the Hussite period constituted the culmination of Czech history. Regarding policy, Palacký fought for equal rights for all nations then within the Austria. He was a Federalist and a moderate Liberal.

### **Jan Kollár (1793-1852)**

An evangelical minister, poet and national revivalist of Slovak origin. His most significant work, *Slávy dcera* (Slava's Daughter), is a patriotic, lyrical epic, monumentally conceived and classicised poetic composition fuelled by the idea of pan-Slavism. As we can see, Kollár's intellectual activity and publications, his conception of Slav reciprocity was based on the notion of humanity taken from Herder's – and partly Hegel's – philosophy of history. Kollár linked nationality with religion and general humanity. Within the Czech reformation, he represented the nation's original contribution to the conceptual and ethical development of humankind. He became an advocate of the separation of the Slovak and Czech languages and struggled against the Hungarianisation of the Slovak nation.

### **Karel Havlíček Borovský (1821-1856)**

Journalist, critic and satiric poet, Borovský fought tirelessly against sentimental national romanticism (the demise of which was largely due to his efforts) with his enlightened realism. He earned respect not only by virtue of his literary and journalistic work, but also by the vigour of his personality and the emphasis he placed on inner truth and political courage. Initially an advocate of pan-Slavism, it was after two years' study in Russia (1843-1844) that he renounced this concept. Czech nationalism, political and economic liberalism and the economic and cultural rise of the nation form the point of departure in all of Havlíček's work. He rejected the separation of the Czech and Slovak languages. He constructed his political programme both against the revolutionary radicalism and reactionary tendencies of the changing Vienna governments. He was considered an enemy of clericalism, and championed the separation of church and state. In 1848, the year of revolution, he became a deputy in the Imperial Assembly, but was soon forced to abandon his political activities. In 1851, he was placed under police surveillance and was later forced to leave Prague. In 1851, he was deported to Tyrolean Brixen, where he fell seriously ill. Borovský died a year after his return to Bohemia, quickly becoming a symbol of the Czech anti-Austrian position.

### Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk (1850-1937)

Student at the Universities of Vienna and Leipzig, philosopher, sociologist, publicist, Czech realist politician and Czechoslovak statesman, first President of the Czechoslovak Republic, lecturer at the University of Vienna (1879-1882), then associate professor (1882), professor at Prague's Czech University, founder of the first Czech scientific monthly, *Atheneum*, and the popular-scientific *Naše doba* (Our Time). (For an extensive bibliography of Masaryk's work please refer to the special appendix which follows.) His general world view can be classified as Christian positivist: he saw the theistically conceived notion of humanity, along with the concept of moral progress, as a continuation of the Czech reformation. He called for the spiritualisation of both national and individual life and ethical activism as a prerequisite for its implementation.

Masaryk's first phase of scientific activity was multithematic : in addition to the historical-philosophical essays *Plato jako vlastenec* (Plato as a Patriot), works within the sphere of applied philosophy, the philosophy of history and religion *Slovanské studie* (The Slav Studies), he produced his sociological, ethically inspired promotion thesis *Der Selbstmord als sociale Massenerscheinung der modernen Civilisation* (Suicide as a Mass Social Phenomenon of Modern Civilisation) and the positivist-inspired classification of science, *Základové konkrétné logiky* (The Principles of Concrete Logic).

The second phase is constituted by works concerning the problems of Czech politics and the philosophy of Czech history *Česká otázka* (The Czech Question), *Naše nynější krise* (Our Present Crisis), *Jan Hus*, *Karel Havlíček*, *Palacký's Idee des böhmischen Volkes* (Palacký's Idea of the Czech Nation) and in the socio-philosophical works *Otázka sociální* (The Social Question) and essays *Moderní člověk a náboženství* (Modern Man and Religion), and *Ideály humanitní* (The Ideals of Humanity).

Masaryk gained international renown for his works on Russian culture, literature and politics (the essays on Kirejevskij's Slavophilia, Dostojevskij and the substantial work, *Rusko a Evropa* (Russia and Europe)).

Shortly after the outbreak of the First World War, Masaryk emigrated, becoming the leader of the Czech anti-Austrian struggle for independence abroad. He linked this struggle with American democratic traditions, the idea of civil liberty, the right to national autonomy. (At the beginning of the war, he moved away from the notion of Historical Law to embrace that of Natural Law, politically advocating the distintegration of the Austro-Hungarian state.) The birth of the independent Czechoslovak Republic in 1918 saw Masaryk its first president. Of note in this, the final period of his activity is the main programme commenced in the middle of the Russian Revolution and completed in the USA: *The New Europe: The Slav Standpoint* and the reflexively-conceived 'report' on his activity during what the title refers to as *Světová revoluce. Za války a ve válce 1914-1918* (The World Revolution. During the War and during the Revolution (1914-1918)).

Miloš Havelka

**Spor o smysl českých dějin 1895-1938**  
**(The Controversy Concerning the Sense of**  
**Czech History 1895-1938).**

**Prepared and introduced by Miloš Havelka**

Praha, Torst 1995, 869 p.

It might seem that the publication of an anthology of texts which documents the protracted „Controversy Concerning the Sense of Czech History 1895-1938“ is merely a report on the past and a reproduction of the discussions on this controversy, and that, furthermore, this publication would have little, if anything, to communicate to the contemporary situation in the Czech Republic, where everything has changed. Nevertheless, it is my opinion that this event should be given exceptional attention.

Above all, it is necessary to reflect upon the fact that the historical cleft in the development of our national community between the years 1939-1989 renders the period preceding those years less distant than the number 50 might, at first glance, suggest. It is only today that we have the opportunity to assess – in peace, as a whole and wholly free – the entire collection of studies from the wide circle of authors on which little has been said or whose work has been misinterpreted over the last half-century: T. G. Masaryk, J. Kaizl, J. Vančura, K. Krofta, J. Pekař, J. Herben, Z. Nejedlý, F. M. Bartoš, J. Jareš, E. Rádl, J. L. Fischer, F. X. Šalda, J. Slavík, K. Miklík, K. Kupka, J. B. Čapek, K. Stloukal, J. Werstadt – even the confrontation of these significant actors' perspectives in the discussions provides an interesting angle to the understanding of our national history and intellectual/spiritual endeavours such that the presentation alone of this historical picture demands high praise be accorded the anthology.

Of course it does not only concern a deeper recognition of time-specific controversy. The evaluation of their significance for our historiography as well as considerations on the possibilities and choice of texts I will leave to the competent experts. I am not an historian and therefore have chosen to limit myself to certain questions of a philosophical-sociological nature.

In terms of its content, the anthology is, in my opinion, is rich the research on Masaryk, focusing on the key theme of his thought and practice. The anthology testifies the depths to which Masaryk influenced our scientific and cultural-political life, and more especially, it testifies to the fact that in the years of the interwar republic, Masaryk was not only a revered symbol: his thoughts were always subject to a multidimensional objective critique. Within the controversies, it will be immediately clear (when we pursue them from the perspective of Wissenssociologie) how the reflections on our national existence, identity and their developmental paths were founded on the historiography and philosophy of Czech history. Reflections of this kind do not lose their actuality with the passing of historical time: indeed, their insistence today – in a dramatically changed Europe and within the new Czech statehood – has increased significantly.

It would also be possible to close the door on such considerations. I have no doubts that there are both reviewers and scientists who would find many good reasons for thrusting this subject into the past. They could, for example, argue as follows: the question as to the sense of history is a pseudo-problem, a leftover from conceptions of the logic of historical development, a metaphysical residue which imposes hidden meanings on the chaos of historical conflicts from without, scientifically unverifiable constructs, a reassuring metarécit, a personification of history and nation. Certain goals are only formulated by individuals, whereby history constitutes their result – various human activities, an unintended result of intentional action, from which, all too often, something quite different emerges from what people originally sought. It is only after the fact that people, in a desire for self-reassurance, strive to bestow historical non-sense with a sense.

Such reflections (I leave aside the question as to whether or not they be post-modern) can invalidate the question itself. Nevertheless, it is interesting that in thoroughly dedicating oneself to the texts in the publication, one comes up against all the aforementioned objections. Even at the time of their initial appearance, several levels of the whole question

came into view, none of which, in my opinion, have been definitively dealt with as a real problem by contemporary philosophy and science (until this very day).

It is, above all, a question of the relation of philosophy and sociology to historiography. In the case of Masaryk and his conflict with Pekař, it can be seen as a difference between a philosopher of history (or a typologising sociologist) and an historian, (the latter) who seeks to depict past events which are based on the maximum number of carefully collected and ordered facts. In this context, one can apply the concept of an „ideogram“ to Masaryk's philosophy of history – a concept which Václav Černý (and Karel Čapek before him) employed in the exposition of Masaryk's approach to belletristic (V. Černý: „F.X.Š a T.G.M.“ *Host do domu* 1967, no. 12): the authors and the heroes are not, in Masaryk's approach, the creators and products of an artistic artefact – they are merely typical representatives of or certain ethical-philosophical and social stances towards the world. Analogically speaking, one could say that for Masaryk, the historical products, époques, personalities and events are ideograms, the bearers of certain meanings, whose ordering creates an illusion of continuity – a vision of the sense of history: the Bohemian Brethren, the reformation, Jan Hus, the national revival, Havlíček and so on – all these historical phenomena are for Masaryk an expression of the secularisation, of the concept of humanity, of the democratic tradition, an opening of the space for individualism and critical thought, an expression of the inner weight of Czechness, the appeal for civilisation, of peaceful approach to politics.

A further important distinction is connected with this – the controversy over the sense of Czech history as a controversy over „dual historiographies“ (F. X. Šalda), a duality in the approach to the historical material. Masaryk expressly declared himself (in, for example, his unpublished response of 1928 to Pekař, entitled „Masarykova česká filosofie“) a proponent of „[understanding] history“ *verstehende Geschichtswissenschaft* (indicating German historians); thus Masaryk can be placed within the current of the *Geisteswissenschaftler*, which, in contrast to the positiv-

ist conception, champions the interpretative approach to the sciences dedicated to human beings and society. Hence, after thorough comparison of Masaryk's sociology with the mainstream sociological theories of the 19th and 20th centuries, Jiří Musil has placed Masaryk in proximity to the theories of symbolic interactionism (Jiří Musil: „Masarykova sociologická teorie: co je z ní stále živé.“ *Masarykův sborník*, VIII, Praha 1993).

The third level of the problematic concerns the relations between the philosophy of history, historiography and politics – a relation which, without a doubt, lead to a radicalisation and broader publicity of the controversy as well as to the transgression of the border of purely scientific, academic discussion. For Masaryk, it was above all a question of the creation of a national-emancipatory programme, through which historical references were incorporated into the contemporary political polemics, into the concrete conception of Czech politics : namely under the conditions of the autonomous development of Czech society within the Austro-Hungarian framework, in the context of the First World War, and with the building up of the independent national state. Masaryk's philosophy of Czech history indisputably shows signs of purposeful construction, which played a significant and positive political role. This does not mean, however, that no concrete historical objections could be formulated against it. The risk of this also arises in those situations when the problems of history – quite naturally – insinuate themselves in „extra-scientific“ contexts. The French revolution of 1789, for example, became an historical event, from which the French people derived their Republican statehood; nevertheless to this very day, the French have passionate arguments concerning their interpretation of this event. In addition, there should be no doubt as to the fact that Masaryk himself - through his robust, and in a certain sense, charismatic personality - contributed to the intensity of the controversy.

The fourth dimension is also connected to this – being the connection between the activist traits of Masaryk's personality with the orientation of his entire thought: with his approach to nationality, with his conception of

national existence as an active creation and as a task which stands before us – thus, not as a simple continuation of a set, completed, given, ethnic (linguistic-cultural) community. By „sense“, Masaryk not only signifies a „telos“, but also the creation of a quality of national life through the connection of our activity to the stable vertical (the perspective of eternity, the integration of the supernatural democratic and humanist values). Such, for example, was F. X. Šalda's immediate reaction to Masaryk's *Naše nynější krize* (F. X. Šalda: „Těžká kniha“, 1895. In: *Soubor díla F. X. Šaldy*, vol. 11, Praha 1950). Likewise, Erazim Kohák signifies Masaryk's conception as „ethical“ – and not „ethnic“ – and Jan Šimsa (in his contribution to the 1994 Hodonín conference on the religious dimension of Masaryk's thought) interprets Masaryk's term „question“ as „task“.

One could say that in these last two points, there is no difference between Masaryk and Pekař: rather, they have passed one another by. The published texts contribute to the return of Masaryk's name to the current scientific discussions, in which, for example, the all-too-strict formulation of the alternative „Masaryk or Pekař?“ (or similarly, the most recent alternative „Masaryk or Patočka?“) can be solved at a more subtle level.

The debate did not come to an end in the year 1938. A further dramatic historical development authored certain sequels to the Czech question: beginning with Nejedlý's combination of patriotism and Stalinism, through the attempts for „socialism with a human face“ with the ensuing considerations on the „unself-evidence of a nation“, on the Fate of the Czechs, through the controversies in samizdat and exile literature on the success or failure of the philosophy of Czech history, on the moral failure – or otherwise – of the Czech nation, through to the emancipatory year, 1989. Thereafter, a rapid course of events which placed the Czech question in radical new contexts: the renewal of the democratic statehood, the unsuccessful attempt to maintain a common Czecho-Slovak state, reflections on the national and state identity in the independent Czech Republic, the Czech-Czech and Czech-German dialogues, the controversies over national holidays, the efforts towards a pluralistic

and ecumenical community, the problematic of the positioning of the Czech Republic within European integration, the debates on the need for a broader vision of the future...

Hence, the publication of this anthology could in no way be viewed as a simple retrospective. In reading it, we are increasingly more aware that it is extremely necessary to continue – to publish yet a second or even a third volume which would encompass the last 50 years.

The author of the introductory study therefore rightly places the theme within the context of the post-war reflections. One must also give credit to the manner in which this author accomplishes the complex task of selecting and ordering the texts, as well as to his explanation of this process and the analysis of the key positions of every actor within the controversy.

I in no way think that the subsequent parts of this edition will be „Czechocentric“, focusing solely on the small Czech community. It has become clear that it is inconceivable that the „Czech question“ be viewed in any other terms than the „European question“ and, indeed, the „global question“. Not that the Czechs have been singled out from all other peoples to deliver new, unexpected truths. The reason is less grand: the reflections on the experiences of a small nation in a sensitive, eventful space are reflections which contribute to the search for an answer to the problems of the contemporary historical situation which is characterised by the breakdown of the bi-polar world.

I think that the permanent posing of the Czech question is no Czech illness (even if the symptoms of fever and hypochondriac hyperventilation are sometimes encountered here): this question may also be a cryptogram for a general existential problematic of the contemporary humanity which is pluralistic, multicultural and fearful of the crisis. These are the old problems: Who are we? What can we know? What can we hope for? Where can we go? What may we do?

Lubomír Nový

**Milan Otáhal: Opozice, moc, společnost 1969-1989 (Opposition, Power, Society 1969-1989).**

Praha, Maxdorf 1994, 124 p.

The study is divided into four chapters themselves indications of the main thrust of the author's evaluation of the opposition movement. The first, *The beginnings of „normalisation“ and the first phase of the opposition*, is an analysis of the activities and demands of the groups active till about 1972. The second chapter describes the circumstances leading to the rise of Charter 77, the implications of this event and the new elements distinguishing it from opposition groups of the previous period. The next part, *The break in the development of the dissident movement and society* focuses on the late 80s, on changes in the USSR and the consequent weakening of the Czechoslovak normalisation regime as it lost its ability to manage the expansion of the opposition's influence on the people's thoughts and attitudes. The conclusion then concentrates indepth on the events of November and December 1989.

The manifestation of disagreement at the Soviet invasion increased at the same time as the Dubček leadership overstepped the line of tolerable compromise. I would not, however, identify myself fully with the author's postulation that there was no break in the opposition development until Gustáv Husák was elected leader of the Czechoslovak Communist Party (KSČ). However, it is the author himself who shows convincingly that there was no significant difference between Dubček's and Husák's politics.

In the period 1969-1970, there was a notable shift in both the representation of the opposition's opinions and in their strength. The mass actions rising from the wide population strata engagement continued to fade away. Characteristic features of the entire opposition of the late sixties and early seventies were the belief in socialism and its values as well as the confidence in the serious contradiction between the normalisation politics and the genuine socialistic principles, the latter being vehemently discredited by the former. In opposition to this standard as represented by, for example, the Socialist Movement of Czecho-

slovak Citizens (Socialistické hnutí československých občanů), remarkable exceptions could be found. While the initiatives embodying these professed socialism, their practical programmes were quite different from the traditionally socialistic ones. The first of them is the Ten Point Manifesto (Manifest Deset bodů) published by a small group of citizens on 21. 8. 1969. It was fundamentally different from anything else at that time, due to the great weight placed on human and civic rights and on the possibility of „non-political practical functioning“ with the aim of self-protection from the system. This document was signed by many people connected with the further development of the opposition movement (Václav Havel, Ludvík Vaculík, Rudolf Battěk).

It seems legitimate that the author pays attention to the appearance of perhaps the most remarkable ideas on the Czechoslovak scene of that time: the Czechoslovak Movement for Democratic Socialism (Československé hnutí za demokratický socialismus). „A Preliminary Thesis of Open Socialism“ (Předběžné teze otevřeného socialismu), an outline for future development, ushered in a fundamentally new moment in our political way of thinking by introducing a completely different conception of socialism: socialism is neither a concrete vision nor a rigid doctrine, but merely a method – an attitude assuming understanding and tolerance. It consists in and aims for the „co-operation of individuals“.

The atmosphere of the post-1972 period was not favourable for opposition activities: while the opposition was not completely destroyed by the intervention of authority, it was fundamentally shaken by it. It is in these early stages that the author distinguishes two factions of the opposition movement, applying this dichotomy throughout the entire ensuing development. Thus he contrasts Mandler's „realistic“ or „constructive“ group with Havel's „radical“ group.

The „realistic“ group – embryo of the later „Democratic Initiative“ (Demokratická iniciativa) – remained in the field of traditional „political“ politics which sought to act within the range of existing political possibilities and on the basis of an overall knowledge and understanding of tradition as well as the present

state of society. This differentiation serves as the starting point for further description of the origin and evaluation of Charter 77, Havel's conception of „apolitical“ politics becoming an essential part of its concept. The origin as well as the nature of Charter 77 was simultaneously stimulated by its originators' incentive to defend basic human rights. It was their violation, the effort to prevent their being violated and to secure the general respect accorded them that was the main goal of Charter 77. It avoided becoming an organisation, insisting on its fixed status and its particular goal postulated in advance as well as on a conditional acceptance of new members. Its aim was not to be an opposition political power intent on changing the political system. Instead of traditional political methods, Charter 77 made moral demands of the party, state authorities and ordinary citizens, who all were to reject their lives of „one kind of thought and another kind of action“ and start to „live in truth“. The leader of the „realistic“ faction saw Charter 77 and its demands as „moral radicalism“. Given its distance from the problems facing the majority of people, it could not count on stronger public support.

The most controversial moment of the entire book is Otáhal's evaluation of Charter 77: it is an unsatisfactory evaluation of the well-known fact that during the totalitarian regime, every display of independence on the line laid out by the political authority acquired a political connotation, even if under normal conditions it would have born no connection with politics of any kind. The domain of politics in such a system is much more extensive and includes independent cultural activities as well as attempts to think and behave independently in the various spheres of life. Similarly, the behaviour of any individual who refuses to be humiliated by the regime forcing him or her to live against his/her beliefs, thus has its own political importance. Václav Havel believed such individual human decisions to be the most important prerequisite of the system change as they derived the social crisis from the crisis of the individual.

Thus we come to the second reason allowing us to take Charter 77 as the manifestation of a political act. Besides its mediated political

importance, I think it is also possible to claim its direct importance. This is clearly shown in the November 1977 essay by Professor Patocka, which M. Otáhal quotes. The human rights which see commitment as the acknowledgement of something „confining, not criticisable or taboo“ retain a political dimension which cannot be ignored. Basic civic rights were acknowledged by western political thought, not as the expression of utilitarian political calculations, but as a claim derived from the conviction that the world is submitted to the principle making all individuals equal; thus, in order to protect their legitimate interests everybody must also be equal in terms of the political power which has illusively risen from their decision.

On the other hand, it is possible to agree with the author's assertion that Charter 77 did not always avoid slipping into the role of the „conscience of society“. After all, it is obvious that there was really no direct way for Charter 77 to overcome the totalitarian regime. Neither, however, was there a way for other opposition attempts such as the Democratic Initiative – as the author himself acknowledges, if in a less careful and elaborated manner.

Although Charter 77 was not accepted by all protagonists of the opposition, the alternative organisations were only to come into being ten years later – at the time somewhat problematically characterised by M. Otáhal as a „break in the development of the dissident movement“. Obviously the development in the USSR subsequent to M. Gorbatschov's rise to power and the commencement of his perestrojka, and after the consequent, albeit highly troublesome „liberalisation“ of the regime in ČSSR coupled with the growing economic problems and a stagnation, created new, more favourable conditions for the opposition's activities. The new petitions, requests and letters from citizens' groups addressed to the party and state bodies were emerging, while the number of people signing them was increasing; new independent organisations came into being, just as the number of demonstrations grew. Naturally, new conceptions were emerging – from among those which Otáhal emphasises, the most important is the Democratic Initiative

project of 1987, this according to his basic differentiation of the opposition. Although its statement was signed by Václav Havel and the other leaders of Charter 77, it was the action of a so-called realistic group. However, when the author talks about the break in the development of the dissident movement, he necessarily accepts the views of the Democratic Initiative. Indeed, the expression „break“ is not an appropriate application to the Democratic Initiative itself – at best it functions as a characterisation of the overall expansion of the opposition, thus being used in a quantitative rather than a qualitative sense.

Although there are immense differences between the Democratic Initiative and Charter 77, it is questionable to interpret and present their coexistence as a contest between naive moral radicals and wise cautious realists. The Democratic Initiative's fundamental interest was not the individual, his/her rights and moral dilemma, but the political sphere. According to the Democratic Initiative, the solution to the crisis was not a moral, but a political one. Thus the Democratic Initiative was intent on the democratisation of public life, the liberation of rigid centralism, an extended space for all kinds of independent activities. These changes were to occur gradually in a period of transition which should last, according to the September 1989 statement, until free elections were held.

Surprising in the Democratic Initiative's documents is the strong accent on the nation. The conception of Charter 77, based on the rights of the individual and his or her basic values, was probably closer to modern democratic society than the opposition's intended.

There were also other independent initiatives distinguished by striking political engagement – in the original sense – such as the Movement for Civic Freedom (Hnutí za občanskou svobodu), established in October 1988, or the Club for Socialist Reconstruction – Revival (Klub za socialistickou přestavbu – Obroda), whose programme was published in December 1988. The manifesto published by HOS (Movement for Civic Freedom), *Democracy for Everybody* (Demokracie pro všechny), responded to the changing situation, already pro-

posing possibilities for real political activity. With Václav Havel's considerable participation in the formulation of this programme, evidence of the main faction's mutual approach is to be found there. In contrast with HOS, the Revival associating the reform communists was much more linked to the concrete political vision and the ideal of democratic socialism.

Besides its programme not corresponding to its time of origin, the Revival also failed to establish the right strategy. While it maintained its connections with the other independent groups, it sought contact with the Czechoslovak Communist Party (KSČ) at the same time, thus dramatically damaging its ability to act properly. This, together with the quite high average age of its members and the fixed character of their past, lead to its isolation.

More new organisations were also being established such as the Independent Peace Association (Nezávislé mírové sdružení), the John Lennon Peace Club (Mírový klub Johna Lennona) and the Czech Children (České děti), thus completing the spectrum. All created their mainly generational profiles as an expression of their mistrust in ideals of the older generations.

The further course of events – up until November 1989 – is seen by Otáhal as the encounter with the „realistic“ and the „radical“ conception. The author embarks upon a more detailed analysis of the opinions expressed during the preparation and evaluation of the 21. 8. 1989 demonstration. Unfortunately, no opposition groups in ecclesiastic and artistic spheres are included in his work: only swift and marginal references made. The Christian groups in particular should not be omitted from the opposition movement – indeed it is hard to imagine it without them.

From the perspective of political sciences, the chief interest in Otáhal's book is the analysis of the „non-political“ and „political“ conceptions of politics and their practical expression and, in terms of mediation, the author's conception of what is the entire content of politics in general and especially politics in a totalitarian, undemocratic system.

*Jan Dobeš*

## The Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk Institute: Past and Present

### Foundation of the Institute

Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, the first president of Czechoslovakia, established the Institute to which he gave his name as a foundation in the year 1932. In the dedicatory document, he defined the mission of the Institute as follows:

- 1) to maintain and systematically build up the library and the archives in the manner established by my praxis thus far, or, if need be, according to certain directives issued by the curatorship upon consultation with me;
- 2) to process internally the material entrusted by me as well as that obtained thereafter and to prepare relevant material for publication; in accordance with the possibility of organising lectures, courses and extension courses and, similarly, to make use of the results obtained;
- 3) to continue the editing and publication of my own writings;
- 4) to enable scientists to conduct external studies and scientific work within the framework of the library and archive regulations as stipulated by the curatorship, in consultation with me; the library and the archives are to be reference in nature;
- 5) to edit or to contribute to publishing the results of this external work as well as other publications, provided the curatorship considers them to be relevant in subject and approach;
- 6) as to the museum – to hold the items donated to me and to make them accessible to the public according to the regulations laid down by the curatorship.

In fulfilment of the abovementioned tasks, Masaryk transferred to the foundation his archives, the library comprising about 70 thousand volumes and an even greater number of various items, intended for the eventual establishment of a museum. He provided the Institute with an initial financial deposit amounting to 10 million Czechoslovak crowns. At the end of the thirties, the Institute had nearly 17 million Czechoslovak crowns in valuables and on deposit books. Masaryk established a five-member curatorship to direct the Institute. Prominent members included Masaryk's daughter, Alice, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Edvard Beneš.

During the first years of its existence, the Institute was located within the Prague Castle complex. In signing the Dedicatory document, its founder presumed that in the course of time, a new building would be built for the Institute. Paragraph 4 of the Dedication document includes the statement: „The aim of the foundation is to establish and to maintain the Institute in its own building as a working centre.“ In the year 1935, the government of the Republic realised this aim. On the occasion of the president's 85th birthday, the government donated to the Institute a building site in Prague-Letná (registered in the Land Register of cadastral area, Holešovice-Bubny), with an area of 3038 square meters. Even before the war, selected architects began work on the proposed building. When the Institute was compelled to leave Prague Castle in Autumn 1938, its curatorship purchased a tenement-house in Prague-Bubeneč.

### **The Fate of the Institute after 1938**

For nearly a half century after 1938, a period of two totalitarian dictatorships prevented the Institute from developing its activities in accordance with its founder's wishes. During the Second World War, it was wrecked by the occupation forces, who commandeered the building in Prague-Bubeneč for military purposes. The Institute library and collections had to be moved, with some items going to the University library in the Klementinum, and others hidden in various places. The director, Vasil Škrach, and his close colleague Josef Navrátil were imprisoned. V. K. Škrach was executed in Berlin-Plötzensee on May 28, 1943.

In the year 1945, the Institute was re-established with substantial support from president Edvard Beneš. The government of the Republic assumed responsibility for the renewal of the Institute's financial capital, which had depreciated during the war. It freed up 59 million Czechoslovak crowns for the Institute from the UNRRA with a June 3, 1947 decision. The Institute property was returned to the house in Prague-Bubeneč. Unsuitable for optimal activity, the Prague municipality awarded the Institute Kramář's villa in December 1948 and the house in Bubeneč was made available for housing purposes. In the years 1950-1951, the Institute had to move again – this time into the Czech Savings Bank's building on Národní třída.

The promising after-war activity of the Institute was disrupted by the communists. Masaryk's conceptual and moral heritage, the monument to his existence taking the form of a scientific workplace independent of totalitarian power, was an obstacle to Stalinism, which arrived after February 1948. It was for this reason that as early as 1953, the Communist Party leadership of Czechoslovakia decided to abolish the Institute as a scientific workplace. The entire staff was dismissed. The library, which from 1950 had expanded to 204 000 volumes, was divided into several parts, most of them being deposited in various places kilometres from Prague. The museum collection met an even worse destiny, being lost during the liquidation of the Institute. All traces that could lead to its discovery have so far lead to dead ends. Masaryk's archives, on the other hand, escaped these dark times without great damage.

Upon liquidation of the Institute, its property (the building, library and collections) and financial capital fell into the hands of the state.

A new attempt to re-establish the Institute was made in 1968 during the Prague Spring. The development after the August intervention of the armies of the Warsaw Pact countries, however, foiled this plan before any work had begun.

### **After November 1989**

As early as January 4th 1990, the President of Republic, Václav Havel, decided to renew the Institute, this in response to a proposal from the Masaryk society committee. PhDr. Anna Masaryk thereupon established a curatorship by co-option (according to paragraph 5 of the dedicatory document) as the directive organ of the Institute. The curatorship consisted of the following members: Dr. Josef Zmr (chairperson); Dr. Anna Masaryk (vice-chairperson); Dr. Jaroslav Opat (secretary); Dr. Valentin Urfus, Dr. Karen Pichlík, Professor Miloš Tomčík were co-opted as further members of the curatorship and Mrs. Herberta Masaryk and Dr. Martin Kučera as alternate members.

The wherewithal for the declared renewal of the Institute, the necessary working space and financial means, however, were not granted to the curatorship in 1990. Indeed,

a minimum means and highly provisional working space were only obtained by the curatorship at the beginning of 1991. In May of that year, the first five employees began work there. Protracted difficulties in financing the restoration of the Institute were overcome only recently, at the end of 1994 and the beginning of 1995. After earlier negotiations between the Institute curatorship and the directive body of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic and the relevant government authorities, the Academy assembly decided to incorporate the Institute into its facility structure. The Institute thus became a budgetary organisation and a substantial part of its activity will henceforth be secured from the state budget.

At the beginning of 1995, the Institute team consisted of 14 permanent employees, with an additional six to ten external specialists co-operating with the Institute.

### The Present Activity of the Re-established Institute

Soon after activities recommenced, the Institute set about fulfilling its most important task: the publication of Masaryk's *Collected Works*. By the end of May 1991, the staff of the Institute had met with a group of external specialists to discuss the editorial programme, upon which a unanimous decision was made in favour of an annotated edition of Masaryk's literary heritage. To formulate the methodological structure of the project, the participants of this meeting proposed the establishment of an editorial council, the current members being: Jiří Brabec (editor-in-chief), František Kautman, Jiří Kovtun, Jaroslav Opat (chairperson), Lubomír Nový, Mojmír Otruba, Stanislav Polák and Josef Zmr.

The first volume, *Juvenilia. Studies and Essays (1876-1881)*, was published by the Institute in 1993. The volume, *The Way of Democracy III. Speeches – Articles – Discourses 1924-1928*, appeared in June 1994. The Institute plans the completion of all three volumes of the work, *The Spirit of Russia*, by 1995. At present, the following volumes are being prepared for publication: *Suicide as a Mass Social Phenomenon of the Modern Enlightenment*; *Studies and Essays from the years 1882-1884*; *The Principles of Concrete Logic*; *The Way of Democracy IV.* – a series of forty volumes in total.

In addition to the series of *Collected Works*, the Institute published a new edition of *Masaryk's Book of Papers* (which first appeared before the Second World War). In 1993, volume VIII was published; volume IX is currently being prepared. Further publications by the Institute include: T. G. Masaryk: *My Attitude towards Literature. Šalda's Czech Novel*; – Alice Masaryk: *Childhood and Youth* (Memories and thoughts); – Jaroslav Opat: *Masarykiana and Other Studies 1980-1994*; – Stanislav Polák: *Masaryk's Parents and the Anti-Semitic Myth*; – R. W. Seton-Watson: *Correspondence, Documents (1906-1951)* (in print).

On the eve of the split of Czechoslovakia into the Czech and the Slovak Republics, the Institute prepared a scientific conference on the theme, *Masaryk's Idea of Czechoslovak Statesmanship in the Light of the Critique of History*. It took place in Masaryk's birthplace, Hodonín, in September 1992. The following year, the Institute published the conference proceedings. On the 80th anniversary of the beginning of the First World War, the Institute prepared an international scientific conference: *The First World War, Modern Democracy and T. G. Masaryk*; this took place at Liblice on 22.-24. September 1994. The conference had as its patron President Václav Havel. The chairman of The House of Deputies of The Czech Republic, Milan Uhde, delivered a speech at the introductory plenum of the conference. On September 24, a representative of the Committee

of The European Union in The Czech Republic, Gerhard Sabathil, addressed the conference. The Institute is currently preparing the conference proceedings for publication.

On the occasion of the publication centenary of *The Czech Question*, the Institute, together with Masaryk University in Brno, is preparing an international scientific conference on the theme: 100 years of Masaryk's *Czech Question*, to take place from September 26-28, 1995. At the conclusion of this conference, the participants are to visit Masaryk's birthplace – the Hodonínsko region.

Masaryk's archives form the basis for the most substantial component of the Institute's activities. Concurrent with their work on the archival materials, the archive staff provide numerous services to scholars. Over the years 1992-1994, 205 scholars made use of the archives, about one third of them being foreign scholars..

Masaryk's library still constitutes a sore point in the plan for a full renewal of the Institute's activity which will respect the founder's wishes. Even in the five years following November 1989, the curatorship has not succeeded in acquiring the necessary space. Thus, as of spring 1995, the major part of the library collection remains dispersed in various deposits, inaccessible for scholars. The opportunity to acquire a space arose at the beginning of this year. A certain Prague firm has made an attractive offer to the Institute. Negotiations with the firm's representatives are currently underway. If an agreement is reached and the Institute is able to begin the re-establishment of the library, its operative basis will have taken an important step in nearing the primary conception of its founder.

Jaroslav Opat

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